The Maranatha Village Trumpet



Comeths &

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Maranatha's County Jail Ministry

Sheriff Blackman, a Christian, welcomes organizations to share Biblical truths giving these men and women the opportunity to grow spiritually and change destructive behavior through transformed lives. Our county jail hosts about 60 women, sometimes teens, and many men, about 500 inmates altogether.

Maranatha's Ministry at Highlands County Jail began with a personal burden to see men and women freed from the bondage of sin. We must fill out an application, have a background check, attend a security briefing, get our picture taken, and be issued a photo identification.

§ Ministering to Women §

Betty and I, along with Ruth Watterson, leave the Village at 7:30 a.m. on the 3rd and 5th Sundays of each month for morning worship at the jail. Upon arrival, we press the intercom to let the guard know we are there, leave our car keys, and pick up the CD player and the preapproved music we plan to use. We proceed through the metal detector, several



locked doors, and up the stairs to the ladies' class room. The numbers vary because the women have breakfast at 4:30 a.m., and some of them go back to bed after their meal.

On our Sunday visit, Betty opens in prayer, introduces us, and Ruth leads the music she has chosen, explaining the truths conveyed by the song. Ruth and Betty reverse this order for the next Sunday. With both the men and the women, we find that many have made a profession in Christ, but they know little of the Scriptures: how to find verses and use them to have victory in their daily walk.

One heartbreaking memory occurred when the invitation had been given. The women were reminded that all they needed to say was, "I need Jesus." An echo, "I need Jesus," came from the back of the room. Betty located the girl and asked her what she needed. *She said*, "*Peace*, *I need*

peace." Betty's verse for that day had been Romans 8:31b "If God be for us who can be against us?" Tearfully, Stacy listened to Betty's explanation of the gospel; then she prayed asking Jesus to come into her heart and life. This gave her peace and freedom in Christ. In our later visits with the women, we never saw her again. (continued on page 10)



Bruce & Betty Hendsbee



AVOIDING EVERLASTING MEDIOCRITY

Dr. Gerald Webber



Jerry

Harriet Beecher Stowe, famous for her literary excellence, said, "One would like to be grand and heroic, if one could...one wants to be very something, very great...it is this everlasting mediocrity that bores me."

Are you bothered by "this everlasting mediocrity?" I remember back in 2009 when Joe Maddon, quirky manager of the Tampa Bay Rays, was defending mediocrity. In 2008, his team had won the American League championship and almost taken the World Series with their inspired play. A year later, they were a mere shadow of their former selves. Despite hanging on to some really outstanding players (Evan Longorio, BJ Upton, Carl Crawford, James Shields) they struggled most of the season to keep their heads above the .500 mark, and missed the playoffs. Despite this, virtually every time Maddon was interviewed, he'd say something like "You can't win them all." I remember wishing that just once he'd say, "Our relief pitching is pitiful; our bats are dead; this team stinks!" At least the baseball world would've known he wasn't satisfied with mediocrity.

What a contrast to the incomparable Vince Lombardi, head coach of the Green Bay Packers. In his first team meeting with the Packers, he is reputed to have said, "Gentlemen, we are going to relentlessly chase perfection, knowing full well we will not catch it, because nothing is perfect. But we are going to relentlessly chase it, because in the process we will catch excellence. I am not remotely interested in just being good."

You knew, didn't you, that it's no sin to pursue excellence? What is not OK is to settle for mediocrity in the work of the Lord. Paul seemed to understand that. In Philippians 3:13-14, he says, "Brethren I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Mediocrity was simply not in Paul's vocabulary.

In his challenge to the Corinthian church (1 Cor 12:29), he said, "And yet I show you a more excellent way." The apostle was urging them to adopt a mindset all too rare in today's world: it's what the Lexus people call "the relentless pursuit of excellence."

Maranatha Village will never be perfect in an imperfect world. Our residents aren't perfect (sorry); our leaders aren't perfect (but you knew that); our buildings and grounds aren't perfect; our climate isn't perfect (though there's precious little we can do about that); and admittedly our service isn't perfect, however hard we try.

