



AMES UCC COURIER

FALL 2017

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hymn Sing Sunday by Pr. Eileen

Although there has never been one way, as Christians, to worship God, we do have a particular inheritance from the UCC's forbears (the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches) and American Christianity at large. As a celebration of those roots, Sunday, September 3 will be one big hymn sing. I've been planning it with our Chancel Choir, and early choices include "This is My Father's World," "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past," "Lift High the Cross," "I Love to Tell the Story," and "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

Join Us for Learning Center This Fall by Lynette Spicer

Sundays at 9:15 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

September 10, Rally Sunday

Potluck breakfast, bring a dish to share plus your own plates and utensils.

September 17 and 24

The Rev. Charles Kniker fulfilled a life-long dream by touring Israel and Jordan recently. Based on the trip, he will speak twice at Learning Center. The theme of his presentations is "The Holy Land: Crossroads, Customs, Conflicts, and Constructions."

October 1 Alison and Diana McHenry attended UCC General Synod June 30 to July 4 in Baltimore. Every two years, General Synod brings together thousands of members of the United Church of Christ for formal church witness, inspirational worship and fellowship. The McHenrys will talk about resolutions, speakers and their experiences.

October 8 Journeys of Faith. Two members will share their religious backgrounds, how they came to Ames UCC and their hopes for the future of the church.



Look Back at Summer 2017
Vacation Bible School

October 15 To coincide with Ames Pridefest promoting diversity and inclusion, UCC members will focus on LGBTQ parenting issues. Pat Spangler will address where Iowa law stands on allowing people who are LGBTQ to adopt children. Steve Rogers-Smith will provide his experience on children's reactions to a parent coming out. Kim Spangler will talk about how faith can play a role in supporting gay youth. Everyone attending will be invited to participate.

October 22 Sociologist Paul Lasley will talk about populist anger, or what he calls the politics of resentment. Waves of anger have increased recently. What will it take for that anger to subside?

October 29 Pastor Hannah Hannover, minister to children and families, will talk about her summer of discernment considering ordination as a United Church of Christ ordained minister. Hannah is on sabbatical from June 19 to September 4. She has been employed at Ames UCC for more than 10 years and is currently a locally licensed pastor in the Iowa Conference. The national UCC is phasing out licensed pastors.

2017-2018 Book Club Schedule by Lynette Spicer

Summer is a good time to get reading. The UCC Book Club welcomes all readers and even those who just want to hear the discussion. We meet in the church parlor on the third Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m.

September 20 *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (2009 nonfiction, 320 pages) Discussion leader: Nancy Marks

Pulitzer Prize winning authors take readers through Africa and Asia to meet the extraordinary women struggling there, among them a Cambodian teenager sold into sex slavery and an Ethiopian woman who suffered devastating injuries in childbirth. Drawing on the breadth of their combined reporting experience, Kristof and WuDunn depict a world with anger, sadness, clarity, and, ultimately, hope. They show how a little help can transform the lives of women and girls abroad. They make clear how we can each do our part.

October 18 *Bottomland* by Michelle Hoover (2016 fiction, 336 pages) Discussion leader: Lynette Spicer

2017 All Iowa Reads selection. (Multiple copies are available in the Ames Public Library Book Club collection. Books may be checked out for six weeks.)

In the years after World War I, the Hess family attempt to rid themselves of the Anti-German sentiment that left a stain on their name. When the youngest two daughters vanish in the middle of the night, the family must piece together what happened while struggling to maintain their life on the Iowa plains. Hoover examines the ways a person can forge a life of their own despite prejudice and oppression.

Other books coming up in our 2017-2018 schedule include *Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus* by 2018 Theologian in Residence David Csinos, *My Ántonia* by Willa Cather, *America's First Daughter* by Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie, and more.

TEAM TALK

Worship and Music (WAM) by Barbara Faidley

Since our last newsletter, our team has been involved in various activities. WAM planned and executed the Fire Drill in May. We hosted our yearly Worship at Hobbit Hill with the help of George Belitsos. We have also acted as deacons for all of our church services and helped recruit greeters and ushers for all services. We have helped Dinah Kerk sieck change out banners and pennants according to our liturgical year. We decorated the front elevator vestibule for Spring, Pentecost, and the 4th of July. In the future we plan to lead oral announcements at the beginning of worship, organize a severe weather drill, and probably another fire drill sometime in the fall. Many thanks to all of you that have volunteered to act as greeters and ushers. You all make our church a very welcoming place.

