



Ames United Church of Christ Sunday, September 20, 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.

Our worship leaders today are Jerry Chase (stewardship moment), Jan Flora (scripture), Eileen Gebbie (sermon and Children's Celebration), Hannah Hannover (Communion) and Ben Schrag (prayers).

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Most announcements are also in your bulletin and our weekly e-newsletter. To sign up, e-mail office@amesucc.org.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Passing the Peace is an ancient Christian tradition in which we show we carry no weapons, only love.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

A formal and mutual invitation to move into the worship experience.

One: We who dwell in the shelter of the Most High

All: Seek God here.

One: We who come to be inspired and changed

All: Seek God's Spirit here.

One: We who know how little we know

All: Seek God's Word here.

***HYMN OF WELCOME**

"God of Abraham and Sarah" (see insert)

Singing is one way to connect to God through our bodies. We stand up, breathe deep, and let loose. As Augustine wrote, "(S)he who sings, prays twice."

INVOKING THE HOLY

God is always with us, so this "invoking" or invitation to God, is really an invitation to our own selves to become aware of that constant presence.

One: God, you are made known to us in the rustling wind that blows, in the blazing fire that does not consume, in the face of the good, in the deep of the unknown. We meet you here. We accept your greeting. We welcome your inspiration. We await the change you have in store for us. Draw us in to you. Inhabit our spirits. Focus our attention. Bring us to you – you who are already with us. Help us to be as you would have us be. Through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, here and everywhere, now and always.

All: Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Confession has a long tradition in Christian history. It is a way to name our own brokenness and failing, sometimes generically and sometimes quite specifically, as a means to cleanse our hearts as we move through the service.

One: Is our love always genuine? Do we resist the evil we see? Do we consistently seek to serve God? Are we hospitable to strangers? God of mercy and forgiveness, we confess that:

Many: our love isn't always genuine

we see evil and wring our hands instead of resisting it

we forget to consider more ways to serve you

we turn our back on strangers who could benefit from our hospitality

One: For all this, and for all that burdens our heart today, O God, we seek your forgiveness. Have mercy on us and hear our prayers...

SILENT PERSONAL CONFESSION

A brief moment to reflect on the prayer and your own heart and life. Silence is as important as noise in our dialogue with the divine.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

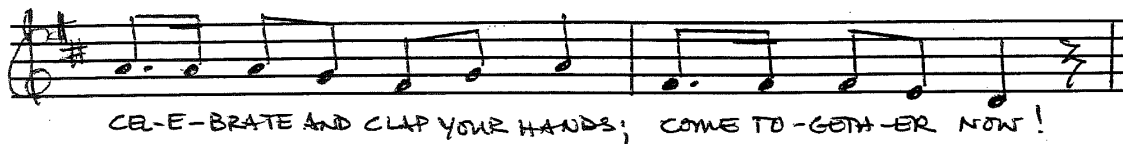
As a people of Easter, there is always good news: when we die to our brokenness, we live again in hope.

One: God's mercy extends beyond the bounds of even our collective imagination.
God's love seeps through any wall we could ever put up.
God's goodness holds more power than the sum of all brokenness.

All: Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S CELEBRATION

Children are very important to our church. Each service they come forward for a special lesson just for them. We want all children to know they are welcome everywhere in our sanctuary, even – especially – at the very front. We sing the song below as they come forward.



HEBREW BIBLE

Genesis 18:1-25; 21:1-7

Good News Translation modified for inclusive language. We use "Hebrew Bible" instead of "Old Testament" out of respect for our Jewish sisters and brothers (it isn't old to them) and acknowledgement of the living voice still found in these ancient stories.

The LORD appeared to Abraham at the sacred trees of Mamre. As Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the hottest part of the day, he looked up and saw three men standing there. As soon as he saw them, he ran out to meet them. Bowing down with his face touching the ground, he said, "Sirs, please do not pass by my home without stopping; I am here to serve you. Let me bring some water for you to wash your feet; you can rest here beneath this tree. I will also bring a bit of food; it will give you strength to continue your journey. You have honored me by coming to my home, so let me serve you."

They replied, "Thank you; we accept."

Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, "Quick, take a sack of your best flour, and bake some bread." Then he ran to the herd and picked out a calf that was tender and fat, and gave it to a servant, who hurried to get it ready. He took some cream, some milk, and the meat, and set the food before the men. There under the tree he served them himself, and they ate.

Then they asked him, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

“She is there in the tent,” he answered.

One of them said, “Nine months from now I will come back, and your wife Sarah will have a son.”

Sarah was behind him, at the door of the tent, listening. Abraham and Sarah were very old, and Sarah had stopped having her monthly periods. So Sarah laughed to herself and said, “Now that I am old and worn out, can I still enjoy sex? And besides, my husband is old too.”

