



ames

# UCC COURIER

United Church of Christ

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(515) 232-9323 [www.amesucc.org](http://www.amesucc.org)

Just Peace, Open & Affirming

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## ***Why No Shoes?***

One of the most common questions I'm asked after church is why I don't have any shoes on. The reason was initially practical: I get really hot when I lead worship.

At my previous church I was tucked away in a high pulpit where no one could see what I was up to. And although my initial reason for going unshod was comfort, I came to really love the feeling of preaching bare- or stocking-footed: connected, grounded, and agile. Initially I would pause to put on my shoes before leaving the pulpit to do the prayers of the people. But I realized, though, that worrying about my feet was creating an awkward lull in the service as well as a disruption of my own sense of connection to the divine. So I just left them off. A couple of people Tweeted, Facebooked, and Instagrammed my feet; quite a few elders chuckled and said they hoped other elders didn't give me a hard time because I should be free to be myself, darn it; and the youth took it as a sign that pastors are people, too.

On coming to Ames UCC, I wasn't sure what my feet would do, but I quickly found out: as tippy-toed for hymns and unfettered for preaching as ever.

I hope that along your own journey, as fellow members of the priesthood of all believers (and doubters), you will find the movements or positions or expressions or silences that allow you to connect viscerally with our faith, too. For all the spiritualizing theology that has built up around our story, it is fundamentally embodied, full of skin and hair and clothes. And as the author of Psalm 13 wrote, *For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* Our bodies are everyday miracles. Let us rejoice in them and with them whenever we give service to God.

Pr. Eileen Gebbie

## ***Worship***

### **Colors, Cloth, and Clothing**

Worship is a multi-sensory experience: sounds (music), body (singing, praying, holding and shaking hands), and sights.

Our paraments (the fabric art in our worship spaces), the Communion table, the stained glass, and the style of our cross all share messages about our faith, our history, and the season of the church year.

Our worship leaders contribute to this experience in their robes and other garb. For example, the robes our pastors wear (between Advent and Pentecost) are references to the traditional image of Jesus as a shepherd.

The clerical stoles (the long scarves) that you see Pr. Eileen wearing emerged through several historical streams. It is most commonly understood as a representation of the wearer's acceptance of the yoke of service in Jesus' name as well as her or his called role to bring the Good News in worship. It is a role bestowed by God and congregation.

In our church, our pastors' stoles match the liturgical seasons: blue for the preparation of Advent, purple for the reflection of Lent, white for the glory of Christmas and Easter, red for the flames of Pentecost, and green for the explorations of all creation in Ordinary Time. They serve to further reinforce the message of the day.

The clerical collar, also worn by Pr. Eileen, is another part of that visual message. For the wearer, it serves as a reminder of her or his obligations and responsibilities to God and God's people. For the viewer in worship, at moments of public witnesses (such as demonstrations, parades, or other actions on behalf of God and the church), and in the visitation of the sick and shut in, the collar quickly also identifies the wearer's role: a representative of love on behalf of God and God's people.

The United Church of Christ is diverse in its use of all of these symbols. I invite you to reflect on your own experience with colors, cloth, and clothing, and how they have or have not contributed to your own experiences of worship, witness, and care. Pastor Eileen most welcomes any conversation you would like to have about the worship practices at Ames UCC: 515-232-9323, eileen@amesucc.org.

## ***Social Justice & Outreach***

### **Save The Date—Theologian-In-Residence Weekend**

Theologian-In-Residence Weekend is scheduled for January 30 & 31, 2016. Barry Lynn will be speaking on "God and Government: Are Religious Liberties Crumbling?" Please mark your calendars for this very important event that you will not want to miss!

## **Bell Ringing for Peace**

Join us every Wednesday at 12:10pm in the bell tower to ring the bell and pray for worldwide peace. Ames UCC is a Just Peace Church, encouraging the interrelation of friendship, justice, and common security from violence.

## ***Christian Education***

### **Rally Sunday, September 13**

Our theme this year is "Superheroes of the Bible"! We will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 a.m. for a potluck breakfast! Come eat and enjoy the fellowship of those in our church family! There will be crafts, singing, and a chance for you to hear about all of the Christian Education opportunities available for you this fall! Capes will be provided. Worship will begin at 10:45 a.m.

