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# The Church of the Damascus Road Prison Ministry Newsletter Sept 2024 Edition

## Heaven's Gonna Be More Crowded!

August 28th we had the honor and privilege of baptizing 34 individuals into the family of God at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility. This was the first time baptism has been offered there in over 4 years and the response was amazing! We had well over 100 in attendance, including 4 of our own volunteers and several Department of Corrections staff. Thank you so much to everyone who helped make it happen! Men are sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ out on the yard, lives are changing and a culture of darkness is shifting, one man at a time, into a community of light. God is amazing!



This change in hearts not only effects the lives of the incarcerated individuals, but their families as well. We've already heard from some men who've been able to repair relationships through their new found love of Christ. Others have shared that this has been the catalyst for family members to start going to church. The ripple effects of God's amazing love are reaching far beyond the prison walls and your generous support is making it possible. So from all of us **THANK YOU!!**

Please keep these new believers in your prayers, that they continue to grow their faith and stay connected to the church.

Please also pray for the DOC staff, for their physical and spiritual health as they work on God's behalf to provide security and safety for these men. By God's grace CODR has been given permission to lead worship services at FDCF once a month and provide support for the inmate Deacon team. We pray that our presence inside the facility can continue to grow and that we can demonstrate the transformative power of Christ's love.



WEBSITE

*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)*



FACEBOOK

## Ministry Update from the Pastor

It's almost that time of year again where we can dress up our kids and get them to go hustle candy from complete strangers:) All my kids are grown but I do have a new grandson! He'll only be 1 year old, but I'm sure we can find him a cute costume. Will it be too obvious to his parents if we offer to babysit on Halloween? Probably easier to just go buy the candy, but where's the fun in that?

It's been a wonderfully busy season in ministry and I feel so blessed! Here are some more of the ways we've been able to make connections, share God's love, and grow our mission.



Thank you to the Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance for hosting our CODR Open House Event Aug 21st. It was an amazing chance to meet leaders in our community and share about the mission of CODR Prison Ministry. We are so grateful to be a part of such a supportive community!

Speaking of great community, Aug 24th we had the privilege of participating in "We Heart Fort Dodge" a community wide ministry event organized by the Fort Dodge Ministerial Association. Groups from local churches spread out all over our city to share the love of Jesus Christ through: paying for laundry, decorating sidewalks, and making encouraging cards for people. Our CODR group partnered with Crossway Church and Prairie Lakes Church to provide a cookout for the residents and staff at the Fort Dodge Community Correctional Facility. It's awesome when God's church comes together this way to serve!



A very special thanks to the ladies of WELCA for inviting us to share about CODR Prison Ministry at their annual conference Sept 11th. You serve the church with such dedication and sincerity, it's an inspiration for us all! The hygiene kits you assembled for the men's halfway house in Fort Dodge are very much appreciated by the residents and staff!

*(If your local church group is looking for a new service project and would like to assemble hygiene kits, please give us a call or email and we'll send you our kit list with instructions.)*

**Meet one of our Reentry guys - Nick Mount.** Nick was one of our faithful church members on the inside at both NCCF and FDCF and now he's in our reentry program at the men's halfway house. He's hit the ground running, doing amazing work in his own life as well as sharing his powerful testimony with others. He's already been with me to share at 2 different churches and was a big hit with the ladies at the WELCA conference! I have no doubt that God has big plans for him in the kingdom!



## CODR WORSHIP SERVICE AT NCCF

# James

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Listening and Doing

19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Every one should be quick to listen, slow to speak

Starting at the end of August, the congregation at NCCF in Rockwell City started a brand new sermon series on the book of James. If you know anything about James, you know he doesn't mince words and is not afraid to challenge his readers into action. He loves God's church and wants to see it thrive in spite of it's hostile environment (a pretty relevant theme for us all!). It has been an amazing series so far and I'm sure it will continue to challenge us as we grow in our ability to live out our faith in tangible ways.

