



Winter 2024

NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

One of my favourite stories in the Bible is found in the gospel of Mark. Friends of a paralyzed man, who couldn't reach Jesus, took extraordinary steps to lower the paralyzed man through a hole in a roof so that he could be healed. I try to imagine how hard that would have been for these four friends, not only physically but emotionally to feel the urgency of getting their friend as close to Jesus as possible so that he may experience transformation.

Everyday at New Life, we have people who step in to "carry the mat" for inmates.

One corner is held by chaplains who dedicate their lives to help inmates see the love of Christ. Another corner carried by volunteer instructors who work diligently to write letters for students bringing them closer to Jesus. Another corner carried by our staff who print materials, mark courses, train and lead teams to continue the movement of God in the lives of students. And the last corner carried by our donors and partners who generously provide resources needed to spread the gospel to inmates across Canada.

I am so thankful that I get to serve in a space where God continues to use so many people to reach the lost and broken with the good news of Jesus Christ. I am even more thankful that I witness Bible stories like this one come alive in modern day testimonies and am witness to the hope and transformation provided by so many disciples of Christ.

During this season of generosity, as we celebrate Christmas, I ask each of you to prayerfully consider supporting our mission. We have so many inmates waiting to receive Bible studies and we want to respond with urgency. Please consider helping us carry the broken and lost to Jesus by giving to our Christmas campaign.

Merry Christmas to everyone that is a part of the NLPM family. May God continue to bless each of you as we celebrate the birth of Christ together.

NADIA ZEVERSENUKE *M.Div. RP*
Executive Director, NLPM



"Before I came to jail, I didn't think I would ever be apart of God's family, but now I know I have a seat at my Father's table"

Justin
an NLPM student

RENE KOOISTRA
Board Chair



**Introducing our new Board Chair,
Rene Kooistra**

During different seasons, I have always been intrigued by some of the desperate, yet honest questions inmates ask. This passion led me to serve on the board of Crossroads Prison Ministries Canada years ago and now to serve with New Life Prison Ministries as board chair. Still today, I am regularly inspired by evidence of the surprising gift of growth, not only to students but to instructors as we serve to spread the gospel to the broken and lost. The letters and feedback from our instructors provide hope to inmates - this to me is proof that God is at work at both ends of the spectrum of life experiences through the work at New Life.

NLPM continues to unlock the potential of God's grace to individuals who in the world's estimation have lost all hope. New Life continues to develop specific and unique resources to serve this disadvantaged population with literacy aids, Indigenous studies, and topical studies, assisting inmates to deal with the situation in which they find themselves. These resources are anchored by a personal letter written by a 'stranger' who loves them, for Jesus' sake. A fascinating relationship develops that can open a new world for the inmate while at the same time reinforcing to the writer how good God is in His promises to us all! My work with NLPM to promote this uncommon and unlikely partnership in the kingdom is rewarding. Many serve in many other ways and, among all the good done by Christ's followers everywhere, we are called to serve inmates.

Please join us or connect with us so that you can participate in the amazing work.

Blessings,
Rene

"IT HAS BEEN A HOLY PRIVILEGE"
Dee Eller

**A message from Dee,
our former student care team member**

I've had the joy of working in many ministries and learning lessons from each one in turn. From my time at New Life I have learned how true it is that God is always working. Inmates have felt God in their cells, or Jesus sitting beside them on their bunks, helping them to face the days ahead. They find hope for life changes, making amends and repairing relationships. Others with irreparable damage find some peace in the great mercy and forgiveness of God and find purpose in praying for the loved ones they will likely never see again in this lifetime. And so very many hear the good news of God's saving grace for the first time.

I have been blessed to witness these things and to take part in the serious and life-changing work that God is always doing in the hearts of inmates. I will miss my workmates that are more friends than colleagues. We have worked and wept together, prayed and laughed and spent endless hours updating the ever-shifting details of our students as we strive to help them grow in their walk with God. It has been a holy privilege.

I am looking forward to new adventures in life.

With gratitude and joy,
Dee



Dee has been an incredible blessing to the ministry over the past four years. We are beyond excited for her as she embarks on this new chapter in her life, and we wish her all the best for the future!

