



Order of Malta  
American Association  
Prison Ministry

# PRISON MINISTRY COMMITTEE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

*"Lord, when did we see you in prison and visit you?"*

–Mt 25:39

Prison Ministry Committee  
American Association  
Date of issue: July 2025



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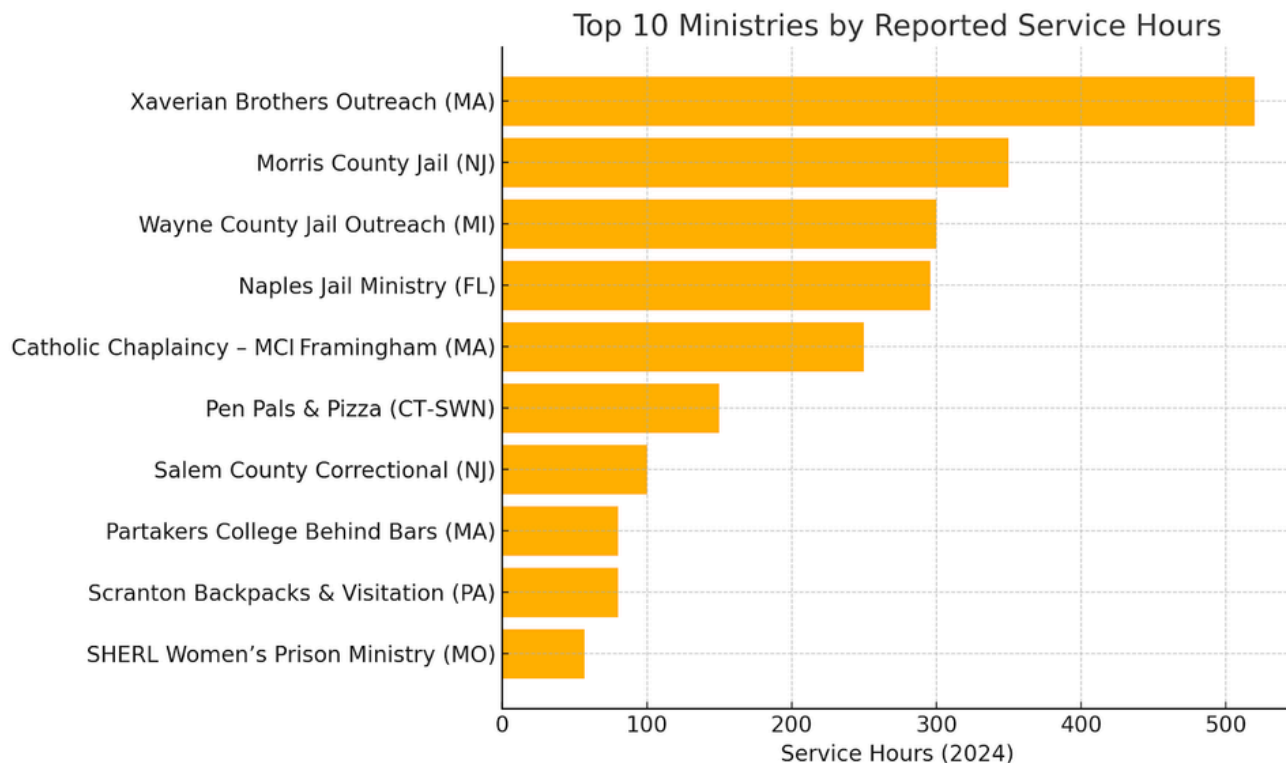


# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, the American Association supported 21 active prison-ministry projects across 15 states, engaging at least 200 Knights, Dames, Auxiliaries, and volunteers and contributing over 4000 documented service-hours (many programmes did not yet supply hour totals, so the real figure is higher).

Key growth points this year include:

- **Two new county jail Eucharistic teams** in New Jersey
- A **first-time ministry in Brown County, WI**, after 22 years of informal witness
- **Expanded legal-aid and re-entry partnerships** at Wayne County Jail Outreach, Detroit
- The Boston Area's sixth distinct programme, giving Massachusetts the Association's broadest footprint



A concise data table and a bar chart of the ten ministries that reported the largest hour totals are displayed above for quick reference.



# PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

## (alphabetical by state)

*Red values mark the largest reporting counts.*

### CONNECTICUT

**Facility / Project:** Pen Pals & Pizza

**Lead(s):** Kristy Snyder DM & Liz

Tamarkin DM

**Reg./Aux.:** 15/2

**2024 Hours:** 150

#### Highlights & Impact:

- Quarterly formation nights
- Postcard action with Women Against Mass Incarceration
- "Continued communication and hope."