**James 1:1-18** taught us that God's people will have to endure persecution and trials, but that this is an opportunity to grow our faith as we learn to depend more and more on Jesus. God loves us and will give us wisdom if we have faith in Him alone. Everything good comes from Him.

**James 1:19-27** showed us the value of listening over speaking and that procrastination is a spiritual disease. It's so easy to hear from God and then forget as soon as we leave church. God wants us to put his principles into practice and He will bless us when we do.

**James 2:1-13** taught us that God does not condone prejudice of any kind. From His standpoint, we are all on the same level - hopeless sinners, completely dependent on his grace. Our job on this earth is to share his amazing love with everyone regardless of the labels society puts on them.

We invite you to follow along with us over the coming weeks, as James challenges us to be more like Christ and less like the world. Also, please keep the men at NCCF in your prayers asking God to grow in their faith so they can live the gospel of Jesus Christ out on the prison yard.

**8/29 - James 1:1-18**  
*Faith and Endurance*

**9/5 - James 1:19-27**  
*Listening and Doing*

**9/12 - James 2:1-13**  
*A Warning against Prejudice*

**9/19 - James 2:14-26**  
*Faith Without Works is Dead*

**9/26 - James 3:1-18**  
*Controlling the Tongue, True Wisdom Comes From God*

**10/10 - James 4:1-17**  
*Drawing Close to God, Warning Against Judgment, Warning About Self-confidence*

**10/17 - James 5:1-20**  
*Warning the Rich, Patience and Endurance, The Power of Prayer, Restoring Believers*



Our Volunteers are Amazing! Thank you so much for your dedication, compassion and wisdom. It means so much to the guys to know that They matter and have not been forgotten, that they are loved and forgiven.

*Pictured: Pastor Kelli, Steve Pederson, George Hedges, Dave and Luann Bohnet.*

We have spots available. Please consider being a part of our wonderful volunteer team!



# **INSIGHT from INSIDE**

## **Dear J: A Letter to My Younger Self**

I know you don't care, but I need a minute of your time. I know some qualities about you that you might not know. Time's not on your side right now. the path you're choosing brings a lot of loneliness - feelings of inadequacy, resentment, despair, and hopelessness. You can't see it yet because it all seems so rewarding. It's a trick and you can't fall for it.

You don't know it yet, but your childhood was traumatic and unwarranted. It's causing you to be mad at the world. It's causing you to be bitter and evil. It's making you someone you're not. You can overcome that pain, hurt, and anger though. You have feelings of abandonment and they're forcing you to search for love and acceptance in a place where it doesn't exist. The streets don't love you - they don't love anyone! There's plenty of evidence to prove it.

You're stronger than you know though. You're a leader - it's in your blood. Those men that you idolize don't mean you well. No one with your best interest in mind would lead you down a path that breeds failure. There's never been a successful criminal and the chances of you being the first are zero, but you know that. You can't live a double life. Your criminal world will collide with your real world and it will all come crumbling down. The people you love the most will look at you different. It won't matter that your heart's in the right place and that you have the best intentions. Actions and results are the only traits that we'll be judged on in this world. I'll keep this short because I know you don't care. Just ask yourself this - will you care at thirty and you've been locked up for eleven years with an eternity to go? Will you care at forty-five and you realize you've been locked of for twenty-five years with no end in sight? Will you care that you never had a chance to be an adult? Will you care that you never had children? Will you care that the women in your life will never really love you the way they would if you were free? Will you care if your parents die while you're locked up?

I need you to ask yourself what's really important to you? I need you to remember all of your hopes and dreams and never lose sight of them. You can accomplish them all, trust me. I know you. I'll fill you in on a secret.

You're going to become an amazing man - an amazing person. The question is, do you want to be locked up and have a minimal impact on the world or do you want so be free where your impact on the world is limitless?

