



**Ames United Church of Christ
Sunday, December 3, 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 Tom Meyer; our greeters and ushers are Debi Ford, Mim Fritz, Andrea Klocke, and Chris Klocke. Barbara Faidley is scheduled for building lockup.

HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE

During each week in Advent, all households are invited to take home empty Christmas tree ornaments to bring back the next week somehow representing the Advent theme of the week. This week we are distributing balls for joy. Fill them or decorate them as you are so moved. We will hang them on our tree during the passing of the peace next week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Most announcements are in your bulletin, our weekly e-newsletter, and our quarterly print newsletter. To sign up for the last two, contact Katie Tschopp at either 515-232-9323 or office@amesucc.org.

RINGING OF THE MEMORIAL BELL

GREETINGS

CALL TO WORSHIP

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

One: When we are dead, lifeless in broken despair,
Many: God hears our cries for deliverance.

One: When we are without hope, without a future,
Many: God breathes a new spirit into us.

One: And then we know that God is the Lord.
Many: To God be the glory; we have been restored!

HYMN "On Jordan's Bank" (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."

OUR ADVENT WREATH: The Candles of Hope and Peace

Silent Preparation

Prayer

One: Just as Ezekiel saw a world of violence, despair, injustice, and unfairness,

**Many: so we too see the dry bones
filling the valleys of this war-torn world.**

One: But God sets forth a light of peace, delivering flesh to bare bones,

**Many: bringing workers for harmony and justice
in places of discord and strife.**

One: We light first the candle of hope,

Many: trusting that hope for a savior remains.

One: And we light the second,

**Many: trusting that God's own beloved child might usher in a new order,
where lion and lamb lie peacefully together.**

Hope and Peace are Kindled

Silent Response to Hope and Peace

Sung Response to Hope and Peace

**All: O come, Desire of Nations,
bind all peoples in one heart & mind.
Make envy, strife & quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Passing the Peace is an ancient Christian tradition in which we show we carry no weapons, only love. Please hang your ornaments of peace on our tree.

CHILDREN'S CELEBRATION WITH THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

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.

Watch and wait, lis-ten and pray. Je-sus will be born on Christ-mas day.

Watch and wait, lis - ten and pray.

Lord, give us hope; Lord, give us peace to - day.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 2/2 time. The first staff contains the lyrics 'Watch and wait, lis-ten and pray. Je-sus will be born on Christ-mas day.' The second staff contains 'Watch and wait, lis - ten and pray.' The third staff contains 'Lord, give us hope; Lord, give us peace to - day.' The music is simple, using quarter and eighth notes.

Meaning of Baptism

One: Dear friends, as we come to this font of living water, let us recall the meaning of baptism... Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark our acceptance into the care of Christ's church and the beginning of our growth into full Christian faith and discipleship.

**All: This is the water of baptism.
Out of this water we rise into a new life,
marked as beloved members of Christ's body.**

One: Do you have faith, which is hope, in God?

All: I have faith in God.

One: Do you have faith, which is hope, in Jesus Christ?

All: I have faith in Jesus Christ.

One: Do you have faith, which is hope, in the Holy Spirit?

All: I have faith in the Holy Spirit.

Blessing by Water

Final Prayer

One: We give you thanks, O Holy One...Grant us grace to receive, nurture, and befriend this new member of the body of Christ.

All: Give to the newly baptized strength for life's journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE Ezekiel 37:1-14 Liberato Silva Dos Santos

(New Revised Standard Version, modified for inclusive language and clarity of speaker)

We use "Hebrew Bible" instead of "Old Testament" out of respect for our Jewish sisters and brothers (it isn't old to them) and acknowledgement of the living voice still found in these ancient stories.

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. The Lord led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry, and said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.' Then the Lord said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophecy

to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as commanded, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then the Lord said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

SERMON

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS & FRIENDS

Our new members and friends today are Jeremy Best and Amy Rutenberg (Ben, Noah), Linda and Herb Best, Brett Brinkmeyer, Jim Coppoc (Fionn, Will), Catherine DeLong, Nancy Dunn, Bonnie Hawbaker and Diane Northington, Anna Johnson, Andrea and Christopher Klocke (Norah, Stella), Liz Kolbe, Joshua Pepe and Angel Hubbard (Galahad, Persephone), and Liz Mendez-Shannon and Bill Shannon (Maya, Julia).

Invitation

One: All baptized people are members of the universal Christian church. Through a liturgy of membership in local Christian churches like ours, we have the opportunity to ratify those baptisms, wherever and whenever they occurred, making fresh that water once again. But the liturgy, this series of affirmations, is just as open to those who have not chosen that sacramental step, but desire to make formal your relationship—your friendship—with this local Christian church and the Christian faith. So I invite forward all who attended our recent membership class and wish to join Ames United Church of Christ, be it as a full member, an affiliate member, or as a friend.

Please affirm the commitments that are right and meaningful to you as you stand here before holiness and in community today.

Affirmation of Commitments

One: Do you renounce the powers of evil and desire the freedom found in love of God, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit? If so, say, "I do."

Do you profess Jesus Christ as teacher, guide, agitator, and scandalous presence? If so, say, "I do."

Do you promise, by the grace of God, to disciple yourself to Jesus Christ by resisting oppression and evil, showing love and justice, and witnessing to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able? If so, say, "I promise, with the help of God."

Throughout our scripture—from the Torah of Moses through the Gospels of Jesus—we are taught to love the stranger as we do God, to care for all peoples no matter their nation or faith. To that end, our church welcomes in glad, formal, and equal friendship those who are not Christian yet are moved by the evidence of the divine in and through this place and wish to make a public commitment.