Financial Stewardship by Janet Binder

On June 30th we passed the half-way point of the fiscal (budget) year, so it's a good time for an update on the church's financial position:

Balance Sheet	
Assets	\$876,000
Liabilities	12,000
Equity (Fund balances)	864,000

Our assets consist of cash and investments including received, but as yet unspent, 150th Capital Campaign donations.

Statement of Income and Expenses			
	Operating Budget	Through 6/30/17	%
Income	\$310,000	\$169,000	54.5%
Expenses	310,000	151,000	48.7%
Difference	\$0	18,000	

Our operating budget is closely monitored and controlled to keep our day-to-day spending within the budgeted limits established by the congregation.

As you can see, we have received slightly more income to date than we expected and we have spent slightly less than expected. In spite of the restricted budget that we are operating under in 2017, we are doing a good job of living within our means. The question I would like you to ask yourself is this: Do we want to continue to operate under such a restricted budget?

As summer wanes and fall quickly approaches we enter our stewardship campaign season. The stewardship campaign is a time of discernment – not only of financial matters, but also of who we want to be as a church, what programs we want to offer, and what we, as members, want to support with our time and talents.

Every day, people living in and around Ames UCC are experiencing sustenance, transformation and care through our ministries. A large part of **“Do we want to continue to operate under such a restricted budget?”**

Ames UCC's positive reputation lies in our generous commitment to outreach. But our outreach is not only the considerable dollars we give away. Whether it's Invitation and Welcome making new contacts through Community Greetings, Caring Network providing a meal to a family experiencing health concerns, the Christian education we provide to all ages, or the fact that we have a campus downtown where anyone can come to safely join a vibrant worship service and receive God's love – it's all outreach and it's all making an impact.

Over the summer, I met with the various teams of the congregation to discuss their budget, to review the work that they are currently doing and to ask them to dream about where they would like to go in the future. These conversations were exciting and invigorating. Our teams are doing important work in our community and I can't wait for you to hear about the expanded opportunities for outreach they have planned for the future!

During the stewardship campaign, titled **“It's all outreach and it's all making an impact.”** “Journey to Generosity – the Way of Jesus,” the Financial Stewardship team will be hosting several informal, informational meetings to discuss our journey. We will be sharing the team's plans and asking for your input on the direction you think we should be going. Yes, the focus of these discussions will be on the budget which may not sound too exciting, but think of the budget as the roadmap we will follow. A sound budget that shows we are excited about our mission and willing to invest in it is the beginning of our adventure. Stay tuned for details and plan to join the journey!

Financial Transparency & Health by Jim Peake

Each month our Financial Stewardship Team reviews all of our incoming and outgoing monies. Once each year, a smaller team does a random check to ensure that our staff and lay leaders are following best practices for internal controls and accounting. This financial review was conducted on May 31, 2017 at the church office by Jim Dickson, Jim Peake, Joel Johnson, Katie Tschopp, and Cheryl Binzen. Below is Jim Peake's report on that check.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

- For October 2016, followed cash from the collection plate journal to bank deposit slips to checking account bank statement. One entry was off by \$4 in our favor.
- For October 2016, followed non-cash deposits from bank statement to source documents. No discrepancies were found.
- For December 2016, UCC balance sheet total was tied to December First National Bank statement balance. There was no discrepancy.
- For December 2016, tied Ameriprise brokerage statement total to the sum of three accounts in the UCC balance sheet. Also did the same with United Church Fund balances and the UCF statements. There were no discrepancies.

Expenditures

- The committee selected ten checks (7 over \$2000 and 3 random) from the October bank statement. All were verified by comparison to supporting documentation.

Attic to Basement Sale Update by Barbara Faidley

As we go to press, the annual Attic to Basement Church Sale is scheduled for Friday, August 4 from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, August 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This is an increase in hours for Friday. Thank you for all of your generous donations that help make this sale a success.

