



CHARIS of MINNESOTA INCORPORATED

The Olive Branch

We Are the Church!

Karen Troyer, Vice President

**Charis Mission:
Presenting God's
reconciling love in
Jesus Christ to
inmates in
correctional
institutions in
Minnesota**

**Questions about the
first Charis Outside
Weekend?**

**Want to work on the
team?**

**Want to sign someone
up to attend the week-
end?**

**Contact Lori Kemper at
952-440-6551
or Bruce Kemper at
952-607-6360**

**Go Team Charis!
Sign up to be part of
Team Charis for the
Prison Fellowship
Run for Second Chances.
April 23, 2017
Seafoam Stadium
Concordia University**

**Rally starts at 9:05
Race starts at 9:30
Register at [https://
www.prisonfellowship.org/
events/e2017/second-
chances-5k-st-paul/](https://www.prisonfellowship.org/events/e2017/second-chances-5k-st-paul/)**

The Charis Prison Ministry in Minnesota owes its existence to the Cursillo movement and to the Holy Spirit moving in the hearts of hundreds of Cursillistas. For over 35 years, Charis (formerly Kairos) has reached into five Minnesota prisons and ministered to thousands of men and women in the name of Jesus Christ. For many of us, our call to prison ministry came following our respective Cursillo weekends and the challenge put forth in the model of the 3-legged stool. And as you may have observed, once we participated in Charis, we were hooked.

Today, Charis of Minnesota has a mailing list of more than 700 current and former volunteers, many of whom continue to volunteer on the inside, or support our weekends through prayer and financial gifts. And our weekends inside prisons (7 Charis weekends are conducted annually in MN at present) continue to fill up quickly. With some weekends limited to 36 weekenders, the waiting list can be as high as 100 people hoping to get in. Men and women alike are hungry for the truth of the Gospel. For many who are unchurched, Charis is a short course in Christianity that must substitute for a basic Sunday School education.

Considering that our volunteers AND our weekenders come from a wide variety of Christian churches representing all denominations in our communities and in our prisons Charis had no choice but to eliminate

denominational flavor and aim for a truly ecumenical process. Since the early 1990s when we broke away from the national Kairos and became Charis Minnesota, our spiritual directors have worked hard to tailor their words and their practices according to the words and practices of Jesus in Scripture. Our Act of Remembrance, for example, is taken directly from the words in the Gospels, so that all present may be invited and included in the communion meal, in the unity of the Body.

**Charis of Minnesota
Outside Weekend
#1
June 22-25, 2017
St. James Lutheran
Church
Crystal, MN**

Over the past two years the Charis Board of Directors has spent much time and energy in prayer, seeking to discern the future direction for our ministry. We recognize that our volunteer base is aging quickly and we have made volunteer recruitment a high priority. For that reason, we have determined that Charis must work to develop new volunteers through all possible paths, including the invitation to our Charis graduates (the Overcomers) to join us on an outside weekend that will begin to develop future team members and leaders. Those who know us will help us carry on the Charis ministry.

Charis is looking for ways that we can join with the Twin Cities Cursillo communities in reaching outside our congregations to engage with those who would not typically have the opportunity to experience the Cursillo retreat and the community waiting to welcome them. We believe the Cursillo method remains a viable tool for sharing God's love in our communities. We have no wish to compete with or replace any of the denominational Cursillo movements. However, we recognize that our path must continue to be non-denominational and must minister to the unique needs of our community members.

The Charis ministry remains committed to our incarcerated brothers and sisters. Our dual purpose is to expand our boundaries and follow the Holy Spirit wherever that leads us. Please consider how you might join us in this step outside our comfort zones, into the unknown, hand in hand with the Holy Spirit, in an effort to revive and strengthen this life-changing ministry.

Charis is poised to hold its first outside-prison weekend from June 22 to 25, 2017 at St. James Lutheran Church in Crystal. Make plans to join us for the closing on Sunday, June 25.

Contact Lori or Bruce Kemper if you know of someone you would like to attend the weekend or if you are interested in serving on this outside team.

Charis Outside Weekend #1 Application

Charis of Minnesota Outside Weekend #1 Application Form

COMPLETED BY APPLICANT (please print clearly). Submitting this application does not guarantee your attendance at the weekend retreat requested. You will receive confirmation in the mail 4-6 weeks before the weekend begins. Additional information will be provided to you at that time.

Date and location of Charis weekend for which you are applying:

**June 22-25, 2017
St. James Lutheran Church
6700 46th Place North
Crystal, MN 55428**

Full Name _____ Age _____
(Last) (First)

First name, or nickname _____ Spouse's first name (if any) _____

Mailing address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (with area code) Home _____ Cell _____

Name of your Church (if any) _____ Denomination _____ City _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone _____

Special needs (medical, diet, etc.)? Describe _____

Person Who Recommended You Attend (if any) _____

Charis Participant Information and Guidelines

Charis is non-denominational Christian program. It is recommended that a person be over 21 years old.

