



St. Mark's  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# Mite Box Project

[Incarceration Justice Information Resources](#)

When Lent is over please send the total of your daily mite box offerings to St. Marks in one of the following three ways by April 12:

- 1) Mailing a check to St. Mark's, 301 A Street SE, Washington, DC 20003.  
In note line put Mite Box.
- 2) Making an online contribution using this mite box form.
- 3) Texting "stmarks20003 mitebox" followed by the amount to 73256.

Day of Week	Weekly Themes & Daily Topics	Daily Reflection
Wednesday 2/17 Ash Wednesday	<b>Faith Perspective:</b> <i>Introduction to Incarceration Justice &amp; Ministry</i>	Why are the people of St. Mark's called to Incarceration work? One way that we gather is to pour our lives through scripture. We have the biblical belief that all people are made in God's image with inherent dignity and potential. Our work with prisoners takes a restorative approach to those affected by crime and incarceration. We believe that our work heals broken people and systems. Working with Prisoners helps us realize the cost on all of our humanity. We seek to replace the cycle of crime and incarceration. We use the Lenten Mite box to engaging with God's call to "remember those in prison," caring for those incarcerated, and creating safer communities both behind and beyond the walls. Please sign up and use the daily readings to do what we are called to do, heal the world and see the face of God in everyone. -Contributed by Michele Morgan
Thursday 2/18	Trends in the U.S. Prison Population	The next time you sing the Star-Spangled Banner, and say the words "land of the free," think about this: The United States incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. The U.S. is home to less than 5% of the world's population, yet we incarcerate more than 20% of the world's prison population. Up until the 1970s, the U.S. prison population remained relatively steady. Since 1970, the U.S. prison population has increased 700%. Tough on crime policies such as the War on Drugs, mandatory sentences, and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 have led to dramatic increases in the prison population. <b>Make a contribution to your Mite Box if you were aware of these three policies, but never realized the impact they each had on the U.S. prison population.</b> -Contributed by Suzanne Wells <i>Sources:</i> <a href="https://drugpolicy.org/issues/brief-history-drug-war">https://drugpolicy.org/issues/brief-history-drug-war</a> <a href="https://www.cjpf.org/mandatory-minimums">https://www.cjpf.org/mandatory-minimums</a> <a href="https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/3355/text">https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/3355/text</a>
Friday 2/19	Trends in the U.S. Prison Population	As our country grapples with systemic racism, race and ethnicity cannot be ignored when looking at arrests in the U.S. In 2018, black people were 13% of the U.S. population, yet they were overrepresented among persons arrested for nonfatal violent crimes and serious nonfatal violent crimes (36%). Hispanics, regardless of their race, were 18% of the U.S. population, yet they were overrepresented among persons arrested for nonfatal violent crimes excluding other assaults (21%). White people, on the other hand, accounted for 60% of U.S. population, but 46% of all persons arrested for serious nonfatal violent crimes, and 39% for nonfatal violent crimes excluding other assaults. Serious nonfatal violent crimes include rape, robbery, and aggravated assault and exclude other assault. <b>Make a contribution to your Mite Box, if the past year's Black Lives Matter movement made you more aware of systemic racism in our country.</b> -Contributed by Suzanne Wells <i>Sources:</i> <a href="https://drugpolicy.org/issues/brief-history-drug-war">https://drugpolicy.org/issues/brief-history-drug-war</a> <a href="https://www.cjpf.org/mandatory-minimums">https://www.cjpf.org/mandatory-minimums</a> <a href="https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/3355/text">https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/3355/text</a>
Saturday, 2/20	Alisa Earnest and St. Mark's Part 1	From parishioner Lynda Smith-Bugge: "You may remember the tragic events surrounding my grandson's suicide. He was ensnared in a sting operation by a sheriff's deputy impersonating a young woman interested in romance. In support, parishioners raised over \$25,000 for legal defense, visited him in remote Virginia prisons, and sent books and letters. Fifteen St. Markers showed up for Andrew's hearing, and the lawyer said this solidarity made an impression on the judge, who ultimately reduced the sentence from 23 years to 11 years. His final art reflects his thoughtfulness and internal struggle in prison. He was a generous, passionate and inventive human being. His death, sting operation, and unyielding justice system are all parts of an ongoing tragedy. <b>Who has shown up for you when you most needed support? Contribute \$1 for each.</b> -Contributed by Lynda Smith-Bugge and Christoph Berendes <i>Read more about Alisa Earnest &amp; St Mark's background at <a href="http://bit.ly/ae-stmarks-2021">http://bit.ly/ae-stmarks-2021</a></i> <i>See his art work at <a href="https://www.dropbox.com/s/psv9palonn00d5z/AE%20art.jpg?dl=0">https://www.dropbox.com/s/psv9palonn00d5z/AE%20art.jpg?dl=0</a></i>

