

# Living Stones Prison Congregation

welcome to come to their church when I get out. After the game they prayed for me and I talked with Pastor Eric. He let me know that I was welcome to attend the Saturday night service and that if I ever need to talk to him let him know. I felt obliged to attend the next Saturday service. That night I walked in the church. Worship music was playing, everyone was clapping it was electrifying! When Pastor Eric gave his word that night it felt like he was talking to me personally. From that night forward I knew I had a place where I belonged. Almost every Saturday I am in church from 6:30 to 8:00 pm and I feel even better after every service. I would really like to say thank to Lutheran Christ of the king from Tacoma. They are the softball team that came in. I would like to thank Pastor Pete and Pastor Eric. Pastor Pete for helping me in my walk with Christ. And Pastor Eric for always being there for me when I am ready to give up. That softball game has changed my life! Please give other people the chance to experience this mission. Thank you for your time and God bless.

BY: Kyle B.

## Testimonies from The Inside (A candle in the night)

*The following testimonies are from inmates within our congregation. Again, their words have been reproduced exactly with minor syntax, content and punctuation adjustments.*

### Living Stones Prison Congregation

To: Our fellow churches,

My name is John M. of the living stones prison congregation and I am writing this testimony to let you know how one day could change some ones way of thinking acting and beliefs. My testimony started about two years ago and is continuing today. Two summers ago, I came to prison in Shelton. I did not believe in god and I did not go to church. I was mad at the world and I disliked most people. I sat in my cell wondering what prison I will be sent to. They told me that I was staying in Shelton and I was going to population the next day. I sat in my cell that night scared of the unknown. That morning I decided that I was not going to talk to anyone. When I got over there it was nice, quiet and people were respectful. Although I already made my mind up I was not going to befriend anyone. A group of gentleman involved with the church asked me to join them. I told them no! I was still confused about how I was supposed to act in prison. After about a month and a half a church came in and blessed us with a softball game. That day I met Pastor Eric and the Pastor of the church that came to play softball. I was not on a softball team I was just watching the game. After the first game a gentleman from the church got hurt, I believe he twisted his ankle but I am not sure. The Pastor from that church (Pastor Pete) asked me if I would play for their team in the second game. I told them I would play for their team. Their whole team accepted me like I was part of the team. They made me feel like I still have a life after prison. They let me know I'm more then

## About Us

We are a Christian congregation made up of inmates at Washington Corrections Center in Shelton, WA. We are a member Church of Southwestern Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Our congregation name, **Living Stones Prison Congregation**, was selected by the inmate congregation. We encourage participation by them in all aspects of services and organization. We also stress the point that, when they attend our services, they can "exhale", or let down their guard. The men here have enough stress to deal with when they walk out of a service and rejoin the rest of the prison population. Therefore, we let them know that when we are together for worship, it is our "family time".

The congregation of Living Stones continues to grow by leaps and bounds. The inmates of Washington Corrections Center value the visitors from the "outside" that come to worship with us. As a congregation we thank the good people that give up their time with families and friends to worship with us!

## Attention

May 16, 2008

We at living Stones invite our fellow churches to come in and play softball. It's a fun time and helps people learn about Christ. I am hoping a few of our fellow churches will accept our invitation to come in, play, and keep testimonies like the one you just read happening. So please bless us with your presence and have a fun day in the sun, softball and worship. If your interested please contact Pastor Eric A.S.A.P for we can schedule the games. We can't wait we hope to see you soon.

## Project COPE Update

Project Cope now has three teams working with guys throughout the Southwestern Washington Synod area. This was the result of a recent training last February in Poulsbo where 40 church members from 13 different churches came for the training. We celebrate our progress; we do not rest on our Laurels. We have scheduled another training for September 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 from 9am to 12 noon at Messiah Lutheran church, 905 NW 94<sup>th</sup> St., Vancouver, Washington. It is our hope we will have teams in every county in our synodical geographic area. All churches in our area are welcome: we hope to see as many Ft. Vancouver and lower Columbia conference churches as possible. Refreshments will be provided. If interested or have question please contact Pastor Eric via the synod office, 420 - 121<sup>st</sup> S. Tacoma, WA, 98444.

