



the connection

Summer 2021



Board of Directors

WWW.WECAREPROGRAM.ORG

find us on



To help our readers get better acquainted with the men currently serving on our Board of Directors, we asked them to share a few facts about themselves.

1. Years of marriage
2. Number of children/grandchildren
3. Occupation
4. Church
5. Regular ministry involvement
6. A hobby or two
7. Length of time associated with We Care
8. Why do you serve on the We Care Board?

Dale Brubaker
Rockingham, VA

1. 5
2. None
3. Residential construction
4. Bethel Mennonite Church
5. Assistant Pastor
6. Kayaking and going to the beach
7. Since 2015
8. I enjoy being a part of God's ministry that is actively taking the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into prisons. It is a blessing to serve along with the other men on the board who have a love and passion for Jesus.



Marcus Zimmerman
Orrstown, PA

1. Not married
2. None
3. Agriculture fence installation, farming
4. Living Faith
5. Prison and jail ministry, overseas ministry (including evangelism and pastoral training)
6. Hunting, kayaking
7. Since 2015
8. This is an opportunity for me to serve the incarcerated of Alabama, alongside brethren from various backgrounds and cultures who share a vision of bringing the Kingdom into broken lives. The unity of common faith amidst the diverse leadership of We Care has been a blessing to me. I feel I receive more than I give.



Edwin Ranck
Cumberland, VA

1. 46
2. 2 sons and 5 grandchildren
3. Retired from dairy farming. Work part time at an orchid greenhouse and help my son crop farm.
4. Powhatan Mennonite Church
5. Elder and teacher at Powhatan Mennonite Church, also help lead a weekly men's group
6. Reading. Occasionally I try my hand at writing an article or short story. Outdoor activities.
7. Since 1980
8. I think We Care is providing a valuable service, and with my years serving at We Care, I may have some helpful insights to offer.



Loren Wissmann
Milford, NE

1. 40
2. The Lord has blessed us with 13 children and 19 grandchildren.
3. Contracting business as Wissmann Enterprises, Inc. with three of my sons. We do sandblasting & painting, trenching & drip irrigation installation, and roof coating application. My family has also had a music ministry over the past 20 years.
4. East Fairview Mennonite
5. Music ministry, teaching in our home church
6. Life has been busy so I'm not sure I have anything that classifies as a "hobby." The closest thing is that my oldest son is a flight instructor which enabled me to get my pilot's license about 12 years ago. I find flying very refreshing; I never get tired of seeing God's creation from that perspective.
7. Since 2006
8. It has been a great blessing for me to work with the other board members, whom I greatly respect, in seeking God's direction for a ministry that is all about seeing lives changed through the power of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As in anything like this, there are challenges along the way... but to see God's faithfulness towards His ministry is a beautiful thing!



Marvin Bender
Kalona, IA

1. 29
2. 5 children. We are eagerly expecting our first grandchild this coming November.
3. Bi-vocational Pastor/Carpenter
4. Sunnyside Mennonite Church
5. Associate pastor. Witnessing at an outdoor Ped Mall with a couple from our church who set up a free literature table there; I join them every other Friday, weather and schedule permitting.
6. Deer hunting. Meeting people and visiting. Auctions. Being a carpenter, it seems I always have a project or two going on at home. Cutting and splitting wood with a hydraulic wood splitter.
7. Since the mid-1980s
8. This ministry is close to my heart. I have spent years ministering to men in (and out of) prison. I never get tired of seeing God's redemption in the lives of incarcerated individuals. It proves God's love to those whom society has mostly ignored. It is a privilege to serve with others who seek God's direction and plan for this ministry. It is a blessing to see God use this ministry to further His Kingdom.



2021 We Care Program Board of Directors

Daniel Atkins
Montgomery, AL

1. 13
2. 3 children
3. Pastor
4. Taylor Road Baptist
5. Pastoring, prison ministry, local association and state Baptist ministries
6. Fishing, kayaking and camping
7. Since 2019
8. I believe God has called me to serve in prison ministry, and I fully believe in and want to support the vision and ministry of We Care.

