



JAMES UCC COURIER

JANUARY 2016

Beloved community, by the time you read this, we will have lit not only the four Advent candles (hope, peace, joy, and love) and heard again our ancient story of God's unlikely presence in a child. We will have also lit the Christ candle and passed that flame between each other to remind us of the sacred light we all carry with us in the midst of worldly darkness.

Now we look forward to hearing the story of Jesus' public ministry, his betrayal, execution, and God's unlikely presence beyond a tomb. We also look forward to new year: 2016. It will be a challenging year, there is no doubt, between the presidential election, the growing division between the haves and have-nots, war, and the terrorisms of hatred and gun violence. Those hours between 12 p.m. on one Sunday and 10:45 a.m. on the next will tax our strength and may even test our faith.

So be sure to come back. Be sure to come back each Sunday for that sweet hour of prayer and community. Don't worry about how you are dressed, don't worry if the pain of your days shows on your face. Cry if you need to and laugh if you are able to. Sing loudly or simply listen to others sing. Let someone know your name and hold your hand.

Our salvation, which is healing from brokenness, comes to us through a powerless infant and a persecuted man. That means there is nothing we can say or do that can separate us from the love of God. And so loved, there is nothing that anyone else can say or do that will stop us from loving ourselves and each other.

Merry Christmas, dear ones. And a happy, bold, and transformative New Year.



Pr. Eileen

WORSHIP

Welcome Chad Schwickerath to Our Pulpit

Chad Schwickerath will be joining us for worship on Sunday, January 3. Chad grew up in suburban Ankeny, Iowa, and graduated from Iowa State University. With an interest in church politics and a deep spiritual hunger, he attended Princeton Theological Seminary for his Masters of Divinity. Chad's seminary experience transformed his worldview by challenging his preconceived notions of right, wrong, and the expected.



Seminary allowed Chad to expose and explore previously unacknowledged aspects of his identity, his theology, and his understanding of humanity. After graduation, Chad worked for a housing-first agency, providing programming and crisis-management to homeless young adults in Chicago, employing a lens of harm reduction and trauma-informed care. Chad is currently the Annual Fund & Alumni Relations Manager at Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS), one of Ames UCC's mission partners and Pr. Eileen's alma mater. He and his partner live in Hyde Park, Chicago with their feral cat Ira.

"Worshiping with congregations gives me the opportunity to take part in that on-going dialogue between CTS and its supportive churches. It provides opportunity to challenge and be challenged in our work together. It is a constant reminder that the ministry of CTS impacts and is impacted far beyond the walls of our building and the streets of our city. Coming to Ames United Church of Christ is, in a sense, also a homecoming for me. It is a return to the state that raised me and a return to the town where I attended college. I look forward to worshipping with you."



Worship with The Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins 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 will be available at FCC.

SOCIAL JUSTICE & OUTREACH

Theologian-in-Residence

This year, TIR weekend is early: January 30-31, 2016. The Rev. Barry Lynn, Executive Director 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*, will be speaking on religious liberties, church and state, and an analysis of current presidential candidates' views.

Visit amesucc.org/tir to register for a box lunch from The Café for \$11. Lunch registration deadline is January 11, 2016.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Thank You to Youth/Children Christmas Program Participants

Thank you to all the youth and children and their parents who made our Christmas program possible:

Eliana Briseno, Mariela Briseno, Abby Buchele, Jacob Buchele, Jenna Buchele, Adam Chelcea, Oscar Chelcea, Elliot Coffey, Ailis Shenk Cook, Erin Frank, Sarah Frank, Lucy Hannover, Will Hannover, Eli Heginger, Grace Heginger, Adela Johnson, Annelise Johnson, Emma Johnson, Reese Johnson, Adeline O'Neal, Adysen Pingel, Celia Schrag, Eli Schrag, Kathryn Shields, Anna Watts, Oliver Watts, Lamar Wilson

A BIG thank you to Amanda Petefish-Schrag and Ben Schrag for their help in leading this special program!

