



My first Lent at Ames UCC was remarkable: each Wednesday night 60-80 of us gathered for soup, about 30 worked through Jennifer Harvey's "Dear White Christians," a dozen went to choir practice, and 4-8 stayed for silent meditation. Then we came back together on Sunday mornings for spiritual formation at the morning coffee (a.k.a. "tailgating"), Learning Center, God Talk, youth group, and Godly Play.

When we entered worship, we did so quietly, singing a simple reminder to ourselves: be still and know that I am God. In that stillness we explored the meanings of the Good Friday cross, blessed a van, and received two new banners, one for Palm Sunday and one for Holy Week

But our good growth and fellowship does not end with Easter Sunday.

The cooks for our soup suppers have generously donated their recipes for inclusion in a book. They will be sold for \$5 each to benefit our youth group's summer mission trip. Thank you to everyone who threw cash into the basket during the suppers themselves. The kids had a great time cleaning the dishes.

Almost 20 of the reading group participants have committed to not only finishing the book together, but to taking some kind of personal or corporate action to address racism at the end.

And, I hope, each of us have had enough of a taste of God's stillness to want to continue to seek it out. Jesus asked his people to resist the temptations of wealth. Maybe our call is to resist the temptations of busyness.

I am looking forward to our Eastertide journey, which will culminate with Pentecost on May 15. Please wear red and bring a friend. Soon, with our shared faithfulness, the remarkable will become the norm and beloved community will become our home.

elaine

WORSHIP

Responsibilities of the Worship and Music Core Team
by Elaine Hieber

Much of the work of WAM is done quietly behind the scenes, but its work speaks loudly to the fiber of our worship services and church atmosphere. The team provides support to the pastor, the music staff and the Christian education staff to assist in the planning of meaningful worship experiences, special worship services and events, and in determining the general musical tenor of our services. The team is also responsible for finding and organizing ushers, greeters, tracking attendance, maintaining the supplies and materials needed for worship, and operating the public address and video recording equipment. Additionally, the team is charged with maintaining the sanctuary banners and overseeing the decoration of the sanctuary for Advent and special worship services and events.

When team members speak of their role, there is also consistent mention on an action not specifically defined in their responsibilities, that of assisting in providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere for ALL who worship with us. The team recognizes that we are blessed to be part of a faith community that supports our church and each other and takes seriously our obligation to try to make everyone feel welcome, safe, and included.

Our team is committed to doing whatever we can to ensure that we have relevant, meaningful worship experiences, strong music programs, a welcoming atmosphere, and adornments that enhance our faith practice. It is our hope that we can contribute in this way to support our own spiritual journeys and God's work.

INVITATION & WELCOME

Pr. Jake Joseph Miles on Social Media

The following is reprinted from the March 1, 2016 Plymouth UCC e-newsletter.

The year was 1891 and a conversation was happening somewhere in a 200 year old New England Congregationalist Meeting House somewhere North of Connecticut and South of the Canadian border:

Minister: Reading a newspaper, "I believe it is time for us to get a telephone."

Member: Looks up from the typewriter, "Oh I don't know..."

Minister: "It is important to keep up with the times..."

Member: "I don't know... it might lead to bad things. Maybe we won't communicate with each other face to face or write letters anymore once this telephone thing from Mr. Bell becomes popular! What will the world come to?"

Minister: "Our denomination is responsible for having brought the first printing press to the North American continent in the early 1600's and maintaining the oldest publishing company, Pilgrim Press, in the United States. Surely this legacy means remaining on the forefront of technology and innovation in ministry?"

Member: "Oh, alright, but I don't understand the point exactly. We have gotten along well enough without it until now, why would we have to have a telephone to be successful as a church anyway? I bet this whole telephone thing is just a phase..."

200 years later, in 1995, in the same church somewhere in New England, the same exact conversation took place about the church getting its first computer and email address. Then only five years later, the verbatim same conversation took place about if the church *really* needed its own website. Wasn't the denomination's website and listing of the church address in the phone book enough?

