

# The Church of the Damascus Road

## Flash!

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Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

### Passages



Cynthia Hanks

Cynthia Sue Henn Hanks of Manson was CoDR's Office Manager for nine years. She died June 8, 2017 at the age of 75. She is survived by her two children, Mark & Michelle, grandchildren, and a brother, Rev. Byron Henn.

During her life, Cynthia worked as an Assistant Librarian in several libraries, she worked for the Research and Development at the Racine, WI Public Schools. In Iowa, she found work at Bank of America, Fort Dodge, where she worked for 18 years as a secretary, Customer Service Representative, and Loan Officer. Cynthia then framed pictures for Dee's Hallmark. She was also the Office Manager for The Church of the Damascus Road until 2008 when she retired from commuting. In Manson, Cynthia was the Administrative Assistant for St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Cynthia was very active in her church, singing in the choir and participating in women's groups, involved in Home Ec. Club, Homemakers, church work, social committees, and Chorale. Cynthia sang with the Meridian Singers 14 years. She also was a substitute teacher for the Sunday Seekers Adult Sunday school class.

Cynthia loved her family, enjoyed her friends, photography, creating greeting cards for friends and family, writing, arranging flowers, and her roses.

### What CoDR Means to Me



The Church of the Damascus Road, being a prison congregation, offers its congregation members an opportunity that doesn't exist in any other church groups in prisons. We don't have the feeling of 'getting pity' or that sense of 'someone coming to see us.' We have a real sense of ownership in our congregation. It's our Church. This congregation, to me, represents the most authentic Church I have ever witnessed. In the outside world, too often, people 'go' to church. In here we 'are' the church, as was intended all along. We are The Church of the Damascus Road!

—Kevin Reid, Inside Council President FDCF



### Brothers in Blue Team:

I have seen many groups come into prison. I also know that many people don't want to get involved with prisoners. This commitment I know cost a lot, but I know it has touched many lives. You have come to show your act of kindness for prisoners like me. You have shown me that you are people who not only talk his words, but you carry them out. His words become actions. **That is what I want in my life.** And when you say that God loves me, you show it by your actions. You give me an **example.**

Life in prison consists of anger, pain, torment, and hostile acts, cussing, throwing fits. The sound level gets so bad in this place, you can't think.

I felt a peace when I went into Brothers in Blue that made my heart softer so I felt less pain, I saw smiles on people's faces. Saying "acts of love" is an understatement, because they **showed love** in person.

Someday, to be able to come back into prison and do a ministry of love is now my goal in life. Thank you,

—Matt Ritt



### CoDR Foundation

The Church of the Damascus Road has ministered to inmates in prisons in Rockwell City and Fort Dodge for 20 years. Even though several churches, community members, and some corporations have been generous supporters over the years, the Outside Church Council of CoDR has consistently faced financial challenges. In order to prepare for the future, a new Foundation has been established. Five members of the Board of Directors of the Foundation have been designated by the outside council: Rev. Paul Stone, Pastor of CoDR; Rev. David Grindberg, Pastor of St. Olaf Lutheran Church, Fort Dodge; Rev. Jim Davis, Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Gowrie; Diane Vavak, Vice President of the Outside Church Council of CoDR, a member of St. Paul Lutheran and Presbyterian Church, Rockwell City; and Jim Willis, member of Emanuel St. John Lutheran Church, Lytton. The directors are currently holding monthly meetings, developing Bylaws, and plans for a fund raising campaign. The fund will be held 'in perpetuity' and no distributions will be made until at least \$50,000 has been raised. As in the case of an Endowment Fund, distributions will be made from a percentage of the value of the total fund, and distributions will be made to support the financial needs of CoDR.

—Jim Willis

### Inside the Flash!

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## Take My Son

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art. When the Vietnam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands.

He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art." The young man held out a package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this."

The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture.. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift."

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.

The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collections. On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?"

There was silence...

Then a voice in the back of the room shouted, "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one."

But the auctioneer persisted. "Will somebody bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?"

Another voice, angrily, "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Goghs, the Rembrandts. Get on with the Real bids!"

But still the auctioneer continued. "The Son! The Son! Who'll take The Son?"

Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting..." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford.

"We have \$10, who will bid \$20?"

"Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters."

The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections.

