

Hope For All in Jesus Prison Outreach



P.O. Box 2493 New Caney, TX 77357 / 281-467-2410
"Bringing Hope and Life to the Prisoners"



NEWSLETTER FOR MARCH 2021



From Shelia Johnson Chaplain and President

Dear friends and partners,

I pray that everyone has lights and water and that none are suffering from busted pipes. I also pray that none have lost a love one during the freeze. If so, please let us know so we may pray for you and your family. During the freeze and blackouts I was reminded that we must fully put our trust in God and Him only. I have taken everything that we have been through and going through as a lesson to lean and depend on God believing that He will bring us through it all. If anyone because of the freeze need help, please don't hesitate to let us know. We may not be able to fix a busted pipe, but we can serve a warm cup of coffee or tea, or a hot meal with a smile. I know a few of our members had busted pipes and are getting them repaired. I wanted to share this article by Keri Blakinger an Associated Press reporter who was formerly incarcerated and now writes on prison systems for various news agencies.

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

NOTE: We at Hope for All in Jesus Prison Outreach do not necessarily endorse all the statements in this article or assign blame for the conditions highlighted here. We pray for all those involved and affected by these conditions, that those who have the means to make the improvements needed will do so to the best of their ability and by God's Grace.

Inside Frigid Texas Prisons: Broken toilets, Disgusting Food, Few Blankets

By KERI BLAKINGER

The deep freeze has been terrible for many Texans, but prisoners have little way to get warm. At the Polunsky Unit in Livingston, Texas, prisoners have told their families that they have gathered snow into buckets so that they can flush dorm toilets.

The story was published in partnership with Daily Beast Officials said 33 prisons lost power and 20 had water shortages after the state's electrical grid failed for several days during single-digit temperatures. Though the Texas Department of Criminal Justice said generators kept electricity on, staff, prisoners and their families reported frigid—and increasingly horrific—conditions around the system.

"The heaters aren't working, there's no showers, everybody's locked in the cell," said one prisoner, who asked not to be identified for fear of retaliation. Between buildings, he added, "They're dumping table salt on the ice to thaw it out, trying to make the walkways passable."

An agency spokesman did not respond to questions about prisoner complaints. The state's prison system was in bad shape long before the storm began.

COVID-19 has made things worse. Since the start of the pandemic, at least 40 staff and 187 prisoners have died, and a quarter of all prisoners have tested positive for the virus.



Shelia Johnson; President email: schristiansj@gmail.com
Remembering Pastor Robert Dubois; Founder

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." Proverbs 11:30

The agency has been struggling with an unprecedented staffing shortage, weeks-long lockdowns and continuing omplaints about moldy and meager bagged meals.

Then came the deep freeze.

As blackouts swept the state and left more than 4 million Texans in the dark, dozens of prisons began losing power as well. A corrections officer at one unit said that backup generators didn't go on as planned. Even when they did, aging or shoddy ductwork left some cells so cold the men shivered while wearing all of the clothing they owned.

Unlike people in the free world, prisoners have almost no options to stay warm if there isn't heat. They can't go to cars, hotels or warming centers; they can't huddle together; and they can't necessarily get more blankets or layers. Even though the prison system's spokesman said staff distributed extra blankets and jackets to everyone, current and former staff at several units said that wasn't possible because there weren't enough to go around. "It's been so cold for so long that my fingertips are cracking and bleeding," one man imprisoned near Houston said Thursday. He asked not to be named for fear of retaliation, as he was communicating through a contraband cell phone at a time when regular phone lines were down or inaccessible to many prisoners. As the weather worsened, fewer corrections officers showed up to work, exacerbating the understaffing and making it harder for workers to take care of the men and women behind bars. One officer, who asked not to be named for fear he would be fired, complained that only one person turned up for work during a day shift at the Marlin Unit, which forced others to stay and cover the facility's basic security needs. Across the state, officers were sometimes forced to work 16 or more hours and threatened with write-ups if they didn't come in, said Jeff Ormsby, a union leader. "They're being held hostage basically and told they'd be fired if they go home," he said. "This is the reason you're 5,500 officers short. It's not the pay, it's not the benefits, it's the way you treat your staff." The agency says its emergency plans sometimes mean workers have to stay on site during crisis events, but that they're always paid for that time. "It is emergency policy," said Jeremy Desel, a spokesman for the prison system. "The same thing happens during hurricanes." And—just as during

hurricanes—as more staff called out or couldn't make it to work, conditions behind bars declined. One officer said staff at her



unit weren't able to pass out medication for more than a day, and several staff members and prisoners said the food had become largely inedible and sometimes unidentifiable. "They've been eating pancakes for two days," said Kirsten Ricketts, a 51-year-old from East Texas whose husband is in prison at the Polunsky Unit northeast of Houston. "Today was a pancake and a piece of baloney and a piece of cornbread for dinner."