Today, the conversation churches have is about Social Media. Do we really need to be involved with Social Media? How will this change the meaning of the work we do? And... how does it work anyway?

Not having Social Media accounts as a church is certainly an option. It is becoming, however, something like not having a website or a telephone. It just doesn't speak well for the church being connected. Even if it isn't a place you go every single day (like the website), having Social Media says something about us, as a congregation. It says that we are connected and we are reaching out.

[snip]

Social Media is like having a telephone. It doesn't always ring. Sometimes it rings and there isn't anyone on the line. Sometimes it rings and someone doesn't have something very nice to say. Sometimes it rings and there is a

solicitor trying to sell us something (especially on Facebook). Often it rings and there is someone looking for a place like (Ames UCC) and our Social Media accounts help welcome them to the conversation, to our website, and eventually to worship and extravagant welcome. No matter who you are or how you interact with us in person or online, you are welcome in the full measure of (Ames UCC's) community.

SOCIAL JUSTICE & OUTREACH

150th Anniversary Celebration Charitable Giving

As part of Ames United Church of Christ's 150th Anniversary Celebration's Capital Campaign, we donated sufficient funds to Primary Health Care (PHC) to purchase a new van. With this van, PHC will be able to transport sick and low-income clients to much needed services both within Ames and beyond. In worship on March 6, we blessed it together. Thank you, all!



ABC Sale Charitable Giving

by Barbara Faidley

Our two sales in 2015 took in more than \$5,000.00. 20% of that amount (\$1,000.00) was recently spent. We bought from Hansen's Sinclair fifty \$20.00 gas coupons. These coupons will be given to Emergency Residence Project who will distribute them to people in need who have no money for gas. This is a need in our community.

Green Team at Ames UCC

A Green Team is being rejuvenated at AMES UCC. We hope you will join us in the journey to learn how we as individuals and a congregation can live more environmentally friendly. The team will launch with a showing of the documentary film "This Changes Everything" by Avi Lewis scheduled on Thursday April 28th at 7:30PM This is a purposefully unsettling but ultimately encouraging movie giving a global overview of efforts by activists to

push back against corporate polluters and reduce climate change. The event is intended to educate members about climate change, generate excitement and kick off the Ames UCC green team.

The Green Team will start collecting batteries and florescent light bulbs of all shapes and sizes. Once collected they will be properly disposed. Initially we will collect from **Sunday March 20th through Sunday April 3rd** with a possibility of an extended collection period. Labeled collection bins will be setup in the parlor.

Look What You Made Happen

Please read the press release below about an important and exciting new effort to secure affordable, stable housing in Story County.

Each of you have made this possible through your financial support of AMOS via our church's annual budget.

Leaders from Ames UCC at the big event included Linda Hanson, Amy Erica Smith, Cornelia Flora, George Belitsos, Phil Spike, Terry Potter, Dale Shenefeld, Diane Birt, Ken Birt, and Lynette Spicer. (Please let Pr. Eileen know if she forgot anyone!)

Our Jan Flora was especially important in planning and implementation, including securing strong participation from stakeholders at the city, business, and university levels.

AMOS Conference Launches New Housing Trust Fund Task Force

On Wednesday, March 23, A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS) announced the formation of a Task Force to create a Housing Trust Fund in Story County. Comprised of government officials, business leaders, social service providers, AMOS, and community leaders, this Task Force will work over the next 9-12 months to establish a Housing Trust Fund entity that will draw state funds for housing into Story County.

AMOS began looking for solutions to the housing crisis in Ames after hearing many stories from families struggling to find housing during small group conversations called "house meetings" two years ago.

"Ames is a wonderful place to raise a family," said Jan Flora, co-chair of the AMOS Housing Team, "But what happens when our children grow up? Many can't afford to live and work here. We aim to change that."

