

Special Offering: St. Dysmas Ministry and Family Connections

By Jon Martin, Evangelism & Outreach Board Member



St. Dysmas

In 1989, in response to a need to provide worship, ministry, and fellowship to those in prison at the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls and at Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield, St. Dysmas was born. The name St. Dysmas comes from the name of the thief believed to be hung on the cross next to Jesus. This man asked Christ to be remembered. The St. Dysmas ministry strives to minister to those incarcerated who also feel lost, forgotten, or abandoned. Pastor Wayne Gallipo currently serves as pastor and development coordinator for this ministry. Pastor Wayne is assisted by Pastor David Bentz in Springfield and Re-entry Coordinator Mitch Wilson.



The re-entry program is a new ministry that has emerged within the last couple of years. The goal of the re-entry program is to assist newly released inmates with re-establishing a life in the community. Assistance includes helping with housing, employment, and connection with a mentor group to help them be successful in navigating the world. FLC has a group waiting for a person to mentor. If you are interested in joining this ministry, please contact Pastor Jeff.

Typically, First Lutheran organizes a group twice a year to join the St. Dysmas congregation in their Thursday evening worship service. Over the last year, the pastors have been restricted from the facilities at different times due to COVID but have produced video services, which have been shared in the prisons, as well as writing to the inmates, which is usually not allowed. Pastors are now back inside with live worship services and can minister to the inmates in person. However, outside visitors are not allowed at worship at this time.

Family Connection

To help meet the needs of people visiting loved ones in prison, Family Connection was established in 1996. Family Connection strives to strengthen the bond between family members separated by incarceration and provides support to those visiting the South Dakota Penitentiary. Family Connection provides housing and meals for family members through their hospitality houses.



Two hospitality houses currently function in Sioux Falls. In addition, Family Connection provides support to children of incarcerated parents and facilitates visitation between family members and their incarcerated loved ones. The ministry has been restricted at times over the last year but strives to continue to provide services in a safe manner. To learn more about Family Connection, visit sdfamilyconnection.org.

Please prayerfully consider your financial support of these important partnership ministries by using your special offering envelope. You may also donate using the yellow envelope found in the pew pockets. Please write Prison Ministries on the memo line of a check made out to First Lutheran Church, or visit flcsf.org/give to donate online. Unless otherwise indicated, your donation will be divided equally between St. Dysmas and Family Connection. Please keep the work done by St. Dysmas and Family Connection in your prayers, and thank you for your support!

Special offering envelopes are included with your regular offering envelopes. If you do not have one, please use the yellow envelope in the pew and place in the offering, bring your donation to the Information Desk at church, or visit flcsf.org/give to donate online.