



**Ames United Church of Christ
Sunday, April 30, 2017**

Welcome to Ames UCC! Worship is the way we praise God and learn what it means to be a Christian. Services of worship are just that: a way that we serve the power that calls us together and sends us out to be the eyes, hands, and feet of justice in the world. We hope that you leave today feeling connected, renewed, and in relationship with the holy.

In keeping with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, we joyfully and unconditionally welcome all people of any age, gender, race, culture, ability, sexual orientation, or gender identity into our community of faith and affirm the worth of all people as unique individuals made in God's image. We are open to the special gifts that each person brings and invite each one to participate in the life of our church.

Our deacon for today is Donna Starck; our greeters and ushers are Kevin Binder, Janet Binder, Barbara Faidley, and Karen Lasche. Steve Rogers-Smith is scheduled for building lockup.

GREETINGS

CALL TO WORSHIP Amy Pilcher

A formal, and mutual, invitation to move into the worship experience.

One: You call us, O God, to carry on your Easter witness.

Many: Our necks are becoming limber, our ears more open to hearing.

One: If we speak your words they may not be received.

Many: But how can we contain your Spirit? Amen.

HYMN "Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!" (insert)

Singing is one way to connect to God through our bodies. We stand up, breathe deep, and let loose. And as Augustine wrote, "(S)he who sings, prays twice."

INVOKING THE HOLY

God is always with us, so this "invoking" or invitation to God, is really an invitation to our own selves to become aware of that constant presence.

One: Holy God, Your prophets and servants are bold in the face of danger and death. Make us faithful in our witness, even under threat of opposition to your word, in the name of Jesus, Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Confession has a long tradition in Christian history. It is a way to name our own brokenness and failing, sometimes generically and sometimes quite specifically, as a means to cleanse our hearts as we move through the service.

One: We confess our brokenness before God and one another. Rising Christ,

**Many: Even as we rejoice at your resurrection,
we confess our shortcomings.**

**We have often been ruled by our fear,
concerned more with looking good
than proclaiming good news,
with being right than living as a community
modeled on your righteousness.**

**Please forgive our clumsy attempts at responding to your gifts,
and bring us back into the light of new life. Amen.**

SILENT PERSONAL CONFESSION

A brief moment to reflect on the prayer and your own heart and life. Silence is as important as noise in our dialogue with the divine.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

As a people of Easter, there is always good news: when we die to our brokenness, we live again in hope.

One: God in Christ is gracious and merciful, and does not hold our mistakes against us. Let us rejoice once more at his promise to deliver us from all that enslaves, and let us rest in the assurance of grace, which has always and will always be ours. Alleluia! Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Passing the Peace is an ancient Christian tradition in which we show we carry no weapons, only love.

CHILDREN'S CELEBRATION

Pr. Hannah Hannover

Children are very important to our church. Each service they come forward for a special lesson just for them. We want all children to know they are welcome everywhere in our sanctuary, even – especially – at the very front. We sing the song below as they come forward.



GOSPEL

Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7:2a, 44-60 (NRSV)

Matthew Ellinwood

The Acts of the Apostles is the first book in the Christian Testament after the four gospels. It was written as a companion to the Gospel of Luke.

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.” What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated some men to say, “We have heard him

“speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. They set up false witnesses who said, “This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us.” And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Then the high priest asked him, “Are these things so?” And Stephen replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, “Our ancestors had the tent of testimony in the wilderness, as God directed when he spoke to Moses, ordering him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. Our ancestors in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our ancestors. And it was there until the time of David, who found favor with God and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands; as the prophet says, ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?’

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.”

When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

SERMON

HYMN OF REFLECTION “She Flies On” (insert)

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Please share your prayer needs as you are so moved.

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

The basics of the Lord’s Prayer appear in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. It may be familiar to you in this form, or with “sins” or “trespasses” toward the end. We also support the use of traditional or contemporary language for addressing the holy and naming the holy’s realm.

Our Father/Creator who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom/kin-dom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts/trespasses as we forgive our debtors/those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom/kin-dom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

OFFERING “I Will Sing New Songs to the Lord” Joseph M. Martin
Chancel choir

In 2017, nine percent of our total budget will help fund local, regional, and national charitable programs. On the third Sunday of each month, when we have Holy Communion, loose change and bills are designated for a Communion Fund, which supports Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance (75%) and our in-house Pastoral Emergency Fund (25%).

