

## Transition time for the Board

by Pastor Rick

The closing months of 2016 are a time of transition for the New Life Board. Three longtime Board members are retiring, while one new Board member arrives. When New Life began in February of 2011, the Board was called a “launch team” because its task was to launch the new church plant in the prison. In those early days, we met twice per month because there was so much to discuss. Glenda Vander Leest and Bill and Judy Strong were there from the very beginning.

Glenda faithfully recorded the minutes of the New Life Board meetings. Here are a few of Glenda’s reflections:

*It has been an incredible privilege for me to serve on the New Life Board for the past six years. I am reminded of the early days when we were still feeling our way by visiting other prison congregations and reading books to gain insights about the men in prison. Now I praise God for the way*



Glenda Vander Leest retired as a Board member but continues to volunteer.

*He has grown this body of believers; our numbers have more than tripled. I am also thankful that being on the board brought me inside the prison, where we have wonderful Christian fellowship. We ourselves are blessed as much or more than the men on the inside. It’s hard to put into a few words what this ministry has meant not only to me but also to my husband, Dwight. We look forward to continuing as volunteers. Thanks for allowing me to be involved in this ministry.*

Bill and Judy displayed dedication by keeping our financial records with integrity. Below are some reflections from Bill and Judy:

*Six years ago, we were asked to be a part of a new ministry at the Newton prison. We both had recently retired, so doing the financial work for New Life Prison Church was something we could do together. At the time, we didn’t know that Judy*



Bill and Judy Strong served as treasurers for New Life.

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## The ministry of presence

by Pastor Rick

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of the Holy Child. In great joy, we reflect on the beauty of his incarnation. In the Gospel of John, we read:

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).*

Jesus knows all about the ministry of presence. During his life on earth, he was present with us, ministering to our needs. Even now, his ministry of pres-

ence continues through the Spirit he has given to us. In fact, it is by the Spirit of Christ that volunteers enter the Newton prison each week to encourage the men and demonstrate God’s love. Some of the men don’t receive visitors, so for them the New Life volunteers are their visitors. New Life has a large number of volunteers. I believe that this maximizes our impact for Christ by increasing personal connections and building relationships with the incarcerated men. One of the men on our Equipped for

Service Team, Bob, was moved to tears when he thought about the volunteers. Bob told us that the volunteers show so much love. He remembers to pray for the volunteers while they also pray for him. Truly the ministry of presence is a gift to be shared. God’s present to us is His presence, which we share with one another. That eternal reality has power to penetrate prison walls!



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## New Life wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We pray that God will bless you during this holiday season!



## Church visitors encourage

by Pastor Rick

On November 17, New Life received an encouraging church visit from representatives of Classis Central Plains. The minister of Peoria Christian Reformed Church, Rev. George Den Oudsten, was accompanied by one of his elders, Mr. Daryl Bouwkamp. In the afternoon, the team met with our inside council, the six-member-strong Equipped for Service Team. In the evening, they joined us for our annual praise and thanksgiving service. Here are some of Daryl's reflections:

*Visiting and worshipping with the brothers in Christ of New Life Prison Community on behalf of Classis Central Plains was wonderful. It is very evident that God is at work in the hearts and lives of men who are encountering Him through His Word and Spirit. I was able to witness and hear stories of what God is doing at the prison through conversations with the New Life members, the service team, volunteers, and Pastor Rick. What a joy to celebrate Thanksgiving together in worship and give thanks for all that we have and are in Christ. Praise God for his ability and willingness to make all things new, even us! "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).*

What a great encouragement this church visit was to us!

## Prayers & praise

by Rose Admiraal

- We give praise for the launch of the Stephen Ministry program! We ask that God would continue to help this group to learn how to be Christian caregivers.
- We praise God for the increase in attendance in our group and worship times. We are truly seeing the movement of the Holy Spirit in this place.
- Please pray for the men that have been transferred to other facilities and for those who are waiting for a transfer. These moves can be very challenging for them as they leave their Christian brothers and the familiar system.
- Please keep our brothers in prison in prayer during this holiday season. This can be a very difficult time to be apart from family and friends.

Would you like to pray for New Life's weekly needs as a prayer warrior? Contact Rose at [rose@newlife-prison.org](mailto:rose@newlife-prison.org).

## Transition time for the Board *continued*

*would not be allowed in the prison because she is in a wheelchair, but this showed us that there are other ways to serve without going into the prison. At the Board meetings, we always loved hearing the stories about God's Spirit working inside the walls and the passion of our volunteers. As we retire, New Life will always hold a special place in our hearts.*

Personally, I am extremely grateful for the faithful service of both Glenda and the Strongs to New Life.

Meanwhile, Marcus Van Zee joins the Board as its new treasurer. Marcus works as an accountant at the Schuring-Uitermarkt CPA firm in Pella. He is a member of Sully Christian Reformed Church. Marcus graduated from Northwestern College this year and is also an alumnus of Pella Christian High School. Marcus shares these words:

*I am incredibly grateful to be a part of the New Life Board. I love the mission of this organization and its willingness to spread the love of Christ to the prisoners. I am humbled to be a small part of New Life, and I am excited to see where God leads us in the future.*

After the completion of a busy tax season, Marcus hopes to take the volunteer training so he can be an eyewitness to all God is doing behind prison walls. We're grateful that Marcus made this commitment to serve the Lord.



Marcus Van Zee is ready to catch big fish for the Kingdom!

### New Life Board Members:

**Sheryl Hanthorn** (Grace Fellowship)

**Marcus Van Zee** (Sully CRC)

**Marv Goodyk** (Sully CRC)

**Phil Goodyk** (Third Reformed)

**Ken Stursma** (Federated Fellowship)

**Pastor Rick Admiraal** (New Life)