<p><b>Sunday 2/21</b> <b>Week 2 of Lent</b></p>	<p><b>Faith Perspective:</b> <b>Critical Issues</b> <i>Subjects including death penalty, covid, solitary confinement, youth sentenced as adults, racial disparity, etc.</i></p>	<p>In 2019, Bryan Stevenson described a client's experience at "Angola," the Louisiana State Penitentiary named for the plantation whose land it now occupies. According to Stevenson, inmates there "worked in fields under the supervision of horse-riding, shotgun-toting guards who forced them to pick crops, including cotton. Their disciplinary records show that if they refused to pick cotton - or failed to pick it fast enough - they could be punished with time in "the hole," where food was restricted and inmates were sometimes tear-gassed." If this sounds like slavery by another name, Stevenson agrees: "mass incarceration and excessive punishment is the legacy of slavery." Repeat offender laws put non-violent offenders (usually black men) in prison for life for marijuana possession or not checking in with a parole officer. And, in states like my home state of Alabama, which used incarcerated bodies for manual labor as recently as 1996, the slave economy has simply taken on another name - the prison economy. Just this month, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey signed three no-bid contracts to pay private companies to run three private prisons in the state for over \$96 million a year for 30 years. What might restorative justice look like for those trapped in a prison economy, if that \$3.7 billion budget was redirected? And, what is our responsibility for naming this sin? -Contributed by Joe Hubbard <b>Sources:</b> <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/prison-industrial-complex-slavery-racism.html">https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/prison-industrial-complex-slavery-racism.html</a> <a href="https://www.al.com/news/2021/02/alabama-prison-plan-went-from-900-million-to-37-billion-how-thats-still-secret.html">https://www.al.com/news/2021/02/alabama-prison-plan-went-from-900-million-to-37-billion-how-thats-still-secret.html</a></p>
<p><b>Monday 2/22</b></p>	<p><b>Decriminalizing Mental Illness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 in 4 people who die in officer-involved shootings are in a mental health crisis.</li> <li>• Approximately 17% of U.S. jail inmates have serious mental illnesses, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).</li> </ul> <p>The United States criminal justice system has seen exponential growth in costs related to the incarceration of persons with mental illness. Resources for jails, prisons, and state hospital are insufficient to adequately treat the number of individuals cycling through their system. Reversing the cycle of criminalization of mental illness is a complicated process, but mental health diversion programs across the nation are uniquely positioned to do just that. Not only are these programs providing humane treatment to individuals within the community and breaking the cycle of recidivism, the potential fiscal savings are over \$1 billion. <b>Put 25 cents in your mite box for everyone in your family who has received mental health support.</b> -Contributed by Kit Arrington <b>Sources:</b> <a href="https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Get-Involved/NAMI-National-Convention/Convention-Program-Schedule/Hill-Day-2017/FINAL-Hill-Day-17-Leave-Behind-De-Criminalizing-Mental-Illness.pdf">https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Get-Involved/NAMI-National-Convention/Convention-Program-Schedule/Hill-Day-2017/FINAL-Hill-Day-17-Leave-Behind-De-Criminalizing-Mental-Illness.pdf</a> <a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31910935/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31910935/</a></p>
<p><b>Tuesday 2/23</b></p>	<p><b>Eliminating Cash Bail</b></p>	<p>In effect, the cash bail system criminalizes poverty, as people who are unable to afford bail are detained while they await trial for weeks or even months. Cash bail perpetuates inequities in the justice system that are disproportionately felt by communities of color and those experiencing poverty. Spending even a few days in jail can result in people losing their job, housing, and even custody of their children. Studies show that pretrial detention can actually increase a person's likelihood of rearrest upon release, perpetuating a cycle of arrest and incarceration. What is more, the cash bail system often leads to the detention of people who do not pose a threat to public safety. <b>Knowing that the Mite Box will be here daily (except Sundays) through Lent - put whatever amount into your Mite Box that you can afford today.</b> -Contributed by Kit Arrington <b>Sources:</b> <a href="https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/criminal-justice/reports/2020/03/16/481543/ending-cash-bail/">https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/criminal-justice/reports/2020/03/16/481543/ending-cash-bail/</a> <a href="https://eji.org/news/tag/criminal-justice-debt/">https://eji.org/news/tag/criminal-justice-debt/</a> <a href="https://www.courtinnovation.org/fines-fees">https://www.courtinnovation.org/fines-fees</a></p>
<p><b>Wednesday 2/24</b></p>	<p><b>Death Penalty</b></p>	<p>While death penalty sentences and the number of executions has declined since the late 1990s, the racist use of the death penalty continues. As of October 2020, more than 2,500 people were on U.S. death row. A disproportionate percentage of them are Black (41%) compared with their percentage in the U.S. (13%). According to the Death Penalty Information Center, the death penalty is significantly more likely to be imposed if the murder victim is White, especially if the defendant is Black. Wrongful convictions are also more likely among defendants who are Black. The Innocence Project has recorded 21 cases where DNA evidence has been used to free people who were sentenced to death. <b>Put a quarter in your mite box for each of these 21 people who should not have been on death row.</b> -Contributed by Suanna Steeby Bruinooge <b>Sources:</b> <a href="https://documents.deathpenaltyinfo.org/pdf/FactSheet.pdf">https://documents.deathpenaltyinfo.org/pdf/FactSheet.pdf</a> (Death Penalty Information Center, <i>Enduring Injustice</i>, September 2020) <a href="https://innocenceproject.org/">https://innocenceproject.