

## **Prison Ministry Program – Annual Report 2021**

Statement of Purpose: “To charge the Diocese of Arizona to minister to prisoners and their families (*during and post incarceration*), advocate for changes to the current prison system, and to mutually share God’s forgiving love.” The Diocesan Prison Ministry team currently has 16 active members and 6 interested parties that participate in meetings and events. These individuals represent 13 churches located throughout the Diocese. The team hosts a monthly teleconference call.

St. Peter’s Litchfield Park resumed worship services at Perryville Women’s Prison in July. The Bridges Re-entry organization formed by Rev. Gay Romack has recently introduced a Mentoring Beyond the Gates program. Orientation of perspective mentors occurred on 8/28 and 9/1. Training begins on 9/14. This program will assist women who are released from Perryville prison and do not have family or community support to help them cope with the many demands made upon them as a condition of their release. The hope is to help reduce recidivism through community support and mentor guidance.

Camp Genesis resumed in June of 2021 with a group of 14 children. We had three returning children and five Camp Genesis “graduates” attended regular church camp. Three members of the Diocesan Prison Ministry team served at Camp Genesis. Several churches were involved in providing backpacks for the campers. Scholarships for these children (ages 8-13) continue to be needed for camp in 2022. Camp Genesis Sunday in our Diocese will be celebrated on September 19<sup>th</sup>. The Camp Genesis Card Program currently has 17 churches participating in sending cards to the children who have attended Camp Genesis. This has proven to be a popular ministry among the children and those sending the cards.

Two “Straight from the Heart” Art Exhibitions will occur in 2021. The Olney Gallery at Trinity Cathedral will host an exhibition in September. A local Tucson restaurant will host a rotating display of artwork from Oct through Dec. Christ the King in Tucson has requested an exhibition in the spring of 2022. Proceeds from art sales benefit the artists, providing much needed funds for family and personal support. The art shows continue to be a successful method of raising awareness about the issues of incarceration in Arizona.

Work has restarted to identify a leader and team of individuals to provide worship services within the Wilmot Men’s Prison in Tucson (similar to what is offered in Perryville women’s prison). Meetings have been held with several clergy members and articles are planned to help raise awareness of this incredibly rewarding ministry (for team members and inmates alike). We are poised to “go where the fish are” as Presiding Bishop Curry has called us to do and hope to have a team assembled and approved to go into the Wilmot facility as early as Dec. 2021.

Deacon Kim Crecca is currently serving on a committee that is reviewing the 2023 budget requests received from AZ Department of Corrections with a goal of holding ADC accountable for their budget and informing the legislature about questionable or vague line items that need further clarification and/or fiscal notes. Kim is also involved in several advocacy groups that seek to support criminal justice reforms in Arizona as well as the national Episcopal Prison Ministry Coalition that meets monthly to share information about best practices and programs.

The Diocesan Prison Ministry team continues to work toward raising awareness about incarceration, reducing recidivism, facilitating successful re-entry for releasees, advocating for legislative reform, and serving the needs of loved ones affected by incarceration.

*Respectfully submitted by Rev. Kim Crecca, Convener, Diocesan Prison Ministry Program*