



# AMES UCC COURIER

OCTOBER 2016

## WORSHIP

### Learn About the Worship & Music Team

Much of the work of Worship and Music is behind the scenes, but its work speaks loudly to the fiber of our worship services and church atmosphere. Our team is committed to ensure that we have relevant, meaningful worship experiences, strong music programs, and a welcoming atmosphere to enhance our faith practice. 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, and acolytes, tracking attendance, maintaining the supplies and materials needed for worship, and operating the audio system and video recording equipment as needed. 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.

Team Coordinator Linda Shenk, Vice Coordinator Elaine Hieber, Core team Dale Shenefeld, Donna Stark, Kim/Pat Spangler, Greg Lamont, Peg Powell, Abby Buchele, Bradley Duckstein

### Announcing... Listening Sessions!

In February of 2016, Pastor Eileen provided each of the seven teams with a book by David McMahill, *Completing the Circle*. The book provides a process by which a congregation can conduct an overall evaluation of congregational life. It outlines a three-year cycle that encompasses many phases of church life, providing a framework to foster healthy communication and planning within congregations—often in areas where ministers devote much of their time. It can serve as an important resource for a congregation's planning cycle.

The primary objective of the book is to pursue a process that results in stronger congregational mission and ministry. As a key aspect of this process are listening sessions where congregants get together in small, facilitated focus groups to share their first hand experiences and listen to the experiences of others. Unlike situations focused on providing evaluative comments meant to assess a minister or a situation, these sessions are designed to create positive conversation to discover interest and share personal experiences.



On September 11, 2016, Ames UCC presented a check for \$12,000 to Project Iowa. These funds are a portion of the 20% raised in our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Capital Campaign, which have been allocated for giving throughout the community. Previous gifts include \$22,000 to Primary Health Care, \$15,000 to the Emergency Residence Shelter, \$13,000 to Food at First, and \$40,000 to Habitat for Humanity of Central Iowa.

To implement this process, Worship and Music will be conducting two listening sessions for 10-12 members with a particular focus on discussing congregants' experiences in a key element of our congregational mission: lay-led worship.

The discussion will be focused around questions such as the following:

- What about our worship service, for you, best shows our commitment to be a congregational church, where we are all ministers?
- What specific lay-led moments or practices in worship have been particularly meaningful for you?
- What new practices/ideas do you think we, as the congregation, could take on ...even occasionally...during worship?

Following the sessions, the Worship and Music Team will provide a summary of what was shared with both the congregation and the Executive Board. Interested in joining one of these conversations? Tentative dates are October 23 and November 6, both at 9:30. The sessions will last approximately one hour and will be held in room 104. Please contact Elaine Hieber at [jehieber@gmail.com](mailto:jehieber@gmail.com) by Oct 17 if you are interested.

## Request for Volunteers to Usher and Greet

We are in need of volunteers to help with ushering and greeting throughout the fall. Helping with this part of worship is easy and not time-consuming—you need not have any prior training... just a smile! Willing to help? Ideally, please use the website SignUp Genius that we have set up to take care of these opportunities. It takes only a minute or two to set up an account, and you can even have an email reminder sent to you. Here is the link for the online sign-up sheet: <http://bit.ly/2a2BXOq>

If you would prefer contacting us directly to sign up, please contact Linda Shenk at [lshenk@gmail.com](mailto:lshenk@gmail.com).

**Special thanks to those who ushered/greeted over the summer:** Ellen Barnhart, Steve Barnhart, Abby Buchele, Janet Binder, Kevin Binder, Nancy Clark, Kermit Dirks, Trudy Dirks, Irene Dohrmann, Boyd Dohrmann, Debi Ford, Elaine Hieber, Diana McHenry, Tom Meyer, Peg Powell, Dale Shenefelt, Ginny Shenk, Linda Shenk, Kim Spangler, Pat Spangler, and Allen Trenkle.

