

The Church of the Damascus Road

Damascus Road

Echo!

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BUILDING

Building a Foundation

Hello, Fellow Christians! I was in NA and the participants were discussing the importance of group participation. Basically, consensus was: people can help others by offering up their personal experiences to them. It was thought to be a disfavor to your fellow man not to offer up your services.

No man is an island, we all hold a place in each other's puzzle. It was thought by Albert Sebastian himself that to seclude ourselves and keep to ourselves is to live in a mental prison. Limited knowledge is bondage. I challenge everyone to pursue God and all of the knowledge He has handed down throughout the ages.

Remember that the wisest of men have not always been wise. Offer up yourselves to strengthen yourselves. Fortify yourselves by building a foundation that doesn't crumble. If what you say crumbles, then you know you have yet to find the truth.

—Lance Clapham



Empowering Call

Yet God not only calls but empowers—although the power may come only as we respond. Conversely, if we don't respond to God's call, we may cut ourselves off from the Lord's strength and become increasingly blind and deaf to God's promptings.

-- Unknown

Attention Members:

Encourage all of you to submit articles to the Flash, and Echo for us all to read. It's good to hear personal testimonies of how God has inspired you. Let us know what's on your minds, and in your hearts.

—Tony Halsrud FDCF

It Is No Secret

Back in the 50's there was a well known radio host/comedian/song writer in Hollywood named Stuart Hamblen who was noted for his drinking, womanizing, partying, etc. One of his bigger hits at the time was "I won't go hunting with you Jake, but I'll go chasing women."

One day, along came a young preacher holding a tent revival. Hamblen had him on his radio show presumably to poke fun at him.

In order to gather more material for his show, Hamblen showed up at one of the revival meetings.

Early in the service the preacher announced, "There is one man in this audience who is a big fake." There were probably others who thought the same thing, but Hamblen was convinced that he was the one the preacher was talking about (some would call that conviction) but he was having none of that.

Still the words continued to haunt him until a couple of nights later he showed up drunk at the preacher's hotel door around 2AM demanding that the preacher pray for him!

But the preacher refused, saying, "This is between you and God and I'm not going to get in the middle of it."

But he did invite Stuart in and they talked until about 5 AM at which point Stuart dropped to his knees and with tears, cried out to God.

But that is not the end of the story. Stuart quit drinking, quit chasing women, quit everything that was 'fun.' Soon he began to lose favor with the Hollywood crowd.

He was ultimately fired by the radio station when he refused to accept a beer company as a sponsor.

Hard times were upon him. He tried writing a couple of "Christian" songs but the only one that had much success was "This Old House", written for his friend Rosemary Clooney.

As he continued to struggle, a long time friend named John took him aside and told him, "All your troubles started when you 'got religion,' was it worth it all?" Stuart answered simply, "Yes."

Then his friend asked, "You liked your booze so much, don't you ever miss it?" And his answer was, "No." John then said, "I don't understand how you could give it up so easily."

And Stuart's response was, "It's no big secret. All things are possible with God." To this John said, "That's a catchy phrase. You should write a song about it."

And as they say, "The rest is history."

The song Carl Stuart Hamblen wrote was "It Is No Secret."

"It is no secret what God can do.

What He's done for others, He'll do for you.

With arms wide open, He'll welcome you.

It is no secret, what God can do...."

By the way... the friend was John Wayne.

And the young preacher who refused to pray for Stuart Hamblen?

...that was Billy Graham.

—Source Unknown



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Jokes You Can Tell in Church

Rev. Dr. F. Christopher Anderson, pastor of Heidelberg United Church of Christ, York, PA, authored a book titled *God Is Still Laughing: The Revised Heidelberg Catechism Joke Book*, excerpts from which have been carried in *The Joyful Noiseletter*. Rev. Anderson passed on a few more of his whimsical questions and answers:

- Q. Who was Adam?
 A. The first man to fall for a woman. (Genesis 3:24)
- Q. Who was Eve?
 A. The only woman whose husband did not ignore her because he was watching a ballgame. (Genesis 1:28)
- Q. What was Noah's biggest mistake?
 A. Not killing the two mosquitoes.
- Q. What was the greatest miracle in the Bible?
 A. When Joshua told his son to stand still, and he did. (Joshua 10:12-14)
- Q. What is "the Church Triumphant"?
 A. The church softball team after winning 23 to 4.
- Q. What is the Bible's senior citizen's prayer?
 A. Job prays, "Oh for the days when I was in my prime." (Job 29:4)
- Q. Why didn't Pinocchio succeed as a politician?
 A. People could tell when he was lying.
- Q. Who uses God's name in vain more than anyone else?
 A. Politicians.
- Q. Why is God like a Californian after an earthquake?
 A. With all our faults, God still loves us.