### FLORIDA – COLLIER COUNTY

**Facility / Project:** Naples Jail Ministry

**Lead:** Leo Stec KM

**Reg./Aux.:** 4/0

**2024 Hours:** 296

#### Highlights & Impact:

- Weekly Eucharist & Rosary
- Tuesday Bible study for 80–90 inmates
- Urgent need for Malta Bibles and prayer-books

### FLORIDA – PALM BEACH

**Facility / Project:** Diocesan Prison Ministry (multiple sites)

**Lead(s):** Deacon Greg Quinn (Richard Smith KM liaison)

**Volunteers:** 100+

**2024 Hours:** —

#### Highlights & Impact:

- 2,000+ inmates received Christmas gifts
- Weekly Scripture reflection groups

### MASSACHUSETTS – BOSTON

**Facility / Project:** Catholic Chaplaincy, MCI Framingham

**Lead:** Sr. Maureen Clark CSJ

**Reg./Aux.:** 1/0

**2024 Hours:** 250

#### Highlights & Impact:

- One-to-one spiritual direction for women
- Two inmates preparing for full initiation

### Facility / Project: Xaverian Brothers Outreach, Essex Co. Jail

**Lead:** Br. Jim Connolly CFX

**Reg./Aux.:** 1/0

**2024 Hours:** **520**

#### Highlights & Impact:

- Three Sunday communion services
- Weekday guided meditation

### Facility / Project: Partakers "College Behind Bars" Mentoring (MCI Norfolk)

**Lead:** Chrissy Cassa

**Reg./Aux.:** 6/1

**2024 Hours:** 80

#### Highlights & Impact:

- Full parish team participation
- Student quote: "Mentors give the emotional support needed to get through school in prison."



# PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

(alphabetical by state)

## MAINE

**Facility / Project:** Somerset Co. Jail  
Bible Programme

**Lead:** W. Adam Stearns (vol.)

**Reg./Aux.:** —

**2024 Hours:** —

**Highlights & Impact:**

- 40 cases of English/Spanish Bibles requested
- Inmate reflection: "The first gift I've ever received."

## MICHIGAN

**Facility / Project:** Wayne Co. Jail  
Outreach Ministry (WCJOM)

**Lead:** Andy Smith

**Reg./Aux.:** 1/2

**2024 Hours:** 300

**Highlights & Impact:**

- New office space established
- Legal aid link with Univ. of Detroit Mercy
- Health partnership with Pope Francis Center

## MISSOURI – ST. LOUIS

**Facility / Project:** SHERL Women's  
Prison Ministry

**Lead:** Patricia Hofmeister DM

**Reg./Aux.:** 2/0

**2024 Hours:** 57

**Highlights & Impact:**

- Relaunch of subsidized child-visitor bus trips
- Partnership with Criminal Justice Ministry

## NEW JERSEY – MORRIS COUNTY

**Facility / Project:** Weekly Mass/Bible  
Study

**Lead:** Christine Myers DM

**Reg./Aux.:** 8/—

**2024 Hours:** 350

**Highlights & Impact:**

- Bishop Sweeney's Holy Week Mass
- Two male catechumens baptized

**Facility / Project:** Salem Co. Correctional  
Facility

**Lead:** Diana Zayas

**Reg./Aux.:** 2/0

**2024 Hours:** 100

**Highlights & Impact:**

- First year of consistent priestly presence

**Facility / Project:** Ocean Co. Jail  
Eucharistic Team

**Lead:** Chaplain James Casey

**Reg./Aux.:** —

**2024 Hours:** —

**Highlights & Impact:**

- Weekly communion services
- Monthly priest-led confessions

## NEW YORK - NASSAU COUNTY

**Facility / Project:** Going to Masses in  
Prison and assisting with the setup  
and breakdown of Mass

**Lead:** Raymond Nardo

**Reg./Aux.:** 2

**2024 Hours:** 20

**Highlights & Impact:**

- Masses in prison
- The prisoners appreciate the presence of the Order of Malta



# PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

## (alphabetical by state)

### OHIO

**Facility / Project:** Portage Co. Jail

Ministry – Cleveland

**Lead:** John Das KM

**Reg./Aux.:** 1/1

**2024 Hours:** 18

**Highlights & Impact:**

- Friday communion liturgies
- Collaboration with Kent State Newman Center

### PENNSYLVANIA – SCRANTON

**Facility / Project:** Backpacks, Visitation & GED Program

**Lead:** Grace Dawgert DM

**Reg./Aux.:** 12/0

**2024 Hours:** 80

**Highlights & Impact:**

- 100 “Welcome-Back” backpacks distributed
- Interfaith education course with federal camp imam

### VERMONT - BOSTON AREA

**Facility / Project:** Provide volunteer laity, deacons and priests to provide weekly catholic religious services in all 6 state prisons.