We will never reach perfection in this life, but what we can do, from top to bottom, is to relentlessly chase after it, believing that in the process we will "catch excellence." That's a pursuit worth engaging in, from the Board of Directors, to the administration, the office staff, maintenance crew, and every resident. May God deliver us from "everlasting mediocrity."

~ Women's Jail Ministry ~

Elaine Kintner - Marlys Johnson - Ruth Watterson



Elaine

Elaine Kintner, Marlys Johnson, and Ruth Watterson have the privilege of sharing God's Word and His love with the women inmates. In order to reach the place where they reside, we stop at the reception area that is closed off by bullet proof glass. We tell the officer behind this partition our names and badge numbers and

are allowed to carry into the jail cells only our Bibles and Bible study material that have been approved by the officer in charge.

Once we are cleared to enter, an officer comes and escorts us, taking us through a series of eight heavy metal doors that we hear clang and lock behind us. We proceed down a maze of hallways, then up two sets of stairs to the common room where we hold the ladies' Bible study. We set up the plastic chairs in a circle so we have good eye-contact with the women.

The matron on duty uses the PA systems to let the inmates know we are there for Bible study. They are not required to attend, so attendance varies. If there is a Hispanic woman present, Elaine interprets, using her experience as a missionary to Spanish-speaking people.

The ladies come in different-colored uniforms (blue, white, green, orange, red, black and white stripped) that indicate a level ranging from minimum to maximum custody. We never know who or how many women will come.

The stories of these ladies break our hearts though most of the time we do not know specifically what the offenses were. The ages range from great-grandmothers down to 18-year-olds. We see, from time to time, both the mother and daughters, sisters, and cousins who are jailed, waiting to receive their sentences.

The jail ministry is different from the prison work. The inmates in prison have been sentenced for a longer period of time, thus allowing a larger influence of the Word of God. Those in jail are there from just a few days to several months; then they receive their sentences and are either released or sent to prison. This shorter time frame makes it imperative that we get the Good News of Christ's forgiveness and His purpose for living to these women. We go every second and fourth Tuesday of the month.

As our time begins with them, we take prayer requests. During this time, they often ask us to pray for their children. When we have had around 20 in the Bible study, there were about 60 children represented by these women's lives. One can see how important it is to reach these ladies with God's Word. The effects are far-reaching.

As in any ministry, we don't always know the outcome of what we do. We have seen God



Marlys

change many of their lives, and sometimes we've had contact with them once they are out of jail. If we see them in or around Sebring, some will often speak to us and let us know how they are doing and thank us for coming to the jail to teach them about Christ and the forgiveness they can receive through Him.

At the end of our Bible study time, the Lord opens many opportunities to counsel and pray with these women. Many of these ladies have a religious background, and say they have already trusted Christ as Savior but have fallen away from church and Bible-reading. Perhaps God is using their time in jail to discipline and bring them back into fellowship with Him. Some have said they are thankful God brought them to this place. Once they are in jail and under the Word of God again, they repent and get their lives right with God. Then God uses them in the jail to be a catalyst for helping the other inmates. It is thrilling to share the Word with them and watch them minister to the other gals in the cells. It strengthens them and helps them to grow. When they get out, we encourage them to get into a good Bible-teaching church and to stay in the Word of God.

Another arm of the ministry has been extended to a lady who has been sentenced to 12 years in prison. We keep in contact with her through the mail system to encourage her by sending her a Bible lesson

once a month. She shares it with her "Bunkie," and they answer the questions, returning their responses, ready for a new lesson.

We thank the Lord for the wonderful opportunity we have to go into a very dark place with the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Please pray that we will be usable vessels for the glory of God.



Ruth

New Village Residents

Jim & Julie Russo



Julie & Jim

We live at 246 Timothy Rd. This is our first year as snow birds. We came to Marantha Village by invitation of Ilene Coyle whom Julie knew from Bible study in Pennsylvania. After traveling the US in our motor home visiting friends and family a couple months each winter for three years, the

time had come for us to make a decision about where we would retire as we had prayed for God's leading. Our family and friends are scattered across the USA. The Coyles suggested we come to Maranatha's RV Park where we stayed for the month of February.

