

ALASKA CORRECTIONAL MINISTRIES



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Summer time greetings, still, to those of you in the south trying to endure the continued heat and humidity. As far as those readers and supporters in Alaska, it is now, regrettably on my part, fall time greetings. This is written near the end of August and the migratory birds have been here for more than a week, the colors have begun a marked change, the leaves are falling, and the temperatures certainly indicate that summer is over. Now we just pray that the Lord will bless us with a good extended fall time and hold the snow for as long as possible.

It has been a very busy summer for us with little time for anything but work! We did not even get to do any fishing this year because of the inclement weather and the lack of free time when the weather did permit. We were, however, blessed in so many ways through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and what the Lord did in many lives. I was privileged with praying with four specific persons for their salvation or recommitment to the Lord as Savior and Lord of their life. Since our last letter I have met and counseled with more than eighty inmates, had prayer with the majority of them and took the opportunity to share God's grace and love with each one. Several have reported back concerning answers to prayer and the great way the Lord answered and did some marvelous things they had trusted Him for. On June 25th we baptized three men in our chapel service and rejoiced with them and others over what the Lord has done in, and for, those new believers.

Summer is a time of travel for many and we get to enjoy the visit from some of those making their way to Alaska, some just for leisure and some for ministry. A small singing and musical group from down south, 'voices of Peace' came again for the second year to share and minister at FCC for both the men and women services. They were a blessing and the inmates shared how much they enjoyed this group's ministry. We were also blessed to have a visit from a long time friend and supporter of Prison Ministries in Alaska, Lois Spees (Grandma as she is known) and Cathy Allen. They have traveled to Alaska from Florida more than twenty times and shared their testimony and ministered to the inmates in various institutions in Alaska. Lois and Cathy are always a blessing and their ministry is always well received and always touches the lives of those who turn out to receive God's grace through these faithful servants. Lois celebrated her 84th birthday this summer and says she is looking forward to coming again next year. (And Lois I sure hope you don't mind me mentioning that number in birthdays, but it is a blessing and you are a blessing as you continue so faithful.)

As Chaplain I continue to be blessed with faithful volunteers who give of their time and efforts to help provide ministry here at FCC. Services continue as usual, each night of the week, with extra programs like the 'RU' recovery program operated by the Bible Baptist Church here in Fairbanks. We are still working toward getting the Genesis Recovery Program, facilitated by the Chaplain and staff from the Fairbanks Rescue Mission, and hope to see it up and running before the end of this year. A faithful volunteer, Rocky MacDonald, teaches the 'Expected End Series' every-other Friday night and this has become one of the favorite classes for those men getting involved.

We had another notable incident the end of June at FCC when one of the male inmates attempted suicide. His roommate discovered things just in time for the staff to intervene. The inmate was rushed to the hospital and the reports coming in were not positive as the medical staff induced a coma to see if he may recover. I visited the inmate at the hospital and received a 'less than positive' report but God still has the last word. Two days after I visited the inmate he woke up and began talking, within hours he was up and around, and two days later they had to take him back to FCC and without any physical complications. No one in the secular world had any explanation but we believe God has given this man, in his mid-forties, another opportunity in life and for eternity. I cannot give you his name, but please pray for him and pray for me and the volunteers to have an opportunity to reach him and minister to him concerning God's grace and love.

Joyce and I are now working on our twenty-first year here in Fairbanks and we continue to enjoy this ministry and rejoice in God's grace and blessings. We do not know what the next year, or years, may have for us, but we deeply appreciate your continued faithful and loving support as we continue in this field of service. Please keep us in prayer as we move forward in this ministry and this tremendous harvest field that continues to need the message of God's grace and love.

Sincerely, Under His Care,
Bob and Joyce Stephens
Missionaries to Alaska and the Alaska Correctional System

"Providing chaplaincy services and religious programming in Alaska's prisons"