A Fork in the Road

Several artists were asked to illustrate their concepts of temptation. When their paintings were unveiled, some of them depicted man's attempt to achieve fame and fortune at any cost. Others pictured mankind's struggle against the alluring desires of the flesh. The prize-winning canvas, however, was quite different. It portrayed a quiet country lane with a man walking among inviting shade trees and lovely wild flowers. In the distance the way divided into two roads, the one leading to the right, the other to the left. The road that veered to the left seemed almost as inviting as the one that kept to the right. But if the traveler chose to take it, he would soon become mired in the mud. The artist was conveying the thought that sin's allurements are extremely subtle at first. They often present themselves as an innocent-looking fork in the road.

— Our Daily Bread



Risk Your Heart a Little

Jesus lived in joy. Sometimes we forget this as we think of his self-emptying love, his concern for those who suffer, his own trials. He also lived in joy. He was no grim Puritan, pulling himself up straight and tall and pointing an outraged finger at sinners. Neither was he a bitter social activist, smugly cynical about this corrupt world. He partied; he danced and sang; he held children in his lap and told them stories about abundant feasts; he laughed, he praised God with a grateful heart.

Jesus had a joy for living not because he had it easy; not because everything turned out well for him; not because he was prosperous and lived in a fair society; and certainly not because he was naïve. He had a joy for living because he risked his trust in the goodness of it all. He believed that no matter what, God was with him and with everyone, infusing the whole creation like a precious spice in a good meal.

When we risk our trust that God is everywhere, then everything — even the bad parts — work together for good. In the midst of our difficulties, God is here, as a force for goodness that will not be stopped. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it. Jesus burst forth from the tomb, after life had done its worst, and the light shone on.

As followers of this joyful man of Nazareth, we are invited to welcome another celebration of Christmas. In order to enjoy this feast, it doesn't matter whether things are going well or going badly for you. It doesn't matter whether you can predict how things will turn out. It doesn't matter whether you are privileged or disadvantaged, whether you succeed or fail.

What matters is that you risk your heart a little. Open it up. Trust in the goodness of it all; have a little faith. Let yourself be grateful for life itself. Keep a twinkle in your eye and be a little outrageous now and then. Be playfully affectionate with others. Look up at the stars. Feel your breath. Look into the eyes of a stranger and see God. The light is everywhere.

What matters as you greet another Christmas is that you keep your mind's eye trained on the Holy One who goes before you, spreading your life before you like a Sunday table cloth.

The Bethlehem Savior who came to bring life beckons you. Follow him and he will bless you with love, simplicity, and, oh yes, joy!

And you too will be a light to the world. Love and prayers,
 Fr. Richard Graves, Rector, St. Mark's Episc.

Church Football

- Quarterback Sneak - Church members quietly leaving during the invitation.
- Draw Play - What many children do with the bulletin during worship.
- Halftime - The period between Sunday School and worship when many choose to leave.
- Benchwarmer - Those who do not sing, pray, work, or apparently do anything but sit.
- Backfield-in-Motion - Making a trip to the back (restroom or water fountain) during the service.
- Staying in the Pocket - What happens to a lot of money that should be given to the Lord's work.
- Two-minute Warning - The point at which you realize the sermon is almost over and begin to gather up your children and belongings.
- Instant Replay - The preacher loses his notes and falls back on last week's illustrations.
- Sudden Death - What happens to the attention span of the congregation if the preacher goes "overtime".
- Trap - You're called on to pray and are asleep.
- End Run - Getting out of church quick, without speaking to any guest or fellow member.
- Flex Defense - The ability to allow absolutely nothing said during the sermon to affect your life.
- Halfback Option - The decision of 50% of the congregation not to return for the evening service.
- Blitz - The rush for the restaurants following the closing prayer.

