

ISSUE 243

MAY 2013

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# United Church Courier



**God is still**

**speaking,**

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



**Starting May 26:**

**Worship  
summer hours  
9:30 a.m.**

## **Graduation Sunday, May 5, 10:45 a.m.**

During worship, we will honor our 3 high school graduates: Dylan Adams, Matthew Coyle, and Nolan Dickson

## **Membership Classes May 5 & May 12**

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 May 5 & May 12. You must be able to attend both classes. If those date do not work for you, let us know and we'll work to arrange a more suitable time.

## **Gay Men's Chorus on Sunday, May 5, 3:00 p.m. (See details inside)**

## **Silent Retreat May 17-18 at Pilgrim Heights**

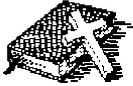
Join us for a meditative retreat on Pentecost weekend. Pilgrim Heights is a camp and retreat center located near Montour (about 50 miles east of Ames). We will leave late afternoon/early evening on Friday, May 17 and return the same time on May 18. This is a time for prayer, silence and guided reflection, and an opportunity to explore more deeply your relationship with God. Total cost, including meals, is \$60 per person for double occupancy, \$80 for single. Some financial assistance might be available. Please contact the Rev. Jonathan Page at [jon@amesucc.org](mailto:jon@amesucc.org) if you would like to sign up.

## **Confirmation Sunday on Pentecost, May 19**

Confirmation is a special day for the church. Please plan on being there! (See details inside)



## FROM THE PASTOR



### **Confirmation Sunday on Pentecost, May 19**

This year on Pentecost, we will have the privilege of confirming several of our youth. This is a great moment of celebration for us all. But I realized the other day that there might be some ambiguity about what confirmation is or how our current practice came to be. So, being a fan of this kind of trivia, I thought it might be useful to explain briefly the history of confirmation in preparation for the big day.

In the book of Acts, the descent of the Holy Spirit on an individual marks the beginning of the Christian life. This happens through baptism, the laying on of hands or even on its own (e.g. Acts 2, 8, 10, 19). Early baptismal liturgies, meant for adults, included baptism in water and the laying on of hands and the imposition of oil or the chrism. Over time there arose the belief that baptism purged the stain of original sin and saved someone from hell, whereas the laying on of hands “confirmed” or strengthened the presence of the Holy Spirit. Baptism was done with water by a presbyter or priest, while confirmation included the laying on of hands by the bishop. Given the pressing need to save infants from hell, baptism became a sacrament for children. At some later point the bishop would confirm those baptized in the faith. Christian initiation involved those two distinct rites.

Reformed Protestants rejected the Roman Catholic views on baptism as well as confirmation. For the Reformers baptism did not save you, but was a sign and seal of your election in Jesus Christ. In other words, God already saved you and baptism is an outward sign of that inward reality and itself a confirmation of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Puritans, our spiritual forebears, did not have confirmation. Instead, they welcomed someone to join the church covenant and therefore become a full member of the church. Someone was welcomed to join the covenant once they demonstrated an inner regeneration by the Holy Spirit, which usually happened in someone’s late teenage years, though it was common to join the church later in life.

After Horace Bushnell’s book *Christian Nurture* (1847), Congregationalists emphasized nurturing young Christians in the faith, as opposed to a dramatic conversion or regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

Confirmation emerged as the culmination of early education and the time when teenagers could accept the baptismal vows that their parents took for them at baptism. We embrace the same tradition today in confirmation, but we also will include a laying on of hands in deference to the ancient Christian tradition.

Confirmation is a special time for the church. At baptism, the congregation promises to nurture and care for children as they grow in the faith. In confirmation, the congregation sees the fruits of that communal nurturing process, and we welcome the confirmands as adults in the church. After confirmation, the youth will be full members of the covenant, able to vote in a congregational meeting and serve on any team or committee. I sincerely hope you will mark May 19th on your calendar and make every effort to be there.

--Jonathan Page

## **Christian Education Team**

### **May 1 - Women's Fellowship**

Join us Wednesday, May 1, at noon in Fellowship Hall. Bring your lunch and join in a fun conversation. The topic is gardening. Suggest great plants. Reveal your favorite places to shop for plants. Recommend public gardens to visit. Bring any seeds you'd like to give away. Anything related to gardening ...or May Day...is appropriate.

Facilitator: Lynette Spicer

### **Church Library News**

The Christian Education team met with a group of people to brainstorm ideas to promote and improve the church library.

The first thing we decided to do was to send an online survey to church members. Please answer the survey if you haven't already. The information you provide will help us make decisions about the church library.

Check out the clutter free church library. Thanks to Ellen and Steve Barnhart for making the library very welcoming.

## Church Library Donations

The church library would like to have new or gently used books for use in the library. The Christian Education Team will look at the books and decide if we need them in the library. Any books we do not use will be put into the book sale at the rummage sale. Fiction, biographies, books on spirituality, ethics, social concerns, etc. are appropriate. We are also looking for copies of the BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS from the past 3 years. If you have donations please call Barbara Faidley first at 515-233-3874 or 515-450-1078. You can also e-mail me at [barbara@faidley.org](mailto:barbara@faidley.org). After calling me you can drop them off at the library and I will know to look for them. Thanks for your help.

