CONNECTIONS
PRISON MINISTRY

Christmas 2024

Dear Connections Family!

Only this time of year do I sit to consider the first Christmas. The truth gets lost in the tinsel and the bustle. We forget what *really is magical*, is that a Holy God reckoned us worthy, to dress His only Son in skin and humanity, to send Him to our messy world as a baby, to reconcile us to Himself. In fact, so much of what we call 'Christmas' is wrapped in glitter and lights and trailing ribbon, not swaddled in cloth and birthed in a barn, lain amidst the stench of manure at the bottom of a food trough to the bleating of a lamb. It wasn't a silent night, lit by a dim star and a faint chorus of angels. The Infinite arrived an infant, and humanity so unsuspecting, no one even greeted Him on that most glorious of mornings, when like the hymn describes, '...He appeared, and the soul felt its worth...'

But I sit here today, inundated with lists, surrounded by the twinkle of merry lights, Christmas hymns playing softly in the background, and I again promise myself, *this year will be different*. Our world is melding through one of the most difficult and hostile times I have known in my lifetime. Every tragic moment of each day is on full display, and I wonder if you remind yourself to breathe too. Tears are on the tip of my tongue, and hope hangs like cobwebs from rafters, glinting just barely in a sliver of light caught by a draft. And slightly wafting into this chaotic chatter, is the Person of Peace, who I too often forget to invite. I remind myself *He* is the reason for this season, come to offer freedom to all of us bound by one kind of chain or another. *If* we'll but invite Him.

Wouldn't the greatest gift of this season <u>not</u> be what we place under the tree, hidden in swatches of glitter and paper, but that we recognize Emmanuel as He arrives and welcome Him into humble hearts and open homes? Wouldn't the most significant decision we make this month <u>not</u> be what to give one another or what to gift ourselves, but, rather, what difference might we could be in someone else's life? To the one starting over who can barely breathe, the single mom who can't afford groceries let alone gifts, the addict who is hardly hanging on to a thread, the lost who just is trying to find his way home. Wouldn't the greatest gift this year <u>not</u> be found in a department store or online, but would it be that 'every heart *prepare* Him room', to come, to come and work, to come and save, to come and simply abide.

We have encountered people of all walks of life since the doors to Kindness opened, literally. Most days, *we listen*. Kindness is quickly becoming what we truly believed the Lord designed it to be: a safe place, a peaceful place, a lighthouse, an open door, a place of healing, a place for fellowship; where someone can get help, make a way forward, be cared for by a stranger who wishes to become a friend. It is our desire that we live in a manner causing people to encounter Jesus, so they can know His peace, hope, love and grace is available to them as well, this season and forever.

We welcome you too to come visit. Please! Shop our incredible selection of clothing at amazing prices! Order some food from the Kindness Café and step inside to fellowship with us or with someone who is there needing a friend. We ask you to continue to hold us up in prayer, and boldly, we ask if you need a tax write-off, please consider giving a year-end gift to CPM on behalf of Kindness for its consistent presence in becoming a haven to those in need of a second chance, in receiving help, and introducing hope through the Person of Peace, Jesus Christ.

May God richly bless you and your family and may you 'sleep in heavenly peace' this season and always. We love you!

~Michelle Kim

Meet our first employee... Some of you may remember Madeleine! She and her daughter Kendrix were in the spotlight in a previous newsletter, as we asked you to partner in prayer with us for Madeleine and Kendrix to be reunited and for their future. These girls are precious to us!

So, Madeleine needed work, and we needed help, and she is a true godsend! Whether cooking in the trailer, sorting clothing, serving others or just plain encouraging us with her positivity, we would feel lost without Madeleine.

Please continue to pray for Madeleine and Kendrix as they navigate what the future holds. She is currently working very part-time hours with us, at minimal pay but as the Lord continues to provide, our hope is to give her more.

For as long as I can remember Christmas has been my favorite time of the year; and my most favorite Christmas song is "O Holy Night". I even have a playlist that has this beautiful song by 41 different singers and the list continues to grow as more and more beautiful versions are made. I love it! The second line reads, "It is the night of the dear Savior's birth". While sitting in church as a high schooler, I was impacted by these words imagining the birth of our Savior. WOW – it still touches my heart to think the Lord would come as an infant to fulfill the desires of a people in need of a Savior! I am grateful the Lord came on this Holy Night! Many blessings to you this Christmas...celebrate the coming of our Savior!

