

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 13
Issue No. 6
November 2010
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



Mark Your Calendar

The Church of the Damascus Road Annual Meeting will be Sunday, November 14, 2010 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Storm Lake, IA.

At 3:00pm Reentry Reintegration teams and interested persons will meet for "continuing education" and to compare notes on team activity.

At 5:30pm we will enjoy a catered dinner and fellowship and begin the "business session" of the meeting.

We invite all of you to attend, all we need to know is how many will be there so the caterer can prepare enough food. See you there!

In God We Trust

When rumors of war are in the air
All the more important that we all declare
That Lord Jesus is on the Throne
And in the end we're all going home

With famine and pestilence so common today
And political ramblings in our way
With men and women given to unnatural lusts
So important, In God We Trust

All this learning, but never the truth
Churches with godliness, yet denying His power
From all this we must turn away
And trust in Him these final hours

Inspired by: 2 Timothy Chapter 3
— William Bell FDCF

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Crucial Step

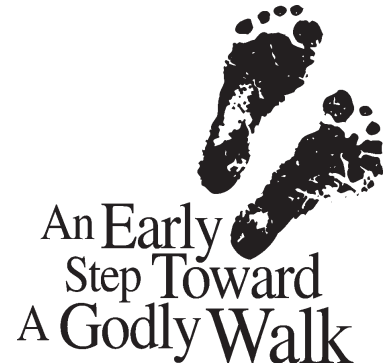
With a release date in sight, many men begin to focus on two areas: (a) fantasizing about how good life will be outside again, and (b) worrying about how to provide for basic needs.

Like a boomerang, men hurl themselves into freedom only to return just as fast to the prison they so desperately dislike. Many inmates and ex inmates have observed an important factor in moving successfully to the outside: *inner transformation*. Even with all the material advantages they could desire — women, money, partying, house, care, jewelry, etc. — ex cons will return on a second and third strike if they have not corrected the corruption in their hearts.

On the other hand, some inmates can leave prison penniless, homeless and alone and never return, because they are new people inside.

The most important step in preparing for release starts with change on the inside.

— Jose R. Acosta Abadia



How to Raise a Criminal Thinker

1. Begin from infancy to give the child everything he wants. This way he will grow up to believe that the world owes him a living.
2. When he picks up bad words, laugh at him. It will encourage him to pick up "cuter" phrases that will blow the top off your head later.
3. Never give him any spiritual training. Wait until he is twenty-one and then let him decide for himself.
4. Avoid the use of the word "wrong." (It may develop a guilt complex. This will condition him to believe later when he is arrested for stealing a car that society is against him and he is being persecuted.)
5. Pick up anything he leaves lying around - books, shoes, clothing. Do everything for him so he will be experienced in throwing the responsibility onto others.
6. Let him read any printed matter he can get his hands on. Be careful the silverware and drinking glasses are sterilized, but let his mind feed on garbage.
7. Quarrel frequently in the presence of the children. Then they won't be too shocked when the home is broken up.
8. Give the child all the spending money he wants. Never let him earn his owl!. Why should he have things as tough as you had them?
9. Satisfy his every craving for food, drink, and comfort. See that every desire is gratified. Denial may lead to harmful frustrations.
10. Take his part against the neighbors, teachers, and policemen. They are all prejudiced against your child.
11. When he gets into real trouble, apologize for yourselves by saying, "I never could do anything with him."
12. Prepare for a life of grief-you will have it.

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.
Proverbs 22:6

— from *The Presbyterian Journal*



Blessings

Some of you may remember from last year's charge conferences, that I dragged a door with me from church to church as we celebrated the various ways that we are called to invite people in, but especially to send people out into service. You may even remember singing the words to "Seek Ye First". If I could have my pick, you would remember my challenge at the end to see where God is calling you in the year ahead and to go! Well, as we get back into our crazy fall schedules and as charge conferences start to creep up again, I would like to share with you a door that I encountered this last month.

After much persistence by Ken Miller, a layman from Holstein UMC, I finally accepted his invitation to attend worship at the Rockwell Men's Correctional Facility. It was an incredible experience! I already knew that I was experiencing an incredible God moment,



Blessings From Above

MIRACLE! It's been several years since I first responded to the calling put on me to visit these men. Shortly after that, I started bringing others with me. I started by telling my fellow church members at Holstein UMC that they would be carrying the light of Christ to these men. Without fail, everyone that has accepted my invitation to attend "Inside Worship" comes away from the experience saying that they felt that the light of Christ was carried to them through the worshipping inmates. I would agree. Christ's light burns brightest when shared by many and held high.

