



VALLEY INTERFAITH PROJECT

June 25, 2020

Director David Shinn
Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, & Re-entry
1601 W Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Delivered electronically

Dear Director Shinn,

Thank you for meeting Tuesday to continue the conversation on issues surrounding the novel coronavirus in the prisons. It was helpful to hear of the steps that your department is taking with correctional staff, uniformed officers, inmates, and the community at large.

In our original letter to you and Dr. Christ last month, we iterated our concerns about universal testing and monitoring in correctional facilities, access to PPE for staff, officers, and inmates, supportive isolation prior to release, and the release of a greater number of prisoners under guidelines used by other state and federal agencies.

We walked away from our meeting yesterday more hopeful about the commitments made to increase the protections within Arizona's correctional facilities, including:

- A commitment to provide meaningful access to soap to all inmates without the torment of their cell being flipped
- Creating soon and publishing a timeline for universal testing and monitoring for all persons within Arizona's correctional facilities
- A plan for testing and providing supportive isolation for inmates about to be released
- Showing test results for released inmates on the Department Dashboard
- A plan for providing masks for all inmates, staff, and officers.
- Creating a plan for seamless enrollment into AHCCCS upon an inmate's release
- Meeting again on June 30, 2020 at 9:00am to continue this work with you and your key staff

All of us are concerned about the spread of the novel coronavirus in our state. As clergy, we hear the stories of fear and of pain on a daily basis. We have seen the tears of parishioners and congregants as COVID-19 changed our realities. We feel the anxiety of families whose loved one is in prison without the benefit of self-isolation. We carry these anxieties, fears, and pains in our hearts as we strive to pastor our communities across the state.

Our nation and our state are faced with an unprecedented public health emergency. Never in our lifetimes has it ever been this important to care for the most vulnerable among us - which includes those who are incarcerated. We look forward to meeting again next week.

Respectfully,

Rev. Mary Bullis, Crossroads United Methodist Church, Phoenix

Rev. Rock Fremont, Shepherd of the Hills UCC, Phoenix

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Reddall, VI Bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Arizona

Fr. Eric Tellez, St. Patrick's Catholic Community, Scottsdale

Mary Permoda, St. Patrick's Catholic Community, Scottsdale

Rev. Andy Burnett, Valley Unitarian Universalist, Chandler

Rabbi John Linder, Temple Solel, Paradise Valley

The Rev. Hunter Ruffin, Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Tempe

The Rev. Kim Crecca, AZ Inmate Family & Friends Association

Joe Rubio, Arizona Interfaith Network

Jason Lowry, Valley Interfaith Project