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Thursday 2/25</b></p>	<p><b>Youth Sentenced as Adults</b></p>	<p>Juvenile courts provide services that focus on childhood development, education, and rehabilitation. Most states make juvenile courts available up to age 17, but some limit them to age 16, and two states to age 15. During the 1990s, states passed laws to allow courts to prosecute children in adult court. Data from 15 states found that 82% who were convicted in adult courts committed another crime following their release. This rate is 16% higher than adults. Supreme Court decisions since 2005 placed limits on youth death sentences, mandatory sentencing, and life imprisonment, and the 2018 Juvenile Justice Reform Act set federal standards for trying youth as adults. Such reforms help protect youth from violence and life imprisonment. <b>Put a quarter in your mite box for each person under 18 in your life who should be treated as someone in development.</b> -Contributed by Suanna Steeby Bruinooge <b>Sources:</b> American Bar Assn "Should Juveniles be Treated as Adults" 2016: <a href="https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/childrens-rights/articles/2016/should-juveniles-be-charged-as-adults/">https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/childrens-rights/articles/2016/should-juveniles-be-charged-as-adults/</a> Pulitzer Center "Children are Different" 2019: <a href="https://pulitzercenter.org/blog/children-are-different-sentencing-juveniles-adults">https://pulitzercenter.org/blog/children-are-different-sentencing-juveniles-adults</a></p>

Friday 2/26	Restorative Justice	Restorative Justice is an effective alternative to prison to repair harm to individuals and the community from crime. Pioneered by Mennonite practitioner Dr. Howard Zehr, a person or organization takes responsibility for those harmed. Facilitated meetings between the victim, offender, and community member build consensus about repairing harm, allowing a victim to face the offender and to tell how they were impacted. The perpetrator is held responsible and compensates a victim in a tangible way determined by the victim in community, rather than using prison to punish. In the breach of the US Capitol, for example, a formula of community service and mental health intervention; money could be paid to victims with a facilitation between those responsible to make amends to those harmed. –Contributed by Mary Neznec <i>Source: <a href="http://restorativejustice.org">restorativejustice.org</a></i>
Saturday 2/27	Case study of Massachusetts Juvenile Incarceration Costs	The absence of Restorative Justice: A Black adolescent drug addict was given a double life sentence for robberies and sexual assault in 1975 Boston. He was represented by a Public Defender, his accomplice turned state's witness, and no jury. It was the era of racial tension about busing, but could be today. Given the double life sentence, he would die in prison. A George Washington University professor described this youth as emotionally disordered with addiction disorder and school failure. Dr. Karen Ihrig (George Washington University professor of special education) noted restorative justice intervention with mental health, addiction treatment and educational services could have prevented the draconian double life sentence. He was released in 2005 due to the intervention by a victim witness assistance program, advocacy on the part of the District Attorney and a judge's review of the case. Drop a coin in your mite box for each year he was in prison. –Contributed by Mary Neznec
Sunday 2/28 Week 3 of Lent	<i>Faith Perspective: The American Prison System</i>	In The New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander explains how the prison system in America has legalized discrimination against African Americans (and other people of color): "Once you're labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination, employment, discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity...are suddenly legal." The acts of mercy that Christians are called to practice come from Jesus' injunctions to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the imprisoned, comfort the afflicted, because in so doing we're showing kindness to God in the world. (Matthew 25) Whatever we do for one of our brothers and sisters in need, we do for Christ. Following Jesus means taking care of one another. By helping returning citizen who have to start from scratch and face discrimination at every level we're doing God's work in the world. <b>Let's support the Lenten Mite Box.</b> –Contributed by Patricia Catalano <i>Source: <a href="https://newjimcrow.com">https://newjimcrow.com</a></i>
Monday 3/1	Private prisons	The Department of Justice will not renew existing contracts with private prison companies, following an executive action signed by President Biden on Jan. 27. However, the federal government is not the only government actor in the private prison industrial complex. According to the Sentencing Project, more than half of the states use private prisons, and "[e]ighteen states with private prison contracts incarcerate more than 500 people in for-profit prisons." Montana and New Mexico both incarcerate more than 30% of their prison population in for-profit prisons. <b>There are many questions about why private prisons exist and their role in the criminal justice system; put a quarter in the mite box for each question you have.</b> –Contributed by Jason Horrell <i>Source: <a href="https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/private-prisons-united-states/">https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/private-prisons-united-states/</a></i>
Tuesday 3/2	Solitary Confinement	According to the American Civil Liberties Union, people on death row in the United States spend most of their days in solitary confinement, sometimes with only two hours of contact with other humans. According to the ACLU, "researchers have found that the clinical effects of extreme isolation can actually be similar to those of physical torture," which led the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to call "for a global ban on solitary confinement in excess of 15 days." Because the appeals process can take years to exhaust, the ACLU calls solitary confinement on death row a "double punishment" because it causes needless and devastating suffering while prisoners pursue lawful challenges to their sentences. <b>How many hours each day do you have some form of human contact? Put a dime in the mite box for each hour.</b> –Contributed by Jason Horrell <i>Source: <a href="https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/deathbeforeying-report.pdf">https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/deathbeforeying-report.pdf</a></i>
