

## Quarterly Newsletter Jottings

### September 2025

**Our mission** - Onesimus Ministries exists for the purpose of introducing prison inmates, ex-inmates and their families to the lifechanging good news of Jesus Christ, as well as spiritually supporting and assisting anyone in becoming faithful in their daily walk as Christ's disciples.

## Announcements/Events

Cooler weather points to the coming Fall, where once again our gracious host Kerry Greco opens the doors of his excellent restaurant in Downingtown for our **2nd Annual Green Street Grill Benefit Dinner**, scheduled for Friday, Oct 24, 2025.

Last year was a big hit with a delicious dinner, live dinner music, and a silent auction. Plans are in the making for this year's dinner, so stay tuned!

A few other events to look forward to in 2026...

- **Feb-Mar 2026** Our 2nd Annual Benefit Breakfast
- **May-June 2026** 2nd annual Benefit Concert

## From the Board of Directors

Phil  
Taylor

### An Appeal for God's Wisdom

As August ebbs away, we're aware that inexorably the end of the year will soon be upon us. Early in December the board of Onesimus Ministries is tasked with formulating the budget for the following ministry year. Each and every member takes very seriously the responsibility to be good stewards of the generosity of our benefactors, who've shared their treasures from God. These donations help the incarcerated men & women at Chester County Prison to hear the Good News, and to come to Jesus to not only change their own destinies, but also those of their family for hopefully generations to come. (A personal aside: That is exactly what happened to me while at CCP in December 1998, and why I always say the 8 months I was imprisoned there was the greatest blessing of my life.)

The primary expenses of Onesimus are the salaries of our wonderful chaplains. Their heart for the inmates, dedication, and the light that they bring to a dark place certainly justifies significantly greater compensation, yet, as with all of the Christian life there is an inherent duty to juggle grace with truth. So, while the Board relies on typical financial tools such as year-to-date giving vs. prior years, budget vs. actual expenses, the bank balance, and inflation in budget planning, we are a faith-based ministry, and so trust in the Lord's providence is also an essential consideration.

In 1 Timothy 5:18 (NKJV), Paul quotes Moses in referring to ministers saying *"The laborer is worthy of his wages."* (I deliberately left out the first part of that verse: *"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,"* for fear of having Heinrich & Rhonda identified with oxen.) While we're instructed to *"Walk by faith, not by sight,"* in 2 Corinthians 5:7 (KJV), Jesus also references Moses *"Do not put the Lord your God to the test"* in Luke 4:12 (NIV)

Thus, we attempt to counterbalance good financial management practices with the reality and recognition of the Lord's faithfulness in sustaining Onesimus Ministries for more than 40 years, even when its finances seemed akin to the poor widow in donating her 2 small copper coins.

Both Rhonda and Heinrich have made clear on multiple occasions that if OMI would ever fall on hard times, they'll still be at CCP ministering to both women & men – salary or no salary. I cannot express how their heart to serve the Lord – NO matter what – has relieved the board members of the pressure to fulfill our duties.

So, we continue to thank God for bringing such wonderful servants to our midst – neither of whom appeared to initially be the obvious successors to Peter Roomet & Lil Anthony as chaplains. Please pray for the Board to be infused with the knowledge of God's will as we look to 2026 & beyond. Thank you for your past, present, and future support for this ministry in investing for eternity.

## Chaplain Jottings



Heinrich  
Botes

### Blooming Behind Bars

Tucked quietly in a corner of the chapel sits a small Anthurium plant with pale green leaves. It's been there since the COVID-19 shutdown, a silent witness during a season when the once-vibrant chapel fell into darkness and stillness. For four long years, the room meant for worship and renewal became more like a cave—empty, dark, and unused. Gone were the days when hungry souls, desperate and searching, would gather to hear God's Word shared by enthusiastic, Spirit-filled volunteers.

During that season, the chapel became a nursery of sorts. Not for people—but for plants. The Anthurium and two Epipremnum Aureum (commonly known as Pothos) quietly endured the silence. The Anthurium in particular struggled. For nearly eight years, it clung to life in the harsh, artificial environment of prison, producing only limp, yellow-tinged leaves. I gave it a little water each week. Nothing more. And never—never—a single flower.

Until this week...



To my great surprise, the Anthurium bloomed.

A single, strikingly beautiful flower: deep red with a bright yellow spadix at its center.

Bold. Unexpected. A sign of life, of flourishing—even here.

That single bloom felt like a gift. A sign. A reminder.

You see, many of us in prison ministry labor faithfully, often without visible results. We show up week after week. We teach, we pray, we love. But sometimes, it feels like nothing is growing. No response. No transformation. No “fruit.” It can be discouraging.

But then I remembered the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:6–9:

*“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”*

Most of us are not called to harvest the fruit of changed lives. We’re called to plant. Or to water. Or simply to show up—faithfully, patiently, persistently. The flower blooming in that forgotten chapel reminds me that God is always at work, even when we see no signs.

No one expects a flower in a dark, cold prison chapel. Just like few expect the beauty of a transformed life in a place of confinement. And yet, it happens. God brings life from the darkest places. He brings hope where none was thought possible. He causes growth—in His time.

So, dear co-laborers in Christ:

Be patient.

Be faithful.

Keep showing up.

Keep watering.

And trust the Master Gardener. One day, you may glimpse the bloom.

## Chaplain Jottings



Rhonda  
Soland

### Our Faithful Volunteers

I am so thankful for our team of chaplaincy volunteers— the faithful men and women who come into the prison each week to minister, encourage, support, and share the love and grace of God with the men and

women incarcerated there. We could not have a fully functioning, thriving chaplaincy program without them. They come in as the hands and feet and heart of Christ, to serve in a place where many others would hesitate to go. They are a wonderful support to Chaplain Heinrich and myself.

