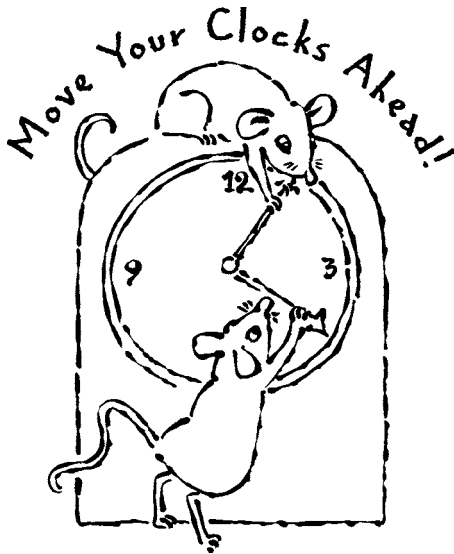


The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 11
Issue No. 2
March 2008
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



March 9, 2008 begins daylight savings time at 2:00 a.m. Don't forget!!

Brotherly Love

Hebrews 13:1-3 says: "Let brotherly love continue, be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves, also in the body. To me this means that we need to love our brother in Christ no matter what our circumstances are. Have empathy for someone who is in a tougher situation than you are. Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." So, love your brother, as you love Jesus, as He loves you.

—Tony Halsrud, FDCF

Inside the Flash!

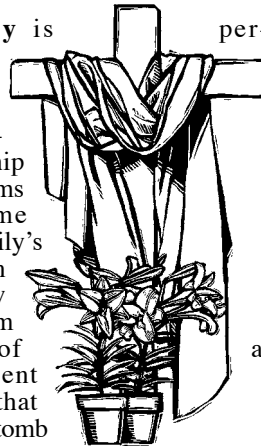
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The Symbols of Easter

Christianity has many symbols; the most recognizable is, of course, the cross. There are a number of symbols linked with Easter or the Resurrection: the butterfly, the lily, the pomegranate, the phoenix and the peacock.

The butterfly represents the Resurrection and eternal life. It emerges from its cocoon or chrysalis and gloriously rises into the sky in its splendid new body. Similarly, Jesus and his followers are born into a new life on Easter.

The lily is perhaps the most common Easter symbol because it's displayed during Easter worship services and blooms around this time each year. The lily's bulb decays in the earth, yet new life sprouts from it in the form of flower-reminiscent of the new life that emerged from the tomb so many years ago.



The pomegranate is used as a symbol of the power of Christ and his Resurrection because of the many seeds that burst forth from the fruit. These seeds represent the many believers who follow Christ. They also represent the magnificence of divine grace and the fertility of the Word.

The peacock sheds his feathers annually. Each year the feathers grow back more beautiful and more brilliant in color. This renewal symbolizes eternal life or resurrection. There's also a myth that the peacock's flesh doesn't decay after death-immortality. (The peacock is sometimes used to represent human vanity, because of the way he proudly struts and displays his plumage.)

The phoenix was a mythical bird that lived in the Arabian Desert for five hundred years. It set its own nest on fire and perished in the flames. But on the third day it rose from its own ashes and ascended into the sky as a new and beautiful creature. It's easy to see why the phoenix represents immortal life and the Resurrections.

—unknown

In Appreciation

Merry Christmas! December 24, 2007. I would like to donate to your ministry in honor of my daughter, Amber Asche. She is currently serving time for drug charges in Texas and I keep praying for her parole to come up soon.

I got the best letter from her after her 19th birthday (December 8). She has been involved in the church ministry at the prison and they had a Praise & Worship team there on December 8th & 9th. Amber went up front and asked God to save her and walk with her on her birthday. She told me she was dreading her birthday under the circumstances and it ended up being her best EVER! I've prayed for this for years!

I was given a gift of cash for Christmas and told I have to use it to buy myself something or do something I've been wanting to do. God has been very good to me and He takes care of my needs so I decided to donate the money to a prison ministry.

God answered my prayers Saturday (December 22) because I ran to Casey's to get gas and my niece was working. She told me I'd better take my free Fort Dodge paper, so I did. I got home and opened it to the church section – and there was the article in the *Church Spotlight* about your ministry!!! God is AWESOME!!!

I just know what a big difference the prison ministry in Texas has made for my daughter and I want to help others know our Lord.

Thank you for all you do.
God Bless!

—Lisa Asche

Beyond Cocoon

Arthur Brisbane once pictured a crowd of grieving caterpillars carrying the corpse of a cocoon to its final resting place. The poor, distressed caterpillars, clad in black raiment, were weeping, and all the while the beautiful butterfly fluttered happily above the muck and mire of earth, forever freed from its earthly shell. Needless to say, Brisbane had the average orthodox funeral in mind and sought to convey the idea that when our loved ones pass it is foolish to remember only the cocoon and concentrate our attention on the remains, while forgetting the bright butterfly.

—Edmund Goldsborough

Thanks Be to God!

