

Perry Correctional Institution Mentor Message #3

(March 28, 2020)

Email Communication with Mentees Using GTL

Two weeks ago, following the suspension of mentoring in light of the pandemic facing our world, we encouraged each of you to write your Mentoring Partner using the postal system. One of the issues we have run into is, given that we do not want you to put your home address on it but use a PO box or church address, many churches have closed their doors for business and we realized that this won't work. After much prayerful consideration, Chaplain Epps has agreed to allow the mentors to communicate with their mentoring partner through e-mail. I want to say up-front that this process is safe, and your e-mail address is not seen by the prisoner. **Please read both of the following sections carefully.**

1. [Instructions for Setting Up the Global Tel Link Email System](#)
2. [Important Policies and Notes Regarding Electronic Communication via GTL](#)

Instructions for Setting Up the Global Tel Link Email System

South Carolina uses Global Tel Link (GTL) for their phone services and for their e-mail. In order to use the service, you will need to follow these instructions:

1. The website to go to in order to set things up is <https://web.connectnetwork.com/>.
2. Select "Create an Account" and follow the steps to establish a new account.
3. When prompted to "Add a facility" (also available via "My Facilities" on the menu on the left side of the page), you will select "South Carolina Department of Corrections."
4. When prompted to "Add an inmate" (also available via "My Inmates" on the menu on the left side of the page), you will select "Search for Inmate" and enter in your mentee's name.
 - a. If you are having trouble locating your mentee, please email me at metanoiamentoring@pcanet.org.

5. Each message sent requires the purchase of a virtual “stamp.” Each stamp costs \$.25. In order to add a payment method to purchase stamps, you will select “Payment Methods” on the left side menu and enter in your preferred card.
6. In order to send a message, select “Messaging” on the left side menu, and then select “Compose” at the top of the page.

Important Policies and Notes Regarding Electronic Communication via GTL

The following are policies regarding the use of GTL that must be followed in order to ensure that we as a ministry can continue to use this service during the current shutdown:

1. You may NOT put money onto the offender's account.
2. You SHOULD attach **one** stamp (credit) to each message you send in order for your mentee to be able to write you a response.
3. You may NOT attach more than one stamp (credit) to any message you send to your mentee.

The following are important notes and lessons in troubleshooting from our own experience and the experience of other mentors in using the GTL service:

1. Messages can only contain up to 2000 typed characters including spaces.
2. The GTL service “times out” and logs off the user after even very short periods of inactivity. We recommend typing out your message (still obeying the 2000-character limit) in another software—Microsoft Word, Notes, etc.—before logging on, so that you can simply copy and paste your message into the GTL window.
3. GTL does not give a confirmation as to if a message has been received by your mentee. However, GTL will tell you that your message has been sent. If the message has been sent, it will get to your mentee.
4. There is an inspection process that each communication coming through GTL goes through. With the undoubtedly higher-than-normal volume of communications coming through the system right now, it may take a couple of days for the message to get to him.

5. GTL may not alert you as to if you attached a return stamp so that your mentee can respond to your email. If you are unsure, simple math can help you determine whether or not you have sent a return stamp. For example, if you purchased ten stamps originally, and after your first message you have eight stamps remaining, you can be confident that you sent a return stamp. If you only have nine remaining, it is likely that you did not include a return stamp on your original message.
6. If you have not heard back from your mentee within a week's time, I would send another message and make sure a return stamp is included. If a return stamp is attached, there is no reason why he shouldn't respond.

Brothers, I would encourage each of you to set up the account and write. You have taken the time to establish the relationship with your mentee, and this will be a way for you to continue fellowship during what is likely to be a long absence from the facility.

I also want to encourage you to be in continual prayer for Chaplain Epps. As many of you know, he was a nurse before he became a chaplain, so this virus hits home to him on a couple of fronts. He is working long hours serving Christ in several arenas. Let us pray for his continued health as He serves our King on the front lines.

If you have any other questions, please direct them to metanoia mentoring@pcanet.org.

Stay encouraged.