

Summer 2026

Living Stone Prison Church

Mike Durfee State Prison - Springfield, SD

Freedom's Gate Church

4800 S Tomar St, Sioux Falls, SD

"STORMS IN LIFE"

One of the things I have always enjoyed is fishing.There is something refreshing to me about being on the water. We are right on the edge of fishing season again and I'm hoping for a good year.

Last year Natalie and I had a chance to go travel to Canada for a getaway. We set up camp and put our boat in with the expectation of rest and relaxation. I had a day and a half alone in camp until Natalie was able to join me. After camp was set up and I was situated, I took the opportunity to hunt for spots that might be productive for catching fish. The lake is twenty miles long and roughly twelve miles wide and is full of islands which are productive spots. I was trying a hole near one of the islands in the middle of the lake when I noticed the clouds in the distance were getting very dark. Since I had been catching fish, I decided to wait a little bit longer before I started heading back to camp, which proved to be a poor decision. Within ten minutes the wind kicked up, pulling the anchor and the boat towards the rocks. Before stowing away what I needed to safely drive back, I pulled the anchor and drove 500 yards in the middle of the chain of islands to protect the propeller. By the time I was ready, waves were coming over the side of the boat, the wind had kicked up dangerously, and the wind had started to blow heavily. It was then I realized my electronics on the boat were failing and I was

MARK YOUR CALENDAR TO COME WORSHIP WITH US EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT AT 6:00

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.

completely disorientated as to which direction North was (I was born without a sense of direction). I was completely lost, in danger of sinking, and had the real potential of going hypothermic. The only thing I could do was choose a direction and pray for God's protection .It was a slow and miserable ride back elevated by the fact that I didn't know if I was heading in the right direction. I was going to move ahead another minute or two before banking the boat on one of the islands but had my doubts I would not get hypothermic. Right before that happened, I was able to see a tree coming up out of the water which had a very distinct look to it confirming I was indeed heading in the right direction. If anyone is wondering how the story turned out, I did survive that day. Out of all the things I should have done differently that day, there is one simple thing that stands out that could have been the difference between life and death. It is a $4 piece of plastic which every boy scout has in their kit.... a compass. It would have definitively shown me which direction I needed to go and saved me a lot of anxiety. I know that God was watching out for me that day.

How often do people feel like they are perfectly fine and heading in the right direction in life until a storm arises and puts everything into question. For the brothers and sisters inside this storm is incarceration. When that storm hits, it tends to send a lot of confusion, fear, anxiety, and doubt into a person's life. This storm in many cases is too heavy to carry on our own. Just to be clear, Living Stone is not the compass people need. We are not the life raft keeping people afloat. We are not the harbor of safety so many of our brothers long for. We strive to be the ones pointing others to Christ who is all those things. It is a privilege to ride with those souls in the boat as they discover the safety and peace that comes with embracing Christ. It is inexpressibly beautiful when a man realizes the Word of God is speaking to them and pointing them in the direction they should go.

While visiting with the manager when I returned to the camp, he said he saw my boat was gone and had considered going out to look for me. He shared with me there had been a tornado in the area which is why the storm was so violent and fast. In honesty, there was fear, but I also felt a peace. As I drove the boat, I sang hymns and prayed for safety, and I knew God's presence was with me. Praise be to God there are countless men praising Jesus and relying on Him during the storm of incarceration. Thank you all for riding in the boat with them through your support, prayers, presence, and love. You are all very appreciated.

God bless,

Pastor Dan Ebbens (Living Stone Prison Church)
Pastor Jason and Ruth Wiersma (Freedoms Gate)

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