



Lent came quickly this year. Having said that, though, it seems to come quickly every year. There is barely time to sit in Christmas' afterglow before Jesus is grown up, baptized, and in public ministry. In just six weeks we will walk through his worst, and our holiest, week, then celebrate the mystery and joy of Easter morning.

It all comes and goes so quickly.

I think that might be why spiritual disciplines are so important, whether it be prayer or worship or reading or Bible study or meditation. The few moments each day and week we take to be aware of God not only keeps us in touch with the divine, but readies our souls for the gifts of our tradition.

On Wednesday during Lent we will take a collective pause with supper, study, and meditation. I hope that you will come to one of the elements each week, if not all three. Spiritual disciplines can be hard to sustain on our own but seeing with our own eyes that we are not alone in the effort to hear our still speaking God is encouragement beyond measure.

On our first Sunday in Lent, young Sam took our "alleluia" home. He will bring it back on Easter morning. But let's not let the absence of "yay God" in worship prevent us from giving thanks for this time, for each other, and for God.

Pr. Eileen

## WORSHIP

### Meet the Members of WAM

by Elaine Hieber

This is the first in a series of articles by the members of the Worship and Music Core Team (WAM). The nine members are a diverse group in age, ranging from 16 to 80, as well as in backgrounds and interests. We have a grandmother and her grand daughter (Peg and Abby), a former minister (Dale), an expert on Shakespeare who is called Dr. Shenkspeare by her students (Linda), a pottery artist (Greg), a crop consultant (Kim), a hospital dietician (Donna), an author of an instructor's manual for a college level biology textbook (Carla) a retired senior associate athletic director (Elaine), the office administrator of the Ames Unitarian church (Bradley), and a member of the choir and YSS Diversity Task Force (Pat). Though diverse in many ways, there is at least one unifying theme among them, the desire to serve our church and God through assisting the pastors, music staff and liturgists in the planning and execution of its services, and to do all we can to provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere to all who join us in worship. To paraphrase the thoughts of our team chair, WAM's work is like the poetry of church. Not only does experiencing the visual and musical elements in service help us feel the presence of God, but getting to help plan and "make happen" those meaningful, often beautiful or haunting elements lets us write part of the poem, too.

More on WAM's responsibilities next month.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE & OUTREACH

### Good Neighbors Emergency Assistance

The SoJO team is seeking a board member for Good Neighbors Emergency Assistance (GNEA, <http://www.gnea.org/>). Ames UCC has a long history of representation on the GNEA Board. Judy Blair, who has been a board member since Kevin Voit stepped down when they moved to Wisconsin, recently stepped down because of her health. Board members are expected to attend up to 10 meetings annually, provide advice and help with fundraising. Board members set their own terms with the term often being three years.

Diane Birt (dbirt@ames.gmail.com) will be happy to talk with anyone who would consider serving on their board or who wishes to nominate someone. UCC is not required to have a board member but SOJO hopes that UCC can continue this level of support to GNEA.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



### Learning Center Topics for March

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 classrooms.

- March 6: God Talk hosted by Pr. Eileen. This month's topic is sin.
- March 13: Emergency Residence Project's work with families, featuring ERP staff member Troy
- March 20: A Palm Sunday intergenerational even hosted by Pr. Hannah.
- March 27: Easter Sunday! No program.

### Palm Sunday Celebration

Join the Christian Education Team on Palm Sunday morning, Sunday, March 20, for our annual Palm Sunday Celebration! We'll meet in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 a.m. There will be many crafts for children, youth, and adults of all ages. A light breakfast will be provided. This is a time of crafting and fellowship as we prepare together for the beginning of Holy Week.

## Easter Egg Hunt and Help Filling Easter Eggs

Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place at 10:00 a.m. on Easter Sunday morning (March 27)! We will meet in the Fellowship Hall before going out to hunt hundreds of eggs! Be sure to bring your own basket or bag to gather all of your findings! All children, grandchildren, friends, and youth are invited to join us!

We need help filling hundreds of these Easter eggs for our annual hunt! If you are willing to help, we would appreciate individually wrapped candy, stickers, or small toys that can fit inside a plastic egg. There will be a basket in the parlor for your donations. Thank you for your generous support!

