Theologian in Residence Program

Ames United Church of Christ

“The Challenges of Truth in Our Time”

Karen L. King

September 18-19, 2021

PROGRAM

**Note: All sessions except the regular Sunday worship service will be provided via Zoom. A link will be sent to all who register about a week prior to the program.**

**Saturday, September 18**

8:45-9:00 a.m. Welcome (instructions and introductions)

9:00-10:15 a.m. Part 1. *“Now that you say “We see,” your sin remains”*: Confronting Blindness to Address “Who is Jesus?”

We start our conversation together with the *Gospel of John*, notable both for its theology that God is love, and for the horrors against Jews it has fanned and fueled over centuries. We ask: What connections are being made among belief, violence, and love? With what effects? For whom?

10:15-10:30 a.m. Break

10:30-11:45 a.m. Part 2. *“She knows”*: Confronting Lynching and Racializing Violence

W. E. B. Du Bois, one of the most prominent activists and writers in US history, wrote a story entitled “Jesus Christ in Texas.” In it, a Stranger appears. As in the *Gospel of John*, some recognize who he is; some do not. And that makes all the difference. The Stranger’s presence clarifies the truth of what is happening as a Black man is sentenced to a chain gang to profit White police and businessmen. A minister thinks he might recognize the Stranger, but the Stranger says he does not know him. In the end, the Black man is lynched as the Man of Sorrows on the cross blazes across the night sky and a White farmer’s wife looks up and screams. “She knows,” Du Bois writes. We ask: What does she know?

11:45 am -12:45 p.m. Break

12:45-2:00 p.m. Part 3. *“There is no such thing as sin”*: Confronting the Powers of Evil

*The Gospel of Mary*, a second-century non-canonical gospel, elaborates the *Gospel of John*’s teaching that Jesus is the Son of Man who descends into the world to reveal the truth, and then ascends, showing the Way for his followers. The *Gospel of Mary* teaches how to overcome the Powers that rule the world with ignorance, false desire, and wrath, not least through their self-serving law and false judgments. By accepting its true spiritual nature within, the soul defeats the Powers with truth. We ask: Is there teaching here for soul-repair and effective challenges to structural evils in our time?

**Sunday, September 19**

9:00-10:15 am Adult Forum: The Three Lives of Mary Magdalene

10:30 a.m. Worship with Ames UCC church

Dr. King’s Sermon: Kindness is the only thing that makes sense.