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NEWSLETTER

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My name is John; I'm 33 years of age. I was born and raised in Pekin, IL. My parents had 10 kids, 6 boys and 4 girls. My mom worked at the hospital and my dad worked at Caterpillar. Although my parents had good jobs and celebrated holidays and went on vacations as normal families do, our home was still broken. As I remember, my mom always tried to keep the family together even though my dad was abusive to us, and my mom. As a child I had all the normal toys as any other kid, but I always thought my father hated me. My parents were always working; my two older sisters took care of us. Whenever dad was around he was abusive. My oldest sister ended up leaving, so another one of my sisters took care of us. As time went on I got tired of my dad beating me, so I wouldn't come home after school, instead I would go to the mall and steal. I got caught stealing, but I didn't care about going to jail because it was better than going home and being beat by my father. After I went home from the mall incident I told my dad he better not touch me, my mom or my brothers and sister again.

One day when I was eleven my dad was beating my mom, I told him he better stop or I was going to kill him. I had an old typewriter, and I was going to bust it over his head then stab him with a knife. The police came to our house and took me away. I was placed in the hospital, diagnosed with homicidal thoughts. They didn't understand I was a victim of abuse. While in the hospital my mom was taken to jail for hitting my dad with a tea pitcher. My mom was fed up with the abuse and came to the hospital and told me she was separating from my dad. When I was released from the hospital I moved in with my mom and grandma. The other kids stayed with dad. Things were good at my grandmothers but I had a lot of

anger in me. I didn't want to take the medicine and said something I shouldn't have and was sent back to the hospital. When I was released this time, I went to live with my mom who had her own house now.

My sister Liz ran away from our dad's house. We were always pretty wild, drinking and smoking pot together. One day I went out with a couple of friends, we were stealing cars. I also stole a gun and was arrested by the police; they found everything we had stolen. I was sent to Galesburg to the detention center. A week before my court hearing, I was awakened at 3:00 am by the guard, telling me there was an accident at home. I was told my brother JB had accidentally shot my sister Liz, (my closest friend in the world at that time) with a gun my dad owned. My brother was never charged because it was an accident and he was released to my mother's custody. I went to the funeral shackled up inside of the church, I was only 13. The judge said he was giving me a break, but little did I know he was sending me to hell. I was sent to Peoria Youth Farm. I hated everything about the place; I fought with the other kids and staff and got high all the time. I ran away and partied a lot, I was arrested high out of my mind. I was then sent to St. Charles, then Warrenville, then Valleyview, and that's when my life took a turn for the worst. I was released and I continued to party. I later caught a burglary as an adult and was sentenced to 3 years in Illinois Dept. of Corrections.

Upon release this time, my drug habit was worse and I ventured into crystal meth. I later caught 2 mob action charges and I was sentenced to six years

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in IDOC. Again released and did my best to get my life back in order, but the drugs played a big part in my life and things turned bad again. My brother BB was killed by a car.

I later got married, we have two beautiful kids. My kids were taken by D.C.E.S. because of the drugs. My wife and I were divorced and she was given the kids. I was sent back to prison two more times. While I was in prison serving time for aggravated battery and great bodily harm, I heard two guys at church talking; they had just lost their dad and were still happy. I asked them how they could be so happy. They said because God loved them and they knew their dad was in a better place.

My grandparents who were spiritual people always prayed for me. Before I got saved my little sister MB died of a drug overdose, she was only 21, and my brother JB who shot my sister Liz, he had overdosed on heroin, he is alive and able to talk with the help of a computer, he is only 37.

By now I have had enough; it was time to turn my life around. While in Jacksonville Correctional Center, I went from a 500 page disciplinary report and removing my ankle bracelets while on parole to a God fearing Christian. I went to a re-entry summit at Jacksonville and that is where I met Scott Krile from Jesus is the Way and told him my story. By the grace of God, I was accepted into their program. I am currently in the program in Rantoul and involved in the ministry. God is working miracles in my life through the staff as well as the volunteers. The only thing I regret is I didn't find Jesus is the Way Prison Ministry sooner. I know with God and JITWPM that God will not let me down. And I know I will get my life back and my two kids back by the power of God, His will be done.

Sincerely,

John

Yard Work, Volunteer Work, and the Garden!





Celebration Banquet **August 26, 2016**

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Doors open at 5:30 pm

Fluid Event Center
601 N. Country Fair Dr.
Champaign, IL 61821

Shine Brightly, It's All About Jesus **Guest Speaker, David Haidle**

- **Teaching Pastor at Village Bible Church, Indian Creek Campus**
- **Institute for Prison Ministries – Colson Scholar Mentor/Coordinator**
- **Leadership Consultant**
- **Volunteer Chaplain IDOC**
- **Chaplain for Vietnam Veterans**
- **Mentor of young men**
- **Retired Wheaton College Facilities Management**

I was ordained at Village Bible Church and have served as an Elder/Pastor for some 25 years. I began serving the Institute for Prison Ministries in 1998 in different capacities. I have taught leadership while working at Wheaton College and specifically as a consultant for the last three years. My first foray into prison ministry was in 1979. I have been involved as a volunteer in jails and prisons since the mid-1980s. I have had the privilege of leading Wheaton students to prisons, especially Angola prison in Louisiana for the last 13 years. As a Vietnam veteran I have had the privilege of working with Veteran's organizations at Angola and in other venues. My unit has made me their Chaplain after our first reunion in 2002. My whole career at Wheaton from 1981 – 2012 allowed me the privilege of mentoring workers and students. I am still active in all of these roles presently.

Come one, come all, and let your "light shine" at our "**Shine Brightly**" 2016 fundraising banquet. We will be accepting a free-will offering the night of Friday, August 26th and *there will also be a drop off table at the door if you would like to bring one or more items from our Resident needs list:*

Men's Boxers (large & extra-large)
Men's Ankle Socks
Bath Towel sets

Men's T-Shirts (large & extra-large)
Twin sheet sets

PLEASE CALL 217-892-4044 or you may also
Email info@jesusisthewayprisonministries.org with your reservations.

Founder

Jesse Mathes (1942-2008)



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Darrel Dunnigan
David Nisbet

Women's Division
Rev. Vicki Schoonover

Support Staff
Edith Mathes

Rantoul Staff
Brenda Krile

We Need YOU!

Banquet Sponsors - We need your money and information by August 17, 2016 to be included in the brochure.

Banquet Reservations - Please call 217-892-4044 before August 22, 2016, so that we can get the total head count to the caterer.

Jesus Is The Way Needs

Window Cleaner

Dish Soap

Hand Soap

Ziploc Bags (Quart & Gallon Size)

Small Alarm Clocks

Bleach

Laundry Soap

Paper Towels

Trash Bags (13 Gallon)

Electric Hedge Trimmers

Due to the generosity of our partners at this time we don't need toilet paper, men's disposable razors and shaving cream.