



God's 2020 Vision...

— *The Blessings of Love* —



2020 Annual Report

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Dear Friends,

2020 was an incredible year for Institutional Ministries. While COVID closed the doors to in-person contact with inmates, God used this illness to open new doors for us.

Amid the COVID panic, inmates began turning, not to scientific experts, but to God’s Word for comfort, by requesting email devotions from our ministry. We began supplying devotions six days a week and soon found ourselves so flooded with requests that we daughtered a congregation of inmates in no time at all. By the time 2020 ended, our devotion list grew to over 150 grateful recipients, extremely thankful for our ministry.

One thankful inmate wrote:

Dear Pastor Henselin,

Thank you for your letter inviting me to begin receiving Christian Devotions from Institutional Ministries.

Yes, I cannot tell you what a wonderful blessing it has been to have your Chaplains shepherding the Institutions I have lived in for more than 30 years now. It has been one of the great honors of my life to learn about God’s word through this string of wonderfully gifted and inspired teachers. I will forever be grateful for the certitude their combined teaching has given me regarding my eternal Salvation through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*Sincerely,
(Inmate name withheld)*

Our prayer is that the COVID shut-downs will end soon and we will be able to resume our face-to-face ministry with inmates. But in the meantime, God has opened a door for ministry, which I expect to remain open, even when the prison doors finally reopen. To say it another way, I see God doubling our outreach through COVID!

Pastor Philip Henselin
Executive Director

2020 Board Members

- Mr. Mark Hoyord (Chairman)
Delavan
- Mr. Joe Rogers (Treasurer)
Waukesha
- Mr. Scott Krause (Secretary)
Watertown
- Rev. Timothy Bauer
Watertown
- Rev. Conrad Prell
Hillsboro
- Rev. David Cooper
Beaver Dam
- Rev. Joshua Kesting
Neosho
- Mr. Carl Rudolph
Appleton
- Mr. Gary Zenda
Racine
- Rev. Jim Olsen
Ontario

God's 2020 Vision for His Church — *Faith, Hope and Love*

God's Blessings of Love in 2020

A twentieth century proverb tells us that hindsight is 20/20, meaning that it's always easy to envision something after it has already occurred. God's vision, however, is not limited to mere hindsight, for His vision of the past, the present, and the future is always 20/20. What's more, God's vision concerning His own (those who belong to Him now and those who will belong to Him in the future) is always crystal clear. God

envisions how and when His own will be brought to *faith*, and how they will be kept in that *faith* till he comes to call them home. God also envisions how the certain *hope* that they have in His Son, Jesus Christ, literally changes their lives, both now and in eternity. And finally, God envisions how the *love* of Christ burns in their hearts, moving them to reach out to others, wherever they may be, so that everyone who belongs to God is brought into His family.



In his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul speaks of the spiritual gifts that God bestows upon the body of Christ, to nurture, bless and grow the Church. And, at the end of chapter 13, Paul highlights three of these gifts of the Spirit, which play a prominent role in the building up of His Church. He writes, "And now these three things remain: *faith, hope and love*. But the greatest of these is *love*."

For three years, we've been using these three gifts of the Spirit (*faith, hope and love*), to help us stay focused as we carry out the work that God sets before us — reaching out to the institutionalized — so that *God's vision for the Church* is at the heart of all that we do together. For the 2020 Annual Report, I have selected a ministry story that highlights each of our four pillars of ministry — Corrections, Healthcare, Extended Care and Ongoing Support — so that you might see how God pours out His blessings of *love* upon the souls we serve. May the LORD continue to pour out blessings upon His Church through the work that we do together.

Chaplain Joseph Radsek



First Day in Heaven –Corrections–

Twenty years ago, when I began serving as a chaplain for Institutional Ministries, I met a fellow Christian named Wayne, who was incarcerated at Waupun Correctional Institution. Wayne was one of twelve men at the prison who had spent more than two years in an intensive study of God’s Word with my predecessor, Chaplain Kenneth Lenz. Eventually, all twelve of these men were received as communicant members of the Wisconsin Synod, and unofficially, they formed their own congregation at the prison – *Freedom Ev. Lutheran Church*.



On one occasion, when I was celebrating the Lord’s Supper with Wayne, he shared with me the reason for his incarceration. After confessing his sin of murdering two women, he told me about the two life sentences he’d received, sentences, which were to be served consecutively, not concurrently.

As Wayne spoke about his sin and, more importantly, his faith in his Savior Jesus, he said something I’ll always remember. “My first day out of prison will probably be my first day in heaven.” And when the Lord took Wayne home to heaven in the fall, it was his “first day out of prison” in more than thirty-three years. It was his “first day in heaven” with an eternity of days to come!