I am a former member and President of the Church of the Damascus Road. I am very grateful to Pastor Lang and Judy Lang, and all the visitors that came into FDCF for their gift of love. I still thank the Lord quite often for the opportunity I had to serve on the Inside Church Council and as President. The Lord blessed me tremendously in that time of my life. My mother passed away while I was an inmate at FDCF, and Pastor Lang came immediately to console me.

My strength in the Lord at the time kept me from losing my mind. I know that strength came from Christ, but I do have to say that my relationship with Pastor Lang helped me realize that.

I'm now an active member of Regular Baptist Church in Pocahontas, Iowa, and, thanks to a loving, merciful God, I am a decent human being.

I was in prison for domestic assault against my fiancée, Sandy, to whom I am now married, thanks be to God, and it has been a very long time since I have acted out in anger toward her — also thanks be to God.

I have a very bad leg from an injury in 1993 when I fell out of a truck, and developed a bad back from one leg being shorter than the other. The Lord shows his mercy to me by helping me make it through work every day.

While this may all be a good testimony for our awesome God, it isn't my main reason for writing. I need to tell you this instead.

I was released in March of 2005, and moved to the same area I had lived in before prison. Needless to say, I had a bad reputation and had a very hard time finding help, in

any way, shape, or form. I turned to alcohol before long and even got back on drugs after about a year, actually 10 months. I was lucky enough to have a strong Christian brother who wouldn't give up on me. He talked me into going to his church in January of 2006. I haven't missed a Sunday, yet.

My wife and 12-year-old son are active members and saved. Our family is very loving. We sit down together for supper every night and take turns praying. I dare say, if not for the love of this man, his walk with God, and being part of such a loving church, I most certainly would still be lost in the world and most likely be back in prison.

My point in this is that every community should have an aftercare team like Reentry AfterCare, that is Christian based. Had we had one in Pocahontas, I wouldn't have had to go through such hardship and lose so much time with God. The Lord blessed me with a true Christian brother who stayed with me, but not everyone would be so lucky as to meet someone so special. So if you are thinking of doing something for God, consider contacting The Church of the Damascus Road or Paul Harrison. If you have been thinking about it already, please don't hesitate any longer. Someone in your community might be fresh out of prison and need a Christian brother to help him along. If you are getting out of prison soon, please ask someone about Reentry AfterCare and get involved. If you can't find one close enough, please, for Christ's sake and yours, don't take any chances, find a Christian church now!

May the Lord be with you always.
Love in Christ,
Terry Schoon

Heaven

Heaven is a place where everything is perfect and in order.

An Everlasting dwelling that is safe from hurt, harm, and danger.

All of creation in heaven is one accord having the same mind and thoughts. The residence of a victorious King, the King of glory, mighty in battle.

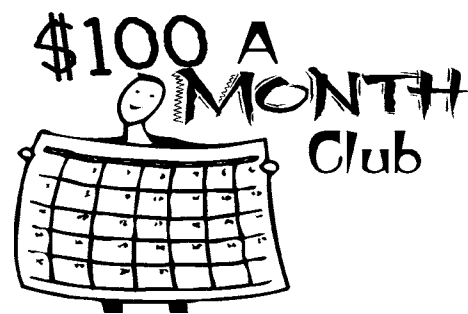
Only enlisted personnel may be permitted entry, for the land is holy.

The price is non-negotiable, however quite affordable. Heaven sounds like a truly wonderful place.

Have you signed your lease?
—Kenneth Crawford (FDCF)

Memory Verses for March

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak (Isaiah 40:29). I tell you the truth, if a man keeps my word, he will never see death (John 8:51). For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end (Psalm 48:14). With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies (Psalm 60:12).



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

Augustana Lutheran, Manson
Bethany Lutheran, Spencer
Emanuel-St. John Lutheran, Lytton
First Lutheran, Algona
First Presbyterian, Fort Dodge
Grace Lutheran, Fort Dodge
Immanuel Lutheran, Forest City
New Covenant Christian, Fort Dodge
Our Saviour's Lutheran, Callender
Our Saviour's Lutheran, Humboldt
St. John Lutheran, Pomeroy
St. John Lutheran, LeMars
St. Mark's Episcopal, Fort Dodge
St. Olaf Lutheran, Fort Dodge
St. Paul Lutheran, Palmer
Sukup Manufacturing, Sheffield
Trinity Lutheran, Hardy
Trinity Lutheran, Spencer
Zion St. John Lutheran, Sheffield
Patricia Gohman, Kingman AZ
Rev. Carroll & Judy Lang, Fort Dodge
Troy & Karyn Leininger, Spencer
Eunice Loots, Fort Dodge
Larry & Cindy Lubinus, Grimes
Adam & Inga Sanford, Frisco TX
Melba Shelby, Fort Dodge
Noel & Linda Singer, Webster City
Vince & Leila Wilson, Fort Dodge



When I Die

When I die, I am going to fly like a dove in the sweet summer sky.

