

**Let Us Break Cake Together  
A Prison Ministry Program**



For over twenty years, First Presbyterian Church in Ossining has been involved in prison ministry at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. For most of those years this ministry was under the leadership of Marion Farrell. Last spring Marion passed away. The best way to remember her is to continue her work.

I have been involved with the ministry to men in the New York Theological Seminary Masters Degree Program at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. The third Saturday of each month, a group goes to Sing Sing and engages in a lively Bible study with men in NYTS, as well as alumni of the program. One of the high points of the program comes each spring. The Bible study team attends the graduation ceremony of the current year's class. For many years we have provided cake for dessert at the dinner which follows that ceremony. We join the graduates, their families and friends, the faculty of NYTS and members of the Sing Sing staff to celebrate by sharing a meal. Dessert is always a special part of that meal!

Over the years the tradition has grown. We now also provide cakes for the graduation ceremony of Hudson Link (associates and bachelors degrees), as well as the dinner that celebrates the awarding of high school diplomas. In the past, this program was funded by a grant from the state which was administered by Marion Farrell. That grant is no longer available to us, but we hope to continue the tradition.

Are there ten churches who would be willing to pledge \$100 a year to break bread with our brothers behind bars? That is all it would take to make sure that this celebration continues this year and in years to come.

Of course, it is not just about cake! Those cakes celebrate a relationship between men behind bars and those on the outside who honor the Biblical exhortation to visit those in prison. It would be pointless to simply send them cake. We must minister to them.

Perhaps your church can contribute financially. Perhaps you can do more. Might there be someone in your congregation who would like to participate in the Saturday Bible study? The time commitment is small. We meet every third Saturday of the month, twelve times a year. Our group is at Sing Sing from noon until 4 PM. We also share a Christmas Eve worship with the men in the Chapel each year. Anyone at Sing Sing is welcome to join us for Lessons and Carols. It is the best Christmas service I attend. And, of course, we are all invited to the June graduation!

We do not take attendance. There is no preparation for any of this. All that is required is people who will come with open hearts and open minds and minister to some of our brothers in prison. In doing so, we minister to Christ himself.

The commitment is small, both financially and in terms of time. The rewards are great. Won't you join us?

While our commitment as a presbytery to ministry inside the prisons is broad, diverse and longstanding---and while everyone is not comfortable going "inside" and engaging in a 1:1 relationship---this ministry of "breaking cake together" profoundly honors our partnership with men who have invited us into their home to study, pray and see where the Holy Spirit may lead us together!

If your congregation can participate, please contact me. I would be happy to talk about this mission opportunity and answer any questions you may have.

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