Then the LORD asked Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Can I really have a child when I am so old?’ Is anything too hard for the LORD? As I said, nine months from now I will return, and Sarah will have a son.”

Because Sarah was afraid, she denied it. “I didn't laugh,” she said.

“Yes, you did,” he replied. “You laughed.”

The LORD blessed Sarah, as promised, and she became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham when he was old. The boy was born at the time God had said he would be born. Abraham named him Isaac, and when Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded. Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born. Sarah said, “God has brought me joy and laughter. Everyone who hears about it will laugh with me.” Then she added, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

SERMON

***HYMN OF PREPARATION**

“All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly” *(see insert)*

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

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; the cup contains grape juice.

The Invitation

One: Come, you weary and restless, come, all who hunger and thirst. Jesus calls us to dine as friends; come, God’s feast of welcome awaits us.

The Communion Prayer

One: God be with you!

Many: And also with you.

One: As we partake of this bread and fruit, we honor Creator and creation. As we bless and share these gifts, we celebrate the table-fellowship of Jesus. All are worthy, all are welcome! As we receive the fruits of Spirit, we celebrate the communion of all things. Creator, Christ, and Spirit dance as one. So may it always be. Come, Holy One, come. Bless and prosper this meal; bless and prosper this fellowship; bless and prosper our lives, that justice and love may be the measure of our common witness.

Many: Amen.

Sharing the Meal

Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: Thanks be to you, O God, for your presence and your purpose, for your loving kindness and your steadfast Spirit.

**Many: May the blessings of this table strengthen our faith,
increase our generosity and unify our hearts,
for we pray in the name of Jesus, the Risen One. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

If you would like a name on the prayer list, simply contact the pastors.

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

The basics of the Lord's Prayer appear in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. It may be familiar to you in this form, or with "sins" or "trespasses" toward the end. We also support the use of traditional or contemporary language for addressing the holy and naming the holy's realm.

Our Father/Creator who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom/kin-dom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom/kin-dom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

OFFERING

"When We Gather at the Table"
Chancel Choir

J. Martin/J. Raney

Thank you for giving what you can. All cash gifts will go to supporting our community justice partners like Food at First.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

HYMN OF SENDING

"We Are Dancing Sarah's Circle" (*see insert*)

BENEDICTION

From the Latin of "well" and "to speak," this is one final good word to send us off.

POSTLUDE

You are welcome to be seated and enjoy the day's postlude or move into the parlor for fellowship. Our worship leaders will greet you at the end of the center aisle, or you may go out the side aisle. Thank you for joining us today – if you have any questions or concerns, please contact any one of our pastors or members of staff.

Ames UCC Announcements

Upcoming Sunday Scriptures

During the 8:30 a.m. Wednesday Bible Study, in the Fellowship Hall, we reflect on the coming week's scripture. Join us!

9/27 Jacob Wrestles God, Genesis 32:22-30

10/4 Moses & God's Name, Exodus 1:8-14; 3:1-10

10/11 Hear O Israel, Deuteronomy 5:1-21;6:4-9

10/18 The Book of Ruth

Sunday School began today, Sunday, September 20th! Children age 2 - 5th grade will gather in the upstairs hallway for a time of singing and prayer before moving into their Sunday morning classrooms. The 2 and 3 year old children will spend each week learning about a new superhero of the Bible and doing a craft before going to play in the nursery. Children 4 years old through 5th grade will go to the Godly Play room for a story and time of wondering. We have added several new stories and art supplies to our room and are very excited to begin a new year of wondering together! Parents will need to pick up their child/children in the Godly Play room before worship each Sunday morning. Youth grades 6-12 will meet in the Youth Hangout which is in the office building. This will be a temporary space for the Youth to meet on Sunday mornings until the Youth Room renovations are complete!

Women's Fellowship - September 23rd

Calling all women of the church. Please join us for lunch on Wednesday, September 23 in Fellowship Hall. The meeting goes from 12.00 till 1.00 pm. This is our joys and concerns Women's Fellowship meeting. We thought we might share with each other about the past summer. Come and get to know your church neighbors. Hope to see you all there and don't forget your lunch.

Easy as... Roasted Veggies & Fruit Bouquets - September 26th

Join us on Saturday, September 26th at 9 a.m. in the church kitchen for an "Easy as..." cooking class. This is going to be "Easy as..." with a twist! We will be learning how to make oven roasted vegetables and fruit bouquets and, like the Valentine cookie class, the food we prepare will be used to bless others, this time for Pastor Eileen's Installation Reception. Bring along your favorite kitchen knife if you have one, and come learn new skills and socialize with your classmates! This class will be led by

Matthew Ellinwood and Kristin Shields. Please let them know if you can attend so that they can plan accordingly. Contact Matthew atmellinwo@gmail.com and Kristin at sleepycat@hotmail.com.

