



"Remember Me"



Original watercolour by Adrian Vandenberg, one of the founders of Dismas Fellowship

Easter Greeting

Easter is about hope. It is a reminder of Our Lord's infinite love and unceasing mercy for those who love him and those who seek Him.

Within our value statement at Dismas, we are reminded that while all are offenders in some way or another, and regardless of religious or criminal convictions, we should never allow ourselves to be defined by our failures or stumbles.

The themes within Easter of rebirth, transformation and restoration are what bring about this tremendous sense of hope which in turn allows us to receive the Peace of Christ that Our Lord seeks to share with us.

(continues on page 2 ...)

"A Quiet Resurrection" by Harry Nigh

"Take time to see the quiet miracles that seek no attention."

—John O'Donohue, Irish poet and philosopher

I was driving my friend Norm (not his real name) to the police station. He was carrying a batch of documents to support his application for a pardon after serving over 13 years for armed robberies that fueled his opiate addiction. He had been on the run from a correctional facility when he encountered "Rodger" a night shift staff member in a Salvation Army shelter in Calgary.

"He seemed to "know" my situation, Norm said, that I was not who I said I was and that I was running from something, He also had a spirit about him that people would just sense that he is not a threat and desired to really help. This man Rodger, would be the person that God the Father of Light and Life, would shine the truth of the gospel into my heart, I clearly remember he said "Norm, God wants to be your friend and can give you a whole new life, a completely new start a life of complete freedom, and he wants to but you need to allow him to give it to you he will not force you to take it."



"What is the delivery system for resilience? In part, it's the loving, caring adult who pays attention. It's the community of unconditional love, representing the "no matter whatness" of God"

(Fr. Greg Boyle, "Tattoos on The Heart")

(story continues on page 2 ...)

"A Quiet Resurrection" (continued...)

I had met Norm at the halfway house in Toronto on his journey through the system. He started coming to Dismas Fellowship. He even asked to be baptized at one of our meetings. This day though, after being out of the prison system for several years, he was in the process of applying for a pardon.

In the car, just before going into the police station, he showed me a copy of his criminal record, going back years, with page after page listing convictions for violence, addiction and misdeeds. Then on the last page, it was a clear, absolutely blank sheet - no more charges.

"What happened here", I asked.

Norm replied, "That's when I received the Holy Spirit."

It was startling, literally a clean sheet that spoke volumes.

In the following months he was notified that his application for a pardon was accepted and he continues to live free of crime and prison.

I don't have a prescription for new life, for transformation. Often it is chaotic – sometimes folks return to the tombs of prison, - of course, even the original resurrection was messy and chaotic - but I believe that having a community of support, friends who believe in you, celebrate you and accompany you through tough times is essential.

Yet there is a mystery to these resurrections that we witness in our Dismas Fellowships that speak of love and a higher power at work, and so often unfolds quietly, and often we are unaware that it is happening until we look back after months and years of faithful accompanying.

It is one of the greatest privileges that we enjoy as we come together week after week. Have a blessed Easter!



Harry Nigh

Harry Nigh is a co-founder of Dismas Fellowship and Circles of Support and Accountability and serves on the board of Friends of Dismas.

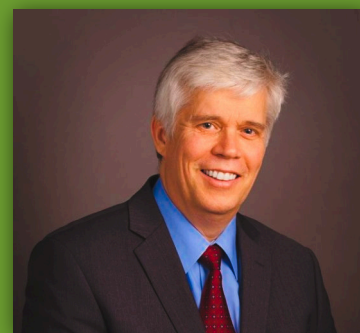
Easter Greeting (cont...)

As you will read in our newsletter this quarter this hope is also the source of redemption. These stories shared by Tee and Harry exemplify the power of God and His works that we are able to witness within our Dismas community.

We pray that no matter the cross or burden we bear, like Tee or Norm, we too may find healing, restoration and redemption this Easter. As Our Lord defeated death and became the source of hope for all mankind, may we also be reborn, through Him.

May we always recognize despite our challenges, that not only were we created in the image of God, but that He loves us always, until the end of time.

On behalf of the Board, I wish you and your family a Blessed Easter and pray that the Risen Christ will keep your hearts filled with great joy and great hope always.



Paul Bar

President, Friends of Dismas

Paul has served on the Friends of Dismas Board since 2020 and is an active member of the Dismas Toronto East and West Fellowships.



