

Glad Tidings

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY



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Yokefellow Virtual Aftercare Program Launching

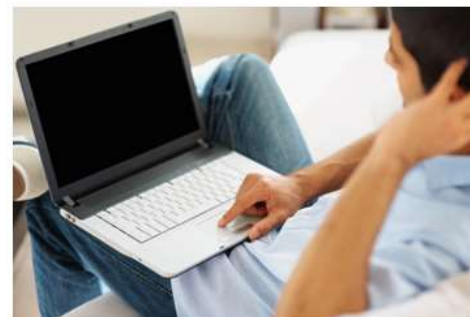
On July 27, Yokefellow will launch its Virtual Aftercare program to support returning citizens, those who are transitioning from prison back into society. Weekly Yokefellow meetings will be offered on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays through the Zoom platform. Returning citizens and volunteers can attend using a computer or smart phone to join through video, or they can call from any telephone to attend using audio only. Details are available on the Yokefellow

website and will be updated with more specific information as it becomes available: yokefellowprisonministry.org/virtual-aftercare-program.

As with Yokefellow meetings in a prison, Virtual Aftercare meetings will begin with all volunteers and attendees gathered together for the welcome and opening prayer. Participants will then be placed into breakout rooms, which is an online version of dividing attendees into small groups. By

video or phone call, returning citizens will be able to have small group discussions with volunteers, regardless of how many people call in to the meeting.

Yokefellow leadership is excited about launching this new arm of ministry that provides support for those transitioning from prison to society. The online platform removes barriers to attending in-person Yokefellow Aftercare meetings, such as transportation issues



and COVID-19 exposure risk. This form of ministry also enables attendees to join anonymously, if desired, which removes concerns about possible stigma for attending.

Yokefellow would like to grow to providing Virtual Aftercare support daily, but we need more volunteers to do this. Please contact State Developer Carlton Gooding at 336-740-0392 or yokefellownc.statedeveloper@gmail.com to learn more.

Yokefellow Prison Ministry received a generous grant from a private foundation. The Yokefellow Board of Directors and Staff are very appreciative of the support of this private foundation!



Continuing the Mission...

... even while the Prisons are Closed to Volunteers

Yokefellow started 2020 on track with its strategic plan, and then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Prisons closed to volunteers, resulting in prison ministry being placed "on pause" for months. To date, nobody knows when ministry in the prisons will be able to resume. How does a prison ministry stay relevant when the prisons are closed to volunteers?

In the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, Yokefellow President David Morton said some wise words: "We've talked enough about what we CAN'T do. Now let's focus on what we CAN do."

What CAN we do? We can focus on our mission:

In response to the call and example of Christ, Yokefellow Prison

Ministry of N.C., Inc. motivates and encourages prisoners, yoked in personal relationships with community volunteers, to examine their lives; experience the forgiveness, healing and power of God's love; and return from incarceration with a covenant commitment to, and new disciplines for, personal responsibility and contribution to family and community.

How can we do this while the prisons are closed to volunteers? We can shift our focus to those returning from incarceration.

Yokefellow Prison Ministry has already been supporting returning citizens through its successful in-person Aftercare program in High Point, and we will move forward with our plans to launch more in-

person Aftercare programs in 2020 within the constraints of COVID-19.

On July 27, Yokefellow will launch Virtual Aftercare, a new arm of ministry for returning citizens using Zoom. These weekly meetings will take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays and will be similar to in-person Aftercare meetings, using the Yokefellow model of ministry, but meet online, accessible through computer (with video) or telephone (audio-only).

While Yokefellow is shifting its focus to returning citizens for now, we have not forgotten those in prison. We ask all volunteers to cover inmates and prison personnel in prayer as they face



unprecedented challenges. We also encourage volunteers to complete online volunteer refresher training so they will be ready to go back into the prisons whenever they reopen to volunteers.

Currently, the prisons are closed to volunteers, but the mission continues. Yokefellow continues to build trusting relationships through listening, caring, and encouraging, just as we have been doing for 51 years.



Help Wanted in Marketing Virtual Aftercare

Yokefellow's Virtual Aftercare program launches the last week of July, and we need help promoting this new ministry across the State of North Carolina so returning citizens will know about it.

Where can you distribute Yokefellow Virtual Aftercare brochures?

- ◇ Homeless shelters
- ◇ Parole, Probation, and Post-release offices
- ◇ Libraries
- ◇ Thrift shops
- ◇ Churches
- ◇ Local Media
- ◇ Others places serving this population

Brochures about the ministry are posted on the website at yokefellowprisonministry.org/virtual-aftercare-program. These can be downloaded and printed. Alternatively, Yokefellow Staff is happy to print out brochures and snail mail them to you for local distribution.

