

PRISON:

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Tadd Bazant, 41, grew up attending church with his family. However, at the age of 18 he quit going. When he landed in prison 10 years later, the former Washington County resident sought out religious programming — both as a way to reach out to others and to make changes in his life.

“People in prison aren’t bad, they just messed up,” Bazant said. “Everyone has a chance for redemption.”

Under the umbrella of religious services, Hodney said upwards of 160 volunteers provide inmate programs. In addition to numerous faith-based organizations, inmate worship bands, religious study groups, American Indian drumming and ceremonies, spiritual retreats, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, annual holiday celebrations, anger management and meditation groups fall under the prison’s religious services programs.

Scott and Kelly Zielke started visiting the prison with Dale and Sandy Russell, founders of Visions of Hope — an inmate art and sponsorship program that provides support for Otino Waa Children’s Village in Uganda. Utilizing their musical talents, the Hermiston couple has participated in rehearsals



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Kelly Zielke of Hermiston sings along with the Two Rivers Correctional Institution worship band — featuring Jacob Lawrence on bass, Chester Gunter on drums, Shane Hall on guitar and Joseph Opyd on keyboard — during a chapel service at the Umatilla prison.

and services with inmate worship bands. Calling them talented musicians, Kelly said they do a great job in setting the stage for worship services.

“They are really singing to the lord,” Kelly said. “It touches me be-

cause it is so genuine ... they truly are praising God.”

The couple is in the process of going through Department of Corrections volunteer training in order to participate more in faith-based prison pro-

grams.

Unsure of exactly what they will do, the Zielkes just want to reach out to incarcerated individuals who are looking for hope and striving to change their lives. Scott Zielke said it’s about reconcil-

iation and a redeeming God. The ironic thing, he said, is the inmates are incarcerated but have reached beyond the prison walls and razor wire to find more freedom than they had before being locked up.

Bazant agreed, saying the faith-based prison programs reach across barriers to provide something special.

“When we come together like this, we are a community of God,” he said.

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