## Emergency Preparedness

1. We are gathering emergency supplies to have in the basement should we experience a weather emergency that requires us to seek shelter. As we gather emergency supplies, we would really appreciate donations of the following items:

- flashlights/lanterns
- AA batteries (ideally still in the package to keep out moisture)
- clean tarps
- clean water jugs (even ones from purchased distilled water)
- package of plastic cups

If you are willing to donate any of these items, please feel free to bring them to church and give them to Linda Shenk.

2. A group of team members from WAM and Property are working on a series of items related to emergency preparedness such as drafting a handbook for emergency procedures and creating signage to indicate exits and path to the basement (for extreme weather warnings). Many thanks to Nanette Heginger, Greg Lamont, Terry Potter, Linda Shenk, Kim Spangler, and Justin Watts for their work on this set of projects.

## Why I Serve on the Worship and Music Team

by Greg Lamont

In recent articles in this newsletter, other members of the core Worship and Music team have eloquently described what the WAM team does to provide a meaningful and uplifting worship experience each Sunday and what it means to them personally. I will just add to this by saying that, for me, the music in our church has always been an important part of the worship experience. When my wife, Sue, and I first visited the Ames UCC 33 years ago, it was the friendly and warm greetings from Harriet Goslin, and others that first caught our attention. But it was the music presented during the service that moved me. I joined the choir shortly thereafter and soon found myself serving on the Music Committee.

I continue to sing in the choir, provide special music on occasion, and now serve on the WAM team because I continue to believe that it is vitally important that our church continue to provide a strong ministry of music as part of our worship. I serve because it is important to me that I use my God-given talent and my time to grow our church and to be a part of something larger than myself.

It's been said "teamwork will make the dream work". Our church cannot function without help from people within the congregation. Behind each and every service or activity is a team of people working together by using their gifts and passions to serve God and one another. If you like to sing and/or play a musical instrument and feel called to contribute to this very important part of the worship experience, I want to encourage you to consider joining me in this ministry by singing in the choir or by volunteering to provide special music. We need and welcome you! Contact any WAM member, choir member, Music Director Lesley Lackore or Keyboardist Sunny Stewart for more information.

## Order Your 2016 Advent Devotional

Wolves and Lambs: Advent Devotional 2016 from the UCC Stillspeaking Writers' Group is not a typical—or tame—Advent devotional. This unique collection of Advent devotions will push and challenge you through the season as much as it will inspire and enlighten you.

Wolves and Lambs begins on the first Sunday of Advent (November 27) and includes a scripture verse and prayer for each day of Advent and Christmas Day.

Devotional titles include:

- Wolves Are Coming
- Locusts and Chocolate
- Rats and Cats Rejoicing Together
- Preaching to the Choir
- A House for the Homeless Messiah
- Holy Applause

"We think the image of a wolf and a lamb lying down together should be comforting, yes, even sweet. But it should also be deeply unnerving. As the first Christmas was. As this one will be, if Isaiah and God—and we—have anything to say about it."

Devotionals are \$4 each and must be reserved by Sunday, November 6. Just call or e-mail Pr. Eileen to let her know how many you would like (515-232-9323, eileen@amesucc.org).

## When Do You Pray?

by Pat Spangler

Last month during a children's sermon, Pastor Hannah talked about prayer. When she asked the children if they prayed, they all nodded or murmured "Yes". But when she asked "**When do you pray?**" she was answered with silence. After a few moments the congregation heard a little voice respond, "When we put up Christmas decorations." The parishoners responded with a hearty laugh!

Driving home after church Kim and I were talking about the child's answer about praying when we put up Christmas decorations. Kim said "That child probably witnessed a stressful situation." I agreed. I know that I should pray when I put up Christmas decorations. A tradition so lovely as decorating for Christmas should be a joy, but how many times hasn't it been an exhausting task.