## Coming to the Sanctuary – Children’s Books

Soon a shelf of children’s books will be in the church sanctuary. Anyone with young children in worship may take some books to the pew to use during the service. Please return the books to the book shelf or check them out of the church library after worship. To check a book out, put your name on the card in the book and leave the card in the check-out basket near the phone in the library.

--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:** Chad Walsh. 1981. **A Rich Feast: Encountering the Bible from Genesis to Revelation** San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers

I'm a little sad to say that I don't know nearly enough about the Bible. I get the general idea, I guess, but still there's a lot of it I haven't read. The solution to this problem is seemingly pretty obvious: read the Good Book. But this is the task of a lifetime. The Bible is an enormous terrain: so big and vast and varied, full of valleys and hidden gorges. Some of us could use a little help in getting started, a leg up to appreciate the lay of the land, so to speak.

If you are looking for a "leg up," I recommend *A Rich Feast*. Chad Walsh explores the Bible from his point of view as an Episcopalian priest, a poet, a literature professor and a children's book author. In the first part of the book, he encourages us to approach the Bible fresh, appreciating it as one of the greatest works of literature in human history. Walsh's rich sensibility as an English professor and a

poet and writer makes this first section, in my opinion, the best part of the book. For instance, in discussing Psalms, he explains how the ancient Hebrews wrote poetry. He shows Paul's mastery of persuasive techniques in the Letter to Philemon, and points out that this personal epistle is unique as a literary genre within the Bible. In the second part of the book, Walsh tries to understand who the God or Yahweh is who is revealed in the Bible. The third part of the book narrates the Bible as a five-act drama, with Christ's life as the central act.

If you want a beautifully written, accessible, quick read about the Bible, this is a great candidate. Ultimately, though, Father Walsh would say that the point of this sweet little book is to give you some tools and encouragement to help you read a much longer one.

-- Amy Erica Smith

### **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.

**April 28 - Charles Bruner, Executive Director of the Child and Family Policy Center**, will talk about third grade literacy of at-risk children in Iowa and in Ames. The discussion will focus on ideas for grassroots approaches. How can the Ames cluster of AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy) work on literacy?

**May 5 - Kathy Svec, Co-president of the Ames Historical Society** will explain what it takes to preserve and share the unique Ames story. Her presentation will take you behind the scenes at the Ames Historical Society, where saving our collective past, answering questions from around the world and engaging visitors of all ages is an everyday occurrence.

**May 12 - Ask the Pastor**

**May 19 - Potluck and brainstorming** ideas for autumn Learning Center programs

### **Loan Items, Volunteer for 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](mailto: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.

Contact Hannah Hannover or Barbara Faidley

## **Member Services Team**

### **Religion and Society Movie Nights in Fellowship Hall**

Thursday, May 9 at 6 p.m. — *Wall-E*

Thursday, May 16 at 7 pm — *Gas Land*, a documentary about fracking

### **Take Me Out to the Ballgame, Take Me Out to the Park!**

Enjoy an outing at Principal Park to watch the I-Cubs take on Round Rock.

Sunday, June 9, First pitch 1:15 p.m.

Cost: Three (3) canned goods to be donated to the Food Bank of Iowa.

We will tailgate prior to the game, around noon. Come join us!

### **Do you have Ideas for Food, Fun and Fellowship Opportunities?**

Please share them! Contact Allison Anderson at (515) 291-6351 or [ast1961@gmail.com](mailto:ast1961@gmail.com) and we'll get the ball rolling!

# Social Justice Team

## **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. Just show up! Get involved!

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).

To get involved, contact Jan Bauer at 515-292-3739.

## **Strengthen the Church Offering—May 19th, Pentecost Sunday**

This is one of the four special offerings for the UCC. (see insert)

## **Volunteer to help –Sign up in the Parlor**

- Food at First (serving meals to those in need).
- Meals on Wheels (deliver meals to homebound people)

## **A Note of Thanks**

The LGBT Fellowship collected nearly \$400 to help provide a safe-house for persecuted LGBT people in Uganda. The money arrived safely and Jon received this note in response: "I just can't believe this, my dear. God sent you all to us as an angel to save us from trouble. The house we got is able to accommodate 8-10 people. Kindly please send our greetings to all the people who helped us in this and also send our great thanks to them. Tell them never to give up with the kind hearts they have. Love you all and take care."

## **Green Justice Team**

### **Mission 4/1 Earth**

Individual and group efforts are helping us progress toward our congregational goal of 1,000 hours of direct earth care, 100 trees planted and 100 letters written for earth care advocacy.