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

HYMN OF SENDING “God the Spirit, Guide and Guardian,” Hymn 355, vv 1 & 4

BENEDICTION

From the Latin of “well” and “to speak,” this is one final good word to send us off. On Easter Sunday we do this as a community. Afterward, please join us next door in the parlor for coffee, tea, treats, and community.

April 30, 2017

God's StoryTM Our Story

Devotion: Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions. You can do this alone or with others; in the morning, during the day, or at night. Find a routine that works best for you.

Pray: Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

Holy Lord, Your servant Stephen was bold in the face of danger and death. Make us faithful in our witness, even under threat of opposition to your word, in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Reflect: Reflect on the key verses from Sunday's reading.

Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died. Acts 7:58-60

Study: Study the reading and consider the background.

Introducing Stephen, a man of spirit and grace who seems to speak with the authority of God. The powerful are known for attracting attention, but it may not be the sort that Stephen would have wanted. How far are Jesus' followers willing to go?

Consider: Consider this theme for the week's text.

Sometimes the proclamation of truth is dangerous.

Read: Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding of Sunday's text.

After the reading, ask the follow-up question.

Sunday: Stephen's Witness, Acts 6:1 – 7:2a, 44-60

Monday: Saul Persecutes the Church, Acts 8:1-25

Tuesday: The Conversion of Saul, Acts 9:1-19a

Wednesday: Saul Preaches in Damascus, Acts 9:19b-31

Thursday: Peter and Cornelius, Acts 10:1-33

Friday: Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit, Acts 10:34-48

Saturday: Peter in Prison, Acts 12:1-19

What happened to apostles that preached Jesus?

Connect: Connect in conversation with others in your household. Discuss the following questions.

- What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?
- How have the duties in your faith community been distributed? How might you do things differently to best honor the gifts of those in your community?
- What role do you play at home, at work, or at church? How are you best using your gifts to do God's work in the world? Are you doing what God has created you to do, or is it time for a change?

Do: By acting on what we learn we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

Keep a calendar this week of everything you do. Include trips to the grocery store and time spent on your phone or TV. At the end of the week, evaluate your calendar. How is your time reflecting your values? Make one change next week so your time honors your values.

Bless: Close your devotion with a blessing.

God has created you with unique gifts. Use them well. Amen.

Upcoming Scriptures

5/7 Acts 8:26-39

5/14 Acts 15:1-18

5/21 Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21

5/28 Galatians 3:1-9, 23-29

Will We Build Power for Justice? – TODAY

As one of the 30 member institutions of AMOS, we have the opportunity to take part in a campaign of conversations in preparation for the fall city and school board elections. Today after worship, please join me to decide if we will participate. No previous AMOS experience is required. – Pr. Eileen

Confirmation: Will we hold it next year? – 5/7

Please join me and Pr. Hannah at Torrent Brewing Co. on Sunday, May 7 at 5p (or right after you drop your kids at church for Youth Group) to discuss if we will hold Confirmation for your (soon to be) 8-12th graders next year. If your collective answer is yes, we will also decide the scheduling for the year to come. –Pr. Eileen

Wellons Home Work Days with Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity of Central Iowa would like to thank the members of Ames United Church of Christ for their generous donation of \$40,000 to our organization. Your donation has helped in our current remodel on Wellons that will soon be home for the Chiman family. With the warm weather returning, we would love to have volunteers help with construction on the home. Most upcoming Saturdays, we will have work days. If you are interested in volunteering, please call 515-232-8815 or email volunteer@hfhci.org

Help Wanted: Temporary Janitorial Work

Our sexton Dave Cook will be on vacation June 7 through 20. I am looking for someone (or a couple of someones) to do some of his custodial work during that time. We have \$200 budgeted for your time. Please let me know if you are interested: eileen@amesucc.org or 515-232-9323. –Pr. Eileen

Calling All Volunteers: ABC Sale Work Days

Work days for the ABC Sale will be starting Wednesday, May 3 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. We will be working in the West Basement (old choir room). Everyone is welcome. Join us for fun and fellowship as we sort and price items for the ABC Sale. Because it is the policy to keep the church doors locked during the day, the east door and the handicapped doors will be open from 9.50 to 10.10 am. If you arrive after that time, my telephone number will be posted on the door to call me so someone can open the door for you. You can also contact Katie in the church office and she can open a door for you. Hope to see you there on Wednesday.