By God’s free grace and because of Jesus, my Savior, I look forward to seeing Wayne again on my own “first day in heaven,” whenever that will be.

What a privilege it is to share the hope of Jesus Christ with those who need it most!

Chaplain Charles Iles

Going Home –Healthcare–

I was called to the NIC unit on a Wednesday evening. Little baby John had entered the world early and with great difficulty. He was breathing with the aid of a ventilator. He had suffered severe brain damage because of respiratory arrest and the nurse informed me that the parents were struggling with the decision of continuing life support. The parents wanted baby John baptized, so we gathered around his bed and gave him the gift of *new life*. It was a bittersweet moment because we all knew why we were baptizing John in the hospital. Baby John was soon to go home – to heaven.



As I left the bedside and started out of the room, I saw Annie and Jake. They had twins three months earlier. One had died soon after birth and the other, Mason, barely survived. Today Mason’s parents were taking their son home! There were lots of smiles and congratulations, but there were also tears. I was overwhelmed by emotion; two babies going home, but in such different ways. Mason went home with his parents; a short time later I was holding baby John as he died and went home to heaven. “To live is Christ and to die is gain” (Php 1:21). Baby Mason and baby John embodied those words and touched me in a special way. What a privilege to be present at this time of such great emotions of both grief and joy. What a privilege to be able to share the love of Christ.

Chaplain Mark Wenzel

Sharing Living Hope *—Extended Care—*

I sat in her room at the nursing home watching her fight back the tears as she asked, “Does it hurt to die?” One of her kidneys was failing, and while the other was still functioning, she was fearful having recently watched a dear friend die in a great deal of pain. Knowing that she was once a nurse in the Navy, I sensed that her question wasn’t really rooted in the physical aspects of suffering or death. As we talked, it became clear to me that her question (and her concern), was about where she would spend eternity. What she really wanted to know was, “What must I do to be saved?” What a joy it was to point this troubled soul to the sure hope we have in Jesus Christ.



In the words of St. Peter, ours is a “living hope... kept in heaven for us, who through faith are shielded by God’s power” (1 Pt. 1:4-5). Extended Care ministry focuses on sharing this “living hope” with those who need it most – the often-forgotten souls living in nursing homes, independent and assisted living facilities, as well as rehab and hospice care centers. These souls are precious to our Savior, and it is our great privilege to share God’s Word with them, reassuring them with the faithfulness of God’s promises – “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mt. 28:20).

Chaplains Go There *—Ongoing Support—*

The phone call was unexpected, asking if I could report to a location that we don’t usually serve. A husband was lost to suicide. The wife, to whom I was sent to speak, was deeply distressed by the news. In fact, she began to cry out, “No, no, it’s not true!” and she began attacking the officer who informed her of the news.



