

ISSUE 242

April 2013

PHONE: 515-232-9323

WEB: <http://www.amesucc.org>

CAL: <http://www.amesucc.org/calendar>

E-MAIL: office@amesucc.org



United Church Courier



God is still speaking,
No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Mission 4/1 Earth, April 1—May 19

Our BIG upcoming justice event!

(See details inside)

GNEA Fundraiser

Sunday, April 7, 5:30 p.m. at Lucullan's

Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance provides rent and utility assistance and food vouchers for Story County residents in need. We are a founding congregation of GNEA and Judy Blair sits on their board of directors. Join in the effort! 100% of your donations will go to direct aid.

Religion & Society Movie Nights

A new way to connect with one another and have fun... 7:00 p.m. on Friday, April 12 and Friday, April 26 in Fellowship Hall

(See details inside)

Congregational Dinners—April 19-21 & 26-28

Volunteers still needed to host. If you have any questions about the dinners, contact Hannah.



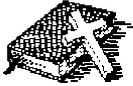
Mark Your Calendars:

-Graduation Sunday, May 5, during 10:45 a.m. worship

-Gay Men's Chorus on Sunday, May 5, 3:00 p.m.

-Confirmation Sunday on Pentecost, May 19

FROM THE PASTOR



The United Church of Christ is entering a new era as a denomination. It has as clear a theological voice as it has had since its founding. Older leaders in the denomination have told me again and again how strong a crop of young ministers we have across the conferences. And while churches in rural areas continue to shrink with their populations, congregations all over the nation are thriving. One important shift in the denomination has been the role of the national setting of the church. A generation ago the national setting took on tasks itself, largely divorced from the local churches. Now the national church is coordinating and supporting efforts of local churches. One excellent example is our current campaign, Mission 4/1 Earth.

A year and a half ago, the national church coordinated a nationwide anti-hunger campaign. Since I had just arrived as your minister, we decided not to participate in that effort. Yet, the response across the country was so overwhelming, that the national setting decided to try a similar effort with Mission 4/1 Earth.

The idea is simple. We all know that the environment is in trouble, but we often despair about what can be done. As one individual or one church, we can only accomplish so much, but as 5,000 churches across the UCC working together, we can make a real difference. The plan has three parts.

Each of us will be asked to make small adjustments in our daily routine to cut down on our carbon footprint. These adjustments can include walking or biking to work rather than driving, or using cold water in the washing machine. There is a long list of potential ideas. While these efforts may seem minor, they hopefully reflect a deeper spiritual change in our relationship to our world. That spiritual change is crucial for our collective future.

In addition to making small adjustments in our daily lives, we are asked to plant trees, both in our area and around the globe. Trees have significant environmental benefits, especially in the developing world where deforestation has led to erratic rainfall, erosion, and lower crop yields. One example of a global effort is the UN's "Plant for the Planet" campaign, which is worth googling if you want to know more.

Finally, we are going to write letters of advocacy to local, state and national leaders about the importance of smart environmental policies. The environmental issues that face us are so daunting that only with governmental support, both in this country and across the world, can we hope to make the lasting change that is necessary. It is time we add our voices to the debate.

Caring for the environment is a theological issue. We believe that God created this earth and gave us dominion over it so that we can care for it. A healthy environment is necessary for the flourishing of all life and continued environmental degradation will disproportionately affect the poorest in our society and around the globe. We may not be able to change everything, but with the whole UCC working together, we can make a difference.

--Jonathan Page

NOTE: Rev. Jonathan Page will be out of town from April 15-22. If you are in need of emergency pastoral care, you may call Hannah Hannover at 515-408-0228.

Christian Education

**From Hannah Hannover, Minister to Children and Youth
Time to Sign up for Pilgrim Heights Camp**

Pilgrim Heights is a camp and retreat center located near Montour (about 50 miles east of Ames). Starting this spring and going through the fall, Pilgrim Heights has a variety of camp and retreat opportunities for all ages and interests. Thanks to the generosity of the Bath Fund, our church will pay for 1/2 of every camper (regardless of your age or length of camp) registration! If you are a **FIRST TIME** camper, we will pay 100%!