[Photos of cold meals served to Texas prisoners during the Feb. 2021 snowstorm and power outage.](#)

At other units, prisoners with contraband phones sent pictures of their increasingly pitiful meals, including one that was nothing but a small piece of cornbread, a half a piece of cheese, a handful of raisins and a hot dog with no bun or ketchup. The quality (or lack thereof) of the bagged meals served during lockdowns has been a persistent problem, and one that the pandemic—and now the blackout and snowstorm—has just exacerbated. "The short staffing and the element of surprise and then the quality of the labor is this giant crap sandwich that I get to enjoy every morning for breakfast and every afternoon for lunch," one man said before sending pictures of the single square pancake he got for breakfast. To make matters worse, more than a dozen prisons lost some or all of their access to water. "They're trying to distribute bottled water, but they don't have enough to go



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around, they can't flush the toilets or take showers," said Jenny Allen, who has two relatives at Polunsky. "The toilets are overflowing with waste. The inmates are starting to fight, there's a whole lot of tension—because they don't have water." Advocates for prisoners say these problems have been years in the making. "The Texas prison system is in that category of infrastructure that the Legislature doesn't give a flip about," said Jennifer Erschabek, director of the nonprofit Texas Inmate Families Association. "It's just punishing these people on all sides: COVID, heat, cold, food, understaffing, broken prisons."

Saints we really need to pray. Pray for the wardens, the guards, the inmates and their families that are going through this trauma. Pray for the prison ministry. Pray that we as volunteers will be able to go in and minister to these souls that they may receive Jesus as their personal Savior. Pray for the ones coming out that they will have a place to call home when they are released such as the Town of Hope. Pray for the Town of Hope which is so very much needed at a time like this. Please continue to give to the vision of the Town of Hope. We did not make our goal of \$30,000.00 in the time allotted but they are working with us as we continue to raise the money needed. We still have the land that was donated for the Town of Hope "Praise God", so that's a blessing. We need you and can't do this alone. This is a team project, not a one-man project. Everyone is important and essential. You may not be able to give monthly maybe you can give a one time donation. However the Lord leads you to give, we appreciate you.

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><i>"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Phil 4:6 (KJV)</i></p> <p>Please send your prayer requests to Shelia Johnson ** 281-467-2410 **</p> </div>  </div>	
PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO JOIN US IN PRAYER	
SUBJECT	REQUEST
COVID-19 Pandemic	Lord, we ask for strength & comfort for all who have lost loved ones.
TOWN of HOPE	Jesus, let your own vision burn within our hearts that we will see clearly to pray and move forward with patience and a firm conviction
Pastors, Mozell & AT	Father, Minister to Mozell Sparks & AT and continue strengthening her heart
Daisy Turner	We pray for a reversal of the infirmities plaguing her and complete recovery
Wayne Turner	Holy spirit, show him your loving kindness and the peace that passes all understanding
Bryan Voan – Estelle	Lost his father. We pray comfort and a revelation of Eternity for Bryan and Family

★ MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Bless God our Father who has brought you through one of the worst years in recent history, and maybe in your life. He is faithful and will continue to sustain you. Believe and hold fast. Now, if you were born in the month of February, **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** from all of us at Hope for All In Jesus Prison Outreach



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VISION

All of a sudden a scene appeared before me!! I saw the shadow of a man walking through a very, very poor neighborhood. Standing in the doorways and all around were men, women and children doing some of everything that was contrary to the Word of God. As the shadow of the man approached, in his left hand he held a Bible with large glowing letters which said "HOLY BIBLE". All eyes were on this shadow as he approached. But the amazing thing about this vision was the fact that I was hovering over the shadow and a voice spoke to me and said, "The man in the shadow would be able to do all that the Word of God says, but he was not to be prideful, he was not to let money go to his head, nor was he to have sexual relations with any woman other than his wife, because if he violated any one of the above quoted statements, he would lose the anointing." Then the vision lifted! (Deuteronomy 8:11-20 *KJV*)

Although I was the person hovering over the shadow in the vision, the voice was directly talking to me. God has since then shown me that the shadow of the man going off into darkness to do battle against the enemy for the Kingdom of God, also represents anyone in jail, juvenile centers, prisons, in mental or physical bondage that would obey His Word and yield to the leading and guidance of His Holy Spirit daily in their lives.

Evangelist John Earl

SUBSCRIPTION

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If we receive the witness of men, The witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. (1 John 5:9 *KJV*)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pentecostal Church of God in Jesus Christ: A ministry that exercises faith in God's Word and His people

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Chaplain Richard Lopez: Who is a teacher by example of the love and grace of God

R. Dubois & Shelia Johnson: Hope For All In Jesus Prison Outreach; P. O. Box 2493, New Caney, TX 77357

Jimmy Stockton: Caring and supportive; one who is trustworthy and has a great heart for the downcast

Drew Love: God's servant, an instrument of help to this ministry and the lives of others

Maxine Earl: My wife, God's gift to me

The above individuals, through their abilities and authority given by God, inspired me very much in my walk with Christ. They are in no way accountable for the enclosed contents.

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