

The Church of the Damascus Road

Flash!

Volume 9
Issue No. 3
June, 2006
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

Father's Day

Feasible & Firm
Able & Accessible
Teacher & Talented
Head & Helper
Eager & Effective
Refuge & Reachable
Security & Sensitive

Discipline
Admire
Your Father

Mother's Day has come and gone. Now it is time to celebrate Father's Day all over the world. This day is set aside to give recognition to young men as well as older men their part of parenthood. This is a big task for us as fathers to our children that we love and care for in our lives. Fatherhood is commanded of us as men to our children as head of the household. We are to be the model, teacher, helper, and security for our children that will one day be men and women who will lead and become parents themselves. In the meantime we must be an example for them to follow, to strive for success, and to be a responsible person. We can start by being kind, respectable, appreciative, honest, unselfish, sensible when approaching problems, loving, caring, positive, supportive in all family activities, active in our children's lives.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph 6:4

Fathers, we are the bold leaders and teachers to help our little boys and little girls to be strong and to prepare to take steps against all the negativity of drugs and alcohol abuse, violence, failure, crime, prison, abuse, death, and failed marriages.

In closing, Happy Fathers Day to all men in jails and prisons around the world. We are security and refuge for our children, not just for one day, but for the rest of our lives. Seize the day to change and to drop your anchors in being happy, firm, wise, understanding, and full of dignity to yourselves, your children, wife, girlfriend, and others. You are special to yourself and to God.

Scriptures used: Prov. 3:12, 13:24, 19:18, 22:6, 15, 23:13, 29:15, 17, Psalm 103:13, Col. 3:21, Lk, 11:11.

by Victorio DeLance 5/31/06

Kite Quilts to Re-Member Those in Prison



Candace Booth assists an unidentified assembly member to sew pieces together to form a kite.

Assembling Kite Quilts was the project of the Church of the Damascus Road at the Ministry Fair at the MidAmerica Center in Council Bluffs, May 5-7, 2006. Candace Booth and Marge Everts helped interested persons assemble four pieces of colored cloth into kite shapes to be appliqued to a quilt when they return home. Kites are for messages, so a kite quilt sends a message that inmates are not forgotten while they are in prison, and will be re-membered with others when they return home. Pastor Lang and Judy were in attendance and former member, Bryan Teeters, was an assembly member for CoDR.

Another project of the weekend was the gathering of medical supplies to be sent to our sister diocese, the Southern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. The Langs pulled a trailer full of supplies from Fort Dodge's Millenium Ministries to the Western Iowa Assembly. The gathered supplies filled about 2/3 of a 53 foot long trailer. There were exam tables, surgery tables, lamps, stainless steel bowls, X-Ray film cabinets, syringes, needles, even bicycles, all donated to the cause. All the supplies will be packed into a 40 foot container and shipped to Tanzania at a cost of \$20,000.

I Am the Kite

I am the kite, Red and orange
Fire in the sky. Stunt kite,
Cutting loops and gashes in the blue.
My skin vibrates on the frame with power.
I cut the cord to fly higher still
To show the rest what freedom is all about.
I turn and twist, my fanciest curl,
And set my course for the distance.
But my mistake was not to take the wind
for granted, But the cord,
Which tensioned me to one I did not see
so far below. The flier is not me.
Prayer: Lord, give me anchor, give me
pause; Let me know in freedom's limited
flight, The kite's first cause.

Inside the Flash!

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Wise and Foolish

We've all done silly and foolish things in our lives and we wish we could be more wise in the choices we make. In the Gospel of St. Matthew we have the following parable.

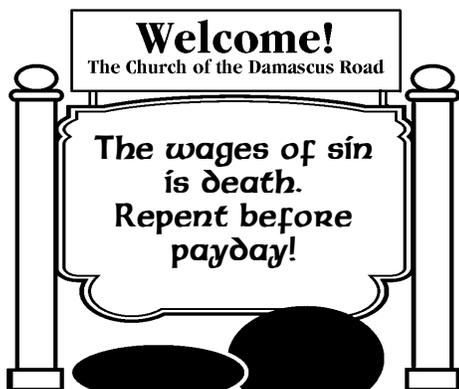
"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'" ⁷"Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' ⁹"No," they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. ¹¹"Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!'" ¹²"But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' ¹³"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. (Matthew 25:1-13)

Jesus is the bridegroom in this parable, and he is telling us to watch for his coming again so that we will always be ready. Are you ready? If not, pray the following prayer:

Dear God, I've been living my life my own way. Now I want to live it your way. I need you and I am willing for you to take control of my life. I receive your Son, Jesus Christ, as my personal Savior and Lord. I believe he died for my sins and has risen from the dead. I surrender to him as Lord. Come, Lord Jesus, and occupy the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen.