MEMBER SERVICES

Women's Fellowship

by Barbara Faidley

In January we have 2 dates for Women's Fellowship: January 13 and 27. On both of those dates the women of our church gather in Fellowship Hall from 12 noon to 1:00 p.m. We bring our lunches and have a time of conversation, learning, and being together as a part of our church. We hope all of the women will come together for this time of fellowship. Nanette Heginger will be joining us for both meetings this month. On January 13 she will share with us her experiences at the Refugee Center in Minneapolis and bring some information from the center to share. On January 27 Nanette asked to speak to the group about an opportunity for some physical exercise. She already works with First Methodist on a program and they would like to include us in this opportunity. We hope to see lots of women at our gatherings for these interesting topics.

Library News

by Barbara Faidley

The library work group has been making progress. One of the bookshelves in the library has nine cubbies in it and it is full of General Children's Literature. These books have been sorted into categories. Each of the cubbies has been labeled for the categories in that cubby. Each of the categories has been identified with a certain color and shape of sticker. Each book in that category has that identical sticker on its spine. PARENTS: Please help your children remember not to take the stickers off of the books. This work should help parents find a certain type of book for their child and it will help the library work group return the books to the right location. Our next project is to label all of the Christian Children's Books into categories and put stickers on them also. At our work sessions we continue to process new adult books into the library. When that is done we will finally be able to shelve all of the adult books into categories. So we have lots of work to do yet and we would welcome new people into our work group. The library work group will be meeting on a new day and time starting in January. Look for announcements in the church bulletin and in our e-mail announcements.

Book Club Spring Reading

by Lynette Spicer

The UCC Book Club's meeting day and time has changed to the third Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the library for the new year. Please join us!

January – To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee (1960 fiction, 384 pages)
Discussion leader: Christa Andersen

February -- Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End by Atul Gawande (2014 nonfiction, 304 pages) Discussion leader: Nancy Marks

March -- The Long Walk: A Story of War and the Life That Follows by Brian Castner (2012 nonfiction, 240 pages) Discussion leader: Barbara Faidley

April – I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban by Malala Yousafzai (2014 nonfiction, 368 pages) Discussion leader: Barbara Faidley

May – Reaching Beyond the Waves: The Inspirational Story of One Teacher's Sixth Grade Students' Search for the WWII Survivors of a Downed B-17 by Suzanne Kelly (Local Author, 2015 nonfiction, 346 pages) Discussion leader: Christa Andersen

June -- Select titles for upcoming book club year

PROPERTY & OUR CAMPUS

Quarterly Follow-up on the 150th Capital Campaign
by Doug Powell, Follow-up Chair

Pledges from seventy-seven (77) giving units based on “letters of intent” received by Nancy Heathman, Ames UCC Financial Secretary, total \$840,795. Pledge years run from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 at \$453,922; July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 at \$134,373; July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 at \$114,950; July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 at \$64,350; and July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 at \$20,000.

Prior to 2015, \$53,200 had been given to seed the 150th Capital Campaign. Some of this seed money was used to fund conceptual design as the 150th Capital Campaign Core Team worked with its “qualifications-base selection” for architectural services, Benjamin Design Collaborative. Another portion of this seed money allowed the 150th Capital Campaign Extended Team to hire professional guidance and fund its actual campaign.

Construction (including design) consumes 80% of the money received. Outreach consumes 20% of the money received. The 150th Capital Campaign Core Team will proactively pursue additional pledges from new members and friends so as to more fully realize the eight (8) priorities set forth in our original “master plan” (80%) along with the additional outreach (20%) that is thereby made possible.

As of this writing, Priorities 1 and 2 of the Master Plan have been or will soon be completed. These include deferred maintenance items to remove and replace flat roof areas over the educational wing and to correct roof water effluent damage at the northwest corner of the property with drainage repairs and landscaping; planting to be done next spring through donated materials and labor. Priority 2 is renovation of the Youth Room in the lower level of the educational wing (for which other deferred maintenance regarding drainage and waterproofing needed to be done.) The Youth Room is projected to be in full use by mid-December.

Design of Priority 3 is well underway, and a “focus group” drawn from members of the following core teams will work with our architect, Pastor Eileen, and myself through completion of design and construction: Invitation and Welcome, Properties, Worship and Music, and Christian Education. Design of the New East Entry Enclosure should be ready to take to bid in February with a recommendation to membership submitted through the Executive Board in March, 2016. That would allow construction to start around April 1, 2016, and it should be completed within six to eight months.

