



The Lenten Cross Project draws together thousands of faithful people every year in prayer to seek relief for prisoners and their families and to prepare for the great Feast of Easter. Host churches simply extend an invitation to their members to participate in the project.

Christians have been long associated with acts of charity on behalf of prisoners. And Easter has been long associated with their release (often miraculous). Many classical writers, in fact, chronicle incidences of “chains and shackles of prisoners burst[ing] asunder and ly[ing] broken on the ground,” and “locks springing open, chains falling off and prisons opening themselves” on the anniversary of Christ’s resurrection. Neither was it uncommon for constitutions of that period to provide clemency to prisoners on Easter, “lay[ing] aside the chains and properly abolish[ing] the occasion for prison that is dark with filth.”

The symbolism of these extraordinary events animated the mundane work of early Christians who ministered to prison inmates – praying to God to protect them from despair while collecting alms as ransom for their freedom. Continuing in this tradition of prayer and almsgiving, Chattanooga Endeavors, Inc. (CEi) invites area churches to participate in its Lenten Cross Project as a way to prepare for the great Feast of Easter.

The centerpiece of this project is the Lenten Cross – one of the most beautiful and appropriate symbols of Lent. Made from the trunk of a Christmas tree, the Lenten Cross reminds us of the eternal love for man shared in the birth of Christ. In the form of a cross, it becomes a symbol of His passion and death and the glory of His resurrection.

The project itself is very simple. Participants select a prisoner’s name (written on a plain river stone) from the Lenten Cross of a Host Church. Each day of Lent they pray for the prisoner and make a modest contribution to CEi...of a nickel to a dollar a day. Although simple, each year our Lenten Cross Project is the occasion for thousands of faithful people come together in prayer seeking relief for men and women who suffer behind bars and for their families who suffer in silence with them.



Date: March 1-April 12

Cost: Free

Benefiting: CEi

Website: [www.lentencross.net](http://www.lentencross.net)

Contact: Brad Waye

423-266-1888 (102)

[bwaye@lentencross.net](mailto:bwaye@lentencross.net)

To sponsor the Lenten Cross Project, host churches:

- Submit the participation form by fax or online.
- Designate a primary contact for the project.
- Provide a setting (usually in a vestibule) for the project.
- Pick up the project display and accompanying material.
- Distribute information to members encouraging participation.
- Although the project is free, churches may wish to support it financially by making a small monetary contribution to defray associated costs.

To promote the event and support host churches, CEi:

- Assembles the Lenten Cross and prepares remembrance stones
- Provides participation instructions and related material
- Publishes daily reflections booklets and emails
- Posts promotional material online (e.g., video slides, web images, print ready bulletin ads, inserts, and announcement text).

As the opportunity arises, a qualified member of the staff or board will be available to speak to groups about the work of CEi, the world of crime and corrections, and the role of the faith community in establishing a just society.

The Lenten Cross Project is an outreach of CEi which improves public safety by restoring former offenders to productive roles in society. For more about CEi, visit [www.ceiservices.net](http://www.ceiservices.net) or call 423-266-1888.