

Connecting with the Community of Believers

Chaplain Delores Epps

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- “An Underserved Population”
- Outreach is serving, encouraging, going, and showing mercy.
- Outreach is a different act of worship or spiritual sacrifice from preaching and teaching.

Why Outreach Matters

- Connects with community
- Builds relationships
- Provides resources for those facing difficulties
- Puts faith into practice
- Helps those in need through kindness and compassion
- Builds community and connection with isolated populations

Biblical Foundation

- Luke 10:30–37 – The Good Samaritan and mercy for all.
- Galatians 6:2 – Carry each other's burdens.
- Ephesians 4:32 – Kindness, compassion, forgiveness.

Key Question

- How do the Scriptures reply to those being released from prison?

Scriptural Themes

- Redemption
- Transformation
- Forgiveness
- Community restoration
- Hope for a new path
- A call for both individual and society

Responsibility of Believers

- Believers must welcome and support returning citizens.
- Scripture says to “Remember those in prison.”
- Supportive environments help break recidivism cycles.

Where to Start

- Learn available programs and services.
- Church ministries inside prisons: retreats, Bible studies, art, GED, college, education, exercise.

Community Advisory Board

- Indiana Women's Prison hosts Advisory Community Board Meetings.
- Shares programs offered and volunteer engagement opportunities.

Mentoring Programs

- In-Person: PLUS Program at Indiana Women's Prison.
- Correspondence: Rockville facility allows letters to PLUS graduates.

Celebrate Recovery

- Biblically based, long-lasting recovery.
- Freedom from hurts, hang-ups, and habits.
- 12-step program for behavioral patterns.

Taking Action

- Develop a plan for providing assistance.
- Create or join a support group.
- Support groups can be joint ventures among congregations.