



Bishop's Office

North Carolina Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



BISHOP'S OFFICE

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Dear Friends:

On Sunday, August 24th, we will celebrate Cross and Key Prison Ministries Sunday with a special offering. I invite you and your congregation to support this important ministry.

Since 1999, Cross and Key Prison Ministries, originally known as Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries of NC, has equipped churches in our conference to engage meaningfully in prison ministry. Under their leadership, hundreds of volunteers from local churches have entered prisons to share God's love.

Since 2023, the ministry has trained 73 lay and clergy leaders from 47 congregations across our Conference. Using their comprehensive 70-page Prison Ministry Toolkit, Cross and Key Prison Ministries offers free training workshops throughout both the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences.

Prison ministry was at the heart of John Wesley's community outreach. He regularly visited Newgate Prison in London and encouraged those in the Methodist societies to do this same. Likewise, he called on Methodist pastors in America to visit the prisons and to make prison ministry a regular part of their ministry in the world.

The Great Commission in Matthew 25 reminds us that inmates are among the least of these for which Christ died. Hebrews 13 tells us to remember those in prison as if we were in prison ourselves. Our scripture, theology and Methodist heritage move us to act.

I pray that you will respond to the call to visit those in prison. Reach out to Cross and Key Prison Ministries by visiting their website (www.crossandkeyprisonministries.com) or calling 336-689-1443. Whether you are beginning a new prison ministry or revitalizing a former one, they are eager to help.

Please consider supporting the Cross and Key Prison Ministries Special Offering (Conference Advance #S-00103) on August 24, or another Sunday of your choosing. Together, we can extend the love and presence of the church to those in prison and their families.

Thank you for your faithful ministry.

Gratefully,

Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton