



December 7, 2021

Dear loyal Ministry of Hope supporter,

What is the post-pandemic “new normal”? (And what does this mean for 2022?)

Everyone is talking about it, especially as we have begun the holiday season with plans to see (or not see) loved ones in person. Nothing could have prepared us for what happened in 2020, and I believe we all thought 2021 was going to be much different than it actually shaped up to be. “No rest for the weary,” isn’t that how the saying goes? Never has a phrase felt so true for every person I speak to these days. Will there ever be an end in sight? Or, as I’ve contemplated, when will we get a reprieve from things staying in a constant state of change so I can just catch my breath – mentally, physically, and spiritually? And while we have all faced challenges in the past couple of years, this time has been intensely trying for the women we serve who have been even more limited and isolated than the rest of us.

Yet, we all keep on moving forward, persevering no matter how tired we are.

You may ask, “How is Ministry of Hope doing this?” I’ll tell you: **with your support**. Without it, we would not have the encouragement, resources, and hope required to keep facing the ongoing challenges and changes – while being **present** one day at a time – to serve the residents at Western Correctional Center for Women (WCCW).

I like how Peter W. Marty described the value of **real presence** in pastoral care:

“...[calling on people in their different conditions of life] does imply that the joy of connecting personally with other people brings tremendous depth, perspective, and richness to life.”

Whatever this post-pandemic “new normal” experience has been for you thus far – as it relates to the day-to-day life of your household, career, socializing, shopping, even involvement in your community – I believe we all have come to understand the need and the power of the “human moment.” Psychiatrist Edward Hallowell defines the authentic human encounter as having two prerequisites: people who are physically present to one another and who are emotionally and intellectually engaged. Precious human moments have been our primary focus during 2021. Ministry of Hope’s chaplains have worked full time inside the gates throughout this pandemic. We are continuing to provide services, programs, craft projects and in-person support the best we can without our volunteer and community on-site resources. Even without one’s inner community (because of COVID protocols), we are still able to serve – both residents and staff alike.

Presence paired with resources equals a greater quality of life – physically and spiritually – even in difficult times.

By joining us in making a deeper connection with our residents, we are able to make a real impact in their day-to-day lives and their future. This creates **hope** for **renewal, reconciliation, and restoration** – our vision statement enacted! The Ministry of Hope wishes you and yours a blessed 2021 holiday, with hopes for a healthier and brighter 2022. On behalf of the all the women, staff, and our chaplains at WCCW, **we truly thank you** for remembering Ministry of Hope with your support.

Let’s continue to **be present** for one other, our loved ones, and our community.

Lauronda Morrow Teeple
2020-2021 Board Chair



MINISTRY OF HOPE

DECEMBER 2021 ISSUE

HEARTBEAT

This year at a glance...

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WCCW Chaplain

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Board Bookkeeper
& Assistant

April Shoup,
WCCW Associate
Warden

David Velez,
WCCW Asst.
Warden of Programs

Contact Us

Ministry of Hope
P.O. Box 998
Black Mountain, NC
28711

Chaplains
(828) 259-6055

MOH email:
admin@
ministryofhope
wnc.org

Visit Us Online:
MinistryOf
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GREETINGS FROM WESTERN CORRECTIONAL CENTER FOR WOMEN

...where we are busily preparing for a Christmas Play, and you haven't lived if you've never heard J.S. "heehaw" like a donkey or T.B. "baah" just like a sheep! Women are also coming to the chapel daily to participate in an art project - what fun to watch a woman sit down to a palette of paint, a 4"x4" canvas, and a variety of brushes while she's saying, "I'm not a painter." Then, she creates the most amazing little winter scene, and I say, "Maybe you weren't a painter when you walked in, but you are now!" **Blessings.**

Then Chaplain Spencer comes in with her CD of worship music, prayers and a sermon, and they are so happy to gather together for worship every week. They laugh and cry and yearn for a new day. **Communion.**

