

ISSUE 241

March 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.

March 10 is Camp Sunday

Ann Graham from Pilgrim Heights will be in Learning Center to share news from Pilgrim Heights Camp! Everyone is encouraged to wear "camp clothes" to Sunday School and worship! If you have a camp t-shirt, that is even better! Forms will be available to sign up for summer camp beginning March 10. Ames UCC will pay half of the cost for every camper that attends camp at Pilgrim Heights this summer! If you are a new camper, we will pay 100% for one camp this summer! You won't want to miss out on this learning and fun!

Visit <http://www.pilgrimheights.org/> to learn more about Pilgrim Heights.

Holy Week Services

Sunday, March 24 – Palm/Passion Sunday at UCC at 10:45 a.m.

Thursday, March 28 – Maundy Thursday at First United Methodist Church at 7 p.m.

Friday, March 29 – Good Friday at First United Methodist at noon

Friday, March 29 – Good Friday at UCC at 7 p.m.

First Christian Church will hold a vigil from Good Friday until Easter morning and you are invited to sign up for a time to pray there in preparation for Sunday.

Sunday, March 31 – Easter Sunrise Service at First Christian Church at 7 a.m. Breakfast after the service in their Fellowship Hall.

Easter service at UCC at 10:45 a.m.



**FROM THE
PASTOR**

There comes a time every winter when you are ready for it to be over. The first flush of winter is great. Love that. The first time you feel the crunch of snow under your boots, the first fire in the fireplace, the holidays, they are wonderful. But by the time March rolls around, the winter feels oppressive. The cold makes everything move more slowly, from the gears in your car to the joints of your body. If you are anything like me, you keep the thermostat low to save on heating costs, which means that the house maintains a slight chill. Grey skies, dried and cracked skin, all the joys of the winter months. Eventually, it begins to wear on you.

Modern society insists that we carry on throughout the year as though there were no change of season. When the days are dark and cold and you just want to lie in bed, work still begins at the same time. The same errands have to be run. The same meetings and classes occur with frustrating regularity. Big snow storms force a break in the routine but carry with them their own share of difficulty. It is at times like this when I begin to think what life must have been like when society gave allowance for winter and when you were forced inside because crops do not grow in frozen ground.

Lent is a time for intentional reflection and slowing down. I think there is no mistake that Lent falls in this, the most difficult part of the winter months. Lent is a season of tamped-down joy that matches our own body's adjustment to the weather around us. I wonder if Lent should be that reminder from God to slow down now because you need it. As opposed to pushing ourselves to new levels of self-discipline and rigor, perhaps we should listen to our body and nature and find some peace. The slowing down gives us a chance to think, reflect, and pray. That is what we need at this time of year.

My mother is a lover of aphorisms, and she would always remind us that March "comes in like a lion and out like a lamb." I am not sure if "lion" is the right way to describe early March, but "lamb" works for the end of the month, especially this year

because Easter falls on March 31. That is when we celebrate the resurrection of the Lamb of God.

This year, like last year, I encourage you to immerse yourself in Holy Week. There is a certain rhythm to Holy Week that runs from Palm Sunday through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and ends with the chords of "Jesus Christ Has Risen Today." The full impact of the Easter celebration is most deeply felt when you take the time to experience the services of the week.

As we have for many years, we will celebrate Holy Week with the other downtown churches. Maundy Thursday will be at First United Methodist Church, as will a noon service on Good Friday. We will have our own Good Friday service at 7pm that evening. First Christian Church will hold a vigil from Good Friday until Easter morning and you are invited to sign up for a time to pray there in preparation for Sunday. Easter begins with a sunrise service at First Christian Church and then will conclude with our own Easter service at 10:45 a.m. There are plenty of opportunities to honor the season.

In the interim, I offer my best wishes for the long month ahead. Take a deep breath. Slow down. And do not hesitate to reach out to me with any pastoral concerns. I am always happy to meet with you in the office or your home.

