



United Church Courier

God is still speaking.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Joint Worship with First Christian Church during July

All worship services begin at 9:30 a.m.

At First Christian, 611 Clark Avenue

July 4 – Hannah Hannover preaching—This will be a shorter service with live music to follow on the lawn. Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy the fellowship time with our FCC friends!

July 11 – Paul Johnson preaching

At United Church of Christ

July 18 – David Digby preaching

July 25 – Mary Jane Button Harrison preaching

Search Committee Update

The Search Committee has conducted small group sessions to collect input for our church profile. The church profile describes our church to potential ministers and indicates the type of minister we are seeking. Each group session included eight open-ended questions provided by the conference office. The Search Committee facilitated the listening sessions with all church boards, several organized groups of the church and by open invitation to the congregation after worship on May 23, 30 and June 13. We thank everyone for sharing their time and ideas. The Search Committee has also contacted boards and others for input on other questions in the profile. We expect to be receiving responses over the summer.

--Phil Spike, Chair

Summer Cleaning?

Donate your items for the UCC annual rummage sale coming August 13 and 14. Items may be put in Parable Playhouse on the second floor of the church; that's the room in the southeast corner of the education wing. Need suggestions on what you might donate? See page 5.

Worship at 9:30 a.m.

Worship is at 9:30 a.m. through August 15. On Sunday, August 22, worship will go back to 10:45 a.m. to coincide with the Ames Community School and Iowa State University school year.





FROM THE PASTOR

“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.” —**Psalm 46.10**

In a busy world it can be difficult to find quiet, still places in our life. The busyness takes place within us as well as around us. Have you noticed that even when no one around you is speaking or when you are alone there is always a conversation going on. There is always a conversation going on in our mind. That conversation – taking place in our head – is busy seeking an explanation of the world around and within us. We are busy trying to make sense of what we hear, see and feel, around and within us.

Sometimes that works well and the world makes sense to us. We are able to respond appropriately and constructively to the world around and within us. But sometimes such things as fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, confusion and negative assessments about others and ourselves overwhelm our internal conversation. We may feel like our thinking is going in circles and we might find it difficult to sleep or relax.

At times like that, we need to “be still.” We need the kind of stillness the Psalmist speaks of. We need the peace that comes from an assurance of God’s presence and power in our life. It is difficult or impossible to just stop having the thoughts we are engaged in. We can’t just tell ourselves to stop thinking or to stop thinking that way. We can, however, begin to have a different internal conversation.

Last night I saw the new “Karate Kid” movie. In the movie Mr. Han tells the young man, Dre, “Being still and doing nothing are two different things.” The Psalmist is not suggesting we do nothing. Rather we are invited to do something different. To “Be still and know that I am God” is to change the conversation. In the face of fear we can have an internal conversation about the presence and strength of God. When our uncertain future creates anxiety we can remember that whatever happens, God will be with us. When we are angry we can think about the importance of God’s forgiveness and the peace that can come when we forgive. In the face of sadness we can choose to welcome the tears rather than trying so hard to avoid such authentic feelings. And when our head is full of negative assessments we can remember God’s unconditional love for others and us.

“Being still” is not about doing nothing. It is about embracing an internal conversation, which includes faith in God and an assurance of God’s presence.

Rev. Paul Johnson



Welcome O'Neal Family

Elaine and Matt O'Neal joined the church on Sunday, June 13. Elaine is a licensed Social Worker working as a school-based therapist at Orchard Place. Matt is an associate professor in entomology at Iowa State University. The O'Neals have three children – Charles Shields (22), Marlys (8) and Addy (4) O'Neal. Elaine is originally from West Islip, N.Y. and Matt is from Quincy, Ill.

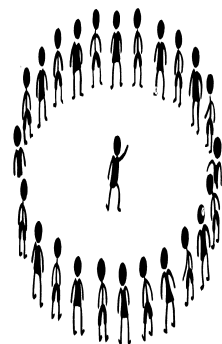
From the Minister to Children & Youth

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Monday, August 2—Friday, August 6!

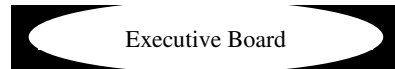
We will learn all about praising God, Galactic Blast style, all week at Vacation Bible School! It will be an "out of the world" adventure as we learn new stories, make crafts, play games and hang out with old friends (or make new friends) all while praising God and having fun! Bible School is 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon each day. Our friends at First United Methodist will join us again. Children can sign up with Hannah by calling the church office (232-9323) or sending an email to: amesucchannah@midiowa.net

Each morning we will meet in OUR church sanctuary for an opening and then children will travel, according to age, to different parts of the building or go across the street for morning activities. We still need a lot of adult help to make our week of VBS a success! If you are available one, two...or all five days of the week and are interested in volunteering-let Hannah know immediately!



Spots that still need adults:

- *Snack time (preparing and serving...not buying)
- *Story time for K-4 grade children (reading a story and having the children act it out!)
- *Pre-School Shepherd (stay with group of children all morning, no teaching)
- *K-4 grade Shepherd (stay with group of children all morning, no teaching)
- *5th and 6th grade co-teacher
- *Nursery Care (the nursery for the children of all volunteers will be here at UCC)



Iowa Conference Report

The 48th Annual Meeting of the Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ was held at Grinnell College on June 11 and 12. Our church was represented by the Rev. Louise Dengler, Joyce Hertz, the Rev. Selva Lehman, the Rev. Paul Johnson, Lynette Spicer and Phil Spike. During the business session, Paul was elected to be a part of the 2013 class of General Synod delegates. Lynette was elected to the Board of Directors for the Iowa Conference.