### Congregational Dinners

We are looking for people willing to host a Spring Congregational Dinner in their home! The dates for the dinners are April 15-17 & April 22-24. Hosts are responsible for opening up their home to others within our congregation for a time of food and fellowship. Twice a year we get together for congregational dinners as a way to get to know one another better outside of our church walls. If you are interested in hosting, please contact Hannah ([hannah@amesucc.org](mailto:hannah@amesucc.org)).

### Wednesday Afternoon Club

In February our Wednesday Afternoon Club (WAC) kids had a great time making and delivering valentines to some of our friends at Ames UCC! The children spent a lot of time carefully crafting each of their valentines to make sure they were unique and special. Ellen Barnhart helped Hannah drive the children around to make the deliveries. It brought our children so much joy to share their special greetings!

## Godly Play

by Pr. Eileen

Last month I had the opportunity to participate in a Sunday morning's Godly Play session. Godly Play is a curriculum that utilizes objects, ritual, space, and activities in order to stimulate wonder and wondering.



On this particular morning, the story was baptism. After the children sat in their circle, each on a special mat, the teacher, Genya, began to wonder out loud where the story was located in the room. This is clearly part of the Godly Play technique: "Where is the story about baptism? Is it in the liturgical area? No. Is it in the Psalms area? No. That's right! It is in the sacramental area." Everything, from how the story is told to where the story's supplies are stored, help children to learn the layers and nuances of our faith.

Genya laid out three felt circles, naming each of the parts of the Trinity as she did. She then put symbols on each circle: a Christ candle, a wooden bird and scented oil, and a pitcher with water and bowl. My first favorite part was how she explained the Holy Spirit. After she moved the wooden bird through the air, she had the kids smell the oil: You can't always see the Holy Spirit, but like this smell, you know it is there.

The children then named a baby doll and watched as Genya baptized it. She lit a candle (similar to the ones we use on Christmas Eve) from the Christ candle to symbolize the doll's baptism. Then each child said their own names and lit a candle (some held onto them, some preferred to have them set into a bowl with sand).

Then came my second favorite moment: rather than just blowing out the candles, and so blowing out the blessing of baptism, Genya explained that the light was simply being transformed. Using a candle snuffer, the kids could see how the flame became smoke. And smoke, Genya explained, moves all around us, bumping into us when we least expect it.

Genya then invited the children to think about what they wanted to "wonder on" for the rest of their time and then go do it: drawing, playing with another story's elements, hearing the baptism story again. (The desert stories' sand box is a perennial hit, I learned.)

The sacrament of baptism is complex and Godly Play doesn't dumb it down for kids. Neither does it tell them how they should think or what they should believe. Instead, they meet the elements with all of their senses and are given permission to respond in their own way – and as that smoky, bumpy blessing guides them. The kids were completely absorbed the entire time and so was I.

I hope that you will consider being trained as a Godly Play teacher. I guarantee you will be blessed to offer that blessing.

## Theologian in Residence 2016 and 2017 Report

by Charles Kniker, Coordinator of the Theologian in Residence Committee



*Rev. Barry Lynn speaks on January 30th at the Theologian in Residence program.*

### The Impact of the 2016 Program

The TIR Weekend of 2016 occurred on Saturday, January 30 and Sunday, January 31, 2016. The following day, February 1, were the Iowa Caucuses. Barry Lynn, a United Church of Christ minister and lawyer who serves as the Executive Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Washington, DC. was the Theologian. On Saturday, his three presentations were on: a) the history of church-state relations in the USA – it began with schooling issues; b) an analysis of "religious liberties statements by presidential candidates; and c) the future of First Amendment religion rights. An estimated 135 attendees were present for the first and second presentations.

At 9:00 a.m. Sunday a new feature of the TIR Weekend occurred – a panel discussion on the current status of Religious Liberties. Connie Ryan of the Iowa Interfaith Alliance moderated the panel. In addition to Rev. Lynn, panelists included Dr. Hector Avalos of Iowa State (a fundamentalist preacher as a child, now an atheist), who teaches the Bible courses at ISU; Dr. Michael Waggoner of the University of Northern Iowa, who prepares school administrators who is the editor of *Religion & Education*, and Mr. Church Hurley, Vice-President of The Family Leader, an organization opposed to same-sex marriage and supporter of ministers endorsing political candidates (even though that is illegal for non-profit organizations to do under current law). Almost 90 persons attended that program. Many favorable comments were received, for the moderator, for the balance of the panel, and the manner for receiving questions. Rev. Lynn's sermon was timely: "Proof-texting with Passion: How the Bible Is Used for Political Positions." At 4 p.m., Rev. Lynn gave a lecture at Iowa State University as one in a series, "When American Values Are in Conflict."

