



**Ames United Church of Christ
Thursday, December 24, 2015**

Welcome to Ames UCC! Worship is the way we praise God and learn what it means to be a Christian. Services of worship are just that: a way that we serve the power that calls us together and sends us out to be the eyes, hands, and feet of justice in the world. We hope that you leave today feeling connected, renewed, and in relationship with the holy.

In keeping with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, we joyfully and unconditionally welcome all people of any age, gender, race, culture, ability, sexual orientation, or gender identity 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.

PROCLAMATION AND LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE Isaiah 9:2,6

The Christ candle in the middle of our wreath has been unlit since the first Sunday in Advent, four weeks ago. It will now be lit every Sunday until the next Advent season (with the exception of Good Friday).

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

CALL TO CELEBRATION

Please rise as you are able.

One: Have you not heard? Something new has happened upon our earth!

Many: Yes, we have heard! Rumors say a child is born, a Savior found!

One: People of God, these are not rumors. For unto us is born this day in Bethlehem, Jesus, the infant Christ!

Many: This is good news of great joy which has come to all people!

HYMN "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

**Good Christian friends, rejoice / With heart and soul and voice;
Now give heed to what we say: / Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before him bow, / And he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! / Christ is born today!**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice / With heart and soul and voice;
Now we hear of endless bliss: / Jesus Christ was born for this!
God has opened heaven's door, / And we are blest forever more.
Christ was born for this! / Christ was born for this!**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice / With heart and soul and voice;
Now we need not fear the grave; / Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all / To gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! / Christ was born to save!**

GOSPEL Luke 2:1,3-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

HYMN "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (verses 1 and 4)

**O little town of Bethlehem / How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep / The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth / The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years / Are met in thee tonight**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem / Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in / Be born to us today
We hear the Christmas angels / The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us / Our Lord Emmanuel**

GOSPEL Luke 2:8-18

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Star Child"

Shirley Erena Murray

Bradley Duckstein, tenor

HOMILY**HYMN** "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!"

During this hymn, all the children will be invited to come forward to ring bells together during the refrain.

**Hark the herald angels sing / "Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild / God and sinners reconciled"
Joyful, all ye nations rise / Join the triumph of the skies
With the angelic host proclaim: / "Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! The herald angels sing / "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Christ by highest heav'n adored / Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time the Savior comes / Offspring of a Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see / Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased on earth with us to dwell / Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald angels sing / "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! / Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life our Savior brings / Ris'n with radiant, healing wings
Mild He lays His glory by / Born that we no more may die
Born to raise us all from earth / Born to give us second birth
Hark! The herald angels sing / "Glory to the newborn King!"**

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION WITH OFFERINGS OF FOOD

Our Communion table is open to all: young and old, faithful and dubious. No one will be turned away. We serve the bread and the juice through "intinction," which means dipping the bread into the juice. Your server will offer each to you with the phrases "the Bread of Life" and "the Cup of Blessing." If you are unable to come forward but would like to participate in the meal, simply wait for your row to be empty, then raise your hand. A server will come to you. The bread is free of gluten, soy, and dairy. If you have brought canned goods for our local food pantries, please set them at the Communion table before being served.

Invitation

One: God is with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Let us open our hearts to the Spirit of Christ, born a long time ago, and born again this night in our lives.

Many: We open our hearts to God, the Christ birthing now in our lives, and to one another—precious embodiments of Your creation.

One: We give thanks.

Many: We thank God with joy.

Thanksgiving

One: God of humble births and the stars in the heavens, we thank You for Your persistent love for all creation. We thank You for those who can see You and make connections that lead toward meaning. We thank You for those who are wise—who will journey out to strange lands and unknown territories in search for truth or to bring justice. We thank You for Your way of breathing life into us, and of helping us to take deep breaths when we need them.

Many: God of love, creativity, novelty, joy, meaning, peace and hope, in spite of all the challenges on earth and in our personal lives, we give thanks for Your persistence throughout the universe.

