

No Humbug in Prison at Christmas

CID Pastor and Prison Chaplain Steve Southward conducted a Christmas service on Christmas Day at Pittsfield Work Camp. Nine inmates attended the service. Pastor Southward preached on the theme, “Lord, You Didn’t Have to Do It, but Thank God You Did.” The service included hymns and carols such as “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” “The Little Drummer Boy,” and “Joy to the World,” and a Christmas lullaby that Pastor Southward had learned in his youth.

After the service, the men loved these songs so much that they kept singing them. The officer in charge asked if they wanted to sing these same pieces to the inmates eating in the cafeteria. They sure did! The members of this impromptu choir were excited to sing the Christmas Good News to those who were eating dinner.

As they started to sing in the cafeteria, Pastor Southward says, “a little Christmas miracle took place. The inmates quieted down and listened intently. It was as if the message of these carols hit home. And as a result, the men enthusiastically clapped in appreciation because of the Christmas joy they heard.”

A member of the informal choir wrote Pastor Southward: “This Christmas season has been the happiest one I’ve spent since being incarcerated. Spending time singing Christmas carols and seeing the joy it brought to all the other inmates and even the officers reminded me of how much more there is to Christmas than just lights and decorations. It’s about the love that is showed by God through His Son Jesus Christ and for that love which is passed down through this family of believers to people such as yourself.”

The Lord has used your congregation’s gifts to the Central Illinois District to put Pastor Steve Southward into Illinois prisons for more than a quarter-century. Thank you!

“I thank my God . . . because of your partnership in the gospel” (Phil. 1:3-5).

No Humbug in Prison at Christmas

CID Pastor and Prison Chaplain Steve Southward conducted a Christmas service on Christmas Day at Pittsfield Work Camp. Nine inmates attended the service. Pastor Southward preached on the theme, “Lord, You Didn’t Have to Do It, but Thank God You Did.” The service included hymns and carols such as “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” “The Little Drummer Boy,” and “Joy to the World,” and a Christmas lullaby that Pastor Southward had learned in his youth.

After the service, the men loved these songs so much that they kept singing them. The officer in charge asked if they wanted to sing these same pieces to the inmates eating in the cafeteria. They sure did! The members of this impromptu choir were excited to sing the Christmas Good News to those who were eating dinner.

As they started to sing in the cafeteria, Pastor Southward says, “a little Christmas miracle took place. The inmates quieted down and listened intently. It was as if the message of these carols hit home. And as a result, the men enthusiastically clapped in appreciation because of the Christmas joy they heard.”

A member of the informal choir wrote Pastor Southward: “This Christmas season has been the happiest one I’ve spent since being incarcerated. Spending time singing Christmas carols and seeing the joy it brought to all the other inmates and even the officers reminded me of how much more there is to Christmas than just lights and decorations. It’s about the love that is showed by God through His Son Jesus Christ and for that love which is passed down through this family of believers to people such as yourself.”

The Lord has used your congregation’s gifts to the Central Illinois District to put Pastor Steve Southward into Illinois prisons for more than a quarter-century. Thank you!

“I thank my God . . . because of your partnership in the gospel” (Phil. 1:3-5).