

Newsletter April 4 2017: Cellblock Seminary with CIC's Katy Dickinson



## *Education for Ministry at Elmwood Jail*

*Support for Innovative Religious Programming is Strong*



*"Has anyone ever thought about doing a college-level class in theology?"* asked Katy Dickinson, fresh from her first CIC training event. An accredited mentor of Education for Ministry, Katy thought this four-year college-level correspondence course for lay people would have application in the Elmwood Correctional Facility of Milpitas, California.

Conventional wisdom, which held that long-term classes can't work in local jails, is changing. Changes to California law have created opportunities for deep study programs to help inmates further their spiritual growth. Katy saw this. "I felt that little nudge, you know, God's nudge, saying *'these two things go together. EfM and Jail Ministry go together,'*" she recalls.

She thought it would take a year or two to get online. To her surprise, "How about next week?" was her answer.

In true entrepreneurial form, Katy worked first with EfM's developers Southern University to reduce tuition, and then raised money to cover remaining costs through her church, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church of Saratoga. Her ministry is now in its second year, meeting with ten first- and second-year students in a protective-custody unit on Wednesday nights. Katy Dickinson blogs about her experience; we've posted an article to [CICMinistries.org](http://CICMinistries.org).

EfM is one of several programs CIC has introduced to Santa Clara County Jails in the last five years. CIC's innovative religious programming is enormously successful, and seems to be limited only by the creativity of our volunteers. "We're thrilled with how well these programs are received by inmates, how excited they are about participating," said CIC Executive Director Rev. David Robinson. Mirroring Katy's surprise, he added "We've been ecstatic to see how supportive the administration has been."

Our challenge in 2017 is to develop programming to bring more music, artwork, and challenging spiritual disciplines into the jails. We want volunteer chaplains to give homework, push growth, and challenge the people we work with. What can you do, to reach special audiences like 18-24 year old men, or groups of protective-custody inmates? How can we get into these folk's hearts, in the deepest possible way? Bring your ideas to a training meeting, or call or write us with a proposal. Support for innovative religious programming is strong.

May God bless you and yours.

***Thank you for supporting jail ministry.***

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