



The Open Door

SEPTEMBER 2021



An Open and Affirming Congregation

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Who We Are

We are a community of God's beloved dedicated to **following** the teachings of Jesus as we live our faith by **loving** and **serving** all of God's creation and **striving** for justice and peace throughout our community, our nation, and the world.

WHAT'S NEXT

This is (almost) the news you have been waiting for! We have been approached by a candidate who is interested in our half-time pastor position. We are very interested in this candidate and excited about the possibilities for our future. The candidate is coming to us from out of state. Therefore, two things need to happen before we can proceed: 1) a background check completed, and 2) an updated profile posted with our conference. These two steps are the reason we cannot yet make a more revealing announcement about the candidate. Sorry! The motto for a search and call process seems to be "Hurry up and wait," so we cannot even say when we will be able to say more..... Stay tuned.....

Photo credit goes to Norm Van Klompenburg for the new headline photo. We are super grateful to Norm for all of his talents and, at this moment, especially, his photography talents. The open door in the photo is the door to the pastor's study. You get a view into the cleaned up and rejuvenated study with an inviting area to sit and chat. We look forward to having a pastor walk through that open door.

ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

OCTOBER 17, 2021

The Annual Meeting will take place on the third Sunday in October, as specified in the By-Laws. This year that is October 17th. The meeting will commence following the Worship Service. Two of the essential items of business at this meeting are the presentation and acceptance of the 2022 budget and the election of the slate prepared by the Nominating Committee to fill all expired terms.

The following are the positions whose terms will expire at the end of the year: Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer, the at-large member of the Personnel Committee, and the three members of the Nominating Committee. Below is a list of all elected positions, with the new nominations marked with an asterisk (*).

ELECTED POSITIONS **(elected to serve through year listed)**

CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator: *Dorothy Raymond (2023)
Assistant Moderator: *Jane Ann Cotton (2023)
Secretary: *Jenni Pryke (2023)
Treasurer: *Larry Leitner (2023)
Assistant Treasurer: Sonia Sledge (2022)
At-Large: Les Morgan (2023), Heidi Grandstaff-Fresh (2022)
Norm Van Klompenburg (2023)

FINANCIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Pat Van Klompenburg (2022), Tom Turk (2023), Brent Parker (2023)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*Duane Hobbs (2022), *Marti Barker (2022), *James Jensen (2022)

AT-LARGE MEMBER OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

*Jan Turk (2024)

ADDITIONAL POSITIONS (that do not require election)

Health Ministry: Carolyn Hobbs & Cindy Pollard

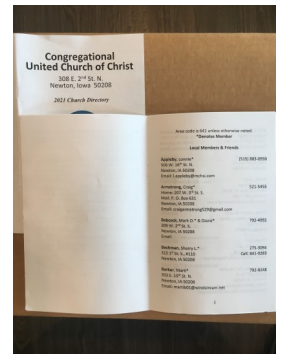
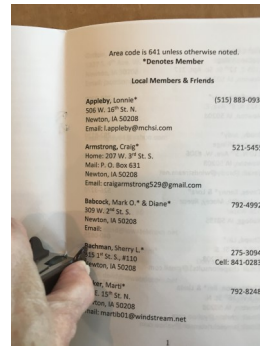
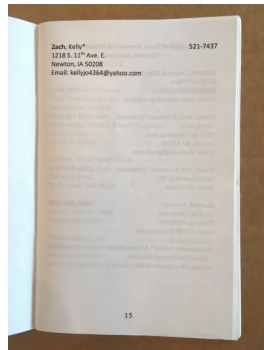
Library: Jamie Sawin & Marti Barker

Mission Coalition: Stormy Storms

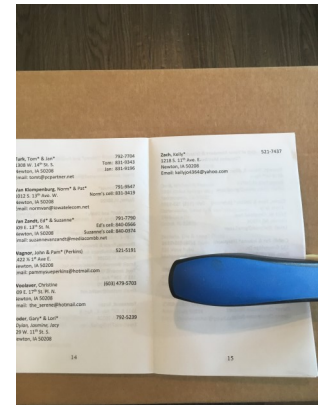
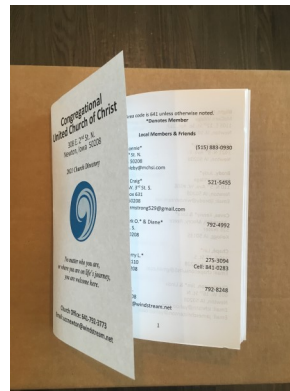
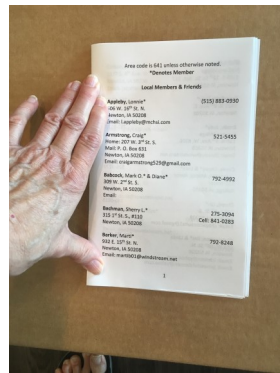
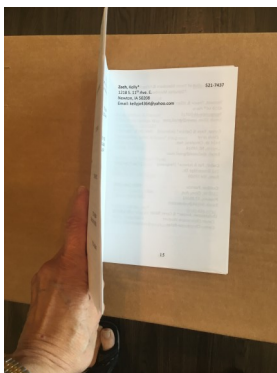
A note of explanation: April Faidley served for the past two years as the Assistant Moderator and would have been nominated as Moderator. However, following Pastor Jessica's departure, April took over editorship of the Open Door. Council did not know of anyone else who might be able to do that job and, therefore, decided to leave April as the Open Door Editor and seek another Moderator.



