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On the Road, Again!

By Frank Zeidler, Executive Director

"On the road again, Goin' places that I've never been, Seein' things that I may never see again, And I can't wait to get on the road again"

While the motives may be different, Willie Nelson's 1980 song resonates with missionary-athletes wearing the Saints Prison Ministry uniform. Each one relishes the opportunity to visit states or prisons where they have never been, knowing God is going to show Himself in ways they may never see again!

SPM has been conducting crusades almost since the very beginning. As the years passed, and the invitations mounted, those crusades grew lengthier and the distance traveled grew greater. At one point, the ministry sent a team to the Pacific Northwest for an 8-day, 7-night trip! In more recent years, the crusades leveled off to almost universally encompassing 5-days and 4-nights - still a challenge for the families remaining at home but more manageable for everyone involved.

But that still wasn't enough - the invitations nationwide continued to pile up! In 2013, a church in Ocean City, NJ suggested partnering with SPM to answer a few of those invitations. Shortly after, it was a church in Mercer County, NJ that not only conducted a crusade but challenged other churches to do the same. Huntington, WV...Fayetteville, GA...the concept was spreading across the breadth of the Saints' network! The Church-Crusade partnership was born...although it wasn't formalized for a couple more years.

Crusades became increasingly popular, and there has never been a shortage of opportunities. Each year the ministry calendar showed more evangelistic trips than the year before. In 2025 alone, the Saints Prison Ministry, either using current MAs or in conjunction with a local church, conducted eight crusades, **resulting in more than 400 professions of faith in Jesus Christ!**

Five-day crusades are getting expensive, and the experience of the Federal Team (see The

Inside Story on pg. 2) demonstrated to ministry leadership another method. In 2026, the Saints Prison Ministry distinguished between Crusades of 5-6 days and Campaigns of 3-4 days. This distinction presents missionary-athletes with choices that fit their schedule, family situation or support capacity...and allowing the ministry to respond to even more invitations!

The calendar for this year already has 12 crusades/campaigns being planned - half of which are being conducted by local churches partnering with SPM! Please be praying for the men and women we will encounter on these missionary journeys, that God would use His missionary-athletes to reach many more for His Kingdom!

For one story of how these trips impact the men involved, read God Locked the Door on page 2.

A New Team in the Desert

Over a year ago the phone rang in the Saints office. A former missionary-athlete was interested in starting something similar where he now lives. After a lengthy conversation, the determination was made to launch a new Saints team rather than try to start something from scratch.

God moved in men's hearts to build a team and, on January 10, 2026, the Saints Prison Ministry's AZ basketball team played the first game of their 2026 Inaugural season at the federal prison in Phoenix. 150 men came out to witness this new team play against the prison's varsity squad. The game was a spirited contest but the Saints team prevailed. More importantly, at the halftime Gospel presentation, 12 men made the decision to claim Jesus Christ as their Savior!

The 2026 season still has three more games remaining: two at the federal complex in Tucson in February and a return visit to Florence West with the "official" team in March. Please continue to pray for this new team, even as you are lifting up the existing teams during their seasons.

O Federal Team, We Hardly Knew Ye!

By Frank Zeidler Jr., Executive Director

As many of you know, 2025 brought a unique opportunity for the Saints Prison Ministry: the first season of our Federal Softball Team. Created to navigate strict Bureau of Prisons guidelines, the team stepped into a full schedule with one mission - respond to the growing number of federal invitations that our traditional structure couldn't accommodate.

Visiting eight federal facilities - six of them brand-new to SPM - the team experienced an outpouring of openness and gratitude from the men we met. Time after time, residents shared a hunger for truth that challenged and inspired every team member. Those encounters were unmistakably the highlight of the season and a powerful affirmation of why we go.

