

The Church of the Damascus Road Flash!

Volume 12
Issue No. 2
March 2009
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA



Pastor Paul Stone

Introducing

The Rev. Paul Stone has accepted the call to serve The Church of the Damascus Road as its second pastor, succeeding Pastor Carroll Lang, who has served the prison congregation since it began in August 1997.

Pastor Stone has been serving as Co-Pastor of a 3-point parish, Trinity United Lutheran Ministry, in Eagle Grove (Evangelical), Vincent (South Enes) and Thor (Ullensvang). Before this parish he served Washington Lutheran in Duncombe and South Enes in Vincent. His first parish was Trinity Lutheran in Shumway, Illinois.

Pastor Stone has 15 years experience in Illinois Corrections and has a Masters in Corrections as well as a Master of Divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago.

Paul married Susan in 1999 and she has two daughters, Jori and Katie, and Paul has a daughter, Lauren, and a son, Bob, and a granddaughter, Hannah Rose.

He enjoys golf and ping pong and spending time with his granddaughter.

After two weeks of Preservice Training, March 9-20, he will shadow Pastor Lang for a week or more and assume his call as pastor at Fort Dodge and Rockwell City.

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Tithes & Gifts

The Tithes and the Offering

Tithes are monies we give to God before the offerings, they are the “first-fruit” of earnings or wealth, which always belongs to him. “Honor the Lord with your substance,” is a command, not an invitation. People who do not tithe live off the blessings of the church, but deny its claim through their actions. Non-tithers, in my opinion, are similar to non-voters — they are both irresponsible.

The Church is not a beggar, pleading with people to part with their money, nor are ministers mendicants begging alms.

The prophet Malachi thundered his indictment against Israel for robbing God when he wrote: “Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it” (Mal 3:8-10).

Understand this: the tithe is the Lord’s. The tithe is the Lord’s and not ours, so if we do not give the tithe, we rob God. The tithe is the Lord’s, so when we give it, we really have not given anything of our own until we give above the tithe. When we give to the Lord beyond our tithes, we enter into true sowing and reaping.

God promises to save tithers from disasters the Devourer plans, but when you give offerings, something will be “given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over,” whether tangible or intangible.

Out of the heart of gratitude we give generously to God’s work on earth, for the process started with God giving his best, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

What a great statement of love and trust toward God, to give the very means by which we live — money. Money is an expression of love made for living and giving, not lusting and getting.

Giving money follows the giving of self. The condition of our heart is revealed in the use of our money.

Through our tithes, gifts, and contributions, the Gospel is preached, and we become sons and daughters of God for eternity.

So I end by pointing out that money is a means of doing a great good. Good fruit follows obedience in giving. We give because we love and our love is evidence of our obedience to God’s Word. Thank you.

—Robert Fry, NCCF 11-2008



BAPTISMS

NCCF

Kary Keith Headley 1-22-09
Eugene Noah 1-29-09

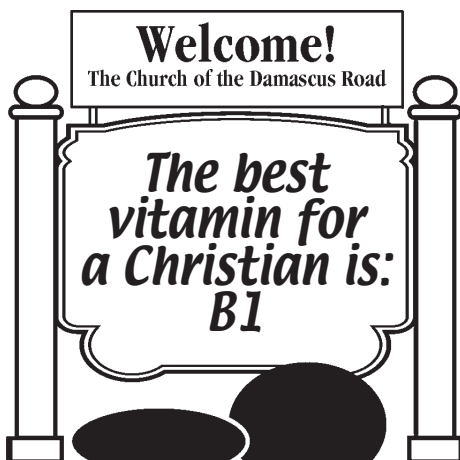
The Call

Blue clouds hugging the sky,
Lined in rows - all puffy and white,
Far from grasp - up so high,
Caught only by ones sight.

Puffs of marshmallows caught my eye,
Moving briskly - showing their glory,
A magnificent moment to stop and cry,
All apart of a great big story.

Clusters of wonder offer a glimpse to why,
Spreading peace, hope and love to all -
To change ones way and not die,
But answer the prayer of God - to take the call

—Cody Anderson, May 23, 2008



A Better Place

The sparkling ocean waters,
The warm sand by the bay,
These things we take for granted,
Cause we see them everyday,

It isn't because we just don't care,
It's because we don't have time,
To appreciate what God gave to us,
We're too worried about the dime,

What the world should know
isn't money all the time,
It's a little lamb called Jesus,
Who paid for all our crime,
The world would be a better place
if we didn't chase the dime.

Samantha Abbey



**"FOR I AM WITH YOU
TO RESCUE
AND SAVE YOU,"
DECLARES THE LORD.**

JEREMIAH 15:20, NIV

Rescue Me

Oh please - Oh God
Will you rescue me?
I'm up without a paddle - in this misery.

Oh please - Oh God
Will you send somebody?
I've done people wrong - and don't de-
serve thee.

Oh please - Oh God
Will you forgive me?
I repent what I did - and want to be free.

Oh please - Oh God
Will you cleanse me?
I know you've changed me - and want
everyone to see.

Oh please - Oh God
Will you rescue me?
I'm up without a paddle - in this misery.

—Cody Anderson, May 26, 2008

7 Stanzas for Easter

Make no mistake: if He rose at all
it was as His body;
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse,
the molecules reknit,
the amino acids rekindle,
the Church will fall.