A group of congregants has met since the beginning of May on Wednesday morning for 2 hours. We work hard, get to know each other, and share together. We have created a time of fellowship during these two hours. Our sale could not be a success without the concerted effort of all of these people who come week after week to sort, price and organize all of our great donations. They all deserve a GREAT BIG THANK YOU. Twenty percent of our profits this year will be divided between the Emergency Residence Project and the youth shelter run by YSS. The other 80% of the money is being given to the Property Team to fix the damaged stairs into the kitchen.

“We work hard, get to know each other, and share together.”

We are planning to do another sale on November 4. This will be a HOLIDAYS SALE AND COOKIE SALE combined, similar to what we did last year in October.

Church Library by Barbara Faidley

Ginny Shenk and Barbara Faidley have finished labeling all the shelves of the library and putting stickers on the books so they are easy to put away when they come back into the library. We also put new books on display in the sanctuary, church parlor, and library every month.

The latest and ongoing project in the church library is to scan all the barcodes on the books into a database so that we can create a shelf list of all the books in our church library. This allows us to store the title, author, and other descriptive details, including a nice summary of each book. We will continue this work with an iPhone and iPad during the fall months. When it is complete, we will make the list available to all members of the congregation.

Book Review: Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography by Bruce Chilton

Author Bruce Chilton draws on recent archaeological findings to paint a vivid portrait of the social customs, political forces and religious beliefs and practices of the period around Jesus' life. Examining new translations and interpretations of ancient texts against this fresh, historically accurate background, he offers a revolutionary look at Jesus' early life and the philosophical and psychological foundations of the ideas he promoted as a young man.

Chilton provides evidence that contradicts long-held beliefs about Jesus and the movement he led. He describes his understanding of Jesus' role as a rabbi, or "master," of Jewish oral traditions and a practitioner of a Galilean form of Judaism that emphasized direct communication with God. This casts an entirely new light on the origins of Christianity. The reader can see, hear, smell, and taste the texture of Jesus' every day and dramatic life in this book. Find this book in the church library under "Jesus." Presently it is on the bookshelf to the right as you enter the library door.

Children's Book Review: *The Usborne First Encyclopedia of Our World* by Felicity Brooks, illustrated by David Hancock

This is a well-illustrated beginning book of information about planet Earth. Each topic in the Table of Contents has a two page spread in the book. It ranges from information about space, to weather and floods, to the world in danger. Each two page spread gives basic facts that are then illustrated so a younger child can understand the concepts presented. This is a well-done basic knowledge book. There is also an index of subject matter in the back of the book. This book is found in the non-fiction section of our children's books, on the bottom shelf of Bookshelf F. It is often displayed on one of the display shelves in the sanctuary or the library.

CHURCH CHAT

Our Unique Role by Pr. Eileen

Pastors ask annoying questions, at least mine have.

Two in particular have stayed with me over the years. The first is "Where is God in that?"

When I would share a struggle or be in a committee meeting struggling with a decision, my pastor would say, "Where is God in that?" Totally annoying but also very effective. It serves as a mindfulness bell: I am not alone in any pain and our work is always for God, not ourselves. (You heard an echo of that bell in worship with First Christian recently.)

The other is "What is my unique role?"

This one came from my spiritual director within the context of being a parish priest. In the house of prayer that calls me to pastor, what is my unique role? Is there anyone else who can make handouts or set up for an event? Is it part of my unique role to manage contracts with snow removal services or set building use policies?

No, not really. I can insert myself into all of those things, for sure, and sometimes my experience and perspective can be helpful, but that's not what the church called me to do. Ames UCC called me to preach, teach, provide pastoral care, and represent you and God in the community.

"Where is God in that?" So that question is another kind of mindfulness bell, one that tells me to be mindful of the things I need to do, day in and day out, so that I can be ready to share the good news of God in Jesus Christ, to be in an emergency room or at a hospice bed, and make sure that I am not speaking from my own interests or ego but the will of God and the people of God.