A Tutorial: Fixing the Church Directory All By Yourself!



1. Yay, a new directory!
2. Open cover. Boo!
3. Open to center, remove staples.
4. Set aside cover.



- 5 & 6. Reverse the fold.

7. Insert refolded pages into cover.
8. Here's the challenge.

Even my Paper Pro, One Finger, 25 Sheet Power stapler will not reach the middle! If you have the same problem, stop in at the church office and Annie will staple it up for you.

Disclaimer: Newton Congregational United Church of Christ cannot guarantee that in-person attendance at a church event will not result in contracting the Coronavirus that causes Covid-19 or any other virus, bacteria, or illness. Newton Congregational United Church of Christ assumes no liability for any communicable disease believed to be contracted at the church. Persons who attend any event at the church do so at their own risk. At this time, as directed by our conference ministers, we require attendees to wear face masks at all times over their mouths and noses, to avoid touching other attendees, and to use hand sanitizer after touching any surfaces or objects. Please stay home if you have signs of a communicable illness of any kind.

Pastoral Care

We are grateful to have Rev. David Raymond available to provide pastoral care. If you have a pastoral emergency, please reach out to Rev. Raymond directly at (641) 521-1506 or davidray@mediacommbb.net, or through the church office (staffed Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:00am-3:00pm). Thank you, David, for blessing us with your care.



Communications

Church Council Catch Up

August 8, 2021 Council Meeting

Present: Jane Ann Cotton, Moderator; April Faidley, Assistant Moderator; Larry Leitner, Treasurer; Jennifer Pryke, Secretary; Norm Von Klompenburg & Les Morgan, Members at Large. Absent: Heidi Grandstaff-Fresh.

Treasurer's Report: Larry Leitner asked if we want to purchase pledge envelopes. We still have boxes of unused envelopes, so we will use those instead. Larry requested approval for purchasing our domain at WIX for two years, instead of one, in order to save \$112. Approved.

Maintenance Report: Norm Van Klompenburg reported that we passed the city inspection with flying colors. Re-inspection is in three years. We are grateful to everyone who helped make this happen!!!! Tape was purchased to repair the seam in the roof, which was thought to be the source of a leak. Unfortunately, after the repair the leak continued. Norm, Jim, and Les will take a look at it again. Norm & Jim will be installing a railing in the basement. Heritage will be sending a proposal for the stained glass repair. Norm hopes that the leak beneath the stained glass window on the west wall will be repaired.

Where We Are: As of August 8, in response to rising COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations, UCC leadership communicated the necessity of wearing a mask regardless of vaccination status and the inadvisability of singing or reciting during the service. We will adopt these recommendations.

A church member requested approval of attending worship with an emotional support dog. Approved.

The report from the Nominating Committee, Duane Hobbs, Marti Barker, and James Jensen, was discussed. Please refer to the article *Annual Meeting of Members* on p. 2.

The Search Committee has been approached by an interested candidate. Please see the article *What's Next* on p. 1.

Council approved the use of the parish house by a quilting group, Empty Spools, once a month for 9 months of the year. Three of our members participate in this group. Approval was also granted to DKG, after Jenni specified the dates requested and the details of clean-up. Norm mentioned we should review our building use policies to make sure we are complying with all of the stated requirements.

The Financial Review Committee, Tom Turk, Pat Van Klompenburg, and Brent Parker, will conduct a review of the accounts of the church and provide a written report to the Council.

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

- 9/3 Rick McNew
- 9/8 Ashley Christenson
- 9/9 Catfish Cottrell , Shirley Nuzum
- 9/10 Zach Johnson
- 9/12 Sonia Sledge
- 9/13 Steve Schober
- 9/15 Anna Mae Morgan
- 9/19 Collin McGinley
- 9/20 Christopher Pearson, Karen Shump
- 9/22 Julie Schmidt
- 9/23 Brian Schmidt
- 9/24 Clarence Planer
- 9/28 Gary Pearson



- 9/8 Diane & Ron Marvelli
- 9/14 Jamie & Jerry Sawin
- 9/27 Janie & Gary Kahn
- 9/30 Lori & Gary Yoder

MORE WHAT'S NEXT

In the last Open Door we described meetings between our church, the Lutheran Church and First Presbyterian Church exploring budgetary and personnel challenges all of us are facing and specific ways to share ministry. In July representatives of all three churches met with representatives from the “conference” level of each denomination to delve into the different ways that denominations might join together to consolidate personnel, reduce expenses, and maintain a vigorous presence and ministry in our community. That meeting produced a variety of options and a process for moving forward.

At the August meeting of reps from the three churches, First Presbyterian explained they would be leaving the group in order to engage more deeply with the desires and ideas of their congregants.