Now tell another Christian about how you have prayed the above prayer and that you mean every word of it and intend to live life from now on ready for Jesus to come again.

— Micheal Smothers



Prayer of a Lonely Heart

I cry out to you, Lord, Missing my family
 A lonely heart is hard to bear
 It is You who can comfort me.
 So many mistakes of my past
 I wasn't who I should have been.
 Not there for my family
 Caught up in addictive sin.
 It's been so long will they remember me?
 How can I show I care?
 To let them know I love them
 Will they still want me there?
 Will I have a place to lay my head?
 A place I may call home?
 Will we be together again
 Or will I be alone?
 As I ponder these questions
 This I know for sure.
 With You beside me
 By faith I will endure!
 Amen

Robert L. Johnson II (11-19-2002)

The Last Time

I didn't know it was the last time
 I'd tell my friend goodbye
 We talked and laughed, there was no hint
 That soon she was to die
 I didn't know it was the last time
 My spouse could speak my name
 I hope he knew I held his hand
 Before the angels came
 I won't know when it's the last time
 I help a friend in need
 To live each day as though my last
 Should really be my creed
 I won't know when it's the last time
 I see apple blossoms bloom
 Or watch spring flowers poking through
 Dispelling winter's gloom
 I won't know when it's the last time
 I celebrate Jesus' birth
 But what a blessing that He came
 Bringing heaven closer to Earth
 When will be the last time
 I sing a hymn to Him
 Jesus, Savior, Son of God
 Before Whom all glories dim
 When will be the last time
 I bow my head to pray
 Some things we just aren't meant to know
 I think it's best that way
 Perhaps this is the last time
 That I shall write a poem
 I know my days are numbered
 Till God shall call me home
 I know there'll be a last time
 For everything I do
 A simple fact, which must be faced
 When the years one's left are few
 I won't know when it's the last time
 That on this earth I trod
 But there'll be that joyous first time
 When I shall see my God!

by Elizabeth Daws Sturns, a member of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Humboldt, IA.

A Little Wisdom

To handle yourself, use your head. To handle others, use your heart. -Eleanor Roosevelt

The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves. -Helen Keller

Falseness lasts an hour, but truth lasts until the end of time. -Arab proverb

Life is like string cheese, we keep peeling back the layers until we get to the end, and have fun doing it. -Gene D. Cook, Jr.

That Man

I once knew a man who was about ready to give up. He thought for sure that he was down and out for the count. On what he thought would be his last minutes on Earth, the Holy Spirit came into his life and said to him; "Open the door to your heart."

The man then opened up his heart and his Bible and found Jesus. Then he wholeheartedly asked for forgiveness of his sins that holding him down so hard. He then felt a warm rush all through his body. It felt like someone was hugging him. He could not see Him, but he could definitely feel him. He then felt all of the burdens of his sins being lifted up off his shoulders and taken forever away from him. Then he heard two words that forever changed his life: "Follow me." Follow Him he did. Now the man's Bible is ragged and worn, but his faith is strong and growing.

How do I know all of this? Because, I am that man. Jesus said that our faith could move mountains. My faith has removed my mountains of doubt and fear, and has cleared the path so I can follow Him. There is plenty of room on that path. I pray that you all can find the faith to move your mountains and follow Him with me.

— Nick Carlson (FDCF 5/17/06)

The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Volume 9.3

June, 2006

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

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

Reentry

AFTERCARE!

Lloyd Abbey

Lloyd was a truck driver traveling through Iowa when he was stopped in the Clinton area, searched, and arrested on drug charges. Convicted and sent to the DOC he ended up at NCCF in Rockwell City.

He was very active in Church services while here, but even more so he wanted to learn about God. He wanted to experience Him on a more personal level. He got his heart's desire with the help of another inmate who answered his many questions, gave him books and tapes by anointed teachers, and prayed with him. Mr. Abbey grew spiritually by leaps and bounds and it showed.

One day after 10 months or so he was told that his sentence had been reconsidered. He would be going back to Clinton to be re-sentenced to probation. This was an answer to Lloyd's prayers but there was one problem: He had nowhere to go. All his possessions, job, and home were gone. The prison would transport him back to court where he would be released in a town he had never seen, without a dollar in his pocket and with only the state issue clothing on his back. I think it's safe to say this is not very conducive to a successful probation experience. Lloyd's life had been going at 6 miles per hour (walking speed) for over a year, being told what to do and when to do it. Now he would be heading down the road at 60 miles per hour into the unknown.