So to you all, lovers of God in many names, will you promise to participate in the life and mission of this family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves this community and the world? If so, say, "I promise, with the help of God."

Thanksgiving

One: By your covenant, you are made partner to us in the work of God. Today we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith that has brought you to this time and place. We give thanks for every community of faith that has been your spiritual home, and we celebrate your presence in this household of faith.

Response of Covenant

One: Ames United Church of Christ, what promises do you make?

**All: In the name of God and with God as our witness,
we promise to be in community with one another
as we strive to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, God's anointed.
We profess our belief in God who created and is still creating us.
We hold as our vision for the world
Jesus' vision of beloved community,
where all are welcomed, where justice reigns,
where all are provided for, and where peace prevails.
We affirm that we can only be faithful disciples in community
with others who share that vision and who work to achieve it.
Therefore, we promise, insofar as we are able,
to attend the services of this church,
to volunteer our time to its mission,
and to contribute financially to its work.
Finally, we earnestly pray for the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit
that God might bless all that we do together.**

Welcome and Reception

One: Let us, the members of Ames United Church of Christ express our thanks, and welcome, and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

**All: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church.
Amen! Thanks be to God!**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Please share your prayer needs as you are so moved.

PRAYERS 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 as we forgive our debtors. 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 "Light a Candle for Peace" Ruth Elaine Schram
Chancel Choir with Emily Mullaney, violin

*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%). **The latter is currently overdrawn due to substantial needs within our own church family.***

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

HYMN OF SENDING "Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates" (insert)

BENEDICTION

From the Latin of "well" and "to speak," this is one final good word to send us off. Afterward, please join us next door in the parlor for coffee, tea, treats, and community.

PLEASE STAY FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Materials outlining the agenda and proposed 2018 budget are available in the back of the sanctuary.

Updated Church Directory

Want one? Call or e-mail Katie Tschopp: 515-232-9323 or office@amesucc.org.

Bring Back Your Balls of Hope, Peace and Joy

During Advent we have the opportunity to fill and decorate hollow Christmas tree ornaments using the four themes of Advent, then hang them on our tree during worship. Take as many as your family/household feels moved to fill, and bring them back! If you still have your ornaments from past weeks, you still have time to bring them back and add to the meaningful decoration of the tree.

Pr. Eileen Out – 12/5-7

I will be away from church Tuesday, 12/5 through Thursday, 12/7 and back for worship on Sunday, 12/10.

Food at First's Pass Along Party – 12/5

Food at First's annual Pass Along Party will be held December 9 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. to help families in our community. Children and adults are given the opportunity to Christmas shop from the donations of new or gently used items you no longer need or that your kids have outgrown. It is a great way to help make the holidays extra special for many families in our community that often struggle to put food on the table, let alone gifts under the tree. Food at First accept new or gently used items, including household items because kids shop for presents for their parents too. Gift wrapping supplies are greatly appreciated as well. Due to space limitations, Food at First will not be accepting clothing, furniture or large items.

Drop off gently used or new donations to Food at First (First Christian Church, lower level), 611 Clark, the corner of Clark and 6th, Ames Iowa.

Donation drop off time:

Tues, Dec 5 from 1-2 p.m.

This Week on Wednesday – 12/6

This week on Wednesday, join us for faith formation and fellowship in our midweek gatherings. AM and PM Bible study will resume December 13.

8:30 a.m. First Wednesday Early Jesus Movement Study Group
12:00 p.m. Peace Bell Ringing in the bell tower
2:00 p.m. Wednesday Afternoon Club
6:30 p.m. Christmas Choir Rehearsal
6:30 p.m. Youth Group

Find a bookmark in the pews listing upcoming Bible study topics, and learn more about our Wednesday events in the rest of the announcements.

First Wednesday Early Jesus Movement Study Group – 12/6, 1/3, 2/7, 3/7

Some members of the Wednesday morning Bible Study have organized to discuss the short book *The Early Jesus Movement and its Parties*, the story of how early believers crafted the message of Christ to different peoples in different contexts. Copies of the book are available in the Church Library or for purchase (\$10). We have read and discussed the first two chapters, but welcome you to join us for more! We meet in the parlor at 8:30 a.m. the first Wednesday of the month.

Advent Party Thank You

Thank you to everyone who came to help decorate the church for the holiday season. The sanctuary, parlor, outside and Fellowship Hall look very festive, and our children had a great time crafting! The new tree in the parlor this year has some very unique ornaments on it. Take a look and think about your favorite ornaments! –Barbara Faidley, Worship and Music Team Leader

Christmas Books in the Church Library

Christmas books are on display in the sanctuary, parlor and church library. All these books are available for check out. Sign your name on the card in the pocket and date it. Leave the card on the top of the bookcase in the Church Library. There are many children's books, as well as some adult fiction and non-fiction. Enjoy the season with a good book!

Calendar for the Week

Tuesday, December 5

Pr. Eileen away

Wednesday, December 6

Pr. Eileen away

8:30 a.m. First Wednesday Study
12:00 p.m. Bell Ringing
2:00 p.m. Wed Afternoon Club
6:30 p.m. Christmas Choir
6:30 p.m. Youth Group

Thursday, December 7

Pr. Eileen away

Sunday, December 3

9:15 a.m. Godly Play
9:15 a.m. Youth Coffee Talk
9:15 a.m. Learning Center
10:30 a.m. Worship

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.

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