

# The Church of the Damascus Road

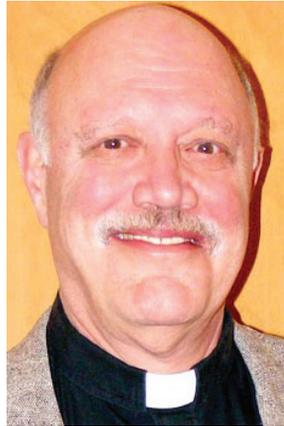
# Flash!

Volume 18  
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July 2015  
Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

## “Remember the Prisoner”

CoDR is an ongoing, privately-funded ministry dependent entirely on donations from individuals, congregations, foundations, etc. We greatly appreciate and have depended upon your support for CoDR’s first 18 years of ministry.

We have expanded our services in the last year and a half.



Pastor Paul E Stone

We added Paul Abbott to our staff as a half-time Assistant to the Pastor. With his inside and outside experiences he has proven to be a tremendous, enthusiastic, and spirit-filled asset. We have also expanded the number of Reentry/

Reintegration teams in Western Iowa. We hope to continue to expand into new areas, particularly to the east, so we can serve more guys as they return to free society. These efforts take both time and money.

In my six years as pastor of this congregation, I have not written to ask for money. I am doing so now. I am asking two things of you, our partners in ministry: 1) Please prayerfully consider increasing your weekly/monthly/annual support of CoDR; and 2) Please prayerfully consider including CoDR in your will. Thank you *very much* for your considerations.

—Pastor Paul Stone

## Will You Will It?

Have you considered remembering The Church of the Damascus Road in your will? Many congregations have formed foundations that sustain their ministries and allow them to expand those ministries as well. We’d like to be able to do that, too.

To find out more, call 515-955-3579 or email us at [DamascusCh@aol.com](mailto:DamascusCh@aol.com). We will send you information about how a bequest can be included in your will.

## Miracle-Minded

This one goes out to all my brothers at FDCF. I encourage you to keep up the great work. And remember it will all pay off. I keep you all in my prayers. Let’s start by defining the word “miracle” in spiritual context: God’s intervention or suspension of the natural laws of the universe. Miracles are described in the New Testament as signs, wonders, mighty works, and powers. Jesus worked miracles to relieve suffering (Matt.8:14-17), to raise the dead (Matt. 9:23-25), to calm nature (Luke8:22-25) or to give an object lesson (Mark 11:12-14).

Remember that miracles still exist today. I encourage you to become miracle-minded. Utilize your talents, search for your identity and press on. Never mind the haters. Become more patient with them, endure the humility and remember—vengeance belongs to God and trust he will handle it. This will keep your conscience clear.

Many people dread the thought of having a miracle-minded mentality. They feel it’s beyond their reach. However, the Bible teaches us, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26)

Society does not teach us how to become Miracle-Minded. Society can only teach what it knows and understands. I’ve learned over the years that SCIENCE can affect the minds of believers if taken out of its proper context. Science is based on physical knowledge. Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. (HEB 11:1) Miracles are divine acts unexplainable by the laws of nature.

Prison can be used as a great opportunity for “change.” Fort Dodge Correctional Facility is a prime example. It’s become more than just a place to do time. Warden Jim McKinney and his staff are producing miracle-minded men. I speak from experience. The time I spent from August 2011 to February 5th 2014 at FDCF was a major transitional period in my life. I was able to discover who I was, as opposed to who I want to be, my self-identity. As a facilitator for Victory Bible College, Celebrate Recovery and Mentor, at FDCF I was allowed opportunities I didn’t feel I deserved. I didn’t have the teaching experience and I didn’t feel qualified. But the Holy Spirit said “Go for it, you have nothing to lose.”

So I did. I had my ups and downs, and the devil was working overtime, but once I realized it was possible to achieve, there was no turning back. I was spiritually motivated by other inmates, such as Arthur ‘Breeze’ Williams, Dick Spence, Anthony Cole, Mark Wilder, Walter Miller, Wayne Smith, Michael Hardesty, BJ Harris, Michael McCullough, Earney Walters, Ramone Price, William Pargo and others. These men are all miracle-minded. They don’t wait for things to happen, they make them happen! And I was motivated by their actions and positive movement. Since the first day I arrived at NCCF (Rockwell City), doors have opened up wide. I’m proud to say that I hold the title as President of The Church of the Damascus Road, I facilitate the inmate Christian Church Service (Take Flight Ministries), I’m the inmate sports coordinator for sports athletics, and I work a full-time private sector job at Nuage Marketing Solutions.

All the hard work I put in at FDCF carried over to NCCF. I can assure you that my heavenly Father has been the power and source. I encourage everyone who reads this to remember: miracles are real. Anything that the mind can conceive, it can also achieve!

