

Glad Tidings

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY OF NC



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WALKING IN UNITY

Post-Incarceration Ministry Pilot

Did you know that one of the last things Jesus prayed was for all believers “to be brought to complete unity” (John 17:20-30)? Yokefellow is a ministry of unity, bringing together Christians from various denominations and races to serve together in love. As we set aside our differences and come together as one body of Christ to share God’s love with inmates across the state, God is glorified. Jesus said that everyone would know we are his disciples if we love another (John 13:35).

The Yokefellow Board of Directors has approved launching a post-incarceration ministry pilot in Greensboro. The idea is to take the Yokefellow model that has worked so well in the prisons and adapt it to an environment outside the prison walls so those returning to society after incarceration can continue to receive mentoring support through Yokefellow’s relational listening ministry. Stanley Gladden and Yokefellow Board member Frances Gladden (front left and center) joined some of the volunteers — Wesley

Richmond (front right), Patricia Gilmer, Tonya Kitchens, and Steve Kitchens (back left to right) — at the kickoff meeting at Guilford College United Methodist Church on May 12. Other volunteers were trained in July in preparation for launching this ministry on August 30. The post-incarceration ministry will be offered on Thursday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at East Market Street Seventh Day Adventist Church near downtown Greensboro. Thank you to East Market Street SDA for offering to host these meetings!

Regional Trainings Getting a Facelift

Beginning this Fall, Yokefellow will be replacing regional trainings with regional Volunteer Collaboration events. After speaking with numerous volunteers and local coordinators, the Yokefellow leadership has decided to give regional meetings a facelift. The Volunteer Collaboration Events will be more interactive with the bulk of the event taking place in small groups, enabling volunteers serving different prisons to get to know one another and share their success stories and challenges. See page 3 for more details.



Mark your calendar!

**Volunteer Collaboration
Event & Annual Meeting on
10/27/18 from 9:00a-1:00p
at Guilford College UMC in
Greensboro.**

LOCAL COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT

Janet Flowers and Janie Glasgow are the Yokefellow Local Coordinators at Orange Correctional Center. In April 2018, Janet was given the Orange Correctional Volunteer of the Year award by the NC Department of Public Service. However, as Janet says, the work she does is so heavily supported by Janie that she feels she must share the honor.

Janet coordinates the weekly Yokefellow meetings, chairs the monthly volunteer meetings, maintains a listserv for the group, and facilitates communication. She does weekly meditations, provides monthly refreshments, and also helps with Parent Day. Janie coordinates the Yokefellow meeting when Janet is absent, does meditations, and organizes and does the heavy lifting for three major events for the residents: Fourth of July Cookout, Thanksgiving Feast, and Christmas party. She also serves on the Alamance Orange Prison Ministry (AOPM) Board.

Both volunteers do their work because their Christian faith compels them to affirm, support and love the less fortunate. They both feel very blessed by the interactions with the men and consider their fellowship a community of hope, love, and second chances.



Janie Glasgow (left) and Janet Flowers (right)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Learn more about Leon Morrow,
Vice-President of Yokefellow



What is your involvement with Yokefellow Prison Ministry? I am Yokefellow's Vice President.

What is your background? As the oldest of 4, I was often told that I was in charge and to take care of the younger ones. Those two orders have shaped my life because I often find myself either in charge or taking care of others. I worked for the NC Division of Prisons from 1974-2002 mostly as either a staff psychologist (the "taking care of" part) and as the head of Western Youth Institution (the "in charge" part) from January 1987-July 1997. While the title at WYI varied, in most other states, I would have been called a warden.

How did you decide to become a minister? I didn't "decide" but was rather "called." While working for the prison system, God called me into pastoral ministry. Imagine a scene from a slapstick comedy with someone pushing against a door that someone else unlocks, causing him to fall through the door and stumble into the other room. I had been pushing (working diligently and happily) in corrections but suddenly felt myself stumbling in a

new direction. In 2002, I retired early from the Division of Prisons and took an appointment as a United Methodist pastor while simultaneously attending seminary. The UMC, through a system of procedures and evaluations, confirmed my call, and I was fully ordained.

How did you get involved with YPM? A wonderful Christian leader who worked at WYI, Chaplain Bill Hall, asked me to join the Executive Board. I had positive memories of YPM from my time at WYI, so I accepted his invitation. The relational ministry of YPM is instrumental in changing the lives of prison inmates.

Tell us about your life away from ministry. I deeply love my wife, Yvette, and spend as much time with her as I can. We enjoy our work in the church and community as well as traveling. This year, we visited the Holy Land for a religious tour, spent a week in Budapest, and also visited my father-in-law at his home in Colorado Springs. Yvette and I walk, ride bikes, and swim laps on a regular basis. We attend various musical and cultural events near our home. I have two successful adult sons who are mar-



ried to wonderful ladies, and Yvette and I have five grandchildren who are dear to our hearts.

