



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

Winter 2025

EXPANDING THE KINGDOM FROM THE INSIDE-OUT

In our fall newsletter we highlighted a series of positive changes and answers to prayer in our first few months of scheduled activities after an early fall lockdown kept all prison ministries shut down for a month. 2024 had many disruptions to the schedule, but even as hard as those things were, they pale in comparison to the ways God has demonstrated his faithfulness to the church and his children.

Fall brought sweeping changes, not only getting back in after a month of lockdown, but getting back to better times and rhythms of ministry and seeing exponential growth in participation. Our worship service was able to switch back to the evening time slot which caused it to gain increased attention from the prison population and increased the opportunity for groups to come in from partner churches. After a year without having an official praise team practice time we are back to having a scheduled time weekly for the men on our praise team to prepare for worship and special songs.

We recently had a song saturated service, giving extra time for praise and special music that we hadn't been able to do as much of without practice times. As men clapped along to original praise music written by some of our members the room was filled with such energy that the projector screen on the stage was literally moving.

In the last newsletter, there were a series of prayer requests including:

"Pray that God would continue to draw to himself the hearts of men who have been far from him so they would take that step of coming to a church program or service for the first time."

God has answered that prayer repeatedly the last couple of months. One story that stuck out is include here:

A man requested a visit with me to ask how a person knew they were a follower of Jesus. He had been sent to solitary confinement for something his cellmate had done, but the staff brought them both down for investigation anyway. Between the solitary cells and the recreation cage men can walk in for an hour a day while in that unit there was a tattered book. The guys had been kicking it around each day on their way between the cells and the larger walking cage, joking about the fact that it was written by a female Christian author with each abusive kick when they passed it. Then one day a guard joking asked this man if he wanted a book to read. (continued on back)

At first, he was mad when he was passed the tattered book, but then on one of the remaining pages found a passage from Jeremiah 29 promising that God will be found by those who seek him with their whole heart. This man prayed that God would reveal himself if he were real and over the next 24 hours had a series of unexpected events including staff clearing him of the charge he was in solitary for. He has this strong sense that God must be real for the way He showed up in answer to prayer. As we talked about this guy's first few experiences attending church in his life, he had tears in his eyes as he described the feeling of raising his hands in worship to a God he hadn't known a month earlier, but who showed up when a tattered book was given to him as a joke and the Word of God written in that book sunk into his heart.

Through the changes and challenges these kinds of interactions remind us that God is doing a great work and that we can count on him to continue to be faithful to his promises. Psalm 36:5-7 says, ⁵Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. ⁶Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, Lord, preserve both people and animals. ⁷How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

In addition to praising God for the great works he has been doing in the lives of men the last few months, Cornerstone is also marking a significant milestone later this year. This summer will mark the 20th anniversary of Cornerstone being a Christian Reformed Church inside the walls of the State Penitentiary.

If you would like to join us in celebrating God's faithfulness, we invite you to consider joining us at our annual banquet or coordinating a visit to a church service.

As always, thank you for your prayers and continued partnership in the ministry of Cornerstone Prison Church. - *Pastor Scott*

Cornerstone Prison Church

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Cornerstone Annual Benefit Banquet

You are invited!

When: Monday, April 7, 2025 - 6:30pm.

Where: Trinity CRC - Rock Valley

An evening to celebrate 20 years of God's faithfulness to
Cornerstone Prison Church

RSVP by Monday, March 30

to Kim at 712.476.5292

or at 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

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

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.