

Onesimus Ministries, Inc.

145 Bethel Road • Oxford, PA 19363 • 610-932-4429 • <http://OnesimusMinistries.org>



March 2019 Newsletter Jottings

How You Can Help

- (1) Donate online anytime at www.gofundme.com/OnesimusMinistries
- (2) Receive your Jottings by email - more convenient for you & it saves us on postage & materials.
- (3) Attend the Annual Spring Banquet.

Chaplains

Heinrich Botes
Rhonda Soland

Executive Board

Richard Chiavetta
Andy Duncan
Roy Fite, Treasurer
Andrew Leatherman
J. Vernon Myers, Chair
Phil Taylor, Secretary
Dan Turley

Our Mission

“Onesimus Ministries exists for the purpose of introducing prison inmates, ex-inmates and their families to the life-changing good news of Jesus Christ, as well as spiritually supporting and assisting anyone in becoming faithful in their daily walk as Christ’s disciples.”

Chairman’s Article

Vernon Myers

Welcome, Friends of Onesimus. Welcome to the Lenten season—a time of walking with Jesus to the cross. In a few weeks we will celebrate Resurrection Sunday when the living Christ brings life out of death, hope out of despair, joy out sadness, forgiveness out of condemnation. Resurrection makes possible new life changes.

Thank God for opportunities to experience life changes. The Apostle Paul’s letter to his friend Philemon is a wonderful picture into the heart of God which makes people who often regard themselves as “useless” to become “useful” in God’s kingdom. The Apostle Paul makes a play on the name of the runaway servant named Onesimus. Read Philemon v.10,11. Paul says to his friend, “I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in prison. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful to both you and me.” Read v. 12-16. These are really encouraging verses—the possibility to significant life changes.

Life changes have far reaching implications—life changes which transformed a young man from a life dominated with out-of-control anger issues into a very useful man for his family and our community. It has been 40 years since Doug Burnette asked to “go back to prison” to help others with the same help he received when he had a life change while at Chester County Prison. In November 1978, Onesimus Ministries received permission to provide chaplaincy services at CCP. 40 years later the ministry continues. Peter Roomet and Lil Anthony retired in 2018 and the Lord graciously provided Heinrich Botes and Rhonda Soland to pick up the responsibility.

We have needed to share with chaplain Heinrich the recent death of his father in South Africa. It was such a blessing for friends of Heinrich to contribute to needed funds for him to make the trip to be with his father and mother and sister days before his father’s death.

The Bible says Joseph “found favor” with Pharaoh while in prison in the Exodus story. Trust is an important commodity to have in the working relationship between the prison staff and Onesimus board. We are grateful for the faithfulness of previous chaplains who have earned that trust—Doug Burnette, Keith Brooks, Peter Roomet, Lil Anthony and now Heinrich Botes and Rhonda Soland. It is a privilege for Onesimus Ministries to help provide a positive spiritual atmosphere.

You are encouraged to attend our annual banquet at Mt. Vernon Christian Church on April 5. Our speaker will be Rhonda Soland, the chaplain for

Chaplain Jottings

Heinrich Botes

While some recognize it as the legendary April's Fool Day, April 1 will forever be the anniversary of my first day as Assistant Chaplain at Chester County Prison. I have been in many ways challenged, stretched during these past 12 months but I am more surprised and thrilled by the opportunity to be a co-worker, a witness and an ambassador of the Almighty God, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.

Serving Muslims in distress, loving antagonistic Satanists, sharing death notifications with inmates who erupt with violent and charged emotional reactions (deaths included murdered mothers, newborns), discerning between truth and deception, all form an incomplete list of the issues that came my way during this year one.

Not everything, however, was dramatic, traumatic or borderline dangerous—there's a fair share of the mundane, repetition to calm the waters of the soul. This includes receiving and distributing hundreds of Bibles and other literature, arranging special religious diet trays, presenting classes, preaching and, what may sound downright boring, talking to many inmates. These sessions reminded me of how broken humanity really is, what horrible things men can do to another, how engrained sin is and how hopeless we are without the saving grace of Jesus Christ, the crucified Lamb of God, the last sacrifice. Pointing to Him as the Only Way, The Truth and The Life is what

turns the seemingly mundane into an electrifying encounter between darkness and light.

Please pray for and support chaplains because we are on the frontlines of a spiritual battle that will only reach the surface of society a few short years from now.

Losing Peter Roomet and Lillian Anthony in one year was a major blow; but by God's grace He introduced Rhonda Soland seamlessly into the works and overall, in my humble opinion, with no momentum lost.

Thank you for the love and support expressed in so many different ways during the time of my father's unexpected illness and death. The Body of Christ is truly amazing and once again proved to me that it is an unrivaled tool/weapon in the Hand of God which can also do amazing miracles during an inmate's reentry into society. Please be part of such a miracle in your special way where you are.