But as quickly as the need for a dedicated federal team arose, the landscape shifted. With the Bureau of Prisons easing its restrictions, all SPM teams are once again free to visit multiple federal facilities each year. In the spirit of Ecclesiastes, the season for a specialized Federal Team was never meant to be long - just long enough to show us what God intended to teach.

And teach us He did. While the model had its limitations, the experience proved invaluable in shaping our strategy for 2026. One clear takeaway came from our MAs: the strong positive response to shorter, three-day ministry trips. Because of their feedback - and the demands many families face - we're excited to introduce a mix of traditional crusades and these new, focused 3-4 day "campaigns." These shorter trips will reduce financial

pressure, expand opportunities for involvement, and maintain the intense, purpose-driven schedule our teams are known for.

In Genesis 50:20, Joseph tells his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive." That verse resonates deeply with this chapter in our ministry. Even when obstacles appeared, God used the Federal Team experience to sharpen our vision, strengthen our approach, and ultimately open new doors - so that many people behind prison fences will be made alive!

2025 Federal Team Results:

- ◆ Number of facilities visited: 8
- ◆ Inmates who watched: 2,347
- ◆ Inmates who stayed for the gospel: 1,780
- ◆ Number of Gospels handed out: 2,736
- ◆ Number of cards collected: 924
- ◆ Professions of faith in Jesus Christ: 223



God Locked the Door

By Gus Casey, Wellspring Church crusade participant

In early November, I had the privilege of serving with sixteen incredible men on the Saints Prison Ministry crusade to South Florida. When ministering inside prisons, timing is critical and every movement has to be precise. As a military man, that fits right into who I am. I was raised to prepare, plan ahead, and be on time and it is how I operate to this day.

The third morning, I was responsible for one of the vehicles, containing half our team. Everything was perfectly on schedule - bags packed, team in uniform, hearts ready - until the hotel room door refused to open. Three of my teammates were inside with their gear, and no matter how

many key cards I tried, that magnetic lock wouldn't give. I must've gone back and forth to the front desk five times trying new keys.

Finally, after more than an hour, maintenance showed up with a crowbar. And together we forced that door open! Mission accomplished... just later than expected.

Because of this delay, our speaking lineup had to shift. The guys who were originally scheduled to share their testimonies at the prison weren't the ones who ended up speaking. And for someone like me - disciplined, structured, always on time - that tested me a little. But God was working.

When we arrived at the prison yard, it became clear that the men who stepped up to speak on short notice were exactly

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FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Correspondence from behind the walls

Hello brothers and sisters of the Saints Prison Ministry. For 30 years, this ministry has NOT failed to miss by birthday. I would like to thank you! Not only on my behalf but on behalf of ALL the brothers and sisters you reach to to each year on their birthday. I look forward to hearing from you next year!

- Kevin G.

This letter I'm writing is to express my upmost appreciation for everyone at the Saints Prison Ministry. I have been incarcerated since 2010. I first met the Saints in 2011 while at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. I was 20 years-old back then. You guys took my information and every year since that day on my birthday, I have received a happy birthday card with scriptures and kind words. I just turned 35 years-old and like clock work I received a birthday card. I have said to myself for years that I would write to you guys to let you know how much the cards mean to me and how much I appreciate everyone at the Saints Prison Ministry. Again, thank you.

- Bashan R.