### **Incarcerated Individual - FDCF**

#### **Forgiven**

Father forgive me for I have sinned  
I held the hammer that drove the spikes in  
Is forgiveness that easy, it's only to ask?  
Will my sins be forgiven, will I be free at last?  
I lay broken and bruised from all that I've done  
Father forgive me please send me your son  
I've heard your prayers  
and I know that they are true  
Here is my son and I've sent him for you.

#### **Incarcerated Individual - NCCF**

#### **Its' Me Again**

Lord, it's me again and I need something again.  
Not a vacation or a new car but this time I need  
a new me. I'm tired of complaining, so help me  
to speak only when I have something good to  
say. I'm tired of dwelling on other's faults. Help  
me to work on eliminating my own instead. I'm  
tired of being dissatisfied, help me to be  
grateful for what I have and to make the most  
of it. I'm even tired of saying "I'm tired." So  
when I feel this way remind me of your strength  
which is sufficient for any task. Amen

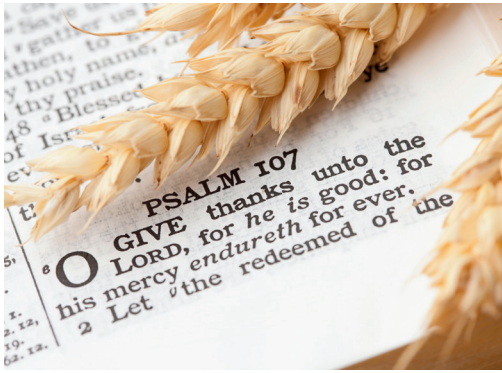
#### **Incarcerated Individual - NCCF**

#### **Father Time**

Memories of time I've spent,  
the days, to weeks, to years that went  
My time grows short, the days grow long  
as I listen to the radio and the words to the song  
They sing of love and the way they feel,  
yet I am surrounded by hate and steel  
I watch the faces that come and go,  
one half of them I won't know  
They speak of crime and the dope they done,  
when there out it's for a run  
Let them go and back they come,  
new beef, this time with a gun  
Well they're here it's sad to say,  
this time it's for a longer stay  
When they sit as I have done  
and watch the faces one by one  
They'll know it's true what I say,  
it' time to go the other way  
Give up crime and the fantasy,  
this is for real, it's not TV  
You don't want to end up just like me

#### **Incarcerated Individual - NCCF**

# PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUESTS



## Please join us in thanking God for:

- The opportunity to rejoin worship in FDCF and the blessed opportunity to baptize 34 new men into the kingdom of God!
- Our new NCCF Worship volunteers - Connie Gustafson, Frank Mayall, and Steve Pederson!
- The dedicated staff at the Fort Dodge Community Corrections Center for helping us help the residents!
- The opportunity to network with local employers such as CJ Bio, Koch, Cargill, USG and Georgia Pacific!
- Local property managers who are willing to rent to our guys!



## Please join us in prayer for:

- Our newly baptized brothers in Christ, that they continue to grow in their faith!
- The men in our reentry program, that they keep working hard and stay focused on their faith!
- Locating a property for our Reentry Housing facility and CODR offices.
- The staff at FDCF, NCCF and Fort Dodge Community Corrections, for their safety and security and for them to be filled with the patience, endurance and love of Jesus Christ!

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sept 29th 9am** - Pastor Kelli speaking at 1st Lutheran Church in Algona IA

**Oct 2nd 12-4pm** - Beyond the Bars Reentry Conference at AFES in Fort Dodge IA

**Oct 6th 10am** - Pastor Kelli speaking at Augustana Lutheran Church in Manson IA

**Oct 13th 10:30am** - Pastor Kelli speaking at 1st Covenant Church in Fort Dodge IA

**Oct 27th 9:30am** - Pastor Kelli speaking at Lifegate Fellowship, Humboldt IA

**Nov 3rd 5-7:30pm** - CODR Donor Celebration, Location to be announced

## CODR APPAREL ONLINE STORE - NOW OPEN!

1. Scan the QR code or go online to <http://churchofdamsacus.itemorder.com>
2. Choose your items and add them to your cart
3. Securely checkout with your credit card



