

YOU BEEN ASKED TO SPEAK AT COH! HERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS.

1. You are a Jesus follower.
2. You accept the Bible as God's inspired, infallible, and complete word.
3. You are committed to preaching/teaching the simple but profound gospel or sharing your testimony of the gospel in our life.
4. Church of Hope is non-denominational. Please do not speak on particular denominational practices beyond your own testimony, example: styles or practices of baptism or communion.

You affirm COH statement of faith

THE FOUNDATION OF WHAT WE BELIEVE

As a Christian organization, COH believes in the full authority of the Bible as God's inspired Word and the complete tenets of the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. We believe in one God, Creator and Lord of the Universe, the co-eternal Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary, atoning death on the cross, rose bodily from the dead, and ascended to heaven where, as truly God and truly man, He is the only mediator between God and man. We believe that the Bible is God's authoritative and inspired Word, without error in all its teachings.

HOW WE ARE COMPELLED TO LIVE AND TO ACT

We believe that Christians, both individually and corporately, must submit to the Bible as God's authoritative, divine, and inspired Word in all matters of belief and conduct.

HOW OUR MISSION AND OUR APPROACH IS SHAPED

COH exists to bring glory to God and share His truth and love with those we serve, our employees, volunteers, and communities, according to scriptural truths.

Our mission is to help restore those affected by crime and incarceration. This mission is founded on the biblical conviction that all people are created in God's image and that no life is beyond God's reach.

Therefore, we believe that a restorative approach to prisoners, former prisoners, and all those affected by crime and incarceration reflects the God-given dignity and potential of every person and can help individual lives and communities flourish.

WHAT THE HOPE OF JESUS MEANS FOR OTHERS

We believe that Jesus—Himself brought to trial, executed, buried, and brought to life again—offers hope, healing, and a new purpose for each life. He can make even the most broken people and situations affected by crime and incarceration whole again.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COMMUNITIES

Through an amazing awakening to new hope and life purpose available through Jesus, those who once broke the law are transformed and mobilized to serve their neighbors, replacing the cycle of crime with a cycle of renewal that restores entire communities.

Because the Bible calls us to remember and visit those in prison, we believe that every Christian is compelled to contribute to this restorative cycle.

5. You must be able to exercise flexibility. Also be able to be teachable and prepared to modify style – not basic content – to communicate well with a prison audience.

6. You need to be able to control how long you preach/teach, and are able as circumstances change to put into 5 minutes what might otherwise take 25 minutes, or conversely to suddenly take a whole service which you did not expect to take! It will rarely happen but always be willing to do plan B. Please stick close to time given for you to preach/teach by the Vision pastor or other staff. .

7. Dilution of churchy wording will not compromise your message. Neither will you sound as if you have swallowed Berkhof's Systematic Theology (or anyone else's!). You can communicate with ordinary people in ordinary words, without avoiding key biblical truths. You will use biblical words and concepts in your sermon but explain them simply, in plain English.

8. You may have spontaneous questions are raised during your talk or others may talk or cause confusion try not to become sidetracked, angry or frustrated. Look to the facilitator/care minister to take care of the issue.

9. You must be able to preach/teach uncompromisingly and clearly, yet not confrontationally.

10. Do not expect to **BRING** Jesus to prison He is already there and doing many amazing things. DO not beat people with the gospel allow the Holy Spirit to minister to hearts you do not have to force the ladies. Also, when you do an alter call be aware that many women will stand up or affirm receiving Christ when have done this many times before especially if there is fear or shame involved in the message. If you do an alter call please do it in love not through fear and shame and for those who have made a new commitment please connect them with the care minister so they can get the resources and care they need.

11. Remember the officers. (Do not call them OTHER NAMES' – they are 'officers'.) Be friendly and courteous to them. Your actions reflect back on COH and may affect our continued presence in the prison. Also, honor protocol, especially when it comes to chain of command. Please speak to COH staff before speaking to staff to make sure that protocol is honored.

12. Think about how you put things! Some words have double-meanings anyhow, and some have another set of prison meanings. You will not avoid them all, but be street wise about the obvious ones: you will learn the rest in time! Also some phrases just don't work 'inside'.

13. Don't take the moral 'high ground' personally. There seems to be fewer things that impress the reality of sin more on the women in prison than for the preacher/teacher to identify with them as a guilty sinner, to own up to it, and to admit that we are all in the same sinking boat without Christ. Our testimony of the redemption our sin through Christ is our most powerful message.

14. Do not be controversial for the sake of it, or to shock. We are there to present Christ primarily not to campaign for anti-anything.

Thank you for saying yes to speak at COH. We are so grateful for your gifts.

Sincerely,

Vision Pastor
Rev. Dr. Kimberly K. LaPlante