An AMOS research team of lay leaders, community members, and clergy met with key stakeholders in Story county and experts from around the state. Through this research, AMOS developed a list of best practices, and began to organize a conference to bring community members and key decision makers together to explore these practices further and identify possible courses of action. This conference, *A Place to Call Home*, held on March 23, was co-sponsored by the City of Ames, Story County Board of Supervisors, and Iowa State University.

But for AMOS, studying the issue was not enough. They wanted the conference to lead to action, and saw the perfect opportunity: the creation of a Housing Trust Fund. As they approached public officials and allies with this proposal, they found interest and agreement.

"We have been talking about housing for years," said Ames City Councilmember Amber Corrieri, "It's time for action."

"A Housing Trust Fund is an important step forward. It's more than a new revenue source for affordable housing, it's a way for our community to have a new conversation about our housing priorities," said Jason Paull, AMOS leader with First Christian Church.

AMOS will convene this new Task Force to create a Housing Trust Fund. Over the next year, the Task Force will prepare and submit an application for approval of the new Fund to The Iowa Finance Authority.

Key elements of the application include identifying a local match for the state funds, recruiting an inaugural Board of Directors (to be 51% or more community members and 49% or less elected officials), and determining the geographic scope and priorities of the Fund.

Task Force Members thus far include:

Rev. Eileen Gebbie, Pastor of Ames United Church of Christ, AMOS

Jason Paull, First Christian Church, AMOS

Amber Corrieri, Ames City Councilmember

Warren Madden, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, Iowa State University

Wayne Clinton, Story County Board of Supervisors

Dan Culhane, President and CEO, Ames Chamber of Commerce

Dale VanderSchaaf, President, Story County Community Housing Corporation

Roberta Milinsky, Associate CEO, Youth Shelter Services

The announcement of this new Task Force was made during the closing session of the recent housing conference, *A Place to Call Home*. The Task Force will begin its work in April 2016.

“This is an exciting moment for our community,” said Shari Reilly, co-chair of the AMOS Housing Team and Director of Campus Ministry and Social Justice at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. “There is so much a Housing Trust Fund can do to increase housing options for families in Ames and beyond. The City of Ames, the County, the University, service providers, the business community, and the faith community are all at the table. Now it’s time to get to work.”

A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS) is a broad-based organization comprised of 31 member institutions – congregations and non-profits—in Central Iowa. AMOS believes that ordinary people, organized together, can make democracy work and transform their communities for the common good.

Join Us in Celebrating 20 Years of AMOS!

2016 marks 20 years of AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy) in Central Iowa! Here is a list of AMOS’s victories over the past 20 years:

Healthcare and Mental Health

- *Brought the first Federally Qualified Health Clinic (FQHC) to Story County in 2014, now providing care to thousands of low-income and underserved residents of Ames and the surrounding area.*
- *Secured access to free pre-natal care for hundreds of uninsured pregnant women in Story County by initiating a partnership with Broadlawns Medical Center, Free Clinics of Iowa, and Des Moines University.*
- *Saved hundreds of Iowans from bankruptcy through the expanded charity care agreements reached with 6 major Central Iowa hospitals.*
- *Helped secure passage of desperately needed mental health care reform in the state in 2012 Iowa legislative session. Continuing, along with many others, to fight for appropriate funding of the state’s mental health care system.*
- *Fought for passage of the “Kathleen Brown bill” in the Iowa State Legislature that ensures our state’s in-home daycare providers are paid promptly and accurately.*

Workforce Development

- *Created Project IOWA, a workforce intermediary that to date, has trained and placed over 250 formerly impoverished central Iowa residents into career track, living wage jobs with Iowa companies like Vermeer, Bridgestone, Mercy Medical Center and Sauer Danfoss in Ames. Go to www.projectiowa.org to learn more.*