The Ames UCC group collected 26 bags of trash at Stuart Smith Park during Stash the Trash on April 6. The total for city wide collection was 1.94 tons (3.880 pounds) of trash. The UCC participants were Diane and Ken Birt, Nancy Brown, Jacob Buchele, Jenna Buchele, Gracie Cannon, Jack Cannon, Leigh Ann Cannon, Jerry Chase, Paul Clark, Erika Mudrak, Doug and Peg Powell, Linda Shenk, Aidan and Ailis Shenk Cook, Kristin Shields, Kathryn Shields, Galina and Phil Spike, Donna Starck and 3 dogs. More group activities are planned in May. Letter writing sessions will be held every Sunday after worship through May 19. Stop by to write a few letters or pick up a packet. Join us for movie nights on Thursdays, May 9 and 16. Check out the bulletin board for details and more ideas and resources to help us reach our goals.

Make your actions count by completing a green tally card and turning it in each week. Monitor our progress on the Mission 4/1 Earth bulletin board in the church parlor.

--Donna Starck

## **Property Team**

### **Mark Your Calendars**

The spring all-church workday is Saturday, June 15, from 9 a.m. to noon. Your help will be needed in the areas of interior and exterior cleaning, minor repairs and painting. Details will be in the next newsletter and will sent out via e-mail and announced during worship as they are finalized. As always, many hands will make light work, so please plan to join us that day.

--Greg Lamont

## Financial Stewardship Team

**Full of Creative Ideas? Enjoy Organizing Campaigns? Talented in Communications?**

Join the Financial Stewardship Team in planning, developing and presenting the fall stewardship theme to the congregation. Share in encouraging investment in our ministry at Ames UCC. We need a volunteer to coordinate the campaign and one or two additional people to participate in the decision-making process. Contact Sharron Slinger at [sbsling@netins.net](mailto:sbsling@netins.net) if you are available or want more information.

## Worship & Music Team

**Calling ALL to serve!**

For those interested in serving as an usher, greeter or Deacon-in-Charge, come to a brief training session Sunday, May 5 immediately after worship. Anyone interested should attend the training. Without your help, our worship experience would be drastically different - please consider volunteering! If you are unable to attend, or have further questions, contact Bradley Duckstein at [bduckstein@gmail.com](mailto:bduckstein@gmail.com) or via phone at (515) 971-2886.



**Gay Men's Chorus, Sunday, May 5 at 3:00 p.m.**

**All donations from this concert will be given to a local non-profit**

Come hear a lively and enjoyable concert from the celebrated Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus.

Originally known as the Des Moines Men's Chorus from 1985 to 1992, the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus (DMGMC) reorganized in 2001 under the guidance of Artistic Director and Conductor, Dr. Randal A. Buikema. In 2005, the chorus found new leadership under Dr. Rebecca Gruber, the current Artistic Director and Conductor.

The chorus has an extensive history of performances and honors. Newly reformed, the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus gave its first performance in May 2001, thanks to the dedication of supportive members of the community. The chorus now presents a three-concert season and performs at various events in the community.

**Outdoor Worship and Picnic June 2**

Sunday, June 2 worship service will be outdoors at 10:30 a.m. at Hobbit's Hill, home of George Belitsos and his husband, Peter. Make the journey out to 5508 West Lincoln Way for worship. Following worship, we'll have a picnic. Several llamas and pigmy goats will be eager for children of all ages to pet. Tour the garden, prairie and visit the beautiful house. The interior of the house is decorated in Chinese art and furniture.

Bring food to share (sandwich stuff, summer salads or sweets), table service and lawn chairs. Drinks will be provided.

Please contact Allison Anderson (515) 291-6351 or by email at [ast1961@gmail.com](mailto:ast1961@gmail.com) if you are available to help coordinate parking, provide refreshments (cookies and lemonade) or assist folks as they tour the house and gardens.

**Summer is the Season for Special Music in Worship**

Interested in sharing your musical gifts with the congregation? Contact Music Director Lesley Lackore or Organist Karen "Sunny" Stewart today.

**Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!**

On March 25, Pastor Jonathon Page conducted a memorial service for Maurice Lee "Maury" Geist.

Serving refreshments following the service involved many wonderful volunteers to help put tablecloths, placemats, napkins and centerpieces on each table; bring the silver service, cups, silverware and serving dishes from the small kitchen to Fellowship Hall; cut

the bars and place them and the cookies on serving plates; prepare juice, coffee and tea; wash and arrange the fruit on serving plates in a beautiful way. And, of course provide the dozens of cookies and bars. Thank you to all who said a cheerful "Yes!" to the request to help: Ann D'Arcy, Barbara Faidley, Nancy Marks, Trudy Yoder, Bonnie Trede, Joyce Huisman, Peg Powell, Nancy Clark, Sharron Slinger, Kristin Shields, Tania Tipton, Galina Spike, Edna Wiese, Sally Chase, Frieda Lehman, Bernie Pohm and Ellen Barnhart. Lynette Spicer, Lowell Mathison, David White and Bill Yungclas were ushers. Bill Yungclas fired up the dishwasher and Roger Parmenter helped with drying the dishes and the clean up. Blessings on you all!

--Barbara Yungclas

## UCC

**Join our UCC General Minister and President Geoffrey Black for some great conversation!**

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.

**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>

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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### STAFF

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Hannah Hannover, Children & Youth Minister

**Youth Director** Emily Kenneke

**Music Director** Lesley Lackore

**Organist** Karen Stewart

**Secretary** Becky A. Bridges

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