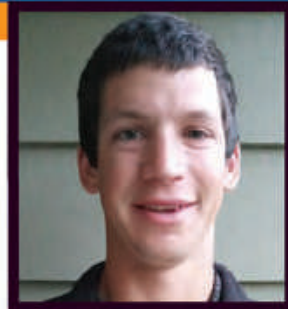


John Yoder
Wagener, SC

1. 31½
2. 3 children
3. Builder
4. Connection Church
5. Preach at church occasionally and am involved with a Rescue Mission on a monthly basis. Also serve on the board for Addicts at the Cross.
6. Deer/hog hunting, mini farming
7. Since 1994
8. I felt led of the Lord to be on the board, and I enjoy helping out and serving where I can.



Derric Miller
Abbottstown, PA



1. 7
2. 3 daughters
3. Construction work, management of several personal properties
4. Upper Conewago Church of the Brethren
5. Teaching youth Sunday school class
6. Hunting and fishing with my daughters. Horseback cattle sorting with my wife Danielle.
7. Since 2013
8. This is my way of learning more about the growth and structure of We Care. I am passionate about the men in those prisons and actively pray for them to find their true freedom in Christ. Being a board member is another piece of the puzzle being placed in my life serving through Christ.

Sherwin Wenger
Lancaster, PA



1. 29
2. 3 children
3. Owner of Wenger's Construction, Inc.
4. Petra Church
5. No formal ministry positions, focus on mentoring employees
6. Hunting and fishing
7. Since 2001
8. I have in-prison ministry experience and that has given me wisdom and insight to apply to the decisions the board is confronted with. I enjoy the fellowship and unity of the board members.

Brent Yoder
Century, FL



1. 20
2. 4 children
3. Family Nurse Practitioner, rental property
4. Grace Fellowship
5. Small group leader, board member for a missionary couple in Peru
6. Fishing, hiking, traveling
7. Since about 1984

Daniel Martin
Selma, AL



1. 45, lost my wife Carolyn almost 5 years ago
2. 4 children, 17 grandchildren
3. Pastor
4. Bethel Church
5. Pastoring, praying and witnessing while carrying a cross around my city, prison ministry, hosting a weekly pastors' luncheon trying to fulfill the prayer of Jesus in John 17, that we be ONE
6. Putting puzzles together
7. Since 2001
8. It is a very godly ministry; board meetings are often like good church services. Members of the board are so godly, easy to get along with. God called me to it for now.



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

David S. Landis, Chaplaincy Director

A little over a year ago we as a director team faced the question, "We are a prison ministry with all these chaplains and we're not allowed in the prisons, what are we going to do?"

In the book of Acts, Paul and his companions had aspirations to evangelize in the province of Asia but "the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them." Soon afterwards Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." (Acts 16:7-9) Paul had his plans, but God thought differently.

In early 2020 we had our plans, but by the middle of March all of our chaplains were suddenly out of work. It would be four to six months before most of them were allowed back into prison. Even then things would be different. So how have our chaplains fared over the past 15 months?

We had to learn to be flexible. While our chaplains were denied entrance into prison, we encouraged them to find alternative forms of ministry. A number of chaplains began investing a significant amount of time in helping returning citizens acclimate back into society. Finding a job, acquiring transportation, and obtaining a Social Security number and

driver's license are just a few of the needs returning citizens have during their first few weeks out of prison. COVID didn't stop people from being released. Some chaplains occasionally worked at our thrift stores doing maintenance or sorting clothing. In South Alabama we had work fixing roofs and cleaning up in the community after Hurricane Sally. Many prison facilities in Alabama allowed us to hold services outside the fence. An associate chaplain in Ohio started compiling and printing a newsletter of faith articles and getting it into prison every two weeks for distribution to the men.

After finally being allowed back in prison, our chaplains had to find ways to adapt to the new environment. In some cases, the chapels had been turned into COVID hospitals. One chaplain improvised by holding classes in the chow hall; another is using the visitation room. In many institutions our chaplains are currently the only ones available for spiritual guidance.

