



**The United Methodist Church**  
North Carolina Conference-Raleigh Area  
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Dear Colleague:

On August 27, we will celebrate Cross and Key Prison Ministries Sunday and take up a special offering for this important work. I encourage you to participate by highlighting this ministry in your church. Please reach out to Cross and Key Prison Ministries on how to begin a prison ministry in your local church.

Hebrews reminds us to remember those in prison as if we were in prison ourselves and prisoners are specifically named in the parable of the Great Judgment in Matthew 25: "I was in prison and you visited me." "When you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me." America's prison population continues to be the largest in the world. Our prisons are a great mission field!

First established in 1999 as Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, Cross and Key Prison Ministries has been faithfully ministering to prison inmates for 24 years. Hundreds of volunteers and thousands of inmates have participated in Disciple Bible study behind prison walls and Cross and Key Prison Ministry has now expanded its reach to resource all prison ministries in our conference. Cross and Key Prison Ministries is our North Carolina Conference resource for prison ministry.

I believe in prison ministry. Throughout my ministry, I have seen the change it has brought to individuals, volunteers, and local churches. Please do all you can to support this effort.

Additional information and resources will be provided on NCCUMC.org and please feel free to contact Executive Director Mark Hicks at 336-689-1443 / [www.crossandkeyprisonministries.com](http://www.crossandkeyprisonministries.com).

Gratefully,

Connie Mitchell Shelton, Resident Bishop  
Raleigh Episcopal Area  
North Carolina Conference  
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*Healthy Congregations and Effective Leaders in Every Place  
Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World*