As an adult whenever I hear the question "When do you pray?" my first reaction is when I'm in trouble. But I need to be prayerful ALWAYS and not take for granted that lovely holiday traditions will always go as I hope. As we welcome fall traditions, Thanksgiving and Christmas I must be prayerful about these traditions. Are they worthy of my time and energy?

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### Learn About the Christian Education Team

The overall responsibility of the CE team is to assist Pastors Eileen and Hannah create, foster, and facilitate educational programs for all ages. Whether your interest is supporting CE activities and/or CE growth within our church, join the Christian Education team this fall. (Team Coordinator Genya Coffey, Vice Coordinator Ellen Barnhart, Core Team Gordon Knight & Kris Strum)

## Learning Center for October

### Oct. 9 Update on 150th Capital Campaign

Diane Birt was the campaign administrator and currently chairs the Social Justice and Outreach team. Diane will provide an update on the outreach funds distributed and plans for future outreach funds as members and friends continue to contribute to the campaign.

Doug Powell serves as the follow-up chair for the capital campaign. He reports campaign income and expenditures quarterly to the Executive Board and to the campaign consultant. Doug has also been volunteering as the congregation's design and construction liaison working with Benjamin Design Collaborative, the City of Ames, and various contractors as appointed and directed by the moderator.

Ken Birt is chairing a newly-formed task force which will recommend options to move forward with construction in a time of heightened construction in central Iowa. The task force had its first meeting August 23.

Moderator Phil Spike will introduce the speakers and explain the roles. Come find out about recent developments. Bring your questions and comments.

### Oct. 16 The international role of women in climate change with Cornelia Flora

### Oct. 23 Were we founded as a Christian nation? with Charles Kniker

## Manna & Mercy: Learn the Bible with a Coloring Book

If you are unfamiliar with the arc of our Bible's story, or would like a refresher, join Pr. Eileen for a 6-week study of Genesis through Revelation using Daniel Erlander's "Manna and Mercy" adult coloring book. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall from 7–8:30 p.m. on the following Wednesdays: October 19 and 26, and November 2, 9, 16, and 23.

Childcare will be provided if requested by Sunday, October 2. Please also reserve your copy of the book by Sunday, October 2. There will be a \$10 charge, with a few copies available for those for whom this is a hardship. Either e-mail (eileen@amesucc.org) or call (515.232.9323) Pr. Eileen. Thank you!

## Meals for Youth Group

by Jean Watts, Youth Director

I am coordinating Sunday night dinner for the youth group. We will need dinner for about 12 people. The meals should arrive at the church kitchen by 5pm, or you can make alternate plans with me. Dessert is optional but we do require a vegetarian option. Some meal suggestions are: tacos, pasta, sandwich bar, pizza, soup, breakfast for dinner, macaroni and cheese, baked potato bar. Sign up at <http://bit.ly/2crG3PE> Thank you!

## SOCIAL JUSTICE AND OUTREACH

### Learn about the Social Justice and Outreach Team

We research and communicate local, regional, and global social justice issues and needs to the congregation and to the Ames community. They recommend special collections to the congregation and decide how funds collected for local and regional outreach should be disbursed. Current emphases have been in the area of local social justice initiatives, including affordable housing and job training, largely coordinated through A-Mid Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS). Re-energizing our Congregational Green team and seeking to resettle refugees have also received attention in the past year. (Team Coordinator Diane Birt, Vice Coordinator Jan Flora, Core Team Linda Hanson, George Belitsos, Jeremy McMahon)

### Updates from the SoJO Team

The purpose of the Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance (AIRA) is to resettle refugees in Ames, Iowa. George Belitsos and Diane Birt are the Ames UCC participants in the AIRA. The group has met with Carly Ross, the Director of the US Committee for refugees and Immigrants in Des Moines, and learned that she is agreeable to applying to the State Department to be able to settle refugees in Ames. We met with Ames City Council member Tim Gartin and learned that in November of 2015 the City Council passed a resolution supporting refugee resettlement in Ames. The AIRA expects it will take about 2 years before we will be able to settle refugees here. An early step will be to have a town meeting to discuss refugee resettlement. If you are interested in joining the Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance contact Diane Birt or George Belitsos.



