

# Church of the Damascus Road Summer 2026 Newsletter

## God Is On The Move!



### Baptized Into New Life

In June, we had the incredible privilege of witnessing 38 men take a public step of faith through baptism. Behind prison walls, where hope can sometimes feel distant, God is bringing new life, new purpose, and new beginnings. Each baptism represents more than a moment in a service—it is a testimony that Jesus is still changing hearts wherever people are willing to surrender to Him. What a beautiful reminder that no wall, sentence, or circumstance can limit the reach of the Gospel. As we look at these baptisms, we celebrate what God is doing and give thanks for everyone who helps make ministry inside the prison possible. Your generosity is helping bring hope where it is needed most.

### Lives Being Transformed

Every baptism tells a story, and every story represents a life being transformed by the power of Christ. These men are not simply attending a Bible study or listening to a message—they are responding to God's call and choosing to follow Jesus. That transformation reaches far beyond the baptismal water. It affects how they see themselves, how they treat others, how they face their circumstances, and how they think about the future. We get to witness the remarkable work God is doing from the inside out. Your support helps provide Bibles, ministry opportunities, discipleship, and the consistent presence of people who remind these men that they are not forgotten. What an honor it is to be part of these stories!



### Your Faithfulness Makes a Difference

When you give to CODR Prison Ministry, you are doing more than supporting a program—you are investing in people and in the eternal work God is doing in their lives. These baptism photos are a glimpse of what your generosity makes possible. Behind every picture are conversations, prayers, Bible studies, worship, encouragement, and countless moments when someone hears the Gospel and begins to believe that God has not given up on them. We are deeply grateful that you have chosen to partner with us in this ministry. It is an incredible privilege to serve behind these walls and witness God changing lives. Thank you for helping make these moments possible and for being part of what God is doing.



# The Waves of Blessing Just Keep on Coming!

What an incredible privilege it is to serve as the Pastor and Ministry Director of the Church of the Damascus Road Prison Ministry. As I look back on this last quarter, one thing is abundantly clear: God is on the move! He is moving inside the prison walls, and He is moving outside the walls as well. We are seeing lives changed, relationships restored, faith strengthened, and new opportunities opening before us.

Inside the prison, God continues to draw men to Himself. Through our worship services, Prison Fellowship Grow, Pathways and Cornerstone programs we are witnessing men discover the hope and freedom found in Jesus Christ and share that hope with others. Baptisms, changed attitudes, growing leadership, and a genuine desire to serve others are reminders that the Gospel is powerful wherever it is proclaimed.

But God has also expanded our vision beyond the prison walls. Through our reentry ministry, Damascus House, community partnerships, and the many ways our volunteers serve, we are helping men transition from incarceration into lives of faith, responsibility, purpose, and service. We are seeing that restoration doesn't stop when a man walks out of the prison—it continues in his home, his workplace, his relationships, and his community.

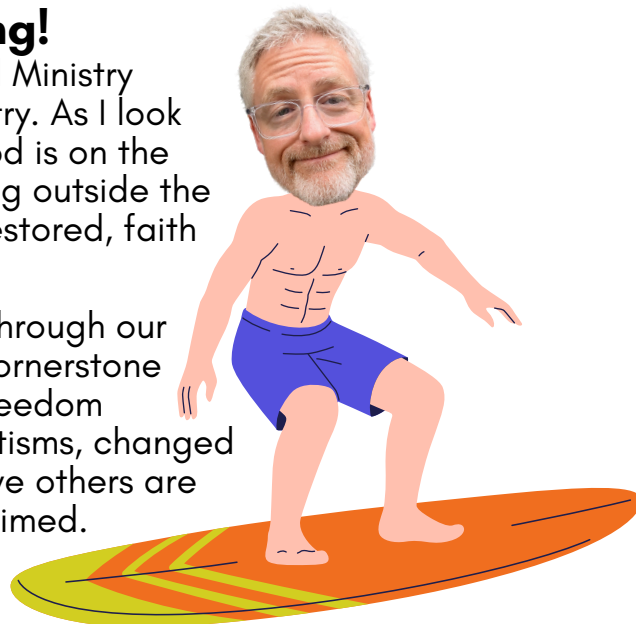
I am incredibly grateful that God has entrusted me with the opportunity to lead this ministry. It is a responsibility I do not take lightly, and it is also one of the greatest honors of my life. Yet this ministry is far bigger than any one person. It takes an army of faithful people who are willing to say yes to God's call.

