

## **Prison Ministry Program – Annual Report 2018**

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 11 members, mostly from the West Valley and Tucson areas. The team meets monthly via teleconference call.

The Diocesan Prison Ministry team and St. Peter’s Prison Worship team are looking forward to hosting Bishop Kirk Smith for a confirmation service at Perryville Women’s Prison in October. In addition, six priests from the diocese have participated in leading worship services at Perryville with the team from St. Peter’s Litchfield Park. We continue to use these opportunities to raise awareness throughout the diocese.

In addition to visiting priests, the team also uses a presentation entitled “The Cross of Incarceration” to help raise awareness about the effects of incarceration on our communities. In the spring of 2018, a presentation was given at St. Michael & All Angels in Tucson and we anticipate rescheduling a presentation at Christ the King in Oro Valley for this fall.

St. Peter’s Litchfield Park continues to offer worship services at Perryville Women’s Prison and several members of the Diocesan Prison Ministry team also assist with that ministry. The Bridges Re-Entry Mentoring Program continues to be offered and has been well received by the inmates. Deacon Gay Romack has formed a 501c3 corporation called Bridges Re-Entry and has received a grant to obtain housing for recently released women from Perryville Prison who have no where else to go. Deacon Romack hopes to have that housing arranged by the end of 2018.

In July, the first camp for children with incarcerated parents – Camp Genesis – was held at Chapel Rock. From all accounts, the camp was a success and plans are being made to offer it again next year. Several churches in the diocese provided items to fill backpacks for the children. We hope to have even more participation from churches next year.

Planned events during Prison Awareness Month in September include the Women of Perryville Art Exhibit at All Saints Phoenix (opening on Sept. 1) and a screening of the Oscar-nominated documentary “Knife Skills” at St. Peter’s on Sept. 12. Team members have also made plans to attend an Arizona Town Hall this fall. The AZ Town Halls are focusing on Criminal Justice and are being offered statewide.

Members of the Diocesan Prison Ministry team have continued to be engaged in various prison ministries including Kairos, prison reform advocacy, prison worship services, penpal programs, prison art shows, TedEX events, re-entry simulations, and prisoner visitation programs. In 2019, the team will continue to work toward reducing recidivism and facilitating successful re-entry for releasees.

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