--Jonathan Page

Membership Classes:

Interested in joining Ames UCC? To become a member, you attend member classes which will take place before worship at 9:30 a.m. on March 3 and 10. You must be able to attend both classes. If those date do not work for you, let us know and we will work to arrange a more suitable time. We hope to welcome new members on Sunday, March 24.

*CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TEAM***Palm Sunday Celebration**

Join us for our annual Palm Sunday Celebration on Sunday, March 24. There will be a light breakfast, many crafts, and plenty of good fellowship! Come all ye children and adults of all ages! Meet in Fellowship Hall at 9:30 a.m. And then it's on to 10:45 a.m. Palm Sunday worship-complete with palms! Hope to see you there!

Easter Egg Hunt!

Easter Sunday morning (March 31), we will have our annual Easter Egg Hunt beginning at 10:00 a.m. Children and families can meet in Fellowship Hall before the hunt. Please bring your own basket for collecting eggs. The more the merrier! If you have grandchildren or other children visiting for Easter, we would love to have them join us! We are currently collecting donations for the Easter eggs in the parlor. Ideas: individually wrapped candies, stickers or small tokens.

Learn Something New Every Sunday at Learning Center Adult Forum

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

March 3	AMOS and Project Iowa – Jan Flora
March 10	Camping at Pilgrim Heights Camp and Retreat Center
March 17	No program
March 24	Palm Sunday intergenerational program
March 31	Easter no program
April 7	Journeys of Faith
April 14	Church World Service – Russ Melby

The May 12 program will focus on the Peace Corps. Do you have connections to the Peace Corps? Let Art Pohm know, avpohm@aol.com, (515) 233-2362.

From Emily Kenneke, Youth Director.....The Ravens Win!

Sunday, February 3 the Ames UCC Youth Group collected money and food for the Souper Bowl of Caring. We collected \$312.55 and several bags of canned goods. The money and groceries were donated to Food at First. The voting results--

San Francisco 49ers (\$79.19) Baltimore Ravens (\$208.36)
Referees (\$25.00)

The real winners are the individuals and families that will benefit from your generous donations! THANK YOU!

Book Club

Ames UCC Book Club

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

March 20 – Crow Lake by Mary Lawson (2002, 291 pages) Discussion leader: Lynette Spicer

Set in the rural “badlands” of northern Ontario, families suffer heart-break and hardship which are mirrored in the landscape. Orphaned young, Kate Morrison was her older brother Matt’s protegee, her fascination for pond life fed by his passionate interest in the natural world. Now a zoologist, she can identify organisms under a microscope but seems blind to the state of her own emotional life. And she thinks she’s outgrown her siblings—Luke, Matt, and Bo—who were once her entire world. It’s a drama of family love and misunderstandings with heartbreaking humor.

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/BookClub>

Vacation Bible School

Mark your calendar for June 24-28 when we Celebrate God's welcoming love for everyone at "Everywhere Fun Fair" – where God's world comes together during Vacation Bible School! Once again we will join our friends at First United Methodist Church and Collegiate Methodist Church for a week of learning and fun! More details coming soon!

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Income Highlights for 2012

	2012	2011	Difference
Operating Budget			
Pledges	\$244,535	231,739	12,796
Non-pledge/ Loose Contributions	\$ 21,531	15,857	5,674
Rent	\$ 9,431	9,370	61
Outreach Beyond the Budget			
Communion Offering to GNEA	\$ 3,125	1,719	1,406
Communion Offering to Minister's Discretionary Fund	\$1,300		1,300
Blankets+ (Church World Service)		1,008	(1,008)
UCC special mission offerings -- One Great Hour of Sharing	\$2,501	2,663	(162)
Strengthen the Church	\$ 933	911	22
Neighbors in Need	\$2,624	2,096	528
Christmas Fund	\$1,391	1,280	111