## Recent Visitors

*We have been blessed with the opportunity to worship with members of the community. Many of the men here do not get the opportunity to directly thank you for coming to worship with us. I'd like to take this opportunity to give them a voice in thanking all of you who have taken the time to worship with us. Recent visitors have included:*

- 1st Lutheran, Tacoma
- Shepard of the Valley, Maple Valley
- Faith Lutheran, Shelton
- Key Peninsula, Lake Bay
- Pt. Madison, Bainbridge Island
- Family of Grace, Auburn
- Emmanuel Lutheran, Tacoma

- Zion Lutheran, Camas

- Bethlehem Lutheran, Marysville

You are worthy of all praise  
 F G C  
 My heart will sing, how great is our God  
 C  
 You're the name above all names,  
 Am

### Musical Faith

*Our team of musicians continues to bless us with awesome songs of praise. They have been a consistent presence in all services throughout the week. We are blessed to have them. Thank you to Mike, Chris, Zach, Trent, and Phil for your dedication.*

### HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD

C Am  
 The splendor of the king clothed in majesty  
 Dm G  
 Let all the earth rejoice, all the earth rejoice  
 C Am  
 He wraps Himself in light and darkness tries to  
 hide  
 Dm  
 And trembles at His voice, and trembles at His  
 G  
 voice  
 Chorus  
 C  
 How great is our God, sing with me  
 Am  
 How great is our God, and all will see  
 F G C  
 How great, how great is our God

You are worthy of all praise  
 F G C  
 My heart will sing, how great is our God  
 C  
 You're the name above all names,  
 Am

You are worthy of all praise  
 F G C  
 My heart will sing, How Great Is Our God  
 (chorus)  
 Am

### Success or Failure

You must be willing to make change in your life to allow you success.

You must be willing to make the change necessary in your lifestyle to set goals and keep them.

Disobedience has a price  
 God loves you too much to let you  
 Get away with blatant disobedience

No discipline seems pleasant at the time  
 But painful, Later on, however, it produces  
 A harvest of righteousness and peace  
 For those who have been trained by it.

This speak to all of us who are disobedience  
 Heb 12:11  
 Even me Boyd D.

God is love and his love for us is far  
 Greater than our act of disobedience.

Conclusion it your choice!  
 —Derrick B.

### Your Ship Has Come In

Let Jesus show you a new way of life if you  
 want to change your life.  
 You must first change what you do, Because  
 what you do is who you are, Trust the lord,  
 and let the lord guide your ship, Your Destination is up to you, where do you want to end up,  
 the choice is yours, my choice is with Jesus.

— Robert. M

When we exalt human love above truth we  
 cross a very dangerous line.

If what we share with each other only  
 tickles the ear and fails to move us on to the  
 next level with you.

Perfection is still just a word for us.

Help us understand that receiving your  
 word is for our benefit.  
 It will help keep us on the path of right  
 thoughts.

Words and deeds, this kind of wisdom  
 protects us from being

Vulnerable to the destroying forces of  
 these worlds' influences.

### —Unknown author

### I Remember

I remember the day it all began  
 When the devil stole my heart.

He reached deep down within my soul  
 And tore my world apart.

I remember the tears my mother cried  
 What seemed to be in vain.

Within a world unknown to me  
 Where words could not explain.

I remember all the fear I felt  
 As they took me from her side.

The overwhelming emptiness  
 I knew I wouldn't survive.

I remember as the years went by  
 The coldness filled my soul.

Without a care, with no concern,  
 I gave up all of my control.

I remember the day when god touched me  
 How he filled my soul with peace.

How he calmed the fears in my heart  
 And made my tears all erase.

I remember looking, and how  
 He kept me in his arms.

His footsteps in the sands of my life,  
 Yes he carried me through storms.

I never will come to know  
 Or truly understand

His constant watching over me  
 With his loving, guiding hand.

Where am I and who will I be? I'm stored up  
 inside prison walls' taking a hold of Christ  
 promises for me.

My prayers are for those I hurt that I tried to  
 carry on my own power. The hell I once lived  
 squashed a many precious flower.

My heartaches for those who lived with my  
 lies and who tried helping me carry my load.  
 Hearts that once beat as one are now strangers  
 without a place to call home.

The pain and regret still comes to pay a visit  
 every now and then. But as my faith in Christ  
 grows. The victory he gives to us all. Wins.  
 Memories are inside every tear that falls for a  
 love I once knew. If given a tomorrow's morn-  
 ing dew' I pray the ones I've caused to stum-  
 ble and hurt to run and find you.

Lord I'm clear, as crystal and you know what  
 lies in my heart there's still lives hope for a  
 love I pray hasn't died.

Healing is something that comes only with  
 time' and here I ponder of my heart desperate  
 cries. For all those I've loved and their burned  
 I've created. A touch of your garment is what  
 is needed.

I pray for the ones who mean so much.

To live a life of love and faith and to never  
 give up. Hoping they find the savior the Lamb  
 of God who's name is agape.

So where am I? In Christ love. Who will I be?  
 His soldier when and where his trumpet leads.

He tells me I'm forgiven for whom I was. A  
 brand new man breathes in his wonderful love.

May his mighty hand stretch out to you in your  
 own prison cell. Follow god choose life over  
 the depths of hell.

No matter where you're at or what you may  
 have done. He loves you enough to call you  
 his own/

Let him in and watch the wonderful change  
 and you to my friend my brother' my equal  
 wall also praise Christ Jesus name.

— Trent R

### My father of grace and mercy

MY father of grace and mercy, help us not  
 be concerned about who loves us.