Weekly, the Kairos Sisters gather for *Prayer and Share*, and they discuss where they've seen God at work. They pray for the staff and the other women. They hope for a day when others have a chance to attend a Kairos Weekend. They distribute cookies made from dough provided by Kairos volunteers. Chocolate chip cookies keep hope alive. **Nourishment.**

The current *Houses of Healing* group meets every Wednesday afternoon to learn how childhood trauma lies underneath their everyday pain, but tools are available to help that wounded little girl feel loved and cared for. She doesn't have to act out. Triggers can be recognized, and there are other emotionally mature responses. **Growth.**

Twice a month, women from the Transitional Mentoring Program meet to learn from each other about life skills and to share excitement about living life on life's terms. It's amazing what happens when women are given a simple prompt, and they start talking with each other. Holding each other accountable leads to healthier relationships. **Transformation.**

Word is out about the chance to scream – yes, scream – in Chap Spencer's Grief Group. Release of pain and a chance to tell a story, time to be seen and heard and cared for happen in this chapel. The tree out front is holding our grief on strips of cloth where we've written our pain at the death of our warden, of our friends and of family members. They wave in the breeze, acknowledging our losses. On the *Longest Night*, they will be removed and buried. As the days grow longer than the nights, we will hold hope for the resurrection that springs eternal. **Hope.**

In between it all, personal conversations happen, prayers are uttered and funerals are watched via live stream in the chaplain's office. Bad news comes in a phone call. Children graduate from college. Grandchildren are born. Teens attempt suicide, and we make phone calls, talk to doctors, and provide connection. Children's books are read and recorded, and I make a trip to the post office to mail off the book and CD to kiddos who will hear Mama reading "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" while they turn the pages and see the pictures. **Opportunities.**

You are here with us every time we walk through the gate. You offer blessings, communion, nourishment, growth, transformation, hope and opportunities. And we are grateful to have you on the journey with us.



Carol Dalton,
Chaplain



Shannon Spencer,
Chaplain

RIISING TO THE OCCASION IN 2021

No truer phrase could ever be spoken than this - our Ministry of Hope's board, staff, volunteers, supporters, WCCW staff, and even our extended community met every need that came our way during this challenging year. To say that they did what was necessary to successfully overcome the variety of difficult situations faced is putting it mildly. **Each hurdle was met with quick response, eager and positive spirits to do the work necessary, while all handled with grace under pressure. It has been such an honor and a privilege to serve as the Chair of Ministry of Hope for the last two years.**

I've asked a few of our board members to share a bit from their experiences this year, as well, in an effort to shine a light on the highs (and lows) we encountered. I hope that these messages touch your heart and spirit as they did mine. **"Many hands DO make light work,"** and it was a true blessing to share in this year's service to the women (and campus) of the Western Correctional Center for Women* with such an amazing group.

* In September 2021, SCCW's name was changed to Western Correctional Center for Women (WCCW)



*Lauronda Morrow,
2021 Board Chair*

PARTICULAR HARDSHIPS FACED

There were countless challenges that WCCW faced in managing the Covid-19 safety and health protocols that were put in place. These would change almost daily, so maintaining any sense of normalcy was an obstacle in and of itself. **But in August, WCCW was tasked with providing staff to another prison facility in order to maintain its operational needs due to the impact of Covid-19. This caused a drastic reduction in the residential population and staff population at WCCW.** This extreme and sudden turn of events had a tremendous impact on inmate programs, inmate jobs, and volunteer programs available to the residents.

We are cautiously optimistic to report that staff are beginning to return, and the inmate population is slowly returning to WCCW. So many women that were displaced during that time were unable to access the programs, services, work and/or education opportunities that they had underway while at our facility.

With the tragic and unexpected death of Warden TA Boysworth in October, residents and staff then suffered an enormous emotional loss. Ministry of Hope was able to provide a memorial service and reception for staff. Our chaplains also worked countless extended hours during that time of grieving to provide on-site support for both residents and staff alike.

