



**Ames United Church of Christ
Sunday, January 1, 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 Greg Lamont; our greeters and ushers are Debi Ford, Sue Lamont, Karen Lasche, and Steve Rogers-Smith. We have no one scheduled today for building lockup.

IN OTHER WORDS

As people of The Book, we are much indebted to the poets of ancient Israel: the authors of the Psalms, Job, Isaiah, Genesis, and so many more. In honor of that inheritance, today's service will highlight more contemporary poets who have reflected on holiness and the grace of Christmas.

GREETINGS

Dan Coffey

“Questions” by Joseph Mills

On the Interstate, my daughter tells me
she only has two questions. I'm relieved
because she usually has two hundred.
I say, *Okay, let's have them*, and she asks,
What was there before there was anything?
Stupidly, I think I can answer this:
There was grass, forests, fields, meadows, rivers.
She stops me. *No, Daddy. I mean before
there was anything at all, what was there?*
I say that I don't know, so then she asks,
Where do we go when we die? I tell her
I don't know the answer to this either.
She looks out the side, and I look forward,
then she asks if we can have some music.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Debi Ford

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

“The Risk of Birth” by Madeleine L'Engle

This is no time for a child to be born,
With the earth betrayed by war & hate
And a comet slashing the sky to warn
That time runs out & the sun burns late.

That was no time for a child to be born,
In a land in the crushing grip of Rome;
Honour & truth were trampled by scorn-
Yet here did the Saviour make his home.

When is the time for love to be born?
The inn is full on the planet earth,
And by a comet the sky is torn-
Yet Love still takes the risk of birth.

HYMN “Joy to the World”

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.”

**Joy to the World , the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.**

**Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.**

INVOKING THE HOLY Dan Coffey

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.

“When the World was Dark” by the Iona Community

One: When the world was dark
and the city was quiet,
you came.

Many: You crept in beside us.

One: And no one knew.
Only the few
who dared to believe
that God might do something different.

Many: Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?

One: Will you come into the darkness of tonight's world;
not the friendly darkness
as when sleep rescues us from tiredness,
but the fearful darkness,
in which people have stopped believing
that war will end
or that food will come
or that a government will change
or that the Church cares?

**Many: Will you come into that darkness
and do something different
to save your people from death and despair?**

One: Will you come into the quietness of this town,
not the friendly quietness
as when lovers hold hands,
but the fearful silence when
the phone has not rung
the letter has not come,
the friendly voice no longer speaks,
the doctor's face says it all?
Will you come into that darkness,
and do something different,
not to distract, but to embrace your people?

**Many: And will you come into the dark corners
and the quiet places of our lives?**

One: We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden
or want to be,
but because the fullness our lives long for
depends upon us being as open and vulnerable to you
as you were to us,
when you came,
wearing no more than diapers,
and trusting human hands
to hold their maker.

**Many: Will you come into our lives,
if we open them to you
and do something different?**

One: When the world was dark
and the city was quiet
you came.

Many: You crept in beside us.

One: Do the same this Christmas, Lord.
Do the same this Christmas.
Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Sunny Stewart

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.

“A Short Testament” by Anne Porter

One: Whatever harm I may have done
In all my life in all your wide creation
If I cannot repair it

Many: I beg you to repair it,

One: And then there are all the wounded
The poor the deaf the lonely and the old
Whom I have roughly dismissed
As if I were not one of them.
Where I have wronged them by it
And cannot make amends
I ask you

Many: To comfort them to overflowing,

One: And where there are lives I may have withered around me,
Or lives of strangers far or near
That I've destroyed in blind complicity,
And if I cannot find them
Or have no way to serve them,

Many: Remember them. I beg you to remember them

One: When winter is over
And all your unimaginable promises
Burst into song on death's bare branches.

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

Debi Ford

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

“In Blackwater Woods” by Mary Oliver

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars

of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,

the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders

of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is

nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned

in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side

is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world
you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it
against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

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

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.

