

The Church of the Damascus Road Echo!

Volume 11
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Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY,
Jesus!**

Letters to a Pastor

- **Dear Pastor, I know God loves everybody but He never met my sister. Yours sincerely, Arnold. Age 8, Nashville.
- **Dear Pastor, My father should be a minister. Every day he gives us a sermon about something. Robert, age 11, Anderson
- **Dear Pastor, My mother is very religious. She goes to play bingo at church every Thursday, even if she has a cold. Yours truly, Annette. Age 9, Albany
- **Dear Pastor, I would like to go to heaven someday because I know my brother won't be there. Chrissy. Age 8, Chicago
- **Dear Pastor, I think a lot more people would come to your church if you had free donuts. Lorreen Age 9. Tacoma
- **Dear Pastor, Please say a prayer for our Little League team. We need God's help or a new pitcher. Thank you. Alexander. Age 10, Raleigh
- **Dear Pastor, I liked your sermon on Sunday. Especially when it was finished. Ralph, Age 11, Akron

—Ray Kerley

Attention Members:

Encourage all of you to submit articles to the Flash, and Echo for us all to read. It's good to hear personal testimonies of how God has inspired you. Let us know what's on your minds, and in your hearts.

—Tony Halsrud FDCF

What's so amazing about Christmas?

Consider this: God loved the world so much that he came visiting. God slipped into the world as a helpless baby, without fanfare or heraldry.

Think of it: The baby, born of humble parents, the man a carpenter, the woman still in her teens, scholars say. Jesus was born in a backwater town called Bethlehem, in a stable reeking with animal smells.

It took years before people fully comprehended God's self-revelation. Even John the Baptist, sitting in Herod's prison, sent a message to Jesus asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" (Matthew 11:3, NRSV). Jesus then explained that he was working miracles and bringing good news to the poor.

That became even more clear when Peter concluded that Jesus was "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16, NRSV).

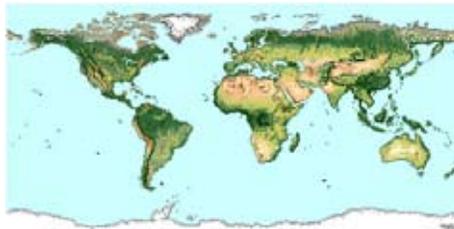
What's amazing about Christmas is that it began in a manger. And today more than 2 billion people around the world celebrate Jesus' birth.

God's Smile

When God came to earth as a baby in a manger in Bethlehem, God was smiling on his creation. God didn't come into the world with a show of power and might; instead, he entered his created world as a powerless infant so that nobody would be frightened. Then he grew up like any other human being and there was nothing about him that gave away that he was God.

God gave himself to us as gentle as a smile to let us know that God's love is meant for all people, and then to show how much he loved us he died on a cross to pay the price for our sins.

—Pastor Carroll Lang

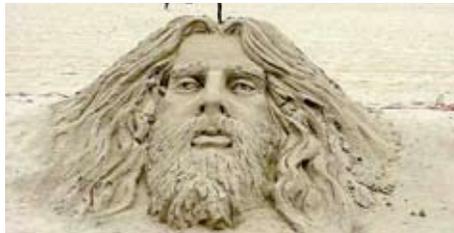


World Map

A father wanted to read a magazine but was being bothered by his little girl, Shelby. She wanted to know what the World looked like.

Finally, he tore a sheet out of his new magazine on which was printed the map of the world. Tearing it into small pieces, he gave it to Shelby and said, 'Go into the other room and see if you can put this together. This will show you our whole world today.'

After a few minutes, Shelby returned and handed him the map, correctly fitted and taped together. The father was surprised and asked how she had finished so quickly. 'Oh,' she said, 'on the other side of the paper is a picture of Jesus. When I got all of Jesus back where He belonged, then our world just came together.'



Inside the Echo!

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Why, Why, Why?

- Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are getting dead?
- Why do banks charge a fee on 'insufficient funds' when they know there is not enough money?
- Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?
- Why do they use sterilized needles for death by lethal injection?
- Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?
- Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?
- Why do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?
- Whose idea was it to put an 'S' in the word 'lisp'?
- If people evolved from apes, why are there still apes?
- Why is it that no matter what color bubble bath you use the bubbles are always white?
- Is there ever a day that mattresses are not on sale?
- Why do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?
- Why do people keep running over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it, then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?
- Why is it that no plastic bag will open from the end on your first try?
- How do those dead bugs get into those enclosed light fixtures?
- When we are in the supermarket and someone rams our ankle with a shopping cart then apologizes for doing so, why do we say, 'It's all right?' Well, it isn't all right, so why don't we say, 'That really hurt, why don't you watch where you're going?'
- Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?
- In winter why do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about the heat?
- How come you never hear father-in-law jokes?
- And my favorite: The statistics on sanity are that one out of every four persons are suffering from some sort of mental illness. Think of your three best friends -- if they're okay, then it's you.
- ****A day without a smile is like a day without sunshine!****

Christmas: the Birth of Christ

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger."
—Luke 2:13-14, 16

This is the message of Christmas in its entirety. God has made peace with us through his Son, Jesus. He has nothing but goodwill toward us all.

