

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 3
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Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Our very own— New Video

For those of you who haven't heard—we've made a video. Well, not actually made it, but starred in it. It's not "Escape from Alcatraz" or "Shawshank Redemption," but it does explain and show how God is accomplishing his work inside the walls, and you can learn what it means to us to have people who care. So if you're interested, and would like to know what CODR is doing, give us a call and we'll try and set you up with a copy of the video. If you're already persuaded to help, give us a call at 515-955-3579. I would also like to thank all those people who helped in making this video possible: Waldorf College, the students who volunteered to shoot, edit and produce; their instructor, Mark, who allowed and encouraged them to do it; the volunteers who spoke so highly of us, and how they enjoyed what's happening here, to the group who volunteered to be interviewed and, last but definitely not least, God, whom through all things are possible. I'd also like to thank you for taking the time to read this. God bless you all.

Glenn Wooten

Some Things I've Learned

by Jeff Swearingen

A lot of people who turn to God when they are in trouble tend to make one mistake: they think that once they turn to God, he is going to get them out of the trouble they are in. That is not what our Lord said. He said we wouldn't have more than we could handle when we truly accept Jesus into our life. We will know the peace of his presence in our life. If we have Jesus in our life, we can be like Paul, "Content, whatever the circumstances" (Phil 4:11).

Use it as a chance to grow in the Lord, to bring praise to the Father in heaven. Let the people around you see the changes the Lord is making in your life.



Inside the Flash

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Stefanie's Dads



The Church of Damascus Road congregation is sponsoring a foster child, Stefanie, through Children International, and she requested a picture of her sponsors, so the proud "Dads" lined up for a photo to send her.

August 18, 2000

Dear Stefanie,

Hi, how are you doing? We, your family here at the Church of the Damascus Road, want to reassure you that you are in our hearts and on our minds! So, how have you been doing and how have you been spending your summer? Speaking of summer, it is already getting hot and nasty here in Fort Dodge, Iowa, USA.

We all want to wish you a happy birthday and sweet wishes now that you are an-

other year older. We hope you had a fun birthday and that nothing went wrong.

How is school going? Good, we hope. School is very important. You might not think so right now, but as the years come and go you will. Plus, you get to have fun and see other kids. School also helps the week go by fast, so Sunday will come and you can go to church.

We hope you had fun. Stay out of trouble, listen to your parents, and do your chores.

Sincerely, Your friends at

The Church of the Damascus Road

I Will Remember

Having been in Iowa but a short time, I found myself before the courts and was sentenced to a five year term of imprisonment for a nonviolent offense. It was quite a rude awakening to the realities of the state, and a shock to me, to say the least. When my sentence was first handed down, I couldn't for the life of me figure out just what I was going to do, or where I could turn in order to make the time go by easier than what I'd heard doing time was like. Thank the Lord that I found the Church of the Damascus Road.

Pastor Lang was kind enough to come and see me when I was in the hole in the North Central Correctional Facility in

Rockwell City, Iowa, and to listen to my worries as well as the problems that I was having with my marriage, and with my church life out on the street. His easygoing manner and willingness to listen to me really made a huge difference in the way that I viewed myself, my relationship with Christ, as well as how I was dealing with the hardships of doing time in a place almost 3,000 miles from my home of Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Although it is never easy to accept the hard things in life, and I am of the mind that anyone would rather not have them come

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Thanks a Million

I am getting to leave this place called the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility. The reason I tell you this is that I got to Fort Dodge earlier this year and in that time I have witnessed a lot of different things happen to various people. I have experienced what a lot of people will never get to experience in their lifetimes.

I attended what is called Brother's in Blue here at FDCF, and I must say that what I saw totally blew my mind. I have been a believer in Christ for quite awhile and I love who I am now and what is in store for me in the future. At the Brother's in Blue I witnessed to a young man after the end of the first day. This gentleman wanted nothing to do with staying in the rest of the weekend activities. By the GRACE of God he came back the next day with a new attitude, this was the greatest thing for me to see that weekend.



Dominic Marcott

I am going to the IFI program in Newton and it is there that I have been called. I have learned a lot of things in the last few months. I thought that I had learned a lot in the last few months but what I'm about to learn will even be more insightful. Life is full of choices; and it is these choices that we make that show who we are and what lengths we will go to to obtain and fulfill the callings that each of us as Christians have received.

Thanks to Pastor Lang and the fellowship that is offered by the ENTIRE Church and its members I have not only grown a lot spiritually but emotionally as well. Through the visitors who show up and the way that the Church helps to uplift everyone who is willing to come to Christ and ask for forgiveness of their sins no matter what they may be; this is truly a Christ centered church to say the least.

I have written many times in the FLASH and unfortunately this is the last article that I will be able to do, at least that is how it appears at the present moment. I want to express my complete gratitude to the outside Church Council and the inside Church council. I want to thank ALL of the visitors who have come to worship with us, and sometimes even got to dance. People of Christ is what we all are; and that we truly are people of Christ clearly shows by our works. God-Bless each and every one of those who are praying and supporting us while we are incarcerated no matter how minimal the support may be—GOD BLESS YOU!!!

