

# Church of the Damascus Road Spring 2025 Newsletter

## Loving Life at the Damascus House!



It feels so good to have some sunshine back in our lives and some warmish days. No better time to have some great BBQ! Special thanks to Connie Gustafson and the New Beginnings reentry group for donating the money for our new grill, and special thanks to our newest resident Akil Jabbar for being the grillmaster. God is good and springtime is always an opportunity to appreciate the amazing things only He can do.

It's been a beautiful season in ministry as well. On April 17th it was our honor to baptize 16 more men into the family of God at our Rockwell City service. Our weekly attendance is averaging 45-50 and new guys are showing up every week. The service is growing in Fort Dodge as well. The inside praise team has some amazing new musicians onboard, they're having weekly rehearsals and the worship is incredible!



One of the biggest blessings so far this year is the Brothers In Blue event we were able to facilitate at the Rockwell City prison March 27th. This was the result of a lot of prayer, patience, and determined effort by the Brothers In Blue team, especially Larry Lubinus. We had 48 men and 10 volunteers at the one day event along with a whole lot of Holy Spirit. Men encountered God in community, some for the first time, and God's Kingdom grew. The prison has asked us to come back and do another event in September! Praise God!



**BROTHERS IN BLUE  
PRISON MINISTRY**

***Pastor Kelli would love to come to your church or community group and share about the wonderful work of CODR. Give us a call!***

# Ministry Update from Pastor Kelli Glasgo

Things at The Damascus House have been coming together at a pretty brisk pace. We closed in January and started remodeling right away. That good looking guy on the ladder is our very own James Rainer. He was also our first resident and helped tremendously with getting the house ready to operate. Also pictured is Daniel Rial who did a great job laying all of our flooring, Mark Juhl who painted and sealed the floors, the great crew from Ayala roofing and our Lytton crew who helped us load all the furniture.



And that was really just the tip of the iceberg. We had Archibald Electric update our old fuse panel to breakers and add a 220 outlet in the basement for our dryer. They did a fantastic job, thanks to Matt Fowler for all his help.

Per Mar Security installed video cameras in the common areas of the house and all around the outside perimeter as well as keyless access control systems on the entrance doors. We'll be the safest, most secure house on the block!

As I mentioned before Ayala roofing repaired and replaced our roof (which was in pretty bad shape) and will be coming back soon to redo the soffits, fascia and gutters.

Last but most certainly not least, I want to give a very special thank you to Don Bergman who fixed several of our plumbing issues. He truly was a Godsend and went way above the call. He's one of our awesome PFA volunteers too!

In the months to come we'll be having a new driveway poured as well as adding new landscaping and redoing our porch. It's pretty much going to be a brand new house!

## Reentry Highlight - Shawn Jones & Akil Jabbar

We were blessed to have these two awesome guys move into the Damascus House in March. They've been working hard, staying focused and serving the Lord. Shawn recently graduated from the ICCC CDL program and is driving for Williams Trucking. Akil is working at Hy-Vee in the bakery. They both bring a lot of warmth, wisdom and maturity. We're luck to have them!





# PRISON FELLOWSHIP ACADEMY™



Our partnership with Prison Fellowship has been such a blessing! We began this journey over a year ago when Mark Dejong from Prison Fellowship (pictured below) reached out and asked if we could provide volunteers for a transformational new program at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility. It had been almost 4 years since we'd been able to go inside the facility after Covid, so we said of course! The Prison Fellowship Academy curriculum was incredible and challenged us all to be better people. We spent a year building relationships with the guys in our groups, talking about real issues and life-changing solutions. I'm so proud of the work the men did and I know our world is better and God's kingdom is bigger because of it. I think their families like the results too!



Through this partnership CODR was able to reestablish a presence in the facility and important connections with the IDOC staff. This eventually led to getting back in for worship and providing baptism for 28 men! We're looking forward to another great year with PFA and can't wait to see what God has planned for us. I've heard the next cohort will be double the first one! Below are some of the speeches given at the graduation ceremony.

# Speeches Given by Some of Our PFA Graduates

Coming to prison for the second time, in the second state I knew I needed to change and I could not do it for myself alone. The PFA program was a commitment for that purpose, to change. I have always viewed the Bible and Jesus as a myth, a collection of stories told around campfires for thousands of years, never really giving him the chance to work miracles into my life. Although I have taken everything in this world to heart, I have taken that much more for granted knowing only what this world has shown me. In one word neglect. In Ephesians 6:12, Paul talks of the rulers over this present darkness, spiritual forces that entice us with worldly desires. I fell into most if not all of these finite pleasures. Throughout the program I have discovered a peace within myself I never knew I possessed. The alpha course and responsible thinking packets were what made me begin to take it all in. So with this newfound relief from stress and anxiety I began more scripture reading, memorization and devotionals along with some simple prayers throughout my entire day. I found out I liked talking about Jesus and God to those who also believed. Thus distancing me from the war stories, gossip and profanity we in here are subject to daily. When I realized I was coming to prison I thought I would do my time alone. This program changed that too. My goal is to live my life of recovery with a firm foundation in Christ along with a very strong support system involving AA, a sponsor who shares the same higher power, and my family who knows how far I have come already. For I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, Philippians 4:13.

