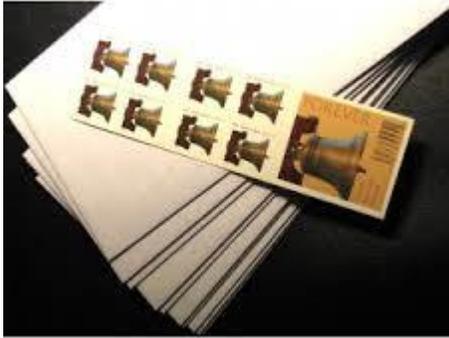


More than 2.3 million men and women are locked away in America's prisons and jails. Most of them are desperate for contact with the outside world. Many have been forsaken by friends and even family members. They long for an expression of human concern.



Paper, pen, stamp and envelope are all you need to begin to address this issue and to reach out in care and concern.



For more information about the Rye Writes program please contact:

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Rye
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Rye

Writes

**Rye Presbyterian
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“...I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” – Matthew 25:35-36

In Matthew 25, Jesus taught that God was pleased with those who showed care and concern for people in prison. In keeping with this spirit and teaching, it is our mission to reach out and offer friendship and compassion to those who are often forgotten and overlooked.



The **RYE WRITES** program is an extension of our long-standing Prison Ministry at Rye Presbyterian Church. This is a program to create a letter writing relationship enabling congregants and others to begin exchanging letters with those in prison, many of whom never get a visit or correspondence from the outside.

Simply put, we will create a facility through which any member of the congregation can exchange letters with incarcerated people in the New York State prison system.

We're doing this program because many of those in prison, often for 20 or more years, receive no visitors or letters from the outside. For the inmate, this program provides an opportunity to connect with an individual other than other inmates or the prison staff. For the congregant, it offers an opportunity, on his or her own time, to ease another person's loneliness, as well as to learn about a little known part of society.

We will ensure anonymity for congregants who are exchanging correspondence with inmates in prisons.

- Writers will use only first names—and not their own first names.
- They will use the church as the return address.
- Heather Miller, Program Coordinator, will notify the writer when a letter has been received from an inmate correspondent.
- The writer can pick up the letter at a "Mailbox" in the Library and respond on his or her own time.

We will also attempt to ensure that participating inmate correspondents will be individuals who are not disciplinary problems in prison and who are working at changing their lives and preparing themselves for reentering society to live positive, productive lives.

The main referral sources for these inmate correspondents will be prison staff, the heads of prison programs RPC has worked closely with in the past, and perhaps individuals known to us to be positive role-models in prison.

Inmates will be informed clearly that this is for correspondence only. They are not to expect money, gifts, or packages of any type. They will also be informed they should not expect more than one letter per month, though the frequency of correspondence will ultimately be up to the congregant and the inmate to work out.

We are very enthusiastic about the opportunity that Rye Writes provides to the many people who have indicated they'd like to be involved in prison ministry, but find the time commitments or bureaucratic entanglements to be problematic. Simply writing letters once a month eliminates all those problems.

