

The Holiday Edition

CHURCH OF THE DAMASCUS ROAD PRISON MINISTRY
NEWSLETTER

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CODR'S MISSION:

to break the vicious cycle of incarceration by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ both inside and outside the prison walls. We help individuals take responsibility for their lives and provide a healthy support system for their reentry into society. We would love your support!

Christmas came early for the Glasgo family this year. We were blessed with our first grandchild, Ezekiel Fredrick Schaefer. Don't let the picture fool you, he was really excited about getting his picture taken with Grandma and Grandpa! At least that's the story we're sticking with :) We're so grateful for our family, friends and opportunities to share God's love!

Invite the Pastor

We're looking ahead to next year! Pastor Kelli would love to visit your church or small group and share about the work of CODR Prison Ministry and is available to fill pulpit supply. Give us a jingle and we'll get you on the calendar!

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www.codrcare.com

[CODR facebook](#)

LETTER FROM THE PASTOR:

It sure seemed like it got cold awful fast! Well that's lowa for you - one day you're in a t-shirt and shorts mowing your lawn and the next day you're wearing bibs shoveling your driveway. I suppose it builds character, but what if you're already quite a character?

Whatever the temperature, it's always a good time for ministry. God is always up to something and we get the privilege of joining him in his incredible mission of redemption in this world. God especially cares for people who have been marginalized, mistreated and misunderstood. That's why prison ministry is so important. We get the opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with guys who are starving to death for a new life. Seeing Jesus transform lives is a truly thrilling experience!

It's been a great season for CODR ministry. We've been averaging about 25 guys in our Rockwell City service on Thursday nights. New guys are coming every week and lives are being changed. Since March we've given away 100 Bibles, 50 prison prayer books, gone through a few hundred communion packs and baptized 8 men. The inmates have used the offering they collect to support local backpack programs, a women and children's center and just recently bought two goats for a struggling village overseas so that they could have milk. The guys love making a difference in this way. We also had a great event Nov 12th. Thank you to all who came and helped us celebrate this amazing ministry!

We haven't been able to worship in the Fort Dodge prison for a few months, but we are getting requests from inmates there for re-entry support, so word about CODR is spreading. Our re-entry ministry is growing slowly but surely and we've had our first re-entry candidate from our Rockwell service parole out to the Fort Dodge Halfway house. He's been doing amazing work, has a job already, and is coming with me to churches every week to share his testimony (*which you can read later in this issue!*) In the coming months, we'll have a few more guys paroling out to this area so I'm excited to see how God grows this part of the ministry!

We're still searching for the right property to start our re-entry housing facility. It's been taking a little longer than we thought, but finding the right place in the right location is really important for us so we're taking our time. It's all happening according to God's plan, so we're not worried. The Fort Dodge city planners have been very helpful as well as local realtors. Once we get this piece in place the real excitement begins! We'll get to minister to guys full time and empower them to make a difference in the community. Please keep us in your prayers and also please consider becoming a re-entry mentor or financial partner for this important ministry. Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve!

Blessings!
Pastor Kelli





JESUS IS COMING!

EVERYONE LOOK BUSY!

MATTHEW 24-25 ARE YOU READY?

We've been following the lectionary at our Rockwell service this last month and diving into the challenging words from Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew having to do with the end times.

Jesus has made his way to Jerusalem for the final showdown. He's come into town heralded as a new king and then immediately starts causing trouble in the temple. He's confronted the hypocrisy of the religious leaders and now he's preparing his disciples for the future. It's a future that can be either terrifying or liberating. It all depends on how you've lived your life.

It's a challenging message for all of us but especially for those of us who live with the painful memories of self-neglect, bad choices and broken relationships. It's difficult for some of us to accept that our sin can actually be forgiven. We hear the words of the Gospel but we still doubt because we know what we've done.

Our savior reminds us again and again that this is exactly what he came for. We are free and forgiven because of what he did, regardless of who we are and where we've been. As we enter the season of Advent and prepare for the coming of Jesus, let's take hold of every promise our Lord has made with confident hope and joyful expectation. Our King is on his way!

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING CHURCHES FOR HAVING US COME SPEAK!

