

# The Church of the Damascus Road

# Flash!

Volume 7  
Issue No. 4  
October 2004

Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

## Story Teller Story



Phillip Mericle, FDCF, shared this photo of his son, Adam, listening to a tape of Phil's voice reading the book he is holding. Phil has read books and sent them home several times and wanted to share how much his son enjoyed it.

Inmates at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility and the North Central Correctional Facility in Rockwell City have monthly opportunities to select books to read to their children, recording their voices on cassette tape, and sending the book and tape to their children. The child then puts the tape in a player and opens the book and turns the pages as his Dad reads to him.

Inmates who wish to participate in this project of the Church of the Damascus Road need to sign up ahead of time. At FDCF they can do this in the chapel on Wednesday and Friday afternoons. At NCCF they need to send a note to Misty Sweet, who will invite them to come to the Treatment Center, select a book and be scheduled to read.

Recording sessions are on 3rd Fridays at FDCF and on 3rd Saturdays at NCCF.

## Joy in Suffering?

Few men suffered as the apostle Paul did, yet he learned how to abound and how to be abased. He learned to live above his circumstances—even in a prison cell. You can do the same. Refuse to permit circumstances to get you down. In the midst of your difficulties, there will be a deep joy. *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds (James 1:2NIV).*

## Want to Help?

The annual CROP Walk will take place at NCCF on Saturday, October 9 at 9am and at FDCF on Sunday October 10 at 1:30pm. We walk for two reasons. First we walk because they (the hungry) walk just to get food. They walk up to ten miles, carrying the water and food on their heads or backs. We walk to show our empathy and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Third World countries. Second, we walk as a demonstration to others who can see us walk and visibly see how much we care about the hungry of the world. The CROP Walk is three miles. Easily done in an hour.



If you wish to give toward the hungry, sending your donations to:

CROP Walk at (NCCF or FDCF)  
The Church of the Damascus Road  
PO Box 834  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834

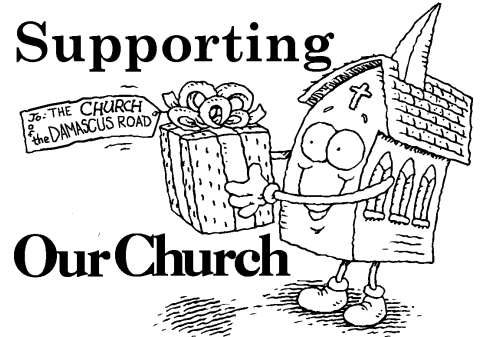
Personal donations from inmates are made with a special CROP Store Order (FDCF) or giving sheet (NCCF). Inmates, set your sights on the CROP Walk and join us for the fun and fellowship and the satisfaction of knowing that you are doing a good thing for someone else in need.

## How God Answers

There are four ways God answers prayer: No, not yet; No, I love you too much; Yes, I thought you'd never ask; Yes, and here's more.

—Anne Lewis

## Thanks for Supporting



## Our Church

## \$100-a-Month Club

Donors of \$100 or More Per Month, both Churches & Individuals

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Faith Lutheran Ch, Marcus  
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First Presbyterian Ch, Fort Dodge  
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Hardy Trinity Lutheran Ch, Hardy  
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Jim & Marilyn Fevold, Humboldt  
Patricia Gohman, Monrovia CA  
Fr. Stephen & Roxhanne Hall, Fort Dodge  
Troy & Karyn Leininger, Spencer  
Darrel & Norma Pennel, Verona MO  
Noel & Linda Singer, Webster City  
Adam & Inga Sanford, Frisco TX  
Warren & Melba Shelby, Fort Dodge

## Inside the Flash!

Page 2 - Noah Excuse  
Page 2 - Promoting Prison Ministry  
Page 3 - Brothers in Blue  
Page 3 - Precious Names  
Page 3 - Meet Peg Jackson  
Page 3 - It's Not Too Late  
Page 3 - Lyle Harris Carcon  
Page 3 - Throne of Grace  
Page 3 - Faith  
Page 4 - Artworks

## Noah's Excuse

It is the year 2004 and Noah lives in the United States. The Lord speaks to Noah and says: "In one year I am going to make it rain and cover the whole earth with water until all is destroyed. But I want you to save the righteous people and two of every kind of living thing on the earth. Therefore, I am commanding you to build an Ark."