Additionally during 2021, **WCCW was chosen to be the first female correctional facility to undergo a Federal Accreditation in the state of North Carolina.** This was a very difficult project for staff to accomplish due to staff reduction and limited resources, but they managed to still "get the job done" and we are proud of the efforts made by our WCCW staff.

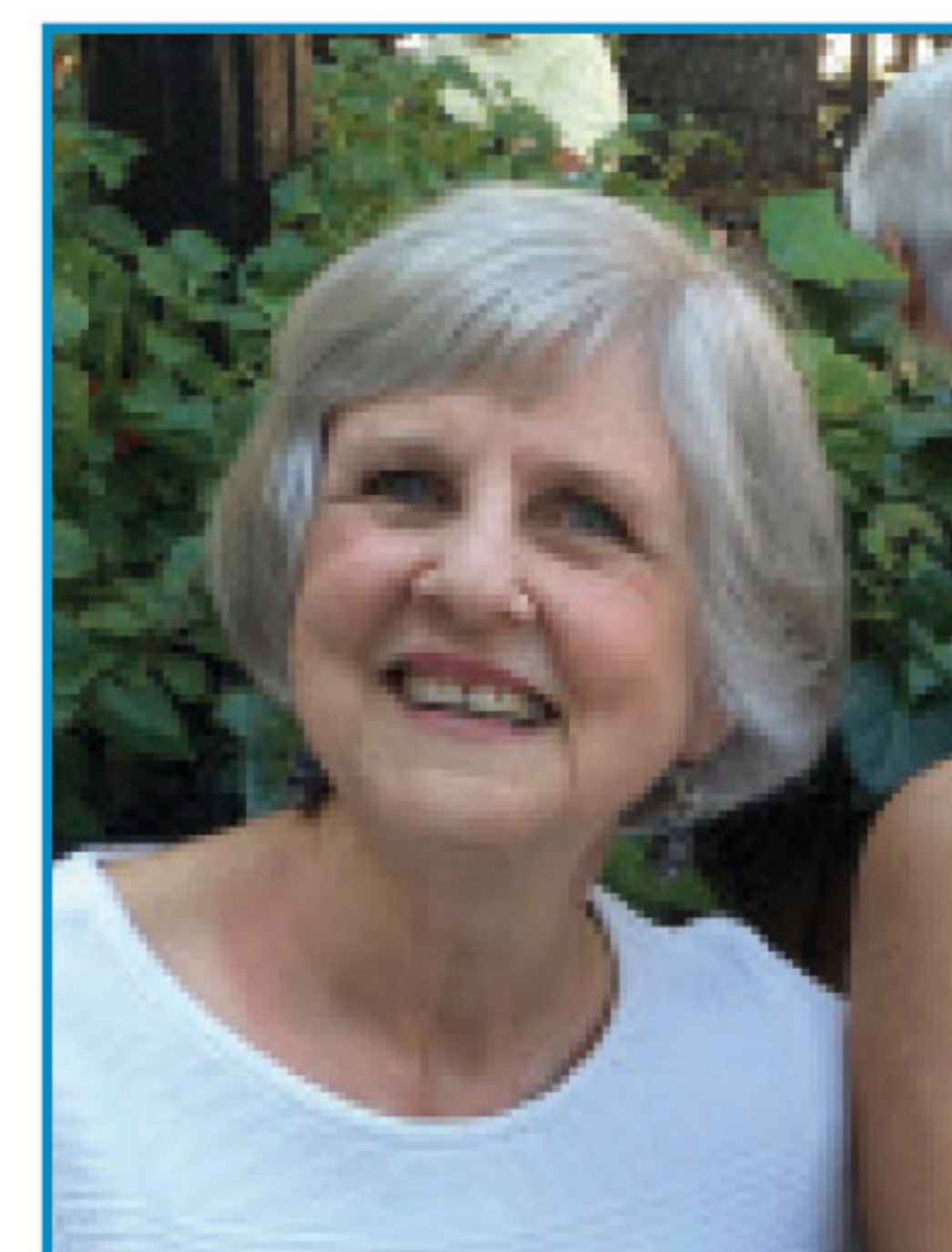


*Mike Gregory,
2021 Board Vice Chair*

INSIDE PERSPECTIVE

Serving as the Chaplains' Assistant for four years prior to the closure of all volunteer programs due to Covid-19 in March 2020, I know firsthand the impact that the Ministry of Hope has maintained throughout these extremely difficult two years. All programs ceased: GED, Bible studies, exercise classes, local churches' programs, choir, dance team, family visits, etc. **The women found themselves in complete isolation.**

