



The Gift that keeps on Giving!!!

Merry Christmas to each and every one of you as we ponder anew God putting on flesh and dwelling with man. Have you ever been intrigued by one of God's character qualities of being a **Giver?** Christmas is the biggest expression of this quality of our **great God!** For **God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son that whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life** John 3:16. What a gift God has given to all of us!!! This tangible gift is available to all who choose to turn from their sins, believe in His name, and receive Him as Savior and Lord. Praise His Holy Name that He has made this available to the world!

On December 1st and 2nd we had our annual Christmas event. This was an amazing night to share God's love in a tangible way by giving each inmate pop, popcorn and two stamped Christmas cards. They were given to each inmate who wanted them, and then we sang two familiar Christmas carols as the inmates enthusiastically sang along with us. Some inmates sent me one of their Christmas cards to thank us for coming. Most of our 23 volunteers were there which blessed the inmates greatly. They were two memorable nights of demonstrating the love of Christ, and sowing seed into hearts. Thanks to everyone for your financial gifts, all the donations of stamps, and those who prayed for this Christmas event. It's exciting to watch God work in individuals. Thanks to HyVee for the pop, and Brandmeyer Gourmet Popcorn for their donations. Both businesses give these incredible gifts each year. Only God knows the total

impact this event will have for eternity!

Divine appointments are a mystery to me. I experience the sovereignty of God in each encounter as I walk into a housing unit and am greeted by individuals that God has prepared for this very moment in time. A man ran up and said Jerry we need to talk. There was a real sense of urgency on his face. He told me his life was a shambles due to addictions. He then reinforced to me how much he loved his girlfriend of many years and their children. He believed in God and cared about Him. I asked questions to determine if there was fruit evident in his life and to see if he had a personal relationship with Jesus? He could only answer no to my questions and we both knew that he really hadn't ever given his life to Christ. He was depending on information that he had in his mind, but there was no transformation of his heart. Now he was ready to surrender his life to the Lord Jesus Christ and he did. Praise God he was prepared and his heart was open to receive this gift from God. A Savior is now born in this man's heart as he received this gift of love from a God who gave His Son to the world for sinners like you and me. CHRIST is God's precious gift to man, and our only hope for eternal life!

Merry CHRISTmas from our home to yours and have a blessed New Year!

In His Service, *Chaplain Jerry*

Tip of the Month: THE STAR BREATHER BECAME MANKIND'S SIN BEARER.



Chris Fontana – One of the Harvest!

I grew up in Ankeny and by the grace of God, AA and sponsorship I've been sober since 06/22/12. At a young age I did very well at wrestling, so I wanted to go to Iowa and wrestle for Coach Dan Gable. A catch to the dream was in my freshman year of high school a couple of my friends and I got a hold of some beer. For the first time I got drunk, and instantly fell in love with the effects produced by alcohol. My life did a complete 180. I started drinking and using drugs as much and as fast as I could get my hands on them. I skipped school, soon quit the

wrestling team and started running the streets. I visited the Lutheran Hospital treatment center three separate times. Since I was underage I became a ward of the state under the China Act and placed in a group home. I eventually went to Teen Challenge in Yuma, Arizona. While in Teen Challenge I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior; although I was not entirely ready to surrender my problem with alcohol and drugs. Over the next 15 years plus I found myself in many institutions, treatment centers, hospital stays, and homeless shelters. In one of my many stays at the Polk County Jail I ran into Chaplain Jerry. He would always come in, greet us with a smile, and a

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PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Prayer for former board member David Hamlin, and his wife Edna as they battle cancer.
- Prayer for volunteer Rich Baker who is recovering from serious bypass surgery.
- Pray additional churches, individuals and businesses would catch the vision of what our great God is doing here at the Polk County Jail Ministry, and support it both prayerfully, and financially.
- Prayer for an Assistant Chaplain who is called and burdened for this ministry.
- Prayer for wisdom in dealing with the multifaceted aspects of the ministry.
- Prayer for Sheriff Schneider that we would continue to experience a great working relationship and favor for the ministry.
- The ministry will increase in its influence and effectiveness in 2024.
- God protects and provides for the needs of the volunteers.
- Pray for the **D**iscipleship **O**utreach **C**enter as classes occur and excitement increases as individuals want to grow spiritually, face personal issues, and find freedom from their past.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit stirs the hearts of staff and the incarcerated with the Gospel message through the ministry's presence in the Jail.
- Inmates awake to watch Sunday services at 10:00 A.M. and also that detention officers would be convinced of their benefit to the inmate population.
- God will move the hearts of the inmate's family members at home, and convict them of their spiritual needs as their family member shares Jesus with them from Jail.
- Prayer for released inmates to have the self-discipline to be active in, and attend a Bible believing local church, daily Bible reading, find a mentor, and get a job.
- More opportunities to share about the ministry this coming year in churches and other organizations.
- Pray we all stay thankful, humble and broken before the **King of Kings!!**

ANSWERS:

- We received all the stamps and more needed for our Christmas event! PTL!!! Thanks to each of you for the stamps, donations to purchase them, and your powerful prayers!
- All the divine appointments throughout the month! To God be the Glory!

- We are thankful for favor and good working relationships with the Sheriff's office.
- Hearts are ready, and open to the Gospel.
- More inmates in the housing units are gathering to pray and study God's word.
- Lives of the incarcerated and the employees of the Sheriff's office were deeply touched by the Christmas event. Hearts were drawn to a point of hunger for God. What an open door to get into the housing units to interact with inmates face to face again!
- God has blessed the ministry Board with unity, and strong, wise leadership.
- I want to thank and praise God for each of you who partnered with us in 2023 to make it one of the greatest years ever! Each of you is truly an answer to our prayers!

MOST WANTED:

- Clothes closet needs - **men's shoes, winter coats, men's jeans sizes 30-34** Please donate only listed items.
- Spanish *Left Behind* soft cover all 12 in the series

Ministry Monthly Report: December 2023

	<u>Monthly:</u>	<u>Ytd:</u>
Inmate Request:	644	9,578
One-on-One inmate counseling:	599	8,200
Religious reading materials given:	663	9,679
Bible Study groups:	36	473
Inmates involved with studies:	266	3,057
View Worship Service:	159	2,404
Volunteer Hours:	258	2,087
Number of Volunteers:	24	274
Bibles given:	292	3,961
Number of New Believers:	21	233

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sense of hope. You never know when the seeds that are being planted will end up being watered by God at the right moment. 06/22/12 I was at my jumping off place. I like to say I couldn't live the way that I was living, and I couldn't live without the drugs and alcohol. I had hit bottom again so I called a man, asked him to be my sponsor, and said what do I do? He told me to pray to God for help and come to a meeting with him. Over the last 11 years if you would've told me that just getting sober was not enough, I would've run the other direction. I have had to face a lot of fears with the courage that only comes from the Lord. I do that one day at a time by surrendering each and every day saying God, may Your will be done not mine. I continue to work 12 step programs in Recovery, and volunteer my time to go to the place that I used to not be able to come out of, the Jail. I go to church regularly, and am involved in a Bible study. All of these things have a ripple effect in my life. It touches the lives of my family, my

friends and any newcomers that God places in my life. It's only by the grace of God there go I. My prayer is that my story touches the heart of somebody out there who's struggling. If I can do it, so can you. Amen and God bless.

*Here is another changed life
made possible by faithful
partners like you!*

Thank you! -Chaplain Jerry

**Please help
support**



**The
Polk County Jail
Ministry**

THANK YOU for your financial support! Please make checks out to the Polk Co. Jail Ministries and use the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.