Wednesday 3/3	DC JAIL statistics	DC's Department of Corrections runs several detention facilities for those who are awaiting trial, serving a sentence for a misdemeanor, or awaiting transfer to a federal prison for a felony. The primary facility for men is the Central Detention Facility at 1901 D St SE. On Oct 1, 2020, it housed 1079 men, of which 90.4% were Black, compared to 46.4% in the District's population. Latinos made up the next largest group at 5.3%, against an overall percentage of 11.3%. There are many questions we can explore about this population: their ages, education levels, their defenses, crimes, and employment opportunities when released, etc.. <b>Think about your questions and what you would like to know more about. Put a quarter for each question your family might have in your mite box.</b> –Contributed by Susan Sedgewick <i>Source: DC Department of Corrections Facts and Figures Oct. 2020: <a href="https://doc.dc.gov/publication/dc-department-corrections-facts-and-figures-october-2020">https://doc.dc.gov/publication/dc-department-corrections-facts-and-figures-october-2020</a></i>
Thursday 3/4	Federal prisons and where DC residents are	The Justice Department's Bureau of Prisons has hundreds of federal facilities, categorized by security levels, or special types such as "private", halfway houses, medical, etc. In 2019, over 4,000 DC residents were incarcerated at over 120 federal facilities or were in-transit. Even prior to the pandemic, families found it difficult to visit their incarcerated loved ones, as only 63% were within a 500-mile driving range of DC. The remaining 1,294 men and 30 women were up to 2,921 miles away. The closest prison, Hazelton in West Virginia is a three-hour car ride from DC, and only 393 of the incarcerated were located there. <b>Does your family travel to visit out-of-state relatives? How much does it cost to visit them? If you drive less than 500 miles, put 50 cents in your Mite Box. If you travel more than 500 miles, contribute 50 cents for each family member.</b> –Contributed by Susan Sedgewick <i>Source: <a href="https://cic.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cic/page_content/attachments/CIC%20Annual%20Report%20FY%202019%20FINAL.pdf">https://cic.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cic/page_content/attachments/CIC%20Annual%20Report%20FY%202019%20FINAL.pdf</a></i>

Friday 3/5	The 13th Amendment	<p>The Thirteenth Amendment, ratified in 1865, prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude, but exempted those convicted of crimes. The result was convict leasing, a system in which Southern states leased prisoners to private railways, mines, and large plantations. The prisoners earned no pay and often worked in deadly conditions. Thousands of Black people were jailed for “offenses” such as loitering, breaking curfew, and not carrying proof of employment. Industrialization, economic shifts, and political pressure ended widespread convict leasing by World War II, but the Thirteenth Amendment’s loophole still permits prisoners working without pay in various public and private industries. As recently as 2010, a federal court held that “prisoners have no enforceable right to be paid for their work under the Constitution.” <b>Place a \$.25 in the mite box for everyone in your family who is paid for the work they do for others.</b> –Contributed by Kit Arrington  <b>Source:</b> <a href="https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-convict-leasing/">https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-convict-leasing/</a></p>
Saturday 3/6	Children tried & imprisoned as adults	<p>In the 1990s, some criminologists warned that young, male, predominately Black “superpredators” would soon unleash a national crime wave. In response, nearly every state expanded the legal power to try children in adult courts, place them in adult prisons, and sentence them to death and life imprisonment without parole. Children as young as eight years old have been prosecuted as adults. Criminologists now believe the superpredator theory was false, but its impact lingers. By 2010, more than 3,000 American children were serving life-without-parole sentences, with children of color making up 70% of those age 14 or younger, and approximately 10,000 children are housed in adult jails and prisons. 2010 &amp; 2012 Supreme Court decisions greatly reduced states’ power to sentence children to life without parole and gave thousands of people chances for new sentencing hearings and release. <b>Place \$.25 in the mite box for every child in your family who is age 14 or younger.</b> –Contributed by Kit Arrington  <b>Sources:</b> <a href="https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-prosecuting-children/">https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-prosecuting-children/</a>  <a href="https://eji.org/news/tag/adult-prosecution/">https://eji.org/news/tag/adult-prosecution/</a></p>
Sunday 3/7 Week 4 of Lent	<b>Faith Perspective: Conditions and Environment in Prisons and Jails</b>	<p>In Hebrews 13:1-3, we are instructed to Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue 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. Caring for the prisoners in our world is a central Christian tenet. Yet, conditions in many of our prisons are known to be unacceptable. We open our eyes to the horrible conditions in prisons, exacerbated this year by the COVID pandemic. How are we called to respond? It is my hope that we can all become more educated and aware of the standard conditions in prisons. This will hopefully lead to action. <b>What about putting a coin in your mite box every time you seek to learn more about prison reform?</b> –Contributed by Cindy Dopp</p>
