

**Pedal for Prisoners XIV is here! See the back for more details.**

## Is it worth it?

by Dave Gritters

### Sometimes the question may arise: “Is it really worth it?”

It takes a lot of time and coordination to be able to enter the Newton Correctional Facility for just an hour or an hour and a half once a week. There is the service to plan and lay out, a sermon to write, volunteers to find, and many hours of just thinking about things associated with that one service slot we have. On top of that, you sprinkle in the challenges of working in a correctional facility. We cannot communicate with our regular attendees in any way outside of our service time. We cannot pass information to the chaplain and ask him to pass it on in turn. We cannot give out personal information. If we violate these rules, we may lose our volunteer status.

The prison’s administration can call off the weekly service at their discretion, and there is nothing we can do about it. Once, it was called off because they did not have the personnel that must be with us. Recently, we arrived and a severe thunderstorm warning happened. That meant lockdown for the next hour or so, and then, “Sorry, but you need to head back home.” Sometimes, events or evenings are cancelled, and the men become frustrated, even during a worship service.

Yes, preparing, planning, and holding a worship service here can be challenging, and we may be tempted to ask: “Is it worth it?”

It is!

Let me share one brief story that happened recently. On this night, Pastor Jack Vanden Heuvel was bringing a message out of 1 and 2 Peter. During this message, a guy got up and went to the chaplain’s office (which is right off the room we meet

in). Now, it is not unusual for men to have to get up and leave during a service, so you don’t really think about it much. But after this service was over, the chaplain came out with this man and announced, “Gentlemen, we have a new believer tonight—a man who just gave his life to Jesus!” Everyone cheered and clapped. We prayed with this young man after the service, and I asked, “Why tonight?” His answer was, “After being here for week after week, I could not resist any longer—it was a decision I had to make. And I just had to get up at that moment and go see the chaplain!”

Is it worth it?

It is!

Week after week, the prayer requests, the smiles, the worship, the Word, the testimonies, the fellowship ... is it worth it?

**YOU BET IT IS!**

**“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”**

**Galatians 6:9**  
**(New International Version)**



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**Support Pedal for Prisoners this summer!**

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>



# Pedal for Prisoners XIV

by Dave Gritters

**It is the fourteenth year of Pedal for Prisoners—our big summer fundraiser that culminates with riders representing New Life in different cycling events!**

This year, New Life Prison Church has five bicycle riders: Keith Van Gent, Rick Admiraal, Erik Kamp, Steve Kennedy, and Kris Van Gent.

Our goal is to raise over \$25,000 this year. Iowa Bike Co. of Pella will match the first \$5,000 donated to Pedal for Prisoners. Iowa Bike Co. will also set up a Strava Challenge for its customers to bring more attention to our event. (Strava is an online service for tracking physical exercise.) Thank you to Kris, Dana, and everyone at Iowa Bike Co.!

We are ready to pedal with purpose—will you help us meet our goal? All gifts support New Life Prison Church and are tax-deductible. Beyond Pedal for Prisoners, you can make monthly donations to New Life or give a one-time gift year-round. You can also give through your church or through your estate planning.

We cherish and need your financial support. You may ask: Is it worth it? It is! Thank you so much for your support through prayers and finances!



*Pedal for Prisoners riders Keith and Kris Van Gent in 2023.*

## Perspective from a first-time volunteer

by Dan Van Kooten

**I had heard about New Life Prison Church since the ministry began with Rick and Rose Admiraal several years ago.**

Andi and I heartily supported this ministry, read the updates, and prayed for its effectiveness. Although I had considered volunteering, I had never felt a strong call to do so. When Dave Gritters asked if I wanted to visit and perhaps preach at New Life, the timing seemed right. I completed the training through Iowa Corrections very easily, and I was cleared to visit. I accompanied Dave and Cindy one Tuesday evening in early June.

The men of New Life Prison Church were assembled when we arrived. They met Dave and Cindy with open arms, clearly showing a strong relationship with them. They showed that same hospitality to me, and I made my way through the crowd, shaking hands and hearing stories. Coming from a culture where we don't often share deeply, I found most of the men to be very open and anxious to tell me some of their stories. One of the church leaders shared his faith story, the first in a series of shared testimonies. The men listened to his story in the same manner they participated in the entire service—with deep engagement and rapt attention. These men clearly wanted to be in that space at that time, worshipping together. I was reminded of the Mother Theresa quote, "You'll never know that all you need is Jesus, until Jesus is all you've got." I was blessed and moved by worshipping with these followers of Jesus.

## New Life Prison Church Outside Council

**Dave Gritters**  
(Governing Elder)

**Glenda Vander Leest**  
(Governing Elder)

**Max Killoren**  
(Governing Elder)

**Linda Zuidema**  
(Administrative Deacon)

**Tricia De Haan**  
(Administrative Deacon)

**Keith Van Gent**  
(Administrative Deacon & Treasurer)