In a flash of lightning, God delivered the specifications for an Ark. Fearful and trembling, Noah took the plans and agreed to build the Ark. "Remember," said the Lord, "you must complete the Ark and bring everything aboard in one year."

Exactly one year later, a fierce storm cloud covered the earth and all the seas of the earth went into a tumult. The Lord saw Noah sitting in his front yard weeping.

"Noah," He shouted, "Where is the Ark?"

"Lord please forgive me!" cried Noah. "I did my best, but there were big problems. First, I had to get a permit for construction and your plans did not comply with the codes. I had to hire an engineering firm and redraw the plans. Then I got into a fight with OSHA over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system and floatation devices. Then my neighbor objected, claiming I was violating zoning ordinances by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission. I had problems getting enough wood for the Ark, because there was a ban on cutting trees to protect the Spotted Owl. I finally convinced the US Forest Service that I needed the wood to save the owls. However, the Fish and Wildlife Service won't let me catch any owls. So, no owls. The carpenters formed a union and went out on strike.

I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Union. Now I have 16 carpenters on the Ark, but still no owls. When I started rounding up the other animals, I got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me only taking two of each kind aboard. Just when I got the suit dismissed, the EPA notified me that I could not complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed flood. They didn't take very kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of the Creator of the universe. Then the Army Corps of Engineers demanded a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a globe.

"Right now, I am trying to resolve a complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that I am practicing discrimination by not taking godless, unbelieving people aboard!"

The IRS has seized all my assets, claiming that I'm building the Ark in preparation to flee the country to avoid paying taxes. I just got a notice from the state that I owe some kind of user tax and failed to register the Ark as a recreational water craft."

Finally, the ACLU got the courts to issue an injunction against further construction of the Ark, saying that since God is flooding the earth, it is a religious event, therefore unconstitutional. I really don't think I can finish the Ark for another 5 or 6 years!" Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear, the sun began to shine and the seas began to calm. A rainbow arched across the sky. Noah looked up hopefully. You mean you are not going to destroy the earth, Lord?"

"No," said the Lord sadly. "The government already has."



## Prison Ministry

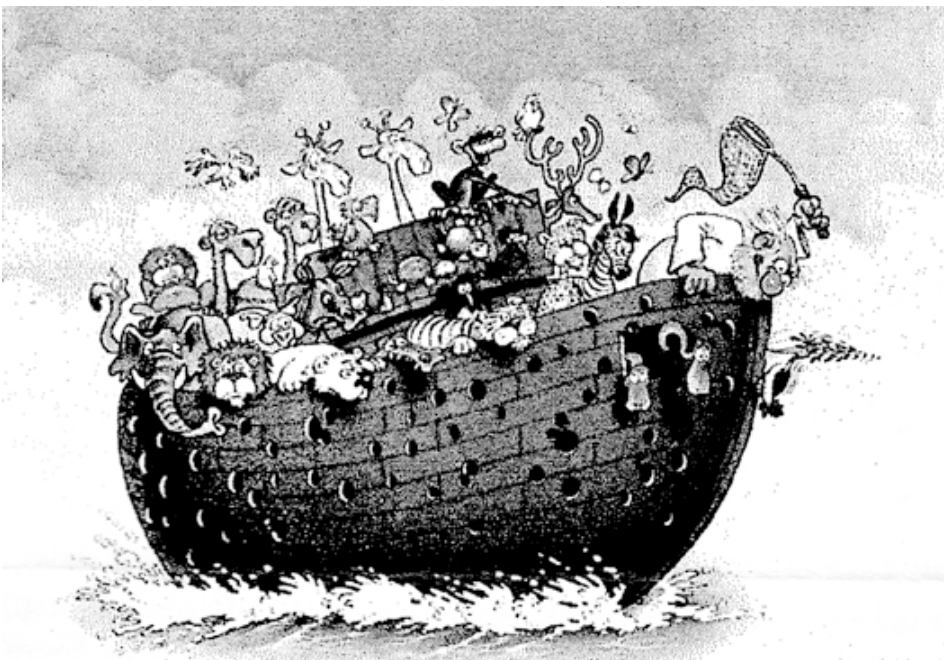
If you're looking for a way to promote prison ministry with the Church of the Damascus Road in your congregation, here is the way Zion Lutheran in Gowrie did it in their parish newsletter. Just substitute your information for the indicated info in the parentheses.