One: We rejoice in Your Word through Jesus the Christ, who was born humbly, who communed with those others called outcast, who lived a complex life that sought justice, who died unfairly, and whose Spirit lives among us still.

Sharing the Meal

“Away in a Manger”

**Away in a manger / No crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus / Laid down His sweet head
The stars in the sky / Looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus / Asleep on the hay**

**The cattle are lowing / The Baby awakes
But little Lord Jesus / No crying He makes
I love Thee, Lord Jesus / Look down from the sky
And stay by my side, / 'Til morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, / I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever / And love me I pray
Bless all the dear children / In Thy tender care
And take us to heaven / To live with Thee there**

“What Child is This” verses 1 and 3

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, / On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, / While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, / Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, / The babe, the son of Mary.
So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, / Come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings, / Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise a song on high, / The virgin sings her lullaby
Joy, joy for Christ is born, / The babe, the Son of Mary.**

“The First Noel” verses 1 and 2

**The first Noel the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay:
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel / Born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star / Shining in the east beyond them far:
And to the earth it gave great light / And so it continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel / Born is the King of Israel.**

“Adeste, Fideles” verses 1, 3, and 4

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! / O come ye, o come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels; / O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, / O come, let us adore Him, / Christ the Lord!
Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation! / Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
Glory to God, glory in the highest! / O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, / O come, let us adore Him, / Christ the Lord!**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning, / Jesu, to Thee be glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; / O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, / O come, let us adore Him, / Christ the Lord!**

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory” verses 1, 2, and 4

**Angels from the realms of glory, / Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story, / Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, / Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!**

**Shepherds, in the fields abiding, / Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing, / Yonder shines the infant Light;
Come and worship, / Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!**

**Saints before the altar bending, / Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending, / In His temple shall appear:
Come and worship, / Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**All: Holy Creator, Bread of Life, Everlasting Salvation, a light shines in the night
and the night will not overcome it. In this meal we have been replenished and
strengthened, the light of your love rekindled within. We will be bold to carry
this light into the world. Amen.**

OFFERING

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly
Chancel choir

H. Helvey

Your gifts go to support the work and mission of our church. Coins and bills are sent to mission partners like Food at First and Youth and Shelter Services. Checks, unless otherwise designated, go to the church proper to help keep our ministries (like worship, youth group, and Godly Play) vital. If you would like to sign up for electronic giving, please contact Katie Bonney for details (office@amesucc.org, 515-232-9323).

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

THE SHARING OF LIGHT

The ushers receive their light from the Christ Candle in the center of the Advent Wreath. Then we pass the light in to one another in silence as the Light of the World dispels the darkness. As the spreads, we will sing the hymn.

HYMN

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

**Silent night, holy night / All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child / Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace / Sleep in heavenly peace**

**Silent night, holy night! / Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar / Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior is born / Christ, the Savior is born**

**Silent night, holy night / Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face / With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth / Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth**

BENEDICTION

We will extinguish our candles after we say "Amen!"

One: Welcome Word made flesh! Your presence transforms our lives. Sisters and brothers, before we go forth from this beautiful place,

All: let us take a good look at one another: See what beauty is revealed among us in the light of Jesus!

One: Now let us extinguish these small lights and go forth bearing the light of Jesus in our hearts

All: to let it shine in our world! Amen!

RECESSIONAL HYMN "Joy to the World"

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! / Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room, / And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing, / And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! / Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains / Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, / Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.**

**Christ rules the world with truth and grace, / And makes the nations prove
The glories of God's righteousness, / And wonders of God's love,
And wonders of God's love, / And wonders, wonders, of God's love.**

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT AMES UCC?

