



# Cornerstone Prison Church Newsletter

As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion,  
a chosen and precious **cornerstone**,  
and the one who trusts in him  
will never be put to shame."

1 Peter 2:4-6

**January 2024**

EXPANDING THE KINGDOM FROM THE INSIDE-OUT

## GLIMPSES OF GOODNESS

The opening verses of Luke 2 provide the setting and situation for the birth of Christ. Many of us put up manger scenes and reflect on the reality that the King of Kings was born in a dingy place. We are reminded at verse seven that Mary and Joseph weren't granted better accommodations because there was no place for them in the inn.

I try to imagine the transition it must have been for Jesus. Having eternally existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and taking a first breath in a cattle stall. The glaring contrast between rolling out the red carpet for people of great importance and the messy arrival of the Messiah should shock us. As we begin a new year it should serve as a reminder that from the very beginning Jesus brought great hope and joy in unlikely places. Remembering what was less than desirable as Jesus arrived should help us remember how he continues to bring hope and joy in less than desirable times and places.

The last quarter of 2023 was filled with further changes and challenges for Cornerstone Prison Church. Chapel programs have continued to be impacted by policy changes and staffing shortages. Outside of the chapel, the lives of the men have also seen changes and challenges. There are less jobs, less hours to go to rec, less single occupancy cells, and at times less time out of the cells for everyone.

One of our annual programs was directly impacted by this reality. Every year we partner with the other chaplains in the South Dakota DOC Chaplains Advisory Committee to provide a sack of Christmas goodies to all the inmates. The last few years we have had a team of guys help us pack the roughly 800 sacks for the Hill and have distributed them at the rotunda as the men head back from their evening meal. This year, an unexpected lockdown of the facilities meant there was no help from the guys in the packaging process and no opportunity for them to come to us to receive their gifts. Instead, while the whole prison was on lockdown a few of us brought the Christmas sacks to every cell in the prison.

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This was a lot of work, and a sharp contrast to what was expected. But it was also a unique gift. That in the middle of undesirable times a reminder of hope and joy showed up in unexpected places. Many expressed the relief of a moment to feel like being home with family, enjoying a special treat, and the sense of joy of simply receiving a gift and knowing the care that it represented.

This last year there have been many frustrations, but there have also been many glimpses of goodness right through them. Maintaining our ministry hasn't been easy, but the Lord has been faithful to show up bringing joy when the situation has people feeling down and to share hope with the hurting. Whether you have put away your Christmas decorations or will do so soon, I encourage you to take an extra moment imagining the light of the world showing up in a dingy cattle stall and then say a prayer for the hurting, the addicted, the incarcerated, and the families they have been kept separate from, inviting God to continue to show up as the Messiah that enters our messes showing us the love of our faithful Heavenly Father.

*New Year's Peace,  
- Pastor Scott*



## Cornerstone Prison Church

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### Cornerstone Annual Benefit Banquet

Save the date!

**When:** Monday, April 8, 2024 - 6:30pm.

Doors open at 6:00pm.

**Where:** Trinity CRC - Rock Valley, IA

Cedar Rock Café out of Rock Valley, IA will be providing the food.

Please join us for an evening of celebrating how the hope of Jesus Christ is working in hearts and lives of inmates in the SDSP!

A freewill offering will be taken to help with Cornerstone financial needs.

RSVP to Kim at 712.476.5292 or at [www.cornerstonepcsd.org](http://www.cornerstonepcsd.org)

Give your gifts to Cornerstone Prison Church

Enclosed is a \$ \_\_\_\_\_ gift for Cornerstone Prison church

Please use for ( ) General Fund ( ) Bibles & Materials ( ) Cornerstone Barnabus Foundation

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Please make checks payable to *Cornerstone Prison Church*.

Donations are tax deductible.

Donations can be sent to:

Cornerstone Prison Church, c/o David Vande Kamp, Treasurer,  
801 S. Gordon Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57110.