—Ray Kerley



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An 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.
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 Gene D. Cook, Jr., Editor

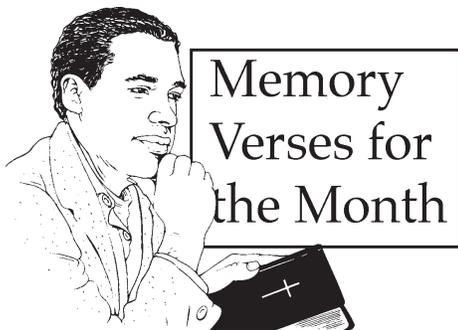
Your Favorite Scripture

Do you have a favorite scripture verse or verses in the Bible? Tell us what the Word of God means to you and where it is in the Bible. We will publish it in our newsletter each month. We all need encouragement every single day of our lives. We may never know how one single word from someone can affect us until we meet Jesus Christ and all is revealed. Is your daily goal to please Him? We need to abide in His word so that He will abide in us. And we will see God through our actions.

We must be able to "talk the talk" if we are trying to "walk the walk."

Give your scripture references to Pastor Lang or any Inside Church Council member.

—Tony Halsrud FDCF



Memory Verses for the Month

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall (Psalm 55:22).

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble (Psalm 9:9).

When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world (1 Corinthians 11:32).



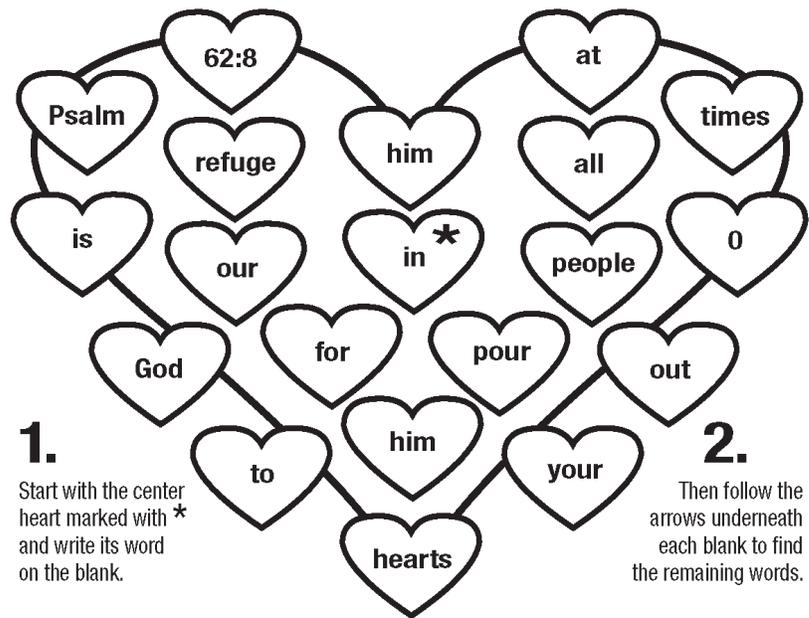
Story Tellers

Story Tellers is the third Friday of every month at FDCF and the third Saturday at NCCF unless a scheduling problem arises. You can read a book to your child on tape, and then send the book and audio cassette tape home for your child to listen to you read to them, and read along with you. The tape, and book are free to you. You just pay regular mail home to your child, or, at FDCF, you can send them out on a visit like regular property through R&D. Sign up with Pastor Lang, or at our regular worship service, or with any Inside Church Council member.



OUR HEARTS

This special Bible verse from the NIV describes what God wants us to do with our hearts.



1.

Start with the center heart marked with * and write its word on the blank.

2.

Then follow the arrows underneath each blank to find the remaining words.

“Trust _____, _____, _____, _____, _____,
 _____; _____, _____, _____, _____, _____,
 _____, _____, _____, _____, _____,
 _____.”

Answer: “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.” Psalm 62:8

Three things in life that—
once gone, never come back:

1. Time
2. Words
3. Opportunity

can destroy a person:

1. Anger
2. Pride
3. Unforgiveness

you should never lose:

1. Hope
2. Peace
3. Honesty

are most valuable:

1. Love
2. Family & Friends
3. Kindness

are never certain:

1. Fortune
2. Success
3. Dreams

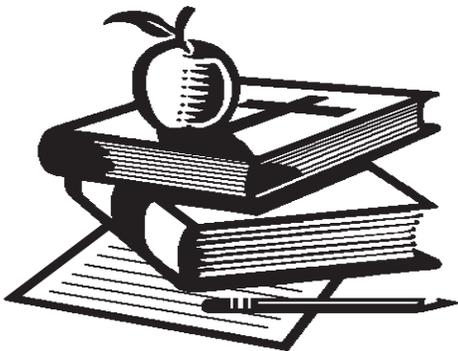
make a person:

1. Commitment
2. Sincerity
3. Hard work

truly constant:

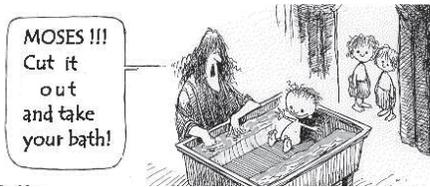
Father - Son - Holy Spirit

I ask the Lord to bless you,
As I pray for you today,
To guide you and protect you,
As you go along your way.
God's love is always with you,
God's promises are true.
And when you give God all your cares,
You know God will see you through.



Check Them Out!

The Church of the Damascus Road Librarians are inviting you to come to the chapel (MPR 23 in FDCF H Building; Treatment Center Room A in NCCF), and "check out" the books, tapes and compact discs in our library! There are many genres of books to choose from! We hope to see you there!



Moses - Awesome

This is almost overwhelming when you think about it. Moses and the people were in the desert, but what was he going to do with them? They had to be fed, and feeding 2 or 3 million people requires a lot of food. According to the Quartermaster General in the Army, it is reported that Moses would have to have had 1500 tons of food each day. Do you know that to bring that much food each day, two freight trains, each at least a mile long, would be required!

Besides you must remember, they were out in the desert, so they would have to have firewood to use in cooking the food. This would take 4000 tons of wood and a few more freight trains, each a mile long, just for one day.

And just think, they were forty years in transit.

And, oh yes! They would have to have water. If they only had enough to drink and wash a few dishes, it would take 11,000,000 gallons each day and a freight train with tank cars, 1800 miles long, just to bring water!

And then another thing! They had to get across the Red Sea at night. Now, if they went on a narrow path, double file, the line would be 800 miles long and would require 35 days and nights to get through. So there had to be a space in the Red Sea, 3 miles wide so that they could walk 5000 abreast to get over in one night.

But then, there is another problem... each time they camped at the end of the day, a campground two-thirds the size of the state of Rhode Island was required, or a total of 750 square miles long... think of it! This much space for camping.

Do you think Moses figured all this out before he left Egypt? I think not! You see, Moses believed in God. God took care of these things for him.

Now, do you think God has any problem taking care of all your needs?

*I asked the Lord to bless you
As I prayed for you today.
To guide you and protect you
As you go along your way.
His love is always with you,
His promises are true,
And when we give Him all our cares,
You know He'll see us through.*

Our God is an Awesome God!!
So when the road you're traveling on seems difficult at best, just remember I'm praying and God will do the rest.

—Source Unknown

Who to Turn to

Why do you keep crying?
Why do you blame God?
What you did got you here,
And now the excuses begin.
You try to tell yourself
That God meant for this to happen,
But, in the scheme of life
You always left God out.
So, when you're sitting all alone,
Locked down inside your cell,
Cry out to God to save you now
Before you go to hell.
And if you don't believe He can,
Just look at others all around
And vow to take a stand.
Stand up for God, He's the one
Who helped you through those tough times,
And you won't even acknowledge His son.
So now I will pray for you
That you will know my Lord.
I only hope that you accept Him,
And not sit down and be bored.
It is a wonderful gift God gave us,
His one and only son, His name is Jesus.
I'm going now, I've been called home.
I just want to leave you
With this special telephone.
It is the Holy Spirit,
It guides you on your way.
And maybe in a while
We'll meet again someday.
—Kyle McMenamin, FDCF 2006



Articles Invited
The editor of this newsletter is inviting all readers to contribute articles, poetry, art work, and opinions for the newsletter. So don't be bashful. Give all your newsletter submissions to Pastor Lang.



Worship & Bible Study
FDCF Fort Dodge
7:00pm WednesdaysHoly Communion
6:30pm Fridays Prayer & Bible Study

FDCF Chapel Hours
4:00pm - Count Wednesday
2:30pm-4:00pm Friday

NCCF Rockwell City
6:30pm Tuesdays Prayer & Bible Study
6:30pm ThursdaysHoly Communion