

## Our Mission

The St. Nicholas Prison Ministry believes in the redemptive value of those who are a part of the justice system and seeks to aid the process of assimilation by addressing the essential needs of former offenders and their families, without regard to their past failings and spiritual ideals.

## Matthew 25:36

I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick, and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.



### Prison Ministry Members

Theodora Hart  
Jim Hart  
Alexandra Kavourinos  
Stavra Ketchmark  
Clark Porter

# St. Nicholas Prison Ministry



### Priests

Fr. Douglas Papulis  
Fr. Michael Arbanas

# History of the Ministry

The St. Nicholas Prison Ministry began in 2010 with the goal of assisting former offenders reentering the community who have limited support or resources. The Ministry grew in scope and saw a need to serve the families as well as the former offenders, because families were impacted as well by the former offender's incarceration.

We now direct our services and support to the needs of the former offenders *and* their families.

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*Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep"*

*John 21:17*

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## The Importance of What We Do

As Christians we are called to serve the most dislocated and vulnerable members of our society without regard to their shortcomings or failings. In doing so, we express our love and service to Christ and act in accordance to His commandments.

When we aid in the process of change, we improve the lives of the marginalized and give them hope for a better outcome for their lives.

## The Impact of Incarceration

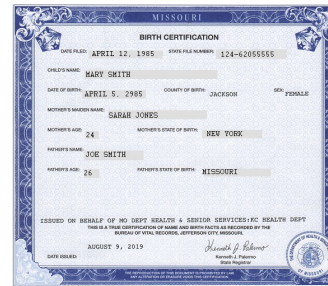
The recidivism rate for former offenders is as high as 87 percent. The United States currently has 1.4 million of its citizens incarcerated. Forty-six percent of those in the federal system are there for nonviolent drug offenses.

Former offenders have extreme difficulty finding gainful employment, relapse in sobriety, and their children unfortunately repeating the cycle.

The role of the St. Nicholas Prison Ministry is to minimize and alleviate these barriers and their adverse impacts.

# Services

## IDs and Birth Certificates



Assist former offenders in acquiring their IDs and birth certificates so they can seek gainful employment and access services within the community.

## Clothing and Furniture



Assist newly released former offenders and their families with the essentials of clothing and furniture donated by parishioners and the Ladies Philoptochos Society.

## Emergency Needs



Assist former offenders who have emergency needs in the areas of bereavement, utility and medication assistance and other emergency situations.

# Our Successes

- Chartered eight all-expenses paid trips to federal prisons for families.
- For 10 years annually collected an average of 400 toys for children of former offenders.
- Provided new laptops and dorm supplies to college freshmen and supported a student to study abroad.
- Provided bus tickets and bus passes to former offenders to assist them in seeking employment.
- Donated two cars to former offenders and their families.
- Provided diapers and infant items to new mothers and fathers.
- Stocked Federal Probation Office's food pantry with meat and can goods.
- Provided new winter coats for former offenders and their children.
- Hosted a Mother- Daughter overnight visit in the Greenville prison for women.

## Our Partnerships

- Missouri Federal Probation Office
- Federal Bureau of Prisons
- Electrical Connection IBEW/NECA
- Caritas Connections, Inc.
- All Saints of North America
- Assumption Greek Orthodox Church
- Sts. Constantine and Helen
- Sts. Cyril and Methody
- Many generous anonymous donors

# Overview of Programs

## Prison Visits



We provide transportation, lodging and meals to over 50 children, so they can visit their incarcerated parents. Also, we introduced them to resources and agencies that provide support service to former offenders, and invited agencies to the prison to conduct seminars with the inmates on parenting.

## College Bound



Former offenders often cannot provide the essentials required to send their first-time college student to school in the first year, so we provide laptops and dorm room items to freshmen college students to get them started

## Christmas Toy Drive



To minimize the stress that holidays generate for former offenders, we partner with other Orthodox parishes and adopt over 400 children to provide toys and winter coats.

# Getting Involved

## What Can You Do?

- Research criminal justice organizations and survey the need(s) of the community.
- Keep it simple. Do not overwhelm yourself with big or costly projects.
- Contact other Orthodox Prison Ministries.
- Limit your services to several projects annually.
- Do not burden the parish with too many requests.

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*“You give but little when you give of your possessions; it is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”*

*Kahlil Gibran*

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## Do What You Do Best

No matter how large or small your parish may be, you can still make a significant impact on the lives of former offenders. Focus on what commitments your parish is capable of fulfilling ( i.e. collecting hygiene bags) and be mindful of parishioners' time and ability to contribute . More importantly, keep your goals and objectives simple and manageable. Finally, partner with and develop a relationship with criminal justice agencies and research the needs of your local former offender population.

## Our Long Term Goals

- Expand the prison trips to other facilities, particularly women's prison.
- Annually support college bound freshmen.
- Expand relationships with other Orthodox parishes.
- Provide for prescriptions medications and tooth extractions.
- Include children of incarcerated.

## Ending the Cycle



*Mother-Daughter sleepover at Greenville Women's Prison 2016*



*Family Day United States Penitentiary (USP) Leavenworth 2018*



*Family Day United States Penitentiary (USP) Leavenworth Prison 2019*