

Glad Tidings

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY

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Yokefellow meetings, such as the above Town Hall meeting, have moved online during the pandemic. More online meetings to come in 2021!

CONTINUING EDUCATION ONLINE

New volunteer training and refresher courses for seasoned volunteers are available in an online format through Convene Communities. Step-by-step instructions for accessing the online training and working through the modules are available on the **Forms** page of the website:

yokefellowprisonministry.org/forms



Module 5 -- Understanding Those We Serve

2021 Meeting Dates (most online)

Mark your calendar! Yokefellow Prison Ministry will be hosting four online Town Hall meetings in 2021 as well as two new volunteer trainings & continuing education meetings (either online or in-person, depending upon pandemic conditions) and other events. Here are the dates to add to your calendar:

- ◇ **Town Hall Meeting:** Sat, 3/20/21
10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. on Zoom
- ◇ **Town Hall Meeting:** Sat, 5/8/21
10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. on Zoom
- ◇ **New Volunteer Training & Continuing Education**
Sat, 5/22/21, in the morning (time TBD) on Zoom
- ◇ **Town Hall Meeting:** Sat, 8/14/21
10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. on Zoom
- ◇ **New Volunteer Training & Continuing Education**
Sat, 9/18/21, in the morning
Time & Location TBD
- ◇ **Yokefellow Sunday:** Sunday, 9/26/21
Statewide
- ◇ **Annual Meeting:** Sat, 10/23/21
10:30 a.m. on Zoom
- ◇ **Town Hall Meeting:** Sat, 11/13/21
10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. on Zoom

March Town Hall Meeting

Join us **Sat, 3/20/20, at 10:30 a.m. on Zoom** for our next online town hall meeting! We will be discussing ways to serve those affected by the criminal justice system while prisons remain closed to volunteers during the pandemic. As we did last time, we will hold regional discussions in breakout rooms to share ideas about how we can best serve those in our region. Invitations will be emailed and snail-mailed out soon.

Town Hall

IN MEMORIUM



George Dwight Allen
1951-2021

Yokefellow volunteer Dwight Allen passed away in January 2021. He was a long-time volunteer with Yokefellow at Orange Correctional in Hillsborough.



Richard Dudley Moore
1933-2020

Former Yokefellow Treasurer Richard Moore passed away in September 2020. He was a long-time volunteer with Yokefellow, using his financial expertise to help the ministry.



Glenda Kay Rogers Wagoner
1943-2020

Yokefellow volunteer Glenda Wagoner passed away in October 2020. She was a long-time volunteer with Yokefellow at Forsyth Correctional in Winston-Salem.

2020 Virtual Annual Meeting

First online annual meeting in 51-year history!



On Saturday, October 24, Yokefellow Prison Ministry held its first virtual annual meeting using the Zoom platform. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Directors decided to move its 2020 Annual Meeting online to ensure that Yokefellow volunteers and donors could participate in the meeting safely. This enabled attendees to participate by video or by audio using a telephone.

Board President David Morton opened the meeting with a welcome followed by a scripture reading from Matthew 11:28-30 by Finance & Budget Committee Chair Yvette Morrow. This was followed by a video of Jessye Norman singing *Amazing Grace* at Wembley Stadium from June 11, 1988. Personnel Committee Chair Kyle Fishbaugh recognized Yokefellow Staff, Executive Committee members, and Board members.

State Developer Carlton Gooding introduced the keynote speaker:



Rev. Jerry D. Murray, co-founder of Yokefellow Prison Ministry, saw Yokefellows as "Faithful Friends."

Bob Barker, Sr., founder of the Bob Barker Company as well as the Bob Barker Company Foundation, which develops and supports programs that help incarcerated individuals successfully re-enter society and stay out of prison for life. Mr. Barker delivered a powerful and uplifting keynote address in which he shared his own story and passion for helping reduce the recidivism rate.

Attendees voted on Board members with 2021-2024 terms, the Executive Officers, and the budget.

Retired Board Member Bruce Pate shared a touching tribute for Yokefellow Prison Ministry co-founder Rev. Jerry D. Murray. Yokefellow Staff announced a new recurring donor program called **Faithful Friends** in honor of Rev. Murray. Staff also provided a programs update.



New Donor Program for Recurring Donors

The meeting ended with a Q&A session, the hymn *It is Well with My Soul* by Hymn Makers, and a blessing & dismissal by Programs Committee Chair Ken Ripley.

With 2020 Behind Us, Now What??