Infrastructure Improvements

- *Increased voter turnout to ensure passage of a local option sales tax for critically needed infrastructure improvements to Des Moines public schools.*
- *Won multi-million dollar upgrades to prevent flooding in the Southeast Bottoms neighborhood of Des Moines.*
- *Secured 65,000 square feet of land on the Des Moines riverfront to build the largest open-air skate park in the United States. The City of Des Moines donated the land and AMOS was awarded a Leadership Grant from the Des Moines Community Foundation in support of this effort. Go to www.desmoinesregionalskatepark.com to learn more.*

Juvenile Justice Reform

- *Launched a racial profiling project with the ACLU and the Des Moines Chapter of the NAACP to document cases of racial profiling as they occur in central Iowa.*
- *Observed over 300 juvenile delinquency court cases in Polk County as part of the AMOS Court Watch initiative to help ordinary citizens keep an eye on justice.*
- *Initiated a school mediation program in six Des Moines Middle Schools that supports students to learn how to resolve conflicts peacefully before they escalate into larger problems for the students, the school or the community.*
- *Elevated the importance of the restorative justice approach as the most effective means of accountability for youth offenders by: organizing a major conference on restorative justice, and educating hundreds of Central Iowans on the criminal justice system, restorative justice circles, mediation skills, and conflict resolution.*

Leadership Development

- *Trained thousands of ordinary Central Iowans in effective leadership development skills that build strong communities, strong congregations, and strong civic organizations. Together, we will continue to build relational power and make democracy work for families in Central Iowa.*

Ames UCC is one of AMOS' 29 member institutions, so with our time, talent, and treasure we have been integral to these successes.

This year, member institutions are investing in the future of AMOS and our communities by asking 1000 people to invest \$20 or more in our work. That's a \$20,000 down payment on our work to improve our juvenile justice system, mental health workforce, affordable housing, and more!

You are invited to attend two important events:

- Ames UCC Core Team training with AMOS Lead Organizer Liz Hall on Saturday, May 14, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. (childcare available) in the Fellowship Hall.
- AMOS's 20th Anniversary Celebration & Delegates Assembly on Sunday, May 22, 2016 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Plymouth UCC in Des Moines.

RSVP for both to Pr. Eileen, including childcare and carpool needs: eileen@amesucc.org, 515-232-9323.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Learning Center Topics for April

Adult Education & Formation at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays in the Fellowship Hall. Sunday School for children is at the same time, upstairs in the Godly Play and other class rooms.

April 3: God Talk on Discipleship with Pr. Eileen

April 10: 9:15a, Active Shooter Training for Adults

As described in "I'm Not Scared, I'm Prepared" in last month's newsletter, Ames UCC will be holding ALICE Active Shooter Training on April 10 and April 24. The April 24 session will be at 9:30a for children whose parents/guardians want them to participate and last only 30 minutes. We will have a separate option for non-participating kids.

April 17: Alternate Journeys of Faith Art

April 24: Paul Lasley



Camp Sunday

Join us in worship on Sunday, April 17 for Camp Sunday! We will enjoy hearing stories about Pilgrim Heights from members of our congregation that have attended camps over the last several years! Information for upcoming camps will be available for you on this morning. As always, half of your camp registration will be generously paid for out of our Bath Fund. Everyone is encouraged to wear their favorite camp attire (jeans, shorts, t-shirts, hats) as we come together to sing favorite camp songs and celebrate our camp together!

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone that donated candy, toys, and stickers for our annual Easter Egg Hunt! Our children and youth had so much fun hunting 700+ eggs on Easter morning! Your generosity is very much appreciated!

MEMBER SERVICES

Directory Update

by Barbara Faidley

Lifetouch Photos has sent corrected proofs back to us twice now and we believe we have all the mistakes corrected. At this point our directory should be in the printing process. I do not know how long that takes. Maybe by the time this newsletter comes out the directories will have arrived or shortly after.

