

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 11
Issue No. 6
November 2008
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Forget Your Past

But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. (Phil. 3:13)

We live, as Christians, under a covenant with God. An agreement based on god's Grace. The old covenant was based on performance, or works. Man had to do certain things, act a certain way, etc, etc... the Bible says that Jesus is the, "Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises"(Heb 8:6) We have been forgiven-we have been made righteous- We have been given God's Unmerited favor-not because of what we have done, r abstained from, but because of what Jesus did.

We have become the righteousness of god in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:20) we have been saved by grace (god's unmerited favor and mercy) through faith... It is a gift of god, not works, lest any man should boast.(Eph 2:8-9)

God did not save us because we are good people, are charitable, or don't drink, cuss, or chew. He saved us because of Jesus, plain and simple. God did not save us because we try to be better people; we try to be better people to please Him who has saved us!

Forgive yourselves for all the things you may have done in the past, and believe the promised the Bible has made about you in your future. "...reaching forth unto those things..."

—William Bell 4/25/08 FDCF



Brothers in Blue

Brothers in Blue is scheduled for December 4-7 at FDCF. The teams are being assembled, and will be ready to conduct the weekends.

To attend the weekend, see Pastor Lang for an application. The deadline is November 21 at FDCF, no exceptions.

Inside the Flash!

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Sponsorships



Missionary Patricia Bentsen is sponsored by the Inside Church Council of the North Central Correctional Facility. She visited NCCF on September 11, 2008, told us all about the work she is doing in Africa, and presented us with the wall hanging seen above.



Reaching Out

The two parts of our congregation have found different ways to sponsor someone to extend our care to others around the world. CoDR at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility sponsors a child, Stephanie Hernandez, in Chile, and CoDR at the North Central Correctional Facility sponsors a missionary, Patricia Bentsen, through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Global Mission department.

Both of these sponsorships have helped the members see the world in a different way, to think about extending their mission into the world, and all this has proved very satisfying to all the members.

We get letters from both to "keep in touch" (a letter from Stephanie is at right) and these are read in worship and/or included in the Flash.

Patricia is NCCF's third missionary and Stephanie is FDCF's first which started when she was 9 years old, now 15.

—Pastor Lang

Translation (Traduccion)

Dear Sponsor

I hope this letter finds you well along with your loved ones. I'm very well, I do well in school. Let me tell you that I have a lot of fun with my friends at the park playing. I also get along well with my brother Alejandro; I also want to thank you for the help you've given me, like the medical and dental attention. Let me tell you I'm in 2nd grade, I'd like to know a lot about you and perhaps you could send me a picture of you. Thanks for everything. Truly yours,
Stephanie Alejandra Reynolds Hernandez



From the CTIMM Team

Dear Church of the Damascus Road – Thank you so much for allowing CTI to be a part of your fellowship. Your hearts for the lord ministered to us and renewed our faith. It was a privilege and a blessing worshipping with you. May God continue to bless your ministry; may the Lord keep you safe and in his will. Thank you again! Sincerely, CTI Team 14:21

Keep the Faith

As I look forward to moving on in my life, I thank the Lord, Christ Jesus for the Church of the Damascus Road, all my brothers here at NCCF, Pastor and Judy Lang, and all of the volunteers that come to worship with us.

We each have our favorite Bible verses and I would like to share mine with you.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 NASB – “For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the places where I have driven you,” declares the Lord, “and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 NASB – “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.”

I know now that when I allow God to guide me, my path is straight. Yes, sometimes I make my path steep and difficult, but as long as I have my eyes (and heart) set on Jesus, He will not let me stumble or fail.

My prayers will always include my incarcerated brothers as I hope your prayers are with me. God bless you. Keep your hearts on our Lord and He will guide your paths according to His plans for you.

Thank you for the fellowship. Keep the faith.

—Jon Neely, NCCF CoDR VP



Council Profile



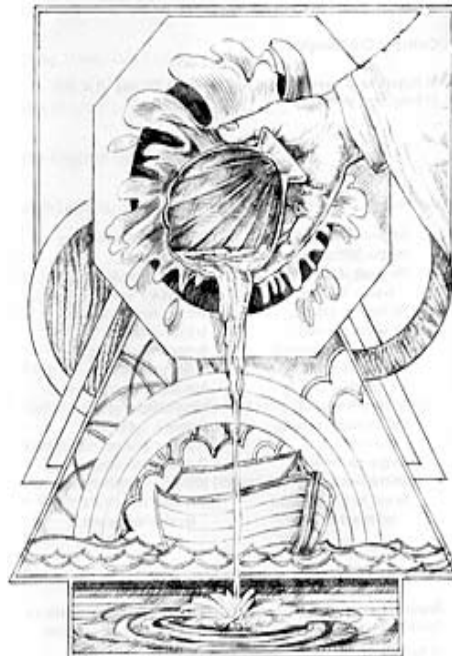
Dennis Booth, President

Hi, I'm currently retired from 34 years of teaching all levels of math and coaching. I have been happily married to my wife, Candace, for 36 years. We met while we were teaching in SW IA — I was at Avoca and she was at Harlan. She is currently teaching 3rd grade at Rockwell City-Lytton. We have both been attending CoDR for the past 9 years. We both attend Emanuel St. John Lutheran in Lytton, and both are on a committee on the Church Council.

We have 3 kids, 5 grandchildren and 2 more on the way.

I currently farm and raise show lambs.

My wife and I hope to see you at CoDR sometime soon.