Contact Executive Director Vita Alligood at 336-724-9801 or yokefellowprisonministrync@gmail.com for printed brochures to distribute and State Developer Carlton Gooding at 336-740-0392 or yokefellownc.statedeveloper@gmail.com for distribution ideas. Thanks for your help!

Are you feeling alone since your release from prison?

WE CARE!



Yokefellow Prison Ministry
P.O. Box 38964
Greensboro, NC 27438
<http://yokefellowprisonministry.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/yokefellow.prison.ministry.nc>



yokefellow
Prison Ministry
Building Trusting Relationships
Listening • Caring • Encouraging

Virtual Aftercare Ministry
Support on the Outside

Provided Virtually
through Computer or Phone



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 and missionary. He was a teacher 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 blessed, as Christians, 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 teaching 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 open heartedness. The Scripture tells us love starts the process. Remember the greatest of what ultimately abides, what lasts, is love. It can grow and last even in a pandemic.

We, as a fellowship of Christian believers, are eager to get the message out about the lasting message of love. That's one of our many missions. And for the church and for Yokefellow Prison Ministry of NC, the mission has changed and also remained the same. As a part of sharing the love of Christ, we continue to seek out and invite people to become disciples for the transformation of community and our world. And now our focus is about offering a beacon of light and a message to people here and around the state of NC.

We can offer hope to those who are feeling restless or gloomy. We can offer encouragement to those feeling isolated or uncertain about tomorrow. We can provide support to those who feel disenfranchised, misunderstood and beaten down. We can remind people that God is with us in the difficult times as well as in the times when things are easy. And we can offer a message that is trustworthy and true rather than confusing or overly optimistic.

These words are a part of the message of love. This can be an important time to be a Yokefellow, not just for ourselves, but for everyone. It is my prayer that you will be guided by the Lord of life who shows us love. It is a message to be shared.



As I consider that love growing in my relationship with family, with you, and with God, I've also been thinking about the state of the world we've been living in, especially these last three months. How can we love well when we are still so distant, isolated? How can we love well when the problems of the world are brought into such sharp vision? God doesn't give us an exact answer. But I think our love must start with empathy, listening to the voices of those hurting most. Our love must start with nurturing, doing what we can to help those we can. Our love must start with recognizing that we are a family. Extravagant love never runs out. As we respond to God, we are helping love grow. It is hard work, and it is beautiful.

Let's adhere to our guiding disciplines. These will see us through:

- ◇ **Prayer:** To pray every day, preferably at the beginning of the day.
- ◇ **Scripture:** To seek God's guidance through reverent reading of the Bible every day, following a definite plan.

- ◇ **Worship:** To participate, at least once a week, in public worship of God.
- ◇ **Money:** To return to God a definite portion of my income to support the Christian cause.
- ◇ **Service:** To invest a specific amount of my time in humble acts of love and service to others.
- ◇ **Witness:** To make an unapologetic witness in daily life, daily work, daily words.
- ◇ **Study:** To become a better informed Christian by careful study of Christian books.

Let us heed to the invitation from Christ the Lord found in the Gospel of Matthew 11:29-30: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

We love you all,

David Morton
President

God makes a home for those who are alone. He leads men out of prison into happiness and well-being. ~ Psalm 68:6



Amazon Smile Now Available on iPhone!

If you have an iOS device, such as an Apple iPhone or iPad, you can now link your online shopping app to your Amazon Smile account!

What is Amazon Smile?

Amazon Smile is an *easy* way to support Yokefellow Prison Ministry. Create a FREE Amazon Smile account and select Yokefellow Prison Ministry as the charity you want to support. Then, whenever you shop Amazon using your Amazon Smile account, a percentage of your purchase is donated to Yokefellow — does not change the cost of your purchases.

How to Sign Up

Type <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-1059009> into your Internet browser. Then, sign in to your Amazon.com account or create a new one. It really is that simple!

Amazon Smile on the Computer

Whenever you shop at Amazon from your computer, begin your shopping at smile.amazon.com. Then, simply shop as you have always done. Amazon will donate a percentage of your purchases to Yokefellow. This will not affect the cost of your purchases.

Turn on AmazonSmile in the Amazon app to generate donations.

amazonsmile



Link your Amazon Smile account to your Amazon Shopping App on Android or iPhone

Prefer to shop Amazon from your cell phone? Link your Amazon app to your Amazon Smile account by following these steps:

1. Install the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app to your device.
2. Open the Amazon Shopping app.
3. Tap the triple bars.
4. Tap **Settings**.
5. Tap **Amazon Smile**.
6. Follow the in-app instructions to link the app to your Amazon Smile account.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Prison Ministry
Building Trusting Relationships
Listening • Caring • Encouraging



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