Installation of Rev. Eileen Gebbie - September 27th

The installation of our new pastor, The Rev. Eileen Gebbie is fast approaching. The service, featuring the United Church of Christ Minister for Youth Advocacy and Leadership Formation and #BlackLivesMatter Leader, Rev. Waltrina Middleton, will be held the afternoon of Sunday, September 27th at 3pm. Come celebrate the installation of our new minister and join in the work of our local and national United Church of Christ!

CROP Walk - October 11th

The 2015 CROP Walk is scheduled for Sunday, October 11, 1pm sign-in; 1:30pm walk. The approximately 5 KM walk & will go through the ISU campus, starting & ending at the Maple Shelter in Brookside Park. Funds raised through the CROP Walk help to fund food programs sponsored by Church World Service as well as seven local food programs. Twenty-five per cent of all funds raised are returned to the local food programs. The 2014 Walk raised \$26,823.87 with 18 groups participating. Anyone interested in participating can pick up an information / sign-up packet at the church office or contact Rachel Schelle at 515-450-3137.

Christmas Bazaar - Oct 24th

So many people were generous with donations for our Attic to Basement Sale that we were unable to display it all. We decided to have another sale with all the Christmas items that were donated. So we are continuing our Wednesday morning sale work parties. All of our donations have been moved to the Choir Room so if you have time, join us on Wednesday morning from 10.00 am to 12 noon to sort and price the items for our Christmas Bazaar. The Sale will be on Saturday, October 24th from 8am to noon.

Hosta Rescue

Thanks to the following people for rescuing the hosta plants in the way of the construction on the north side of the church: Doug Powell for his leadership, also Barbara Faidley, Jeremy McMahan, Fei Yi, Bob Kerksieck and Dinah Kerksieck. Many of the plants have been moved to the courtyard garden and others went to new homes.

Ames UCC Fall Pledge Campaign

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (Genesis 12:2, NRSV)

Those of you who compare the annual campaign letters (and I am sure that someone does) will recognize the scripture quotation above is the same as last year's. And how true it is!

Please take just a moment to think about all the wonderful blessings that we have experienced in the life of our church over the last year:

- We have celebrated our 150th anniversary as a congregation through special events, like the "bridal show", and historic liturgical elements in worship.
- Pastor Terry Hamilton-Poore bridged the interim between settled pastors with energy, imagination and love.
- Pastor Eileen Gebbie is now leading our worship services and spiritual activities with fresh eyes and energy.
- We have completed the first phases of the 150th Capital campaign and construction for our improved youth room are underway.
- We continue to welcome new members into the congregation: 14 on Sept. 13th!
- We continue our important work in the community, through AMOS, Food at First, Meals on Wheels, and Planned Parenthood, just to name a few.

All of this happens because of you, your time, your talents, and your treasure. As we enter the Annual Fall Pledge Campaign for 2016, we invite you to reflect on what sort of commitment of financial support your household is able to make. Although the 2015 budget year felt like a challenge, when presented with a vision for the church, you more than met it. For 2016, thanks to the thoughtful planning and care of your Team leaders, the budget that we will present on December 6 after worship is only 3% over that of 2015.

Sometimes the blessings of a life with God seem to come out of nowhere. At other times, we are actively engaged with the holy in order to bring them to life. Please pray with the scripture above over the next two weeks. Listen for where God and your own heart is calling you to be as a recipient of blessings and a co-creator of them.

Together, we are worshipping God, supporting each other in our needs, and being a visible presence for progressive faith in the larger community. We are not the “great nation” referenced by scripture so much as a great band of disciples seeking to build God’s kin-dom, the Beloved Community.

In faith,

Diana McHenry, Chair

Terry Potter, Vice Chair

Financial Stewardship Team

Calendar for the Week

Monday, September 21

5:30 p.m. Emergency Residence
Project (*Flora*)

Tuesday, September 22

12:00 p.m. Men's Fellowship
3:00 p.m. Farm to Folk

Wednesday, September 23

8:30 a.m. Morning Bible Study
9:30 a.m. AM Work Crew
12:10 p.m. Peace Bell Ringers
1:00 p.m. Newsletter Team
6:45 p.m. Choir Practice

Thursday, September 24

No Scheduled Activities

Friday, September 25

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, September 26

9:00 a.m. "Easy As..."
11:20 a.m. Meals on Wheels (*Tipton*)

Sunday, September 27

10:45 a.m. Church Worship Service
3:00 p.m. Installation of Rev. Gebbie

Be In Touch with Ames UCC

217 6th Street, Ames, IA 50010
515-232-9323

Mondays—Thursdays

8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

24-hour pastoral emergencies:
515-428-1779

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