



Jail Ministries of Otsego and Schoharie Counties

Helping troubled lives find hope and wholeness in the Christian walk

JMOC Newsletter

Summer 2025

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Rev. Russell Anderson as the chaplain of the Otsego County Jail. Russ is an ordained minister at the Word of Faith Christian Family Fellowship in Maryland, NY. He is a deacon and a leader for their Prayer and Healing Ministry as well as their Deliverance Ministry.

He has been active in programming in the jail for over eight years. He has provided Sunday Services, been a counselor for the One-on-One program as well as developing a group counseling program. The inmates appreciate his presence in the jail and his ability to show how each of them can accept Christ into their lives and live a Christian faith daily. His enthusiasm for the Gospel is very apparent to everyone who knows him. The inmates look forward to this group counseling program which meets every Friday.

Russ retired in 2016 from 28 years of working as a manager of many different programs implemented by the New York State Office Information Technology Services (OITS). He is a renaissance man in that he has taught computer-oriented courses and served as chairman of computer science department at an Institute in New Jersey. He also did field service for medical equipment and has been a machinist and electrician/plumber.

Since Russ has been appointed, he has acquainted himself with all the programs that we have at the jail and has made some suggestions as to how they can be improved. The Board is excited with his leadership style and ability and commitment to sharing the Gospel and helping inmates grow in their faith.

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Activities at the Otsego County Jail

The Jail Ministry of Otsego and Schoharie Counties (JMOC) provides various programs for incarcerated individuals at the Otsego County Correctional Facility. These programs include Sunday Service, Discharge Planning, Aftercare, One-on-One, Crossroads, and Christian Counseling. These programs provide spiritual support, guidance, and resources to inmates, addressing addiction, depression, and other challenges.

> Each Sunday a different volunteer hosts the Sunday Service. Volunteer requirements include a heart for service, a personal relationship with God, as well as some biblical knowledge. Inmates express their gratitude for the opportunity to worship their Risen Lord on Sundays. The service commences at 1:00 p.m. and concludes at 2:15 p.m.

> Upon release, inmates gain access to opportunities offered by JMOC through the Discharge Planning program. This program introduces them to programs and services provided by the County and other local entities. The Discharge Planning program facilitates discussions on the inmates' relationship with God and provides opportunities for prayer and guidance. Additionally, it introduces them to JMOC programs available during and after their incarceration at Otsego County jail.

> Aftercare Program supplies essentials like clothing, food, and cell phones, recognizing that releases are released with little more than the clothes on their backs.

> The One-on-One program offers inmates an opportunity to engage in prayerful conversations with volunteers. This allows them to share their concerns, discuss personal issues, seek guidance, and develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. For many individuals who have been arrested, this may represent a pivotal moment in their lives. They may be grappling with depression, hopelessness, and a sense of uncertainty, seeking guidance and a fresh start. The Lord serves as their path and source of hope.

> The majority of incarcerated individuals have an addiction problem that drives them to commit crimes. The Crossroads program is designed for individuals seeking to achieve drug-free living. Volunteers participating in this program undergo training on addictions, emphasizing the power of God to break the cycle of addiction and relying on God's grace rather than solely on willpower.

> Christian Counseling utilizes a group setting where individuals discuss various challenges, including addictions, pain, suffering, mental anguish, and coping difficulties. Inmates share personal testimonies of both failures and successes. These meetings center on the divine attributes of God the Father, His ability to accomplish extraordinary feats through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Do you have a desire to deepen your relationship with God? One way to achieve this is through becoming a servant and guided by the Holy Spirit to serve God in a ministry. Prison ministry addresses the vulnerable individuals who require Jesus' presence and desperately seek a connection with the risen Lord.

Please extend your prayers to the JMOC ministry and its dedicated volunteers.

Russell Anderson, Chaplain

The Joy of Sharing

“Each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 10:45

When we think of serving others, let us remember that it isn’t solely about duty; it is also about finding joy in giving of ourselves. We all have moments when our hearts beat a little faster when we have lent a helping hand or shared a kind word.

The joy we experience in serving not only lifts others but fills our souls. It is a chance to mirror God’s giving nature. Not only do we make a difference in someone’s life, but we create a closer connection to the heart of God. Sharing our resources, time, and love truly enriches our lives and the lives of those we serve.

Many Christians may wonder how significant it is to serve, and what it truly means to put others first. The scriptures are full of instructions and examples that guide us in embracing a life of service. Let us keep our hearts open and ready to receive wisdom that inspires us to step forward to serve one another. Serving isn’t just an act. It is a lifestyle. It is about showing love and kindness in everything we do.

Galatians 5:13 tells us: “You, my brothers and sisters were called to be free, but do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh, rather serve one another humbly in love.” Serving God is one of the most important principles of the Christian faith. As believers, we are expected to help the church with a joyful spirit: love one another, care for one another, support one another. Scripture repeatedly tells us that our relationship to God and others is through service.

Serving God and others is not about doing just great things but about doing small things with abundant love. We can serve God and others daily by being kind to our neighbors, volunteering our time to help others, and giving to those in need. Serving others may not always be easy or convenient, but God’s grace and strength will help us. Nothing is too small that God will not use it. Nothing we do for God is in vain!

Mark 10:45 tell us: “For even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

May these scriptures encourage your spirit and strengthen your will to serve

...Donald Rifanburg

Online Mohawk Valley Gives & Prayer Needs

Opportunity – Would you like to share in our ministry and help us continue to; carry out our purpose and mission? To help prepare inmates for life in jail and freed persons for life out of jail? To enable these troubled lives to find and peace and wholeness in the Christian Walk? Well, we have an upcoming opportunity for you to do that. On September 9, we will be participating in a 24-hour online giving event called Mohawk Valley Gives. This event is a community-wide giving day to benefit nonprofit organizations serving the Mohawk Valley, which is sponsored by the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties and the UpMobility Foundation, in partnership with the Community Foundation of Otsego County. We would love you to first come alongside us in prayer as we continue to minister to the hearts and needs of the inmates in these two jails. If the Lord lays it upon your heart to give during this campaign, we will be eternally grateful. You can view our information for this campaign by scanning this QR code, where there will also be a Donate button to be used on September 9. God bless.



Psalm 145:1-5 (TPT – The Passion Translation)

“My heart explodes with praise to you! Now and forever my heart bows in worship to you, my King and my God! Every day I will lift up my praise to your name with praises that will last throughout eternity. Lord, you are great and worthy of the highest praise! For there is no end to the discovery of the greatness that surrounds you. Generation after generation will declare more of your greatness and declare more of your glory. Your magnificent splendor and the miracles of your majesty are my constant meditation.”

Our focus is to worship Him and lead others into that same place of admiration of all that He has done for us. Please keep this ministry in your prayers that we will be lights and dispel the darkness that has encompassed others.