**ALL ORDERS MUST BE IN BY OCTOBER 4TH, 2024**

<b>OGIO Slate Polo</b>  \$37.00	<b>OGIO Ladies Regain Polo</b>  \$34.00	<b>Tultex Unisex Poly-Rich T-Shirt</b>  \$9.00	<b>OGIO Radius 1/4-Zip</b>  \$49.00	<b>Endurance Ladies Radius Full-Zip</b>  \$49.00	<b>Pacific Headwear Trucker Snapback Cap</b>  \$17.00
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# *A Special Thank you to our July-August Donors*

## Individuals

Adam & Inga Sanford - TX  
Barry Fisher - Gowrie IA  
Brian Underwood - Manson IA  
Carroll & Martha Oskvig -  
Ft Dodge IA  
Charles & Linda Danielson -  
Ft. Dodge IA  
Dale & Lisa Siebrecht - Curlew IA  
Daniel & Colleen Goodwin - Somers IA  
David & Mary Bowser -  
Ft. Dodge IA  
Dennis & Candace Booth -  
Lytton IA  
George Hedges - Scranton IA  
Glen & Sharon Houts -  
Sioux Falls, SD  
Gordon & Peggy Chalstrom -  
Moorland IA  
Janet Bird - Somers IA  
Jim & Mindy McColley -  
Ft. Dodge IA  
Kim & Amy Courter -  
Rockwell City IA  
Larry & Cindy Lubinus - Boone IA  
Lyle & Hilda Hartling - MO  
Margaret Jackson - Ft. Dodge IA  
Mark & Cheryl Juhl - Remsen IA  
Mark & Connie Gustafson -  
Ft. Dodge IA  
Mel Renken - Manson IA  
Melba Shelby - Ft Dodge IA  
Richard & Betty Houke -  
Ft. Dodge IA  
Steve & Barb Licata -  
Dakota City IA  
Steve Pederson - Ft. Dodge IA  
Troy & Karyn Leininger -  
Spencer IA

## Churches

American Lutheran Church - Melvin IA  
Augustana Lutheran Church -  
Manson IA  
Badger Lutheran Church - Badger IA  
Bethany Lutheran Church -  
Emmetsburg IA  
Bethany Lutheran Church - Laurens IA  
Faith Lutheran Church - Holstein IA  
Faith Lutheran Church - Marcus IA  
FDCF Inmate Service - Fort Dodge IA  
First Lutheran Church - Algona IA  
First Presbyterian Church -  
Jefferson IA  
Good Hope Lutheran Church -  
Titonka IA  
Grace Lutheran Church - Ft. Dodge IA  
Hands of Hope Conference -  
Manson IA  
Lost Island Lutheran Church -  
Ruthven IA  
NCCF Inmate Service - Rockwell City IA  
New Covenant Christian Church -  
Fort Dodge IA  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church -  
Albert City IA  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church -  
Humboldt IA  
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church -  
Rockwell City IA  
Samuel Lutheran Church -  
Eagle Grove IA  
Spirit of Hope Church -  
Rockwell City IA  
St. Olaf Lutheran Church -  
Fort Dodge IA  
St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
- Manson IA

*Your generous support has provided: worship services inside FDCF and NCCF, new sound equipment for FDCF, new bibles (we've given away over 100 so far this year!), communion supplies & coffee for worship (we provide full communion services every week at NCCF and once a month at FDCF), New bikes, locks and bike rack for the FD men's halfway house, reentry transportation assistance, haircuts, and buss passes*

# 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.



**Join us for Prison Fellowship Academy!** - We partner with Prison Fellowship to provide educational reentry programming inside of the FDCF. This is a year long program that prepares men for life after release. Our volunteers get to play a pivotal role in helping men grow and transform their lives.



**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**



**THE CHURCH OF THE  
DAMASCUS ROAD**  
PRISON MINISTRIES

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