Attendees came from 18 other Iowa cities and one state (Maine). Approximately 85 persons ordered box lunches. Over 40 members of the Ames UCC volunteered to help with the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual program. They included: Ellen Barnhart, Steve Barnhart, Jane Baty, John Baty, Janet Binder, Diane Birt, Ken Birt, Jerry Chase, Barbara Faidley, Cornelia Flora, Jan Flora, Beverly Gelwick, Bob Kerksieck, Dinah Kerksieck, Bill LaGrange, Greg Lamont, Sue Lamont, Greg Luecke, Doug Powell, Peg Powell, Kristin Shields, Galina Spike, Phil Spike, Donna Starck, Carl Tipton, Tania Tipton, David White, Barbara Yungclas, Bill Yungclas

#### Financial Support for the TIR Program

A \$5000 gift was received for the Theologian-in-Residence Endowment Fund. Iowa State University covered hotel expenses. While not all bills have been processed, we believe all the expenses will be covered. For the second year in a row, the Central Association provided financial support for the TIR program with a \$1000.00 contribution. The total income for the TIR program this year is still being calculated.

#### The 2017 Theologian-in-Residence Program

Retired Episcopal priest and former journalist, Harry T. Cook, will be the next Theologian. The tentative theme of this biblical scholar will be an analysis of New Testament passages with special attention to who was Jesus. He is in the mold of Bishop John Spong and Randall Balmer, previous TIRs. The dates of the TIR Weekend are March 4-5, 2017.

## MEMBER SERVICES



### Pastoral Care & Pastoral Emergencies: What Are They?

By Pr. Eileen

Recently Pr. Hannah asked me how I would define "pastoral care" and "pastoral emergencies." As both phrases (and concepts) are less and less common in daily life, I thought I would share my understanding with all of you, too.

Pastoral Care, given by myself and Pr. Hannah, is a form of accompaniment. We are not trained counselors, but loving witnesses to the burdens you carry. We are physical reminders of God's actual presence in your life. We provide pastoral care through formal conversations (coffee, lunch) and informal ones during the regular life of the church. At its heart, pastoral care is prayerful, non-judgmental listening.

Pastoral Emergencies are sudden life events that might benefit from such prayer and listening. They can take many forms: illness, accidents, death, arrest, incarceration, military deployment, crises in relationships, and struggles in parenting (or being parented). Please note: historically, local hospitals notified clergy when congregants were admitted. They now only do so on direct request.

In order to serve you in such times, we have a 24-hour voice mail number: 515-428-1779. Call that number, leave a message with your concern and contact number, and the on-call pastor will respond as soon as she is able.

If your need is during regular office hours (Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.), or if you are calling to make a non-emergency appointment, please use 515-232-9323. Questions about a meeting time or location, or a Sunday morning detail are not emergencies.

Neither Pr. Hannah nor I ever wish a crisis for you or those you love. But it is our honor to know you and love you all your lives long and to come alongside you when crises inevitably emerge.

## Women's Fellowship

by Barbara Faidley

Women's Fellowship will meet on March 9 and March 30 from 12:00 p.m. noon to 1:00 p.m.. That is the second and fifth Wednesday of this month. The fourth Wednesday happens to be during Holy Week which is extremely busy with many church services and activities to participate in. March is Women's History month and March 8 (the day before our meeting) is International Woman's Day. We will be doing an activity related to one of those events. Remember to bring your lunch. Come join us to celebrate women around the world.

The meeting on March 30 will a sharing of joys and concerns and getting to know each other better—so we can form a community of the women of our church.

Women's Fellowship is hosting the Lenten supper on March 16. Sign up on line or call Barbara Faidley at 515-233-3874 for sign-up.

The subject has been brought up about changing the day of the week that Women's Fellowship meets. By meeting on Wednesday, some of the women miss the first part of the meeting because of their dedication to Bell Ringing. What are your thoughts about meeting on the second and fourth Thursday instead of Wednesday? Please e-mail, call or talk with Barbara Faidley about this. Maybe we can try it out in April after some discussion about it in March.