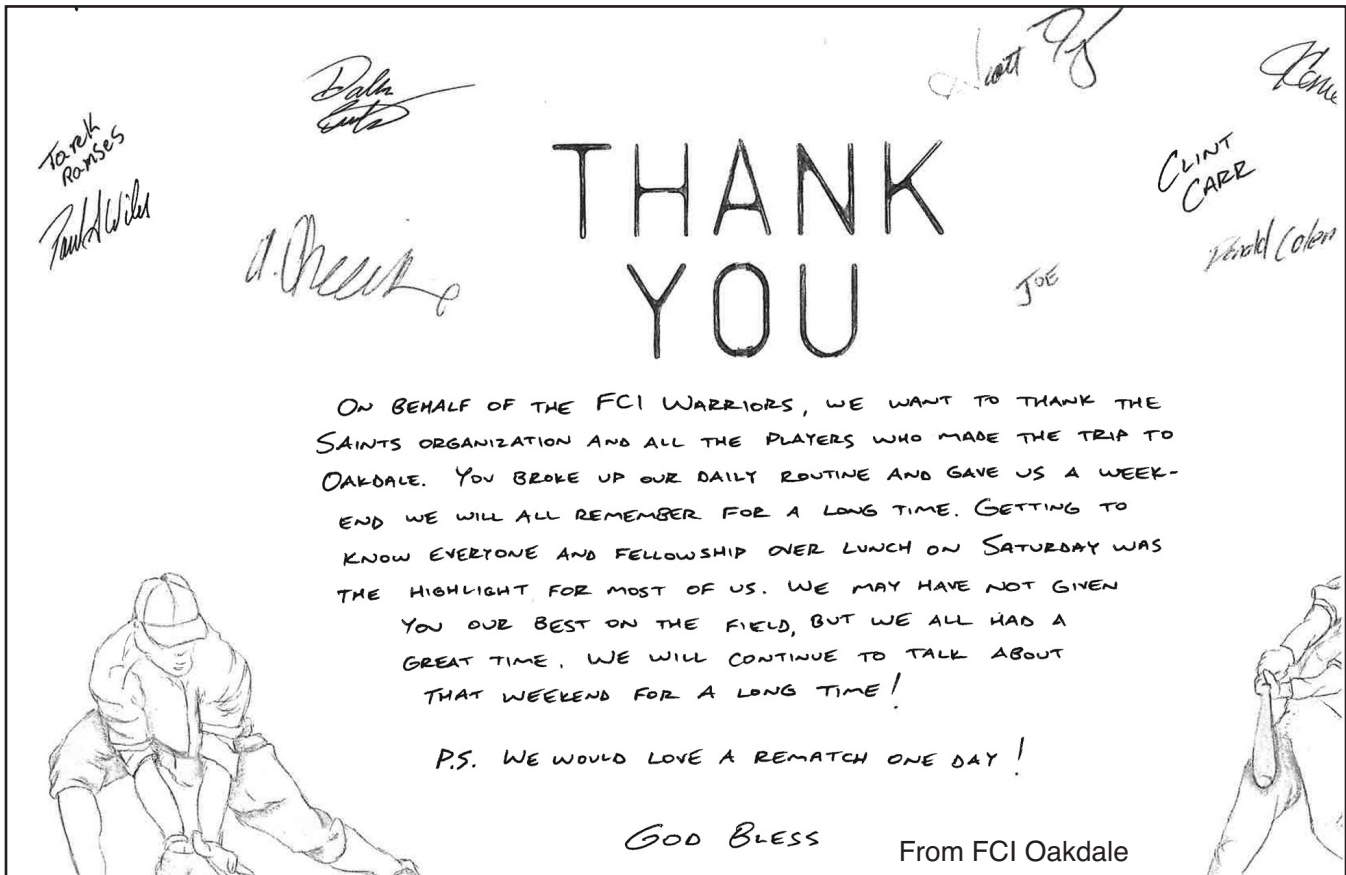
I'm so blessed to have real men that I call my friend. When I came in here everyone, I thought was my friend, wasn't. They walked away from me like they never knew me and at the beginning it hurt. But God came into my life and showed

me what a real friend looks like. I was sitting in my cell telling my cell buddy that you all write me every birthday and I never write back. I just had to write you all back to say thank you for never forgetting about me and showing the love of God. Most of the time in places like this, there is more hatred then the love that the Lord wants us to show to each other. The letter on my birthday made me feel and know that I'm not forgotten. I pray God continues to bless you all and keep the love that you all have growing. I love the Lord and will always hold on to Him no matter what I go through. I'm on my way home soon and I just pray that the Lord protect me, provide for me and lead me in the way that He wants me to go. I want to thank you all again and ask that you keep me and my brothers in here in prayer. May the Lord keep using you all in a way that changes lives.

