

FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST PRISON MINISTRY, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

PASTOR

Outline of Responsibilities

In addition to adhering to the Visions and Expectations of Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the pastor of Followers of Christ (a Synod Authorized Worshipping Community inside the Nebraska State Penitentiary) and Director of Followers of Christ Prison Ministry in the Nebraska Synod ELCA will:

1. Be an Ordained Pastor in good standing with the ELCA. Entrepreneurial and missional leadership qualities are preferred.
2. Complete and pass training as a Full-Time Volunteer Clergy in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS), including passing an NDCS background check and attending the NDCS Staff Training Academy, providing services as described in Religious Services Administrative Regulation 208.1 E (see appendix)
3. Be willing to travel throughout the territory of the Nebraska Synod (entire state) periodically, with primary responsibilities at the Nebraska State Penitentiary in Lincoln. The Synod Office is located in Omaha and correctional facilities in Lincoln, Omaha, Tecumseh, York, and McCook. Periodic travel to these locations should be expected.
4. Offer services of Word and Sacrament, pastoral care, and other creative programming opportunities that further the proclamation of the Gospel and are in accordance with the governing documents of the ELCA. Such services will be provided inside the NDCS, primarily at the Nebraska State Penitentiary (NSP).
5. Encourage and invite those not incarcerated to volunteer and visit Followers of Christ in worship and in programs.
6. Strive to schedule, at least twice a month, visits to other congregations and gatherings to lead worship, preach and teach on prison ministry issues.
7. Raise awareness of the 2013 ELCA Social Statement, *"The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries"*, encouraging members of the Church to hear the cries of those affected by mass incarceration in the United States (victims and offenders), to be hospitable to those affected, to accompany them, and to advocate for progressive criminal justice reform.
8. Encourage financial support of Followers of Christ Prison Ministry across the Nebraska Synod.
9. Be in regular communication, involvement, and partnership with Synod as a partner (includes regular communication and completion of paperwork as required by the DEM or Bishop's designee, and with the Followers of Christ Ministry Council).

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Ministry Overview

The mission of Followers of Christ Prison Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is: "Together in Jesus Christ we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully." Specifically, it is to provide Word and Sacrament, pastoral care, and programming opportunities for inmates within the facilities of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) and to help the people of the Nebraska Synod ELCA to carry out the goals of the 2013 ELCA Social Statement on Criminal Justice.

What has this looked like?

- One-hour worship followed by one-hour Small Group time Saturdays from 6-8 PM at NSP (lead worship once per month; facilitate small group time every week).
- One-hour worship service at 9 AM on the last Sunday each month at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women in York.
- One-hour worship service at 9 AM at the Omaha Correctional Center on the third Sundays of even numbered months with Crossroads Connection Prison Ministry.
- One three-hour Bible study with Death Row inmates at Tecumseh State Correctional Institution every other Wednesday from 12-3 PM.
- Weekly Hero's Journey Prison Writing Class on Thursdays from 1-3 PM.
- Monthly Advanced Hero's Journey Prison Writing Class on first Thursdays from 8-10 AM.
- In the past, there have been weekly Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University Classes for 2 hours on Thursday evenings at Community Corrections Center in Lincoln and in Omaha.
- As needed, one-on-one pastoral care visits, primarily at NSP, scheduled via email with the Religious Coordinator for inmates to meet at the Religious Center, or with Housing Unit Managers to schedule visits inside the Housing Units or Segregation Control Center.
- Outside work has involved maintaining collegial relationships in text studies, participation in the monthly Reentry Alliance of Nebraska meetings, volunteering with Bridges to Hope and Our Saviour's Lutheran Church FEAST program, attending occasional parole and pardons board hearings, and testifying before the Nebraska Senate Judiciary Committee on justice related issues. Our Saviour's FEAST program and Bridges to Hope have historically partnered with Followers of Christ on our annual fundraiser, *Freed for Life*. Nurturing such collaborative partnerships is an important part of the ministry.
- The Nebraska Women of the ELCA have been important partners in Saved to Serve activities and inmate service projects.
- Our Saviour's Lutheran Church has been a valuable partner in donating office space and photo copying for bulletins and prison ministry materials.

The following excerpt from Nebraska Department of Correctional Services policy documents is provided for further information regarding the position. Though the Pastor of Followers of Christ Prison Ministry will be compensated by the Nebraska Synod, it should be noted the Department of Corrections defines the role as "Fulltime Volunteer Clergy."

APPENDIX

E. Fulltime Volunteer Clergy

1. A Fulltime Volunteer Clergy is an individual who provides religious services to inmates, and successfully completes pre-service and annual in-service training as directed.
2. In order to become a Fulltime Volunteer Clergy an individual must be ordained, licensed, or authorized by their religious governing body to provide religious services to inmates. A minimum of one-year of volunteer experience with the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services is preferred. Prior to approving an individual for Fulltime Volunteer Clergy status, consideration will be given to the individual's demonstrated commitment to providing religious services, reliability, community involvement, and adherence to NDCS rules.
3. The Religious Coordinator will initiate the process for establishing a Fulltime Volunteer Clergy position by making a request to the Warden. Upon the Warden's approval, the Religious Coordinator will gather the following information from the candidate:
 - a. A letter of application from the candidate;
 - b. A concise resume that includes a record of volunteer services;
 - c. Copies of any professional credentials;
 - d. Schedule of availability.
4. The Religion Study Committee will review the candidate's application along with any other relevant information. The Religion Study Committee will submit its recommendation to the Warden for approval or disapproval of the candidate.
5. Fulltime Volunteer Clergy may include:
 - a. Provide individual spiritual/pastoral counseling and services (e.g. communion) to inmates including those in Restrictive Housing.
 - b. Lead religious studies, worship or other group activities.
 - c. Distribute religious books, tapes, CDs and literature from the religious center to inmates throughout the institution.
 - d. May be granted unescorted access to specified areas of the facility and/or access to radios and keys as approved by the Warden/designee.
 - e. Provide other services as approved.