~ Peter Kim

"O HOLY NIGHT" - THE STORY BEHIND THE CAROL

A priest in a small French town commissioned a local poet, Placide Cappeal, to write a poem for Christmas Eve mass. Cappeal read through the birth of Christ in the gospel of Luke and finished the poem **"O Holy Night"** by the time he reached Paris. Cappeau turned to his friend, Adolphe Charles Adams, to compose music for the poem, and three weeks later, the song was sung in the village on Christmas Eve.

The song came to the U.S. via John Sullivan Dwight, an abolitionist during the Civil War. Moved by the line in the third verse, **"Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother, and in His Name all oppression shall cease,"** he published it in his magazine and quickly found favor in the North during the war.

"Cantique de Noel" (the song's French name) was popular among the people. On Christmas Eve in 1871, in the midst of fierce fighting between France and Germany during the Franco-Prussian War, an unarmed French soldier jumped out of the trenches, walked on the battlefield, and started singing the song's first line in French. After singing all three verses, a German solider stepped into the open and answered the Frenchman's song with Martin Luther's **"From Heaven Above to Earth I Come."**

Fighting stopped for the next 24 hours in honor of Christmas Day!

David's Story...I got a call on Friday, December 30, 2022 from a parole officer in Pueblo. After some initial greetings, he tells me that he has a client on parole who is in danger of being violated and sent back to prison. When I asked what the issues were, he shared that he was homeless and unable to find employment. He went on to share that if I was willing to assist him, he would give him a chance to continue on parole. The answer was "YES!"

On Monday, January 2nd, 2023, I drove down to Pueblo and met David at a storage unit property. His parole responsibilities were transferred to Colorado Springs, and as we got to know each other during the drive I learned that he was born in South Korea and then adopted by a caring family in the U.S. We discussed his struggles since his release from DOC in September and talked about what success would look like for him. I told him I was committed to helping and we started developing a plan for his future success. He also shared that it was his birthday and we when I offered to buy him a birthday meal, he quickly said he would love to eat at IHOP where he ordered chicken fried steak & eggs. We continued in conversation and spoke about following Jesus, participating in fellowship, and reconnecting with family. I encouraged him that we would do this together one step at a time. By the time the afternoon came around, housing was secured and employment soon followed. David is well on his way to the success – spiritually, physically, socially and emotionally - that we discussed that Monday.

~Peter

David in his own words...

Hello! My name is David, and I was released in September of 2022 after doing many years in the Colorado Department of Corrections. I did 8 years on an 11 year sentence. It is only by the grace of God that I have been able to do so well, with the support of my family, and my new friends, Peter and Michelle Kim, for whom I would not still be out of prison, if they hadn't stepped up to help me. I have been on the outside for two years now, and I am amazed at what I've been able to achieve due to the support I have.

I am involved with 7 Habits program and have been since January of 2023. I just finished my third class, and I was a core member for the first time in this most recent one. I had taken the class on the inside in 2019. I learn something new every time, and I try to implement the 7 Habits in my daily life. As a former teacher, I didn't realize I was using 7 Habits without even knowing it: being proactive (Habit 1), beginning with the end in mind (Habit 2), putting first things first (Habit 3), etc.

After my release, I achieved my driver's license, and I bought a car after only ten-months out. I have a good place to live, thanks to Peter and his support for all of us who are currently on parole, or even off parole. This has been a humbling experience, mentally, physically, and emotionally. Every day, I get up and thank God I am not in prison, or an even worse situation. I am grateful to be out and be doing well. I have a steady job, housing, and support which has kept me on the positive side of life. Being able to wear what I want, eat what I want, go where I am allowed to go. I am even soon scheduled to successfully complete parole - I cannot wait for that to be over. When I was on the inside, I couldn't imagine what getting out would be like. Now that I'm out, I can see the end, and it is so close. Again, I wouldn't be here today if I didn't have the support and people who believed in me when I didn't. While inside, I felt very alone. Then I met some nice Christian men who told me, in God's time, this too shall pass, and God has a plan that I might not see right now. One day it will show itself. I was told that God will be bless me, and my prayer is, someday I will hear from Him, "Well done, my good and faithful servant!"

Jesus...ridiculously KIND!

Come visit us at Kindness.
4559 Austin Bluffs Pkwy
Co. Springs, CO 80918

Tuesday – Friday
11am – 5pm or by appointment

Come, eat & fellowship with us!

Scan the QR code or go to
www.connectionsprisonministry.org

You will find encouraging and challenging words to ponder and strengthen your heart.

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us.""

Matthew 1:21-23 NKJV

Supporting Connections Prison Ministry

Financial donations can be made via the following money transfer apps using the CPM contact number (720.579.5122) Zelle, PayPal, GooglePay, & CashApp. You can also send a check made out to Connections Prison Ministry.

Thank you for your continued prayerful & financial support of this ministry!

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