\$278,640 Pledged for 2013 Operating Budget

Amount Pledged	Number of Pledges for 2013 for 2012	
More than \$20,000	1	1
Between \$6,000 and \$13,000	10	9
Between \$4,000 and \$5,999	15	11
Between \$3,000 and \$3,999	9	9
Between \$2,000 and \$2,999	13	18
Between \$1,500 and \$1,999	10	7
Between \$1,000 and \$1,499	11	14
Between \$500 and \$999	19	15
Less than \$500	12	11
Total pledges	100	95

*SOCIAL JUSTICE & OUTREACH TEAM***Sunday, March 10 -- One Great Hour of Sharing, UCC Special Mission Offering**

One Great Hour of Sharing, the refugee, relief and development offering of the United Church of Christ, transforms lives through health, education, agricultural and emergency relief initiatives in 138 countries. One Great Hour of Sharing funds enable the United Church of Christ to respond quickly to disasters and other urgent and unexpected needs as they arise.

Mission 4/1 Earth – An opportunity to work together for the environment with all UCC congregations.

Mission 4/1 Earth is a nationwide United Church of Christ effort to engage in activities on behalf of the earth and its environment. For 50 days, from April 1 through Pentecost on May 19, UCC congregations across the country will be working together to meet three ambitious goals:

- 1 million hours of engaged earth care, including efforts at home and in the community
- 100,000 trees planted locally and globally
- 100,000 letters of environmental advocacy written and sent to elected officials and media

Here in Ames, the Green Team will be leading the effort to help all of us in our congregation contribute to this national effort. Although many of us may already be working hard to improve the environment in our community, this will be a chance to join together with thousands of others to make our voices heard about the importance of responsibly caring for the environment and to actually engage in activities which will benefit the environment.

The Green Team will be distributing tally cards to help all of us keep track of the work we do on behalf of the environment. We'll be displaying our congregational contribution to the national goals each week on the bulletin board in the parlor. We will be sharing ideas for advocacy and sample letters that you might consider sending to our representatives, and we will be working to identify opportunities around town to plant trees where they are most needed. Based on a great Learning Center session on February 10, we will be sharing ideas for ways all of us can help the environment during Mission 4/1 Earth.

Here are a few ideas to get you thinking:

The church will encourage the recycling of compact fluorescent and LED light bulbs, rechargeable batteries, and printer ink cartridges. Baskets for these items will be placed in the parlor.

The Ames Eco Fair will be held on Saturday, March 30, from 10-2 at the Ames Community Center.

Stash the Trash, the citywide clean-up day, will be Saturday, April 6 During Mission 4/1 Earth, consider car-pooling, riding your bicycle, or taking the bus to church if you are able.

Think about running your laundry on the cold-water setting to save energy.

Each of these activities can contribute to the UCC's 1 million-hour goal, and your ideas and input are welcomed! Please get in touch with us if you would like to learn more about Mission 4/1 Earth or get involved in the planning. Be on the lookout for more information as April 1 approaches.

-Jerry Chase and John Mazzello

Green Justice Team

Save the Date: 2013 Stash the Trash on April 6

Stash the Trash is an annual event bringing volunteers together to help pick up litter and garbage throughout Ames. Reimans Gardens will again act as the launch location and will offer food, drinks, trash bags and gloves as well as free admission for all participating volunteers. Last year's event collected a total of 3.21 tons of garbage.

You are invited to join other members and friends of our church to participate in the 2013 Stash the Trash event on Saturday, April 6. Your participation will help clean up Ames and your hours will contribute the UCC Mission 4/1 Earth goal of ONE MILLION HOURS of earth care.

Watch for more information on where and how to sign up, or contact Donna Starck or any Green Team member.

MEMBER SERVICES TEAM

Women's Fellowship

Join the women of Ames, UCC the first Wednesday of every month at 12:00 noon for lunch (bring your own) and conversation. We are currently trying to line up women to lead the direction of the conversation for one month. Some topic ideas may include: women's health, prayer, travel, cooking, exercise, pets, and more. If there is a topic that is of particular interest to you-volunteer to lead one month and share! For more information or to sign up for one month please contact Barbara Faidley at: Barbara@faidley.org

Men's Fellowship

Men's Fellowship meets over the noon hour on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month in Fellowship Hall. All men of the church are invited to bring a lunch and drink or not as we gather for light conversation. Hope to see you there!