BAPTISMS

FDCCF

Eric McDanel 9/24/08



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

- Augustana Lutheran, Manson
- Badger Lutheran Church, Badger
- 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 Chrch, Hardy
- Zion Lutheran Church, Clear Lake
- 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
- Rollin & Cleo Swanson, Fort Dodge
- Mary Wilkins, Fort Dodge
- Vince & Leila Wilson, Fort Dodge



The Church of the Damascus Road
Flash!

Issue 11.6 November 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
Gene D. Cook, Jr., Editor
Chad Bechtel, 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

Letter from Clarinda

Dear Church of the Damascus Road, My name is Joshua Vasa. I am an inmate in the Clarinda Correctional Facility, and I happened upon your newsletter. A little about myself: when I was 17 I moved here with my brother. Since 19 I have been locked up, and in and out a few times. Since then my brother also got into a motorcar accident. I have two beautiful children, one I cannot find and other was adopted by her aunt, so I really have no one anymore.

When I get out I will struggle, but I will get through. I have been a ward of the state since the age of two, and I spent five years on the run, so I always make do. I know how to survive. This time I just would like to do it legally. I did a little subcontracting, working on structures and house business, either way, I can do it all, I have been taught the business since the age of seven.

I am sending some poems. I doubt they make it, but may as well try. I have spent seven months in the hole and I will be here till I discharge.

I would like to receive your newsletter, if I could.

Sincerely,
Joshua Vasa



Equal

I see no color,
Only how people act.
We all need water,
That is a fact.

We all need to eat,
We all have offspring,
We all have two feet,
With one voice we can sing.

Unity will be glorious;
We shall all come together.
We are all notorious
To hate one another.

Soon there will be one breed.
It will be many different races.
There shall be a new creed,
We shall all have similar faces.

So, come one, come all;
Let us join together.
You can make the call,
If our future shall be better.
—Joshua Vasa CCF 2008

CoDR Annual Meeting

The Church of the Damascus Road is having an annual meeting on Saturday, November 8, 2008 at Emanuel-St.John Lutheran Church, Walnut and Third, Lytton, IA.

A Reentry AfterCare forum will begin at 10:00am. Registration for the Annual Meeting begins at 11:30am, with lunch at 12:00pm. The cost for the meal is \$7.00.

If you would like to bring a love offering for The Church of the Damascus Road, a basket will be available in which to place your gifts. Gifts will be matched, up to \$400, by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

A portion of the agenda features several of our former members who will share the benefits they reaped by being involved with The Church of the Damascus Road.

Re-remembering

Because memos used in prison are called “kites,” the paper kite flown in the wind has long been a symbol of prison ministry in the Prison Congregations of America model, under which CoDR was formed. We now have quilts with the kite symbol sewn on them, that inmates can arrange to have delivered to a family member as a reminder not only that you are thinking of them, but that they are supported by God through a loving church family.

Quilters in our support area have donated their time and materials to lovingly make these quilts available to you. If you wish to have a quilt delivered for you, please complete the form (at our worship service) and return it to the pastor of CoDR. A clergy person, either from the church you note on this form, or one we locate in your family member’s area, will be contacted to bless and deliver the quilt to your family member.

Read Me

Read Me, Hear Me,

Be with Me, Feel Me in your Heart

Just as I laid my head on my pillow these words came to me. This is how Jesus has spoke to me in the past, and I believe they come from my spirit.

These times were frequent at one time in my life, but there have been some set backs in my life, some injuries to my heart, and I’ve neglected feeding my spirit (where Jesus lives in all of us) with the Word and prayer. I’m not as sensitive to Him as I once was and regret drifting so far off course. How about you? Been giving Him time lately, just you and Him?

Jesus manifested in His word (the Bible). He inhabits the praise of His people (you)

In these simple Words He is telling all of us to go back to where we began. “Read Me” He wants intimate relationships with us all. We must have a sensitive spirit to survive these troubled times. God Bless,

— William Bell 9/2008 (FDCF)

CROP Walk 08 Report

A total of 7 walkers walked the 3 miles at NCCF on Saturday, October 4, and 51 walkers participated in the Annual CoDR CROP Walk for world hunger at FDCF in two walks on Sunday, October 5. Total donations are estimated to be about \$80.00. Donations are sent to Church World Service for the hungry, and 25% is sent back to the Fort Dodge community for local hunger programs, and an additional 10% for flood victims in our area.



NCCF CROP Walkers starting around the walk.



NCCF CROP Walkers had beautiful, cool weather.



Many participated in the FDCF CROP Walk.



FDCF CROP Walkers kept pace with Judy Lang.

The Church of the Damascus Road
 PO Box 834
 Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

September 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.



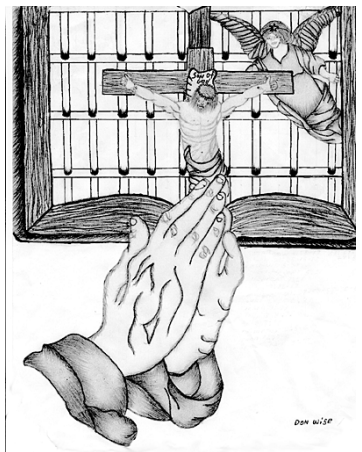
All Readers: Send Contributions

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



Noah's Ark by Joel Seguara Meza FDCF 2002



Don Wise FDCF 2003

NCCF Church Council

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 Jeremiah Hemenway Andrew Gourd

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