### **Sunday School begins on Sunday, September 20!**

Children age 2 through 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 super hero 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 (ren) 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!

### **Godly Play during worship**

ALL children ages 4 years old through 5th grade are invited to join us in the Godly Play room during worship on the LAST Sunday of each month! Following the Children's Celebration Hannah will invite children to follow her upstairs to the Godly Play room until the end of the service. There are other times throughout the year (Advent, etc.) when we will have Godly Play meet more frequently during worship. Those opportunities will be well advertised ahead of time.

### **Wednesday Afternoon Club (WAC) begins Wednesday, September 16!**

We are beginning our 3rd year of WAC! Children K-5th grade are invited to join us every Wednesday from the time school dismisses (2:05 p.m.) until 5:00 p.m. During this time we will learn about a new super hero of the Bible, play games, make crafts, and much more! Hannah is still looking for adult volunteers to help with WAC activities! If you are interested in volunteering your time, bringing a snack, or providing transportation for the child from their school to the church, please let Hannah know! You can contact Hannah at: [hannah@amesucc.org](mailto:hannah@amesucc.org) or by calling the church office.

## The Gift of Godly Play

*Genya Coffey sent this e-mail to me on August 15. With her permission, I am sharing it here.*



*As the Godly Play Web site describes, "Children have an innate sense of the presence of God. The Godly Play approach helps them to explore their faith through story, to gain religious language and to enhance their spiritual experience through wonder and play. Based on Montessori principles and developed using a spiral curriculum, the Godly Play method serves children through early, middle and late childhood and beyond."*

*As you will see, Godly Play is a profound blessing to our children and adults alike. Please contact Pr. Hannah (hannah@amesucc.org, 515.232.9323) for more information about how to involve your child or lead the children in their wonderings. – Pr. Eileen*

Just wanted to share a personal story about how Elliott and I have been interacting with Godly Play and my grandmother's approaching death this past week.

My 95 year old grandmother has had cancer that has come and gone out of remission for some time. About a year or so ago she made the decision that she didn't want to do chemo anymore, so when the cancer started coming back again, we've all kind of known at some point things would start changing quickly. That started happening about a week or so ago.

After her 5 living kids got together and kind of figured out how to approach the next few weeks or months, most of us grandkids, especially those of us who live a bit further away, started planning trips to visit as soon as we could. I decided to take Elliott with me as he has a relationship with my grandma, having visited her 4 or 5 times over the last 5 years (which is probably more times than I had visited her in the 15 years before he was born.)

Elliott has yet to experience the death of a living creature with whom he shared a personal relationship so I spent a lot of time thinking about how I wanted to handle this. He knows that things die - it's come up in books, stories, movies, etc. Also, my uncle died in a car accident just a little over a year ago and Elliott came to the funeral with me and we had some very brief conversations about that. But we haven't had a pet die or anyone that Elliott has met personally, so this is fairly new territory.

Also, most of our fledgling exchanges about death had happened before Godly Play, before Elliott attended church or Sunday School on a regular basis, so we didn't have much in the way of "church vocabulary" in our exchanges. One of the things I love about Godly Play is the way it has helped give vocabulary to the things we wonder about as we think about things like life and death.

So I was thinking about whether any of the Godly Play stories that Elliott experienced last year might help him connect with the experience of my grandmother dying. I told Elliott that we were going to visit my grandmother who was not feeling well at all, was very tired, and that we were going to spend some time talking to her to help keep her company and maybe cheer her up a little.

We have been spending a lot of time in the Godly Play room setting up for the upcoming year and Elliott has been taking out a lot of the stories and telling them to me as I work, so the stories have been in our mouths a lot the last few weeks. One day when we were working I asked him if he would like to bring one of these stories and share it with my Grandma. I told him that I thought she might really like the Good Shepherd story and he told me he wanted to bring that and help me tell her the story.

So we did. The telling of it wasn't exactly a magical moment or anything. It was really fairly awkward - she'd had a rough morning and was even more tired than usual when we finally arrived. There were more people in the house than we'd been expecting, and she was confined to her bed. I ended up trying to balance a story - meant to be told on the floor - in a circle on my lap and the corner of her bed.