- Robert H.

I am writing to thank you for faithfully sending me birthday acknowledgments every year since I met you. I really appreciate it. The fact that I've been incarcerated for 22 years and you haven't forgotten about me, speaks volumes. I am grateful. Thank you.

- Malaika



How to Multitask Better in 2026

By Tom Gibson, IL Saints Softball Coach

Most missionary athletes have more on their plate besides volunteering with the Saints. There are responsibilities at church, projects at home, and calendars full of kids' activities.

Look, it just isn't easy trying to balance everything but lucky for you, I have some tips and resources to help you manage your crazy schedule in 2026.

How do I stay plugged in at church while being a missionary athlete?

No worries. Our regional teams only play on Saturdays so you will be home in plenty of time to get up and go to the worship service on Sunday.

How do I stay plugged in at church and have a thriving marriage while being a missionary athlete?

Once again, nothing to fear here. We have our dates well in advance and with a little communication, you and your spouse will enjoy the Saints season! However, if you run into any trouble, please check out one of those marriage books about communication that Paul David Tripp wrote.

How do I stay plugged in at church, have a thriving marriage, and be a supportive parent while being a missionary athlete?

This is a piece of cake! Chances are, your wife will forget that you've been gone all day while she runs children to soccer practice, piano lessons, does laundry, prepares three meals, and repaves the driveway. I'm willing to bet that your house will even be clean when you get home too. If I'm wrong, you may want to watch one of those parenting DVDs by Paul David Tripp.

How do I stay plugged in at church, have a thriving marriage, be a supportive parent, and play league night softball while being a missionary athlete?

I'm willing to bet your wife will appreciate the opportunity to get out of the house and watch your kids run wild on the playground/park pavilion/parking lot while you get to play a game on Thursday night. She knows that you're just getting some practice before your next big prison trip. By the way, if you need any advice on your softball swing, you may want to check out that one USSSA softball instructional video on YouTube by Paul David Tripp!

How do I stay plugged in at church, have a thriving marriage, be a supportive parent, play league night softball, and volunteer to chaperone a high school marching band trip, while being a missionary athlete?

It seems like I have to answer this question all of the time but traveling with the marching band is just like traveling with one of the Georgia teams. There is plenty of giggling, some drama, and the random singing of showtunes. I'm sure you will have a good time but in the event the show tune singing gets to be too much, Paul David Tripp authored a book on suffering that is only \$11.77 on Amazon right now.

How do I stay plugged in at church, have a thriving marriage, be a supportive parent, play league night softball, volunteer to chaperone a high school marching band trip, while on a completely different mission trip to Norway while being a missionary athlete?

Ok, we are going to cut this one close but stay with me. It looks like you play the early game on Thursday, and your wife is without a doubt going to be fine with you volunteering her for that trip with the band kids to Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. You should have plenty of time to catch the flight to Lillehammer while learning the Norwegian language while everyone else is sleeping on the plane. You will need to grow out a good mustache while in Norway so I would recommend the YouTube video about mustache grooming by Paul David Tripp.

At publishing time, you were probably also asked to be a deacon, coach the church pickleball team, and help build the set for the local high school's production of Pirates of Penzance. But fear not! Paul David Tripp was on a podcast the other day covering all of that!

God Locked the Door

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the ones the inmates at that facility needed to hear. Their individual stories connected in powerful ways, and several men in the prison yard came to know the Lord that day.

And that's when God reminded me: **Even when my timing is precise... His timing is perfect.**

What looked like an inconvenience was actually God's alignment. A locked door placed the right men in the right yard at the exact right moment. Even for someone who prides himself on preparation and punctuality, the message was clear - His schedule is always better than mine.