—Robert Pate aka Pate the Great! NCCF 2015

### THE FAMILY CIRCUS



“Adam and Eve were lucky. They didn’t have any history to learn.”

from *The Joyful Noiseletter*  
Reprinted with permission of Bill Keane

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## Pearls Before Swine

The other day I ran across a comic strip in a Sunday newspaper entitled “Pearls Before Swine,” written by Stephan Pastic. That particular week’s cartoon was entitled “Lessons in Morality.” In this cartoon the main character wanted to impress his friends, so he began using big words like aberration, abnegate, and alacrity. But they were not impressed. So he went out and made lots of money. But they were not impressed. So he dressed in the finest suits, and still, they were not impressed. So our main character went out and found himself new friends, in which every time he spoke in his fancy words they would respond with ooh and ah.

According to the cartoon strip, what exactly was the morality lesson? “That deep friendships hold us back,...Adore Me, New Shallow Friends!” I found this comic very humorous indeed. But then, sadly, reflected upon how so many people do just like our main character in the cartoon. We seek out those of similar likes and character that we may be surrounded by friends who will be impressed when we do certain things. And such relationships can even spiral into “one-upmanship” of pranks and actions, edifying no one and glorifying only the adversary, Belial himself, the father of all liars. How is it we can claim ourselves as followers of the Messiah?

Yeshua said (in Matthew 7:6), “Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend (trample) you.” His words reflect this relationship of friends who play this game of wanting to be seen as better than others, to be something that we are not, ignoring the calling by which we profess. Paul tells us to transform our thinking and that we should turn away from the things of this world. C.S. Lewis said it like this, “Seek heaven, receive heaven, and get the earth thrown in; seek earth, and get nothing, for you can take nothing with you when you leave.”

There’s nothing wrong with friendship, it’s merely a matter of perspective. Is our friendship an outgrowth of some unfulfilled earthly need, some need to herd together for co-dependency like sheep without a shepherd? Or is our friendship an outgrowth of fruitfulness in the Messiah that draws others unto us?

One of my favorite songs these days is a song by the group Planetshakers entitled, “Unto God.” In this song the main verse to the chorus goes like this: “Unto God Be All of the Praise, Unto God Be All of the Praise, For He Has Done Great Things.” The greatest is God, for even though we sinned and turned our backs toward Him, He gave His only Son that we might have everlasting life. Is there anything greater than the love of God?

James 4:4 – “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

—Michael Alkire NCCF 2015



## Bible History in Verse

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that makes three.

They created all that you see in their eternal glory.

Now it was time to bring forth humanity. The Lord breathed life into Adam and Eve, blessing them abundantly.

Fallen from grace, thy did, because of a thief and a tree.

God was angry and told them they would be sorry.

Henceforth they would know sin and mortality,

Being exiled from Eden, becoming worldly. So Adam and Eve said, “What we know now, we hope to survive, maybe.”

Then it dawned on them that they were without mercy,

Teaching them their very own humility, For now, after having shelter and food, it was time to start a family.

Could they conceive? Only the Lord knows, we’ll see.

After many months Eve went to Adam and said, “I’m with baby.”

Sometime after having Cain, Eve was with child again, “It’s a society.”

Bring forth Abel they did, with shouts of joy that went heavenly.

As life went on, a murder took place, how could this be?

Making the Mighty One banish Cain. It could’ve been worse — he was lucky.

Following that, Adam and Eve knew serenity.

Everything began going wrong daily, weekly, monthly and yearly.

The Great Father was displeased with evil humans being free.

Planning something so big that there is no recovery.

So the Lord knew of a man named Noah who was trustworthy,

Developing a covenant with Noah, who went about his work humbly.

Earth’s people, when the flood began, got down on bended knee.

Nothing was left of the wickedness, that was gone, only God’s victory.

All those innocent were loved, and we’ve heard what happened to the guilty.

New days were to come, and the Redeemer would judge righteously.

—Scott Howery NCCF 5-9-15

## Praying Before Bed

On this night I go to bed  
Praying simply while laying down my head  
Thinking about all the men of old  
Never seeing the Latter Rain foretold

Hear it coming? In the distance?  
Coming to give us all assistance?”  
“Pray Ye the Lord for rain  
In the time of Latter Rain”

Former and latter, all will come  
With twice the strength of Pentecost  
Till we get His job all done  
To work with Him and save the lost

My body trembles at the thought  
That we are part of His plan  
These Last Days to save the lost  
His Glory seen throughout the land  
— William Bell FDCF



**Welcome!**  
The Church of the Damascus Road

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**Wisdom is the reward for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk.**

**The Church of the Damascus Road**  
*Flash!*

Issue 18.4 July 2015

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  
Paul Abbott, Assistant  
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](mailto: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  
Phone: 515-955-3579



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Mark and Cindy Willson - West DSM  
Leonard & Georganne Woodruff - Rockwell City

*Thank You*  
FOR YOUR HELP

# REentry integration

"It's a Ministry,  
Not a Program"

## Called to Do Ministry

When Jesus called his disciples, all he said was, "Follow me." When Phillip told Nathanael about Jesus, all he said was, "Come and see." God has given us abilities to do ministry in his name, but sometimes we are not aware that we have those abilities until we try to do ministry, so come and see for yourself. Come to the worship services at either prison, or participate in the bible studies at either prison (see page 4 for times). Once people like you see the faith and depth of understanding of these men, they are often moved to follow in Jesus' footsteps and minister to people, especially returning citizens who need assistance to reintegrate into society.



