

The Church of the Damascus

Volume 7
Issue No. 6a
November 2004

Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Road Echo!



Brothers in Blue

This is another reminder to all FDCF inmates about Brothers in Blue December 2-5, 2004. I encourage all of you who have never attended Brothers in Blue before to give it a chance, or, if you have participated in Brothers in Blue, ask Pastor Lang about the servant team. I was involved with the servant team and I was really blessed with the love that the team showed. I pray that the Lord may lead you to Brothers in Blue. Applications are available now at worship or during the afternoon when Pastor Lang is in the institution.

—Albert Cooper, Editor

Inside the Echo!

Page 2 - Worship Lectionary Readings
Page 2 - Thank You, Lord!
Page 2 - Fallen Heros
Page 3 - Stewardship Talk
Page 3 - Puzzle
Page 4 - A Convict's Letter to His Son
Page 4 - Pride and Self-Pity
Page 4 - Why Do We Swim Away?

Positive Side of Life:

Living on Earth is expensive, but it does include a free trip around the sun every year.
How long a minute is depends on what side of the bathroom door you're on.
Birthdays are good for you; the more you have, the longer you live.
Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.
Ever notice that the people who are late are often much jollier than the people who have to wait for them?
Most of us go to our grave with our music still inside of us.
If Wal-Mart is lowering prices every day, how come nothing is free yet?
You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.

Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
Don't cry because it's over; smile because it happened.
We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors....but they all exist very nicely in the same box.
A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
Working for God on earth does not pay much, but His Retirement plan is out of this world.

A Punny Carol

Once upon a time there was a flock of angels with long flowing beautiful hair. But lo and behold, due to improper eating habits and advanced age, all their hair fell out. They soon saw the light and purchased gorgeous, extravagant wigs, which were even more golden and more flowing than their original hair. One day, there came unto the angels very bad tidings. They lost their financial security and were reduced to a penniless state. In utmost misery, they fell to their knees and prayed for a solution. Suddenly, the clouds parted and a thunderous voice gave forth the following advice, "Hock the Hair, Old Angels."



True Friend

You are to me a true friend,
One that will be around 'till the end.
I know this isn't how things should be,
'Cause you've always been there for me.
So now I'm here and so far away,
But I know we'll spend time together one day.
Even though I'm in here,
I want you to know I'll always hold you dear.
So no matter how often you get blue,
Just remember no one will ever replace you.
Now this poem will come to a end,
But you'll always be my one true friend.

— Stephen Stockbauer



The Lectionary Year of Scripture Readings

A lectionary is a list of readings the church uses in its worship together. We use the Revised Common Lectionary in conjunction with *With One Voice*. Following the lectionary provides us with a retelling of the mighty acts of God throughout the year. The Church year moves from Advent, the expectant waiting of the coming of Christ, to the season after Pentecost, the ordinary week-by-week discipleship that closes the Christian year. Here's an overview of the seasons-

- **Advent:** This four-Sunday season begins in the last week of November or the first week of December, and lasts until Christmas Eve. The mood is marked by expectation. The lectionary readings foretell the coming of the Messiah, recount events leading to the birth of Jesus, and point toward Jesus' final return in the future.
- **Christmas:** Christmas day is the first of the twelve days of Christmas. The last night, twelfth night, is January 5, the eve of Epiphany, which is celebrated on January 6. In Christmas, we celebrate the birth not only of a child, but of God's intimate, incarnate presence with God's people. The readings are marked by themes of light and fulfilled promise.
- **Epiphany:** Epiphany begins with the Feast of Epiphany on January 6 and ends on the last Sunday before Lent. This season invites us to consider the beginnings of Jesus' adult ministry. The first Sunday after Epiphany tells the story of Jesus' baptism, the first act of that, ministry. Subsequent Sundays tell of his call to his first disciples, and show us his beginning work of preaching, teaching and



healing. The season ends with the gospel of Jesus' Transfiguration.

- **Lent:** Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and continues through Holy Week. Lent was also the season of final preparation for new members of the Church. Today, Lent retains this characteristic of preparation and penitence. The readings call us to prayer, fasting, justice and compassion for the poor.
- **Holy Week:** Holy Week begins with the Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday) and continues through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Many of its liturgies are adapted from ancient retellings of the stories surrounding Christ's final days of ministry, together with his passion, death and burial.
- **Easter:** Easter season begins with the Great Vigil of Easter, with the joyful proclamation Alleluia! Christ is risen! The season lasts fifty days and includes several principal feasts of the year. Toward the end of the season, we celebrate Ascension, the feast of Christ's risen and eternal presence with the Father. Easter season ends with the great day of Pentecost, when we celebrate the gift of the Spirit to all baptized in Christ. The readings of Easter include readings that celebrate Christ's presence with us in word and sacrament.
- **After Pentecost:** The season after Pentecost is like a return to a much-loved job after a special vacation. Lasting for half the year, this season invites us to explore the bulk of the year's chosen gospel: Matthew, Mark or Luke. (John is spread throughout each year, especially in Christmas, Holy Week and Easter.)