To our amazing volunteers: thank you! Thank you for showing up, building relationships, sharing the Gospel, listening, praying, encouraging, and loving people who desperately need to know that they have not been forgotten. Your faithfulness is making an eternal difference.

And to our donors and ministry partners: thank you for believing in this mission and investing in what God is doing. Your generosity has enabled us to grow our reach and our ability to minister both inside and outside the prison walls. You are part of every life touched and every story of transformation.

As we look toward the future, I believe God is preparing us for even greater things. He has opened doors, provided resources, raised up leaders, and expanded our opportunities. Our prayer is not simply to grow bigger, but to grow deeper—to reach more men with the Gospel, equip them to become disciples and leaders, strengthen families, restore neighborhoods, and send transformed men back into our communities to make a difference.

God is on the move. What an honor it is to be a part of it! – **Kelli Glasgo**



Congratulations to Jeremiah for graduating the ICCC Welding program at FDCF!



Happy Birthday Rainer!

# Progress on the house

## New Siding



## New Windows



## New Porch!



## Damascus House: Renewing a Home, Rebuilding a Community

When we talk about the work of CODR Prison Ministry, our focus is naturally on changed lives—and rightly so. But God is showing us that restoration can take many forms. Our Damascus House reentry home is a great example.

Over the past several months, we have continued making improvements to the house, and it is becoming more beautiful and welcoming with every project. We recently replaced three more windows, installed brand-new vinyl siding, and completely replaced the old front porch. These improvements have made a tremendous difference, giving Damascus House a fresh new look and helping create a place where men can find stability, encouragement, and a fresh start.

We are especially grateful to John Cagle and the great folks at 777 Remodeling for the excellent work they have done. Their craftsmanship and willingness to invest in this project have helped turn our vision for Damascus House into a reality. We are truly thankful for their partnership.

There is still a little work to do. Once the road work on 15th Street is finished, we will turn our attention to the landscaping. When that is complete, we will pretty much have a new house!

But this project is about much more than improving a building. Damascus House is a place where men coming out of prison have an opportunity to rebuild their lives, reconnect with their families, find employment, grow in their faith, and learn what it means to become productive members of their communities. Every improvement to the house helps create an environment where that transformation can take place.

And none of this happens without you. To all of our donors: thank you! Your generosity is making these improvements possible. You are not only helping us change the lives of men in our reentry program—you are helping us change our neighborhoods, one house at a time.

In fact, we are beginning to consider purchasing another property and giving it new life with the help of the men in our reentry program. Imagine the impact: men who are rebuilding their own lives also learning to rebuild homes and restore neighborhoods. That is the kind of transformation we love to see. And we are grateful to have you alongside us.

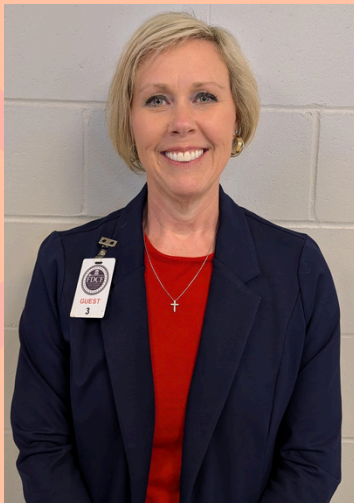
# Welcome Aboard! New Volunteers!



My husband Chris had been volunteering with Prison Fellowship for a couple of years before I joined, so I thought I knew what to expect. But I had no idea how much I would love this. Meeting each week with these men has strengthened my own faith and reminds me weekly of how thankful I am for everything I have. When we meet we exchange stories, sometimes very vulnerable ones, but also many examples of hope, of transformation and the power of the love of Jesus. My life has been changed in every way for the better for having started this. I look forward each week to PFG, and if my schedule allowed I would gladly do this twice a week. I cannot recommend it enough. Whatever you think it will be, it'll be better. More uplifting, more rewarding, more encouraging, more challenging. I thank God for leading me into this and for everyone who makes this possible. – Anna Walker