We Are Growing!

After a hard season of pandemic decline in the early 2020's, new life is breaking through across the Dismas Fellowship Network.

In the last eighteen months, four new fellowships have taken root - Niagara, Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto West, and Kingston.

Each one is a sign that hope is regenerating, leaders are emerging, and community is flourishing again.

What was pruned is now growing back stronger. We are on the grow.

"Reborn as Tee"

(My Redemption Story)

After my arrest, I felt overwhelmed and turned to my faith for guidance.



I came to understand that while people make mistakes, forgiveness and accountability are essential to personal growth. This period marked the beginning of a profound transformation in my life.

I believe my nine-month incarceration served a purpose. The person I was before no longer exists. During my time at the Ontario Correctional Institute, I participated in extensive therapy and treatment, including medical intervention to address my disorder. Through this process, I experienced meaningful change and gained the tools necessary to live responsibly and with integrity.

My involvement with Dismas Fellowship further supported this transformation. From my first visit, I was welcomed with warmth and respect. The shared meals, conversations, and opportunities for reflection fostered a strong sense of belonging. I left feeling supported, valued, and connected to a community that continues to play an important role in my ongoing growth.

I became a CoSA core member in 2019 and later volunteered with CoSA Hamilton and Dismas Fellowship. I currently serve as secretary for two committees, assist with Dismas Fellowship training, toolkit updates, and have edited over 100 videos for the Hamilton Dismas Photo Club YouTube channel.

I also assist with managing and updating website content for CoSA Canada and Dismas Fellowship, and create social media content for Dismas.

Giving back to these programs has been my greatest gift and will continue to do so for many more years to come...



Tee Mann



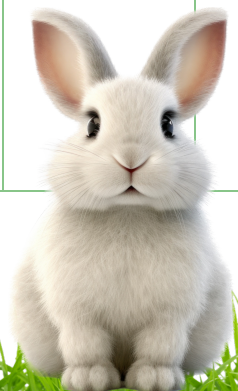


APRIL 2026



Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thu. Fri. Sat.

	<p><i>Toronto West will celebrate Easter on Friday March 27th in lieu of their April meeting.</i></p>	<p>1 </p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 Good Friday</p>	<p>4</p>	
<p>5 Easter Sunday </p>	<p>6 Easter Monday</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 </p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 </p>	<p>13 </p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 </p>	<p>17 </p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>20 </p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 </p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>27 </p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>		





Stirling Avenue Mennonite



Christ Church St. James Anglican

Thank You!



Danforth Mennonite

This quarter, Friends of Dismas would like to celebrate the many faith communities who generously host Fellowships across the province. These relationships are one of the key factors in the continued success of the Fellowship Network and we are grateful for the generosity of both prayer and space from Church leaders and their flocks.



First Pilgrim United

Brockville: Brockville Wesleyan Church

Cambridge: Generations Church (Nazarene)

Guelph: Arkell Road Bible Chapel

Hamilton: First Pilgrim United Church (Now under Faith United Church)

Kingston: St. Joseph's Catholic Church

Kitchener-Waterloo: Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church (Kitchener)

Niagara: St. Barnabas Anglican Church (St. Catharines)

Sarnia: Trinity Anglican Church

Toronto East: Danforth Mennonite Church

Toronto West: Christ Church St. James Anglican Church

Woodstock: Emmanuel Reformed Church

If you feel you are able and interested in contributing to Friends of Dismas, there are two methods by which you can make donations to support our work serving some of the vulnerable within our community.

1. To make a tax-deductible donation by Post Mail please make your cheque payable to Friends of Dismas and send to the address below. You can specify on your cheque which Fellowship or which part within the Friends of Dismas organization you would like to direct your support.

**Friends of Dismas, 1730 Bur Oak Ave Bldg. G
PO Box 3005 Bur Oak PO,
Markham, ON., L6E 0J1**

2. You may also make a tax-deductible donation online by clicking on the link below. This will allow you to securely donate online using your credit card or PayPal through our partner Canada Helps canadahelps.org/en/charities/the-friends-of-dismas/

You may direct funds by selecting either a specific Fellowship or the General Fund. Please note that tax receipts are issued immediately by Canada Helps.

Thank-you for helping us to build a community of hope.