Elliott was really hungry and wanted to go eat his Happy Meal that was waiting in the kitchen and didn't really understand that we only had a little time to spend with Grandma and couldn't just "do it later." But we told the story and I know my grandmother appreciated it.

A few days later, yesterday, when we were back in Ames I decided to talk to Elliott about the fact that my grandmother would be dying soon. It was starting to come up in conversation with other adults more and more and it was hard to avoid him inadvertently hearing about it - and I wanted us to have time to talk about it rather than it just slipping out in conversation. So I told him - and again it didn't really go the way I'd hoped or imagined either - when I told him not very eloquently - I can't even remember how I said it, just that it came out more abruptly than I meant. He burst into tears (which I kind of thought he would because he's always been pretty emotionally expressive) but what I didn't expect was that he wouldn't talk to me about what he was thinking, and he clearly was thinking - he just kept saying he didn't want to talk.

I let him cry for a bit and just stayed with him and then when he got quieter I said I felt sad too because I really like spending time with grandma, but that I also felt kind of not sad because I know she has been feeling really tired and seemed ready to rest. I told him that I really liked sharing the Good Shepherd story with her and I wondered if maybe she was ready to rest. I said I don't really know what happens when people die, but I wondered if it might be like resting and having someone take care of her the way the good shepherd took care of the sheep.

And he kind of thought for a moment and then said, "Yeah, no one really knows what happens when you die. Even the person that's dying doesn't know." And then he got quiet for a bit again and then said, "Maybe her house will be in the field where the good green grass [a line from the story] is now. Maybe it will be there."

And then he said he was hungry for supper and that was kind of the end of that conversation - except for later when we were driving by some garage and moving sale signs and he said, "Maybe Grandma Lillian will need to have a moving sale soon." So I know the concept is still kicking around in that head of his. We'll see what comes next.

Genya





## ***Our Church History Continues to Unfold***

Did you know....?

- Who holds the longest ministry in our congregation's history, i.e., the number of years served as a pastor: *(He was Rev. Henry K. Hawley, who served from 1915-1935.)*
- *That there was a national sorority for young women who belonged to churches in the Congregational denomination? (A chapter of Sigma Eta Chi was formed at Iowa State in 1944; it's first president was Meg Speer.)*
- *That Frisbie House was opened in 1916? Who or what was a frisbie?(Hint: It is not a round plastic toy.) The Congregational*

In September as in the other remaining months of 2015, the worship service on the second Sunday of the month will include some aspect of a worship service from the past 150 years. It may be a confession of sin and assurance of pardon, a pastoral prayer, a popular anthem, or the communion liturgy.

Also on those second Sundays, new thirty-year timelines will be on display. (In September, it will cover the years 1895-1924), which includes the building of our current building. A smaller display board will list the organizations and activities that have offered inside these walls during 150 years.

Volunteers are needed to review old records and compile pertinent data. Please join Janet Binder and Charles Kniker for an inspiring time. Email Charles at [charlesk@ghrc.co](mailto:charlesk@ghrc.co) or call him at 515.296-5036).



### ***Odds & Ends***

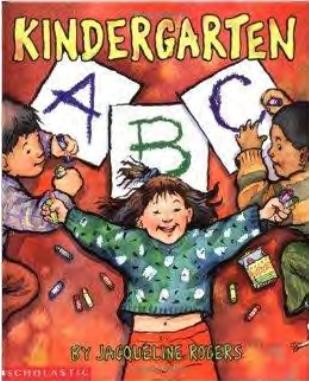
Thank you for your insights Ellen!

After 20 years, our Ellen Barnhart is stepping down as the leader of our Thursday afternoon Insights class. She writes, "this class started out with Kathie Drummond, Edna Weiss and I in 1995 and grew as we explored so many areas and had more questions than answers! I loved that we were never afraid to say that we did not know and took it on as "homework."

Ellen describes the participants as awesome, having, "put up with my technical slowness with the VHS and then DVD issues. You filled in reluctantly if I could not be there. We went through illnesses deaths, births and so much of life together during that 1 hour on Thursday afternoons. Thank you!"