(Your congregation) is (starting/engaged in) a joint outreach ministry in conjunction with the (name of prison) Correctional Facility.

(Person's name) is coordinating this ministry. Our next visit will be (date). Anyone wishing to be included in this outreach ministry please call the (church) office by (date) to reserve a spot. We only have (#) spaces available for our visit, so if you would like to be included, please call early.

If this is your first visit to the prison, the (church) office will need your full name, birthdate, Social Security number and phone number. The correctional facility is required to do a background check on any visitors as a precautionary measure. There is a dress code for worship visitors, pick up a copy at the (church) office. We will meet (here provide information about rides, time to arrive, etc.). The service begins at (?:??)pm. We are to check in at the prison 35 minutes before that.

If you have any questions regarding this ministry, please call the (church) office at (phone number) of (coordinator's name) at (phone number).



**The Church of the  
Damascus Road  
Flash!**

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The 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  
Albert Cooper, Editor

Anyone wishing to be on our mailing list may send name, address, and phone numbers to The Church of the Damascus Road, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834, or by e-mail at: [DamascusCh@aol.com](mailto:DamascusCh@aol.com). The Flash will be sent directly to your home.

Office at St. Olaf Lutheran Church  
239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge, IA



## Brothers in Blue

I would like to remind all of you about Brothers in Blue. At NCCF, the Brothers in Blue weekend is October 14-17, 2004. At FDCF the Brothers in Blue is 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. May you be involved this time, 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



Lyle Harris, NCCF 2003

## It's Not Too Late

I stand with arms outstretched to the Lord  
 His word I read that makes me whole  
 His blood off a cross for our sins did pour  
 I lived in the flesh and not of the soul  
 I only know now that he is the way  
 I'll hope that I'll never stray from thee  
 I'll love and live for each and every day  
 It's not too late, because now  
 I'm a Federal Detainee.

-David B. Hinders, FDCF FED, 4-11-03

## Outside Council Profile



### Peg Jackson

The Rev. Ms. Margaret Jackson serves as Deacon at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Fort Dodge and The Church of the Good Shepherd, Webster City. She earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Yankton College, Yankton, SD; a Bachelor of Arts from Augustana College, Sioux Falls SD; and a Master of Arts from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul.

She was an elementary teacher in the Fort Dodge Community Schools from 1968-1997 and an adjunct faculty member at Buena Vista University, Fort Dodge Center from 1997-2000. After attending United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, she was ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons in June 2004.

Ms. Jackson has two adult children and five grandchildren. She is a Volunteer Advocate for D/SAOC and a volunteer in spiritual care at Trinity Regional Hospital. She is a member of Chapter IM, PEO.

## Throne of Grace

Lord of Mercy, Lord of grace.  
 Always allow me, of your love to taste.  
 Lord, my sight is limited,  
 Ahead I cannot see.  
 Your love and your kindness,  
 May they always guide me.  
 Wherever I go, or where I may be.  
 In times of trials and sorrows,  
 May I receive your mercy.  
 Through the wonder of your love,  
 Lord, I have become your servant,  
 Therefore let me come  
 To your throne of grace,  
 So that I may always serve you.  
 Then I would never go astray.