Maranatha Village was having their annual garage sale that month, and Judy and David Tinkham were just putting a sign up to sell their mobile home. The Lord gave both of us peace about purchasing their lovely house. The genuine love we have received from so many residents has been truly heartwarming. Also spiritually encouraging have been weekly Bible teaching and special conferences at the church.

The Lord has blessed us with three daughters and seven grandchildren. Kari, our oldest daughter, lives in Tucson, Arizona with her four children; Nicole and Pete have three children and live in Sellersville, Pennsylvania. Julie's greatest joy has been raising the girls in the church and serving the Lord by teaching Sunday school and working in youth groups alongside the church leaders.

My work over the years has taken us from western New York, in Syracuse, Connecticut, Nevada, and lately to Pennsylvania, where we have lived for 14 years. I worked for a farming family as a youth in Florida. As an adult, I have been involved as a plant manager, in a plumbing partnership, an agriculture dealer, and in corporate jobs.

During our years of moving, God was always faithful leading Julie to wonderful Christian schools where she taught in Springville, Syracuse, Nevada, and Sellersville. It was such a blessing for her to teach Pre-K and kindergarten and most of all to lead little ones to Christ.

We both became believers later in life. Julie and I met in our early twenties, both of us were raised in Catholic homes. She trusted Christ at a small Baptist church in upstate New York in 1976 after the loss of our second child. Faithful women came to visit her and invited her to church and later discipled her. As she grew in the Lord, she taught in children's ministries until our move to Syracuse, New York. I did not come to Christ until later in our marriage. Because of the love and constant prayers of my wife and the church, Christ got my attention as He did with Paul. He began to work in my life, showing me the vast love He had for me and surrounding me with His love and grace at North Syracuse Baptist Church. Now, we both serve the Lord in our church in Quakertown, Pennsylvania

It has been a joy and a privilege to become a part of the Maranatha Village family and church. Each day we thank God for His provision and the blessing of being here among such dear saints in Christian fellowship. We look forward to many years of retirement and serving the Lord here. We think of the song, "Day By Day," and the verse in Joshua 1:9, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be discouraged, for The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Oh how the Lord has proven over and over again His faithfulness and amazing grace!

"The Fruit of the Spirit Is Love"

Joy is love in jubilation.

Peace is love in repose.

Longsuffering is love on trial.

Gentleness is love in action.

Goodness is love in action.

Faith is love in endurance.

Meekness is love at school.

Temperance is love in discipline. (copied)



Cooks Korner

Chicken Salad

2 cans white chicken breast
1/2 cup toasted almonds
3/4 cup white grapes (cut into 1/4's)
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup Cool Whip
Squirt of lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
Mix together and chill before serving.

Sharon VanNatter

Hash Brown Casserole

1 lb. bacon chopped or 2 cups chopped ham pieces

1 chopped onion

6 beaten eggs

4 cups frozen hash brown potatoes, thawed

2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded

1 1/2 cup cottage cheese

1 1/4 cup Swiss cheese, shredded or cheddar

Brown bacon crisp & onion, drain.

Mix all other ingredients and add bacon.

Pour into a greased 9" x 12" baking dish.

Bake 350° for 40 minutes or until eggs are set.

Gen Schmidt

Raspberry Swirl

(A Frozen Dessert)

CRUST: 3/4 box vanilla wafers crushed 1/2 stick butter, melted Mix this and spread in 13" x 9" pan. Bake for 8 mins at 350°. Cool.

FILLING: Thaw 12 oz frozen raspberries or use 2 cups fresh raspberries; add 1/3 cup sugar and mix to create juice. Mash to a pulp. Set aside.

Mix in order:

1- 8 oz Philadelphia Cream Cheese, softened1/2 cup powdered sugar3/4 of a 1/2 gallon vanilla ice cream, slightly softenedFold in 1 carton Cool Whip

Add: 1/2 of the raspberry pulp into the cream mixture and stir to make it pink with faint swirls Pour onto the cooled crust.