A constitution and bylaws change was approved. The changes were needed to reflect the recognition of multiple paths to ministerial standing (ordained ministers, commissioned ministers and licensed ministers). The change must be approved by the conferences before it can become effective.

The approved 2011 annual budget for the Iowa Conference will be just less than one million dollars. The budget is funded primarily from OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) contributions from churches and includes sending 35 percent to the national United Church of Christ. The Rev. Rich Pleva, Iowa Conference minister, noted that the 2011 budget is significantly smaller than the 1990 budget and drastically less if inflation is considered.

In the worship service on Friday evening the Rev. Michael Williams, First Congregational UCC of Anamosa, preached on the story of the prodigal son. He noted that just like the older brother complaining about the party thrown for the prodigal son, the decline in the mainline churches can be perceived as unfair. The older brother complained, "you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends." The father responded, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours." Rev. Williams challenged the conference audience to resist the temptation to insist on a goat knowing that so much more has been promised.

--Phil Spike, Ames Conference Delegate

Worship and Music Board

Worship in the Park

On a bright and beautiful June 6 morning there were 78 church members and friends (plus three dogs) in attendance for "Worship in the Park" at McFarland Park. The message by Pastor Paul was on "Compassionate Courage". Music, which brought back memories of church camps, family reunions and campfires, was led by Leslie Lackore, Sunny Stewart and Greg Lamont. The Worship and Music Board organized the potluck brunch, with details overseen by Dinah Kerksieck and Sue Lamont. Thank you to all who brought delicious dishes to share. Tables and chairs for dining were handled by Nathan Hannover, Jim Dickson and several others who stepped up to help (sorry for the missing names here). Canoes rides on the lake for young and old were arranged by Member Services Board with Steve Barnhart and John Baty as our expert canoeists. Thank you, John and Steve! A morning such as this reminds us all to enjoy God's handiwork in nature.

--Sue Lamont, chair

Rummage Sale Suggestions



Gently-used clean clothing and shoes (It's helpful if you mark sizes and have items on hangers if appropriate)

Jewelry

Linens and bedding

Collectibles and antiques

Books and DVDs

Kitchen items including dishes, flatware and glasses, appliances in working condition, pots and pans

Office equipment and supplies

Decorative and holiday items

Small furniture, lawn and garden tools and decorative items

Board games, puzzles, dolls, toys and games

Sports equipment

If you want to volunteer to help with preparation or the sale, contact

Barbara Yungclas, (515) 292-9274.



Do you receive the Stillspeaking Daily Devotional? Here's one I thought particularly good.

Lynette Spicer, moderator

Let Mount Zion Rejoice!

Excerpt from Psalm 48

"Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God . . . beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion . . . Within its citadels God has shown . . . a sure defense. . . We ponder your steadfast love, O God, in the midst of your temple. Walk about Zion, go all around it, count its towers, consider well its ramparts; go through its citadels, that you may tell the next generation . . . God is our God forever and ever . . . our guide forever."

Reflection by Ron Buford

How long has it been since you thanked God for your church? We often forget how brilliant, wonderful and life-saving the church has been.

In my 20's, after a bad experience with church, I planned to leave church and God. But then I decided to church-shop before giving up altogether. First visit, I stumbled upon Plymouth UCC of Shaker Heights and found a wonderful church of kind, caring people who taught and practiced open-minded, intelligent, and progressive Christianity unlike any I'd known or dreamed of. I tried to stay away, visiting elsewhere every other week for a year. But Plymouth loved me through my exile and showed me a new vision of who God could be in my life, a new role that church could play. Plymouth was simply irresistible.

Walk about Zion, go all around it, count its towers

"Where have these people been hiding?" I asked. Only one block from my apartment, amazing work of God's transformation and joy was happening. On a recent visit I found Plymouth still vibrant with new leadership, possibilities, new members and children . . . many of them children of children I knew.

Tell the next generation

I have since moved and changed churches but whenever I visit Plymouth, I remember the first time at this beautiful mountain of refuge, a vantage point such as I had never known. In my work I now see many more UCC and other churches, including my own, that are like Plymouth, where the spiritually homeless and hungry still find refuge, safety, peace, vision, and receive God's call to explore life's valleys, to serve and be served.

Beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion

How long has it been since you thanked God for your church? Just do it and tell somebody.

Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for _____ (insert your local church name). I pray for its continued success in teaching children and adults about the God made known to us in Jesus and as we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick and imprisoned, set captives free and break unjust bonds of oppression for all God's children. I ask your continued blessings and fresh vision for my pastor(s) _____ (insert names) for our church leaders; my Conference Minister _____, for the United Church of Christ (insert your denomination name here if not UCC) _____, its president Geoffrey Black, _____ (insert your denominational leader's name), its boards and leaders. Send your Holy Spirit upon us. This I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

- The Daily Devotional is now on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Daily-Devotional/180292304549?ref=search&sid=822507085.3086343131..1>. Become a fan! Sign up to receive Daily Devotionals, <http://i.ucc.org/FeedYourSpirit/Subscribe/tabid/101/Default.aspx>

PRAYER

In keeping with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, we joyfully and unconditionally welcome all people of any age, gender, race, culture, ability or sexual orientation into our community of faith and affirm the worth of all people as unique individuals made in God's image. We are open to the special gifts that each person brings and invite each one to participate in the life of our church.

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United Church of Christ-Congregational
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Ames, IA 50010

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