It's like a dream come true, for me, and you.

But someday I hope we will all see the same view. Amen.

—Albert Cooper



The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Issue 11.2

March 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 23 in Sheldon; February 24 in Pocahontas; March 1 in Grand Island, NE; March 2 in Des Moines; and on March 17 presenting Reentry AfterCare in Grand Rapids, MI. Call 515-955-3579 to register.



Paul Harrison, Director of CoDR Reentry AfterCare

A Gift

A gift is not just a present
It is something you can be
Serving one another
Blesses you and me.
To help someone or pray with them
To sing or write a song
To spread the word or write a poem
Truly can't go wrong.
God blesses each and everyone
Whether big or small
With gifts of love and encouragement
Given to us all
It might be a hand in need
Or an understanding smile
It might be all that someone needs
To go the extra mile.
So never doubt your value
For God loves you and me
Jesus died for everyone
That day on Calvary.
Be the best that you can be
Serve Him every day
Then when all the blessings come
Lift your hands in praise
Praise Him for his goodness
Blessings from above
For being our special gift
Of God's unending love.

Robert L. Johnson II 8-1-2003



Investing in Communities....Not more Prisons

With the month of March coming up quickly, though looking at the white stuff flying past the window it may not be soon enough, but it looks as though will be a GRAND MONTH. With Reentry AfterCare Team Trainings (RACTT) in locations throughout the state, and organizational meetings in the Judicial Districts and the Correctional Facilities, the outcomes of the February events will have a tremendous impact on our capacity to serve. Also March 1st starts a wave of events that kick off with a RACTT on March 1st in Grand Island, NE, and then moving eastward to a splash on the eastern shores of Lake Michigan in Grand Rapids, MI, where I'm scheduled to do a number of presentations on RAC.

Throughout the past two years, as we have expanded the locations of RAC Communities to now over forty, we have always focused on the strength of those who have been served learning to serve others! Meaning that as AfterCare Participants gets on their own feet and become an active member of the community, they then become part of that Team to serve others, a chance to "give back what they got." We have had several men and women that have done just that. This month I want to give credit to the leaders in the community that stepped up to start these teams, and most of all to give credit to some of those who have been served and now are serving others.

John Hatcher: John was a participant in the North Central AfterCare Team in Humboldt, IA, one of the pioneers of this ministry is Iowa. John's success has been a gift to himself his family and the community. John is now Vice President of North Central AfterCare that leads two teams that have produced more than a dozen success stories, and they will be welcoming two new AC participants in the next couple of weeks. John is an example of the strength of empowering those who have been served to serve others. Using his life experiences and supported by his community John is also active in helping others that are in recovery and has had several successful interventions. Speaking to the faith community, civic organizations, and to a group with our former Governor he brings awareness to the problem of recidivism, and provides a solution by welcoming others to get involved. Participants in this RAC Community are in good hands.

Steve Hinders: Thirteen months ago Steve was relocated to the Boone area as a resident of the Boone Biblical Memorial Transitional House. With the support of Steve's new friends in the Faith community he became active in the community, and with the remodeling and maintenance of the house itself. Now Steve holds a chair as an advisor to the Boone County Cares Coalition, resident manager of the transitional house, and facilitates Dads' of Meth. You can also find Steve speaking to groups in the Boone area and has attended several of the Reentry AfterCare Team Trainings in the past year. In the past few months with the direction of Steve's good work, we have relocated five different RAC Participants to the Boone area, and Steve has assisted in Team Meetings in Ames, and is helping with the organization of more teams in the Ames/Boone area.

To date, about 75% of those who have been served by a Reentry AfterCare Team have become a part of that Team to serve others! John and Steve's good work deserves to be commended along with many others that will be spotlighted in the coming months. For questions specific to John or Steve, contact them directly at john.aftercare@gmail.com, or steve.aftercare@gmail.com. In less than two years this ministry has grown from a couple of RAC Communities to over forty in Iowa alone, and these Teams made up of over 700 individuals in the community have seen over ninety people reclaim their independence! With RAC Teams being organized in several other states using this model, two things become apparent, "Working Together Works," and, "Investing in Communities" has a tremendous payback!

Anyone interested in attending any of the events at the top of this page, or wanting more information, please contact me using the contact information below.

Paul Harrison, Director Reentry AfterCare
515-230-8815 or paul.aftercare@gmail.com



The Church of the Damascus Road
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 Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

March 2008

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.



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



Joey Vazquez FDCF '07



Christopher Egenberger FDCF '07

NCCF Church Council

Gary Rolf President
 Jon Neely Vice President
 Chris Egenberger Secretary
 Lyle Harris Daniel Skalla
 Wade Tolle Travis Robison
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 John Flowers

FDCF Church Council

Tony Halsrud President
 Curtis Harms Vice President
 Bradley Booher Secretary
 Randy Elliott Story Tellers Chairman
 Christopher Ward Raymond Reynolds
 Robert Bevington Chad Bechtel

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