Thank you and God bless, **Jeremiah**

For me, this second round of PFA has been even more enlightening than the first. Knowing how good the program was, led me to being even more open to it the second time. The first module "Resolving Everyday Conflict" was life-altering for me. It showed me that I still had work to do. There was a section that spoke about accepting responsibility and making an effective apology. This chapter spoke about the true meaning of accepting responsibility. The book states "an apology or confession is not about escaping the consequences or moving on. Instead it's about healing a hurt or restoring the wounded". I knew this was a step I hadn't been willing to take yet. After a few days of contemplating, I decided I had to apologize to my victim's mother. I had taken her son from her and I needed to try to give her some sort of closure. Resolving Everyday Conflict stated that willingness to accept the consequences is often the mark of a genuine confession. This quote really touched my heart and motivated me to make a genuine confession. That was a year ago. I'm not sure the outcome of that letter but I'm so thankful for this second round of PFA for showing me the path forward.

Finally, I want to thank all of my fellow graduates. Your openness and vulnerability should be applauded. It's not easy for people in general to really dig deep and you all chose to. It is especially hard in this environment when vulnerability is viewed as weakness. I truly want to commend you for having the courage to be better men. And with that I encourage everyone here today to have a wonderful evening, thank you. **Jerrid**

# Speeches Given by Some of Our PFA Graduates

This program includes volunteers from the surrounding community who have chosen to spend time with a bunch of guys who are in prison. I would guess that some of them may have been apprehensive about coming into a prison and spending time with men they know nothing about. I am fairly certain that they were nervous about how terrible we are and how dangerous it would be coming into the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility and interacting with us. These volunteers have shared a little time from their lives with us, helping us to open up and share a portion of our past, our hopes, perhaps and maybe our futures. We set around a table working with materials provided by PFA that helped us to think and to share personally. I appreciate them for the sacrifice they made. I saw many of the men from this institution go from individuals who would hardly say a word to another person, let alone a perfect stranger, open up to where we would gently give each other a hard time. The volunteers did a great job of leading us and keeping us on task each week and made a huge investment of their time coming here each week. They willingly opened up to us, sharing about their lives and how much they have changed. I am grateful for the opportunity that this has given me and for the friendships that have developed from this program. I hope it will continue and that I will have the opportunity to assist in the next chapter. **John**

If it wasn't for the prison fellowship Academy classes, I never would have found the man that I have become. Prison Fellowship has taught me a lot about my walk as a Christian and as a responsible man. There are so many things I could tell you all about this program - from it really works all the way down to I'm going to miss this. The key to it all is that you have to want to change. so don't go in half-hearted and be open-minded. The reason I say this is because that's how I was and boy was I surprised. surprised because I wasn't expecting what it offered and what I would get from it. Before this program I was closed off, unsure and ego-driven. I had a shaky faith, a shaky foundation, and broken relationships. I felt hollow, alone, torn, hopeless, and had no emotion. This Fellowship changed all of that. It gives you strength and a sense of accountability. It teaches you compassion, humility, how to listen to others and your own heart. It gives you purpose, good character and a more faith and family driven life. Most of all it teaches you how to be a man that people love and look up to no matter the situation.

Men have feelings too, you can be a real man and talk about them and even show them. That's not being soft, it's being alive, it's being real. The world needs strong men who make the right statements and choices, men that resolve conflict without harm, speak their minds without damage, and anger. The world needs men that can be pillars to communities and family, rise above hate and distorted thinking, live sober, crime-free, rebuild not tear down, and be happier not cruel. God's waiting for you. Your families are waiting for you, the improved you, the solid foundation you. You are the only one holding yourself back. release your anger, hurt, hang ups, resentments. be the light in the world. be the you that you were meant to be. Thank you PFA family for choosing me.