Monday 3/8	Two ways of reducing recidivism - prison nurseries and education	<p>Recidivism is variously defined as the rate at which individuals are rearrested or return to prison. Several initiatives have been found to reduce recidivism in different groups of people. Prison nurseries: Generally, prison-born babies are taken away 72 hours after birth, many to foster homes. Maryland children visit incarcerated mothers one afternoon/month. In nine states with prison nurseries, the recidivism rate dropped below 20%. Programs vary: mothers keep children for 18 months to 3 years. All offer classes in childcare, nutrition, hygiene, substance-abuse, and self-esteem. Our region has no prison nurseries. Education: People under 21 without high school have a 60.4% rearrest rate, those with a bachelor’s degree a 19.1% rate, with master’s degree 0%. The recidivism rate for Bedford Hills College Program (NY) released graduates is virtually zero. Goucher college’s program (MD) boasts a 6% recidivism rate. <b>Put a nickel for every day you were allowed to interact with your child this year, and one dollar for each year of schooling you had past 9th grade.</b> –Contributed by Elin Whitney-Smith  <b>Sources: Prison Nurseries</b>  <i>Thanks to Kristy MCIW inmate, Goucher student and mother.</i>  <i>NBC on Prison Nurseries <a href="http://bit.ly/NurseriesBH">http://bit.ly/NurseriesBH</a></i>  <i>Prison Legal News <a href="http://bit.ly/Nurseries01">http://bit.ly/Nurseries01</a></i>  <i>Boston University Report on Prison Nurseries <a href="http://bit.ly/NurseriesBU">http://bit.ly/NurseriesBU</a></i>  <b>BAs behind bars</b>  <i>CBS on Goucher at MCIJ &amp; MCIW <a href="http://bit.ly/edPrison">http://bit.ly/edPrison</a></i>  <i>Prison Studies Project <a href="https://prisonstudiesproject.org/why-prison-education-programs/">https://prisonstudiesproject.org/why-prison-education-programs/</a></i>  <i>Rand study on education in prison <a href="https://doi.org/10.7249/PE342">https://doi.org/10.7249/PE342</a></i></p>
Tuesday 3/9	Talladega Federal Prison Pen Pal	<p>Penny Farley offers: I've become close with my prison pen-pal, incarcerated at a young age for a drug-related felony. He has a following, a ministry even, he reaches by writing letters, two books, and occasional “times out” for broadcast interviews... I asked him whether - and how - Christmas is celebrated in Talladega Federal Prison. “Christmas is celebrated here. They give us, like, a Christmas meal, then they also pass out a bag of snacks they call a Christmas Bag. We also had some eggnog, too. All in all people are in a festive mood and things are pretty laid back; the staff even seem to show more humility and humanity.” <b>Think of the special foods you enjoyed last Christmas season, and put ten cents in your mite box for each.</b> –Contributed by Penny Farley.</p>
Wednesday 3/10	Free Minds Book Club and Writing Workshop	<p>Stephanie Deutsch offers: Fifteen years ago, as chairman of the Grants Committee of the Capitol Hill Community Foundation, I attended a meeting of the Free Minds Book Club and Writing Workshop at the D.C. Jail. The club brought together a dozen young men between the ages of 15 and 18 to talk about reading and writing. I felt awkward and self-conscious. So did they. Here’s what a young man named Demetrius wrote in one of the Writing Workshops:  <i>I am like concrete  People always try to walk on me  But I never break  Like the concrete</i>  <b>If you like to write or you like to read or if you have ever felt awkward and self-conscious, put something in your mite box.</b>  –Contributed by Stephanie Deutsch  <b>Source:</b> <a href="https://freemindsbookclub.org/">https://freemindsbookclub.org/</a></p>

<p>Thursday 3/11</p>	<p>Free Minds Book Club and Writing Workshop</p>	<p>Stephanie Deutsch offers: How does it feel to be incarcerated? I find it hard to imagine it but the poems written by the young men in the Free Minds Book Club and Writing Workshop help me to get to know some of them and hear about a life so different from mine. Here's a poem from the book They Call Me 299-359. It was written by Andre, an incarcerated young man.</p> <p><i>A poem is a better weapon Than a knife Because a poem will lead you To a better future To succeed A poem will set your mind free A knife will lead you To violence To jail And maybe To death.</i></p> <p>I wonder what has happened to Andre since this was written. <b>If you have ever had a friend you worried about put a coin in the mite box. –Contributed by Stephanie Deutsch</b></p>
<p>Friday 3/12</p>	<p>Conditions in Prison: "cruel and unusual punishment"</p>	<p>The Eighth Amendment prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." Yet that's just what prisoners are experiencing behind bars across America. Simply put, too many of our prisons are overcrowded, unsanitary and downright unsafe. In Georgia, guards have savagely beaten handcuffed inmates while a senior official stood by and watched. In California, correctional officers have deliberately fomented conflict by placing rival gang members in the same prison yard and then shooting them when they begin fighting. Medical and mental health care are substandard, and many prisoners receive no preparation for returning to the free world. Conditions are especially dire for women, who, as the fastest-growing segment of the inmate population, are increasingly vulnerable to sexual harassment by corrections staff. <b>If this looks like the opposite of justice to you, then please contribute \$1 to your mite box today. –Contributed by Louis Bayard</b> <i>Source: <a href="https://www.aclu.org/other/aclu-policy-priorities-prison-reform">https://www.aclu.org/other/aclu-policy-priorities-prison-reform</a></i></p>
<p>Saturday 3/13</p>	<p>COVID-19 in prisons</p>	<p>On March 26, 2020, Anthony Cheek, an inmate of Georgia's Lee State Prison, became the nation's first known prisoner to die from COVID-19. Since then, the virus has claimed the lives of more than 2,300 prisoners across the country. Like nursing homes, prisons have become both viral hotbeds and death traps - a problem made even worse by widespread shortages of doctors, nurses and other prison staffers. Under the current pandemic, sick inmates are packed together in dorm-style housing units, and prisoners are forced to serve as de facto nurses to each other, working without training or protective gear to care for people who, according to one report, are "going in and out of consciousness, throwing up, trembling, cold sweat, fever, spitting up blood when they cough." <b>If you don't believe that going to prison should be an automatic death sentence, then please contribute \$1 to your mite box today. –Contributed by Louis Bayard</b> <i>Source: <a href="https://www.themarshallproject.org/">https://www.themarshallproject.org/</a></i></p>
