



Christian Science Institutional Committee for New York State

340 Madison Avenue, Room 526, New York, NY



Manhattan Detention Center, a.k.a. "The Tombs"

NEW OPPORTUNITIES AWAIT US— LOVE WILL LEAD THE WAY

The Manhattan Detention Center (MDC), located at 125 White Street in New York City, often referred to as "The Tombs," permanently closed its doors in November, 2020. The Christian Science Institutional Committee had been serving there for over fifty years and it would seem that this closing has affected and will continue to affect our work throughout the state. However, we are confidently praying, patiently waiting for our next steps to be revealed.

We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to have provided Christian Science Services and literature for the residents for so many years, and equally grateful for the Christian Scientists who volunteered so faithfully to provide those Services.

MDC was a short-term housing facility, which also served as a holding facility for those awaiting their trial. Due to the closing of MDC all the residents were moved to facilities on Rikers Island or released to freedom. Rikers Island facilities are relatively short-term facilities where inmates await sentencing to prisons in upstate New York. Those who have wished to continue studying Christian Science have been supplied Bibles, copies of *Science and Health with Key to The Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, subscriptions to the Christian Science periodicals, including the *Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lessons, Full Text Edition*. Before the pandemic, we were able to arrange one-on-one visits.

Once an inmate has been sentenced to an upstate prison, the workers in other Zones of the state take over the work. We maintain contact through letters, emails, and telephone calls, as well as through one-on-one visits when possible.

This has been inspiring and challenging work and we are all grateful to have been a part of it. Those we serve often express gratitude for our efforts.

MDC was one of the few facilities where we could actually hold Christian Science Services. There were twenty to thirty men attending them. At one time, we also held Services and arranged for Christian Science Lectures at Queens Correctional Facility, until they became a release facility only. We had also been able to hold Services at Franklin Correctional Facility in Malone, New York, for several years, but as men were transferred or released the Services eventually were discontinued.

Rules governing state facilities in regard to religious services change frequently. In the beginning the inmates were allowed to attend the church services of any denomination they chose to visit. Now inmates upon entry to the prison or jail must register their religious affiliation, and they can only attend the church services of the denomination for which they register. They can visit another denomination only three times. If they wish to continue, they have to register a change of religious affiliation.

In order for us to start services in a facility at least two people registered as Christian Scientists would have to request them. So far as we know only one man over the years has actually registered as a Christian Scientist.

Recently, we have written letters of support for three men who are coming up for parole. It is a privilege to bear witness to the changes in character of inmates who have truly embraced a new way of thinking and behaving. Anger management has been an issue with many, but through study and prayer in Christian Science we have seen wonderful transformations.

Many of the men who were released over the years have stayed in contact with us, keeping us apprised of their progress, and asking for prayer and support when things got rough for them. Some have shared their favorite citations from the Bible and the writings of Mary Baker Eddy. Their prayers have resulted in their finding places to live, employment, improved family relationships, financial supply, and companionship. In addition to Psalm 91, so familiar to most of them and to us, here are some other citations which have helped to keep them focused and comforted in times of despair:

“Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.” (Proverbs 4:25-27)

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the righthand, and when ye turn to the left.” (Isaiah 30:21)

“Trust in him at all times; *ye* people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us....”
(Psalms 62:8 (to 1st.))

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)

“To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, to-day is big with blessings.” Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health*, p. vii:1-2)

“Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need. It is not well to imagine that Jesus demonstrated the divine power to heal only for a select number or for a limited period of time, since to all mankind and in every hour, divine Love supplies all good.” (Ibid, p. 494:10)

Love leads us on, as Love always has. The emails, letters and phone calls we receive expressing gratitude for our efforts give us great joy and comfort in knowing that our work is bearing fruit.

From glory unto glory,
Be this our joyous song;
From glory unto glory,
'Tis Love that leads us on;
As wider yet and wider,
The rising splendors glow,
What wisdom is revealed to us,
What freedom we may know.