GOSPEL Luke 2:21-38 (New Revised Standard Version) Dan Coffey

Gospel means “good news,” making the full title of this book of the Bible “The Good News of Jesus Christ according to Luke.”

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

SERMON

HYMN OF REFLECTION

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

**O Come All Ye Faithful
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, Born the King of Angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.**

**O Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing all that hear in heaven God's holy word.
Give to our Father glory in the Highest;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.**

**All Hail! Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning,
O Jesus! for evermore be Thy name adored.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Please share your prayer needs as you are so moved.

"Just One God" by Deborah Cummins

And so many of us.
How can we expect Him
to keep track of which voice
goes with what request.
Words work their way skyward.
Oh Lord, followed by petition —
for a cure, the safe landing.
For what is lost, missing —
a spouse, a job, the final game.
Complaint cloaked as need —

the faster car, porcelain teeth.
That so many entreaties
go unanswered
may say less about our lamentable
inability to be heard
than our inherent flawed condition.

Why else, at birth, the first sound
we make, that full-throttled cry?
Of want, want, want.
Of never enough. Desire
as embedded in us as the ancestral tug
in my unconscienced dog who takes
to the woods, nose to the ground, pulled far
from domesticated hearth, bowl of kibble.
Left behind, I go about my superior business,
my daily ritual I could call prayer.

But look, this morning, in my kitchen,
I'm not asking for more of anything.
My husband slices bread,
hums a tune from our past.
Eggs spatter in a skillet.
Wands of lilac I stuck in a glass
by the open window wobble
in a radiant and — dare I say it?—
merciful light.

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 “New Thing,” written and performed by Ben Schrag based on Isaiah 43 (below)

Our financial gifts go to support the work and mission of our church. Loose coins and bills are sent to mission partners like Food at First and Youth and Shelter Services. Checks and cash placed in envelopes, unless otherwise designated, go to the church proper to help keep our ministries (like worship, youth group, and Godly Play) vital. If you would like to sign up for electronic giving, please visit amesucc.org/give

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
Because you are precious in my sight,
and honoured, and I love you,
I give people in return for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
I will say to the north, ‘Give them up’,
and to the south, ‘Do not withhold;
bring my sons from far away
and my daughters from the end of the earth—
everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.’
Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes,
who are deaf, yet have ears!
Let all the nations gather together,
and let the peoples assemble.
Who among them declared this,
and foretold to us the former things?
Let them bring their witnesses to justify them,
and let them hear and say, ‘It is true.’
You are my witnesses, says the Lord,
and my servant whom I have chosen,
so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he.

Before me no god was formed,
nor shall there be any after me.
I, I am the Lord,
and besides me there is no saviour.
I declared and saved and proclaimed,
when there was no strange god among you;
and you are my witnesses, says the Lord.
I am God, and also henceforth I am He;
there is no one who can deliver from my hand;
I work and who can hinder it?

Thus says the Lord,
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
For your sake I will send to Babylon
and break down all the bars,
and the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentation.
I am the Lord, your Holy One,
the Creator of Israel, your King.
Thus says the Lord,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
who brings out chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honour me,
the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob;
but you have been weary of me, O Israel!
You have not brought me your sheep for burnt-offerings,
or honoured me with your sacrifices.
I have not burdened you with offerings,
or wearied you with frankincense.
You have not bought me sweet cane with money,
or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices.
But you have burdened me with your sins;
you have wearied me with your iniquities.

I, I am He
who blots out your transgressions for my own sake,
and I will not remember your sins.
Accuse me, let us go to trial;
set forth your case, so that you may be proved right.
Your first ancestor sinned,
and your interpreters transgressed against me.
Therefore I profaned the princes of the sanctuary,
I delivered Jacob to utter destruction,
and Israel to reviling.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION Dan Coffey

“The Work of Christmas,” Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music from the heart.