Much respect and love to you all that made this possible. **William**

# Support MENU

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Your generosity enables us to:

*Provide bibles, devotional and recovery literature, Christmas cards, communion supplies, musical equipment, DVD resources, coffee, bulletins, sheet music, baptism supplies and pastoral leadership for the Fort Dodge & Rockwell City prison church congregations*

*Provide bikes, bus passes, haircuts, gift cards, bibles, devotional and recovery literature, hygiene supplies, clothing and transportation assistance to the men at the Fort Dodge men's halfway house*

*Operate The Damascus House which provides the men in our reentry program with a safe and affordable place to live and a community of Christian support*

## VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Opportunities to serve:

**Prison worship services** – Worship with us at one of our amazing church services inside the prison. It's an experience you'll treasure!

**Prison Fellowship Academy** – Connect, encourage and grow with men in the Fort Dodge prison as we journey together through the PFA reentry education program in partnership with Prison Fellowship.

**Connie's Closet** – Collect men's clothing and hygiene supplies for Fort Dodge Men's halfway house. Donations can be dropped off at Grace Lutheran or St. Olaf Lutheran churches in Fort Dodge or give us a call and we can pick them up!

**CODR Church Council** – Join our amazing team of volunteer leaders as we make decisions for the future of this exciting ministry!

## Giving Opportunities through Thrivent

thrivent

Thrivent  
Action Teams  
Generosity is meant to be shared.



Gather a volunteer team to put on a fundraiser, educational event or service activity—like landscaping, remodeling or painting at the Damascus House or hosting a CODR fundraiser. Thrivent will provide the resources you need to get started, including up to \$250 in seed money.



thrivent Choice®  
Making  
generosity easy

Through Thrivent Choice®, Thrivent clients with membership can contribute to organizations and causes they care about such as CODR—and influence how Thrivent distributes some of its charitable grant funding through Choice Dollars®.

**Contact your Thrivent agent or the CODR office with any questions you may have. We'll help you get started!**

**LIVE  
GENEROUSLY**

*Thank You So Much  
For Your Generosity!*

### **Individuals**

Adam & Inga Sanford - TX, Barry Fisher - Gowrie, Brian Underwood - Alta,  
Charles & Linda Danielson - Ft. Dodge, Chuck & Linda Danielson - Ft Dodge,  
Dale & Lisa Siebrecht - Curlew, Dale & Nancy Bruns - Jolley,  
Daniel & Colleen Goodwin - Somers, Dennis & Candace Booth - Lytton,  
George Hedges - Scranton, Glen & Sharon Houts - Sioux City,  
Glenn & Sharon Houts - Sioux City, James & Mindy McColley Ft. Dodge,  
Janet Bird - Somers, Jean Bassinger - Des Moines,  
Jim & Mindy McColley - Ft Dodge, Joan Nessa - Webster City,  
John & Carole Erritt - Somers, Kelli & Leah Glasgo - Ft Dodge,  
Kim/Amy Courter - Rockwell City, Larry & Cindy Lubinus - Boone,  
Laurel Palmer - Webster City, Lee & Molly Galletine - Webster City,  
Lyle & Hilda Hartling - MO, Margaret Jackson - Ft Dodge,  
Marilyn Sills - Eagle Grove, Mark & Connie Gustafson - Ft Dodge,  
Marlyce Hauge - Manson, Mel Renken - Manson, Melba Shelby - Ft Dodge,  
Paul Fitzgerald- Forest City, Richard & Betty Houge - Ft Dodge,  
Scott & Cindy Lundgren - Ft Dodge, Steve & Barb Licata,  
Steve Pederson - Ft. Dodge, Steven & Barb Licata - Dakota City,  
Troy & Karyn Leininger - Spencer

### **Churches**

American Lutheran Church - Melvin, Augustana Lutheran Church - Manson  
Bethany Extended Ministries Endowment - Spencer,  
Bethany Lutheran Church - Emmetsburg,  
St. John Lutheran Church - Lytton,  
Faith Lutheran Church - Marcus, Faith Lutheran Church - Odebolt  
Impact Church - Fort Dodge Correctional Facility,  
First Lutheran Church - Algona, Grace Lutheran Church - Ft Dodge,  
Hands of Hope - Manson, Hope Lutheran Church - Everly,  
Lost Island Lutheran Church - Ruthven, New Covenant Church - Ft Dodge,  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church - Albert City,  
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church - Rockwell City,  
Spirit of Hope Church - Rockwell City, St. Paul Lutheran Church - Lakota, St.  
Paul Lutheran Church - Palmer, St. Paul Lutheran Church - Rockwell City

**We have recently revived our CODR Foundation board!**

*Special thanks to Jim Willis, Dennis Booth, Dennis Plautz, Rusty Fairington, Brian Pibal and Leah Glasgo for helping us revitalize our CODR Foundation board and mission.*



Having fun at CODR Council



Helping with deliveries



THE CHURCH OF THE  
DAMASCUS ROAD  
PRISON MINISTRIES



Sharing the Gospel, words of wisdom and great fellowship

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