Subscribe to our weekly e-newsletter (contact office@amesucc.org), find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (using AmesUCC), or simply worship with us on Sundays at 10:45 a.m. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Poinsettias for tonight's service were given by:

Steve and Ellen Barnhart in memory of Roy and Frieda Barnhart, Arnold and Nell Waite. Judy Blair in memory of Harry W. Blair and Jeffrey A. Blair.

Abby, Jacob, and Jenna Buchele, Jessica and Austin Rowland in memory of their grandma Marcia Buchele, and great grandparents Burt and Mary Lou Moore.

Nancy Clark in memory of George H. Clark III.

Kermit and Trudy Dirks

Cornelia and Jan Flora in memory of Billie and Leonard Flora, May and Carroll Butler, and in honor of Lily Flora-Walsh, Sydney Flora-Kirsch, Bailey Flora-Kirsch.

Ami Frank in memory of Herb and Julie Tindall, Pete Camaioni.

Mim Fritz in honor of the Heginger family and all the special new folks she has met at Ames UCC.

Eileen Gebbie and Carla Barnwell in honor of Ames UCC.

The Geist family in memory of Maury Geist.

Nathan and Hannah Hannover in memory of Wayne Hannover.

Elaine Hieber in honor of the Hieber family.

Nancy Marks in memory of her mother, Beatrice Camp.

The McHenry family in memory of Ken McHenry.

Charles and Mary Mulford in memory of Arthur and Esther Mulford, Floyd and Hazel Uitermarkt.

Karen Mullaney in honor of Lesley Lackore.

Elaine O'Neal in memory of Joyce Aubin.

Doug and Peg Powell in memory of their parents and grandparents, and their dear friend Susan Doyle.

Marcus and Leanne Rohrberg-Johnson in memory of Christine Johnson and their grandparents.

Dale and Donna Shenefelt in honor of their daughters, Diana and Denise, and their families.

Sharron and Bill Slinger in memory of Karina Slinger, celebrating her life and her birth on Christmas Eve.

Allen Trenkle and family in memory of Donna Trenkle.

John and Marjorie Uitermarkt in memory of their parents.



Worship with The Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins on January 17th at First Christian Church

On Sunday, January 17, 2016, the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), The Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, will be preaching at First Christian Church (611 Clark Ave, Ames) at 10:30 a.m. As we do each July, we will be joining our friends at FCC for this worship opportunity. There will be no worship or regular Sunday activities at Ames UCC on that day, but there will be childcare and learning opportunities at FCC.

Theologian-In-Residence Weekend January 30-31st

The topic for the 32nd Theologian-In-Residence weekend is “God and Government: Are Religious Liberties Crumbling?” with The Rev. Barry Lynn, executive directory of Americans United for Separation of Church and State and author of *God and Government: Twenty-Five Years of Fighting for Equality, Secularism, and Freedom of Conscience*.



Saturday, January 30th

- 9:00-10:30 “A Primer on the History of Church and State: It Started in the Schools”
- 10:45-11:30 “When Political Candidates Step in It*” (*the issue of church and state)
- 1:15-2:30 “And They Will Be Led By a Child: Predictions for the Future”

Sunday, January 31st

- 9:00-10:30 Panel Discussion
- 10:45 Worship

God to www.amesucc.org/tir for more information and to register for a box lunch catered by The Café. **Registration deadline for box lunch: January 11, 2016**

Calendar for the Week

Monday, December 28

Church office closed for holidays

Tuesday, December 29

Church office closed for holidays

3:00 p.m. Farm to Folk

Wednesday, December 30

Church office closed for holidays

9:30 a.m. AM Work Crew

12:10 p.m. Peace Bell Ringers

Thursday, December 31

Church office closed for holidays

Saturday, January 2

11:20 a.m. Meals on Wheels

Sunday, January 3

9:30 a.m. God Talk (Miracles)

9:30 a.m. Sunday School

10:45 a.m. Worship Service with Chad Schwickerath

Be In Touch with Ames UCC

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515-232-9323

Mondays—Thursdays

8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

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