In the beginning God gave man authority over all that God had made. He saw that it was good, and gave it to us. Man committed treason and gave his possession to another — the devil. The good creation God made was compromised as evil entered in. Sickness, death, poverty, and every evil thing has its roots in this original sin. The devil gained authority by taking it from man. But God has a plan, and took it back.

That was the prophetic word given by the angels that day. It was given to men to meditate on 'til it came to pass. Peace on earth once again! God's good will toward men through his only Son. Even though we had broken his heart by giving his good creation to the enemy, by giving our authority to the devil, making him "the god of this world."

When Jesus finished his work by dying the death we all deserved, he took back the authority we were destined to possess and gave it back to us. Selflessness in the man, Jesus, who gave all he earned to us. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth (once again) peace, goodwill toward men."

Now, brothers and sisters, this is our calling: "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." — Luke 9:1-2.

Jesus' last words spoken through the Word in Matthew were, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go..." Jesus stripped the devil of his stolen authority and committed to us his own ministry, "Therefore go..." He took the keys of hell and of death and gave them to his Church — and that would be us. "Therefore go..." In the very same way that Jesus himself went, and that is with authority and in power over the enemy.

That is the meaning of Christmas to all those who believe. It's the power of God bestowed on us to destroy any work the devil may be reaping in our families, communities, and even churches.

Believe in the power of the name of Jesus to heal and conquer all the works of the enemy. Believe in the goodness of God who works only good for you and your families. Amen

—William E. Bell FDCF 11-14-08

Gossip Fixing

Mildred, the church gossip, and self-appointed monitor of the church's morals, kept sticking her nose into other people's business. Several members did not approve of her nasty habit, but feared her enough to maintain their silence.

She made a mistake, however, when she accused Hank, a new member, of being an alcoholic after she saw his old pickup parked in front of the towns' only bar one afternoon. She emphatically told Hank, and several others, that everyone seeing it there knew what he was doing, and what his problem was.

Hank, a man of few words, stared at her for a moment and just turned and walked away. He didn't explain, defend, or deny. He said nothing. Later that evening, Hank quietly parked his pickup in front of Mildred's house, walked home and left it there all night.

— Ray Kerley



Biblical Theme Songs

- Adam and Eve: "Strangers in Paradise"
 Daniel: "The Lion Sleeps Tonight"
 Esther: "I Feel Pretty"
 Jezebel: "The Lady is a Tramp"
 Jonah: "Got a Whale of a Tale"
 Lazarus: "The Second Time Around"
 Methuelah: "Stayin' Alive"
 Moses: "The Wanderer"
 Noah: "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head"
 Peter: "I'm Sorry"
 Salome: "I Could Have Danced All Night"
 Samson: "Hair"
 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: "Great Balls of Fire!"
 The Three Kings: "When You Wish Upon a Star"

—Ray Kerley

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Damascus Road
Echo!**

Issue 11.6b December 2008

An official publication of The Church of the Damascus Road, a Christian Community of Reconciliation, serving the inmate population of the correctional facilities at Rockwell City and Fort Dodge, Iowa.
 Rev. Carroll Lang, Pastor
 Chad Bechtel, Editor
 Gene D. Cook, Jr., Editor

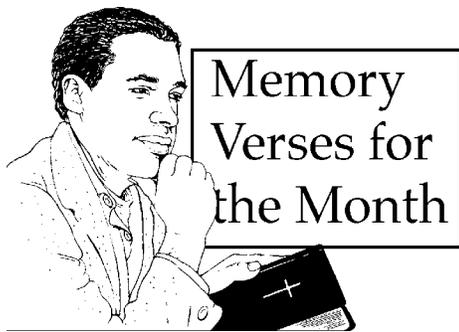
Your Favorite Scripture

Do you have a favorite scripture verse or verses in the Bible? Tell us what the Word of God means to you and where it is in the Bible. We will publish it in our newsletter each month. We all need encouragement every single day of our lives. We may never know how one single word from someone can affect us until we meet Jesus Christ and all is revealed. Is your daily goal to please Him? We need to abide in His word so that He will abide in us. And we will see God through our actions.

We must be able to "talk the talk" if we are trying to "walk the walk."

Give your scripture references to Pastor Lang or any Inside Church Council member.

—Tony Halsrud FDCF



Memory Verses for the Month

A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor (Proverbs 29:23). Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways (Proverbs 3:31).