***Thank you, Ellen, for your vital role in faith formation and fellowship at Ames UCC!***

**LIBRARY NEWS:** We have received a number of new books for our church library which all need to be processed so they can be available. Do you like books? Do you have time to share? We are looking to form a committee to meet a couple of times a month for 2 hours to work in the library. We will be marking books with colored stickers to help them be returned to the correct shelf and making a shelf list of the books that our library owns. We enjoy great fellowship working together and getting to know each other. If you are interested in working on this committee please contact: Barbara Faidley by phone at 233-3876 or by email at [barbara@faidley.org](mailto:barbara@faidley.org). Let's make our church library a GREAT PLACE to come visit.



**Children's Book Review.....**-by Barbara Faidley

As our children are starting back to school, this new book fits perfectly with that theme. "Kindergarten ABC" by Jacqueline Rogers will help little ones to learn their ABC's right along with this classroom full of active kindergarteners!

Each letter page has one major sentence about it with the corresponding illustration. It also included a search and find game of things to find with that individual letter.

The illustrations match the letter and show the children in many different settings (the classroom, the gym, outside, etc). Enjoy this book with your child or grandchild as you each search for items starting with various letters from the alphabet.

**Adult Book Review.....** -by Barbara Faidley

One of the new books added to our biography section in the church library is "Learning to Sing; Hearing the Music in your Life" by Clay Aiken.



Clay Aiken was one of the two finalists in the 2003 American Idol competition. His albums following the show were great successes as well as the launch of several popular singles. Clay began his musical endeavor by first singing in the church choir as he was growing up. He never expected to become a pop music star.

In this book Clay details what his astonishing success has meant to him, while he writes about his instant stardom, how his life has changed and how he struggles to adapt to life in the public eye. He reveals what he has discovered from diving into the white-hot center of pop culture and what it takes for him to stay true to himself. He shares his struggle to remain a man his mother can be proud of and writes about the faith that sustains him. today just as it did when he was an awkward,

## **2015 Iowa Conference UCC Annual Business Meeting**

You are invited to attend the 2015 Annual Business Meeting of the Iowa Conference UCC. This is an opportunity to learn about the Iowa Conference and make decisions that link our local churches, associations, committees and commissions, our Conference and the national UCC setting. Leaders will be elected, budget considered & reports given. It will be a day of worship, lunch gathering and plenary.

The meeting will be held Saturday, October 17, 2015 at Plymouth UCC, 4126 Ingersoll Ave, Des Moines 50312. Registration / Coffee/ Marketplace will begin at 9am. Worship / Meeting will begin at 0:30—3pm. Cost is \$25 per person & includes lunch. Parking is free in the church parking lot. Deadline for registration is September 25th. Walk-in's are welcome but there is no guarantee of meal or material availability for those not pre-registered.

## **#UNITEIOWA ON IMMIGRATION**

Ames UCC is a sponsor of the #Unite Iowa on Immigration forum to be held at Buena Vista University, 610 W 4th St in Storm Lake, Iowa on Saturday, August 29. The forum per se begins at 2:30 pm, but there will be a Meet and Greet that begins at 12:30. All presidential candidates of the two main political parties have been invited. The forum will be moderated by the highly-respected Kyle Munson, a columnist for the Des Moines Register, and an strong advocate for civil dialogue.

The main format will be a panel facilitated by Munson. The panel will include five individuals with difference perspectives on immigration, including a DREAMer, a Latina activist, a small business person, a conservative Republican activist, and probably a law enforcement officer. The panelists will ask questions of the candidates and there will be opportunity for the audience to also ask questions.

The forum is NOT designed as a debate among candidates, but as a conversation between candidates and citizens. More than 150 are register so far. Two Democratic candidates have accepted— Governor Martin O'Malley and former Senator Lincoln Caffee — and it is hoped that a couple of Republicans will respond positively.

If you would like to car pool, please contact Jan Flora at [floraj@iastate.edu](mailto:floraj@iastate.edu) or 515-451-9693. You can register at the following website: <http://www.iowaimmigrations.org/>.

2:30 pm / August 29, 2015

Buena Vista University

610 W 4th Street

Storm Lake, Iowa

This event is free and open to the public, and will be simulcast online. Doors will be open for general seating inside the Siebens Forum at 1:30 pm. The event will begin at 2:30 pm.

RSVP at [iowaimmigration.org](http://iowaimmigration.org)