The auctioneer pounded the gavel.. "Going once, twice, **sold** for \$10!"

A man sitting on the second row shouted, "Now let's get on with the collection!"

The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "I'm sorry, the auction is over."

"What about the paintings?"

"I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!"

God gave his son over 2,000 years ago to die on the cross. Much like the auctioneer, his message today is: "The Son, the Son, who'll take the Son?"

Because, you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything!

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life...that's love.*

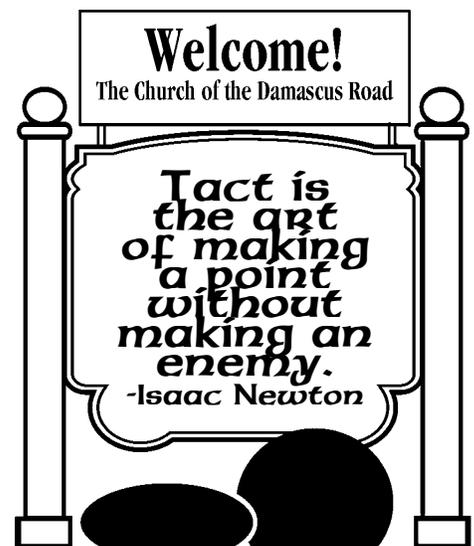
— Author Unknown

## Attention! Please Note

Within these walls we worship regularly with liars, thieves, gossips, backbiters, people with troubled marriages, alcoholics, and drug users. We welcome hypocrites and jealous, envious, coveting, materialistic sinners, of all types, shapes, and colors. The good news is we all have something in common — we have all learned that the Church, the Body of Christ, is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints. We have all learned that the Lord is our rest, that he reaches out to save us, and that we are the redeemed community of the saints.

We come here to worship and praise him, and to continually plan how we might be better agents of change, salt and light in a darkened world that needs the good news: that Jesus saves. You are welcome, but be forewarned: we take Christianity seriously!

— Anonymous



## Get the Flash in a Flash

To receive the Flash! electronically as a .pdf, just send us your email address (include your name and address so we can stop sending by mail) to [cdlng@aol.com](mailto:cdlng@aol.com).

Thanks!

— Carroll Lang, Editor

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

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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  
Carroll Lang, Editor  
Judy Lang, Proofreader

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 can also be sent to your email address. Our office is at St. Olaf Lutheran Church.

The Church of the Damascus Road  
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Fort Dodge, IA 50501  
Phone: 515-955-3579



## Join Outside Council

As you can see, there are now a few vacancies to be filled. You are invited to consider being a member of The Church of the Damascus Road's Outside Church Council. The OCC is responsible for the financial support of the congregation, and the management of the church office, while the Inside Church Councils, made up of inmates, are responsible for the life, worship and ministry of CoDR in the prisons.

The OCC normally meets every third Monday of the month at 10:30am for a catered lunch followed by the business at hand.

Terms of office are 3 years in rotation. If you feel called to this special ministry, please call 515-955-3579 or email [DamascusCh@aol.com](mailto:DamascusCh@aol.com).



## Producing Fruit

The world, the devil and our flesh (and other people) battle against us every day. As we grow dependent upon God, his angels are with us, his Spirit is within us teaching, comforting, guiding and empowering us.

When the attributes of the Spirit are dominant in our lives it will be evident in the 'fruit' we produce: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Our faith must be 'in him,' not in ourselves. We are not as smart as we think we are. We must ask God every day for more faith to 'believe in him,' and trust him totally in every circumstance in life (*Romans 8:38-39; Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 3:5-7*)

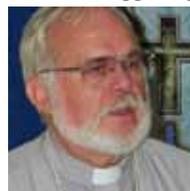
—William E Bell, May 11, 2017

# REentry integration

"It's a Ministry,  
Not a Program"

## A Time of Need

Applications for Reentry Reintegration are coming to Pastor Paul Stone at a rate faster than the number of teams being formed. This creates some anxiety, not only for those hoping and praying for a chance to be accepted by a team, but also for us who would like to be able to place them with a team. I am quite sure that there are more persons interested in being part of a team who just haven't "stepped up to the plate." Normally a team would only be mentoring one returning citizen, but some of our teams are mentoring 3, 4, 5, and more at a time. The need for more teams is urgent.