**Lead:** Deacon Gerry Scilla

**Reg./Aux.:** 0, 25 volunteer laity, deacons and priests

**2024 Hours:**

**Highlights and Impact:** Distribution of KoM Bibles and Prayer books

### WISCONSIN – BROWN COUNTY

**Facility / Project:** Jail Catholic Chaplaincy (22 years)

**Lead:** Deacon Fred Rotherham

**Reg./Aux.:** 1/1

**2024 Hours:** —

**Highlights & Impact:**

- Seeking priest supply support
- Interested in sample Malta materials

### AMERICAN ASSOCIATION PEN PAL PROGRAM

<https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/spirituality-in-action/prison/pen-pal/>

The American Association’s Pen Pal Program is a popular way to become involved in our ministry. Knights, Dames, Auxiliary and Volunteers have joined the Program, which consists of (1) letting us know you would like to become a pen pal, (2) being given an inmate’s name to whom you would write, (3) being furnished “guidelines” and general pen pal information and (4) writing to your pen pal once a month.

- Since 2018, we have had over 1.1 K insiders participate; 320 have been released, 49 have discontinued for various reasons. Currently 682 insiders participate.
- Currently there are 652 outside pen pals; with 30 withdrawing through the history of the program
- The current number of Order of Malta Pen Pals are 53



# RE-ENTRY

## The Importance of Reentry Programs for the Formerly Incarcerated

Reentry programs are vital in helping individuals transition from incarceration back into society with dignity, support, and a real chance at success. Without structured support, many face overwhelming barriers — including unemployment, homelessness, stigma, and lack of access to healthcare or education — all of which contribute to high rates of recidivism.

These programs provide critical services such as job training, housing assistance, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, legal aid, and mentorship. By addressing the root causes that may have contributed to incarceration, reentry programs break the cycle of repeated offenses and promote public safety.

Moreover, reentry programs recognize the humanity and potential of every individual. They foster personal accountability, community reintegration, and economic self-sufficiency. Investing in reentry is not just about reducing prison populations — it's about building stronger families, safer neighborhoods, and a more equitable society.

- **American Association Prison Ministry Resources:**  
<https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/spirituality-in-action/prison/resources/>
- **Dismas Home NH:** <https://dismashomenh.org>
- **Thrive For Life:** <https://thriveforlife.org>
- **One Parish: One Prisoner:** <https://www.undergroundministries.org/opop>
- **Resources:**  
<https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/spirituality-in-action/prison/resources/>



# TESTIMONIES FROM INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

*"I am a former inmate... During the last few years of my incarceration, I was blessed by your pen-pal ministry. ... I am now out, stable, and ready to help."*

– letter received February 2025

*"National statistics tell us one in three parolees return within three years. Those who have pen-pals return at less than one in thirty."*

– Steve Hawkins KM, National PenPal Coordinator

*"I was in a dark space, and He brought me home... Your pen-pal ministry blessed me. I'm now out, stable, and ready to serve—I know firsthand the fruits of it!"*

– Former inmate, now volunteer candidate

*"National statistics tell us one in three parolees return within three years; those who have pen-pals return at less than one in thirty."*

– Steve Hawkins KM, National Pen-Pal Coordinator

*"This is the first time anyone has ever given me a gift."*

– Resident, Somerset County Jail, on receiving an Order of Malta Bible.

*"I was in a dark space, and He brought me home... Your pen-pal ministry blessed me. I'm now out, stable, and ready to serve—I know firsthand the fruits of it!"*

– Former inmate, now volunteer candidate.

