



## Newsletter 2024 Summer Edition

# The Church of the Damascus Road

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The recent rains have brought tragedy to many with the loss of homes and property. Let's keep our neighbors in prayer and be there for them as best we can.

Please check with local authorities for best ways to help. God's light shines the brightest in the darkest times so let's be a conduit for his love in this one.



A HUGE shout out to Walker's Bike Shop here in Fort Dodge IA for partnering with us to provide new bikes for the Fort Dodge Community Corrections Center (*men's halfway house run by the Iowa Department of Corrections*). These new bikes will give the residents there a safe and reliable mode of transportation and provide great exercise!



***Pastor Kelli would love to visit your church or community group and share about the amazing ministry of CODR!***  
***just email us at [codroffice23@gmail.com](mailto:codroffice23@gmail.com)***



## Letter from the Pastor

Prison ministry is hard work so you have to try and multi-task whenever you can 😊 Lucky for me I've got a flexible wardrobe! As the temperature has gotten warmer, the CODR Prison ministry has been heating up as well. We've baptized 20 new members so far this year in Rockwell City and last week we had 45 in attendance! The Gospel is spreading and the room is filling up, so thank you to everyone who's making this possible from our volunteers to our donors. It's such an honor to be a part of!



Our partnership with FDCF and Prison Fellowship has been fruitful as well. We've been facilitating Prison Fellowship Academy (*a year long, intensive reentry program*) for over 2 months now with a group of 20 in the Fort Dodge prison and the engagement with the guys has been incredible! They're really digging in and taking a hard look at themselves as they prepare for life after release.

PFA has also provided the opportunity to rebuild our relationship with the FDCF. The Chaplain Jon Shields and Deputy Warden Mike Boatman have been great to work with. They truly appreciate the value of prison ministry and volunteer involvement and have worked hard to make this opportunity possible. August 28th I've been invited to officiate a large baptism service for the church there. This is an incredible opportunity and an answer to much prayer!

As we look ahead to the future, we see growth in the service we provide inside the facilities, but even more importantly, we see tremendous growth in the service opportunities we'll have outside the fence. Through the worship services and Prison Fellowship Academy, we're able to build relationships with individuals prior to release. This provides the onramp for reentry support, so we could use your help as we'll be seeing more men coming up for parole in the Sept/Oct timeframe. These men will need help finding housing, employment, transportation, life skills support and good Christian fellowship. Please prayerfully consider joining one of our amazing reentry volunteer teams. Discipleship on this level is truly a gift!



In the months of April, May and June, the inside congregation has been following the lives of the disciples in the turbulent yet fruitful time after the resurrection. Jesus has spent 40 days with the new church teaching them about what to expect, then he gives them the great commission and goes back home.

This small band of believers then experience the power of the Holy Spirit and baptize thousands of people from all over the known world at Pentecost. They boldly preach the Gospel in public and face persecution from the religious leaders. Instead of backing down, they double down, preach even louder and soon the movement spreads as the new believers share the great news of Jesus!

The men inside haven't just been learning about the Gospel, they've been living it, sharing the message out on the yard and changing lives! It's amazing to see and an inspiration for all of us who care about the future of God's church.

## **Upcoming study of Ephesians**

**7/4** - *No Service*

**7/11** - **Eph 1**,  
*background and purpose of letter*

**7/18** - **Eph 2**, *saved by grace to be a temple to the Lord*

**7/25** - **Eph 3**, *God's mysterious plan revealed*

**8/1** - **Eph 4:1-16**,  
*Unity in the Body of Christ*

**8/8** - **Eph 4:17-32**,  
*Living as Children of Light*

**8/15** - **Eph 5**, *Make the most of every opportunity*

**8/22** - **Eph 6**, *The Whole Armor of God*

# Reflections

My name is John West and I was released on July 1, 2024 from NCCF. I was born into addiction and grew up with a junkie for a mom. What I used to say was I was dealt a bad hand and had no chance of success. After getting sober on March 25, 2021, I realized that is not my real story. I know God was working on me since birth. I used to despise God because I lived in self-pity. The “why me” attitude was all I knew. God walked me into the rooms of a twelve-step program and I found out that a “what is this trying to teach me” attitude was a much healthier way to view life. I was sentenced to thirty-five years in prison on April 4, 2022. I started attending Church of Damascus Road in 2023 and found that is what I was missing in my program. I found a God of my understanding and got involved in the religious side of things. God used me to help others and had me give my testimony at CODR. I had men come up to me and tell me they finally felt like they were not alone. I felt alone my whole life, so I know that feeling. I met people like Kelli G and others who came in and volunteered for CODR. They made me feel welcome in a world I never really felt welcomed in. God taught me that I am not a victim. Yes, I have had some horrific things happen to me and that does really suck but God uses those horrific events to show His goodness. He took me from a victim to a survivor! I have been out for twenty-four hours and been to two twelve-step meetings and plan on continuing that journey day by day. I want everyone to know that you are never alone. God loves you and will work miracles in your life if you can just be willing to let him. With God all things are possible and I am a living example of that. God bless you all. - **John West, newly returning citizen**

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I believe my getting involved with CODR and Prison Fellowship was truly God working in my life. My wife introduced me to Kelli on Sunday after worship and I knew that he was involved in prison ministry. Then out of my mouth comes, “*if you need any help with anything let me know*” I’m usually happy to help out with things but I really didn’t expect to find myself sitting at a table surrounded by prisoners talking about the ripple effects of their crimes, relationships, communication, family and feelings. However I have found it to be an amazing experience. The men at my table have shown themselves to be truly sorry for the things they have done and are working hard to better themselves. I think I’m getting as much or more from our time together as they are. God works in us and through us in truly amazing ways.

