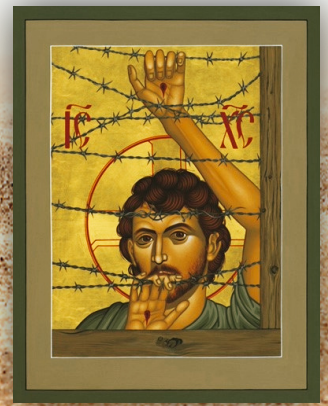




"Remember Me"

"Remember Me"

video by Advent World

(click the link below to play the video)

<https://youtube.com/shorts/ICAVwR-13ED?si=FrEdJEyQLtLZ6Dri>



Please Note: This video was produced in part with Artificial Intelligence

Fr. Michael

St. Barnabas
Anglican Church

(click the link below to play the video)

<https://youtu.be/gxiwomvYurE>



Blooming in Niagara

"How does God want you to be involved?" their pastor asked, a question that sparked Bill Reimer to think about planting a Dismas Fellowship in Niagara. Bill and Elvera had just moved from Brampton where they had been active in the Dismas Fellowship.

"So, it was after that challenge that I felt a calling to start something here, in St. Catharines", Bill remembers.

"I must have sent emails to 200 churches or so just to see if any of them wanted to get involved with Dismas."

Their first attempt ran into Covid so planning was put on hold for five years but the idea did not die.

Father Michael of St. Barnabas Anglican Church thought Dismas Fellowship was a "no brainer" for his community in downtown St. Catharines, and Dismas was reborn. He reached out to Steve Brnjas, Director of a halfway house near the church and whose involvement has been crucial in connecting with men coming back to the community.



Other faith communities responded as well to offer meals for the fellowship, one group coming with a turkey dinner complete with gravy in a little crock pot. Another group did shepherd's pie, actually bringing it in a little wagon – "they must have lived fairly close" says Bill.

Tonight, volunteers from Bethany Community Church bring a delicious supper of pulled pork and potato salad topped off with Strawberry shortcake. There were even leftovers for "care packages" to take home.

Story continued on page 2...



Bill and Elvera Reimer

Blooming in Niagara (continued)

"Part of our expectations", Bill says, "is that we would like them to participate with us. So after you serve, please come and sit with us at the table and stay for Circle." And these people have been so appreciative of the opportunity.

"One volunteer said, 'we were volunteering somewhere else. We were cooking the meal but they never let us interact with the people. It's so great just to be involved and hear these guys, like nobody is even asked who's who, which is kind of nice.'"

One of the young fellows who comes to Dismas lives in a nearby shelter. He carries his possessions with him in a back pack when he leaves in the morning. He has found friends at Dismas and also in the church. He's even joined the St. Barnabas choir and proudly shows off his photo in a white choir gown, arms upraised, looking positively angelic!

As he reflects on his journey with Dismas, Bill says, *"I used to say before I got involved with this, if I would see a homeless person walking down one side of the road, I would go to the other side of the road just so I wouldn't have to be involved with them."*



Some of the Dismas Leadership Team

"My involvement with Dismas has given me an appreciation of people and their situations - just being able to give people a chance to live in community and to be part of that community. That's something that keeps you going every month."

We gather in a circle after polishing off the strawberry shortcake. Elvera leads us in hearty singing. We share the Dismas Values and the Dismas Prayer and then we hear a quartet rendition of the Dismas story (see video on page 1) and share how it impacts us.

Then we pray for intentions and needs and that's it...simple sharing, food, laughter, connections being made without judgment ...just listening...just belonging in the spirit of the gospel story of the thieves on the cross alongside Jesus. *"Today you'll be with me ..."* is the way Jesus put it.

Harry Nigh

A Conversation with Chaplain Juliane



Chaplain Juliane Martin is one of the busiest, most connected chaplains that I know. She ministers to 89 residents in four Salvation Army sites in downtown Toronto, regularly visits dozens of prisoners in 12 Ontario prisons and maintains contact with hundreds of prisoners in the community and even from other provinces wanting to return home to Toronto.

She has little time for knitting and says she can't crochet to save her life!

She was working as a support worker at the halfway house and when someone mentioned that she had a *"chaplain's heart"*, she says *"that kind of stuck with me"*.

"I started going to Dismas Fellowship and then the Christmas days at Warkworth and I sensed that chaplaincy is deeply steeped in faith like the most perfect cup of tea... and there was something about it ... maybe that's what God wants me to do".