<p>Sunday 3/14 Week 5 of Lent</p>	<p><i>Faith Perspective: DC Jails and Returning Citizens</i></p>	<p>The prophet Isaiah opens his 61st chapter with this: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners". Of course prisoners want to be free—but what happens next? The reality for many of these returning citizens is that they have nowhere to go, few people willing to help, and insufficient resources at their disposal. So, in working to support those who are incarcerated, people of faith are also called to support them as they leave incarceration. Here in DC, many organizations are involved in this important work. We encourage you to give to the mite box to support St. Mark's Incarceration Ministry, and to talk with Linell or other members about ways to get directly involved. –Contributed by Scott Lipscomb <i>Source: DC Report CIC Annual Report FY 2019 FINAL.pdf. Ex: No longer a prison in DC - folks get sent to Federal Prisons all over the country which for many mean they rarely see family, recidivism rates, how hard it is to get jobs, etc.</i></p>
<p>Monday 3/15</p>	<p>Barriers to Reentry in DC</p>	<p>Each year, 8,000 people will be released from jail and prison and will return to their home in the District of Columbia. Local studies have found that, in just under 3 years, almost half of those released will be re-incarcerated or have their probation revoked. 30% of those coming home each year are released from a Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facility, the majority from more than 500 miles away from D.C. Distance makes it almost impossible and extremely expensive – it costs \$14 a minute to call someone in prison - for D.C. prisoners to sustain ties to their family, friends and the social services they will need upon release. Few of them receive mental health or substance abuse treatment. <b>Think about what resources could help a person coming home after 2 to 50 years with strained community and family ties. Put a quarter in your Mite Box for every idea you have. –Contributed by Emily Kobayashi</b> <i>Source: National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens, 2020: <a href="https://thenationalreentrynetwork.org">https://thenationalreentrynetwork.org</a></i></p>
<p>Tuesday 3/16</p>	<p>Peer Mentorship for Returning Citizens</p>	<p>Someone leaving prison can face numerous hurdles, including debt, homelessness or unstable housing, unemployment, substance abuse, exacerbated mental and physical health issues, and family conflict. The National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens (NRNC) has operated a volunteer-led community of support for returning citizens since 2010. One method, peer-to-peer mentoring, provides a comprehensive approach through a formal relationship with mutually agreed-upon goals defined by both parties, guiding the returning citizen toward stability, a change in behavior and a change in thinking. Mentors can also help to identify programs and resources that can be helpful, navigate challenging bureaucratic steps, and be a source of moral support. There is nothing like walking a path with someone who has walked it before you. <b>Think about mentors you have had in your life. Put a quarter in the mite box for every mentor who has helped guide you through a challenging situation. –Contributed by Emily Kobayashi</b> <i>To learn more: <a href="https://thenationalreentrynetwork.org/">https://thenationalreentrynetwork.org/</a></i></p>

<p>Wednesday 3/17</p>	<p>Women's re-entry following incarceration</p>	<p>When surveyed about what would help them successfully transition back into the community, incarcerated women have said the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships with family, friends, and other women who were positive role models</li> <li>• Positive support from community services like housing, job connections, and transportation</li> <li>• Positive support from/relationships with corrections staff, especially female staff</li> <li>• Safe living environments</li> <li>• Substance abuse and mental health treatment</li> <li>• Programming focused on their role as parents</li> <li>• Education, employment, and job training</li> <li>• "Transition services" including a mentor, financial assistance, and help attain public health insurance and a driver's license.</li> </ul> <p><b>Think about the relationships in your life that have provided you with support, encouragement, growth opportunities, skill-building, trust, honesty, and safety. Make a contribution to your mite box for each example you can name.</b></p> <p>–Contributed by Thia Hamilton</p> <p><b>Source:</b> <i>Reentry Considerations for Justice Involved Women</i>, Rachele Ramirez, National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women. 2016: <a href="https://mronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reentry-Considerations-for-Justice-Involved-Women-FINAL.pdf">https://mronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Reentry-Considerations-for-Justice-Involved-Women-FINAL.pdf</a></p>
<p>Thursday 3/18</p>	<p>Women's re-entry following incarceration</p>	<p>Community Family Life Services is a DC organization that helps women overcome the unique challenges of transitioning home after incarceration. They recognize and address the intersection of domestic violence, complex trauma, and incarceration. Especially among incarcerated women, the perpetrator of a crime has also been the victim at some point in her life. In fact, the trauma she has experienced is often at the root of behaviors that led to her incarceration. CFLS clients begin receiving transitional services before they leave the jail or prison facility that continue as post-release services for a year. After one year, services shift to support that will help her maintain her progress. <b>Have you ever felt like a victim and then made a poor decision because of that? Make a contribution to your mite box if you later found a better way to think about yourself and your choices.</b> –Contributed by Thia Hamilton</p> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="https://www.cflsdc.org/womens-reentry-services">https://www.cflsdc.org/womens-reentry-services</a></p>