Please, see Hannah Hannover or Bill Yungclas if you want more information on camp opportunities or visit www.pilgrimheights.org.



Vacation Bible School June 24 - 28

This year's Vacation Bible School theme is Everywhere Fun Fair (Where God's World Comes Together). Each day will focus on a different country: Japan, Zimbabwe, United Kingdom, Australia and Mexico.

Do you have items from these countries we could display during Vacation Bible School? They will be returned to you. If you have anything to share, contact Barbara Faidley at (515) 233-3874 or barbara@faidley.org. Items may also be left in the church office.

Vacation Bible School is June 24-28 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. We need SHEPHERDS -- adults or students in 7th grade or above who will accompany a small group of children to the different learning centers. You have no teaching responsibilities. GET INVOLVED and come have a fun time.

Call Hannah Hannover or Barbara Faidley.

Book Review

Ames UCC members will review books in the church library to help you become familiar with the books you may check out. Books that have been reviewed will have a star attached to them.

Book: Niebuhr, H. Richard. *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*. New York: Meridian Books, 1929.

Believing in the absolute transcendence of God, Richard Niebuhr was alarmed that "Christendom has often achieved apparent success by ignoring the precepts of its founder. The church, as an organization interested in self-preservation and in the gain of power, has sometimes found the counsel of the Cross quite as inexpedient as have national and economic groups."

In the New Testament churches of Jesus and Paul, equality and mutual care were the driving ethic. Denominations are institutions using doctrine to differentiate and maintain a competitive edge. Christ, his words, and his example, are lost. Christians compromise their ethics to accommodate those of the ruling economic and secular powers; not addressing social evils of exploitation and greed, they instead focus on individual behaviors such as drunkenness and swearing.

Lack of Christian unity is a guiding thread in this amazing scan of U.S. Protestantism. Not finding the source of Christian divisions in theology or polity the U.S. from what often began as churches of the disinherited to churches defined by social class, nationalism and sectionalism (East versus the frontier, North versus South), immigration (tied to nationalism) and race.

Niebuhr understands religion as a defining identity only marginally related to a transcendent God and God's son. "The domination of class and self-preservative church ethics over the ethics of the gospel must be held responsible for much of the moral ineffectiveness of Christianity in the West." Capitalism preceded Calvinism, but is supported by certain tenets of that doctrine, particularly the emphasis on individual rather than collective concerns. For example, in the 1840s and 1850s, denominations had differing beliefs about slavery and secession from the Union. Methodists and Baptists began as movements of the dispossessed, emphasizing the equality of God's children and condemning slavery. Episcopalians and Lutherans felt the most important thing was to support the state. Methodists and the Baptists split in the 1850s with the Northern branches continuing to condemn slavery (and slave owners) and the Southern churches proclaiming the importance of slavery to protect an "inferior race."

Niebuhr wanted Christians to acknowledge the secular character of denominations. "The road to unity is the road of repentance. It demands a resolute turning away from all those loyalties ... which deny the inclusiveness of divine love."

--Cornelia Flora

From the Youth Director:

Our Youth really enjoyed providing childcare during the Lenten services on Wednesday evenings. Thank you to everyone that brought your children and let us get to know them better during that time.

--Emily Kenneke

Learn Something New Every Sunday at Learning Center Adult Forum

The program begins at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Come early for continental breakfast of doughnuts, pastries, bagels, coffee, tea and juice at 9 a.m. The breakfast is supported by a free will offering.



Learning Center Adult Forum Schedule:

March 31	Easter no program
April 7	Journeys of Faith
April 14	Church World Service – Russ Melby
April 21	TBA
April 28	TBA
May 5	TBA
May 12	Peace Corps
May 19	Potluck and brainstorming ideas for autumn Learning Center programs

Book Club

Ames UCC Book Club

The group welcomes all readers and even those who just want to hear the discussion. The group meets in the church parlor on Wednesdays at 2 p.m.