From the Treasurer

Roy Fite

Greetings Brothers and Sisters! Your prayers for continued support of our Chaplains are so appreciated. We thank God for our Church partners and faithful donors who ensured Peter, Heinrich & Lil were well cared for financially in 2018, as they served the men and women of CCP.

Our Annual Banquet on April 5 will be your first opportunity to welcome Rhonda Soland to our ministry. Rhonda joined Heinrich on our chaplaincy team this January and will be our keynote speaker. Please bless Heinrich and Rhonda with your presence, bringing them much needed encouragement for their pastoral mission at CCP.

You are invited to attend our annual banquet. Please see the invitation included in this Onesimus Jottings. Any questions or to make reservations to attend either call

Pastor Vernon Myers at 610-932-4429 (email: pastorvern@gmail.com) or Phil Taylor at 610-952-1642.

Monday Night Fellowship

Vernon Myers

With Jim Kreider's retirement after forty years of spending Monday evenings at CCP, we wondered who the Lord would bring to carry on the leadership of Monday Night Fellowship. We are grateful God has brought to us Andy Duncan. Andy had served as a volunteer with Jim and the Lord put Andy on Jim's mind as the one who would carry on the leadership. The Lord has proven himself faithful in meeting the many transition needs we have had this past year.

Chaplain Jottings

Rhonda Soland



Hello, I am so pleased to be able to introduce myself as the new chaplain for the females at Chester County Prison. I am deeply humbled and amazed at what God has done in bringing me to this position and to this point in my life. It is all Him, and

I can take no credit for it. As Psalm 118:23 says: “The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in (my) eyes.” I am so grateful to Him.

These first two months as chaplain have gone quickly and I am beginning to settle into the rhythms and responsibilities of the role. I have to thank Chaplain Heinrich Botes for his tireless patience in answering all my many questions and so willingly explaining the workings of the chaplaincy as well as the prison’s policies and procedures. And of course, also thanks to Chaplain Lillian Anthony for sharing with me her wisdom and experience gained from faithfully serving many years as female chaplain; all making for a very smooth transition. I also give thanks to the Onesimus Board who have welcomed me so warmly and made me feel at home among them. I especially want to

thank Chaplain Jack Crans for his unflagging support and encouragement that has been such a blessing to me.

In these two months of ministry, I am excited to report there are quite a few women (and I hope a growing number of them) who are diligently seeking the Lord, really desiring to know Him more and grow in their relationship with Him. They are asking for Bibles, Christian reading books, devotional books, Bible study books, as well as 1-on-1s with church volunteers. I am always so blessed and encouraged when they come to our church service with questions about something they’ve read in their Bibles—wanting to know, wanting to grow. It is a thrill to see them begin to believe there is hope for a better life. I pray God will continue to draw them to Himself, more and more each day. It is a privilege and a humbling thing to think He allows me to have some small part in their spiritual growth. I look forward to the great things to come.

Thank you for all of your prayers and support for the chaplaincy and the men and women of Chester County Prison. I hope to meet each one of you and have the opportunity to thank you in person at the Onesimus Banquet coming on April 5.

continued from page 1

the female population. I asked for a paragraph of biographical information from Rhonda, so I will permit her to introduce herself.

I’m Rhonda Soland, the new chaplain for females at Chester County Prison. I have been serving at the prison for four years as a volunteer, and now, as of the beginning of the year, have assumed the position of chaplain. I reside in West Chester with my husband of 23 years and our three children. Our oldest son is in college, our middle son will be graduating from high school this spring, and our daughter is in 10th grade. We are members of Trinity Assembly of God Church, also in West Chester. I grew up in church, but wandered away from God for many years. It has now been 12 years since I came back to the Lord and He has been so gracious to give me such a desire to know Him and grow in my relationship with Him. He has now brought me to a position where I can serve Him by serving the women of CCP. I am very much looking forward to continuing to minister to the women there and am excited to see how God will work out His purposes. I am so grateful for this opportunity.

APRIL

5



H
E
I
N
R
I
C
H



R
H
O
N
D
A



ONESIMUS MINISTRIES ANNUAL BANQUET

Mt. Vernon Christian Church

1 Lighthouse Drive, Kirkwood, PA 17536

6:00pm - Fellowship & Appetizers;
6:30pm - Meal; 7:00pm - Worship Celebration

A free will offering will be take for the support of chaplains –
Heinrich Botes and Rhonda Soland

RSVP by March 29 to Vernon Myers at
610-932-4429 or email pastorvern@gmail.com
or Phil Taylor at 610-952-1642

Visit us on the internet!
<http://OnesimusMinistries.org>

Onesimus Ministries, Inc.

145 Bethel Road
Oxford, PA 19363



For your convenience and to save on hardcopy costs,
this newsletter can be delivered straight to your email inbox.

40 Years of Sharing God's Love at Chester County Prison