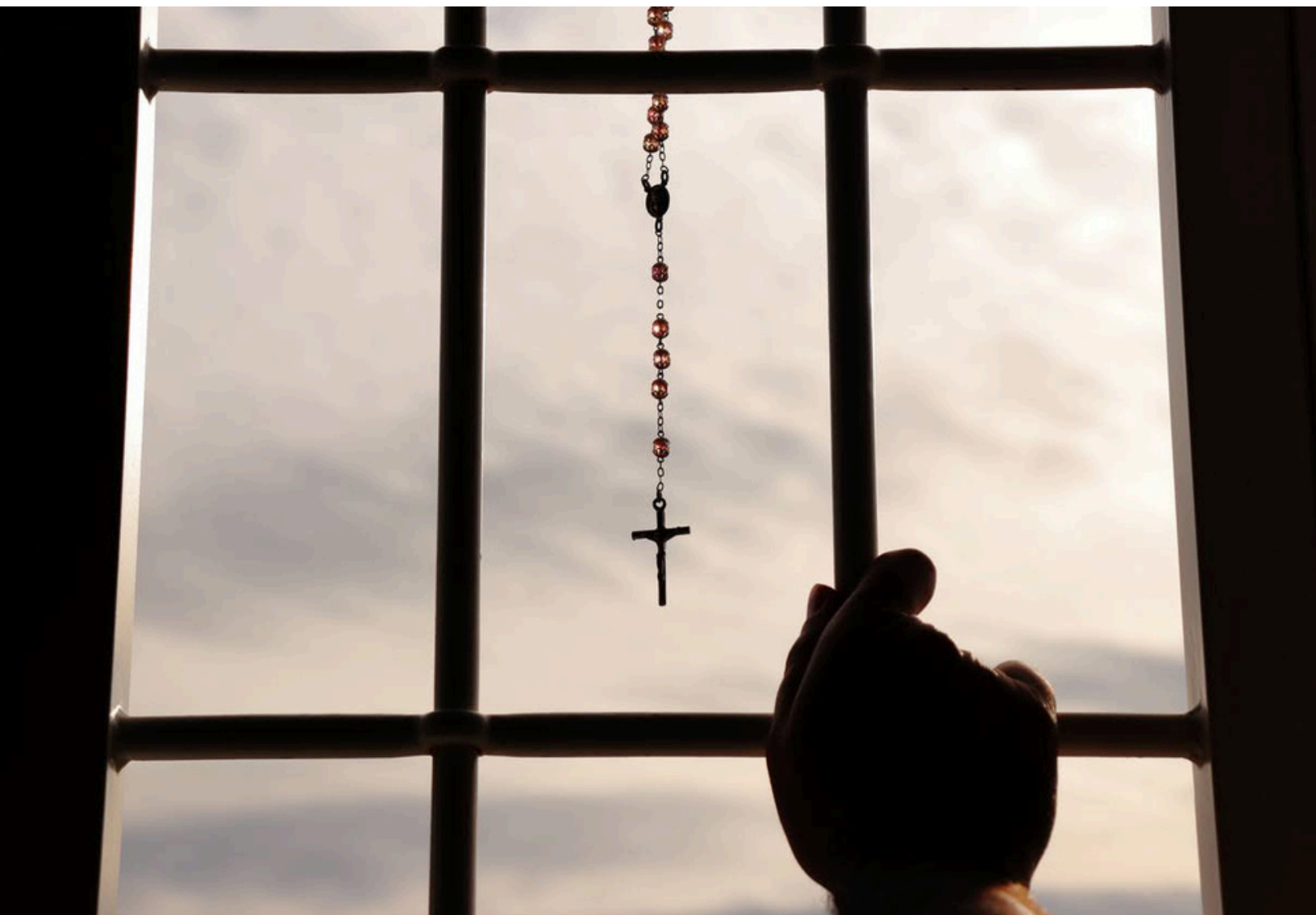
These personal notes echo 2023 findings: correspondence and spiritual resources significantly lower anxiety, boost hope, and reduce recidivism.





# KEY NEEDS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2025

1. **Literature supply chain** – multiple areas (FL-Naples, WI, ME) report back-orders.  
Evaluate vendor contracts and warehouse logistics.
2. **Volunteer formation** – replicate Boston’s mentor onboarding guide Association-wide;  
pursue the Prison Ministry Committee’s 2023 call for unified training .
3. **Digital correspondence** – Texas’ move to e-Messaging disrupts pen-pal relationships;  
explore secure digital alternatives with the MN pen-pal hub.
4. **Re-entry transportation for families** – fund SHERL’s bus or van solution in St. Louis  
(impact on children and caregivers).
5. **Data completeness** – add mandatory fields for hours and member counts in the online  
update form; hours were missing for six programs.



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