April 17 – The Round House by Louise Erdrich (2012, 336 pages)
Discussion leader: Paul Clark

In 1988, Geraldine Coutts gets a phone call telling her to go to the Round House on her reservation. There she is raped and beaten. With her is a young woman named Mayla and Mayla's little girl. Geraldine's husband is the head judge of the Ojibwe nation in North Dakota. He and Geraldine have a son named Joe who is slowly placed in the role of parental child as his mother retreats more and more into herself and does not leave her bedroom. Who is responsible for this crime in the criminal justice system - the white criminal system or the Indian system?

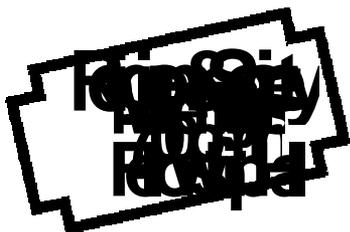
May 15 – Leaving Long Island ... and other departures by Fern Kupfer (2012, 260 pages) Discussion leader: Christa Andersen

Author Fern Kupfer plans to join us!

A memoir about being a woman of a certain age and surviving the loss of a child, the explosive end of a long marriage, and the discovery of a genetic inheritance (the BRCA 1 gene) endemic to Ashkenazi Jews. It is a second half of life story, depicting an ordinary life of pain and happy second chances. Until her retirement in 2011, Kupfer was a tenured professor, teaching creative writing and magazine writing at Iowa State University. She is married to the Lebanese-American writer Joseph Geha. Their family combines step-children and grandchildren, middle-easterners, mid-westerners, gentiles and Jews.

June 19 – suggestions of books for book club fall 2013

Details on these books are on the web at <http://www.amesucc.org/connect#Book>.



Member Services

Friday, April 12 - In *Chariots of Fire* (1981) two British track athletes, one a determined Jew and the other a devout Christian, compete in the 1924 Olympics. Winner of multiple awards at Cannes and at the Academy Awards in the U.S., including Best Picture of 1981, the film raises issues of faith, duty and covenant.

Friday, April 26 - *The Mission* (1986) is a British drama film about the experiences of a Jesuit missionary in 18th century South America. The film was written by Robert Bolt and directed by Roland Joffé. The movie stars Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons. Daniel Berrigan has served as Jesuit advisor for the film and has a cameo part. The film won the Palme d'Or and the Academy Award for Best Cinematography. In April 2007, it was elected number one on the Anglican Church Time's Top 50 Religious Films list. Faith, duty and covenant are again themes linking religion and the state.

Theologian in Residence Weekend 2013

On the weekend of February 23-24, we hosted Dr. Gary J. Dorrien as our visiting theologian. He developed the theme "The Crisis and Necessity of Progressive Theology" during two sessions on Saturday morning ("Society as the Subject of Redemption" and "Idealism in Question") and on Saturday afternoon ("Progressive Theology in a Liberationist Spirit"). On Sunday, his talk during Learning Center focused on "Economic Democracy in Question: Renewing an Ecumenical Tradition" and his sermon title was "The Coin of Caesar and the Kingdom of God" based on Luke 20: 19-26. Community radio KHOI has been given permission to broadcast the sessions, and we have requested that the church office be informed of the dates/times so our members can be informed. The sermon is posted on the church website at www.amesucc.org/Sermons.

We had good attendance this year with counts for the Saturday sessions of 179, 149 and 121. On Sunday the counts were 66 for Learning Center and 149 for worship. We added several new approaches to attracting attendees: banner over south door of sanctuary, announcements over Iowa Public Radio, sending postcards addressed by church members, and Jonathan's article on Religion in the February 16 issue of *The Tribune* that lifted up liberal theology and our visiting scholar.

