



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LSSI's Connections to Hold Women's Conference on Life Following Incarceration on August 20-21

Connections, a program of Prisoner and Family Ministry of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI), will hold a Women's Conference on August 20 and 21 at Salem Lutheran Church in Chicago. The church is located at 318 East 74th Street, and the conference will run from 5 – 7 p.m. on Friday, August 20, and from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Saturday, August 21.

The conference, *Woman at the Well*, refers to the New Testament story found in John 4:14 — a story about new beginnings. It will include a variety of workshops designed for women who have been incarcerated and their loved ones. Among Saturday's speakers are Pastor Bernadine Dowdell, director of Chicago's Grace House, who will speak about what life is like after an incarcerated woman returns home, and the Rev. Cynthia Gregory-Moody, Women's Ministries at Resurrection House Baptist Church, who will speak about relationships in "Love or Like?" Dr. Gail Frazier, president, Daughters of Sarah International Outreach Ministries, will talk about toxic relationships, while Elaine Evans, who coordinates Connections' Visits to Mom program and the Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP) support group, will talk about forgiveness. The workshops on Saturday are only for women who have been incarcerated. There will also be a special "Woman at the Well Award" presentation for three women who are Connections clients on Friday night during the conference's opening service.

"The purpose of this conference is to provide an atmosphere of support and love to these women," says the Rev. Valerie Everett, director of Connections. "The workshops are geared toward the empowerment of the women by providing them with resources, information and a spiritual focus to help in their job search, personal development and family relationships."

LSSI's Connections works with incarcerated mothers, women who are re-entering the community after being in prison, their children and the children's caregivers. It offers Visits to Mom, which transports Chicago-area children and their caregivers to Decatur, Dwight, Greenville, Lincoln and Pekin Correctional Centers, and RAPP, a support group for caregivers who accompany children to the Decatur and Lincoln prisons. For more information about the conference, call Rita Williams at 773/783-9516.

Founded in October 1867, LSSI is a statewide, not-for-profit social service agency of the three Illinois synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. LSSI serves people through an array of services at approximately 83 sites across Illinois. For more information on LSSI or Connections, visit www.LSSI.org or LSSI's Facebook page.

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