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Fellowship

Meets following worship on the third Sunday of the month (March 17). All are welcome, whether you identify as LGBT or not. Recently, the fellowship raised \$375 to support a safe house in Uganda for persecuted LGBT persons. Thank you for your generosity!

Congregational Dinners

Our Winter Congregational dinners were a HUGE success! THANK YOU to everyone that hosted a meal in their home! We had 85 people attend a dinner in 10 different homes! Look forward to our spring congregational dinners the last two weekends of April. If you are interested in hosting a meal or have any questions about the dinners, send an email to Hannah at hannah@amesucc.org



UCC Attic to Basement Rummage Sale Set for August 23-24

Save your gently used items for the rummage sale.

AMOS

Want to know more about AMOS?

Have you considered getting involved with AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy) but are not sure what all AMOS is doing? Are you still uncertain about AMOS' philosophy and its relationship to the Social Gospel? A meeting to introduce members of the congregation to the work of AMOS will be held THURSDAY, MARCH 14 at 5:30 to 7:15 pm at the Flora's (1902 George Allen Ave., Ames). We will discuss the AMOS philosophy and organization (briefly) and current activities of AMOS Issue/Research Teams in Ames. A light supper will be served.

If you need directions, please contact Jan Flora at floraj@iastate.edu or 515-451-9693. Address questions and RSVPs to Lynette Spicer (lynette.spicer@gmail.com), Diane Birt (dbirt@iastate.edu), or Jan Flora after church or by e-mail. The meeting is informational; we will recruit only the willing! You can choose a level of involvement with which you are comfortable if after attending the meeting you would like to support AMOS in some fashion.

UCC

Watch and Listen ... Lenten Virtual Retreats

The Iowa Conference UCC invites you to take a few minutes each Wednesday during lent for prayer and reflection right from your own computer. Every Wednesday, we will post seven prayers, songs, scripture passages, etc. at different points during the day in what we are calling a "Virtual Retreat." We hope that these prayerful moments will help you focus on the Divine as you prepare for your Lenten programs. We hope that the gentle virtual reflections will feed your mind and spirit!

Like the [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Iowa-Conference-UCC/179339622124998), <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Iowa-Conference-UCC/179339622124998> or follow on Twitter, <https://twitter.com/IAConferenceUCC> to enjoy the Virtual Lenten Retreat.

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 in conversations with UCC General Minister and President Geoffrey Black, with Conference Minister Rich Pleva, and others who offer the Iowa Conference their gifts of leadership.
 - 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.

Potpourri

Ames Historical Society 2013 Annual Lecture Series

All lectures are at 7 p.m. in the Ames City Auditorium, 520 Sixth Street
A \$3 freewill donation is requested at the door to assist with auditorium rental.

Tuesday, March 26

Mavericks, Movers and Shakers, Minister: The Mayors of Ames
by Shannon Bardole, Ames Historical Society researcher

Tuesday, April 30

By the Side of the Road: Along the Lincoln Highway in Ames
by Jeff Benson, Lincoln Highway historian

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

United Church of Christ - Congregational
217 Sixth Street
Ames, IA 50010

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

Return Service Requested

STAFF

Ministers

The Reverend Jonathan C. Page, Minister
Hannah Hannover, Children & Youth Minister

Youth Director

Emily Kenneke

Music Director

Lesley Lackore

Organist

Karen Stewart

Secretary

Becky A. Bridges

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Moderator

Ken Birt

Team Coordinator

Ellen Barnhart

Caring Network

Kristin Shields

Christian Education

Barbara Faidley

Evangelism

Jan Bauer

Financial Stewardship

Sharron Slinger

Member Services

Lori Coyle

Property

Greg Lamont

Social Justice and Outreach

Kim Spangler

Worship & Music

David White

Association and Conference Delegate

Rachel Jones

Treasurer

Jim Dickson

Clerk

Lynette Spicer