



**Ames United Church of Christ
Sunday, November 19, 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 Kim Spangler; our greeters and ushers are Nancy Dunn, Barbara Faidley, Sue Lamont, and Jesse Lee Oelmann. No one 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 hope. 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.

Note: Technically the first Sunday in Advent is December 3. This means the fourth Sunday in Advent is also Christmas Eve. Given the pressure that puts on worship leaders and your own schedules, and in line with our Protestant (protest-ant) heritage, Ames UCC will beginning Advent one week earlier, on November 26. This means that on Sunday, December 24 we will not have a morning worship service. Instead, we will gather in the evening to begin our Christmas celebrations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Most announcement 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: The people who walked in darkness...

Many: Have seen a great light;

One: Those who lived in a land of deep darkness—

Many: On them light has shined.

HYMN “The Church of Christ In Every Age,” Hymn 306

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: O God of all ages, you have never forgotten us. Renew in us your vision of your people restored, and fire us up to bring about your will on earth. In Jesus’ name, 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. Faithful God,

**Many: Your promises have never wavered,
and yet we are not always willing to believe them.
We descend into our own despair,
unable to see past our immediate concerns.
We drag others down with us
and live to complain and commiserate.
We ignore the miracles in front of our face.
Forgive us for living such small lives, O Lord,
and restore in us the wonder
of what it is to be your people. 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 is faithful; God is merciful; God does not hold our sins against us! For this we give you thanks, O Lord. Receive the assurance of your deliverance by the One who promised from of old to set us free, and who seeks and finds us to this very day. 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

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.

K. Stewart

COME TO-GETH-ER, CHILD-REN, COME TO-GETH-ER NOW.

CELEBRATE AND CLAP YOUR HANDS; COME TO-GETH-ER NOW!

HEBREW BIBLE Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14 (New Revised Standard Version)

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.

These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the LORD.

For thus says the LORD: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

SERMON

HYMN OF PREPARATION "We Are People on a Journey" (insert)

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION WITH THE OFFERING OF FOOD AND GIFTS

Our Communion table is open to all: young and old, faithful and dubious. No one will be turned away. We serve the bread and the juice through "intinction," which means dipping the bread into the juice. Your server will offer each to you with the phrases "the Bread of Life" and "the Cup of Blessing." If you are unable to come forward but would like to participate in the meal, simply wait for your row to be empty, then raise your hand. A server will come to you. The bread is free of gluten, soy, and dairy. If you have brought canned goods for the Food at First pantry, please set them at the Communion table before being served.

The Communion Prayer

One: Let us gather around the table with the offering of bread and drink upon it and the promise of the Living Christ among us. This is the welcome table of God where all who seek to be at peace with their neighbor and all who seek the mercy of God in Christ are embraced. Come, for we are invited in to this holy mystery. Come.

Many: We are ready!

One: Jesus said: "I am the bread of life. All who come to me shall not hunger, and all who believe in me shall never be thirsty."

Many: We are hungry and thirsty. We come!

One: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus offered the bread in thanksgiving and said . . .

Many: "Take, eat.

This is my body broken because of you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

One: In the same way, Jesus offered the cup in thanksgiving and said,

Many: "Take, drink.

This is the seal of a new covenant,

my poured-out life.

Do this, as often as you drink it

in remembrance of me."

One: God, we bless for you this bread that the earth has given and human hands have made.

Many: May it be for all the Bread of Life!

One: Bless also this cup, fruit of the vine and work of human hands.

Many: May it be for all the Cup of Peace!

One: Bless us too, that by our eating and drinking we may have love for each other and be servants of Christ's peace, until the New Day comes and every creature finds an honored place at the Banquet of Life!

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**All: Gracious and loving God,
you have made us one in the body of Christ,
and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink.
Thank you for feeding our hunger and relieving our thirst.
Now send us into the world to do the work you have given us to do:
to find the lost and lonely, to heal broken souls,
to free prisoners, and make the powerful care.
Grant us strength to persevere in resisting evil,
and to proclaim in all we say and do the good news in Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

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 "Make This Church a Welcome Place" Joel Raney/J. Paul Williams
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%). **The latter is currently overdrawn due to substantial needs within our own church family.** You can also designate your gift to the Communion Fund directly.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

HYMN OF SENDING "I Am the Light of the World," Hymn 584

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.

Fellowship with Holy Transfiguration – TODAY!

Today after worship we will walk down the block to Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church (621 Kellogg) for our fellowship hour. This will be a chance to get to know their congregation, with whom we are now partnering on a "tiny food pantry."

Free While Supplies Last: Advent Devotionals – 11/19, 26

Pick up your own United Church of Christ Advent devotional in the parlor before or after worship on Sunday, November 12, 19, or 26. A donation of \$5 would be great, but not necessary. No one's spiritual journey should come at a price.

Balls of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

During Advent we will 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.

This Week on Wednesday – 11/22

This week on Wednesday, AM and PM Bible study, youth group, and choir rehearsal will not meet due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Youth group and choir rehearsal will return Wednesday, November 29 with Christmas Choir, and AM and PM Bible study will resume December 13.