Women's Fellowship

by Barbara Faidley

In April Women's Fellowship will meet on April 13 and April 27. We will be meeting from 12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. to allow some of our members to ring the Just Peace Bell at 12:10. Our first meeting of the month we are asking every one to share someplace they really like to visit in Iowa. Come prepared to talk about this place, where it is located and how to get there. Places can be in Ames but we are also looking for places in other parts of Iowa. Come and share a favorite place to visit. We will also be discussing some changes that we are thinking about for Women's Fellowship. Please come and share your ideas

with all of us. Our second meeting of the month will be a joys and concerns fellowship. All women of the church are welcome. Visitors are also welcome. Join us for lunch and fellowship in April.

Library News

by Barbara Faidley

Please come and visit the Church Library. We have recently installed two new bookshelves. They look GREAT! and fit in very nicely with the existing shelves in the library. We are making progress sorting and processing all of our new books. All children's books have been processed and are also marked with a colored sticker to help us in returning the book to its proper location. The Library Work Group is meeting once a week now. We meet from 1.00pm to 3.00pm every Thursday. If that time changes a notice will be put into the bulletin. Please come and join us. Our big project for the month of April will be removing all the adult books from the shelves and sorting them into categories and then re-shelving them onto marked shelves. This should make finding a specific book much easier.

PROPERTY & OUR CAMPUS

150th Capital Campaign Construction Plans

By Phil Spike, Moderator

Our architect, John Lott has been working on developing possible plans for construction for priority 3 (East Entrance Enclosure) along with Doug Powell and a focus group of members that have been supplying additional input. The Executive Board reviewed those plans at a special meeting on February 29 and voted to approve the solicitation of bids for construction. We are expecting the bids to be submitted by April 12. The congregation will need to give their approval of any plans for construction before we can proceed.

A special congregational meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, April 24 after worship for a vote on the construction plans and bids.

Two sessions are being organized to inform the congregation about the proposed plans for priority 3 construction. The dates for those **informational meetings** have been established as **Sunday, April 3** at noon and **Saturday, April 9** at 1:00 pm. In an effort to be respectful of the time of our architect and the others involved, we are requesting that people identify the session

they would like to attend. If we do not get a significant number of people registered at least 48 hours prior to the informational sessions, the session will be cancelled. The Saturday session is the most likely session to be cancelled if we do not have significant people registered. You can register your attendance on sign-up genius at <http://ow.ly/ZP1YH> or by contacting Katie Bonney at the church office at [\(515\) 232-9323](tel:5152329323).

ODDS & ENDS

Proposal for Restructuring of the Iowa Conference of the UCC

by Pr. Eileen

The United Church of Christ is organized in concentric circles. At the center is each local church, followed by an association, a conference, and then General Synod (the national setting). Ames UCC is part of the Eastern Association of the Iowa Conference.

Each UCC is entirely independent. We own our properties and all other assets. Associations and conferences are opportunities for networking and mutual support. They also play key roles in the licensing and ordination of pastors.

For example, when I moved to Iowa, I had to apply to have my ministerial standing transferred, including an interview with a "committee on ministry." I recently filled out paperwork to continue Pr. Hannah's own standing as a licensed minister.

Conferences are also key in the calling of new pastors and review of those who may not be performing their job appropriately. In the UCC, a church can call anyone to be their pastor, whether ordained and in the UCC or not. The conferences simply retain the right to allow pastors into the national guild, so to speak. During the process that ended with my call to Ames UCC, Associate Conference Minister Jonna Jensen worked closely with both your call committee and me. I now rely on Associate Conference Minister Brigit Stevens for questions about Iowa's norms and professional advice in general. Our Conference Minister, Rich Pleva, will retire on February 1, 2018. As a result



of that, and the pending retirement of another nearby conference minister, the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota conferences have been exploring ways to consolidate the CM position and share resources.

ACM Brigit Stevens recently stopped by one of our Executive Team meetings for an annual hello. She explained that at the church level, we would likely see very little change in our relationships and functions.