- *The weekend begins at 6:30 pm on Thursday and ends at approximately 3:30 pm on Sunday. Complete attendance is required for the entire weekend.*
- *Each weekend is coordinated by a co-ed team, which has gathered and trained together for that Charis weekend. The same format and time schedule is followed for the weekend.*
- *Charis retreats are held in a host church where all of the participants and Charis team members live together as a community.*
- *Charis is open to both single and married people.*

Please mail this application to the address below:

*Charis of Minnesota Inc., P.O. Box 102, Hopkins, MN 55343 or to
Lay Directors: Bruce & Lori Kemper, 1520 Thomas Lake Pointe Road, Eagan, MN 55122*

~ www.charismn.com ~

Building Together, Working Together

Building a Strong Foundation

Charis Outside
Weekend #1



June 22-25, 2017
St. James Lutheran Church
Crystal, MN

Join us for the first Charis Outside weekend. We are inviting you to participate as a team member or as a weekender.

This weekend retreat is for:

- Families & friends of Overcomers
- People who are interested in prison ministry
- Anyone who wants a non-denominational Christ-centered retreat

Fill out the weekender application in this newsletter and mail it to:

Lori & Bruce Kemper
1520 Thomas Lake Pointe Road
Eagan, MN 55122

Questions? Contact: Bruce.kemper@gmail.com
Or Lorijo.kemper@gmail.com

All are welcome!

Together We Can

Seeking people to serve on the Charis Board of Directors. Duties include attending monthly board meetings, retreats as scheduled and committee work as needed. Term of office is for three years and starts on July 1.

Qualifications Needed: Must have a heart for the Charis ministry. Benefits are out of this world. Deadline is May 1. If interested, contact Maret Ryan at 612-388-0976 or email her at maretryan@gmail.com.



Bringing Out the Best in Each Other

God has blessed us with another beautiful Shakopee weekend. I wonder if any other February weekends got to be enjoyed with open windows and temperatures in the 50's and 60's? And it was not just beautiful naturally, but also beautiful in the supernatural power of our Lord. As I remember back to last fall when I was asked to pray about becoming the lay director for this February weekend, I think I actually groaned out loud with dread. I wondered if perhaps we could wait 14 years until I retired! Even though I accepted without much joy, the Lord brought blessings abundantly. **He is gracious beyond measure.**

As I began inviting volunteers to the team I began to worry that I wouldn't be able to fill the team. We have many snowbirds who are unable to serve in February. A dear friend shared her story of returning from vacation to her busy life and upcoming surgery. As she sat in the airport, she imagined herself putting all those cares into a big basket and handing them over to Jesus. I decided that I could do the same with the things I was tempted to worry over in preparing for this weekend. I pulled out a basket and a pile of colorful index cards. Every time I began to fret over something, I wrote it on a card and put it the basket for Jesus. Now as I look at those cards I am reminded of all the people who accepted the invitation to serve and all the ways He answered and provided for each need. **He is faithful beyond measure.**

The weekend passed by so quickly: 13 talks, Stations of the Cross, poster parties, the Agape dinner, the most beautiful outdoor burning of forgiveness lists ever, and then suddenly we were at the Closing Ceremony. I am amazed that the 36 weekenders before us were the same 36 weekenders from Friday evening. They seemed so different. Yes, they were different. The transforming power of Jesus' love had been at work in them and in us for the past three days. They had been experiencing God's reconciling and unconditional love, some for the first time. They testified over and over again of arriving to the weekend broken, sad, hopeless and feeling alone. What did they find and what were they taking away from the weekend? Hope, joy, new community, knowing that they are loved, peace. One weekender joyfully noted that it was a shame to have to come to prison to have a man pull out a chair for her for the first time! It was so beautiful to see tears of joy and hear all their laughter. **He is loving beyond measure.**

I am so thankful to have had the privilege of being lay director for this team. The Lord turned my groaning into joy and the joy of the Lord is indeed my strength. I am so thankful to have had three more days to spend among the women of MCF Shakopee with a fantastic team of insiders and outsiders as we shared the Charis experience together. **He is praiseworthy beyond measure.**

Patrice Waters, Lay Director Charis #48, MCF Shakopee



P.O. Box 102
Hopkins, Minnesota 55343

Website:
<http://charismn.com>



Like us on Facebook at
Charis of Minnesota
Prison Ministry

Please consider donating to the Charis Prison Ministry.
Your ongoing support will help us carry out our mission to bring the redeeming
love of Jesus Christ into the prisons of Minnesota.

Donate by mail:
Charis Prison Ministry, PO Box 102, Hopkins, MN 55343
or Donate online:
www.charismn.com



Charis Speaker's Bureau

We've got a great story to tell. It's one of redemption and transformation and of how important the Christian community is to complete this story.

Speakers are available to inform groups—churches, community organizations, any other interested groups—about the Charis Prison Ministry. They can learn about the mission of Charis, prisons we are currently serving, elements of the Charis weekend, the follow-up program for those who attended a Charis weekend when they were in prison and want to continue to grow in their relationship with God once they are released, the effectiveness of the Charis ministry, and how to get involved.

Notify us of your interest in scheduling a speaker by contacting Dee Moore at 952-913-7332 or sending an email to Charisprisonmnistry@gmail.com.



Thank you for Blessing Us!

We asked and you answered—blessing the Charis ministry with over \$8,500 in year-end donations, many of which were earmarked for Bibles. Because of your generosity we were able to purchase Study Bibles for the first time ever for the men at FMC Rochester. They had been praying for them and now their prayers have been answered.

We also received generous memorial donations from the families of John Troyer and Reverend Bill Brice—both faithful and faith-filled men of God. They blessed the Charis ministry in so many ways.

We thank God for His many blessings and tender mercies.