(*Christian Science Hymnal*, 65:1)

GOOD NEWS FROM THE SUFFOLK ZONE

Our group was not allowed to offer services in the rehab unit from November, 2020, until May, 2021, due to the Covid restriction lockdown. However, in the early Spring, the Lieutenant in charge of the Riverhead rehabilitation unit gave us permission to mail copies of the *Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lessons, Full Text Edition*, each week to the inmates on our list. A member of our group took the lead in organizing the initiative among our Zone members, as she said, "to bring the Lesson to life for them." During March and April, each participating member sent a copy of the current Bible Lesson, with their own notes, and some questions for them to consider. Many also included an issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*. The Lesson subjects included: "Christ Jesus," "Man," "Substance," "Matter," "Reality," "Adam and Fallen Man," "Soul," "Ancient and Modern Necromancy, *alias* Mesmerism and Hypnotism, Denounced."

Then, good news! In May the Lieutenant told us we could resume holding Services, which we did beginning right away on Monday, May 10th. And now a different two-person team or a solo member *visits* every Monday for a one-hour afternoon meeting. Currently there are three men on our list. The guards tell us that occupancy in both the Riverhead and Yaphank jails is down considerably (we surmise, due to recent changes in bail laws).

These visits are a special time of sharing. With God as our guide we are all learning, and it really is a love-filled, holy experience. It touches one's heart to see a couple of the men bringing their Bibles and well-worn copies of *Science and Health* to the meeting. Two men have read our Textbook, *Science and Health*, cover-to-cover. One of our attendees has read the Holy Bible in its entirety and *Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*. Members of our team have provided copies of the *Christian Science Hymnal, Words Only*, Hymns 1 through 429; a Spanish King James Bible; and a copy of *Retrospection and Introspection*, by Mary Baker Eddy. We were delighted when we heard one of the men tell us that "things are coming together" in what he is reading and learning.

At Riverhead we always leave some copies of the *Christian Science Sentinel* and *Monitor* in the literature rack in the chapel where we meet. Also, of note, we continue to find the guards there to be very welcoming and helpful. They give us time to set up in the beginning and to leave our literature at the end of each session. Their call to the inmates on our list is always loud and clear. We always hear the announcement: "Send your Christian Science."

We know that God is blessing *everyone* we meet in the Suffolk institutions and that no prayer or deed is too small to have its wonderful and healing effect. Can we ever be too grateful for the progress that we are seeing, and for presence of divine Love we are feeling in this holy ministry?

Madeline S. Cassidy, Executive Member for the Suffolk Zone, Long Island

GOOD NEWS FROM THE METROPOLITAN ZONE

The isolation, lack of contact with others, whatever challenges the lockdowns may have presented to us, have been experienced tenfold by those behind bars.

Nevertheless, we have often heard quoted from those we serve, by letter or over the phone, these words from *No and Yes*, by Mary Baker Eddy, "God's law is in three words, 'I am All,' and this perfect law is ever present to rebuke any claim of another law." (p.30)

It is so rewarding to see Christian Science in action in this way. There appears to be an even more urgent need for what Christian Science offers, the uplifting thought of ONE BEING BEING ALL ONE. This is such an important time for continuing prayer.

The Committee is ready. We are reestablishing our outreach teams.

A member with his son visited a gentleman upstate. He said there was no waiting. It was a great visit. Others from the Committee are going to visit soon.

The Committee has been bringing people who need a little assistance to church, and reaching out to others who are homebound.

Christian Science Reading Rooms have been a haven for many of the men who have been released, and a blessing for all.

“The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is absolute faith that all things are possible to God -- a spiritual understanding of Him, an unselfed love. Regardless of what another might say or think on this subject, I speak from experience. Prayer watching and working combined with self-immolation, are God's gracious means for accomplishing whatever has been successfully done for Christianization and health of mankind.” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 1)

Anita Koffler
Metropolitan Zone chairman

The Christian Science Institutional Committee is so very grateful for the support of all Christian Science Churches and Societies in New York State for enabling us to serve.



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