-- Dominick Marcott

Instructions for Life

The following is taken from a Nepalese Good Luck Mantra.

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
3. Follow the three R's:
* Respect for self
* Respect for others and
* Responsibility for all your actions.
4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.
6. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
7. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
8. Spend some time alone.
9. Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values.
10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
11. Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.
12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life. Do all you can to create a tranquil, harmonious home.
13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don't bring up the past.
14. Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.
15. Be gentle with the earth.
16. Once a year, go someplace you've never been before.
17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.
18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.
19. Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.



Council Profile

Fr. Stephen M. Hall

Fr. Steve, as he likes to be called, began his ministry in Fort Dodge in the fall of 1989 and was formally installed as Rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in February, 1990. Prior to accepting this assignment, he worked as Canon Theologian at Calvary Episcopal Cathedral in Sioux Falls, SD, and prior to that he worked at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brookings, SD, and served part time as a chaplain at South Dakota State University.



Fr. Steve brings a varied background to his ministry. He was born and raised in Milwaukee, WI, and graduated from Lawrence University in Appleton, WI. Following service in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, he worked four years for United States Steel Corp., then four years as an editor of two weekly newspapers in Bloomfield, CO. He then spent six years working for the Colorado Highway Patrol before entering seminary in 1978. He graduated from Nashotah House Theological Seminary, Nashotah, WI, in 1981 with a Master of Divinity, cum laude.

In Fort Dodge, Fr. Steve has served as convener of the Ministerial Association for the past numbers of years, and as a member and volunteer for the Heart Association, and the HIV/Aids Coalition. He was instrumental in the development of the Church of the Damascus Road, serving on the Steering Committee and as president of the Search Committee. He has begun his second term on the Board of Directors of the Church of the Damascus Road. He is married and has four children and one step daughter.

The Church of the Damascus Road *Flash!*

Volume 3.5

October 2000

The official publication of The Church of the Damascus Road, a Christian Community of Reconciliation, serving the inmate population of the medium security units at Rockwell City and Fort Dodge, Iowa.

Harvey Fluker, Editor.

Glenn Wooten, Contributor

Jeff Swearingen, Contributor

If you are reading a copy of this letter that is not yours, you can subscribe and receive your own copy by writing to:

The Church of the Damascus Road

PO Box 834

Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834

Office at St. Olaf Lutheran Church

239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge

515-955-3579

Remember, *continued from page one*

about, I was a stubborn believer that whatever happened to me was a result of a state justice system that had gone totally awry. I didn't belong in prison and surely didn't want to be here. Since I got involved with the church, however, my outlook on things has changed somewhat. I realized that nothing ever really happens to us without there being some sort of reason, that is known to God, but not always known to us. I have come to believe that the reason for my being here has nothing at all to do with anybody else, but fully to do with the arrogance and bad attitude that I was living my life with. I see it, now, as a way for God to have taught me a lesson on humility as well as on the pitfalls of pride.

The ministry of the Church of the Damascus Road is unlike anything that I have ever seen or heard of in my own country, and I can only hope that, someday, somebody will take the initiative to do something like it in Canada. The Church truly has something unique going on, here, and it is my hope that someday the same sort of good work that Pastor Lang does here, in Iowa, will carry over into not only other states, but to other countries as well. It is a ministry that is needed sorely by those of us behind the walls, and there aren't enough of them in the world today.

I will be returning home to Vancouver shortly, and it is my prayer that this ministry will grow and do more and more for those persons trapped behind prison walls, like it did for me. This church will not be forgotten by me, and I will remember always the positive influence that it, and the members of it, have had on me. Christ once said that "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there shall I be also," and from that statement of the Lord, I can say with all honesty, that Jesus is doing time right along with everyone that the Church of the Damascus Road has come into contact with, and been able to minister to.

Thank you, Pastor Lang, and you, too, Judy, for your understanding, your encouragement, and your faith that I would find the right things in here. Your work was, and is, a success. Don't stop! To all members of the Church, thank you for the fellowship and the friendship. You shall always be counted among my very best friends. Remember, always, that you have a friend, not only in Christ, but a friend just across the boarder, who'll be praying for you, and will be here, in spirit, every Wednesday and Friday night. God bless.

Charles Parent-Quinn

A Bit of Knowledge

Nothing in your life is so significant, so small, that God cannot be found at its center. - *Mother Frances Dominica*

Newest Prison Congregation

New Beginnings

The newest prison congregation exists in the new women's prison just north of Denver, Colorado. Pastor Steve Cox, in their newsletter "The Light Behind Bars," reports that the members have chosen a name for the congregation, and it is: "New Beginnings Church."