Use rest of raspberry pulp in equal dollops on top of the creamed mixture (I try to get 12 dollops) Use a knife or spatula to gently swirl the dollops together, making a more dramatic swirl.

Freeze uncovered till frozen, then may cover it till ready to use.

Remove from freezer 1/2 hr before serving.
Cut into squares.

Marcia Flaherty



"Good News Clubs"

Mrs. Linda Peacock



Linda

After teaching at Christian schools for 34 years, I feared I would miss children here at Maranatha Village. At my first home fellowship, Harry and Mary Schuster suggested I might enjoy Good News Club. I filled out the paperwork right away.

I am now teaching at two clubs: Memorial and Avon Elementry.

Maranatha Baptist Church supports the club at Memorial. Harry and Mary Schuster, Eloise Skillman, Carol Ciocca, Mary Pyle, Colene Price, and Sharon O'Keefe are regular workers, with Mike Livezey's and Pam Kruger's help when we need them. The church has provided Bibles (which we give the children at the end of the club's sessions in the spring) and money to pay for curriculum, snacks, awards, and other needs.

Each week, we leave the Village about 1:30 p.m. for Memorial Elementry. This year we had a room that we could set up early, and we were able to get chairs from an adjoining room after school let out. As the students entered, Harry and Mary greeted them and gave them the "Quiet Time" sheet to put in their bookbag, which has five different, short devotional activities for the students to complete daily. This year we rewarded students after they had completed five "Quiet Times" sheets, hoping this goal would encourage as many as possible to think about the Lord throughout the week.

After receiving their sheets, students would go to their small groups. Bob Gardiner made bases for the colored flags which identified each of these groups. During this time, students would recite verses for tickets, and leaders would have a prayer time. As we gathered together into one group, we would sing some songs. What a joy it is to hear the students singing these scriptural songs! After singing comes the Bible lesson, illustrated by a flashcard picture book. This year we learned about Daniel, David, and Peter along with some specially focused lessons. The gospel is always carefully woven into the teaching. We conclude the lesson with an invitation, allowing students to be counseled by their group leader. After the invitation, I would teach the weekly verse and conduct a review game, giving ample time for leaders to thoroughly guide the students for salvation, assurance or other

spiritual needs. The competition of the varied review games was a highlight to the children and helped us get an idea what they really understood from the Bible lesson

We also taught them the books of the New Testament and how to find verses in their Bibles. We actually were able to have some "Bible Drills!" Pastor Stan Mohr, ventriloquist, came with hand puppet, Rodney, to our last club. We had invited parents, and five of them with younger ones came. It was an extra special joy! Mary Schuster made some special stuffed "Fred Gonk" dolls which a boy and girl clubber of the year earned. The boy's dad came as one of the guests. The clubbers certainly seemed to enjoy the Bible we gave each of them during the last club.

I also teach a club at Avon Elementary School, where we have a small room we can set up early. *Rosalie Parmelee, Maureen Micka, and Sandy Cornell help out at this club*. They are all winter people so we have a challenging time finding enough workers from October through December. We do not use small groups at this school, although we have more students than at Memorial. We had a rough start at the beginning of the year, but, as the students who really did not want to be there dropped out, we had a wonderful group. We saw God really work in some hearts in such a way we could literally see the difference in these dear ones! What a blessing to invest in young lives even at a public school!

The 2018-2019 school year in five local *Good News Clubs* ministered to 304 different children. Eightyfour students made professions of faith in Jesus as their Savior, and thirty-four received assurance of their salvation. Please pray for next year's clubs!

Visa vs. Master Card?

Some countries have ongoing problems obtaining entry permits, which aren't nearly as amusing as the misconception of this situation.

Several years ago, the primary Sunday school class in Haddon Heights Baptist Church was praying for ABWE missionaries George and Shirley Weber. To promote specific prayer, the teacher suggested they pray that the government would renew the Weber's visa.