As a new volunteer with Prison Fellowship's Pathways program, I've been amazed by what I've seen in the men involved. As someone who owns a martial arts school, I understand the importance of discipline, respect, teamwork, and staying committed to a goal. The men in Pathways are demonstrating these qualities in ways that have genuinely encouraged me. They are learning to lead, hold one another accountable, communicate respectfully, and work together toward meaningful goals. What stands out most is their desire to give back and serve their community. It's exciting to watch them grow in confidence and character while discovering that their past does not have to define their future. – Nik Myers



As I've gotten involved with Prison Fellowship's Pathways program, I have been incredibly impressed by the men I've had the opportunity to work with. As a hospital CEO, I see every day how important leadership, communication, accountability, and teamwork are in the workplace. What has encouraged me most is seeing these same qualities developing in the men in Pathways. They are learning to communicate thoughtfully, listen to one another, take responsibility, and lead with purpose. Their willingness to grow and challenge themselves is inspiring. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this program and to witness men discovering their God-given potential and preparing for a better future. – Leah Glasgo



I have been deeply touched by the genuine kindness and compassion I experience from the men each week. Every visit reminds me that God is doing a beautiful work in their lives. I see men who are growing in their faith, encouraging one another, and learning to live out what they believe. Their willingness to pray, listen, share, and show respect has made a lasting impression on me. In this season of retirement, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve and build relationships with these men. I often leave encouraged by them and reminded that God can bring hope and transformation anywhere.



***If you've been looking for a way to serve and are just not sure where to start, give us a call. We would love to get you plugged into one of our great ministry opportunities!***

# Prison Fellowship 50th anniversary celebration at Anamosa State Penitentiary



This August, we had the privilege of celebrating 50 years of Prison Fellowship ministry and the incredible work God has accomplished through this organization. The recent 50th anniversary celebration at Anamosa State Penitentiary was a powerful reminder that prison walls cannot keep out the hope, grace, and transforming power of Jesus Christ. Prison Fellowship was founded in 1976 by Chuck Colson, who experienced incarceration himself following a Watergate-related crime. During his time in prison, Colson's life was transformed by his relationship with Jesus Christ. When he was released, he felt called to return to those behind bars and share the hope he had found. What began as a vision born from one man's prison experience has grown into the nation's largest Christian nonprofit serving currently and formerly incarcerated people and their families.

For five decades, Prison Fellowship has worked across the country to help incarcerated men and women grow from the inside out. Through Bible studies, discipleship, the Prison Fellowship Academy, Hope Events, Angel Tree, and other programs, the ministry has shared the Gospel while helping people discover purpose, develop healthy relationships, prepare for reentry, and pursue a life of transformation. Their work extends beyond prison walls, supporting families and helping returning citizens build a new future.



The 50th anniversary celebration at Anamosa was especially meaningful because it allowed us to celebrate what God is doing right here in Iowa. Within those historic walls, we have witnessed men hear the Gospel, ask difficult questions, grow in their faith, and discover that their past does not have to determine their future. Prison Fellowship's recent account of the Anamosa Hope Event beautifully captures the atmosphere of worship, community, and testimonies of transformation that marked this special occasion. [www.prisonfellowship.org](http://www.prisonfellowship.org)



We also want to express our sincere gratitude to Mark DeJong, our Prison Fellowship director, for the tremendous support and encouragement he continually provides. CODR's partnership with Prison Fellowship has opened so many doors for us inside the facility to share the Gospel and walk alongside men who are seeking change. We are truly grateful for that partnership.

Finally, we want to thank the Iowa Department of Corrections for supporting the Prison Fellowship program and allowing us the opportunity to come inside and work with the men. Their willingness to welcome faith-based programming demonstrates a commitment to helping individuals grow, take responsibility for their lives, and prepare for a better future.



As we celebrate 50 years of Prison Fellowship, we are reminded that God is still changing lives—one heart, one person, and one second chance at a time. We are honored to be part of that work and excited to see what God will do in the next 50 years.

# Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Event at FDCF

On August 21, the Church of the Damascus Road (CODR) Prison Ministry had the privilege of partnering with Prison Fellowship for a special Angel Tree event at Fort Dodge Correctional Facility (FDCF). It was a meaningful day filled with worship, encouragement, fellowship, and the reminder that God's love reaches beyond prison walls.

Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program was created to connect incarcerated parents with their children and families. Through the program, churches and volunteers come alongside families affected by incarceration, helping provide opportunities for connection, encouragement, and the love of Christ. Angel Tree allows the local church to step into the lives of children and families who may be experiencing the pain and challenges that come with having a parent in prison.

For incarcerated parents, Angel Tree can be a powerful reminder that they have not been forgotten and that they still have an important role to play in their children's lives. Events like the one at FDCF give men an opportunity to think about their families, strengthen relationships, and experience the hope of the Gospel. Several men shared with us that this event was a life-changing blessing to them. Those testimonies remind us why this ministry matters so deeply.

Churches interested in becoming involved with Angel Tree can partner with Prison Fellowship to serve children and families impacted by incarceration. Churches can learn more and sign up through the Angel Tree section of the Prison Fellowship website, where they can explore opportunities to serve, participate in Angel Tree Christmas, and build relationships with families in their communities.

We are incredibly grateful for every volunteer who helped make this event possible. A special thank-you goes to the volunteers from Church of the Damascus Road and the Lutheran Church of Hope worship team from Ankeny, Iowa, whose time, talents, and willingness to serve helped create an atmosphere of worship and encouragement.

We also want to express our sincere appreciation to the staff at Fort Dodge Correctional Facility. Their amazing support, professionalism, and hospitality helped make everyone feel comfortable and safe throughout the event. Their partnership is a vital part of making ministry opportunities like this possible.

We thank God for the opportunity to serve at FDCF and for every person who played a part in this special day. We pray the seeds planted through Angel Tree will continue to grow, bringing healing to families, hope to incarcerated men, and glory to God.





# *Thank You So Much For Your Generosity!*



Augusta Lutheran Church – Manson,  
Bethany Lutheran Church – Emmetsburg, Bethany Lutheran – Laurens,  
Brian Underwood, C & M Oskvig, Carol Moberg,  
Charles & Linda Danielson, Christ Lutheran – Fort Dodge,  
Dacia Schoning, Dale & Nancy Bruns, Daniel & Colleen Goodwin,  
Darwin Lake, Dave Bohnet, Dennis & Candace Booth,  
Dr. James & Gracia Willis, Elwood & Lavon Rieke,  
Everette & Becky Jo Vardaman,  
Faith Lutheran Church – Holstein, First Lutheran Church – Algona,  
First Presbyterian – Fort Dodge, Gail Boock, Gary & Mary Smith,  
George Hedges, Gordon & Peggy Chalstrom,  
Grace Lutheran Church – Fort Dodge, Gus Arnold,  
Helen Hinton/Julie Hiler, Immanuel Lutheran Church – Waukee,  
Iris Hemmingson, Janet Bird, Jeffrey & Peggy Neubaum,  
Jewel United Church of Christ – Jewel, Jim & Mindy McColley,  
Joan Gangestad, John & Madelyn Riles, Kelli & Leah Glasgo,  
Kevin & Sheryl Sandstrom, Kim & Amy Courter, L & S Legore,  
Larry Lubinus, Lee & Molly Gallentine, Lost Island Lutheran Church,  
Lyle & Hilda Hartling, Marlyce Hauge, Margaret Jackson,  
Mark & Connie Gustafson, Marlene Zech, Melby Shelby,  
Mission Community Church members – Harcourt, NCCC,  
North Central Correctional Facility  
Our Saviors Lutheran Church – Albert City,  
Redemption Church Members, Rev Bob & Diane Riggert,  
Rev D Gerrietts, Rev Kent & Heidrun Mechler, Ronald Baxley,  
Paul Stone, Shane & Heidi Arnold, Spirit of Hope Church, S & S  
Lundgren, St. Marks Episcopal Church – Fort Dodge IA  
St Paul Lutheran Church – Rockwell City, Steve Licata, Steve Pederson  
Terry & Marvel Trotter, Troy & Karyn Leininger,  
WIS – American, Melvin, WIS – Faith, Marcus, WIS – Faith, Odeboldt,  
WIS – Melvin American, WIS – St Mark, St Lake,  
Zion St John Lutheran – Sheffield



***If you've made a donation in the last few months (April - July) and do not see your name listed here, please let us know. We want to make sure to thank you for your support!***