To say 2020 was a challenging year is a gross understatement. After 50 years of ministering weekly to inmates across the state, Yokefellow volunteers were shut out of prisons to protect inmates from the COVID-19 virus. Nearly a year later, we continue patiently awaiting NC prisons reopening to volunteers so we can resume our ministry. Now what?

When will prison ministry resume?

The short answer is that we don't know. Because prisons are communal environments, COVID-19 has torn through the prisons, even with safety measures in place. For this reason, the prisons are unlikely to



reopen to volunteers until the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Yokefellow does not anticipate being invited back into the prisons before the summer.

What do we do while we wait?

We continue ministering to those we DO have access to: returning citizens (those transitioning from prison back into society).

Many inmates have been released early during the COVID-19 pandemic, and those released during the pandemic have been given less assistance with the transition process. Thus, the need is even greater for aftercare services.

What is Yokefellow Aftercare?

Yokefellow Aftercare adapts the Yokefellow model of ministry to meet the needs of returning citizens. This ministry takes place in person (currently offered in High Point) or online using Zoom (can be accessed by landline). Volunteers meet with returning citizens weekly to provide active listening ministry and support.

How can I participate?

Contact State Developer Carlton Gooding at 336-740-0392 to learn about volunteer opportunities. We need help marketing Virtual Aftercare in local communities. We also welcome assistance in launching more in-person Aftercare programs across the state. Connecting us with your local church can help us recruit venues and volunteers.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
~ John 3: 16

The story of salvation begins with God's people making a huge error. The scriptures tell us the story of Adam and Eve. The story unfolds, and we read they disobeyed God and brought sin into the world (Genesis 3).



If we were in God's position, would we have felt like restoring Adam and Eve? We might have wanted to start over with someone else. Perhaps we'd even create an entirely different world and fill it with something other than humans. But God chose not to abandon His creation. God stays in relationship with us. He clothes us, guides us, and promises that evil will be defeated.

Throughout the Old Testament, we find that God's people fell into sin and dysfunction again and again. And God remained faithful. He stayed with his people and promised that one day a Savior would come, break the cycle, and free people from the curse of sin.

The message found in the book of John was written to help people understand that Jesus is the Savior (Messiah). God loved us so much that he sent Jesus to become one of us in order to pay for our sin and

restore our relationship with God. In Christ, we see that God's love for us is unconditional. It does not depend on our doing enough to please him; instead, salvation is freely given as an undeserved gift.

We can be certain that nothing will ever tear us away from God's love. Nothing in this life or the next, nothing seen or unseen, not even our fears or worries. Absolutely nothing can separate us from God's love. It means that nothing will ever win out over God's love. It isn't because of our strength or anything that we do, but because of Jesus Christ who calls us His own (Romans 8:38-39).

What a privilege we have to be in fellowship with a loving God. What an opportunity we have to accept His invitation of love. We can accept and give away God's grace. God will use us, individually and as a community of faith, to do amaz-

ing things. We'll see the results in our own life, the lives of many around us, at our churches, during our volunteer fellowship times, and throughout God's kingdom.

I invite you to join me in prayer, meditation, reflection, and participation together as we acknowledge where we have been focusing, our strengths and weaknesses, our energy, and discover where God is calling us. God is always calling us to serve. We are changed as we serve others. We become stronger in our faith, and we are able to assist others as they become stronger in theirs. As we move forward, may our Lord bless us as we focus on His loving grace. Be an active part in the story of God's salvation today. Be safe and well. God bless you.

David Morton
President
Yokefellow Prison Ministry of NC

Supporting Yokefellow Prison Ministry



Faithful Friends are donors who have pledged to donate at least \$10/month in 2021. Thank you to all of our Faithful Friends!

Brian & Vita Alligood
Barbara Bays
Theresa Blount
Gary & Emily Cagle
Rob Ferry
Frances Gladden
Leon & Yvette Morrow

Bruce & Jean Pate
Cathy Robertson
David Stanford

It's not too late to become a 2021 Faithful Friend. Email yokefellowprisonministrync@gmail.com or call 336-724-9801 for details.

Stocks

Do you own shares of stock or other securities that have appreciated in value over the years? You can donate shares of stock or other securities to Yokefellow and save on taxes at the same time.

Let's say you bought 10 shares of stock for \$10 each, and those shares are now worth \$20 each. If you donate 10 shares of stock

directly to Yokefellow, you can give Yokefellow a \$200 donation that only cost you \$100 without having to pay taxes on the \$100 in capital gains.

Here is the information to share with your financial advisor:

Vanguard Client Services:
800-662-2739
Account: Yokefellow Prison Ministry
DTC: 0062
Vanguard brokerage account:
#10363461

Yokefellow Prison Ministry
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Listening • Caring • Encouraging



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