Revenues were \$4,807. Expenses were high (\$6,134) partly because on the Thursday evening of our weekend, airlines canceled flights into Des Moines for the next day due to a forecasted blizzard. We purchased a last-minute airline ticket routed into Minneapolis, and the Rev. Jonathan Page provided taxi service. The deficit of \$1,327 was covered by interest earned on the Adult Program Endowment.

Many volunteers helped the program move along smoothly. The following people carried out the work involved in hosting this year's event: Ellen/Steve Barnhart, Diane/Ken Birt, Nancy Brown, Sally/Jerry Chase, Ann D'Arcy, Mary Dengler, Matthew Ellinwood, Barbara Faidley, Martha Geist, Hannah/Nathan Hannover, Nancy Hart, Dinah/Bob Kerksieck, Charles Kniker, Lesley Lackore, Sue Lamont, Jennifer/Greg Luecke, Nancy Marks, Kate Mason, Lowell Mathison, Carolyn/Roger Parmenter, Peg/Doug Powell, Kristin Shields, Galina/Phil Spike, Donna Starck/Paul Clark, Terisa Thomas/Brayden Smithburg, Tania/Carl Tipton, Bonnie Trede, Allen Trenkle, Barb/Bill Yungclas, and David White. In addition, church staff members had extra work added to their schedules, especially Becky Bridges, David Cook and Jonathan Page. To all these folks a big THANK YOU!

This is my last year to coordinate the Theologian-in-Residence Program. Over these past 18 years I have sent out the call for volunteers for this special weekend in the life of this church. I have appreciated so much the willingness of our members to respond. We could not offer this adult education program without you.

Continuing members of the Theologian-in-Residence planning committee are Jennifer Gelwick-Luecke, Charles Kniker, Jonathan Page and Allen Trenkle. Charles is taking over as coordinator.

--Nancy E. Brown, Coordinator

Social Justice & Outreach Team

Green Team

Mission 4/1 Earth begins April 1

The arrival of spring often makes us more aware of the beauty and the blessings of God's creation. The United Church of Christ Mission 4/1 Earth lets us acknowledge our work to protect the earth and to expand our efforts in addressing environmental and social justice issues.

The national goals of Mission 4/1 Earth are ambitious: 1 million hours of engaged earth care; 100,000 trees planted and 100,000 letters of environmental advocacy. The Ames UCC goals are 1,000 hours of earth care, 100 trees planted and 100 letters of advocacy for the earth.

You may ask, how much can one person or a family do? What difference can I make? A good place to start may be for each of us to identify ways we already care for the earth. What earth friendly actions are already habits? Examples may include use of a reusable water bottle or coffee mug, installation of a "water saver" shower head or recent energy audit through the City of Ames. All actions, both large and small, help to sustain the environment.



The next step may be to explore new ways to reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink. Start small but think big. For ideas to get you started:

- visit the Mission 4/1 Earth bulletin board in the church parlor and the United Church of Christ website, ucc.org/earth;
- discuss new ideas for action with family and church members;
- participate in Mission 4/1 Earth group activities posted on the bulletin board, e.g. Stash the Trash, documentary viewing discussion groups, and more;
- set new environmental action goals for yourself and/or your family.

Join the Mission 4/1 Earth campaign. Make your efforts count towards our goals by turning in a weekly tally card. Monitor the progress of our church during the 50 days of Eastertide. Join us as we celebrate and protect the world around us.

Sign up for Stash the Trash!

The annual **Stash the Trash** event is April 6. Stash the Trash is a community event to clean up our neighborhoods and parks. Our church will be working to spruce up Stuart Smith Park located along University Avenue between Lincoln Way and South 4th Street, the gateway to ISU and central Ames. Details and a sign-up sheet are on the Green Team bulletin board in the church parlor. Time spent will count towards the UCC Mission 4/1 Earth campaign. Bring your family and friends to help make Ames a beautiful and healthy place to live.