I offer the same questions to you, individually and collectively, as we continue to decide how to manage our buildings and express –through our time, talent, and treasures – what iteration of God's beloved community we might bring to life through our time, talent, and treasures:

Where is God at Ames UCC? What is our unique role as people of God downtown, in the city of Ames, and in Story County?

Generations of Care by Allison Anderson

Allison brings her granddaughters to worship regularly. Though Allison's daughter Tracy and son-in-law Nic rarely attend, Tracy highly values Ames UCC. Read on for details shared by Allison. –Pr. Eileen

Even though Tracy attends occasionally, and her girls attend semi-regularly, Tracy has never felt any pressure from anyone to attend more frequently, to join, or to take Communion and she likes that.

The message our church continually projects, that EVERYONE is welcome, no matter if you are gay, straight, black, white or purple. Tracy and Nic have family members who believe that gay and trans people are choosing that way of life and therefore should choose a different path. To have what Nic and Tracy believe reinforced in what the girls hear in church is wonderful.

That kids are such valuable members of the congregation; their voices are important and heard. Eliana and Mari feel like their contributions and their voices matter. They are comfortable in church and in the congregation.

“EVERYONE is welcome.”

Piggybacking on that, Tracy and Nic have had several conversations with the girls about people who are, for lack of a better word, "safe." They have told them repeatedly, that if something is bothering them that they don't want to talk about with mom or dad, Pastor Eileen and Pastor Hannah are people they can talk to.

The sermons and teachings in the church have prompted a lot of great discussions in their household about beliefs and God and heaven. Tracy loves the banner in front of the church that says we are one human family. She also really liked the part of the sermon on Easter when Pr. Eileen said how it doesn't matter if you want to take the bible story literally, or as just a story, that she isn't in charge of how we believe. Nothing is being rammed down our throats as the absolute truth, no questions asked.

Wednesdays May Be the New Sundays by Pr. Eileen
Over the last several months I have been working with Pr. Hannah, Youth Director Jean Watts, our Christian Education team, and the Executive Board on our Wednesday schedule.

Right now on Wednesdays, year 'round, we have Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. and ringing the peace bell at noon. During the school year there is a Wednesday Afternoon Club from 2-5 p.m. for grade schoolers with early release and Chancel Choir rehearsal from 6:45-8 p.m.

The first three can only serve a pretty limited number of congregants: congregants who are retired or have flexible schedules, and kids in the Ames school district.

But what if we try to be unlimited?

Right now, we are considering the logistics, costs, and content for a nearly full day of fellowship, discipleship, and learning on Wednesdays:

8:30 a.m.	Childcare for little ones
	Morning Bible Study for adults
Noon	Peace Bell Ringers for all ages
2 – 5 p.m.	Wednesday Afternoon Club for grades 1-5
6:30 – 8 p.m.	Childcare for little ones
	Wednesday Evening Club for grades 1-5
	Youth Group for grades 6-12
	Evening Bible Study for adults
6:45 – 8 p.m.	Chancel Choir for youth and adults

And just to be even more abundant, why not add in a pizza-n-potluck with activities for kids from 5:30-6:30 p.m. once a month?

I hope this feels as exciting to you, as filled with potential for renewal and growth, as it has for us. Stay tuned for the official announcement!

Become a Matthew 25:36 Visitation Minister by Pr. Eileen

I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Age, illness, or both need not end of our church life. In fact, Jesus says they should not. Be part of a team that offers the peace of Christ to those who are not able to be present physically. Join Sandy Ballard, Barbara Hauerrberg, Debi Ford Smith, Steve Rogers-Smith, Kim Spangler, Pat Spangler, Barbara Yungclas, Bill Yungclas, Pr. Hannah and me for a brown bag conversation on Sunday, September 17 after worship in the Fellowship Hall. We will be done by 1:30 p.m.

RSVP to eileen@amesucc.org or 515-232-9323. Let me know if you need childcare.

Join the Chancel Choir by Bill Yungclas

A U.S. study of 166 older adults revealed that those who joined a choir were in better health, used less medications, were less lonely, and had fewer falls after a year than a similar group of non-singers. This could be due to the effect singing has on breathing, as well as the emotional benefits of creating harmony with a group. And you know God wants us to create harmony in the world around us.