HYMN OF SENDING “Go Tell it on the Mountain”

**While shepherds kept their watching
Over silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens,
There shone a holy light:
Go, Tell It On The Mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, Tell It On The Mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.**

**The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus**

**That hailed our Saviour's birth:
Go, Tell It On The Mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, Tell It On The Mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.**

**Down in a lowly manger
Our humble Christ was born
And God send us salvation,
That blessed Christmas morn:
Go, Tell It On The Mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, Tell It On The Mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.**

**When I am a seeker,
I seek both night and day;
I seek the Lord to help me,
And He shows me the way:
Go, Tell It On The Mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, Tell It On The Mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.**

BENEDICTION

From the Latin of "well" and "to speak," this is one final good word to send us off. Please join us in the parlor next door for refreshments and fellowship.

Tear Down the Wall - January 7 *a concert, potluck, and listening session*

Sponsored by Ames UCC and Central Iowa Center for Independent Living. Hosted by Nate Logsdon of Maximum Ames Records and Bryon Dudley of Nova Labs Records. Moderated by Rev. Eileen Gebbie.

Featuring:

Mumbi Kasumba
Tom Russell
Heather Derr Smith
Abdul Muhammad
Reyma McCoy
Steph Caceres

Saturday, January 7 @ 5:30 pm
Ames United Church of Christ
217 6th Street

#ameswall

Artists (musical, literary, etc) share the risk. In troubled times, we resist. It's what we do.

In these particular troubled times, though, our world and our place in it are increasingly complicated, and it's becoming more and more difficult to sort out exactly *what* to do.

So the two leading record labels in Ames and a collection of friends are coming together to stage a "listening session" to invite feedback on how best to reach out to those most at risk in our diverse community, and on how to use our stages and our talent to do some good for the people who need it most.

We'll begin with a community potluck, there will be musicians and speakers throughout the evening, and we'll end with Rev. Eileen Gebbie inviting community feedback and moderating a dialogue on music and community.

This won't work without a large group of caring people and diverse voices coming together to make it work, so we hope you'll attend. Please feel free to contact jimcoppoc@gmail.com with any questions.

Raising Up the Beloved Community! - January 15

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Service

January 15, 2017 at 2:00 PM

Please join us to:

Raise Up King's Dream of the Beloved Community

Share the Ames Dream with Compassion in Action

Share the Dream with the Youth of YSS

Enjoy a Massed Choir of Local Area Singers and Ames Children's Choir

Contribute to a love offering for the YSS Dream Seed Program

Fellowship Time immediately following the service

Hosted by

First United Methodist Church of Ames

516 Kellogg Ave.

Ames, Iowa

Save the Date: AMOS Core Team Training - February 4

A day long training with lead organizer Liz Hall on AMOS and how we organize to strengthen our church and our community. Save the date!

Worship News

During the fall, our Worship and Music team convened conversations about the role of congregants in worship and how to have worship be a place that fosters our understanding of each of us as ministers. The results have been on display on paper leaves by the east entrance and on our rolling bulletin board. They will give a full presentation at Learning Center on 1/29 and in their annual report.

However, there was one consistent piece of feedback that we (WAM and your worship staff) decided to address right away: the desire to add more quiet in worship, particularly at the beginning of the service. To allow us to settle more fully into worship, we will shift the passing of the peace till after the prayer of confession. This will allow us to settle into worship before hopping back up in fellowship.

In the new year, we will also continue the practice of adding more silence by eliminating oral announcements, as we have done during Advent. Announcements already appear in the bulletin, weekly e-news, and Facebook. After Pentecost, we assess how having no oral announcements has been received.

Pr. Eileen

Calendar for the Week

Monday, January 2

Church office closed for new Year's Day

Saturday, January 7

11:20 a.m. Meals on Wheels

Wednesday, January 4

8:30 a.m. Bible Study

12:00 p.m. Bell Ringing

6:45 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, January 8

9:15 a.m. Godly Play

9:15 a.m. Learning Center

10:30 a.m. Worship

Thursday, January 5

1:00 p.m. Library Work Group

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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