



**Ames United Church of Christ
Sunday, November 26, 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 Linda Shenk; our greeters and ushers are Debi Ford, Barbara Hauerrberg, Diana McHenry, and Rachel Schelle. Ken Birt 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, with the fourth Sunday in Advent 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 is beginning Advent one week earlier: today! 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 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: Praise to the Lord, who is able to deliver.

Many: We could walk through fire with God at our side.

One: Our God is greater than any earthly king,

Many: Let us worship the God of our salvation!

HYMN “The God of Abraham Praise” (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 Candle of Hope

Silent Preparation

Prayer

One: Just as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced certain destruction in the blazing fire,

Many: so we too recognize that fire can destroy.

One: But fire can also create, offer light, and bring hope.

Many: Fire can reveal the light of the fourth one in the fire, the one we call Messiah, Immanuel, Savior.

One: We light this candle as a sign of the growing flame of hope which God sets burning in every heart—

Many: A flame of hopefulness that points to God’s mighty deeds in a dark world desperate for God’s radiant love.

Hope is Kindled

Silent Response to Hope

Sung Response to Hope

**All: O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
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.

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.

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 to - day.

HEBREW BIBLE Daniel 3:1, 8-30 (New Revised Standard Version) Ken Birt
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.

King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue whose height was sixty cubits and whose width was six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

Accordingly, at this time certain Chaldeans came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! You, O king, have made a decree, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, shall fall down and worship the golden statue, and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These pay no heed to you, O King. They do not serve your gods and they do not

worship the golden statue that you have set up.” Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in; so they brought those men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary, and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, their trousers, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. Because the king’s command was urgent and the furnace was so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, “Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?” They answered the king, “True, O king.” He replied, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.” Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from

the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their tunics were not harmed, and not even the smell of fire came from them.

Nebuchadnezzar said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king’s command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.” Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

SERMON Brett Brinkmeyer

HYMN OF REFLECTION “O How Shall I Receive You,” Hymn 102

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

*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 “We Hail You God’s Anointed,” Hymn 104

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.

Updated Church Directory

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

Congregational Meeting

Join us after worship next Sunday, December 3 for a congregational meeting on the 2018 budget. Materials for the meeting are available digitally in your email, at amesucc.org/reports-and-budgets, and as paper copies in the back of the sanctuary.

Balls of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

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 next week!

Free While Supplies Last: Advent Devotionals – TODAY!

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.

Advent Party – TODAY!

After we’ve celebrated the first Sunday in Advent in worship, 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!

Submit Your Poinsettia Order – 11/27

Help decorate our sanctuary for Christmas Eve with Christmas poinsettias. Dedications will appear in our Christmas Eve bulletins. If you haven’t yet submitted an order form for Christmas poinsettias, they are due tomorrow, Monday November 27. Contact Katie Tschopp in the office (515-232-9323, office@amesucc.org) for more information.

This Week on Wednesday – 11/29

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

- 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.

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 in the afternoon
- 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 9:30 a.m. in our pajamas



Calendar for the Week

Monday, November 27

5:30 p.m. Emergency Residence
Project (Barnhart)

Wednesday, November 29

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

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
11:30 a.m. Congregational Meeting
on the 2018 Budget
3:00 p.m. AMOS Delegates
Assembly

Be In Touch with Ames UCC

217 6th Street, Ames, IA 50010
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Mon 8:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

Tues-Thurs 8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

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