St. Olaf Lutheran Church - Fort Dodge IA

Christ Lutheran Church - Fort Dodge IA

1st Presbyterian Church - Fort Dodge IA

Friendship Haven Assisted Living - Fort Dodge IA

United Methodist Church - Rockwell City IA

Badger Lutheran Church - Badger IA

Emmanuel/St. Johns Church - Lytton IA

Samuel Lutheran Church - Eagle Grove IA

1st Covenant Church - Fort Dodge IA

The calendar is starting to fill up for 2024 so give us a call if you would like us to come to your congregation. You can view past messages on our website at www.codrcare.org

WORDS OF HOPE

A testimony from David Grunwald - an incredible young man in our reentry program

I was given a 13 year sentence for alcohol related problems. Alcohol was something I could never shake. Until I was given an opportunity, the opportunity was prison. It gave me a chance to become sober. God gave me the time needed to feel again. The numbness I created with alcohol and drugs was gone and for the first time I could see the damage I caused in my life as well as all the others around me. My children, my grandmother, my friends, coworkers, and my community. Everyone around me was affected. I had lost all control. I not only needed to change, but for the first time I really wanted to change.

While incarcerated I took advantage of every class, pro social group, and schooling opportunity available. This was all great. I even kept a job too. However, something was still missing in my life. I then tried something..., I made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God. This is when I knew that I needed him in my life. I couldn't do this alone. not that I didn't have a great support system because I did. There were just things that only the love of God could handle. He allowed me to focus and to have control over the things that were unmanageable. And I began to journal and make goals every day. Without C. O. D. R. Coming in and speaking the word, singing songs of praise, and giving me an understanding of God. I believe I still would be lost.

I was released from incarceration 12 months after being inside. Upon my release in prison, I was an NA/AA facilitator, I was a pre-release board member, I was a leader inside. The day I was released, I was back to zero. My mental health plummeted. I felt lost again. It was another restart. However, God was still at work. My faith was still with me. I prayed, I read the word, and I still believe that I could be great! Pastor Kelli stayed in contact and began taking me to AA meetings. He's also been taking me to church every Sunday. In my free time I filled out applications, I stayed strong, I stayed focused. God opened and continues to open doors of opportunity for me. I now speak at churches, I got hired at an amazing job I really wanted. I'm able to work on fixing the relationships, I have destroyed in the past. I continue to create goals and check them off. I now love the person who lives inside of me. I have a completely new look on life. I am no longer a prisoner of myself or my environment. Instead, I'M FREE, I have control. I owe it to God, to my family, my loved ones, C. O. D. R. and all its volunteers, also to myself. God is real, his love is true, and his power is infinite. Live by him, and it shall be done! Nothing is out of reach when you accept God in your life.

Sincerely,
David Grunwald



PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Praises: (Thank you for)

- a great celebration Nov 12th!
- getting to work with David and getting our re-entry program started back up!
- the support of our faithful donors, volunteers, city leaders, and area churches!

Prayer Requests: (We could use help with)

- finding the right property for re-entry housing
- resuming services in Fort Dodge Prison (*solutions for their staffing shortage*)
- identifying and equipping more re-entry volunteer mentors

THE COST OF INCARCERATION AND RECIDIVISM

TAKEN FROM IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS ANNUAL REPORT

8,434

**IOWA PRISON
POPULATION IN 2022
(DOES NOT INCLUDE
COUNTY AND CITY JAILS)**



6,817

**NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS
CURRENTLY ON PAROLE
IN IOWA**



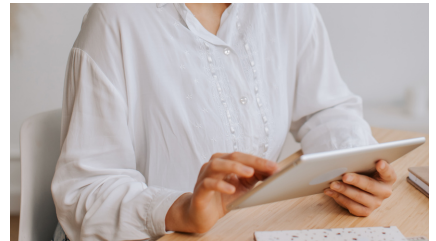
3,378

**NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS
RELEASED FROM IOWA
PRISONS IN 2022**



37%

**CURRENT RECIDIVISM
RATE IN IOWA
(PERCENTAGE WHO END UP
GOING BACK TO PRISON)**



\$103,857,914

**ESTIMATED COST OF RECIDIVISM IN IOWA FOR 2021
(CSGJUSTICECENTER.ORG)**

**FORMERLY INCARCERATED PEOPLE ARE ALMOST 10 TIMES
MORE LIKELY TO BE HOMELESS THAN THE GENERAL PUBLIC
(PRISONPOLICY.ORG)**

