

A ministry of the whole church by the whole church



Lent 3: Hope & Transformation in northern prisons

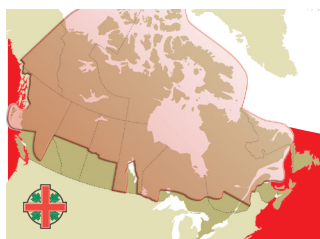
“There’s lots of tears over the years I’ve been there—there’s Kleenex in the middle of the table. You know, the subject isn’t even particularly emotional, it’s just reading the Bible or singing a hymn. But to them it’s emotional. Or the Holy Spirit is just convicting them or there’s something spiritual going on.” Captain Cyrus Blanchet is describing his work at Nunavut’s Baffin Correctional Centre (Diocese of the Arctic).

Lay minister Kathleen Stewart has also witnessed transformation. During the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission visit to the Saskatchewan Penitentiary, she says, “Bishop Michael [Hawkins] came in and they did a circle with the elders and the cultural group. They were telling their stories, but we were there to pray and talk with the inmates.” Stewart says, “This one fellow was kind of down and withdrawn beforehand—almost like he walked with his head down and didn’t want to face anyone. He had been coming to chapel for healing before. But when he came back the next time it was almost like there was sunshine in his eyes and he walked up straight and tall. Even though there was still a little sadness, he was able to hold his head up, he was smiling, he was positive....That transition that we talk about—being ‘made new’? That was evident. And the good news is that I haven’t seen him since....They’re transformed enough that they can move on—and I pray that that’s continuing in his life, wherever he is.”

These northern ministers work within the justice system to share the Gospel’s healing, reconciling and transforming power.

Prayer:

“Jesus, while you were here on earth, you faced evil and darkness. Help us to go into places that are dark and to bring the light and hope of the Gospel. In your name we pray, Amen.”



Council
of the North

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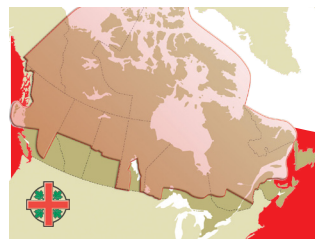
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