12:00 p.m. Peace Bell Ringing in the bell tower

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

Explore Membership at Ames UCC – 11/26

Join Pr. Eileen and current church members to learn more about the theology and polity (governance) of Ames United Church of Christ as well as what formal membership means, all over a tasty lunch. Participation in the lunch does not mean a commitment to join. Childcare will be available on request.

Explore at our Membership Exploration & Luncheon next Sunday, November 26 from right after worship until 1:30 p.m. (at the latest), and join on New Member Sunday on December 3 in worship. RSVP to Pr. Eileen (eileen@amesucc.org, 515-232-9323) by tomorrow, Monday, November 20.

Advent Party – 11/26

After we've celebrated the first Sunday in Advent in worship on November 26, come back at 4:00 p.m. for the Advent Party and Hanging of the Greens. We will have Christmas crafts in the Fellowship Hall for children of all ages, and an Outrageous Sweater Contest! Many hands are needed to help put up the Christmas tree in the sanctuary and our other beautiful Christmas décor. Pizza will be delivered around 5:30 p.m. All are welcome!

Christmas Choir Rehearsals Start – 11/29

Many of us have too much to do and cannot take on a long term commitment. To that end, on Sunday, December 17, we will have a special musical offering by a "Christmas Choir:" regular choristers plus any additional worshippers who would like to join in for a spell. Rehearsals will be Wednesday 11/29, 12/6, and 12/13 from 6:30-7:50 p.m., plus the morning of Saturday, 12/16. For more information, contact choir director Lesley Lackore (llackore@gmail.com).

AMOS Delegates Assembly – 12/3

If you were at the October 23 Ames AMOS Assembly with candidates, you know how powerful it feels, and how powerful we are, when we come together across our differences to work toward our community's common good. On Sunday, December 3 from 3-4:30 p.m. (location in Des Moines TBA), all 34 AMOS member institutions will come together to set our collective 2018 agenda. You do not want to miss out. RSVP to Ben Schrag (515-357-0617, mr.half@gmail.com). We will also work on carpools.

Wreath Making Workshop – 12/3

Come join Ami Frank on December 3 (after the congregational meeting) and learn to make a holiday wreath to festoon your home! Please bring wire cutters and work gloves if you have them. Materials will be provided, but if you have extra evergreen boughs or branches, they would be much appreciated! Please consider a donation of \$9 to cover the cost of the frame and wire. This event is best suited to ages 15 and up. Please RSVP to Kristin Shields at sleepycat@hotmail.com.

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. Written by Harry Eberts (theologian) and Paul Eberts (sociologist), it is a readable approach to church-building in the face of dangers from structures of power. 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.

December 6 Ch. 3: The Brothers of the Lord

January 3 Ch. 4: The Hellenists

February 7 Ch. 5: The Apostles

March 7 Ch. 6: The Jesus Movement in Practice: A Sociological Perspective

Advent & Christmas

Each year we celebrate Christmas Day on December 25 and Advent on the four Sundays beforehand. This year Christmas Day is on a Monday, which means that the fourth Sunday of Advent is on a Sunday. Rather than pack the fourth Sunday of Advent and our Christmas Eve celebrations onto one day, I've decided, along with fellow staff and the leadership of our Worship and Music Team, to begin Advent one week early. So even though Christmas Eve is on a Sunday, we will only have the evening service on that day, not one in the morning. Details are below. –Pr. Eileen

Sunday, 11/26: Advent 1 (Hope) with Advent Party at 4 p.m.

Sunday, 12/3: Advent 2 (Peace)

Sunday, 12/10: Advent 3 (Joy) with our children leading worship and caroling

Sunday, 12/17: Advent 4 (Love) with our Chancel Choir leading worship and Holy Communion

Sunday, 12/24: Christmas Eve worship at 7 p.m. with Holy Communion

Monday, 12/25: Christmas Day worship at 10 a.m. in our pajamas

Calendar for the Week

Monday, November 20

10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

5:30 p.m. Emergency Residence
Project (Hieber/Wood)

Tuesday, November 21

7:15 p.m. Executive Board

Wednesday, November 22

*Church Office Closed After Noon
for Thanksgiving*

12:00 p.m. Bell Ringing

Thursday, November 23

Church Closed for Thanksgiving

Sunday, November 26

9:15 a.m. Godly Play

9:15 a.m. Youth Coffee Talk

9:15 a.m. Learning Center

10:30 a.m. Worship

11:30 a.m. New Member Luncheon

4:00 p.m. Advent Party

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

Lee Bauer, Treasurer

lee_bauer@yahoo.com

David Cook, Sexton

cookdavi@gmail.com

Eileen Gebbie, Minister

eileen@amesucc.org

Hannah Hannover,

Minister to Children & Families

hannah@amesucc.org

Nancy Heathman, Financial Secretary

heathman@mediacombb.net

Lesley Lackore, Chancel Choir Director

llackore@gmail.com

Karen "Sunny" Stewart, Keyboardist

sunny@amesucc.org

Katie Tschopp,

Church Office Administrator

office@amesucc.org

Jean Watts, Youth Director

jean@amesucc.org