A key focus for A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS) at this time is to prepare to have a Project Iowa training class in or near Ames. There are several things that must be done to prepare for this training: employers need to be identified, participants recruited, training set up and financing established. Ames UCC donated \$12,000 to Project Iowa but more funding will certainly be needed to continue the ongoing training in Des Moines as well as expand to Ames. A task group has been formed and if you are interested in working with this group contact Jan Flora.

We have been informed by Sandi Risdal, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity of Central Iowa that they are seeking assistance for the construction work on the Wellons house, the Habitat house that was purchased in part with the \$40,000 donation from Ames UCC. Ken Birt has agreed to coordinate volunteers to help with the construction from Ames UCC. Contact him with your interest.

## MEMBER SERVICES

### Learn about the Member Services Team

We are the party people. This year we provided treats for our Christmas Carolers, hosted an ice cream social at Roosevelt Park, and are planning a chili and pie dinner in October. Our activities are not always food related. Some past events have included attending an Iowa Cubs baseball game, visiting a local Hindu Temple, and an overnight retreat at Pilgrim Heights. We make sure we have volunteers for Coffee Fellowship and organize the Lenten Soup suppers. (Team Coordinator Laura Beason, Vice Coordinator Irene Dohrmann, Core team, Kristin Shields, Bonnie Trede, Ami Frank, & Donna Shenefelt)

### Women's Fellowship

In the month of October we will have 2 meetings of Women's Fellowship on October 12 and October 26. On October 12 we will have a Joys and Concerns gathering in Room 104 as Fellowship Hall will be arranged for our Holiday and Cookie sale. On October 26, we will be visiting the Israel Family Hospice House. Pauletti Lasley who is our hostess for the day, has arranged for a lecture and a tour of the facility and also a place to eat our lunch. You can drive to Hospice House at 400 South Dakota Ave. and meet us there at 12:15 p.m. We will also carpool from the church parking lot, leaving at 11:50 a.m. Meet us there so we

can go together. We will try to have 2 cars to fill with passengers. If you have any questions please call Barbara Faidley, 515-233-3874.

### Holiday Hoopla and Cookies Galore

Please continue to bring donations to the choir room so they can be sorted and priced before the sale. We need anything related to Christmas and other seasons and holidays during the year. Nearly new gift items are also being accepted. The Sale is Saturday, October 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Pauletti Lasley has volunteered to help coordinate the Cookie part of the sale. We will be asking as many people as possible to bake cookies for us. There will be a place online to sign up to make cookies and we will also be signing up people during coffee time in the Church Parlor. We will want to know what kind of cookies or bars that will be baked, if they are peanut free or gluten free and if they need to be picked up by a church member before the sale. If someone could make holiday cookies for Halloween that would be fun. We will also need people to volunteer to work at the sale. We will need cashiers and floaters to help our shoppers. We will also need help setting up tables the Saturday before the sale, cleaning up after the sale on Monday morning. Think about volunteering for one of those jobs. Sign-up online will be available and there will sign-ups in the parlor after church. If you have any questions about the sale please call Barbara Faidley at 233-3874.

### It's Time for Reading and Discussing

The UCC Book Club welcomes all readers and even those who just want to hear the discussion. The group meets in the church library on the third Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m.

October 19 – *The Summer Before the War* by Helen Simonson (2016 fiction, 496 pages) Discussion leader: Lynette Spicer

This witty character study of how a small English town reacts to the 1914 arrival of its first female teacher is a story of a family, a town, and a world in their final moments of innocence. The Washington Post review called it “a novel to cure your Downton Abbey withdrawal”.