Giving returning citizens a chance to become a contributing productive member of society is not an easy ministry, but it is rewarding. There are obstacles. For instance, their criminal past is a big barrier, because employers are often reluctant to give them a chance to prove themselves. What would it mean to be a society which can provide opportunities for returning citizens? It certainly sparks the imagination, doesn't it?

That's where we all can help. As a caring part of a Reentry Reintegration team you may need to help a returning citizen maintain a positive attitude and approach to living "on the outside." You may also have to provide food and drink for this 'stranger,' help him find clothes to wear and assist him to make the transition back into society by helping him find a job and a congregation and realize his niche in your community. When you do, you will have been part of bringing about a miracle in which they can feel 'normal' because they've been given a chance." You may have to help others in the community to love them as God loves them and encourage them to succeed. Caring, trained reentry teams are needed now more than ever.

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. The training typically takes place on a Saturday, from 9am to noon, a break for lunch, then 1-4pm. You'll need to find a space for a group of 20+ persons, a screen to project onto, and arrange for a meal at noon.

We also need help to form new teams in western 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](mailto:CDLng@aol.com).

—Rev. Carroll Lang, NW IA Director



## A Prayer

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

It has been evident to me for some time that I have a calling in my life. Not because I am anything special, but because everyone has a calling, like a ministry of helping, a special faith, a gift of healing, or one of the five-fold ministries Paul spoke about. One of mine is prayer.

Bill's Prayer/Paul's verses/Deuteronomy 28: "Lord, we pray that you will open the eyes of our understanding so that we will be enlightened. That we will know what is the hope of our calling, and what is the exceedingly great riches of our inheritance as saints.

"We pray that your Spirit will dwell within us, and that the love of Christ will fill us with all the fullness of God.

"Now unto Him who is able to do far more than we could ever ask or think, we pray that your blessings shall overcome us and overtake us.

"We shall be blessed coming in and going out, in our baskets and in our storehouses. Our enemies shall be defeated before us coming one way and fleeing seven ways.

"Lord, please open to us your storehouses in heaven and pour out upon us blessings we cannot contain, giving us bread to eat and seed to sow.

"We are the head and not the tail. We are above only and not beneath. We are called by your name, Lord. We are Christians! Who could ever come against us?"

Thank you, Jesus! Amen.

—William E Bell 5-21-17

## Invite the Pastor

**O**ur 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 to visit congregations on Sundays. He 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 is open to suggestions. Just needs time to prepare.

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

### Inmates:

**Y**ou 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.

James Rainer, FDCF 2017



Artists' Corner

The Church of the Damascus Road  
239 North 11th Street  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501  
515-955-3579

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## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Thanks for Supporting



July 2017

### 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 FaceBook

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

Mike Newell-Pres/ST .....Donovan Sands  
Brian Brutus-Sec/Lib .....Kline Goeders  
Mark Leeper ..... Jesse Mugan  
Derrick Roberts ..... Terence Walker-ST  
Matthew Merrick .....David Wesley  
Charles Foster ..... Rick Young-Lib

#### Weekly Schedule

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

**Reintegration Steering Committee**  
Dennis Booth-Pres ..... Judy Lang-VP/Treas  
Barb Rossbach-Sec ..... Diane Vavak  
Mark Juhl ...Doug Rossbach..... Mike Malvesti  
Pastor Kim Wills ..... Pastor Jeff Ungs  
Pastor Paul Stone ..... Carroll Lang-Dir

#### Outside Church Council

Mark Juhl-Pres .....Diane Vavak-VP  
Judy Lang-Treas ..... Doug Rossbach-Sec  
Dennis Booth ..Mike Malvesti.. Barb Rossbach  
Pastor Jeff Ungs ..... Pastor Paul Stone  
Carroll Lang ..... Pastor Kim Wills

#### FDCF Church Council

Kevin Reid-Pres/ST ..... Chad Martinson  
Christopher McCoy-VP/Choir/ST.Terry King  
Chad Burmester-Sec/ST .....David Douglass  
Michael Goehring .....Kelton Houts  
Lamont Prince .....James Rainer  
Richard Dodd ..... Jeffrey Littrel

#### Weekly Schedule

6:30pm Wednesdays .....Holy Communion  
6:30pm Fridays .....Bible Study

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.

Thank you for your support.

— Pastor Paul Stone