



Hope Beyond the Bars
2nd Quarter Newsletter
for 2021

I pray that this newsletter finds you well and centered on God as we continue this faith journey together.

The mini gallery of Hope Beyond the Bars artwork is all set up in the Church Administrator's office at Scottsville UMC and brings joy to all who see it and sparks meaningful conversation about our ministry. Several of the pieces will move around the walls of the church for more exposure and opportunity for discussion and donations now that the COVID restrictions have been lifted. The level of talent within our little group is astounding. Please take the time to come into the office to see for yourself.

Our Bible study program has grown from 12 men in January of this year to 23 men registered in our current study group and three others receiving fellowship and devotional materials. We have made a few adjustments to the program to help our participants make the most of our study group. Many of the men are having small group studies within their facilities. Those who are having study sessions to discuss the reading, have the option to email the director an overview of their group discussion rather than answering study questions. Some are choosing to do both.

Hope Beyond the Bars will be brought before Annual Conference for a vote to become an Advance Special Partner with the Virginia United Methodist Conference beginning July 1, 2021. This basically means, our ministry will be highlighted as a *Special Mission* within the United Methodist churches across Virginia to receive donations made at special times of the year over the next 4 years. This does not guarantee any financial donations will be made but it does guarantee all the Methodist churches across Virginia will be made aware of our ministry and the work we are doing to honor God and grow His kingdom.

In April, we closed registration in the Bible study group and the art ministry to remain within our current financial constraints. We currently have 4 men on our waiting list. An assessment will be done at the end of this quarter to determine if we can increase enrollment during the 3rd quarter.

We encourage you to share our ministry with friends and family by directing them to our website, Hopebeyondthebars.org. People can make financial donations and choose pieces from our artists as a thank you gift for their donations. They can make a financial contribution specifically to sponsor an inmate's Bible study rather than choosing artwork or just read about our ministry and our mission to share the lifegiving, redemptive power of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

How Hope Beyond the Bars Got Its Name

My first visit to prison left me feeling scared and overwhelmed with sadness and anxiety. The thought of my loved one living behind those bars provoked a sense of hopelessness that left me with a deep ache in my heart that felt like it would never go away. Getting to know our first artist helped me to see things from a very different perspective that ultimately changed my life and led to the formation of this ministry. Beyond those bars that brought me so much fear and sadness, are men that are full of hope and seeking to share the source of that hope with others behind and beyond those bars. The name, *Hope Beyond the Bars*, was meant not only to remind myself there is hope beyond those bars that slam shut to imprison those that I have come to love and care about, but to also inform others of the hope they have found through Christ Jesus in the midst of such terrible circumstances. I was the first person in this ministry to find Hope Beyond the Bars and I will be forever grateful. Thank you, Joe. ~ Abigail

An Invitation

Any ministry participant that would like to contribute to our quarterly newsletter, feel free to email me with your submission. They will be published as space allows, as we try to keep our publication to one page front and back.

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone that returned their *What I Want You To Know About Me* questionnaire. It has been fun getting to know everyone a little bit better. I would like to continue to learn more about each of you through our ongoing email correspondence, so please feel free to share whatever is on your heart.

Blessing from the United Methodist Church Conference

Before the letters went out, Steve Summers invited the Conference staff, along with Bishop Lewis, to join in a zoom meeting, during which time each ministry was prayed for, and their letter anointed. We just wanted you to know that we take seriously the commitment to pray for your ministries. May God bless each of your ministries and all who volunteer and are served by it!

Please keep our Hope participants and volunteers
in your prayers

Abigail	Christopher R	Kevin	Tarelle
Andrew	David	Ludwig	Tavoris
Ann	Diamond	Margaret	Thomas
Brian	Freeman	Matthew	Tyler
Carlos	Jesse	Michael	Yahshau
Chad	Joe	Robert	Zachary
Christopher P	Douglas	Steve	

Prayer Requests from Hope
Participants

Kenmonta	Tamani
Allen	Jeremiah
Jose	Iadainian
Sinclair	Genesis
Calaysia	Ann C
Demarea	Cassandra
Chad Jr	Jamarah
Pamela	

*When I say, "I am a Christian" I am not shouting "I am saved",
I am whispering, "I was lost"
"That's why I chose His way".
When I say, "I am a Christian" I don't speak of this with pride,
I'm confessing that I stumble, needing God to be my guide.
When I say, "I am a Christian" I'm not trying to be strong,
I'm professing that I'm weak, and pray for strength to carry on.
When I say, "I am a Christian" I'm not bragging of success,
I am admitting I have failed and cannot ever pay the debt.
When I say, "I am a Christian" I don't think I know it all,
I submit to my confusion asking humbly to be taught.
When I say, "I am a Christian" I'm not claiming to be perfect,
my flaws are all to visible, but God believes I'm worth it.
When I say, "I am a Christian" I still feel the sting of pain,
I have my share of heartaches which is why I seek His name.
When I say, "I am a Christian" I do not wish to judge,
I have no authority,
I only know I'm LOVED.*

~ Carol S. Wimmer 1988

*If you don't leave
your past
in the past,
it will destroy your
future.
Live for what today
has to offer,
not for what
yesterday
has taken away.
author unknown*