Priority 3 program objectives have grown substantially. Some of the east entry and deferred maintenance work in Priority 1 needed to be logistically deferred to Priority 3. Plumbing of the sink in Priority 2 Youth Room was deferred. Youth Room access for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A) should be added, and that work logistically fits with Priority 3. And, finally, secondary egress from the east side of the choir practice room in the northwest lower level must be done logistically with Priority 3, not Priority 7 of the Master Plan.

OUR STAFF

You Are Invited: Pastor Parish Relations Training

By Pr. Eileen

Following best practices and our own by-laws, this January 2016 the Executive Committee and Pr. Eileen has formed a Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) consisting of congregants (see below). One third will serve a one year term and the remaining a two year term in order to have some continuity heading into January 2017.

Our Associate Conference Minister, The Rev. Brigit Stevens will host a PPRC training at the date and time listed above. Although only a handful of congregants will initially serve, she recommends opening the training to the whole church for the sake of transparency and laying the groundwork for future participants.

Our Inaugural Pastor/Parish Relations Committee Members

Christa Andersen (both 2016 and 2017)

Dinah Kerksiek (through the end of 2016)

Allen Trenkle (through the end of 2016)

Phil Spike, Moderator (through the end of 2016, after which he will be replaced by Jennifer Gelwick-Luecke)

Bill Yungclas (both 2016 and 2017)

Below is an excerpt from “Why You Should Develop a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee” Leader Guide by Roy Oswald (2001, The Alban Institute). Please read through it and consider attending the training. RSVP to Pr. Eileen (eileen@amesucc.org, [515-232-9323](tel:515-232-9323)) by December 24, 2015. Thank you!

The most important relationship within congregational life is between pastor and members. There are many ways this relationship can get off track. Each party may enter a relationship thinking that it is going to work, and then a few things happen to throw it off track. Now is the time to inject into this situation an effective pastor-parish relations committee. This committee has no decision-making responsibility. Its sole task is to monitor the quality of the relationship between pastor and congregants. It needs to resist becoming an evaluation committee or a salary review and recommendation committee or, worse still, the channel for all the complaints the congregation has about the pastor. Its task is to try to understand, from the pastor’s point of view, what it is like to be the spiritual leader of this particular congregation.

Who Does What? A Tutorial on Your Church Staff

Katie Bonney is our Church Office Administrator. Katie works 30 hours each week, Mondays through Thursdays. (When Katie joins us for worship, she’s there as a “civilian.”) Her responsibilities include:

- Receptionist
- Publishing the bulletin and newsletter
- Receiving and developing online media and communication for distribution
- Maintaining church membership, attendance, and other records
- Maintaining calendar and facilities use requests
- Support for our Treasurer

Katie is able to provide some support for church groups beyond the duties above, but please give her ample time to work those tasks into her schedule.

David Cook is our Sexton (churchspeak for handy man and custodian). He works 14 hours each week, though his schedule varies according to the needs of the church. His responsibilities include:

- General cleaning of church, usually takes 8 to 9 hours per week.
- Removal of leaves and brush, mowing.
- Snow removal up to 2”, salting and sanding of church sidewalks and steps.
- Repair and upkeep of plumbing, electrical, heating, air conditioning, roof, brickwork.
- Coordination of work done by contractors on church property.
- Maintaining adequate supplies for cleaning, office, maintenance.
- Maintaining documents and files for facilities, supplies, inspections, contracts in the day to day operation of the church.
- Table and chair set up for church sponsored events as needed and directed (the more advanced notice and explicit guidance, the better).
- Clean up before and after church sponsored events.

When planning a special event, please be in touch with David regarding set up and timelines as early as possible in your planning.

Eileen Gebbie is our Senior Minister. She is the church’s only full time employee, working Sundays through Thursdays. Her responsibilities include:

- Preaching and teaching
- Education and discipleship formation
- Pastoral care
- Worship planning, along with the other music and ministerial staff

- Perform weddings and funerals
- Head of staff
- Representing the church in the wider community

Hannah Hannover is our Minister for Children and Families. She works 30 hours each week, Sundays through Thursdays. Her responsibilities include:

- Develop, coordinate, and help lead Sunday School for ages 2 through 5th grade
- Develop and lead the Wednesday Afternoon Club (WAC)
- Develop and lead the Children's Celebration in worship, as well as the in-worship activity packs for children
- Preach and lead worship as needed (no more than quarterly)
- Supervise Nursery Staff
- Organize annual Congregational Dinners
- Pastoral care

