

**EPISCOPAL CITY MISSION**  
**Report to Diocesan Convention**  
**November 2023**

Overview/Mission

Formed by the Episcopal Diocese of MO in 1954, we exist to “provide chaplaincy for the ongoing spiritual needs of all youth in the juvenile justice system by offering support, hope, and healing.” ECM remains strong in our commitment to offer life-changing programs and chaplaincy to our most vulnerable youth who are at the St. Louis City and County Juvenile Detention Centers (before adjudication) and at Missouri Hills, a Division of Youth Services facility (after adjudication). The youth are 17 years of age and under, with an average age of 15. The majority are African American males, and approximately 10% are females. Children who are certified as “adults” and placed into the adult justice system are still detained at the juvenile center while awaiting trial.

ECM chaplains come from various Christian denominations and are trained to address the spiritual needs of the children, regardless of religious background or affiliation. No attempt is made or permitted to coerce participation in activities or to change a child’s basic faith orientation. All services ECM provides are strictly voluntary and include:

- Pastoral care, one-on-one conversations, and a caring, listening presence.
- Faith-based discussions about challenges like betrayal and trust, revenge and forgiveness, doubt and faith; Chapel services; and Bible study.
- *Hope & Healing* – a peer support group for youth struggling with grief and loss.
- Visits to “adult-certified youth” in the St. Louis City and County Justice Centers.
- Resources such as books, journals, games, and digital media.
- Volunteers who provide encouragement and moral support.

Staffing Updates

2023 brought transitions in leadership and staffing, beginning with the retirement of Elizabeth Goad after nearly 10 years as Executive Director. In January ECM’s Board welcomed Nathan T. Ivy as Executive Director. Nathan is a nonprofit professional who brings more than two and a half decades of experience serving the disadvantaged, underestimated, and marginalized. The Rev. Paul Metzler retired from being our “Chaplain to the Chaplains” in February, after serving since 2018. The Rev. Erika Essiem (an Episcopal priest in our diocese) now provides ongoing care and support of our chaplains. The Rev. Clive Samson resigned as one of our four chaplains in August after two and a half years to focus on serving as Vicar of Faith Christian Church of India in Ellisville, MO and to pursue his advance degree.

Successes and Challenges

“Hope & Healing,” a community-based peer-support program for court-involved youth dealing with issues related to grief and loss, will be redesigned for children who are detained, in response to challenges stemming from Court staffing shortages which kept children from participating.

The St. Louis County Juvenile Detention Center re-opened to volunteers in March after three years of quarantine due to the pandemic, and ECM resumed hosting monthly Birthday Celebrations in-person! We are hopeful that the City’s detention center will also reopen to ECM volunteers in the near future, once their staffing shortages and other challenges are resolved.

With an end to quarantine at the County’s Detention Center, ECM volunteer opportunities have recently expanded and include Library Assistance, Tutoring, Program Assistant, “Career Talk,” and Ministry of Presence (small group interactions, games, cards, etc.).

Collaborations and partnerships to offer Mentorship programs at the City's Detention City have also been taking shape, with organizations such as the Urban League of Greater St. Louis and One Hundred Black Men.

ECM's website underwent extensive updates last spring, making it easier to register for events, purchase tickets, find information and volunteer. Visit our website to learn more at [www.ecitymission.org](http://www.ecitymission.org)!

Our Chaplains and Executive Director continue visiting congregations throughout the Diocese to offer insight and share stories of how our ministry impacts the lives of the children we serve. ECM Chaplains are also available to preach, as well as make a presentation. Please call: 314-436-3545 to schedule an ECM visit.)

The chaplains and staff – in collaboration with Family Court staff and ongoing generosity of our donors, exemplify resiliency by continuing to serve youth in Detention, despite some difficult challenges:

- staffing shortages at the City and County Detention Centers,
- a spike in population at both detention centers, sometimes double the number of children,
- Covid infections continue to rise.

### Events & Fundraising

We're grateful to everyone who helped host and participated in our events since last fall:

- MOMENT IN TIME GALA & AUCTION, Oct. 20, Forest Park Golf Clubhouse: Our main fundraiser of the year raised \$80,000, meeting our goal for 2022. We thank everyone who supported MIT!
- HOLIDAY GIFT WRAPPING PARTY, Dec. 18 at Emmanuel Church (Webster Groves: 3 dozen people spent the morning wrapping the gifts donated by Episcopal congregations for over 100 children in detention, before enjoying a blessing, lunch, and fellowship.
- ECM SUNDAY, Feb. 19: chaplains and staff, Court staff and children we serve were held up in weekly and daily Prayers starting on "Transfiguration Sunday" through Lent.
- ANNUAL MEETING, Feb. 28, via Zoom: 35 lay and clergy representatives from 15 congregations in the St. Louis metro area elected Board officers and a new member, adopted the 2023 budget, received financial reports, and welcomed our new Executive Director.
- GIVE STL DAY, May 10, online at [www.givestlday.org](http://www.givestlday.org): ECM received \$1,100 from 14 donors.
- BOARD RETREAT, May 13, Mercy Conference & Retreat Center: See below, "2023 Board"
- WALK-A-THON, May 20, SLU High School Track: This year's event was successful with the addition of games and prizes and saw increased attendance. We surpassed our goal by raising over \$4,000!

### Funding

ECM's primary source of funding comes from individual donors and congregations. We are grateful to Bishop Johnson for including us in the 2023 Bishop's Annual Appeal, for grants from various organizations and foundations, and for everyone who supported ECM at one of our fundraisers.

### ECM Board

The Board's primary responsibility is to embrace ECM's mission and be a goodwill ambassador for the organization. Members are elected to three-year terms, meet semi-monthly, attend, and support our fundraisers. Bishop Deon Johnson is President (ex officio); Mary Ann Moore - Chairperson, Jeff Yount - Treasurer, and Betty Bowersox - Secretary. The Board was expanded from 12 to 14 members in 2023 with the addition of Lisa Gould, Tim Groesch, and Josh Schafer. Other members are Steve Alagna, The Rev. Tom Albinson, Donna Baudendistel, Steve Crock, Bob Ecker, Elizabeth Hines, Leanne Rahe, and Pam Stanfield. Several of our Board members also volunteer at the County detention center.

The Board retreat in May (the first since 2019) provided an opportunity for team building, visioning and goal setting, short and long-term strategic planning. Some of the board's priorities are (*not necessarily in this order*):

- Rebranding Consideration
- Mission Mindfulness
- Chaplaincy Support
- Community Awareness
- Operations Reorganization
- Program Evaluation

Contact

Nathan Ivy, Executive Director, to learn more about serving on ECM's Board, 314-436-3545, [ecmdirectorstl@gmail.com](mailto:ecmdirectorstl@gmail.com).