

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 11
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January 2008
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Ten Years of Ministry!



Former members who attended the 10th Anniversary at the Annual Meeting on November 10, 2007, L-R front: Jermeiah Janes, Bill Heuton, Ray Hill, (Pastor Lang); L-R back: Robert L. Johnson II, Matt Hayes, Paul Harrison, Arnie Evans, Steve Hinders.

It was a great testimony to have so many former members, volunteers (past and present) and other mission partners meet together in St. John Lutheran Church in Pomeroy, IA on November 10, 2007, to celebrate ten years of ministry in the Rockwell City and Fort Dodge prisons.

A brief history from conception to the present was printed in the Annual Report and several persons stood up and recounted what the ministry has meant to them.

We started the day with presentations on Reentry AfterCare, led by Paul Harrison, Reentry AfterCare Director for CoDR. We all enjoyed a meal prepared by the women of St. John with meat grilled by Kenneth Axman.

After the meal and fellowship we returned to the Nave for the Annual Meeting itself, beginning with a brief devotional. After a very brief synopsis of the Annual Reports, the former members each told the attendees how important CoDR had been to them while incarcerated and how they had been supported when they were released.

Jeremiah Janes provided special music

he had written and composed himself, and then we gathered together for social time in the Fellowship Hall where several exhibits were displayed, including many Kite Quilts which will be sent to inmates' families.



Jeremiah Janes sang an original song.

From the Pews

There is the story of a minister who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still in your pockets."

We appreciate your support in the life, and ministry of the Church of the Damascus Road. Thank you for your continued prayers and gifts.

—Tony Halsrud, FDCF

We Need Your Help

Our ministry is growing, thanks to the support of individuals and congregations who faithfully send donations to support this vital ministry. This congregational style of prison ministry has given birth to a ministry of Reentry AfterCare in which teams of 3-7 persons in a community covenant together with a released offender to help that person transition back into society and develop skills that keep that person from recidivating back to prison.

This new ministry is sorely needed in our society today. The cost of housing an inmate in prison is estimated to be \$30,000 per year. That does not include other costs to society such as child support, food stamps, housing vouchers, medical aid, and more. Every person who is incarcerated is unique, so it is hard to actually estimate the cost to society, but helping one person stay out of prison, working a job in the community, and supporting a family, not only saves the state \$30,000 per year, but actually creates economic returns to the community as well.

Since we began this Reentry AfterCare ministry we have slowly trained and developed new teams, nurtured already formed teams, and have been forming networks of services in communities to better serve the needs of the ex offender. We have a new Director/Coordinator of Reentry AfterCare, Paul Harrison, whose passion for this ministry has driven him to work tirelessly to keep ex offenders from returning to prison. He has done this vital, tremendous work without pay, since we do not have enough support to provide him a salary.

Here's how you can help. If you are an individual supporter, consider increasing your regular support. If you are a member of a congregation that sends us \$100 or more each month, ask the budget committee to propose increasing that gift. If you are a member of a congregation that does not yet support CoDR at the \$100 per month, ask the budget committee to propose putting us on your congregation's budget for a \$100 per month in 2008 and beyond. If we can get 100 congregations to donate \$100 per month, we can generate enough support to provide Paul with a salary and cover the expenses of travel and training materials.

Will you be an advocate for us?

—Pastor Carroll Lang

Inside the Flash!

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Kite Quilts for Re-mem-bering Incarcerated



A kite, in prison, is a memo request to a staff member. Taking this as a theme, a kite design was adapted for quilts using (clockwise from upper left) green, blue, red and yellow, usually on a field of blue (sky), but any quilt background will do. The idea is to send them to families of those who are incarcerated to tell them that they are remembered while they wait for the offender back home. If you are interested in making quilts, write to CoDR, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501, or call 515-955-3579 and we will send you a pattern.

Nothing Is Small

When God delivered Israel out of Egypt, he didn't send an army. We would have sent an army or an orator! But God sent a man who had been in the desert forty years, and had an impediment in his speech. It is weakness that God wants! Nothing is small when God handles it.