Donations Wanted

We are ready to start taking donations for our Annual ABC Sale. Everything is welcome, including Holiday items which we will store until our Holiday Sale in the Fall. We would like you to put your donations in the Elevator lobby in the basement. The ABC work crew will take them from there and sort and price them. The sale will be sometime in August. When a date is decided, it will be announced in the bulletin. Remember we take NO CLOTHING. Large items for sale should be held until 2 weeks before the sale. The church building will be locked, but you can ask Katie Tschopp in the office to let you in during church office hours. If you need to bring donations in outside of office hours, or if you have any questions, please contact Barbara Faidley at 233-3874 or barbara@faidley.org.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Many people helped provide an extravagant welcome during the busy month of April. During this month we had 7 services at Ames UCC. The Worship and Music Team wish to thank: Morgan Bartlett, Sam Becker, Janet Binder, Kevin Binder, Fioon Coppoc, Barbara Faidley, Debi Ford, Erin Frank, Sarah Frank, Mim Fritz, Martha Geist, Ed Goedeken, Will Hannover, Barbara Hauerrberg, Buzz Heginger, Eli Heginger, Nanette Heginger, Brecken Johnson, Emma Johnson, Joel Johnson, Reese Johnson, Ryan Johnson, Susan Jones, Greg Lamont, Karen Lasche, Nick Lyon, Art Pohm, Bernie Pohm, Terry Potter, Steve Rogers-Smith, Eli Schrag, Dale Shenefelt, Donna Shenefelt, Linda Shenk, Kim Spangler, Donna Starck, Allen Trenkle, and Oliver Watts.

Sabbatical for Pr. Hannah

On July 1, Pr. Hannah will have her 10th anniversary as a minister in our church. Initially hired as a layperson, she became a licensed minister in the Iowa Conference of the UCC in July of 2009.

In keeping with the Conference guidelines for our pastors (sabbatical every five years), the Personnel Committee recommended releasing Pr. Hannah from her usual duties for a sabbatical/time of clergy renewal from Monday, June 26 through Monday, September 4, a period of time when Pr. Hannah is usually only working 15 hours/week. This recommendation was resoundingly and unanimously approved by the Executive Team at their meeting on Tuesday, April 18.



During her sabbatical, Pr. Hannah will begin the process of qualifying for ordination. Ordination is a worshipful act of blessing from the candidate's supporting congregation (us!) which provides the ordinand with national ministerial standing, the title "The Reverend," and the use of stoles. The process includes a psychological exam, forming a member in discernment committee, meeting with the Iowa Conference Committee on Authorized Ministry, and the like.

Should Pr. Hannah become "cleared for ordination, pending call" by the Central Association of the Iowa Conference of the UCC, our church would then discern whether to vote to extend her a call rather than leave her as a hire. There would be no difference in her duties within our church, but it would allow us to hold a worship service of ordination and installation. It would also hold both Pr. Hannah and the church to the duties and expectations outlined in the UCC's Manual on Ministry (http://www.ucc.org/ministers_manual), such as the practice of sabbatical.

Pr. Hannah will also use her sabbatical time for well-earned rest and renewal.

Calendar for the Week

Monday, May 1

5:00 p.m. 150th Task Force
5:30 p.m. Emergency Residence Project (Powell)

Wednesday, May 3

8:30 a.m. Bible Study
10:00 a.m. ABC Sale Work Group
12:00 p.m. Bell Ringing
2:00 p.m. Wednesday Afternoon Club
6:45 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, May 4

1:00 p.m. Library Work Group

Sunday, May 7

9:15 a.m. Godly Play & Sunday School
9:15 a.m. Learning Center
10:30 a.m. Worship
5:00 p.m. Youth Group
5:00 p.m. Confirmation Discussion at Torrent Brewing Co.

Be In Touch with 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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