<p>Friday 3/19</p>	<p>Fears of Returning Citizens</p>	<p>From the article "Fear": "When I was a kid, I feared my belt-swinging, disciplinarian grandfather. At age fourteen, I feared the neighborhood hoodlums, who succeeded in turning me into one of them, and the cops, who seemed on a mission to incarcerate me. Twenty-seven years later I am sitting in a cold prison cell, I fear for my daughters, trying to navigate an unforgiving world and survive despite their father's failures. I fear my mother will never see her only child become something more than a number counted by prison guards. I fear this is all my life will ever be. I fear God will not forgive my sins. I fear that when I am released, I'll make wrong decisions and return to prison. I fear I may not be good enough to survive out there." <b>Are you haunted by fears? Contribute to the mite box for each fear you count.</b> –Contributed by Kathryn Powers</p> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="https://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/534/fear">https://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/534/fear</a></p>
<p>Saturday 3/20</p>	<p>Coming Home</p>	<p>From a New Yorker article by Adam Gopnik: "Walking out of prison gates in someone else's used clothes with pocket change and a bus ticket is only the beginning of freedom. Of all the challenges facing returning prisoners, the most intangible, the most difficult, and possibly the most important, could be attaining success in 'learning the language and rituals shared by society outside prison walls.' In a job search they must remain truthful about their past as they paint a positive picture of themselves. They must re-learn their reflexes and not react violently to perceived or actual slights. They must internalize that choosing not to fight back is actually doing something." <b>Contribute to the mite box for each time you remember wanting to fight back.</b> –Contributed by Kathryn Powers</p> <p><b>Source:</b> <a href="https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/11/16/what-makes-the-difference-between-getting-out-of-prison-and-staying-ou">https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/11/16/what-makes-the-difference-between-getting-out-of-prison-and-staying-ou</a></p>
<p>Sunday 3/21 Week 6 of Lent</p>	<p><b>Faith Perspective:</b> <b>How Incarceration Impacts Families</b></p>	<p>Mass incarceration impacts more than just those imprisoned. Conservative estimates indicate that over 5 million children in the United States have experienced an incarcerated parent at some point in their childhood. As many as 32,000 incarcerated parents have had their children taken away without any evidence of abuse. Between 2006 and 2016, tens of thousands of children were placed in foster care due to the incarceration of a parent, and over 5,000 parents lost their parental rights as a result of their incarceration alone. Because incarceration rates disproportionately affect communities of color, 1 in 10 black children have a parent behind bars, compared with about 1 in 60 white youth. The disproportionate effect of mass incarceration on families of color are evident in statistics that show that one out of every three black boys will go to prison at some point in their lives. Where is the reign of God that Jesus tells us belongs to these children (Lk. 18:16)? How is our silence to the evils of mass incarceration a stumbling block to these little ones, and how do we remove this millstone from around our necks (Mt 8:16)?</p> <p>–Contributed by Joe Hubbard</p> <p><b>Sources:</b> <a href="https://www.aecf.org/resources/a-shared-sentence/">https://www.aecf.org/resources/a-shared-sentence/</a>  <a href="https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/12/03/how-incarcerated-parents-are-losing-their-children-forever">https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/12/03/how-incarcerated-parents-are-losing-their-children-forever</a>  <a href="https://www.aclu.org/issues/smart-justice/mass-incarceration">https://www.aclu.org/issues/smart-justice/mass-incarceration</a></p>
<p>Monday 3/22</p>	<p>Economic impacts on families</p>	<p>When a parent is incarcerated, the family's income shrinks and expenses increase. This economic reality starts a vicious cycle, causing the family's children to suffer enormously. The cycle goes like this: When a parent goes to prison, the family loses whatever money he or she was contributing. That parent is also no longer able to provide childcare. The remaining parent may have to choose among paying for childcare, not working, or leaving the children unsupervised. There are also legal costs to cover and new expenses to visit the incarcerated parent, who is often far away. Covering rent can quickly become difficult, and the family may need to move, leaving school and friends behind. Whatever support network the family had in place can disintegrate under these economic pressures. Today, 4% of children, 1 in 25, have a parent incarcerated. <b>Put a quarter in your mite box for each of these children.</b> –Contributed by Josie Jordan</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Eric Martin, "Hidden Consequences: The Impact of Incarceration on Dependent Children," March 1, 2017, <a href="https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/hidden-consequences-impact-incarceration-dependent-children">nij.ojp.gov: https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/hidden-consequences-impact-incarceration-dependent-children</a></p>

