

Orientation

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Our Mission

To reach women incarcerated within the Indiana prison system, bringing them a message of hope, forgiveness, and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Vision

That all incarcerated know Jesus.

A vision without action is just a dream.

The History of Friend's Fellowship

Friends Fellowship of Indiana, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was founded upon Proverbs 17:17: "A friend loveth at all times." Our primary purpose is to be "the Lord's hand and heart to those who hurt."

Friend's Fellowship is a ministry to women incarcerated. The ministry was birthed in Tulsa, Oklahoma in February 1982 under the leadership of Madeline Mims, an Olympic athlete. After visiting the Indiana Women's Prison, she felt a need to expand her ministry to Indiana.

The ministry was granted a certificate for admission by the Indiana Secretary of State on April 18, 1984. The ministry began operating under the name "Free in Jesus Prison Fellowship".

Roe Farris became a volunteer of the ministry under the leadership of Madeline Mims. In 1986 Rev. Farris became the director of the Indiana Chapter. In December of 1992, we became an independent organization and recognized as Friend's Fellowship of Indiana, Inc.

The ministry grew under the leadership of Rev. Farris and her assistant, Rev. Ruth Winstead. Following 30 years of service from Rev. Farris and 25 years of service from Rev. Winstead, both women retired from the ministry in 2012.

Delores Epps, a long time volunteer for Friend's Fellowship, is now Director. She is assisted in leadership by Joni Moore.

Statement of Faith

We believe in one God, Creator and Lord of the universe, the co-eternal Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary, atoning death on the cross, rose bodily from the dead, and ascended to Heaven where, as truly God and truly man, He is the only mediator between God and man.

We believe that the Bible is God's authoritative and inspired Word. It is without error in all its teachings, including creation, history, its own origins, and salvation. Christians must submit to its divine authority, both individually and corporately, in all matters of belief and conduct, which is demonstrated by truly righteous living.

We believe that all people are lost sinners and cannot see the Kingdom of God except through the new birth. Justification is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

We believe in one holy, universal, and apostolic Church. Its calling is to worship God and witness concerning its Head, Jesus Christ, preaching the Gospel among all nations and demonstrating its commitment by compassionate service to the needs of human being and promoting righteousness and justice.

We believe in the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit for the individual's new birth and growth to maturity, and for the Church's constant renewal in truth, wisdom, faith, holiness, love, power, and mission.

We believe that Jesus Christ will personally and visibly return in glory to raise the dead and bring salvation and judgment to completion. God will fully manifest His Kingdom when He establishes a new Heaven and new earth, in which He will be glorified forever, and exclude all evil, suffering, and death.

Our Services

Bible Studies
Church Services
Mentoring
Birthday Parties
Healing for Damaged Emotions
Walking the 12 Steps with Jesus
Pen-Pals
Card Ministry

Facts from IDOC

- The Indiana Women's Prison is a maximum security Level 4 prison with an average population of 592.
- The Rockville Correctional Facility is a low-medium security Level 2 prison with an average population of 1137.
- The Madison Correctional Facility is a minimum security Level 1 prison with an average of population of 539.
- The levels of security in the prison system are minimum, low medium, high medium, and maximum. The three main considerations in assigning an offender to a security level are the committing offense, the length of sentence, and prior criminal history.
- Offenders are assessed at the Reception Diagnostic Center and the Rockville Correctional Facility. Each offender is scored on the Classification Designation Instrument. Points are assessed according to length of sentence, seriousness of the offense, violence in the offense, escape histories, substance abuse problems, conduct while incarcerated, etc. At that point, the score is calculated (minimum, medium and maximum). The score is then measured against security level criteria, such as sex and violent offenders not eligible for minimum security.