New Beginnings Church joins the growing list of prison congregations that includes: The Community of St. Dysmas (1984), Jessup, Maryland; St. Dysmas of South Dakota (1990), Sioux Falls and Richardson; St. Dysmas Episcopal (1991), Graterford, Pennsylvania; St. Dysmas Catholic (1992), Smyrna, Delaware; American Baptist (1997), Pierre, South Dakota; Church of the Damascus Road (1997), Rockwell City/Ft. Dodge, Iowa; St. Dysmas (1997), Lincoln, Nebraska; Church of God's Promise (1998), Providence, Rhode Island. Keep them in your prayers continually, and pray that new congregations will start in every prison.



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Romans 15:13

A letter from a visitor to New Beginnings

Dear Prison Pals

- What stories could they tell, what secrets did they hide, the ladies in the orange shirts, murderers? abusers of little children? car thieves?
- And we in our finer togs, stripped of our finery, sat nervous but free.
- And then it happened, our Lord appeared and we became as one, all his children, equals in his eyes, all seeking forgiveness and love.
- And none of us will ever be the same.

Thanks for making my faith journey more glorious! With deepest gratitude and love,

Nell

(New Beginnings is the newest prison congregation inside the new Denver Women's Correctional Facility near Denver Colorado, Rev. Steve Cox, Pastor)

Telling the story of CODR

Appreciation

Thanks to those who have invited Pastor Lang to tell about The Church of the Damascus Road. From the time we began in August 1997, up to one year ago (September 1999), we were invited to 140 congregations and organizations. Presentations were also made by Judy Lang or members of the Outside Council, Guy Olson, Cleo Swanson, Lee Kuhrt, Lee Wilson, John Everts. The following is a list of places we've visited since one year ago (October 1999) for a total of 174 presentations. St. Paul Lutheran, Palmer Golden Mixers, Ch of Christ, Webster City Lakeside Presbyterian Ch, Storm Lake Hannah Circle, United Meth Ch-Ft. Dodge St. Paul Lutheran, Lakota Trinity Lutheran, Webster City Federated Women's Club, Stratford Nazareth Lutheran Church, Armstrong, Fulton Lutheran Ch (Moorland-Roelyn) Augustana Lutheran Church, Boone Badger Lutheran, Badger Stratford Evangelical Lutheran, Stratford St. John Lutheran Church, Pomeroy St. John Am Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls Zion Lutheran Church, Gowrie Our Saviour LC, Humboldt Trinity LC, Ottosen & Trinity LC, Rutland Kanawha Lutheran Church, Kanawha Shepherd of Valley Lutheran Church, Council Bluffs Asbury United Meth Ch, Webster City Faith Lutheran, Marcus Grace United Methodist Church, Marcus United Methodist Church, West Bend Stratford Evangelical Lutheran, Stratford Grace Luth 8th gr Conf class, Fort Dodge First Presbyterian, Rockwell City/Lytton St Paul Ev Lutheran Church, Holstein Grace Luth Church Adult Coffee Group Our Saviour's LC Women of the Church, Audubon American Legion Auxiliary Trinity Lutheran Church, Avoca MO Synod Dist W, Human Care Ministry Humboldt Rotary Club First Covenant Church, Fort Dodge



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PO Box 834
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A note to secretaries and pastors—

Copy Me, Please!

Although there are many individuals included, our database primarily lists congregations, to which a copy of our newsletter is sent. It is printed on white paper so that (all or portions of) it can be copied into your newsletter or bulletin, or simply copied and made available to the members of your congregation.

Anyone who would like to be on our mailing list should send names, addresses, and phone numbers to The Church of the Damascus Road, PO Box 834, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834, or E-Mail us at: DamascusCh@aol.com for faster communication.

-- Pastor Carroll Lang



Baptized in the Name of the Lord

September 20 at FDCF

Curtis Andrie
Shawn Mapes
Michael Nellist

September 21 at NCCF

Lamar Anderson
Johnny Hovenga

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm Wednesdays Holy Communion
7:00pm Fridays Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

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

Visitors Being Scheduled

Visitors for The Church of the Damascus Road worship services at the North Central Correctional Facility, Rockwell City, and at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility, Fort Dodge, are being booked for future worship opportunities (see schedule above). If you would like to make one or more visits to either the Fort Dodge or the Rockwell City services, reservations need to be made soon to ensure the date you would like. Contact Cynthia at The Church of the Damascus Road office, 515-955-3579 or e-mail to "DamascusCh@aol.com" to schedule a time. The necessary forms and information will then be sent to you prior to your visit.



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

Contact us by E-Mail:

DamascusCh@aol.com

The Church of the Damascus Road now has a dedicated E-mail address which is checked every day. Just type your names, addresses, phones, Social Security numbers and birthdates right into the message box and we'll get right back to you and let you know whether there's enough space left for your visit.

I Heard Jesus Calling

I heard Jesus calling calling my name,
He entered my heart I wasn't the same,
He died on the cross for us to see,
a place in heaven for you and me,
a burden was lifted my sins were erased,
the glow of salvation appeared on my face,
my eyes are on Jesus my arms are raised.
Amen

by Robert L. Johnson II



Contributions invited from Readers "on the Streets"

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