Tuesday 3/23	Children's Voices on what it is like to have a parent incarcerated	Every night, 3 million children go to bed with a parent in prison or jail, wondering, "What will happen to me?" They often feel absolutely alone, believing they are "the only kid like this." The stigma follows them to school: "My teacher looks at me funny when the subject of parents comes up. The other kids say nasty things like, 'Your mother was bad. She's a crook.'" For children lucky enough to visit their incarcerated parent, the heartbreak of leaving can be overwhelming: "When I first went down to the prison, it was real hard being able to hug my mama and touch her and then...not take her with me." Alternatives to incarceration include community-based sentencing programs that create supportive environments where parents stay with their kids, while being held accountable for the consequences of their crimes. <b>Add a quarter to your Mite Box for each bed in your home.</b> -Contributed by Josie Jordan <i>Source: Howard Zehr and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, "What Will Happen to Me?", Good Books, Intercourse, PA, 2011</i>
Wednesday 3/24	How to Help Families of the Incarcerated	Two of the best ways to support families of those who are incarcerated are 1) making it easier for children to stay connected to their parents and 2) providing family counseling and parenting courses. The National Fatherhood Initiative's "InsideOut Dad" program promotes family engagement and helps incarcerated men discover and hone their parenting strengths. Another thing that can help is secure video conferencing. Being able to see Mom or Dad, read books together, or just share everyday events can help build important bonds between children and their absent parents. <b>For every television or computer screen in your house, put a quarter in your Mite Box.</b> -Contributed by Julie Murphy <i>Sources: <a href="https://www.fatherhood.org">https://www.fatherhood.org</a> <a href="https://store.fatherhood.org/complete-program-kit-insideout-dad-3rd-edition/">https://store.fatherhood.org/complete-program-kit-insideout-dad-3rd-edition/</a></i>
Thursday 3/25	Policies that can help families of the incarcerated	Helping those returning from incarceration find employment, housing and other support services are critical for the families of these citizens. Some states are instituting policies called "ban the box." This prohibits public and private employers from asking about a job applicant's criminal history until AFTER they have chosen them as one of the most qualified candidates. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, almost 20 states and 100 cities have "ban the box" policies in place. This policy is not the answer for all of the barriers to hiring that formerly incarcerated face but it could be a start. <b>Count all the jobs you or your parents have had over a lifetime and put a quarter in the box for every job.</b> -Contributed by Julie Murphy <i>Sources: <a href="https://www.aecf.org/blog/report-recommends-policies-to-help-millions-of-children-with-incarcerated-parents/">https://www.aecf.org/blog/report-recommends-policies-to-help-millions-of-children-with-incarcerated-parents/</a> "Coming Home to Homelessness: Policy Solutions for Returning Citizens" by Kate Coventry, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, February 27, 2020. <a href="https://www.dcfpi.org/all/coming-home-to-homelessness/">https://www.dcfpi.org/all/coming-home-to-homelessness/</a></i>
Friday 3/26	Housing Critical to Re-establishing Family Connections	Returning citizens identify access to safe, secure housing as the greatest challenge they face, particularly immediately on their release, when they are most vulnerable. Lack of housing exacerbates the other challenges that they need to address simultaneously — education and training, employment, family reunification, child custody or visitation, physical and mental health issues, social stigma, and avoiding recidivism. According to the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, "most returning citizens are released from prison without any savings and without a job, and as a result, they lack funds for housing application fees, security deposits, and rent. They also face high rates of discrimination in the housing market, even though this discrimination is illegal." A 2019 assessment found that 55% of DC individuals experiencing homelessness reported their prior incarceration as the cause. <b>Please add a dime to your Mite Box for every day this month you have enjoyed a safe and secure home.</b> -Contributed by Todd Trafford <i>Source: "Coming Home to Homelessness: Policy Solutions for Returning Citizens" by Kate Coventry, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, February 27, 2020. <a href="https://www.dcfpi.org/all/coming-home-to-homelessness/">https://www.dcfpi.org/all/coming-home-to-homelessness/</a></i>
Saturday 3/27	Alisa Earnest, Part 2	Nora Howell offers: I visited Alisa several times while she was imprisoned, trying to help her make connections to Bible passages with powerful stories and messages of forgiveness and mercy. She had so much time to herself that I feared she would descend into despair, so I wanted her to know that she was never alone, that there was One who loved her and was always calling her by the name she called herself. During my last visit, we talked about the confession the congregation prays during the Eucharist, and how, when we're done confessing, the priest says, God forgives you. Now forgive yourself and go in peace." This led to a deep conversation about how the hardest person to forgive is oneself. <b>Think about the times when you were comforted by words of forgiveness and contribute a quarter for each.</b> -Contributed by Nora Howell <i>Alisa Earnest &amp; St Mark's background: <a href="http://bit.ly/ae-stmarks-2021">http://bit.ly/ae-stmarks-2021</a></i>
Sunday 3/28 Week 7 of Lent Palm Sunday	<b>Faith Perspective: Ministering to the Incarcerated, How We Can Help</b>	Think about the relationships in your life that have provided you with support, encouragement, nurture, growth opportunities, skill-building, trust, honesty, and safety. Make a contribution to your mite box for each example you can name. -Contributed by Michele Morgan

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