### Chili and Pie Fest

There is an October chill in the air which means it is time for our chili and pie fest. Get out your old favorite recipes or try a new adventurous one. Chili

soups and pies of all kinds are encouraged and welcomed. Our members are happy to try them all. We will gather on October 22nd at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Hope to see you there!

## Library News

During the past year, the library work group has been busy sorting books, processing new books and re-organizing the Church Library. As we organized the Church Library Treasure Hunt that the Women's Fellowship participated in, we have finally come up with a list of Topics of Interest. We also labeled each of the bookshelves in the library so items could be found easier. Come in and explore the "new" library. Following is a list of Topics of Interest for the Adult Books in the Library. Next month I will include the list of topics for the children's books.

Aging, Bibles, Bible Dictionary, Bible Study, Biblical Times, Biography, Children's Chapter Books, Christian Life, Church Community, Church Doctrine, Collections, Concordance, Coping with Death, Divorce, Devotions & Meditations, Diversity, Dying, Early Christianity, Environment, Evangelism, Family Activities, Fiction, Fundamentalism, Gender Issues, God, Handicapped, Health, Heaven, Human Rights, Interpreter's Bible, Jesus, Just Peace Church, Lectures, Life After Death, Life Crisis, New Testament, Old Testament, Parenting, Pastoral Concerns, Psychology, Prayers & Meditations, Racism, Religion in Art, Science & Religion, Sermons, Spirituality, Teens, Theologian in Residence, UCC (General info), UCC Book Club, Women in the Bible, World Religions, Worship

## PROPERTY & OUR CAMPUS

### Learn About the Property Team

Our spiritual home, much like our personal homes, requires maintenance and upkeep. Your UCC Property Team works behind the scenes to repair, replace and generally attend to the physical needs of our church grounds. We also work hand-in-hand with other UCC teams to ensure that our congregation has the space and tools to worship and do outreach in the best way possible. If you have any questions or concerns about church property, you are always welcome to contact the Property Team. (Team Coordinator Joshua Pilcher, Vice Coordinator Justin Watts, Core team Steve Barnhart, Ken Birt, Jan Breitman, Bruce Hanson and Laurie Olk)

## Changing the Church Keys by Joshua Pilcher, Chair of the Property Team

In order to better protect our resources—both human and material—the Property Team is re-keying all exterior locks on both the main building and office building during the month of October. After that time, new keys will be distributed to:

- All paid staff
- Moderator and Vice Moderator
- Clerk
- Christian Ed Chair and Vice Chair
- Church Representatives to the Conference
- Financial Stewardship Chair and Vice Chair
- Invitation and Welcome Chair and Vice Chair
- Member Services Chair and Vice Chair
- Property Chair and Vice Chair
- Social Justice and Outreach Chair and Vice Chair
- Worship and Music Chair and Vice Chair

As the occupants of these positions change, the keys will be passed along.

Our campus is open on Mondays from 8:30 a.m. to noon (after which our office admin Katie Bonney is processing our finances at the Treasurer's office), Tuesdays through Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (with a lunch break midday), and Sundays until about 1 p.m.

Recognizing that at times you may need access to our buildings during off hours, there will also be five keys available for check out through Katie in the office.

## ODDS & ENDS

### Learn About the Finance and Stewardship Team

We are responsible for two major activities. The first is to watch after the "health" of the church finances, namely to monitor and audit the churches financial activities (income - as reported by the Financial Secretary and monthly income vs. expenditure as compared to the budget).