— Dwight Moody

HAPPY 2008!

Memory Verses January

The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love (Psalm 145:8).

In your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry (Ephesians 4:26).

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life (John 6:47).

Though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand (Psalm 37:24).

Perfection In My Eyes

All I ever wanted was to be part of your heart,
And for us to be together and never part.
No one else in the world can even compare,
You're perfect and so is the love that we share.
We have so much more than I ever thought we would,
I love you more than I thought I could.
I promise to give all I have to give,
I'll do anything for you as long as I live.
In your eyes I see our father,
present, and past,
By the way you look at me,
I know we'll last.
I hope one day you will come to realize,
Just how perfect you are when seen through my eyes.
— Stephen Stockbauer FDCF

Hesitation for Forgiveness

I lay awake at night
Wondering, will I see the light?
If I ask the Lord into my life,
I fear he won't forgive my sins.
The things I've done in the past
And my feelings from within.
I know it's never too late,
But I can't help but procrastinate.
I have given this subject much debate.
I fill my head with reasons of why not to,
But it's because I know I won't be true
To follow in the Lord's footsteps,
To yearn for and abide by the Christian concepts
I want to ask the Lord into my heart and soul,
Yet I can't seem to take the plunge
To ask the Lord to be the leader of my life
Or to be number one.
I know someday I will get the courage to take that leap,
And willingly ask forgiveness at the Lord's feet.
Peace be with you!
— Quinton Moore FDCF

Jesus

Just Father
Evident to all
Sins he paid for
Understanding love
Surrendered for all.
— Charles Nicolls FDCF 2006

King

God is King over everything, salvation is the station. So give to God the sin, that the devil tries to win. God's love is a flower that will stand through all the hour. So, please sing some to the kingdom. So that's all I have to say about the Lord and his way. Amen.
— Al Cooper FDCF

Winter

Weather the storm with a cheerful and faithful heart.
Instructions have been provided by Christ to ensure our survival.
Night is necessary for our light to shine it's brightest.
Trying our best is not enough, leaning and depending on Christ is essential.
Endurance is required to finish our course. We must obtain the prize.
Righteousness is of most importance, for only the righteous shall live with Christ.
— Kenneth Crawford FDCF



The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Issue 11.1 January 2008

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
Tony Halsrud, 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. The Flash will be sent directly to your home.

Office at St. Olaf Lutheran Church
239 North 11th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Reentry AfterCare

It's a Ministry, Not a Program

Reentry AfterCare Training Events have been scheduled for February 2 from 9am to 1pm in Dav-enport at Christ United Methodist, 2330 W 41st St., and on February 16, 8:30am to 12:30pm in Ames at First United Methodist, 516 Kellogg St. Call 515-955-3579 to register.



Paul Harrison, Director of CoDR Reentry AfterCare

Ministry of Success

As this Ministry is blessed with more and more of these success stories, it is easy to see that recidivism effects more than just the offender. Looking at the effects of the family that is left behind, we have to remember that 82% of the people who are incarcerated today have had at least one parent incarcerated before them.

As people like Chris turn their lives over to the Lord, we have to continue to find ways to continue this great life-changing ministry to these new children of God as they walk out the gate and back into society. Reentry AfterCare Teams like the great people who make up North Central AfterCare, are making a difference on a grand level, with the participants, their families, and the community as a whole. Seeing more than thirty of these Reentry AfterCare Teams in service is a true gift to society, and as we continue to see....those who have been served are now serving others!

To anyone who would like to play a part in this success story of change, please contact my office for available training dates and opportunities. Reentry AfterCare Teams, Marriage Matters Mentor Couples, Inside/Out Dads Facilitators, Big Brother/Big Sister, are but a few ways you can get involved with this great network that is changing the world that we live in **PRO-actively!**

“Invest in Communities....Not more Prisons”

—Paul Harrison

What Reentry AfterCare Ministry means to Chris Mohr

Radio Station KJYL in Eagle Grove interviewed Chris Mohr on November 7, 2007. His testimony was over 30 minutes and could not be transcribed in its entirety, but here is a condensed version testifying to the power of Reentry AfterCare for those who are wanting to make a new start. Chris is part of the North Central AfterCare Team in Humboldt, Iowa.