We are thankful for what we are able to do and for the favor and trust we have been given. We look forward to the time when more of you can again join us in events like ReNew Hope and Softball. Until then we all need to be faithful with what is in front of us. I've been challenged recently with this thought, "Our environment and context might change, but our calling to make Christ known does not."

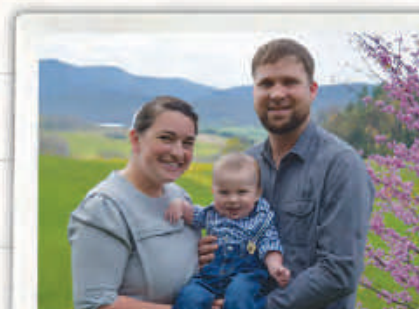
NEWS



Melinda & Christopher Huber

NEW BOOKKEEPER

We are excited to welcome Melinda Huber to the office staff as our new bookkeeper. Melinda and her husband Christopher recently moved to Atmore from Mobile, Alabama. Since last November, Jonathan McMath has been handling the bookkeeping duties. We are thankful for Melinda's stepping in to fill this position as Jonathan moves on.



Nathan, Deborah, and Alexander Kennell

NEW THRIFT STORE DIRECTOR

We are also excited to welcome Nathan, Deborah, and Alexander Kennell from Harrisonburg, Virginia. Nathan is taking on the role of Thrift Store Director, replacing Jonathan McMath who has accepted a position as a church youth pastor.

*"I feel I receive more
than I give."*

Marcus Zimmerman

From the Field

Kevin Kennell

Fountain Annex
Atmore, AL



Men love to conquer! We love to go to the next level in everything. It is how we are wired. In prison this desire is squelched. There are no "levels" to climb. For the most part everyone receives the same rations, supplies, etc., although a man with plenty of money on his books can gain a competitive edge. But even in the prison setting, something resonates with men when you begin discussing "greatness."

Recently, I went through a study with some of the guys about being a great man of God. All of us were challenged that God's greatness scale is not based on outward circumstances or characteristics but on inward qualities. This means that even in prison men can embrace "kingdom greatness." As they allow God to transform them into His image, they can grow to the next level in spiritual maturity. I encourage the guys to embrace the calling God has for them, even if they can't see what it is yet. I know God has something for them if they choose to walk in His ways instead of their own.

I have been doing a lot of classes and Bible studies with the men since last September. It has been great to see some of these guys grow spiritually to the next level. Sometimes it is difficult to tell when we gain another level, but when we notice that things don't bother us like they used to, that is one sign of growth. Other signs include obedience to God's Word in a new area of life and love for others in a new way.

As I watch these men of God study and apply scripture, it is evident to me that they are conquering and growing. I have seen men quit negative habits. I have seen men develop a love for the Word of God. I have seen men grow in patience and forbearance. It is not only evident to me. It is evident to other inmates and to officers. It is why when there was a count time recently in the middle of a church service, the officer stopped his count long enough to grab a microphone and join in the singing as we worshipped God! One of the men looked at me and said, "You know this is only God, because there is nothing else that we all have in common."

This is conquering! As men start seeing others in the identity of God and not in the identity of their job or social rank, someone just went to another level...spiritually!

This is how we conquer both in prison and outside of prison. This is how we achieve kingdom greatness. I am thankful for the opportunities to study the Word of God with these men and to grow with them. I encourage all of us to go on to perfection and maturity. Let's not stop conquering!

Fawn Jacobs

Tutwiler Prison for Women
Wetumpka, AL



In working with the ladies at Tutwiler, I am encouraged time and again. Some have been raised in good families and have knowledge of the Word. When they come to prison, many of them come face to face with the opportunity to re-evaluate their lives. Some rise above their past and some do not, but all are given the free will to choose. The key to rising above is Jesus, counting one's blessings, focusing on what God has done and what He can do, and giving Him the glory for it.

A lady recently told me how her Daddy had beat the odds and amazingly overcame many struggles including health. I commented, "Wow, your daddy must be a strong man."

She replied, "No, my daddy has a strong God."