The Church of Damascus Road is a true congregation inside the walls of the state penitentiaries at Rockwell City and Fort Dodge. They function very similarly as any congregation on the outside. There's an "inside" church council comprised of inmates and also an "outside" council with supporters from many denominations. CoDR operates pretty much the same as any other church, with one big exception.... We love to see members leave! It's an important ministry to visit the person in prison. Worshipping with ex-offenders and simply being part of the body is more important than a person can imagine until it's experienced. You are side by side worshipping Christ with inmates that the world has told them that they are not suitable to be with other people. By your presence with them, they hear God saying that they still have value in His eyes.

I would be glad to be of assistance in helping others experience this ministry. If you would have churches looking for more information, I am willing and able to travel anywhere in the Northwest or Northcentral districts to talk to congregations about how they can be involved in this most basic Matt 25 ministry. I'd be happy to provide a 5 minute "ministry update" but prefer to be able to provide pulpit supply lifting this important ministry. When this is done, it's rich with testimony from myself and at least one ex-offender that shares how he accepted Christ as a result of worshipping "Inside". It's very powerful!!!!

Any congregation that has members performing this type of ministry will experience a new energy that can only come from focus on ministries outside the walls of their physical church plant. Worshipping "Inside" may not be the specific ministry that people flock to... but then we were not told that we should do these things to the least of these, only if it's convenient or appealing to us.

Sorry about getting a little wordy. I guess we all get that way about something that moves us.

Blessings, Ken

I couldn't say it any better myself! What a gift! I want to thank Ken for his work in this important ministry and for his persistent invitations. I also want to celebrate the model that he has provided. Just think of the incredible places and ways that God is leading us into ministry (both to give and to receive!). Any opened doors you want to share? Blessings, Sarah

If you would like to know more about this ministry please contact me or Ken Miller at kmiller@ruralcrop.com. And don't forget about the UM ministry in Mitchellville, Women at the Well! There are plenty of doors to go around...

— shared by Ken Miller



Join Outside Council

You are invited to consider being a member of The Church of the Damascus Road's Outside Church Council. The OCC is responsible for the financial support of the congregation, and the management of the church office, while the Inside Church Councils, made up of inmates, are responsible for the life, worship and ministry of CoDR in the prison.

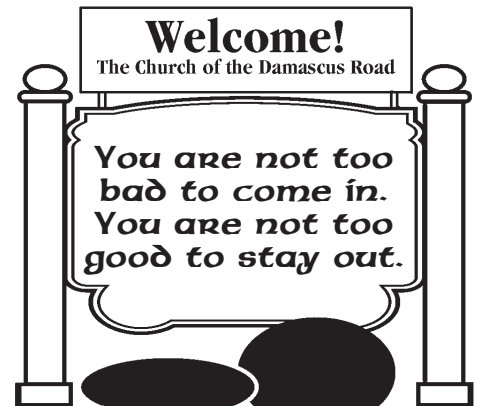
The OCC meets every third Wednesday of the month at 11:45am for a catered lunch followed by the business at hand.

Terms of office are 3 years in rotation. If you feel called to this special ministry, please call 515-955-3579 or email DamascusCh@aol.com.

FDCF Brothers-in-Blue

The next weekend at FDCF is scheduled for December 9-12, 2010. See Pastor Stone in the Chapel for applications. Please note that visits are not allowed, so be sure to notify those on your visiting list not to visit on that weekend. The application deadline is December 1.

Prayer in support of the weekend is one way persons on the 'outside' can support this renewal activity.



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Flash!

Issue 13.6 November 2010

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. Paul Stone, Pastor
Carroll Lang, Editor

Anyone wishing to be on our mailing list may send name, address, and phone numbers to the address below, or by e-mail at: DamascusCh@aol.com. The Flash will be sent directly to your home. Our office is at St. Olaf Lutheran Church.
The Church of the Damascus Road
239 North 11th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501



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RE-entry integration

"It's a Ministry,
Not a Program"

Successful Transitions

The Annual Meeting is this month (see page 1), and for the Reentry Reintegration portion at 3:00pm, we will show you a new training manual developed jointly with Women at the Well. We will also hear about the mentoring ministry of the Dubuque Archdiocese, presented by Director Deacon Bill Hickson. I hope you who are on teams as well as you are curious about this aftercare ministry will join us from 3-5pm on November 14.