Please see the draft proposal here: <http://www.ucciaconf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/DRAFT-Covenant-agreement-3rd-revision-20150922.pdf>

Book Review

by Lynette Spicer

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End

By Atul Gawande, M.D., 2014

This book has been at the top of the New York Times bestseller list for good reason. Dr. Gawande gives case studies of decisions about how to die. He traces the fate of the dying through the last century, the advent of assisted living and the attitude changes of medical professionals. As research provides more medicines and procedures to extend life, we are at a crossroads to think about the length of life vs. the quality of life.

Gawande gives examples from his medical practice and from other doctors. One of his most poignant examples is the story of his parents, both doctors. His father is ill. Can you imagine a hospice worker talking to 3 doctors about end of life decisions? The hospice worker does it with confidence and aplomb.

This book is easy to read and captivating. Whether you think about yourself as you read or a loved one, it gives you confidence that these decisions are hard but lightened by conversations to decide when to switch from fighting for time to fighting for meaningful experiences. What are your fears and hopes? What are the trade-offs you are willing to make? What is the course of action that best serves this understanding?

This is Gawande's third book. He is a surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, a staff writer for *The New Yorker* since 1998, and a professor at Harvard Medical School and the Harvard School of Public Health.

The Ames Public Library has more than 10 copies of the book plus a DVD with the same name, a Frontline PBS program with Dr. Gawande. The UCC library has one copy of the book. Members of the UCC book club discussed *Being Mortal* in February.

Children's Book Review

by Barbara Faidley

"Be Polite and Kind" by Cheri J. Meiners. This book is one book in a series. The series is "Learning to Get Along". The church library has all three books in the series. This picture book shows a little boy in many situations using the words: THANK YOU, PLEASE, EXCUSE ME AND I'M SORRY. He knows when he uses words to help someone feel good that he is showing respect. When I speak polite words people enjoy being around me and it helps me to get along with others. "I want people to treat me with respect so that's how I treat them" says the little boy. At the end of the book there are suggestions for parents on how to reinforce the ideas of the book. There are also several suggested games to play about the concepts in the book. There are even role play situations suggested. The other 2 books in the series are "Understand and Care" and "Share and Take Turns". These books and other similar books can be found in the cubby marked GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS.

Thanksgiving

by Pr. Eileen

It takes a village to raise a child and a city to run a church. Thank you to everyone who helped make worship meaningful through singing, reading, dancing, the creation and installation of fabric arts, hosting Holy Communion, and/or safe-keeping our alleluias. The list below covers the first Sunday after Christmas and Palm Sunday. Any omissions are unintentional.

If you would like to be part of this personal spiritual development and communal spiritual leadership, just let me know: eileen@amesucc.org, 515-232-9323. All are welcome!

Christa Andersen, Allison Anderson, Melissa Askloff

Lee Bauer, Sam Becker, George Belitsos, Kevin Binder, Diane Birt, Ken Birt, Katie Bonney

Oscar Chelcea, Genya Coffey, Laura Deal, Bradley Duckstein, Cornelia Flora, Jan Flora

Jennifer Gelwick-Luecke, Hannah Hannover, Michael Johnson, Emily Kenneke, Dinah Kerksieck, Lesley Lackore, Greg Lamont

Tom Meyer, Laurie Olk, Jim Peake, Lori Peake, Amy Pilcher, Terry Potter, Joseph Rayzor

Ben Schrag, Linda Shenk, Kristin Shields, Bill Slinger, Amy Erica Smith,
Carol Smith, Pat Spangler, Phil Spike, Sunny Stewart

Allen Trenkle, David White, Richard White, Greg Widener, Greg Wool,
Fei Yi, Bill Yungclas

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STAY IN TOUCH

Stay in touch with us throughout the month! Please join us on Facebook,
Twitter, and Instagram @AmesUCC, or send an e-mail to office@amesucc.org
to receive our weekly e-mail announcements.

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