## Lenten Soup Suppers

Our Lenten soup suppers continue on March 2nd, 9th and 16th at 5:30. The following groups will take the lead in providing food and getting the tables set for the Wednesday night meal. However, everyone is welcome to contribute to any of our upcoming meals. Please go to SignUpGenius if you would like to help in the kitchen or bring soup, bread, veggies, or milk.

March 2: Sojo and Executive Board Officers

March 9: Worship and Music, Member Services

March 16: Women's Fellowship and Property

Please contact Kristin Shields at [sleepycat@hotmail.com](mailto:sleepycat@hotmail.com) or call 292-9125 if you have difficulties with the SignUpGenius.

## Library News

by Barbara Faidley

There have many changes in the Church Library recently. We have installed 2 new book shelves in the Church Library itself and we have installed a new book shelf in the Church Parlor. This book shelf in the parlor will be used to display a variety of books from the Church Library. The Book Review books from the church newsletter will be displayed on this shelf. All of these books are available for check out and I hope people take advantage of this opportunity to read some of the top quality books we have in the church library. Our Church Library has become a cozy place to sit before church, a place to hold small meetings or book club. Come in and check it out.

We still have lots of projects pending to make the library an easy to use facility for children and adults. If you are looking for a certain themed children's books the categories above the cubbies will give you an idea of the types of books in that cubby. The library is becoming more user-friendly. The library work group will continue to meet at least twice a month or even weekly. Look for announcements in the e-mail weekly news and in the church bulletin. We welcome anyone who has some extra time and interest in books.

## Book Club

by Barbara Faidley

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!

The book this month is "The Long Walk: A story of War and the Life That Follows" by Brian Castner. The author served 3 tours of duty in the Middle East. He talks of his job in the war as the head of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit. It also is a portrayal of the toll war exacts on the men and women who are fighting it. If you are interested in reading the book we will have copies of it available. Contact Barbara Faidley at 233-3874 if you would like to borrow a copy of the book. Book Club will meet on Wednesday, March 16 at 2.00 pm in the Church Library.

# FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

## Stewardship Moment from Sunday, February 14

by Allen Trenkle

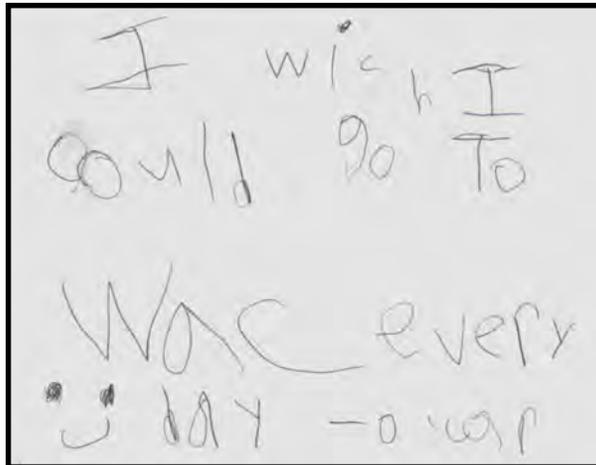
I have been blessed in so many ways in my lifetime. Church is important for me to praise God for the love and all that has been provided for me. I need church to discern the presence of God in my life. God's presence for me might be in the excitement of children up here each Sunday, the music, the message in the sermon, Bible study, a baby in the arms of parents sitting in the pews, the willingness of youth to share their talents, these banners, this cross, the welcoming conversations in the parlor, a friendly greeting from a congregant at FareWay grocery, the thank you in the facial expression of a person opening the door to receive their meal on wheels or my sitting at the dining room table at Emergency Residence making a decision about signing a check to help a young mother in need. I could not experience God without this church and staff. Successful church also needs people sharing their talents in the spirit of community. Thanks be to God.

## Why We Give

by Amy Erica Smith

Before I tell you why I give to the Ames UCC, I need to tell you how much my family receives from this community. At church, my kids find friendly grownups who know them and try to model loving behavior that is engaged in the world. Though we don't always put it in these words, I believe we as a community

are trying to model what we think Jesus would want children to see. Practically speaking, the church helps me take care of my kids, and Pastors Hannah and Eileen are an important part of our support network. And as you can see in this note Oscar wrote, he loves our church--he wishes the Wednesday Afternoon Club (WAC) were every day!