That's the Holy Spirit's way of moving us to answer the call to be part of a reentry reintegration team. Two teams were trained recently in Council Bluffs and Rock Valley, and you could be part of a team in your community. If this is of interest to you, talk to others in your community and contact us.

Most returning citizens have a sincere desire to turn their lives around. Many have never held a job or managed their incomes, so they need help from someone with those abilities; someone who will help them "bind up their wounds" as they reintegrate into society as law-abiding, productive citizens needing second chances. Come and see.

If you are willing to form a Reentry Reintegration team in your area, contact me by phone or email below and we will set a date for a training session.

We also need help to form teams in places other than NW Iowa, developing more teams around the state (and the USA). Please give me a call at 515-571-6566 or email me at CDLNg@aol.com.

—Rev. Carroll Lang, NW IA Director

## Patricia Bentsen

5 June 2015 — Praise the LORD, all you nations. Praise him, all you people of the earth. Psalm 117:1

Greetings in Jesus' name! My heart praises the Lord, for many reasons: - His unconditional love for me, and all of us; - My continued well-being, with healing of the mind, the body, and the spirit; - The prayers of many on my behalf, including yours. Thank you, one and all, with the prison ministries! On 6 May 2015, I departed



Madagascar for the States for my medical checkup with my surgical oncologist, which took place on 11 May. Everything checked out well, for which I thank the Lord. Then yesterday, 4 June, I met with my oncologist, at which time a tumor marker was done (blood exam to help detect, diagnose, and manage some types of cancer). PTL, mine was within normal limits, in fact it was slightly lower than from my previous test. At this time, I feel confident and competent about driving on my own once again. Therefore, if you wish to hear about the working of the Lord in my life, as well as where I have been working in Madagascar, please let me know. If everything goes as planned, I will be in the States until my next check-up with my surgical oncologist on 10 August. If you do decide to have me come and share with you, please indicate two different dates, so there would be no conflict with another speaking engagement. And thank you for your continued partnership with me in the Gospel through prayer and financial support. Because of Him,

—Patricia Bentsen

## Get the Flash in a Flash

This is the first issue of the Flash to be sent electronically in a .pdf to those who requested to get it via the web. Not only do you save paper, ink and printing costs, but you will get your newsletter in a flash, and you can also see photos in color. Just send us your email address (include your name and address so we can stop sending by mail) to cdln@ aol.com.

Thanks!

—Carroll Lang, Editor

## Invite the Pastor/Assistant

Our worship services are on weeknights so that people on the outside can worship with the inmates and not miss worship in their own congregations. And this enables the pastor or the Assistant to visit congregations on Sundays. They can give a brief update on the ministry, a sermon, a children's sermon, an adult forum, a cross-generational class session, or any or all of the above, and are open to suggestions. Just need time to prepare.

Call 515-955-3579 or write to: The Church of the Damascus Road, 239 N 11th St, Fort Dodge, IA 50501, email <DamascusCh@aol.com> to arrange for a visit.

### Inmates:

You can have your original artwork in this space in the Flash; simply hand your art to Pastor Stone. It will be scanned and then returned to you.



Abraham in retirement

The Church of the Damascus Road  
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Fort Dodge, IA 50501  
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Thanks for  
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July 2015

## 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.



www.codrcare.org

## CoDR on FB

The Church of Damascus Road is now on Facebook. There are currently a few videos and pictures and will be updated when more are available. Also check for updates for upcoming events. To LIKE us, log into Facebook with the link <https://www.facebook.com/thechurchofthedamascusroad>

## NCCF Church Council

John Wey-Pres.....Jimmy Johnson-VP  
Thomas Belz-Sec/ST.....Shawn Anderson  
Anthony Powers.....David Whitlock  
Robert Pate.....Terry Hill  
Jelani Green.....Michael Graham  
Alan Walker.....Jay Jermier

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

Kevin Reid-Pres.....(vacant)-VP  
Chad Burmester-ST/Sec.....Tim Smith  
Eddie Jones.....Phillip Stenwall  
Greg Humphrey.....Gary Trueblood  
Darwin Cobeen.....Henry Jones  
Phillip Stenwall

## 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