Innovating: Article on Living Gospel Ministries

*e-news/teaser:*

**A LIFEline to Former Offenders**

Living Gospel Ministries is a SEPA Synod mission start the helps formerly incarcerated people form Christian community and face the challenges of returning to a society that doesn’t want them. (Link to article)

*Full article on reverse side.*

*Newsletter article:*

**A LIFEline to Former Offenders**

***Living Gospel offers skills, support and community***

The US today has 5 percent of the world’s population, yet has 25 percent of the world’s prisoners. “Each year 35,000 people return to Philadelphia from incarceration,” says Linda Manson, pastor of Living Gospel Ministries. And three times that many people are under the supervision of the criminal justice system.

Living Gospel is a Synod/ELCA mission start that helps convicted felons form Christian community and face the challenges of returning to a society that doesn’t want them.

“Freshly out of prison you’re kind of lost because no one wants to give you a chance,” says Philip Curtis, who participated in Living Gospel’s employment search workshops and now has a job. “Everyone’s looking down on you.”

People like Philip need help “knowing that they are loved and cared for,” Manson says. Yet when former offenders are released, there are churches that don’t want them in their pews, Manson says.

Living Gospel gathers for worship to remind those convicted of crimes that God loves them unconditionally. It also offers the LIFE ministry of job skills training, self-esteem workshops, a computer lab and support for families of people who are incarcerated.

“Pastor Linda’s program is relevant, and it’s now,” Curtis says. “You know what you need to do. Period.”

Living Gospel can only serve a tiny percentage of former offenders in our region. “We need…satellite sites all over the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod to meet the sheer volume of men and women who are coming, looking for a welcome place,” says Pastor Pat Davenport, director for evangelical mission.

SEPA’s Forward Together in Faith campaign allows you to be part of launching new ministries to people on the margins.