It was not as the flowers,
each soft Spring recurrent;
it was not as His Spirit in the mouths
and fuddled eyes of the eleven apostles;
it was as His flesh: ours.

The same hinged thumbs and toes,
the same valved heart that--pierced--died,
withered, paused,
and then regathered out of enduring Might
new strength to enclose.

Let us not mock God with metaphor,
analogy, side-stepping, transcendence,
making of the event a parable,
a sign painted in the faded credulity of
earlier ages:
let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mache,
not a stone in a story,
but the vast rock of materiality
that in the slow grinding of time will eclipse
for each of us the wide light of day.

And if we have an angel at the tomb,
make it a real angel,
weighty with Max Planck's quanta,
vivid with hair,
opaque in the dawn light, robed in real linen
spun on a definite loom.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,
for our own convenience,
our own sense of beauty,
lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour,
we are embarrassed by the miracle,
and crushed by remonstrance.

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Issue 12.2

March 2009

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
Rev. Paul Stone, Pastor
Micheal Feldpausch, Editor
Sean Shafer, 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,
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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

Whispers

Speak to my heart Lord,
whispers from above.
Tell me Your desires,
tell me of Your love.

Love that lasts forever.
The giver of all life.
Always there beside me,
through heartbreak and strife.

I give You all the glory
For You are my King.
My Lord and Savior,
You are my everything.

I will praise You forever
For answering this sinners call.
Never to forsake me,
For loving me most of all.

Robert L. Johnson II 5-30-2003



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Reentry After CARE!

Team Member Testimonial

We had a man, of which I previously wrote to you about, who had received a reconsideration of his sentence. He was not from Iowa and had been incarcerated just long enough to loose everything he had.(House, Job, Possessions, etc...) He would be returned to court and released.

Without the help of our aftercare members he would have been literally out on the street, without any resources to survive. But thanks be to GOD that was not the case.

Two dedicated Team Members of the Damascus Road Aftercare, and you know who you are, picked this man up and took him in until Damascus Road Aftercare could arrange housing. They put him to work so that he could have a few bucks in his pocket, and later brought him to his new home in Spirit Lake where he still lives and works today.

I have had the privilege of meeting all these people involved and would like to say this: They love the Lord. You can see it in their faces. The fruit of the Spirit are seen clearly, and the Bible says we will know them by their fruit. GOD bless you!

—Bill Bell NCCF April 1, 2006



Pastor Lang Retiring

Pastor Lang will retire around the end of March, but he will be volunteering for Reentry AfterCare, so he will be around for awhile. The Langs will continue to live in the Fort Dodge area and be active in Fort Dodge community activities.

A retirement party is being planned for Saturday, May 23, but the time and place are yet to be determined, and will be announced in the May issue of the Flash!

June 22 will mark the 40th Anniversary of ordination for Pastor Lang

Jesus Heals the Leper



Man

A man may be a hero
in perilous times of war,
But the man is only remembered
by the things he was fighting for.

Ana a man may be a genius,
endowed with a creative mind,
But the man is only remembered
by the things he was seeking to find.

And a man may be a teacher,
endowed with a didactic wit,
But the teacher is only remembered
by the things he taught with it.

But a man is a man is a man,
for the greatest reason of any,
'Cause he cries those golden tears,
be they few or small or many.

Tears for a long lost lover,
tears for a parting friend,
Tears for a long lost lover,
tears at the journey's end.

—Jehoshua Dillinger NCCF 2009

Nine Lepers' Excuses

Why did only one cleansed leper return to thank Jesus? The following are nine suggested reasons why the nine did not return:

- One waited to see if the cure was real.
- One waited to see if it would last.
- One said he would see Jesus later.
- One decided that he had never had leprosy.
- One said I'd have gotten well anyway.
- One gave the glory to the priests.
- One said, "O, well, Jesus didn't really do anything."
- One said, "Any rabbi could have done it."
- One said, "I was already much improved."

—The NEWSLETTER Newsletter, June, 1990.

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

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

March 2009

Invite the NEW 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 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.

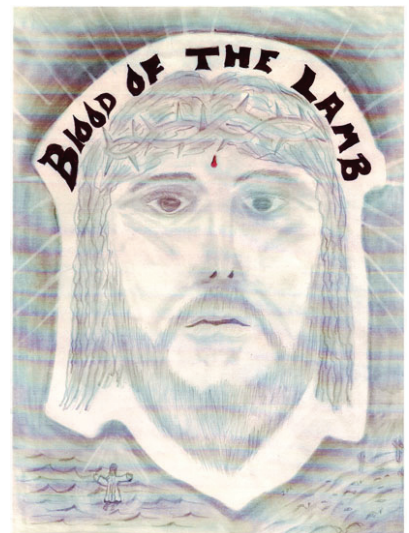


All Readers: Send Contributions
 The editor of this newsletter is inviting ALL READERS, inside and outside to send in articles, poetry, art work, and opinions for the newsletter. So don't be bashful.

Artists' Corner



Joshua Osborn, FDCF 2009



John Reynolds, FDCF 2009

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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
 6:30pm WednesdaysHoly Communion
 6:30pm FridaysPrayer Team
 7:00pm FridaysBible Study
NCCF Rockwell City
 6:30pm TuesdaysBible Study
 6:30pm ThursdaysHoly Communion