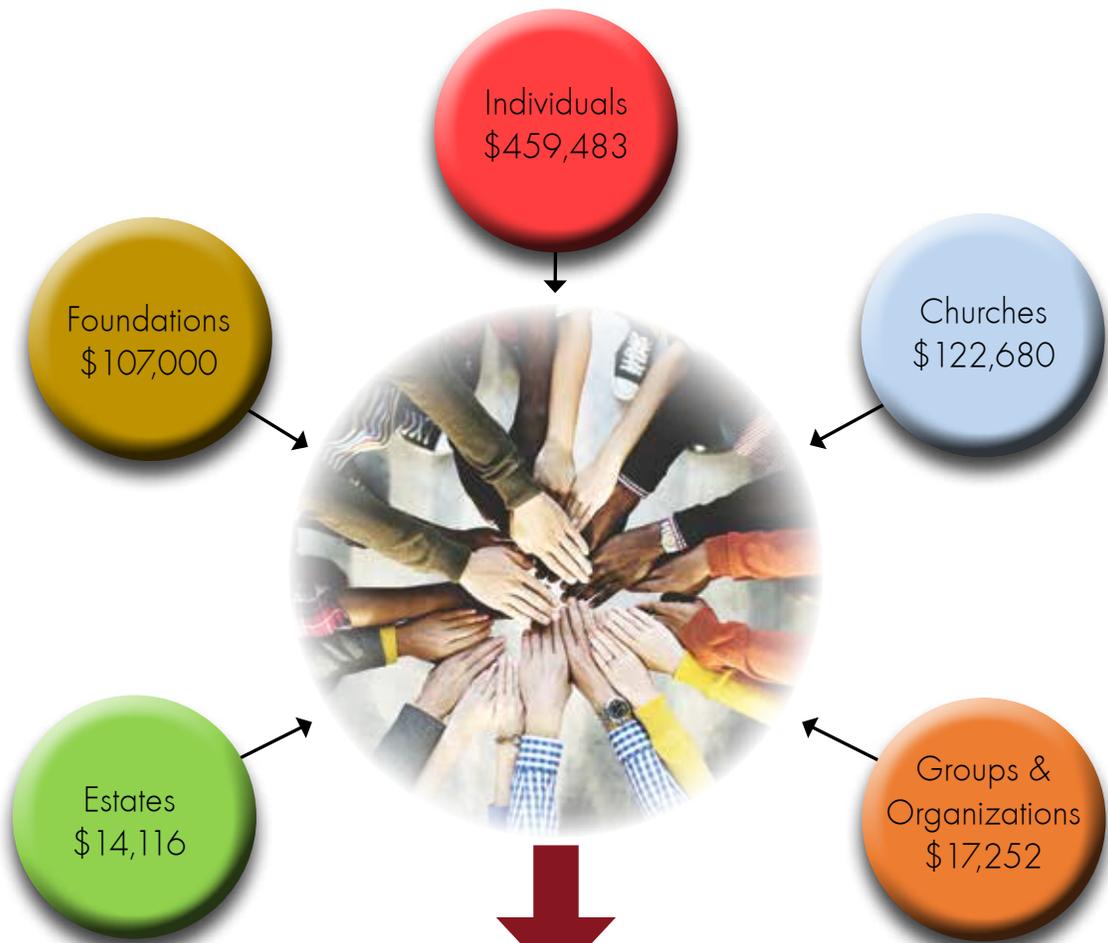
When I arrived on the scene, the officer was deescalating the situation and laying the groundwork for her to speak with me. “Ma’am,” the compassionate officer said, “I could arrest you for assaulting an officer. But I understand that this has been very difficult for you. If you will talk to the chaplain, and be calm, I’ll forget it happened.”

From that beginning, the Lord gave us many conversations through multiple meetings, joint trips to the Coroner’s office and a funeral. This was a close-up encounter with the pain a family is left with following a suicide. It is also an example of moral injury.

Moral injury happens to the heart and to the soul. Usually, it is the result of an individual causing harm to one’s self or others. It is a personal encounter with a situation which no one should have to endure. Most people try to avoid confronting moral injury; chaplains go there, addressing it head-on.

What is a chaplain? Someone who willingly meets people where they are, empathizes with them in their situation, and offers them comfort from God. Chaplains go there, bringing the balm of Gilead, the healing comfort of love, which we have learned from Jesus.

Pastor Philip Henselin
Executive Director



Covid restrictions limited face-to-face ministry to 4,429 opportunities to share God's Word. But God opened a new door through online devotions, enabling us to share His Word an additional 20,780 times.



Correctional Facilities

- Jails
- Prisons



Extended Care Facilities

- Nursing Homes
- Rehab Centers
- Hospice Care



Ongoing Support Groups

- Drug & Alcohol (AODA)
- First Responders (PTSD)



**Healthcare Facilities
(physical & mental)**

Ministry Locations



LOCATIONS OF INSTITUTIONS BEING SERVED BY THE MINISTRY

Institutional Ministries is a nonprofit organization established in 1901 that ministers to people in the upper Midwest, who are living in correctional facilities, drug and alcohol treatment centers, hospitals, mental health centers and extended care facilities, as well as through ongoing support groups.

2020 Staff

Full-time Staff



Rev. Philip Henselin
Executive Director



Rev. Charles Iles, Sr.
Chaplain



Rev. Philip Merten
Chaplain



Rev. Mark Wenzel
Chaplain



Rev. Joseph Radsek
Chaplain

Part-time Staff



Sarah Guenther
Chaplain



Stephanie Burk
Office Manager



Mary Warnecke
Bookkeeping



Suzanne Krenke
Office Assistant



Kyra Lostetter
Development Assistant

Emeritus Staff



Rev. Kenneth Wenzel
Chaplain



Rev. Robert Pasbrig
Advisor

In addition to our full and part-time chaplains, our ministry is also carried out by a growing number of volunteers who help serve the institutionalized in correctional, healthcare and extended care facilities, as well as in various ongoing support groups. We have been blessed with many dedicated volunteers who are committed to the ministry of **sharing hope with those who need it most!**

Our Mission

To provide direction, comfort and hope by sharing God and his love with individuals (and their families) who are, or have been, in an institution.