The Church of the Damascus Road Aftercare, with the help of some caring people from churches in the area (you know who you are and God bless you), picked Lloyd up at the gate, drove him to court, and brought him into their own home until a place was ready for him in Spirit Lake where he was received by other beautiful people whom the Lord surely loves.

Lloyd now has a good job and is thriving in that environment that God has prepared for him. The people from the community that have met Lloyd will tell you that they are blessed for having been a part of his life. "When you have done this to the least of these My people, you have done so to Me" (Jesus' own words in Matt. 25).

In light of Scripture this is what it means to be a Christian: "To be doers of the Word and not hearers only." God blesses us in so many ways, and multiplies us in our giving. "Give and it will be given unto you, pressed down and flowing over." If we give love, we shall receive love, pressed down and flowing over.

If you would like to receive some special blessing from God, be a blessing to someone in need. It surely has to put a smile on the face of God, and you might find it will put a smile on yours as well. Amen

— William Bell 4/25/06

Church of the Damascus Road Aftercare Ministry Pastor Carroll Lang
P.O.Box 834, Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501 (515) 955-3579



Invitation

North Central AfterCare invites you to a fun afternoon of family entertainment! At 3pm Sunday, June 25th, Mokelestad Christian Music Ministries will be in concert at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Humboldt.

The Mokelestad family is originally from Humboldt and will be singing a variety of music. The Humboldt County Chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will supplement the freewill offering.

A fellowship time with cookies and coffee as well as a pie auction will be held afterward.

North Central Aftercare provides a Christian support group for those returning to society after imprisonment. Please bring a friend and join us!!

— Judy Gronbach



So, What Is AfterCare?

It is a ministry of the Church of the Damascus Road helping inmates stay out when they are released. Teams of 3 to 7 persons in a community covenant together with an ex-offender for up to a year to help the ex-offender adjust to life on the outside, be part of a Christian community, stay employed, and make a new life for him or herself. The Christian community is the best environment in which to help the ex-offender maintain a law-abiding lifestyle.

If you are interested in becoming involved in this ministry and you have enough love in your heart to include one more person, contact us at: Church of the Damascus Road Aftercare Ministry Pastor Carroll Lang, P.O.Box 834, Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501 (515) 955-3579

John Johnston

Tomorrow John will leave on parole. This would not have been possible without the help of the Church of the Damascus Road Aftercare and the team of people from the church who are assisting him. All of John's residence letters were denied (the letters were from people who were willing to allow John to parole to their homes but were denied for various reasons by the parole office). The Iowa Board of Parole was on the verge of pulling his parole until other arrangements could be made.

I have seen John very faithful in attending church services, and Bible studies, while here but every man has his breaking point. He was broken and with little hope, fully expecting a long road of more of the same. Then John was told about the new AfterCare program by a sponsor. He was screened by some of the inside sponsors, and having gained their approval applied. He met an AfterCare team at the Church of the Damascus Road service on Thursday night and they agreed to accept him. Within two weeks he had a home church in Fort Dodge, an apartment in his name, the basic necessities needed to get started in life.

John was lucky to find a group of caring people out there to get him on his feet. That is what we do at the Church of the Damascus Road AfterCare. There are so many people that would like to help the less fortunate people like John, but don't know where to begin. We have an option if you would like to make a difference.

— William Bell 4/25/06

The Church of the Damascus Road
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

June 2006

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.

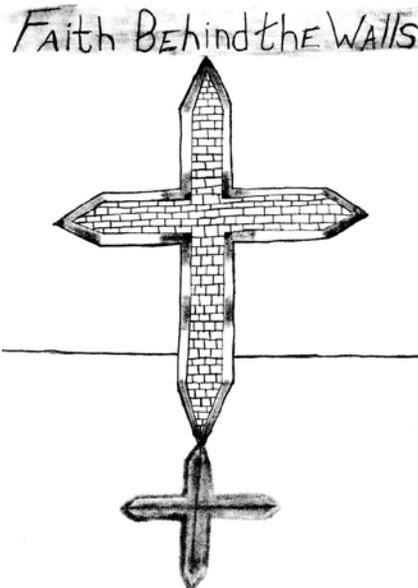


<http://www.frontiernet.net/~codr/index.html>

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



Nicholas Lavin FDCF 2-3-06



Paul Fields FDCF 5-7-06

NCCF Church Council

Marc Leonard..... President
 David Porter..... Vice President
 Daniel Skalla..... Secretary
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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

7:00pm 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