

LIVING STONE PRISON CHURCH

MIKE DURFEE STATE PRISON, SPRINGFIELD, SD

FEBRUARY 2026

FREEDOMS GATE CHURCH

4800 S TOMAR ROAD, SIOUX FALLS, SD

"I'VE GOT YOUR BACK"

by Pastor Jason

Ruth and I had the amazing opportunity to go on a safari in Kenya a couple weeks ago as a gift from the Lily Foundation (January 2026). We were able to see a wide variety of African animals in the wild which was a bucket list experience for sure. The biggest difference in a safari and a trip to the zoo is that in Kenya there were no fences between predators and prey, meaning that when the meat eaters get hungry, they go hunting instead of waiting for a zoo employee to bring them something tasty from the butcher shop.

The most intense moments of the safari were watching 5 lionesses attempt to find themselves dinner. They walked down a hill into a creek valley as we watched from the other side. The menu had options as there were impalas, wildebeests, gazelles and cape buffalo in the area. Our safari guide who went by his nickname "Churro", explained the difficulty lions have in capturing prey. Churro said that all the smaller herbivores on the hillside were track athletes with blazing speed and there was no brush in that area by which the big cats could sneak up on them. As the fabulous 5 felines neared their herds, we watched as the smaller prey animals streaked across the landscape so as not to end up as lunch.

But not all the grass eaters were blessed with lion evading hyper speed. The Cape Buffalo are slow compared to the other prey animals. A lion can run up to 50 mph, but only in short bursts. The wildebeest, impalas, and gazelles can all run 50-60 MPH and sustain the speed long enough to escape predators rather easily. The Cape Buffalo caps out around 35 MPH, so running away is futile. The lions approached and we watched with anticipation.

1 Peter 5:8 says this; *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* That verse was on my mind as I watched literal lions on the prowl. It's hard to describe the tension we felt watching lionesses' approach the cape buffalo, but

MARK YOUR CALENDAR TO COME WORSHIP WITH US EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT AT 6:00 IN SPRINGFIELD 5:00 IN SIOUX FALLS

Please call Lauri at 712.470.4165 to set up a date to come worship with the men at Mike Durfee State Prison! **Visitors are always appreciated!**

Would you be willing to make a meal and worship with us at Freedom's Gate? Please call or text Ruth at 605.366.3624 to find a date that works for you or check our MealTrain link on our website.

Check out our updated website for the calendar of open dates.

Save the Date!

14 th Annual - Living Stone Banquet

It will be a night filled with yummy food, great entertainment and fellowship!

Where: Gate City,
47947 W 5th St, Canton, SD
When: Thursday, March 26, 2026 at 6:30 pm

RSVP: Please let us know by March 22 if you can come, so we can plan on how much food to have. Call or text Ruth at 605.366.3624

Pastor Dan will be giving a ministry update on Living Stone's activities at the prison and Pastor Jason will give an update on Freedom's Gate. We will also hear from a few former inmates how God has used the ministry to encourage and strengthen their Christian journey.

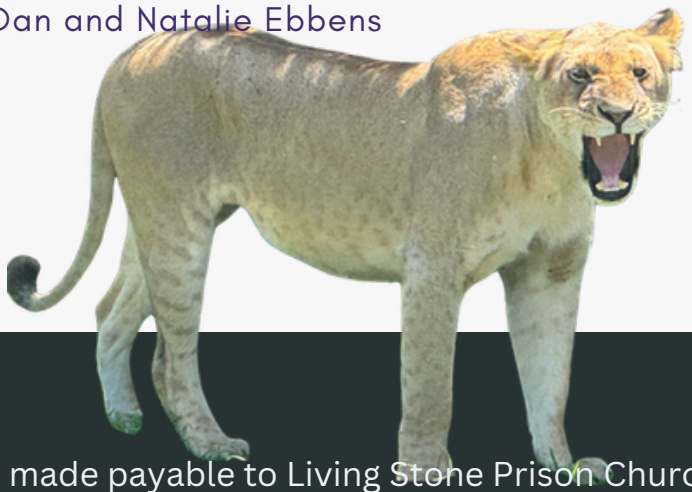
then again, I've felt similar tension when someone from Freedom's Gate is under a spiritual attack. How will it turn out?

It turns out that the Church has something to learn from Cape Buffalo. As the threat approached the Buffalo (who had been spread out) all came together. There were 8 of them total and as the lionesses approached, they put their heads down and ran them off. Friends, this was a vision of unity that I hope is true of Living Stone, Freedom's Gate and whatever other Christian gatherings you may choose to attend. We may not weigh 2,000 pounds like Cape Buffalo but the power of the Holy Spirit upon us when we are together is something the enemy of the faith (the roaring lion) cannot penetrate. Like the giant African bovine, we are better together.

I was reminded of the importance of Christian unity as I reached out today to a member of Freedom's Gate Church who I know is struggling, whom I haven't seen in a while. I invited him to return, so that when the enemy prowls and makes plans to have him for lunch, we can all put our heads together and drive that evil cat back into the jungle of hell he came from. My friend said he is coming back this week……I pray that he does! Please also pray that no one else becomes prey as the struggle is real.

As always, thanks for all your prayers and support!

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Jason and Ruth Wiersma
Pastor Dan and Natalie Ebbens



All contributions can be made payable to Living Stone Prison Church and sent to our treasurer:
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