Singing in the Ames UCC choir only requires one hour and 15 minutes each Wednesday evening starting at 6:45 p.m., and arriving on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. to “warm-up”. When you need to miss, you miss – no problem. You don’t have to be REAL good – notice that I’m a member.

We will be having a “welcome back” dessert social on Wednesday, August 23 at 6:45 p.m. in the church parlor and then rehearsals for the coming year will begin at 6:45 p.m. on August 30.

So... Join up! Join us! Sing your way to better health! Make a joyful noise to God!

Who Does What: Your Ames UCC Staff

In case you are new or simply curious, here’s a list of who does what on your church staff.

Lee Bauer, Treasurer

Lee’s work includes overseeing Katie Tschopp’s processing of bills and payroll and signing all checks. Lee has served as Treasurer since 2017.

David Cook, Sexton

David Cook serves as our Sexton (churchspeak for handy man and custodian). David’s responsibilities include general cleaning of the church, inside and out; repair and upkeep of plumbing, electrical, heating, air conditioning, roof, brickwork, and coordination of other professionals; and support for church events. David has been with Ames UCC since 2012 and works 14 hours/week.

The Rev. Eileen Gebbie, Senior Minister

Pr. Eileen’s responsibilities include preaching and teaching, pastoral care, worship planning (along with other staff and congregants), supervision of the staff, and representing the church in the wider community. She has been with us since 2015 and is our only full time member of staff. (Please note: My official schedule is Sundays through Thursdays, though that changes to accommodate weekend events and needs. I am usually two to three weeks out in scheduling non-emergent appointments so that I may be sure to have sufficient time each week for worship and sermon preparation, prayer, and emergent/urgent pastoral care needs. –Pr. Eileen)

Pr. Hannah Hannover, Minister for Children and Families

Pr. Hannah is a licensed minister in the United Church of Christ and has been with Ames UCC since 2007. Her primary responsibilities are the Sunday school program for children aged two through fifth grade, as well as the Wednesday Afternoon Club (WAC) for the same ages. In worship, Pr. Hannah leads our children’s celebration and creates whole services for the children and youth to lead. She oversees the Youth Group as run by Jean Watts (below). Pr. Hannah supervises the staff of our Sunday nursery workers and occasionally preaches. Lastly, Pr. Hannah is available for pastoral care for congregants of all ages. She works 30 hours/week except for the summer when she works 15 hours/week.

Nancy Heathman, Financial Secretary

Nancy handles all of our deposits and pledges. She has served in this role since 2008.

Lesley Lackore, Chancel Choir Director

Lesley our Chancel Choir Director and has been with Ames UCC since 2005 (plus five years in the 1990s). In that role, Lesley directs the Chancel Choir, arranges for special music and musicians, leads congregational singing, maintains the music library, and participates in in worship planning, along with other music and ministerial staff. Lesley works on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings.

Karen "Sunny" Stewart, Instrumentalist

Sunny Stewart is our Instrumentalist for worship (you name it, she will play it). Sunny accompanies the Chancel Choir and congregation and participates in worship planning, along with other music and ministerial staff. Sunny is available for weddings and memorial services at our church, as her schedule allows. Sunny has been with Ames UCC since 1991. Sunny works on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings.

Katie Tschopp, Church Office Administrator

Katie Tschopp has been our Church Office Administrator since 2015. Her work in that role is diverse: receptionist, publisher, database management, calendar master, and support of our Treasurer and financial systems. Katie is in the office Mondays through Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Jean Watts, Youth Director

Jean Watts has been our Youth Director since 2015. Her ministry includes leading the Sunday morning Youth Sunday School, the Sunday evening Youth Group, and special events like the 2016 trip to Florida for the UCC's National Youth Event. Jean works to bring other adults into our youth activities to promote intergenerational relationships and learning. Jean works 7 hours/week during the program year.

Need more Ames UCC?

Find us at amesucc.org and @AmesUCC on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Contact Ames UCC
217 6th Street, Ames, IA 50010
515-232-9323
office@amesucc.org

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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No.153
Ames, IA 50010

United Church of Christ
217 Sixth Street
Ames, IA 50010

Return Service Requested