It's still the case that there are more applicants than there are teams. It is said that keeping an ex offender out of prison saves the tax payers as much as \$100,000 per year in prison and societal casts. If we can help all who apply for Reentry Reintegration to stay out of prison, we could put some of our prisons out of business! It's certainly a worthwhile goal.

Lytton is a town of 255 population and has already covenanted with three ex offenders. In Sioux City, where there are more resources, the team is working with five or six ex offenders. In Humboldt there are often four, and in Fort Dodge the team is working with three to five. Does your community have enough room for an ex offender?

There is renewed interest in Carroll, IA and there can be a vital ministry of aftercare in your area as well. I've said this before—we need your help in locating existing teams in parts of Iowa other than NW Iowa, developing more teams around the state. Please give me a call at 515-571-6566 or email me at CDLNg@aol.com.

—Rev. Carroll Lang, NW IA Director

Official Ministry Records

Baptisms:

At FDCF
 Matthew Joe Boughton - 6-11-10
 Jon Robert Ellingson - 6-11-10
 James Walter Otto Schultz - 6-11-10
 Michael Taylor Todd - 6-11-10
 Tony Daniel Steece - 6-12-10
 Doanld Clarence Smith - 6-12-10
 Larry Prachett Jr. - 6-12-10
 David Lee Miller - 6-12-10
 Nicholas Wayne Finley - 6-12-10
 Kyle Howard Duncan- 6-12-10
 Charles Joseph Barfels - 6-12-10
 Thomas Andrew Daleske - 6-13-10
 Christopher Lee Keppler - 6-13-10
 Richard Louis Penny Jr. - 6-13-10
 Russel Darold Pick - 8-4-10

Marriages:

At FDCF
 Jaycob Kevin Lee Pell & Kristin May Zinke - 2-24-10
 Leon Edward Harris & Sarah Renee Horsfall - 3-10-10
 Antonio Demar Metcalf & Ieashea Lacle Armstrong - 4-7-10
 Steven Allen Fox & Vanessa Saints - 4-14-10
 Anthony Alford Davis & Lanette Kay Starr - 5-5-10

Ryan Keith Kiefer & Cassie Marie Dencklau - 5-8-10

At NCCF

Rodney Lee Davis & Brenda Sue DeWees - 3-19-10
 Matthew John Lyle Krewson & Amanda Dawn Hendrix - 6-18-10
 Steven Michael Nelson & Tara Renee Ness - 7-9-10
 Thomas Allen Martin & Teri Lynn Davis - 7-23-10
 Bennie Earl Pierson, Jr. & Jamie Duree Ruzicka - 8-13-10

Inside/Outside Council - July 27, 2010 at NCCF

Attendees:

John Everts
 Mark Juhl
 Cleo & Rollin Swanson
 Carroll & Judy Lang
 Diane Vavak

October 20, 2010

Attendees:

Mark Juhl
 Rollin Swanson
 Carroll Lang
 Judy Lang

The Church of the Damascus Road
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 Fort Dodge, IA 50501

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November 2010

Invite the Pastor

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 enable the pastor of Damascus Road 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, Fort Dodge, IA 50501, 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

Drawing by Russel Klein, FDCF 2010

Inmates:

You, too, can have your artwork displayed in the Flash! and the Echo! Simply hand your art to Pastor Stone. It will be scanned and then returned to you.



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.

NCCF Church Council

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 William Stark Story Tellers
 Jose Acosta Librarian
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 James Yeater Eddie Wilson
 Tyrone Sutherland Larry Barton
 Robert Parker

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 Paul Stone

FDCF Church Council

Paul Abbott President
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 Cody Anderson Secretary
 Larry Pratchett Sean Wendling
 Raymond Reynolds Michael Brown
 Brandon Walstrom Wayne Smith
 Russel Klein Nathan Merrill

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

6:30pm Wednesdays Holy Communion
 6:00pm Fridays Prayer Team
 6:30pm Fridays Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm Tuesdays Bible Study
 6:30pm Thursdays Holy Communion