Written By: T. Rada

## Precious Names

No one expected the second anniversary of the 9-11-01 terrorist attacks to be as emotionally charged as the first. But that changed at ground zero in New York City when a group of 200 young people began reading the names of those who had died at the World Trade Center. The readers were the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews, of the victims. The 2,792 names, precious to those who read them, brought a fresh reminder of who they had loved and lost.

A person's name represents his identity, accomplishments, and relationships. Someday our name may appear on a memorial plaque or gravestone as a mark of remembrance and honor. But there is a heavenly ledger that is the most important of all. When Jesus' followers reported their successful service to him, he replied: "Do not rejoice in this... but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Then he thanked the Father for making the way to him simple enough for even a child to understand.

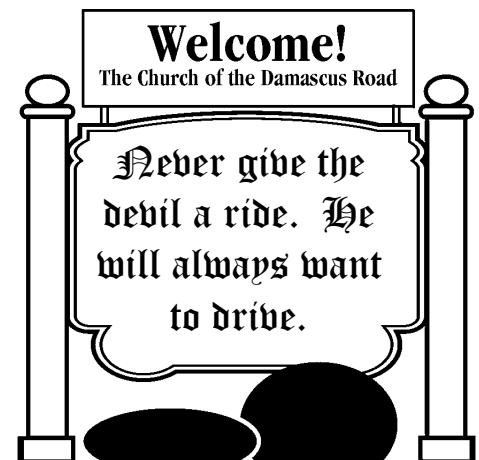
A child values a loving relationship. In that spirit, we should rejoice that through faith in Christ we belong to God and are secure in his love for all eternity. Our names are precious to him.

— David McCasland

## Faith

Oh Lord, forever in my heart you are near me,  
 And always in my mind I see you clearly.  
 For the Lamb sacrificed his life for all our sakes.  
 I pray that the cost was not too great.  
 Whatever path my feet may take,  
 It's you who's always with me.  
 And, like my shadow, it's you I see.  
 I walk and all around me your form is fleeting.  
 I pray I hear your words of wisdom  
 In my own heart's beating.  
 "I love those that love me: and those who seek  
 me early shall find me" (Proverbs 8:17).

by Anthony Castro, Sr. 7-15-03



The Church of the Damascus Road  
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

October 2004

### Invite the Pastor to Worship

The worship services at The Church of the Damascus Road are scheduled on week-nights for two reasons. One is to enable people on the outside to worship with the inmates and not miss worship in their own congregations. The second is to make the pastor of Damascus Road available to visit area congregations on Sunday mornings. The pastor can give a brief update on the ministry, a sermon, a children's sermon, an adult forum, a children's Sunday school opening, a cross-generational class session, or any or all of the above, and is open to suggestions. All that is asked is that there be time to prepare.

Call 515-955-3579 or write to: The Church of the Damascus Road, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834, or by e-mail at <DamascusCh@aol.com> to arrange for a visit to your congregation. The pastor speaks Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, United Church of Christ, Covenant, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Catholic, Evangelical, Reformed, Assembly of God, Mennonite, Nazarene, and a host of other denominations, independent, and non-denominational, too.



<http://www.dodgenet.com/~cjang/index.html>

### All Readers: Send Contributions

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

### Artists' Corner



David Cully, FDCF 2004



"Finished" by Steven Mendoza IMCC

### NCCF's Church Council

Marc Leonard ..... President  
 John Marston ..... Vice President  
 Gary LeCompte ..... Brian Olson  
 Dennis Kaplan ..... John Bothwell  
 Billy Lacy

### FDCF's Church Council

Terry Schoon, Pres ..... Randy Elliott, VP  
 Albert Cooper ..... Secretary  
 David Freeman ..... Librarian  
 Derek Griffith ..... Steven Stockbauer  
 Tony Halsrud ..... Phillip Wells

### 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 ..... Bible Study  
 6:30pm Thursdays ..... Holy Communion

A note to secretaries and pastors—

### Copy Me, Please!

We send our newsletter primarily to congregations. It's printed on white paper so it can be copied to include all or portions of it in your newsletter or bulletin, or simply made available to members of your congregation.

-- Pastor Carroll Lang