Thank You, Lord...

Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings, thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are many who are deaf.

Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning light as long as possible, thank you, Lord, that I can see. There are many who are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising, Thank you, Lord, that I have the strength to rise. There are many who are bedridden.

Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned and tempers are short, my children are so loud, thank you, Lord, for my family. There are many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the pictures in magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced, thank you, Lord, for the food we have. There are many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job often is monotonous, thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my circumstances were not so modest, thank you, Lord for **LIFE!**

Parking Problems

A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter. So he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES." When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note. "I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

Fallen Heros

Your a Piece of my heart,
I'm a piece of your soul,
You've gone to a better place,
This I'll always know,
When I look into the sky,
And see a new star,
It will tickle my heart,
Cause there you are,
From far away, Telling me,
I love you, you love me,
God be with you,
As He is with me

—By: Finus Atwood 5-24-04

The Church of the
Damascus Road
Echo!

Volume 7.6a November, 2004

The official publication of The Church of the Damascus Road, a Christian Community of Reconciliation, serving the inmate population of the medium security units at Rockwell City and Fort Dodge, Iowa.

Rev. Carroll Lang, Pastor
Albert Cooper, Editor

If you are reading a copy of this letter that is not yours, you can subscribe and receive your own copy by writing to:

The Church of the Damascus Road
PO Box 834
Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834
Office at St. Olaf Lutheran Church
239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge
515-955-3579

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship Talk

My Temple Talk tonight is on tithing and the different types or ways of tithing. First, we start by looking in Matthew, chapter 27:45-56. I don't think we really grasp the depth of the pain and suffering Christ underwent for us. The thorns twisted into a crown, then cruelly driven down on his head. He was flogged (whipped), then blindfolded, punched, slapped, beat with clubs, then asked to prophesy who struck him.

The Roman soldiers were big burly brutes. They were cruel men who had no regard for our Savior, because they were going to end his life. They laughed and mocked him. Jesus did nothing but asked forgiveness for them. The soldiers spit on Jesus, one of the most insulting and degrading things one can do to another human being. I've been spit on before, and believe me a fist fight immediately followed. And Christ endured all of this, even though he was innocent! He did it for us!

Now let's turn to Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 23-24. The Apostle Paul tells us that Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. That's us, "the body." The outsiders come here week-in-and-week-out, through snow, in the rain, through spring planting and fall harvest. They are farmers, business people, teachers, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands and wives, all who have full schedules. They get home after work, eat supper, maybe tend to a few things, then right back in the car and over here to have fellowship with us. We, who have been deemed unfit to live in society. They come during holidays when life can be quite busy. Not only do they come for fellowship, but they bring cards for us to send to our loved ones. They always have a smile and a warm handshake and caring concern. They have an interest in us as human beings.

This is very special to me, in light of all of us inmates living in an atmosphere so filled with negativity, where those in authority doubt our every word and action.

These are just two very fine and beautiful examples of tithing. This is something that all the money in the world could not buy.

To respond to these examples with gifts of mere money, just somehow seems inappropriate. My prayer for my fellow inmates and me is that we may be able to go out in the world and be and live worthy of the tithes given here for my fellow inmates and me.

Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. I believe when Jesus looks down on our little flock in Rockwell City that he smiles and says to the Father, "It was worth it!"



King David's Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a special time to thank God for all He has given us.

Use the code to fill in the missing words from a portion of King David's prayer from 1 Chronicles 29:10-13 (NIV).

CODE	1 = everlasting	6 = honor	11 = ruler
	2 = exalted	7 = kingdom	12 = thanks
	3 = glorious	8 = LORD	13 = things
	4 = God	9 = O	14 = wealth
	5 = head	10 = praise	15 = you

" _____ be to _____, _____, ...
(10) (15) (9) (8)

from _____ to _____. ...
(1) (1)

Yours, _____, is the _____;
(9) (8) (7)

_____ are _____ as _____ over all.
(15) (2) (5)

_____ and _____ come from _____;
(14) (6) (15)

_____ are the _____ of all _____.
(15) (11) (13)

Now, our _____, we give _____,
(4) (15) (12)

and _____ your _____ name."
(10) (3)

"Praise be to you, O LORD, ... from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name."