I've heard other statements such as "I didn't know how much I liked flowers until I came here," indicating the speaker has learned to appreciate the little things. I often hear in regards to time, "Man can say one thing but God may say another."

Since most volunteers are still unable to go inside the prison, We Care Program, as well as some other ministries, have had outside-the-fence services, with music, singing and a message. It's encouraging to watch the ladies raise their hands in praise to God as He moves in hearts. A lady who had spent 25 years as an inmate at Tutwiler spoke recently at one of the services. She had said she was never coming back, unless God told her to. Some of the ladies in attendance knew her from having served time with her. She gave a powerful testimony of where God had brought her from. She also shared about the ministry she works in today, helping women like herself readjust into life outside. We truly serve a God who redeems, a God who forgives and a God of second chances. I love seeing the smiles on the faces of the ladies. Truly, faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

We Care Program 50th Anniversary Celebration & Alumni Reunion

Join us for a time of reflection, reminiscing and reuniting with former

We Care persons, and celebrating God's faithfulness.

Anyone who has had a connection with We Care during the past 51 years is invited.

Friday & Saturday, September 10 & 11, 2021
Atmore, AL

Please RSVP: Text 251-294-1472 Call 251-368-8818 Email noreen@wecareprogram.org

Ben Nolt

Fountain Corr. Facility
Atmore, AL



My friend James is an elderly inmate who could easily harbor a bitter attitude towards life and others in general.

Yet he has persevered through years of incarceration and poor health and still has the ability to see beyond himself and care for others. One topic we have talked about quite a bit is family life. It's interesting to hear of his experiences raising children in an entirely different era. For one, it sounds like the switch and belt were employed more frequently in those days! In some ways, times may have been simpler then but not necessarily easier. A few weeks ago James told me he prays for my family and me each day. That was both humbling and touching to hear. It reminds me of another incarcerated individual who penned these words in Philippians 1:3-4, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy." James' commitment to pray for me has been both challenging and convicting.

I've been blessed to know many godly individuals over the years at G.K. Fountain; men who also say with Paul, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to live humbly and to abound...to be full and to be hungry." (Philippians 4:11-12) Only a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ can account for this peace in James' life

and countless others. Walking with the Lord, in fellowship with Him, brings about real change; a heart change that allows them to see beyond the temporal and live for the eternal. If you will, take a minute to pray for James and believers like him to press on. I'll let him know that a few friends and I are just returning the favor!



Will this event happen????

As of now, we hope so but we really don't know. What we do know is that if it does happen, it will look very different from past years. There will be a shorter window of time to register, and we will potentially be limited to just a small group at each prison. It is also probable that the speakers and music groups will not be allowed to travel between institutions. Please pray with us that restrictions in the Alabama prisons will open up soon so that we can submit a request for ReNew Hope 2022. You can also pencil January 23 - 27, 2022, in your calendar in anticipation of the desired approval. Be sure to watch your mailbox, your email and/or We Care's Facebook page for updates.



WORKING FOR MULTIPLE BOSSES

A MESSAGE FROM DON METZLER, PRESIDENT

don@wecareprogram.org

Have you ever had a job with a boss who was difficult to work for? Such a situation can be pretty miserable and make you dread getting up each morning. Thankfully, that is not the case for me. I am blessed with a great boss; in fact, I have 11 great bosses! In my role as president of We Care Program, I serve under the leadership of our Board of Directors. This team of men currently comes from seven different states (see map on pages 2 - 4) and is a very diverse group. However, one thing they all have in common is a love for Jesus and a

desire to see Him made known to men and women in prison. Each of these 11 men care deeply about seeing the ministry of We Care Program grow and flourish. Toward that purpose they give of their time, talent, expertise and finances. I am very grateful not only for this particular group of men but also for the many men over the last 51 years who have given of themselves to help make We Care Program what it is today. If you have not yet done so, please take a few minutes to read about each of the current board members, and as you do, say a prayer asking God to bless them for serving so well in this way.

**"I
have
11 great
bosses!"**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

3493 Highway 21
Atmore, AL 36502-4669
Phone: 251-368-8818
Email: wecare@wecareprogram.org