Think Green This Spring

Did you know that you can drop off compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), rechargeable batteries, printer ink cartridges and eye glasses at the church for recycling? Bring these items from home and place them in a collection basket located in the church parlor. You can recycle these items and earn Mis-

sion 4/1 Earth minutes.

AMOS

A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy

Project IOWA has employers ready to hire low-income Story County residents but not enough trainees!

Project IOWA is recruiting for upcoming classes and training in the Ames area. The goal is to start a Certified Production Technician program the first part of April and a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) class in the next few months.

If you know people who might be interested, please share this information.

Project IOWA provides:

- Upfront job commitments to participants who attain desired skill sets in select employment sectors
- Intensive training to equip participants with the skills they need to get the job
- Community wrap around support and mentoring through weekly motivational classes
- No COST to participants other than their hard work to make it to graduation day

Central Iowa employers have committed jobs to Project IOWA and are waiting for graduates to complete training. Employment Partners: Mary Greeley Medical Center, Vermeer Corporation, ALMACO, Sauer-Danfoss, Bridgestone, and more.

Project IOWA participants need to be:

18 and over

U. S. citizen or legal resident

Have a high school diploma or GED equivalent

Strong work ethic and commitment to complete training

For more information, see www.projectiowa.org and call Project IOWA director, Julie Fugenschuh, 515-280-1502.

AMOS Training: Developing Effective Justice Ministries in Local Congregations

Thursday, May 2 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church, 200 Lynn Avenue, Ames

This training will teach the AMOS approach to organizing within a congregation and offer concrete, practical advice to potential new member congregations and existing ones on how to organize congregational leadership teams. Come learn from veteran AMOS leaders and Paul Turner, Lead Organizer with 26 years of experience of organizing in cities across the United States.

The AMOS Institute of Public Life is designed to help ordinary citizens figure out how and why they should get involved in the decision making process of their community. A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS) is an affiliate of the nation's oldest and largest professional organizing network, the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF).

UCC

April 14 at 2 p.m. Installation of Susan Sickelka at Salem UCC, 320 NE 141st Ave, Alleman

April 28 at 3—5p.m. with dinner to follow - Central Association spring meeting at Salem UCC, Alleman

A new church...

...progressive, passionate, spiritually oriented. A place to explore and deepen your faith Journey with other travelers. Organizing in the Coralville/North Liberty area of Iowa. If you know someone interested, please direct them to the church's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/JourneyChurchCoralville, or send an email to chuck.kelsey@gmail.com.

Recharge: 20 hours of worship, learning, conversation and connection

June 7 and 8 at the Scheman Building, Iowa State University

Welcome to a new way of gathering in the Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ.

- ⇒ Recharge yourself and your congregation's ministries at 27 different workshop opportunities.
- ⇒ Recharge in prayer and song and a festival worship celebration.
- ⇒ Recharge with connections - among the women of the Iowa Conference, among our emerging leaders, among friends old and new.
- ⇒ Recharge in the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, who gathers and gifts the people of God.

Details at <http://www.ucciaconf.org/opportunities/recharge/online-registration>.

Join our UCC General Minister and President Geoffrey Black for some great conversation! He will be there.

Come ready...

- to listen as Geoffrey shares what's new, what's exciting and what's challenging in his ministry among and for us.
- to let Geoffrey know what's new, what's exciting and what's challenging in your congregation's ministries.

Interfaith Alliance of Iowa

Protecting Faith & Freedom 2013 Annual Award Reception

Thursday, May 2, 2013, 6:30—9:00 p.m.

Community Choice Convention Center at Veterans Memorial Ballroom

Featuring: Bishop Gene Robinson and Senator Michael Gronstal

If you'd like to attend the dinner, it is \$75/plate. Contact Jon by email at: jon@amesucc.org

The Interfaith Alliance supports the appropriate engagement of religion and politics. It is a strong and necessary voice in Iowa today.

In keeping with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, we joyfully and unconditionally welcome all people of any age, gender, race, culture, ability or sexual orientation 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.

United Church Courier

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