Prisoner's Soul News – May 22, 2004

A Convict's Letter to His Son

by Lou Torok, from *Chicken Soup for the Prisoner's Soul*

Dear Son,

This is the hardest letter I have ever had to write. But I want you to hear the truth. I am in prison because I broke the law. Your mother is not to blame for my being here. And you are not to blame for my being here. It is entirely my own fault. I broke the law, and now I must pay a penalty.

Because I am away from you both does not mean that I do not love you. There is nothing you could have done to change what has happened to me.

Listen to your mother. You might think that she is being too hard on you when she tells you what to do. The reason we have rules is so you will know that some things you do can get you into trouble with other people.

Rules are just like laws. They help us all keep peace in our family and in our neighborhood. Rules and laws are good for everyone, not just for you. It would be a very bad world if everyone decided for themselves which rules or laws they wanted to obey.

Just because you don't like a law is no reason to break it. Some laws may seem unfair but until they are changed, you will have no choice but to obey them. Otherwise, when you get older you could end up like me... in prison.

It would break my heart if you ever ended up like me, in a place like this. Prison is an ugly place. I do not have the freedom to be with you and Mom. I cannot go to McDonalds for a hamburger with you whenever I want. I cannot take you fishing as I used to. Prison guards watch me every moment of the day and decide when I will eat... when I will sleep... when I will do everything that I take for granted in the free world. There are some very mean people in here, and there are some very fine people in here. I try to associate with the ones who are not violent and destructive.

It is hard being a man and facing the truth. But when you make a mistake, you are the only one who can correct it. It is up to you to do everything that you can to undo any harm or pain you may have caused.

When I talk with you like this it is because I love you, and I want to help you avoid the mistakes I have made.

A real man does not blame others for his own behavior. A real man does not think that everything in life is free. He understands that there is always a price to pay for every action. When you break a rule or a law, you not only hurt others, but you hurt yourself. Don't blame your mother or me when you make a mistake. Be a man and learn from your own mistakes.

Someday I will return home to you and your mother. Until then I want you to know that I think of you both a lot, and I love you both very much.

Obey your mother. Respect her and love her because she needs you now more than ever. Because I failed, is no reason for you to fail. Let my mistake be a way for you to learn as I have learned.

You have a good life ahead of you. Don't waste any part of it as I have done.

Love,
Dad

Reprinted by permission of Lou Torok. ©1998

Pride and Self-Pity

Pride and self-pity can rob us of our victory in the Lord. Pride destroys because it takes the glory away from God and places it on you and me where it doesn't belong. Self-pity and depression are almost inevitable after a great high. Maybe it's because we get our priorities skewed, forgetting how we got to that high and seeing only the slide downward toward normality. Keep your priorities straight. Keep your attitude in tune with God's purposes in your life. Give God credit when He does something great in your life, being mindful that you can accomplish nothing without Him. And then, after the high of victory, realize that a return to normal means coming down, being lower than you were, but by no means down and out. And, unlike Samson, don't think God owes you for your efforts. You owe Him. Because without Him you can accomplish nothing. Even your next breath depends on His willingness to give it to you. Thank Him and glorify Him in all things in your life. Make Him your focus, rather than yourself.

—Bonnie Ricks

Why Do We Swim Away?

Why do we swim away from Him in our times of need? I believe it is because of the fact that we may not think He will forgive us. Maybe you believe that you have done too much. Maybe you ran your bill up more than you can pay. But I'm here to tell you that no matter how far you have gone out to sea the Lord will not leave you. No matter how much you hurt Him, He still loves you.

—Tony Rhoda

Let Go and Let God

How do you react when you're snubbed or mistreated? It's best not to lash out but instead leave the matter in God's hands. Someone once wrote: "When you are quick to fight your own battles, Jesus steps aside and gives you the job." But if we refuse to retaliate, God will intervene on our behalf.

Unknown

Artwork & Articles invited

The editor of this newsletter is inviting ALL READERS to contribute articles, poetry, art work, and opinions for the newsletter. So don't be bashful.

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm Wednesdays Holy Communion

6:30pm Fridays Prayer Team

7:00pm Fridays Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm Tuesdays Prayer & Bible Study

6:30pm Thursdays Holy Communion