Beyond my kids, I also get a lot out of our church, spiritually and intellectually, and I think our church can model a more inclusive, loving Christianity to the Ames community.

So why do I share my money and time with the church? The best things we get from church are, to quote MasterCard, priceless. Volunteer labor is also very, very important to our church, and I share my time. But as MasterCard would have you know, a lot of things cost money--including the building where we worship and gather and the time of the pastors who help all of us live out love and faith in community. An older generation was taught they **had** to give to the church. My generation certainly doesn't think we are obligated to attend or give to churches. For those of us who receive intangible and tangible things from this church, though, it's really important to give what we can--in time and money. By giving, we grow our community's capacity and sustain the people and physical space that nurture us. For some of us, this means tithing \$1,000 a month or more. For most of us, it doesn't. The important thing is for all of us give time and money in the measure we are able, seriously reflecting on our own capacity. I have faith that together we will sustain and grow our community.

# PROPERTY & OUR CAMPUS

## I'm Not Scared, I'm Prepared

By Pr. Eileen

This year our Worship and Ministry Team (WAM) are working to assess and update our church's emergency preparedness be it for a fire, tornado, medical emergency, or lost child. In conjunction with that, I have arranged for our church to have "active shooter" training for both adults and children with Ames Police Department Officer Nick Schieffer.

Officer Schieffer, in addition to being a police officer, is the resource officer for the Ames Middle School and the father of a six year old. He is formally certified in ALICE: Alert Lockdown Inform Counter Evacuate (learn more here: <http://www.amazon.com/Im-Not-Scared-Prepared/dp/1937870286>). ALICE is the standard for public schools and currently in use in the Nevada district. Our Youth Director, Jean Watts, has had her own 5 year old go through that training and reports that it is not scary for children.

The session for adults will be on Sunday, April 10 from 9:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Childcare/Sunday School will start early on that day so that parents may attend.

The session for children, whose parents/guardians want them to participate, will be on Sunday, April 24 at 9:30 a.m. and lasts only 30 minutes. We will have a separate option for non-participating kids.

I know that this does not feel good. I know that it feels bad to live in a world where people go into public spaces to terrorize and kill others—even Christians at Bible study, even children. But my hope is that we will choose to set aside our fear, our sorrow, and even anger, in order to be prepared.

## ODDS & ENDS

### Book Review

by Lynette Spicer

“A Time to Mourn, a Time to Dance: Help for the Losses in Life” by Margaret Metzgar, The author is the founder and primary therapist at the Transition and Loss Center in Seattle, Washington. She specializes in working with individuals, families, children and groups dealing with issues of crisis, loss and transition. This book has four sections: 1) Your journey through grief, 2) The different faces of loss, 3) Giving Help to others and 4) Additional Resources. In this book the author will explore significant losses. She looks at the grief that comes from death, divorce, unemployment and other important losses that may impact your life. She looks at how it feels and how it affects our lives and the lives of those around us. She searches with the reader to find a meaning to grief. And she looks at coping strategies that would help to lessen the pain and promote healing. In the last section she also suggests resources for when the journey seems too difficult to be traveled alone. These include a chart for your own Personal Circle of Support, selected Bible readings for certain types of loss and also National support resources and additional books. This book is for anyone who wants to understand grief; grievers as well as persons who want to improve their ability to help those who are experiencing a loss.

## Children's Book Review

by Barbara Faidley

“The Mitten” adapted and illustrated by Jan Brett. This story is a Ukrainian folktale where a boy named Nicki loses his snow-white mitten in the snow. He can't find it in the snow . . . but the woodland animals do! The author Jan Brett travels around the world to research the architecture and costumes that appear in her pictures. Each 2 page spread in the book has a main illustration and on each side there are two small drawings. In each of these small drawings she draws things that will be happening on the next large picture. Her illustrations are incredibly realistic and detailed. Even though the book is meant for children, adults enjoy reading it for the realistic details in the illustrations. Jan Brett has a website which has more than 2,900 free coloring sheets, activities, etc. on it. The website is [www.janbrett.com](http://www.janbrett.com). This is a classic winter tale by an extremely talented writer and illustrator.

# 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.

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No.153  
Ames, IA 50010

## 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

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

Return Service Requested