The Ministry has been able to serve as a beacon of Hope during this time by having outdoor chapel support sessions, art & craft projects (providing supplies, as well), small holiday gifts, greeting cards so women could stay in touch with their families, and most of all - a Spiritual Presence - there among the women when no other outside individuals or organizations were allowed in. The Ministry of Hope indeed provided Hope perhaps more so than ever before.



*Kitty Kelly,
2021 Board Member*

Would you like to join our email list for SCCW updates, event reminders and news?

Visit the "Contact" page of our website, then enter email address to "JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER"

BEYOND THE GATES

There are many obstacles the women face when they leave prison. As a Ministry of Hope board member, but also a volunteer in our Transitional Mentoring Program (as well as a past CV pass volunteer with WCCW), one of the greatest examples of an obstacle is not having reliable transportation. A post-release woman recently said the thing she worried about the most every day was finding reliable transportation to work.

During 2021, **Ministry of Hope saw the need and stood in the gap:** we helped women transition into their local home plans, assisted in setting up their initial day-to-day needs post-release, provided transportation to work, worship, and other important appointments, even grocery shopping. But perhaps the greatest benefit to providing assistance to these women that have transitioned out is having the opportunity to build rich, healthy friendships - this helps us all feel like we are part of a caring community.

Ministry of Hope plans to continue extending their post-release services and programs in 2022, looking for ways we can join with our community and faith based supporters to better help women adjust to life "outside the gates."



*Jane Derrick,
2021 Board Member*

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOPE

Without the **Ministry of Hope there would be no chaplain in the Western Correctional Center for Women.** As a former chaplain in the NCDPS system, **it is impossible to overstate the importance of that ministry.** Though I now reside in Florida, I recently had a chance to visit with some of the women who were incarcerated while I was a chaplain in NC. Each one had a story she cited that also told about how the support and encouragement they received when they were "on the inside" helped them grow psychologically and spiritually.

One of the women specifically applauded the Transitional Mentoring program that helped develop her self-esteem, confidence and awareness in the importance of having a supportive community. She cited that program as THE most important factor in her turning her life around. Without the Ministry of Hope, there is very little hope for those behind the walls. I encourage you to support this Ministry as generously as you possibly can.



*Priscilla Durkin,
2021 Board Member*

RARELY EXPERIENCED GRACE

Joining a board during lock down could have been an uninspiring and challenging decision...if we weren't talking about Ministry of Hope. Instead, the warmth and dedication of the board members was apparent from the first zoom meeting, and I knew had I made the right choice. I immediately started learning not only about the lived experiences of the women at WCCW, but I also started hearing about the transformational presence of the chaplains in their day-to-day lives.

I think I've been most struck by how much the chaplains provide a sense of human dignity and worth for women that have rarely experienced grace and empathy from those around them. I am constantly inspired by the chaplains' creative approaches to solving problems through solutions that center the women and their needs. As we move into 2022, I hope we can continue to grow awareness of the unique and important support Ministry of Hope provides the women and staff, and the Board looks forward to engaging and expanding our community of supporters through online (and in-person?) touch points.



*Margo Mullinax,
2021 Board Member*

PUTTING FACES WITH NAMES

We hope you've enjoyed in this "year at a glance" - its been nice to "see" our board members (and staff), as well as connect a name with a face as they've shared their news, stories, experiences and special insights about Ministry of Hope during 2021.

Here are the remaining friendly faces of our board and staff that have also worked hard this year - we only had so much room for editorial, but we did not want them to go unacknowledged, as each and every member of our board and staff have been vital to the success we've had, as well as the hope for even more service to the WCCW women in 2022..



