Hello my friends.

May the grace and peace of the Living Christ be with each of you.

**“Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good news about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. “** ( Philippians 1:3-5 NLT)

Truly I can think of no more fitting words than these first penned by Paul so long ago. I do thank God, often, for your support of the ministry here at Sarnia Jail. In particular I pray with thanksgiving knowing that many of you maintain me in your ongoing prayers.

I am writing to let you know how much your support means to the folks I see on a daily basis.

 **“I don’t get headaches when I’m reading anymore”** said a 50 some odd year old inmate commenting on the reading glasses he had received.

 **“Real graph paper. I can finish my math courses on real graph paper,”** said another fellow over and over as he walked away from the bars where I was standing.

 **“You got blue candy canes!! They are my favourite,”** a mid-twenties female enthused. **”Thank you, you’re the best!”**

Actually, you are the reason I get to be **“the best”.**  It is through your generosity. In the past you have provided a communion set (thank you Kent Presbytery); support for replacement prescription eyewear; reading glasses; stationary and Canada Post stamped envelopes; reading material for our Book cart; crosswords, word searches, Sudoku puzzles and dictionaries; and the list goes on.

      

Thanks to a generous gift from a local UCW group of volunteers our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Jane Anema, and myself were goaded into establishing a proper place for cash donations received for the work of chaplaincy. This fund has been of great help to me as I can now react significantly more quickly to needs as they arise and indeed be proactive in meeting them.

There now exists the Sarnia Inmate Chaplaincy Association, SIMCA for short. Much to my relief SIMCA’s treasurer now properly records and receipts donations that are made for the support of the Chaplaincy Program at Sarnia Jail, as well as for expenses reimbursed from such donations.

Your recent donations have helped provide the sundry articles listed above as well as personal care kits for men which they receive if they are leaving custody for a treatment centre or rehab facility (The Elizabeth Fry Society provides the bags/purses for our female clients); specific resources for our Indigenous folk in co-operation with *Indian Life* and other organizations; easy read material explaining the Good News in words that our folk can understand (many of whom are functionally illiterate); Thinking of You, Birthday, and I Love You cards; colouring books … those for adults as well as those geared to young people as some of our clientele will colour and send pictures to their children; and (though this is not likely to resume until our construction project is completed) gift certificates to offset the cost of haircuts for our inmates, especially our females.

Certainly this is not to say that tangible gifts are no longer welcomed. However, an account that is consistently maintained is of great and immediate use to me. It may well prove to be the most practical way for you or your groups to support the Chaplaincy ministry as well.

**Donations may be sent to :**

SIMCA c/o Jane Anema 110-560 Exmouth St. Sarnia, ON N7T 5P5

Thank you for your prayers and your generosity.

**Bruce**  Rev. Bruce Cook Sarnia Jail Chaplain 519-337-3261 extension 3399 Bruce.Cook@ontario.ca

 [A note to my clergy colleagues .I am often asked for print material on various topics. If you have surplus soft-coverd books on any of the major religious traditions, and/or parenting and relationships, please let me know and I will gladly arrange to pick them up.]

**“No greater burden can be borne than to know that no one cares or understands.”** Arthur Stainback