

The birth of salvation

by Steve Linn

A few years ago, Steve was part of New Life on the inside of the walls. Now he lives and works in Sioux City, Iowa.

As the days are growing shorter, it's time to celebrate His birth; the unconditionally loving Savior, who has walked upon this Earth.

Though risen, He still is with us, like the Spirit who stirs our hearts; no matter where we've been or are, His grace and mercy won't depart.

He was born in a Bethlehem manger, a humble place for an Eternal King; God sent Him to save all us sinners, which requires true love, not useless bling.

Be sure to praise Him for coming, and thank Him for forgiving our sin; confess Him as Lord and Savior, open your heart, inviting Him in!

The present of His presence

by Pastor Rick

The holiday season poses a tremendous emotional challenge for many men and women in prison.

Separated from their loved ones, they miss out on family traditions like opening presents around the Christmas tree.

In spite of their emotional distress, incarcerated persons can be comforted by the presence of Christ. Joseph was certainly distressed when he found out Mary was pregnant. His plan was to divorce her quietly, but God sent an angel with this message:

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:20-21)

The Gospel writer, Matthew, explains that this fulfills an ancient prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14:

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')." (Matthew 1:23)

It's an incredible blessing to know the reality of Immanuel. Whether we are locked up or free, we can cope with difficult circumstances by realizing God is with us. The presence of Christ is the present we need the most. What a great gift!

New Life Prison Church Outside Council

Dave Gritters (Governing Elder)

Keith Van Gent (Governing Elder)

Jim Williams (Administrative Deacon)

Tricia De Haan (Administrative Deacon)

Pastor Rick Admiraal (New Life)

Duane Bruxvoort (Federated Fellowship)

Tim Franje (Peoria CRC, represents the Classis Missions Committee)

April Nieuwsma (Treasurer)



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I'd like to donate \$ _____ to support New Life Prison Church.

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

Contributions may be sent to: **New Life Prison Church, 408 Maple St., Pella, IA 50219**

You can also make an online gift: <http://www.newlife-prison.org/donate>



Prayers & praises

by Rose Admiraal

We give thanks and praise for:

- The gift of Jesus during this Christmas season.
- The opportunity to get together with some returning citizens over the past month.
- A time of worship with New Life Prison Church, as well as the opportunity to record this service and send it to the prison.

We ask for prayer for:

- Bill Strong following the death of his wife, Judy. Bill and Judy were the first treasurers for New Life, and they were on the Board for six years. We also grieve the loss of Randy Schneider, a former New Life member.
- Geoff R., a returning citizen who is in court proceedings to have visits with his children.
- The men inside the walls and those on the outside who find this time of year difficult. May God grant them peace in their hearts.
- Clint Vos and his family after the recent loss of their wife and mother, Marla Vos.

New Life Christmas service

by Pastor Rick

On December 5, New Life held a Christmas service at Grace Fellowship in Pella, Iowa.

We held this worship service for three reasons:

- To glorify God for the gift of His Son
- To enjoy Christian fellowship
- To record a DVD for the men to watch in the prison chapel, giving them encouragement during the difficult holiday season



The five speakers from the New Life Christmas service (left to right): Pastor Rick and Rose Admiraal, Pastor Chris Allen, and Cindy and Dave Gritters.

Our Christmas service featured five meditations centered on the five Advent candles:

- Pastor Chris Allen spoke about hope: "We put our hope in this same real and living God."
- Dave Gritters focused on peace: "Jesus calls us to bring peace into our world."
- Rose Admiraal said of joy, "If we truly allow Christ and His Spirit to live in us, our lives should be overflowing with joy."
- Cindy Gritters emphasized love: "God showed us how much He loved us by coming down to Earth to spend time with us. His physical presence was our gift."
- The final candle lit was the white Christ candle. I spoke of Christ: "He's the One who lights up our world and lights up our lives."

Dave, Cindy, and Rose are in the Coram Deo program, preparing to become commissioned pastors.

Inspiring Christmas songs were also a big part of the service. Phil Goodyk, a singer on the praise team, reflected, "It was a beautiful service, and I know it will be much appreciated by our prison brothers."

Our service concluded with the Lord's Supper. We used disposable communion cups, the same kind that will be used by the men when they watch the Christmas video in prison. Christmas cookies and cider encouraged us to stay a little longer and visit with people we hadn't seen in a long time. Commissioned member Joel Waltz shared, "I enjoyed the fellowship, and it is always good to be reminded of God's faithful Word in times like these. Thanks to all who were involved. I hope you have a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!"

It was an extraordinary blessing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with the New Life faith family!

Would you like to watch the Christmas service?
Visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yJuYxbL6M8.