What is something that most people don't know about you? In my 20's and 30's, I played in an adult soccer league and coached kids in the recreation league. I have also had a few articles published and was a community columnist for *The Charlotte Observer* newspaper.

Is there anything you would like to add? My marriage is statistically unusual. Relatively few Caucasian men are married to African-American women. Yvette is the most loving and kind person I have ever met. I married her because I love her, not because she is African-American. However, I have found that my interracial marriage has both deepened and broadened my life in wonderful ways.

Spotlight artwork
courtesy of <https://openclipart.org/detail/284958/theater-or-studio-spotlight-on-roof-mount>



Volunteer Collaboration Events

On September 15, Yokefellow will pilot a Volunteer Collaboration event for the Orange Correctional volunteers to experiment with giving Yokefellow's traditional training format a facelift. Yokefellow will then roll out this new model for the Central Regional Training at Guilford United Methodist Church in Greensboro on 10/27/18 from

9:00a to 1:00p. Constructive feedback from volunteers is that they want more interactivity and the opportunity to share their success stories and challenges with one another. This new format will enable attendees to do this.

The event will begin as a large group with an opening prayer and

devotional. After a brief presentation on **Active Listening**, volunteers will have a small group break out sessions. The small groups will discuss the topic of active listening, including individual successes and challenges, and work together on a simulation to present to the large group. After the large group debrief and a short break, the same format will be followed on the topic of **Boundaries within Prisons**. The Volunteer Collaboration event will end with a love offering and closing remarks followed by a brief annual meeting and then lunch.

Yokefellow leadership recognizes that many of our volunteers have been serving NC prisons for a number of years and have much to share with others. Yokefellow also wants to encourage volunteers for different prisons to get to know

one another to broaden everyone's perspective of Yokefellow being one body serving Christ in different locations.

Yokefellow leadership will distribute surveys to all participants requesting feedback about this new format. The Board and Staff are here to serve you, so please be candid in sharing your ideas for how to make these regional events even better!

Do you pray regularly for Yokefellow? Sign up to be a Yokefellow **Prayer Warrior!**

Yokefellow would like to have one prayer warrior dedicated to praying for each local ministry.

Email yokefellownc.statedeveloper@gmail.com for more information.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)

One of the gifts that made Paul the most effective apostle of the early church was his gift for communicating the gospel message. He was a great evangelist. He was a teach-

er of faith. He also watched eagerly over the spiritual welfare of congregations near and far.

In I Corinthians, Paul summarized his core basis in a straightforward sentence: "... now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13). We are privileged, as Christians and as Yokefellows, to enjoy the privilege to have a fresh start every day at living out the values of faith, hope, and love. Love is shown in the way we conduct ourselves with one another and with people we encounter outside our normal circles, outside of our comfort zones. Following Jesus's teach-

ing and Paul's reminder, we can become a loving people.

It may sound easy, but this is no easy way to live. It requires constant attitude adjustment – from me-centered to other-centered, from judgment to forgiveness, from prejudice to openheartedness. The Scripture tells us love starts the process. Remember the greatest of what ultimately abides, what lasts, is love.

Your Yokefellow Board is eager to get the message out about the lasting message of love. Soon, a new video will debut about our ministry. It includes a testimony from a "dear brother" who was

changed because of Yokefellow Prison Ministry. Our Executive Director, Vita Alligood, and State Developer, Carlton Gooding, give testimony to the multitudes of people they meet exhibiting the faith, hope, and love manifested in Jesus' teaching. It is our prayer that the straightforward message of faith, hope, and love will abide with you today. What a privilege it is to serve the Lord. What an opportunity to serve the incarcerated. What a joy it is to serve you today. It is my prayer that you will be guided by the Lord of life who shows us love.

David Morton, President
Yokefellow Prison Ministry of NC



Yokefellow Sunday is September 23!

It's time to enroll your church to participate in Yokefellow Sunday! On **September 23**, Yokefellow is asking churches across the State of North Carolina to participate in

Did you know that if every Yokefellow volunteer donated \$2 a month, this would generate over \$10,000 a year?

Yokefellow Sunday by airing a two-minute video, which can be viewed on the home page of Yokefellow's website at yokefellowprisonministry.org. Yokefellow will also provide church bulletin inserts explaining Yokefellow's ministry. This is a wonderful opportunity to invite congregations of all denominations to partner with Yokefellow to minister to inmates across the state through prayer, volunteering, and financial support.

If your church would like to participate, contact Vita Alligood at

336-724-9801 or yokefellowprisonministrync@gmail.com.



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