A small voice piped up, "If they can't use Visa, why don't they use their Master Cards?" (copied)

Maranatha's County Jail Ministry § Ministering to Men §

(continued from page one)

Gil Seddon, Barry Byrne, and I pick up our badges, are escorted to the jail cell where we sit down around a table. Though we have a lesson to share, we draw the men out to discover what has been going on in their lives since our last visit. On February 22nd, I asked a new man if he had ever been born-again. He shook his head, no. I asked if he would like me to explain how to have eternal life and know it. After the explanation, I asked if he would like to invite the Lord to come into his heart and life. With my help through the sinner's prayer, he prayed without shame or fear for forgiveness and asked the Lord to save him. The men around the table were noticeably praying for him too.

Some of the men take Bible study booklets to complete and thereby receive a *CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT*. It is exciting to hear of those who are studying together. One of the men has led another inmate to the Lord. Virgil also wakes the men up in his block on Sunday morning to have a service. One day, Virgil's mother called me from Lakeland hospital because she was to be released the next day but had no place to live with her two girls. We support a mission-

ary here at Maranatha Baptist Church whose daughter is CEO of "*Champion of Children in Highlands County.*" Through her, Virgil's mother and sisters were given a place to stay. He expressed thanks for our help for his mother.

One Sunday morning, a Christian guard excitedly told us that one of the cells planned to celebrate "The First Annual Highlands County Jail Christmas Prayer Service." Inmates had developed a program, had hand-printed the verses of "O Come All Ye Faithful," "Away in a Manger," and "Silent Night" on hand-out sheets. They had an opening prayer and Bible readings in Isaiah, Micah, Matthew, and Luke. One of the inmates preached and closed with a "Prayer of Thanks." Another cell heard about this service, and they wanted to have a program, too! It was Virgil who led in the development of this Christmas service.

What a privilege it is to serve the Lord in ministering to these men in the county jail. Galatians 6:9 says, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Bruce Hendsbee



Hats for Kids The Craft Cottage





On a Wednesday night, I read a missionary letter from Yvonne Miller who lives in Missouri. She stated that the kids she works with on Wednesday nights come without hats or gloves. I began to think that the round loom knitters from the

Joy Logan *Craft Cottage* could make hats and send them to the needy children. I found out that Becky and Jim Storey also live at Missionary Acres in Missouri where the Millers reside. I was able to talk to Becky Storey first and found out they work in the poorest area of Silva, Missouri. I asked her how many hats they could use; she responded they needed between 25 to 30. I knew at the time that we only had seven hats in the donation box in the *Craft Cottage*, so I called ladies and told them about my conversation with Becky and the need for 25 to 30 hats. They responded

enthusiastically! On February 25, 2019, we counted 105 hats! My faith was small, the response was huge.

We sent 45 hats to Missouri and 41 hats to Joe and Dawn Lee in New Mexico, who work with the Navajo Indians (BMM). Dawn said, "The winters are very cold."

Twenty-six hats are going to the Budds, who have a crisis pregnancy center in Peru, and 17 hats are going

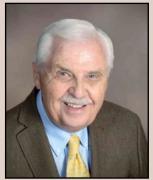
to Alaska for a Christian camp.

God used ladies from Maranatha Village to minister to others in places around the world. "Little is much when God is in it!"





~ Investing In Maranatha Village ~



Gerry

Recently I discovered a document on my computer that I had compiled in October of 2013. The document was entitled: *Forget Not All His Benefits – Ps. 103:2.* There were twenty-four monumental blessings listed that I could acknowledge were directly from the hand of God during my life.

I wrote it during the time that Connie and I, plus a host of friends around the country, were praying fervently that our house in North Carolina would sell so that we could move to Maranatha Village. Like many other Village residents, our road to Sebring was not an easy one. Eight months earlier, we had committed to make the move that would solidly plant our feet in the soil of Central Florida. By late October, not one qualified buyer had seriously looked at our house, but about a month later, the Lord sent that buyer to purchase our home. We had acquired that beautiful house eighteen years earlier via a miracle, and we saw the Lord sell it in a similar miraculous way.