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other (Galatians 5:26).

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior (Habakkuk 3:18).



Story Tellers

Story Tellers is the third Friday of every month at FDCF and the third Saturday at NCCF unless a scheduling problem arises. You can read a book to your child on tape, and then send the book and audio cassette tape home for your child to listen to you read to them, and read along with you. The tape, and book are free to you. You just pay regular mail home to your child, or, at FDCF, you can send them out on a visit like regular property through R&D. Sign up with Pastor Lang, or at our regular worship service, or with any Inside Church Council member.

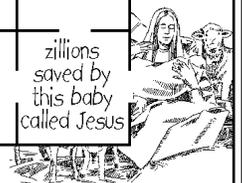


The Story of Jesus' Birth

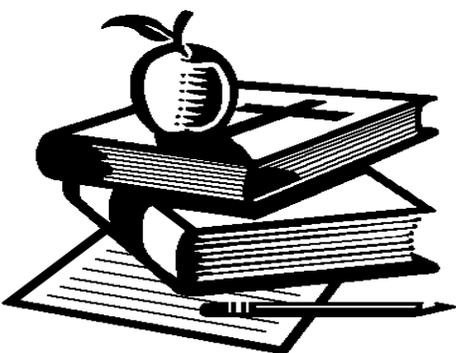
Jesus' birth is recorded in three New Testament chapters: Matthew 1 and 2, and Luke 2. Follow some important words about our Savior's birth by starting at a word beginning with the letter **A** and finishing with a word starting with the letter **Z**.



angels	Bethlehem	car	dance	easel	
cat	bear	child	donkey	egg	fast
holy	glory	flocks	Earth	feathers	gap
inn	jacket	grapes	peace	quiet	hat
Joseph	king	Lord	only	righteous	shepherds
kelp	loop	Mary	night	unique	tidings
last	maze	paper	wise men	virgin	water
open	nest	word	eXcitement	young	zillions saved by this baby called Jesus



Answer: angels, Bethlehem, child, donkey, Earth, flocks, glory, holy, inn, Joseph, king, Lord, Mary, night, only, peace, quiet, righteous, shepherds, tidings, unique, virgin, wise men, eXcitement, young, zillions saved by this baby called Jesus



Check Them Out!
 The Church of the Damascus Road Librarians are inviting you to come to the chapel (MPR 23 in FDCF H Building; Treatment Center Room A in NCCF), and "check out" the books, tapes and compact discs in our library! There are many genres of books to choose from! We hope to see you there!

Choices

I lay awake one morning
 This thought came to me.
 Life is full of choices
 That decides our destiny.

To do what is right or wrong
 To give instead of to take.
 To choose the path you'll go in life
 To love instead of to hate.

Unfortunately for me
 My choices were wrong you see
 Chain link fences and razor wire
 Soon became my reality.

As in all wrong decisions
 There comes a judgment day.
 Mine came for me when a judge
 Declared I had 50 years to pay.

I never felt so lost and alone
 Never to laugh or smile again.
 Bitterness, shame and regret
 I carried deep within.

Freedom had been taken away
 Prison became home for me.
 A loss of what I loved most
 I was a man without dignity.

I could not see the reasoning
 Why Lord must this be?
 I'll change and do what is right!
 Please Lord set me free!

The reality in all our prayers
 Is what we think we need.
 It isn't always what is best
 In God's eyes for Him to see.

Freedom in my eyes was
 To return to my wicked ways.
 But true freedom happens
 When Jesus comes your way.

Completely broken with tear filled eyes
 Alone in complete despair.
 Crying out to God "Help Me!"
 That is when Jesus found me there.

He picked me up and brushed me off
 He told me I was His son.
 Alone with my Lord and Savior
 With Jesus one on one.

He told me that He loved me.
 That true freedom has come my way
 If I choose to let Him lead me
 Down life's path from day to day.

"Life will not be easy" He said
 I would still have my dues to pay!
 Yet I would never be alone
 He was in my heart to stay.

He was right the path was never easy
 But nothing worth having is.
 When He told me that I did not have to die
 It was on that day I chose to live!

Now I have two freedoms
 Five years was all they asked of me.
 But what is far more important
 Is when Jesus set me free!

*Robert L. Johnson II
 1-27-2007*



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. Give all your newsletter submissions to Pastor Lang.



Worship & Bible Study
FDCF Fort Dodge
 7:00pm WednesdaysHoly Communion
 6:30pm Fridays Prayer & Bible Study

FDCF Chapel Hours
 4:00pm - Count Wednesday
 2:30pm-4:00pm Friday

NCCF Rockwell City
 6:30pm Tuesdays Prayer & Bible Study
 6:30pm ThursdaysHoly Communion