Lesley Lackore is our Music Director. She works 5-10 hours each week (depending on the season), between Sunday worship and Wednesday night choir rehearsal, as well as other preparatory and rehearsal times. Her responsibilities include:

- Directing the Chancel Choir
- Arranging for special music
- Leading congregational singing
- Maintaining the music library
- Participating in worship planning, along with other music and ministerial staff

Sunny Stewart is our Instrumentalist for worship (you name it, she will play it). She works 3 hours each week, between Sunday worship and Wednesday night choir rehearsal, as well as other preparatory and rehearsal times. Her responsibilities include:

- Accompanying the Chancel Choir and congregation
- Participating in worship planning, along with other music and ministerial staff

Jean Watts is our Youth Director. She works 3 hours each week, on Sundays. Her responsibilities include:

- Planning and leading Youth Sunday School lessons.
- Planning Youth Group activities.
- Recruiting volunteers to assist with Youth activities.

ODDS & ENDS

Book Review

by Barbara Faidley

God and Government: Twenty-Five Years of Fighting for Equality, Secularism, and Freedom of Conscience by The Rev. Barry Lynn

This is the latest book by Barry Lynn who will be our Theologian-in-Residence the end of January. This book covers many topics and is a review of the many things that Barry Lynn has been involved in over the years. It is a historical record of some of the fights that Americans United has been involved in. Some of the chapter titles include: "Schools are Still a Battlefield, But We are Winning," "The Religious Right," "When Government Officials Pray," "Does the Religious Right Hate Everybody? Answer: Yes," "Faith-Based Funding," and "Religion and Politics."

As one reviewer said, "No one is more on top of the challenges facing the first amendment than Barry Lynn. We are lucky he is paying attention, for no one sees more clearly how important it is that our government and whatever religion you choose to practice remain separated."

The Rev. Barry Lynn is coming to our church and reading his book will help you realize the experiences that he has had to get to where he is now. This book is displayed on a stand in the Church Library. His other book, "Piety and Politics" is also available in the Church Library. Know more about our next Theologian-in-Residence. Come to the library and check out one of his books.

Children's Book Review

by Barbara Faidley

We have a special group of children's books in the library that are meant for adult selection. They are located on the top shelf of our large book shelf. These are special situation books. There are children's books related to death of a grandparent, divorce of parents, HIV infected children, parent in prison, children with special needs. These are books that need to be read and talked about between children and adult. Be aware they are there when something special happens in the life of your child.

One of these books is: "Why Did Grandpa Die?" (A Book about Death) by

Barbara Shook Hazen and illustrated by Pat Schories. At the beginning of the book there is a Note to Parents. The editors, with the help of Bernice Berk, Ph.D., of the Bank Street College of Education, give some suggestions about how to talk to your children about death. The little girl in the book always had a special relationship with her grandpa, and they liked to do the same things and the illustrations show those things. While planting a garden they find a dead butterfly and grandpa tells her that “He is dead now and he does not need to breathe. But it is nice to remember how he was when he was alive.” This book is about feelings: how Molly feels when grandpa does not keep a promise; how she feels when her parents are crying about grandpa’s death; how she feels at the funeral and at the cemetery. The book discusses the grieving process that Molly went through, and how she can keep her grandpa’s memories alive. It is a well done book that provides parents an opportunity to open a discussion with their children at a very difficult time.

Stay In Touch 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.

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

Katie Bonney,
Church Office Administrator
office@amesucc.org

David Cook, Sexton
cookdavi@gmail.com

Jim Dickson, Treasurer
dje49@opencom.net

Eileen Gebbie, Minister
eileen@amesucc.org / Ext 11

Hannah Hannover,
Minister to Children & Families
hannah@amesucc.org / Ext 12

Nancy Heathman, Financial Secretary
heathman@mediacombb.net

Lesley Lackore, Music Director
llackore@gmail.com

Karen “Sunny” Stewart, Keyboardist
kstewart@ames.k12.ia.us

Jean Watts, Youth Director
jean@amesucc.org

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Ames United Church of Christ
217 Sixth Street
Ames, IA 50010

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