Some of the benefits recorded on the document were experiences of God's enablement during the loss of loved ones, or the grace He provided to endure trials in our lives and in our family. They included the sparing of my life on 9/11 when I was at the White House in Washington, D.C., and the safe return of our son from the first Gulf War. Also included were reminders of God's leading, guiding, and protecting us in other specific ways.

We believe that the Lord brought us specifically and especially to Maranatha Village. And in my three years of working with guests and prospective residents, I have become keenly aware that God is the One who brings folks to our Village. He doesn't lead everyone here, but the ones He does seem to know that God's hand has deposited them in our midst. That is a pretty special thought!

Connie and I know that this is God's place for us, and we are joyously investing the rest of our lives here at Maranatha Village. Sometimes, I am asked whether the change in percentage of bond investment is having an impact on whether prospects are choosing to make the Village their home. I would say, emphatically, "no." Potential residents realize that the cost of purchasing something elsewhere, that is comparable to a Villa at Maranatha, is substantially higher than a home in the Village.

In the Sebring area, concrete block houses on the market are about 50% higher than our life-lease costs. Plus, local area residents pay all of their own maintenance costs, regular real estate taxes, and substantially more for water, sewer, and waste disposal. In addition, many retirement communities in Florida are either rental only, assess very high monthly fees, or require entrance fees of \$250,000 and up.

But Maranatha Village is not a bargain community; it is an investment one. Connie and I have committed the rest of our lives to living, serving, and investing in this community. We want to be wise stewards of our resources, but more and more we want to invest those resources – financial and spiritual – in the ministry of Maranatha Village.

We have adjusted our estate documents to include the Village in our final giving plans; we give annually to the Village, and we are making improvements on our villa to contribute to the ongoing ministry of the Village until Jesus comes. We are joyously investing in Maranatha Village. Would you pray with us that God's choice servants would join us in investing their lives here, too?

Dr. Gerry Carlson

Maranatha Village

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"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."



The 2019 Michigan Picnic





The 2019 Michigan Picnic was held on Saturday, March 9th, at Fogel Pavilion. Wow! What a beautiful day with warm temperatures and an easterly breeze. The picnic

started at noon with some announcements given by Yvonne White. The summertime Maranatha Village Reunion will be held at Alpine Baptist Church, 672 Seven Mile Road, Comstock Park, MI 49321 (a suburb of Grand Rapids). Anyone from any state is welcome to attend this Maranatha Village Reunion. The date is usually in July, but Yvonne will give you

further information via Maranatha Village email. Or you may email her at *mikeyvonnewhite@yahoo.com*, or call her at 616-970-4948.

Yvonne gave a *Village Quiz* testing our knowledge of pertinent facts before we started to eat. We had an attendance of 105 residents, the most ever to attend. Of that number, about 25 had never been to a Michigan picnic in Maranatha Village. Carl Bronkema, who owns a mobile home on Timothy Road, led in prayer. And then, guess what? That's right! The long line started to form to get all of the delicious food that had been brought to the picnic. Along with eating, we had a great time of Christian fellowship!

Don Laven

Hooked On Going Fishing!



Maranatha Village had a fishing trip to the Gulf of Mexico on March 5, 2019. We left Port of Tarpon Springs on the deep sea fishing vessel named Two Georges.

We went out into the Gulf about ten miles. The trip was from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., the cost, \$70 each. The day was good for fishing, but not so good for fishermen/lady. The weather was very windy and cold, with a little rain mixed in. We caught about 200 Grunts and

one nice Grouper caught by Sam Huff, which had to be thrown back into the Gulf because it was not in season. Those who went on the trip were: Don Laven, Kent Lake, Tom and Jan Moen, Gene Rampi, Bill Logan, Bruce Hendsbee,



Ken Cook, Jack
Werkema, Charlie Ladd, Dan
Wickam, Wayne Mott, Sam Huff,
and Terry Dale. You may want to
join us sometime for fun and fellowship!

Don Laven