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NEWSLETTER

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I was born in Kankakee, IL my earliest memories as a child are tragic and fearful. I was born in the early 60's in Kankakee. There were 9 of us kids, one died as a baby. One particular day, my parents were at work, my dad worked for one of the factories and my mom worked at a Hospital, so us kids were left to ourselves quite a lot even on weekends because my mom and dad would do their socializing then. My older brother and sister were responsible for the rest of us but they were kids themselves so they did their own thing. Anyway, on this particular day my two older brothers just above me were acting like they were having a gun fight, they had water guns and I wanted to play and they wouldn't let me. So I went to our parents room, looked into a drawer and pulled out my dad's snug nose 38, I don't know how I knew it was there but I did. I'll never forget it, my brothers are counting down for the draw and just as one of my brothers finished the count I'm stepping out of my parents' bedroom, my brothers are in the dining room, I'm standing behind them and in front of them my sister is in the living room. When I shot, the gun was so loud, my brothers panicked and ran, my sister screamed not because of the noise but because she had been shot. I didn't know what to do, I think the noise had me confused, I was just a little boy. My uncle was pulling up to our house as the whole thing happened, him and my oldest brother put my sister in his car to take her to the hospital, I wanted to go but they pushed me out of the car. The only thing I can remember after the incident was that I didn't have no feelings about it.

One weekend when my parents were out we were supposed to be in bed but we knew it would be a while before they came home. So three of my brothers, my two youngest and my brother a year

older than me snuck down stairs into the kitchen. I didn't wake up that night and I'm glad I didn't. My parents came home early and caught my brothers, my father whooped my brothers so bad, and I still can hear them. As they all ran up the stairs after their beating my youngest brother was the last one and my dad kicked him so hard when he made up the stairs all he could say over and over, "I can't move". We feared our dad and when my mom and him divorced I was so happy. My mom, the super hero that she was, did her best, she got all the boys into sports and the Lee's had a reputation they were football stars and known for fighting and my sister was the toughest of us all. I never liked sports or fighting but because I was a Lee it came along with the territory. My older brothers would put me up against the tougher guys in the neighborhood, not because I was a good fighter, but because I had heart. I didn't care how old, or big, I'd fight, so I got a reputation as being the crazy one. There was another gun incident at our house, my two younger brothers and I were snooping around in my mom's room, my mom would bring home all kinds of snacks from work and to stop us kids from "running" through it she put in her room. Again a gun was found this time by my brother who's a year younger than me; he knew he wasn't supposed to touch it. But curiosity got the best of him he first looked into the barrel then as he lowered the gun "BOOM!!" the gun went off. I think back when that happened all those years ago, you would think something so dramatic I could remember how I felt but I can't remember. At some point in my life I shut down my feelings and this carried on throughout all my adult life.

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BANQUET PICTURES 2016



Champaign County "Officer of the Year" Derron Richler, Sheriff Walsh and Captain Vogues



Banquet Guest Speaker Dave Haidel



Vicki Schoonover sharing all the good things God has done at JITW.



Former residents fellowshipping after the banquet.



Some of the 275 guests who registered.



Scott Krile, Aftercare Director and John Parks a supporter of JITW.



Rev. Barry Hinkle, Sr. Pastor at Christian Life Church Rantoul receiving the offering.



Dorothy Herrington recipient of the "John Henderson" volunteer award.



Mark Burns, WGNN-Great News Radio manager closing the banquet out with prayer.

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As my troubles were beginning in life so was the grace of God starting to show up. I met a boy who lived a block up the street. His family was very much involved in church. Every day when we were together I got him into football and he got me into church. I didn't understand the things that were going on in church, but I took it as a normal thing church people do. I was about 12 years old when I had my first experience with God, around this time God spoke to me, not as we all assume, a voice from on high, no, it was a TV preacher. I was at church one evening and the preacher was preaching about loving your neighbor. I wanted to know, who was my neighbor? So I asked God, that night I fell asleep in front of the TV I woke up early that morning and a preacher was preaching on TV and as I woke up the first thing he said was, "your neighbor is anybody in need", I know it was God answering me.

Many things have happened in my life since then, for over 35 years I lived my life as I chose, being immoral, allowing drugs and alcohol to dictate my life. I have had on more than one occasion experiences with God. Whenever I got in trouble I ran to Jesus, sometimes He would deliver me out of them and other times He walked with me through them.

When it was all over with I would go back to my lifestyle, but God is not mocked, I only deceived myself because I ended up in a situation where God allowed me to be sat down for a very long time and that's where I am today. As I said, there are many situations I've been in, at 16, I was cut very badly across my wrist, I've been hit by a car, cut in my face, guns held to my head, stabbed on more than one occasion just to name a few things throughout my life. I've been to prison 3 times and it was the 3rd prison sentence I totally surrendered every area of my life to God.

Isaiah 41:10 is my favorite Scripture "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." This Scripture has been true all my adult life, now God is showing me how to be the man He called me to be and not that scared little boy.

I've been delivered from my addictions and I'm hopeful about my future since my release from Sheridan Correctional Center on 07/16/16 to Jesus Is The Way Prison Ministry.

Shanon Lee

Jesus Is The Way Needs

Bleach

Small Alarm Clocks

Bathroom rugs

Twin Sheet Sets



Rev. Randall Grier once incarcerated, was sentenced to life without parole, but by the grace of God received a full pardon. He currently travels to share his testimony and the hope that is found in God. He is the author of the book "Escaped from Hell". Rev. Grier ministered at Full Gospel Christian Fellowship in Paxton IL. on August 28th where the residents and some staff were honored to hear him minister.



Founder
Jesse Mathes (1942-2008)



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Prison Services Coordinator
John Henderson

Jail Service Coordinators
Men's Division
Darrel Dunnigan
David Nisbet

Women's Division
Rev. Vicki Schoonover

Support Staff
Edith Mathes

Rantoul Staff
Brenda Krile

At this years' banquet we invited past residents of the New Beginnings Aftercare program to be a part of the cardboard testimony. The year on the cardboard is the year that the resident was in the program. It was awesome to catchup with them and hear what God is doing in their lives.