**MACKENNA GONYOU**

Volunteer Coordinator

LAUNCHING OUR NEW INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

For just over a year, I have had the privilege of working alongside our volunteer instructors across Canada at New Life! I have fallen in love with the mission. I have been so captured by the impact and the stories I hear of lives being transformed and touched by the gospel.

One of my key roles is to train and onboard our new volunteers, and I'm thrilled to announce the launch of our **brand-new training program!**

When I began my role, I quickly realized just how much there was to learn, and that journey is ongoing. My experiences visiting several Canadian prisons and meeting with chaplains, former and current students, incarcerated individuals, social workers, and correctional officers have profoundly challenged and changed me. I have gained insight into the realities faced by inmates, witnessing their pain and suffering and understanding their experiences. I've learned about the conditions they are in when they engage with our courses and letters, allowing me to envision what it feels like to be touched by a message of abundant grace and unconditional love. These experiences have deepened my empathy and inspired me to pray for a perspective that sees them as God does, as loved children with stories of brokenness, worthy of God's grace and redemption. This was the catalyst for the new training launch.

I felt a strong desire for our instructors to experience the same depth of understanding I have gained from interacting with different facets of the Canadian prison system. I wanted them to truly grasp the story of an inmate. My goal was to equip our volunteers with the confidence to reach their students, seeing them through the lens of God's grace.

To achieve this, we collaboratively designed our training modules, drawing from insights gathered during institutional visits and feedback from current instructors. Each module addresses key aspects of the prison experience, incorporating real stories and practical strategies to empower our volunteers. This thoughtful approach ensures that our team is not only well-prepared but also deeply connected to the mission of transformation that lies at the heart of our work. This vision has been the driving force behind the launch of our new training program.

Our instructors are the heartbeat of our ministry, engaging directly with our students through their heartfelt letters and responses. ***If you're interested in joining our team as a volunteer, we would love to hear from you! Please reach out to Mackenna at mackenna@nlpm.ca today.***

FROM THE HEART OF AN INSTRUCTOR***In reference to one of her students, Elaine shares:***

"So he said when he found God, he knew he was on the right path and so he just did so many Bible studies with us, he started his own Bible studies, and he started talking to the Chaplain every week. He wrote his own testimony and he is writing a book. It is wonderful to see somebody change so much by the touch of God. And so we can make such an impact on peoples lives, we can help them rebuild their lives. We have so much power in telling people about the Lord. I can't think of any better way to spend our time than to do that."

BAPTISMS IN JAIL

A message from Chaplain Cheryl Webb, from Toronto East Detention Centre

We are so glad for the opportunity to share some good news from the Chaplaincy regarding 1st time Baptisms!

September 2024 was monumental for our new and re-dedicated Christian inmates in first time water baptisms for those who have committed their life to Jesus Christ here at TEDC.

Since baptism is a public display of that commitment, it was so exciting to see each inmate testify before being water baptized of what Jesus had done in their heart. We had approximately 22 baptisms on September 16 and 17th. The testimonies of each inmate was (in a nutshell) heart warming, as many have experienced Jesus for themselves and their desire to walk in the purpose that God has for them.

Some of these inmates were suicidal, depressed, feeling lost and lonely. However, after receiving Jesus and spending time in His Presence, getting to know Jesus through New Life Bible studies, Chapel etc. they began to understand the good plans He has for them. Seeing some of these guys a couple years later, walking with Jesus and the smile of the hope of Who is journeying with them gives them the reason to live for Him. This was their public display of His Presence and His unconditional love for them when everything or everyone else was gone. So many testimonies of these inmates saying they felt "freer in here (prison) than out there". That's God's joy, unconditional love and freedom from the slavery of sin and oppression.

Blessings,
Chaplain Cheryl

NEW MANGA SERIES Manga Metamorphosis

We are thrilled to introduce the latest addition to our Manga series, Manga Metamorphosis!

By God's grace, we've already received an incredible **2,256 orders from chaplains across Canada**. Our prayer is that each student who reads this book will be richly blessed and drawn closer to Him.



"Ending up in jail was enough of a warning sign to see it was time to change. I was getting small signs from God for weeks before I finally picked up one of these New Life Ministries workbooks and a Bible, and I am loving every minute!"


Richard
an NLPM student

In 2024, 145 inmates have declared Jesus as their Lord and Saviour! Praise God!


STAY CONNECTED WITH NEW LIFE


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