

A Message Regarding COVID-19 At Stateville Correctional Center

Illinois Prisons (as of 3/31/20) have [187 Coronavirus test pending](#) (and individuals aren't being tested until they display severe symptoms of the virus). At Stateville specifically, 12 incarcerated men are on ventilators, 9 incarcerated men have been confirmed to have the Coronavirus, and 9 staff have the Coronavirus. One man died on Monday. Two North Park incarcerated students have been hospitalized. These numbers have tripled since Friday. This is an urgent crisis, and we need the Body to pray and act!

Here are three actions that you can take right now, while observing social distancing.

[1. Donate Here](#)

Indicate "health supplies" in the comments) and provide more soap, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes to our brothers and sisters behind bars who have insufficient supplies and are in one of the most vulnerable environments regarding catching and spreading the Coronavirus. These donations will go to our students in the [School of Restorative Arts Program](#) and the other incarcerated individuals at the Stateville Correctional Center, [Logan Correctional Center](#) (which NPTS & the ECC are building relationships with, in hopes to expand to our educational/discipleship offering behind bars), and Cook County jail. Incarcerated individuals across the nation are confined in heavily populated, small spaces with insufficient access to hand soap and cleaning supplies. North Park Theological Seminary spoke with the warden of Stateville, and he said that they would very much welcome donations to help create a more sanitary environment for employees and the incarcerated. No donation is too small. Twenty dollars would buy 20 bars of soap. Thank you for any help you might be able to provide to keep one of the most vulnerable populations safe during this pandemic!

2. Write and Encourage Students in the School of Restorative Arts Program

This is a very challenging time for our students. Many of the inside students have frequently reported that their classes give them hope and something to look forward to each week. Covid-19 restrictions have prohibited teachers from entering Stateville and have disrupted the communal rhythm that many students have become dependent upon. The morale for many students right now is very low. They could use encouragement from our broader ECC family, reminding them that they are not alone, that their studies still matter, that God has a missional purpose for their lives, and that right now is a perfect opportunity to implement the pastoral skills that they are being equipped with. This would be of great service to our students, [but there are strict correspondence responsibilities](#) that anyone who elects this option must follow.

3. Be an Advocate

Advocacy is a very tangible expression of faith expressing itself through love in this unprecedented moment of crisis. Call your elected officials and advocate for needed change now. [Here are some advocacy notes and scripts](#) you can use when you call.

Thank you for faithfully functioning as the interconnected Body of Christ and bearing witness to love in these perilous times! [Here's a reflection from one of our outside Stateville students.](#)

Dominique Gilliard
LMDJ, Director of Racial Righteousness and Reconciliation

"Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison,
and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."
Hebrews 13:3