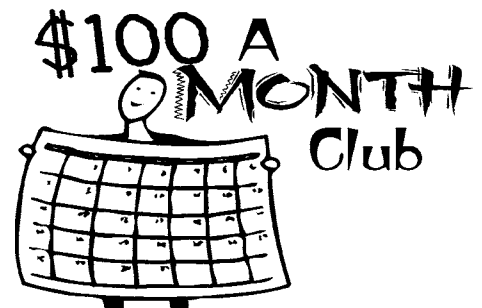
Chris Mohr paints a picture of himself. Originally from Eagle Grove, he moved to Humboldt when his son was about to start school. Before he came to Christ he describes himself as “one of the worst walks of life you could run across.” Characteristically he was not a compassionate person at all, very selfish, didn’t care much about anybody else. Most of his trouble with the law began in Eagle Grove, ironically, and his lifestyle represented a very dark period in his life. He was involved in drug activity for ten years, battling addiction the whole time. He was incarcerated many times, in prison twice, in county jail 15 or 16 times, residential correctional facility two times, and was released from prison on August 28, 2007. During his struggle with drug addiction, “doing everything against the Bible,” he realized how much his actions hurt other people around him, especially his wife and son. “I was basically out there doing the Devil’s work, I wasn’t a good person and I didn’t have any direction in my life.” A breaking point in his life was when he lost his family. His wife, Kim, hung in there with Chris, but reached her limit. These breaking points are what brought him to the Lord and he is grateful for all that has happened in his life, good OR bad, because it all served to bring him to rely on God and bring him to where he is today.

Now Chris sees himself as an evangelist and his mission is to “get out there and relate to others who walk in the same footsteps that I used to walk, and give testimony to the Lord and what he has done in my life and how he has delivered me from all that.”

Although Chris knew about the Lord since he was a kid, the seed took a long time to grow, and it wasn’t until about a year ago that he realized that his faith and understanding were lacking and he began to study the Bible more and to commit his life to God. Before that he would be released from jail or prison and put the Bible aside and get back to his old ways. Then he finally hit bottom and dropped to his knees, knowing he needed God in his life and studied the

Word intensely. His pastor, Rev. Richard Lauger, came to visit him and helped him get into the Word more strongly, building up his faith.

Chris believes that the Lord took his desire for drugs away, a big change from his past. The North Central Reentry AfterCare ministry in Humboldt formed a covenant with Chris and when he was released from prison he had a place to live. A new relationship with Christ is very much emphasized as part of their plan to help the ex offender transition back into society. They offered the support Chris needed to help him get a new start.



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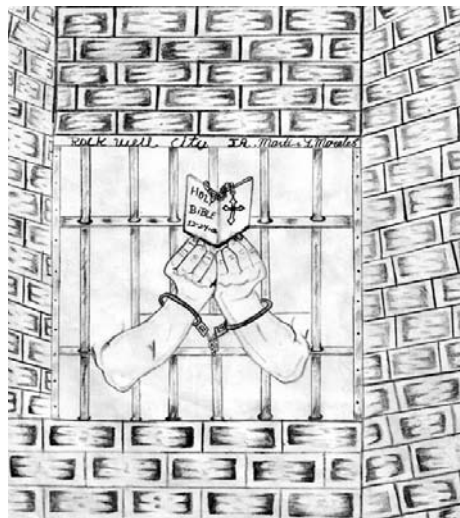
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Invite the Pastor to Worship

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.

Artists' Corner



Martin Morales NCCF



Charles Miller FDCF



www.codrcare.org

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.

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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

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

6:45pm 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