

Advent reflections

by Rose Admiraal

In December, the prayer group is looking at what Advent means.

Here are some thoughts from the men of New Life Prison Church about the five candles on the Advent wreath:



The candle of HOPE

- “Our hope is in Jesus.”

The candle of PEACE

- “His peace helps you get through your daily life.”
- “His peace is never-ending and not of this world.”

The candle of JOY

- “Having the Lord in our hearts.”
- “Joy brings renewal, and it is infectious.”

The candle of LOVE

- “God’s love through the Holy Spirit.”
- “We can have all the knowledge, but without love we have nothing.”
- “We are able to love because Jesus showed us how.”

The CHRIST candle

- “Even in total darkness, the light is always with us in our hearts.”
- “Jesus’ light shines in Brothers-in-Blue and continues to shine out in the prison yard.”

As we reflect on the birth of our Savior, may we remember what He truly means to us.

Give thanks in prison

by Rose Admiraal

In November, the New Life in Prayer group studied some of the Psalms. The Tuesday before Thanksgiving, we studied Psalm 100 and asked the men, “Why are you ready to give thanks and praise to God?”

This is a sampling of their answers:

- “I’ve been reborn!”
- “I have new life in Christ!”
- “My wife is blessed and strengthened to work three jobs while I am gone.”
- “Christians come in from the outside to encourage us.”
- “I have peace from God.”
- “I still have family and friends in my life.”

Even in a dark place like the Newton Correctional Facility, men are giving thanks for what God is doing! Psalm 107 tells us to give thanks, so we need to speak it and share it. We praise God for all the blessings He has given each of us!

New Life in the new year

by Pastor Rick

Circle 2019 in red, because it promises to start off with a bang!

New Life’s baptism service is scheduled for January 17. Eighteen men have signed up to come to the class preparing them for baptism or profession of faith. Looking back, 30 men were baptized and 16 professed their Christian faith in 2018. In its seven-year history, New Life Prison Church has witnessed 170 baptisms and 47 professions of faith. Glory be to God!



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Breaking Adam concert

by Pastor Rick

Breaking Adam rocked the Newton Correctional Facility on Saturday, November 4.

Over 140 enthusiastic men attended their energized concert. Steve Shettler (from the band Piercing the Darkness) was on hand to pass the baton to the group he introduced to Pastor Rick. Thanks, Steve!

Breaking Adam's Travis Williams said, "We really enjoyed playing at the prison. Our passion is to share the Gospel through our music. It was truly amazing to minister to men who are looking for redemption by pointing them to the Redeemer. Thanks again for having us, and we hope to see you again in 2019!"



Breaking Adam, with lead singer Travis Williams (center).

Brothers-in-Blue inspires

by Pastor Rick

The Holy Spirit is renewing the prison through Brothers-in-Blue (BIB).

During the first weekend of December, 70 men and 25 volunteers gathered in the Newton Correctional Facility gym for a four-day spiritual retreat focused on God's grace. What an inspirational time! Volunteers gave most of the talks, but the final talk was given by Steve, the chapel clerk/inmate. He hit a homerun!

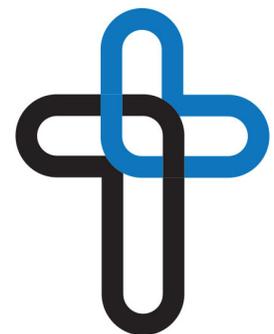
Steve spoke about Romans 5:3-5, making this crucial connection: "Hope is embedded in this perseverance." Later, Steve said, "Hope isn't a feeling. It's a person. Hope is a person named Jesus Christ."

At the end of BIB, men offered words of testimony. Kayleb said, "I'm gonna walk out of this door and be a new person!" Brad let us know, "I had a weekend when I didn't feel like I was in prison." Rodney made strides in the faith, saying, "I had a chance to rekindle my relationship with Christ and gain real peace. He's amazing! He's a blessing to have in my life."

May God continue to inspire all of us, both inside and outside prison walls!

"I had a weekend when I didn't feel like I was in prison."

- BRAD



**BROTHERS IN BLUE
PRISON MINISTRY**

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Mr. Tim Franje (Peoria CRC) represents the Classis Missions Committee.

Thank you to **Phil Goodyk** (Third Reformed), as he is retiring from the Board but will continue volunteering.