The second is to plan and execute the yearly Stewardship campaign, which is going on now. The many good things that this church does are only made possible by the generosity of the members and congregants and the pledging helps all the teams to better plan these activities. (Team Coordinator Terry Potter, Vice Coordinator Janet Binder, Core Team Jim Peake & Larry Trede)

## Learn about the Invitation and Welcome Team

The Invitation and Welcome team is a relatively new one, having grown out of Member Services. It is our desire to provide an extravagant welcome to all who enter the church. The overall responsibility of the team is to help recruit new members and help make new members feel like they belong. We also promote awareness of the life and work of the church in the Ames community. We make sure someone is at the Welcome Table before and after worship service, train greeters and encourage everyone to introduce themselves to people who may be new to church. (Team Coordinator Allison Anderson, Vice Coordinator Ayisha Al-Hassan, Core Team Tranquillity Jo, Bill Yungclas, Paul Lasley)

## Using Ames UCC's Media

by Katie Bonney

This summer, many congregants participated in a survey on their use of Ames UCC's social media, print media, and website. Pr. Eileen and I wanted to learn how much you use the information provided in these different ways, and which of these methods of communication were most important to you. This information is helping us to find where we are doing well, and where we need to make improvements.

We received over 60 responses. Thank you! Let's talk about what message these communication methods send, what audience is being reached, and how that affects which media you want to consume most.

### **Facebook and our Website: How People Encounter Ames UCC**

Our Facebook page is one of the ways people in the community first encounter Ames UCC. We are close to reaching 400 "likes" on Facebook, meaning that almost 400 people subscribe to see posts and information about Ames UCC in their Facebook feed almost every day. We gain new followers every week. Many of these people do not currently attend our church, but our Facebook

page allows us to reach out into the community and say "Look! This is who we are and what we do at Ames UCC." This is a testament to our work, and an invitation to join us in it.

The results from our survey indicate that the Facebook page is not the most important way you communicate with us, and it's true that a lot of the information provided here is available in other ways if you are already involved with Ames UCC. However, this medium allows us to interact more directly. Let us know that you're looking forward to seeing us at our next event, and comment on posts like #ChurchChat to stay connected throughout the week.

Many of you who responded to the survey ranked the current website as least useful to you. This online presence is also important, storing records like bulletins and annual meeting minutes for our congregants, and providing information to visitors. This aspect of our communication with you needs improvement, for the sake of visitors and congregants alike. Please look forward to a NEW Ames UCC website that is rolling out December 1.

### **The Weekly E-Blast and Bulletin: Announcements Straight to Your Inbox (or in your hand!)**

In contrast to Facebook and our website, the weekly e-blast and bulletin provide direct announcements and current information for church members and regular attendees. The weekly e-blast goes out each Thursday afternoon, giving notice for upcoming activities and sharing important information. On Sunday, your bulletin provides you with all the information needed for the service, and a paper copy of announcements and the next week's calendar that you can take home. The bulletin is a way that people can learn about Ames UCC, and it gives instructions for anyone not yet connected with us on the web to find our other information.

You have ranked these as most useful for you. Both have received some overhauls and updates in the last year, and we're happy to see these methods of communication are working well. Use your weekly email and bulletin to stay up to the minute on what's happening at Ames UCC.

### **The Courier Newsletter: Longer Articles to Connect in Community**

The Courier newsletter provides longer form articles with more in depth information about the activities of the church. This includes some regular announcements as well as updates from our leadership teams, reviews of books in our library, and reflections from members on our work at Ames UCC.



The newsletter has also been undergoing some changes, heading towards this goal. You may have noticed variations in format and design throughout the last year. Many of you ranked the Courier as of middling importance to you: useful, but not most useful. We hope to continue to develop the newsletter to provide a wider variety of articles. You can help by contributing articles yourself, and letting me know what you would like to see in the newsletter.

### Communicate with the Best Method for You

Please continue to use whatever methods of communication provide you with the information you need most from Ames UCC, and give any you haven't used a try! My hope is that through our different ways to spread the word, we can stay informed and connected throughout the week and throughout the year. Thank you!

PS: You can also follow Ames UCC on Twitter and Instagram for more ways to stay connected!

#### Contact Ames UCC

217 6th Street, Ames, IA 50010

515-232-9323

Mon 8:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

Tues-Thurs 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

24-hour pastoral emergencies:

515-428-1779

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