Story continued on page 3...

A Conversation with Chaplain Juliane *(continued)*

Inspired by writers like Fr. Greg Boyle who writes of “radical kinship” with those we serve, Juliane realized that the key part about chaplaincy is *“being there for the person and, seeing them with compassionate curiosity, to see them the way that God sees them which is a big ask.”*

“But at the same time it means you have to be willing to let that other person see you which is a scary thing to do. We all want to be seen but then when we're being seen, it's uncomfortable. Right?”

One night at a Dismas gathering her comfort level was tested when a woman sitting across the table asked her, *“You haven't been here before?”*



Juliane replied, “No”.

“The woman asked where I was from and I said Bunton Lodge”

“Oh, I didn't know they had women living there” the woman said.

“In that moment I was like oh, she thinks that I like live there, and I was bristled a little bit by that. That's when I realized. whoa, I've got some work that I need to do because there's absolutely nothing wrong if I did live there, because, as the saying goes ‘but for the grace of God’, and that implies the presence of grace over here and not over there.”

Dismas Light

Juliane is a strong supporter of Dismas Fellowship and serves on the Board of Friends of Dismas. She has championed the idea of “Dismas Light” as a way of introducing fellows to the idea of coming to Dismas.

When men come to Bunton Lodge on a UTA (Unescorted Temporary Absence) for a few days as part of their community release planning, Juliane plans for a time which she calls “Dismas Light” for the men to meet a few folks from Dismas.



“In the basement of one the houses, we have a beautiful boardroom and we have a meal together and talk about Dismas. It's just a smaller scale of a Dismas Fellowship. We have the guys who are there on their UTA and then we also had people who were currently involved with Dismas. So sitting around this table is a group of people who are really just there for connection and a delicious meal.”

“It's like a test run for Dismas, and so they have a bit of an idea of what Dismas is and this gives them something to look forward to when they finally get out. We all look forward to connection and a delicious meal”

And her dream for Dismas?

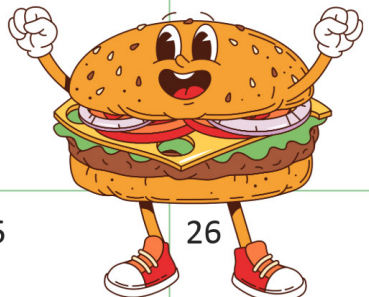
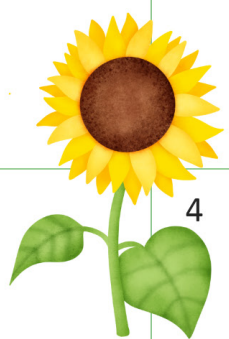
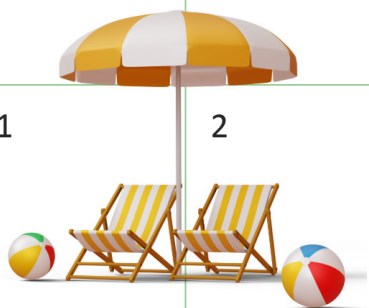
“Well, I would like to do a “Dismas Light” in some of the institutions to be able to have a few of the volunteers go in chapel and have a small thing in the chapel ideally, with a catered lunch.”

“There's a lot of people that would have to agree to that – having a meal in in prison is always tricky, but you know what? I think we can pray on it. Okay.”

Harry Nigh

August 2026



Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
	Kingston Dismas July 23rd <i>**No meeting in August**</i>	28	29	30	31 July	1 August
2	3	4		6	7	
		11	12	13		15
	10		19	20	21	
16		18			28	29
23		25	26	27		
30	31	1	2	3	4	5 September Brockville Dismas Labour Day Weekend Summer BBQ
						

In this quarter, Friends of Dismas proudly acknowledge the kindness of these corporate cash contributors.



Arkell Road Bible Chapel (Guelph)

Bukas Loob Sa Diyos Covenant Community (Toronto)

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

David Miner & Associates

Knights of Columbus Council 1388 (Toronto)

Knights of Columbus Council 11681 (Blessed Trinity)

Knights of Columbus Council 17065 (Blessed Frederic Ozanam)

Mississauga Missionary Baptist

Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation Archbishop's Dinner (Toronto)

Rotary Club of Toronto Eglinton

St. Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church (Hamilton)

St. James Anglican Church (Kingston)

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
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- 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/

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