Liesl Case,
2021 Treasurer



Amy Moore,
2021 Secretary

"We never know exactly what the day will bring, but we can almost always count on interesting conversations and opportunities to listen. Thank you for helping us make a safe space for women of all faiths to express their hurts, joys, questions, concerns and hopes for the future."

- Chaplain Carol Dalton

Contact us today to learn more about Ministry of Hope:

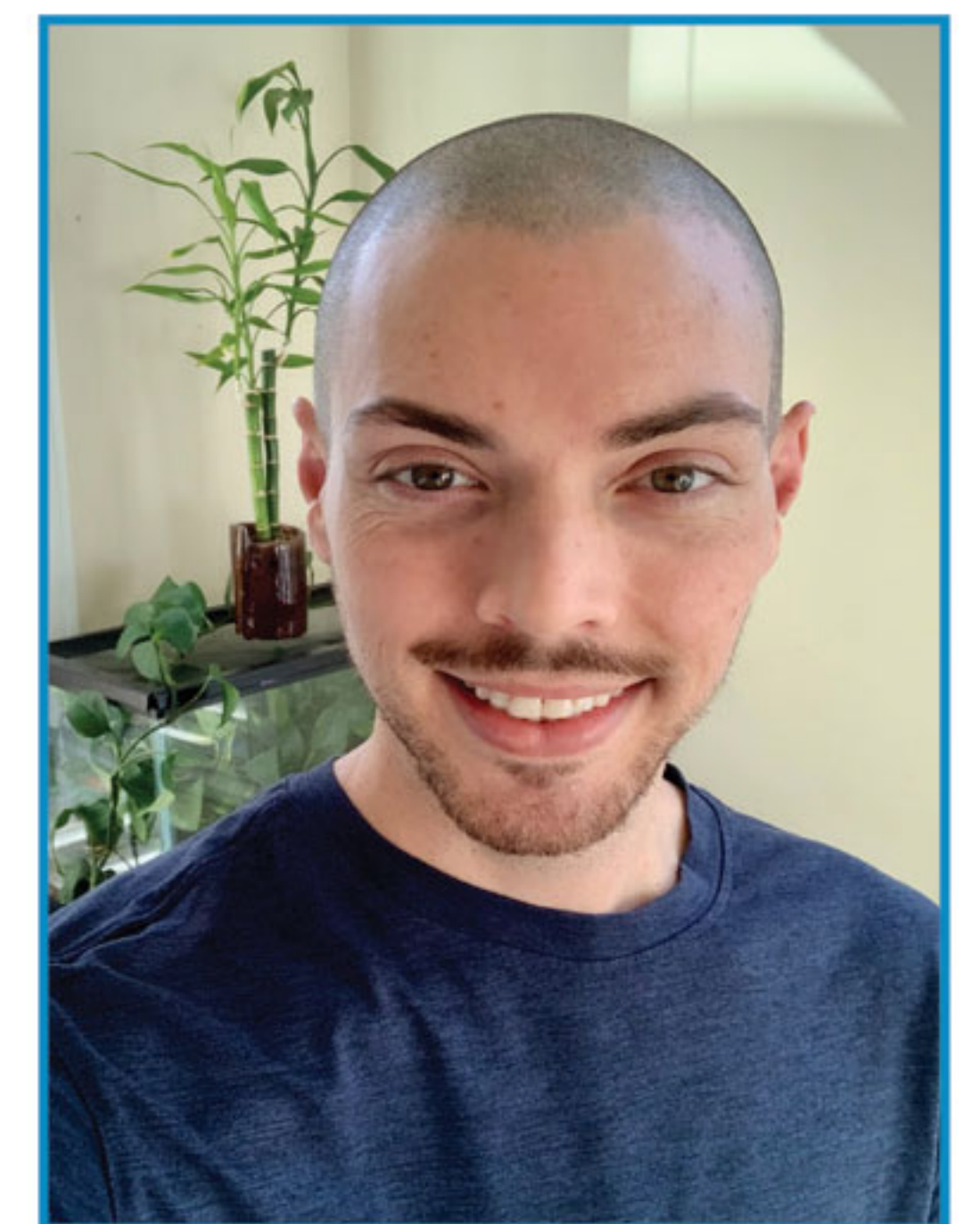
P.O. Box 998, Black Mountain NC 28711

Email: admin@ministryofhopewnc.org

Online: www.MinistryOfHopeWNC.org

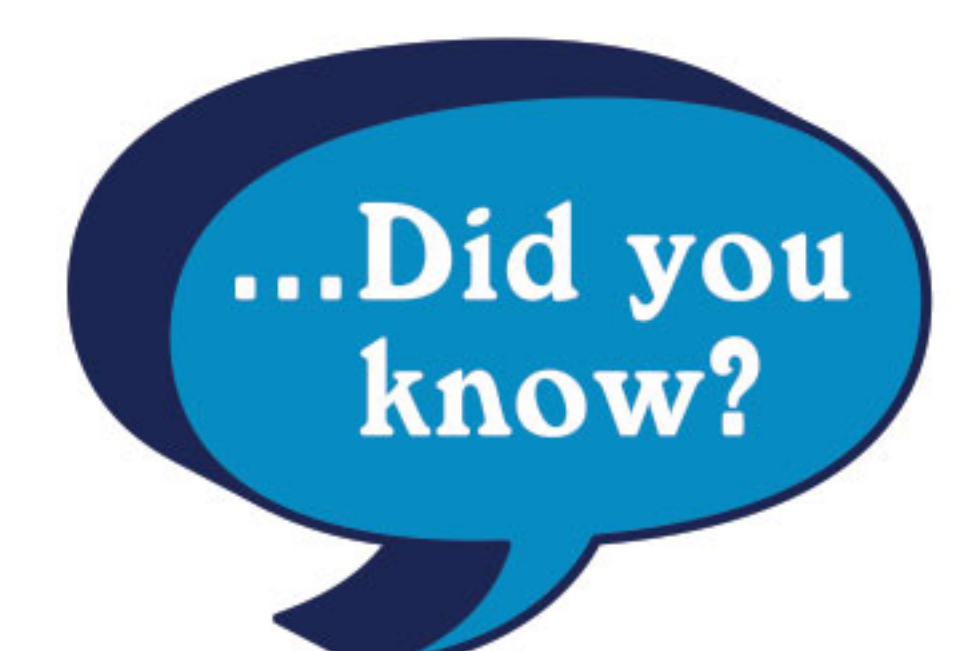


Cari Barcas,
2021 Board Member



Ben Gilliland,
Bookkeeper / Assistant

Besides the obvious spiritual support, our chaplains also provide the residents - and staff - with a wide variety of support services. All of the women at WCCW are separated from their family, friends, and home. Some are struggling with addiction. Ninety percent are survivors of trauma and abuse. Many of the women at WCCW will not receive either visits or mail during their incarceration, so Ministry of Hope chaplains (with help from support staff and volunteers during non-pandemic times) facilitate these arrangements, as well as other mentoring services.



At WCCW all of the women are within 5 years of release or parole so they are not simply slogging through their prison sentence but actively planning for life on the outside. Many of the women are aware that if they do not use their prison time to examine the root issues behind their addictions, they will go back to their old behaviors and end up back in prison. Chaplains help women prepare to re-enter the outside world as healthier people more able to contribute to their communities and families.

A Reminder about recurring giving as a way to support Ministry of Hope...

When a donor signs up for this recurring donation program online, there are no checks to mail and no reminders needed - it's all automated!

A monthly gift allows our supporters the option to spread the financial impact of their giving across the entire year, making the commitment more manageable.

These ongoing funds will provide regular and predictable support for our ministry, allowing our organization to fund our ongoing operations overall, but also predict future cash flow - giving us a better lead in future planning and outreach.

Sign up now online at: www.MinistryOfHopeWNC.org