Men and women are coming back to our communities from prison every day. They've paid their debt to society, they've learned new skills while incarcerated and they want a new life. CODR's goal is to reduce recidivism by eliminating the conditions that lead individuals to reoffend such as: unemployment, inadequate housing, lack of education, isolation, unhealthy coping strategies and spiritual bankruptcy. We help fill these gaps for individuals and provide a Christian community of mentoring and support. Together we can make a difference!



A Special Thank you to our Donors

Individuals



Adam & Inga Sanford - TX
Amette Howard - FD
Brian Underwood - Rockwell City
Conrad & Marlene Klepper
- Eagle Grove
Dale & Lisa Siebrecht - Curlew
Dennis & Candace Booth - Lytton
Dale & Nancy Bruns - Jolley
George Hedges - Scranton
Glen & Sharon Houts - Sioux City
Jack DeWitt - Jefferson
Jim & Mindy McColley - Fort Dodge
Jon & Terry Mogensen - Manson
Lyle & Hilda Hartling - MO
Margaret Jackson - FD
Mark & Connie Gustafson - FD
Melba Shelby - FD
Mel Renken - Manson
Phyllis Hansen - Eagle Grove
Paul Stone - Eagle Grove
Rosalie Newmeyer
Steve & Barb Licata - Dakota City
Steve Pederson - FD
Tony Striegle - Webster City
Troy & Karyn Leininger - Spencer

Churches



Augustana Lutheran Church
- Manson
Bethany Lutheran Church - Laurens
Bethany Lutheran Church
- Emmetsburg
Faith Lutheran Church - Marcus
First Lutheran Church - Algona
First Lutheran Church - Sioux Rapids
First United Methodist Church
- Fort Dodge
Good Hope Lutheran Church - Titonka
Grace Lutheran Church - Fort Dodge
Grace Lutheran Church - Spirit Lake
Grace Lutheran Church - Manson
Kanawha Lutheran Church Women's
Group - Kanawha
Lost Island Lutheran Church - Ruthven
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
- Callender
New Covenant Christian Church - FD
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church
- Rockwell City
Samuel Lutheran Church - Eagle Grove
St. Olaf Lutheran Church WELCA
- Belmond



Volunteer MENU

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CONNIE'S CLOSET

Supplying the Fort Dodge Men's Halfway house with basic needs. Currently we are in need of Towels, Washcloths, men's coats, gloves, hats, sweatshirts and sweatpants (XL-3X), Shirts (XL-5X), Belts (all sizes), Shoes (tennis shoes, black dress, non-slip and work boots, socks (6-12 size), Underwear (L-3X), and Plastic hangers. Donations can be dropped off at St. Olaf or Grace Lutheran Church in Fort Dodge Ia.

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BECOME A RE-ENTRY MENTOR

Mentors help returning citizens navigate the complicated world they are experiencing after prison. This can be as simple as providing a ride or as involved as helping someone walk through a difficult time. We can all use the support of a good mentor.

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CODR COUNCIL MEMBER

As we're reimagining what this ministry will look like in the future, we could use your support. Our goal is to have our CODR Council reflect the diversity in our Churches and our community. We currently meet on the second Monday of the month from 4:30-6pm at St. Olaf Lutheran church in Fort Dodge. We would love to see you!

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BECOME A CODR FINANCIAL PARTNER

We're able to do this incredible work because of the financial support we get from God's people. To give online, check out our website at codrcare.org (QR code below) or you can send a check to The Church of the Damascus Road - 239 N 11th St, Fort Dodge, IA 50501



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**GIVE US A CALL AT (515) 955-3579 OR EMAIL AT
CODROFFICE23@GMAIL.COM WITH ANY
QUESTIONS YOU HAVE ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED.
WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!**