They come in to lend support during the chapel services or to meet one-on-one with the residents, offering spiritual guidance and counsel. They come in to lead classes or Bible studies for the men and women. They are dedicated, faithful, and committed.

During several times when I've had to be away from the prison— for vacation or other reasons, it was reassuring to know that the chapel services would be covered by dependable and capable volunteers who take what they do seriously. Several of them have involved their church groups in prayer for the residents of the prison. They have also been known to generously step in and step up whenever there is a need for donations for chaplaincy— whether it's for Bibles, Rosaries, prayer journals, Christian reading books, or to provide gifts to residents and their families during our Christmas outreaches.

These men and women come in without pay and with little outside recognition, not expecting to receive anything, but always testifying that they are blessed more by serving than the people whom they serve. Again, Heinrich and I are so grateful for our wonderful and faithful volunteers. They are to us what Aaron and Hur were to Moses as they kept his hands lifted so that he could accomplish the work God had called him to. We could not do it without them.

## From the Treasurer

Scott  
Duncan

### Treasurer Report Summer 2025

*"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)*

Our God desires and made a way for us to have an abundant life and has equipped us for every good work. Onesimus Ministries allows people in need to see the goodness of God through the chaplains we support at Chester County prison. Our chaplains (Heinrich and Rhonda) put a face to grace as the inmates are able to visit and seek guidance from them.

You have the privilege of being part of the process when you give towards the ministry and share in the abundant grace that comes from God. Thus far in 2025, the Lord has blessed the ministry by keeping the balance in our account over \$30k for most of the year which is a new occurrence. In an ever-changing world and economy the financial demands are seemingly a constant challenge but our God always answers the need. If you feel the Lord is asking you to be part of the answer, then click the "Donate Now" button on the website and give online at [onesimusministries.org](https://onesimusministries.org) or you can mail in payment to Onesimus Ministries, Inc. 145 Bethel Rd Oxford, PA 19363. We're excited to see how the Lord will provide for the remainder of 2025!

### To What Effect

I don't suppose the name Edward Lorenz or the fraction .506127 has any meaning to anyone reading this.

Lorenz was one of the earlier computer nerds and, in 1961, he developed a much more accurate logarithm for predicting where Atlantic storms, hurricanes, would strike America's East Coast. One of the factors used in his formula was the fraction .506127.

Like any good scientist, Lorenz ran his model many times to be sure he got the same results every time but on one occasion he accidentally left off the last two digits of the fraction. Any mathematician would tell us that those last two digits are practically meaningless.

To Lorenz's shock, the small change resulted in an error of hundreds of miles of difference in where a storm would strike.

He later wrote a book titled "The Butterfly Effect". The basic premise was that a butterfly flapping its wings caused a larger reaction from a bug that startled a large animal, and a series of larger and larger events took place until the flapping of the butterfly's wings ended up causing a tornado.

I remind myself often that what we are doing at the Monday night ministry is not unlike that butterfly. We may be only causing a small change in an inmate, but the long-term effects could be huge. He may well accept Christ as Savior on a given Monday night and, upon release, share God's word with family and friends who would not hear the message of salvation any other way.

### A New Beginning

*"Then he [Jesus] said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'" (Matthew 9: 37-38)*

This is a passage that is very familiar to most Christians who have been following Jesus, even for a short period of time. Jesus is encouraging all of us to spread the Gospel so that seeds which have been planted in fertile soil will produce grain; that good and productive fruit will be the result.

When we bring God's Word into CCP we have the opportunity to sow and trust the Lord for the Word to enter the hearts of these men and change their lives from the inside out. What is challenging is that because we have time limits on Monday nights, it's near impossible to spend one-to-one time with them to really listen and understand who they are and where they're coming from. However, we do have the opportunity to schedule one-to-one meetings with some of them and really press in.

A few months ago, one of the men stood up during testimony time and, in tears, shared that his life was very challenging and that he didn't know what he believed. He said he didn't even know why he came out that evening. I immediately felt led by the Holy Spirit to reach out and ask him if he'd like to meet individually. He said yes and that was the beginning of this young man's journey.

At our first meeting I asked him what his "spiritual" beliefs were and he said he wasn't sure, but he was leaning towards reincarnation. I shared the Gospel and we talked about it for a while. At our next meeting I asked him several questions basically about the validity of reincarnation and I could see he wasn't too sure of his convictions. Again, another conversation about the Gospel. I didn't press; that's the Holy Spirit's job.

As we continued to meet, I began to see change in him. He told me he's involved in regular Bible studies and that things were becoming clearer to him. When I felt that he was "tuning out" we would talk about other topics: family, relationships and sports. I didn't want him to feel like this was a time of lecture. I'm trying to move at his pace.

After about 4 months, I can see great change in him – praise God! He shared recently that he believes he is a Christian. Wanting to be careful and nurture him, I gave him a copy of "How Can I be Sure I'm A Christian" by Donald Whitney, which is a great book for young believers. We continue to meet weekly and discuss the book. His answers to questions indicate that a heart change is taking place. He is experiencing a new beginning and a new way of seeing things.

Has he truly accepted Christ? Only the Lord knows, but he is not the same young man I met a few months ago. I see evidences of good fruit and trust the Holy Spirit will continue to change his heart. He told me his family has noticed a difference in him. He is still involved in regular Bible studies and answers questions with insight and wisdom. I know as volunteers we can get discouraged because we don't often have opportunities to invest personally in the lives of those we minister to. Praise God for the open doors for these meetings and the chance to come along side and mentor hurting men! Praise God for new beginnings in others just like our new beginning that changed us forever! Amen!

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God bless your day!



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