

# Write a Letter & Spread Some Holiday Cheer!

*This Advent, the WPLC community is partnering with the Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants (ICDI) by writing letters to immigrants in Chicago- land detention centers. Thank you for supporting immigrants!*



## Instructions

1. Decide how many people you would like to write to.
2. Let Vicar Bethany ([vicar@wickerparklutheran.org](mailto:vicar@wickerparklutheran.org)) know how many people you would like to write to and if you could write in Spanish. Vicar Bethany will provide names, jail ID#s, and addresses.
3. Properly address the envelope:
  - a. Write the full address, including detained person's Jail ID #.
  - b. All mail needs to have a return address (please use ICDI's address for everyone's safety. DO NOT USE YOUR OWN ADDRESS). Additionally, please include ICDI's address at the bottom of the letter after signing only your first name as some jails do not give people in detention the envelope.
  - c. ICDI's Address, to be used as the Return Address:

**ICDI (via WPLC)**  
**5401 S. Center St.**  
**Chicago IL, 60615**
4. Write your letter!
  - a. ICDI will do their best to forward any letters they receive at the office, but when writing your letter or card you should assume **one-way communication**.
  - b. Remember that the person you are writing to may not be of the same faith, so try your best to use universal language.
  - c. Include ICDI's address at the bottom of your letter.
  - d. **FOR CHILDREN & PARENTS:** Due to the restrictions (below) on crayons and markers, we suggest that kids can still participate by drawing a picture or message, then their parents can scan or take a picture of the artwork and then print it out as a 4x6 picture or image to include in the letter/envelope. Then, place the ICDI address on the back. Alternatively, you may send Vicar the pictures of the artwork and WPLC can print, place in envelope and send ([vicar@wickerparklutheran.org](mailto:vicar@wickerparklutheran.org)). If you choose this method, you may place up to FIVE 4x6 images in the same envelope/letter.
5. You may either:
  - a. Place postage on your letter(s) yourself, and hold onto the letter for a letter to be blessed at hoe during worship on December 13. After blessing, send letter in the mail.
  - b. Drop off your letter(s) at the church with our without postage and we will hold on to the letter to be blessed on December 13. After the blessing, we will drop the letter in the mail.
6. Spread the love! Invite another WPLC member to write a letter too.

## Letter-writing Ideas

1. If you can make a good guess as to what language the person might speak, consider finding encouraging words in that language to include in your card or letter. When in doubt- write in English!
2. Find a card with an appealing, uplifting image on it.
3. Include a poem, prayer, affirmation, mantra, meditation, etc.
4. Rather than asking questions (given the likelihood of one way communication), send encouraging words such as: "I want you to know I am praying for you," "Please know that you are not forgotten," "I am thinking of you and sending love and care."
5. Get creative in thinking how to share news about the natural world outside- written words, a poem, a sketch, a photo, etc.

## Mail Rules and Regulations

### Letters and Envelopes

Plain greeting cards or letters in plain envelopes are allowed.

- Ornamentation (plastics, glitter, wood, metals, cloth, ribbon, cord, etc.), adhesives/stickers, paints, colored pencils, crayons, or any foreign substances (paper altered/discolored, perfume, ink runny) is not allowed.
- Cards with extra pockets, cellophane, strings, animation, or musical devices are not allowed.
- Foreign substances on envelopes or on letters (ie. lipstick, perfume, stickers) are not allowed.

### Pictures

Pictures (4x6 or smaller) without any type of backing and no more than five (5) in number are allowed. Pictures with foreign substances on them are not allowed. Pictures containing any nudity, gang symbols or activity, use of drugs or alcohol or any representation of illegal activity are not allowed.

### Prohibited Items

- Letters and cards with ornamentation (musical, plastics, glitter, wood, metals, cloth, ribbon, cord, etc.), adhesives, paints, colored pencils, crayons, or any foreign substances (paper altered/discolored, perfume, ink runny) are not allowed.
- Photos larger than 4"x 6", Polaroid photos, pictures/photos depicting alcohol, drugs, gang affiliation, weapons (real or toys), nudity or sexual content are not allowed.
- Books, booklets/pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, periodicals are not allowed.
- Blank paper, stamps or envelopes in the mail are not allowed.
- Correspondence from other detained or incarcerated people, including use of a third party outside the facility to circulate mail back into the facility are not allowed.
- Cigarettes are not allowed.

***Want to know more about the impact of your letters?***

**Join WPLC on December 6<sup>th</sup> at 11am for a chat with Ali Smith, Program Director at ICDI**