- **Don Bergman, PFA Volunteer**

## PRAISES:



Please join us in thanking God for:

- Dennis Plautz and Leah Glasgo joining our CODR Foundation board!
- The amazing support we've gotten from the Fort Dodge Growth Alliance!
- Our new relationship with Bowser & Richman for Bookkeeping support!
- Growing our service in Rockwell City and opening the doors to us in FDCF!
- Our wonderful team of volunteers!

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

Please join us in prayer for:

- CODR Church council members who are going through health struggles
- Men in the Reentry process who are struggling with mental health issues
- Locating a property for our Reentry Housing facility and CODR offices.
- More opportunities to support worship at the Fort Dodge Prison
- FDCF and NCCF leadership and staff



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Jul 16th** 4:30pm - CODR Council Mtg, St. Paul LC, Manson IA

**Jul 21st** 9am - Pastor Kelli at St. Olaf LC in Fort Dodge IA

**Aug 18th** 10am Pastor Kelli at Grace LC in Spirit Lake IA

**Aug 21st** 3pm CODR Open House at Fort Dodge Growth Alliance

**Aug 25th** 9am - Pastor Kelli at St. Paul's LC in Rockwell City IA

**Aug 25th** 10:30am - Pastor Kelli at St. Paul's LC in Manson IA

# *A Special Thank you to our April-June Donors*

## *Individuals*

Adam & Inga Sanford - TX, Barry Fisher - Gowrie, Brian Underwood - Alta, Chuck & Linda Danielson - Fort Dodge, Conrad & Marlene Kleppe - Eagle Grove, Dale & Lisa Siebrecht - Curlew, Dale & Nancy Bruns - Jolley, David Cole - Emmetsburg, Deb Zemke - Knierim, Dennis & Candace Booth - Lytton, Elwood & Lavonne Rieke - Fargo ND, George Hedges - Scranton, Glen & Sharon Houts - North Sioux City, James & Judie Carver - Rockwell City, Janet Bird - Somers, Jeffrey & Peggy Neubaum - Rockwell City, Jim & Mindy McColley - Ft Dodge, John & Carole Erritt - Somers, Kelli & Leah Glasgo - Ft Dodge, Kim Courter - Rockwell City, Larry & Cindy Lubinus - Boone, Lee & Molly Gallentine - Webster City, Lyle & Hilda Hartling - MO, Lynda Jones - Rockwell City, Margaret Jackson - Ft Dodge, Mark & Alana Ketchum - Eagle Grove, Mark & Cheryl Juhl - Remsen, Mark & Connie Gustafson - Ft Dodge, Mark & Rosalie Neumeyer - Clarinda, Marlene Zech - Rockwell City, Marlyce Hauge - Manson, Mel Renken - Manson, Melba Shelby - Ft Dodge, Paul Stone - Eagle Grove, Roger Natte - Fort Dodge, Scott & Solveig Lundgren - Ft Dodge, Steve & Barb Licata - Dakota City, Steve Pederson - Ft Dodge, Timothy & Barbara Dooley - Eagle Grove, Troy & Karin Leininger - Spencer

## *Churches*

American Lutheran Church - Melvin, Augustana Lutheran Church - Manson, Badger Lutheran Church - Badger, Bethany Lutheran Church - Emmetsburg, Bethany Lutheran Church - Laurens, Christ Lutheran Church - Fort Dodge, Emanuel-St. John Lutheran Church - Lytton, Faith Lutheran Church - Holstein, Faith Lutheran Church - Marcus, First Covenant Church - Fort Dodge, First Lutheran Church - Algona, First Presbyterian Church - Jefferson, Grace Lutheran Church - Ft Dodge, Hands of Hope Conference, Inmates at FDCF, Inmates at NCCF, Lost Island Lutheran Church - Ruthven, New Covenant Christian Church - Ft Dodge, Our Savior's Lutheran Church - Albert City, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church - Humboldt, Samuel Lutheran Church - Eagle Grove, Spirit of Hope Church - Rockwell City, St. Mark's Episcopal Church - Ft. Dodge, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church - Manson, St. Paul's Lutheran Church - Rockwell City, St. Mark's Episcopal - Fort Dodge, Zion St. John Lutheran Church - Sheffield

# CODR Volunteer Menu

*Come be a part of this amazing ministry!*



**Join us for Church!** - The worship experience inside the prison is amazing and our services are growing! The men inside are hungry for the Gospel and praise God with all their might. Our volunteers always say they get way more than they give.



**Connie's Closet** - Supplying the Men's Halfway house with basic needs such as: towels, washcloths, hygiene supplies and men's clothing. Check our website for an updated list of needs. Donations can be dropped off at St. Olaf or Grace Lutheran Church in Fort Dodge Ia.



**CODR Church Council** - The future is bright for CODR Prison Ministry with many new opportunities ahead. We would love to have our leadership team reflect the beauty and diversity of our community. Give us a call and we'll get you connected!



**Reentry Support** - Part of our mission is to reduce recidivism by eliminating the conditions that lead individuals to reoffend after release. Reentry Mentors help provide support and direction for individuals in the crucial time of transition back to society.



**Become a CODR Financial Partner** - We're able to do this incredible work because of the financial support we get from people like you. To give online, check out our website below or you can send a check to CODR Prison Ministry  
239 N 11th St, Fort Dodge, IA 50501

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
WWW.CODRCARE.ORG**