

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **D.C. JAIL HOLDS BAPTISM SERVICE FOR TWENTY-SIX CANDIDATES**

(Washington D.C.) D.C. Department of Corrections (DCDOC) Director Tom Faust announced today that on Sunday, August 23, 2015, a major milestone was reached with baptismal services being held for 26 male inmates housed at the District's Central Detention Facility (D.C. Jail).

Since assuming leadership of the Department, Director Faust has continually reinforced the importance of support, mentoring, and guidance from members of the faith-based community. To strengthen existing connections and establish a broader base of representation, he reached out to leaders from across denominations and religious beliefs to establish an advisory committee. This committee serves as a forum for sharing ideas and developing strategies to more effectively engage the inmate population. According to Director Faust, during the twice yearly roundtables held with this group there have been many thoughtful and informed ideas shared – one of which was performing baptismal services for desiring D.C. Jail inmates.

The DOC team embraced the idea and moved forward to establish an implementation plan incorporating input from our faith-based and community partners as well as the inmate population. As expected, a great deal of enthusiasm was expressed by many in custody who look to their faith in helping them face difficult and often daunting challenges. Prior to the actual baptismal service, inmates expressing interest participate in classes that focus on discipleship, life expectations and constructive ways to grow into a new lifestyle.

All in attendance at the Sunday baptismal could sense the passion felt by the 26 men being baptized, each committed to changing their lives for the better and embracing their faith in God. The order of service was performed by the DCDOC Chaplaincy staff along with eleven community volunteers. The service, which was overseen by the Jail Chaplain, Reverend Samuel Whittaker, included the baptism ritual, gospel songs, and a review of the doctrine covered during instruction. In moving forward, the Department will hold baptismal services on a quarterly basis

as needed. Fourteen new candidates have already signed on for the next baptism and are excited about a new found hope through faith.

“I view this as a critical component of our programming,” says Director Faust. “Throughout my 30 plus years in public safety, I have witnessed the tremendous impact of supportive religious programming for all faiths. The DCDOC family values our faith-based community partners and the work they do to support our mission. More importantly, they provide the foundation for the men and women in our custody to grow their faith individually.”

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