Friend's Fellowship of Indiana Volunteer Expectations

- *Be a team player. Find your place on our team. Each player is an important link in our chain. This is no place for the "Lone Ranger".*
- Live up to the responsibility of being a volunteer. It is a responsibility that requires an allotment of time, energy, love, and adequate preparation.
- Be on time and be present. If you find yourself unable to meet an obligation, notify your Director or Asst. Director in advance.
- Respect the confidentiality aspects of your assignment and the dignity and privacy of the residents with whom you fellowship.
- Show empathy with the residents; don't show sympathy. Empathy is the ability to relate to another and understand feelings without condescension or over-involvement.
- Be optimistic with the residents and the outlook of life in general, but do not encourage any unrealistic goals or attitudes.
- Dress appropriately for your visit into the prison. Meet expectations of the facility you are entering.
- Ask questions. If you do not understand something, simply ask. Do not harbor doubts or frustrations.
- Respect cultural, ethical, and personality differences.
- Do not over-identify or become over-involved. Respect boundaries and display professional behavior.
- Read the Indiana Women's Prison Volunteer Reference Guide and complete all requirements set forth to volunteer.

REMEMBER: You are in a controlled environment. The first rule of prison ministry is to follow rules. Security is a necessary part of prison life. You will need to know what can be brought in and out. The items we take in will be on the gate release. NEVER take anything into the prison that is not on the gate release. NEVER let the inmate give you anything to take out with you. It is called TRAFFICKING and it is against the LAW.

Letter from the Chaplain

Dear Religious Services Volunteer,

Thank you so much for donating your time to the women at Indiana Women's Prison! You are investing in the lives of women so they might be better prepared when they return to our Indiana communities. The responsibility of creating accountability, teaching, and supporting incarcerated women is vital for our society.

While programs and religious services are important for the lives of women, the primary responsibility of the facility is the safety and security. Consequently, it is important to remind you about trafficking and manipulation.

Often times, an offender may start with small things in order to get what they want; they could ask a volunteer to mail a letter or send a message. Also, a volunteer may bring in something to transfer that they feel is insignificant: eyeglasses, sunglasses, personal hygiene items, etc. **The state provides all these items and it is unlawful to bring or receive anything from an offender.**

I.C. 35-44-3-9 Trafficking with an inmate:

A person who, without the prior authorization of the person in charge of a penal facility, knowingly or intentionally: delivers or carries into the penal facility with the intent to deliver, an article to an inmate of the facility; or carries, or receives with the intent to carry out of the penal facility, an article from an inmate of the facility; commits trafficking with an inmate, a class A misdemeanor. However, the offense is a class C felony if the article is a controlled substance or a deadly weapon.

We know that volunteers have a big heart and desire to do good things. But, Volunteers are not allowed to transfer goods to offenders. If you ever have a question about what you can or cannot do, please feel free to contact a staff person. Also, if you ever are concerned about the behavior of an offender please make staff aware.

Peace,

Chaplain Bowie

WHY PRISON MINISTRY?

Matthew 25:35-40 (NIV)

³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, **I was in prison and you came to visit me.**'

³⁷“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰“The King will reply, ‘**Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.**’

This passage shows our Lord’s ever present concern for the poor and the oppressed. He identified himself with them. He teaches us that His concern should be our concern. Although these scriptures do not mean everyone should become involved in prison ministry, it does mean we should be open to this calling as to any other ministry.

What else does the Bible say?

Luke 4:18 (NIV)

¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,

Hebrews 13:3 (NIV)

³Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Psalms 69:33 (ESV)

For the Lord hears the needy and does not despise his own people who are prisoners.

Psalms 146:7 (ESV)

Who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;

Isaiah 61:1 (NIV)

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to

the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

Galatians 3:28 (NIV)

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus

Luke 23:32-43 (NIV)

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Women who are incarcerated are living in a dark world. We believe the scriptures commission us to take the “Light” of the world, Jesus Christ, into the dark corners of the prison world.

Forgiveness is available from God for all who truly repent. We are His hand extended, reaching out to those oppressed.

Ministry Goals

1. To increase in committed volunteers.
2. To raise funds that will support Our Mission.
3. To expand our community network.
4. To sustain existing services.
5. To expand services.