Our church and the Lutheran Church continue to be committed to these conversations as we face dwindling numbers and an uncertain future.

VI. Wisdom: The Voice of God

Mary Karr

Ninety percent of what's wrong with you
could be cured with a hot bath,
says God through the manhole covers,
but you want magic, to win
the lottery you never bought a ticket for.
(*Tenderly*, the monks chant,
embrace the suffering.) The voice never
panders, offers no five-year plan,
no long-term solution, no edicts from a cloudy
white beard hooked over ears.
It is small and fond and local. Don't look for
your initials in the geese honking
overhead or to see through the glass even
darkly. It says the most obvious s____,
i.e. Put down that gun, you need a sandwich.

Mary Karr is the Peck Professor of Literature at Syracuse University. This poem is from [Tropic of Squalor](#), Harper Collins, 2018.

Book Study

Our Book Study will resume on September 9th at 5:30 with a hybrid meeting. Some members will be in-person at the parish house, as we did before the pandemic, and some members will be “zooming in.” This will accommodate out-of-state book club members and those with obligations at home (such as children to parent). We hope it works well!

The book chosen for the next study is *The Gospel of Jesus*, 2nd edition, by Robert W. Funk, Arthur J. Dewey, and the Jesus Seminar. A new, paperback copy is \$18.00. There are used ones available for around \$11-12. The book is fairly short (less than 150 pages) and would be a good entry point into our studies for new members.

During our studies we have often encountered the Jesus Seminar, a group of biblical scholars and laymen, formed in 1985 to determine their collective view of the historicity of the deeds and sayings of Jesus of Nazareth. (The seminar effectively ceased functioning in 2006.) We hope this book will help us understand their work and their conclusions in more depth. We anticipate lively discussions about what the Jesus Seminar has retained in their Gospel and what they have removed.

September 9	Acknowledgments through Introduction, pp. vii-12
September 16	Prologue, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 15-23, and corresponding Notes, pp. 79-84
September 23	Chapters 3, 4, & 5, pp. 25-35, and corresponding Notes, pp. 84-89
September 30	Chapters 6, 7, 8, & 9, pp. 37-45, and corresponding Notes, pp. 89-92
October 7	Chapters 10, 11, 12, & 13, pp. 47-57, and corresponding Notes, pp. 93-96
October 14	Chapters 14, 15, 16, & 17, pp. 59-68, and corresponding Notes, pp. 96-101
October 21	Chapters 18, 19, 20, & 21, Epilogue, pp. 69-77, and corresponding notes, pp. 102-104
October 28	Optional: Resources, pp. 106-118

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83595726192?pwd=cm9FTXkrVlhrQmkvalEwVitGZW9nZz09>

Meeting ID: 835 9572 6192

Passcode: 377178

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83595726192?pwd=cm9FTXkrVlhrQmkvalEwVitGZW9nZz09>

This study is a laity-generated educational program. The participants choose the books and research additional material to add to the discussion. We hope the books we choose will interest others. If you have a book in mind that you would like to read and discuss in a group format, please let us know, through the church office, what you would be enthused about studying. We would be most happy to welcome you into the study!



We miss our local homebound members.

We hold them in our heartfelt prayers.

Take a moment to call, write, or visit them!

Marilyn Currant
Park Centre #1
500 1st St. N.
Newton, IA 50208

Bev Edge
Village Assisted Living
2571 Guthrie Ave, Apt. 1402
Des Moines, IA 50317
(515) 299-1845

Betty Hotchkin
Park Centre #40
500 1st St. N.
Newton, IA 50208
(641) 791-4687

Norma "Jeannie" Johnson
200 S. 8th Ave E.
Newton, IA 50208
(641) 275-5393

Prayers and Concerns

Marilyn Deppe Lin Chapé Craig Armstrong
Stormy Storms Kelly Jo Zach

If you know someone in need of support—a visit, a call, a note, or a prayer—please contact the church office.

Money Musings



Even as I write this on a 91-degree humid day, fall and the stewardship season is right around the corner. Council recently discussed the issue of pledge envelopes for 2022. We noted that we have numerous unused boxes of envelopes for various special offerings. Rather than buying new envelopes specific for pledges, we decided first to use these other envelopes as a cost saving strategy. There will be envelopes in the pews each week for your use. If you prefer, you can pick up a box of envelopes from the church office or ask me to bring a box to church for you.

We are keeping pace with what we projected for income for the year. In terms of expenses, we are under budget. In no small part, this is due to our having not yet hired a halftime pastor. Year-to-date through the end of August, we have spent \$2,100 for Pastor Mark Holmes to preach from our pulpit, in contrast to the almost \$18,000 designated in the budget for pastoral expenses.

As mentioned elsewhere in the Open Door, we are looking at a possible pastoral hire in the relatively near future. Obviously, if we make that hire, we will begin to disburse the funds budgeted for pastoral expenses. I am hopeful that we can fill our position and begin to approach the "new normal" of a half-time pastor as rapidly as possible.

The Scholarship Committee recommended we award \$35,000 for the 2021-22 academic year. To date, we have awarded \$23,000 from that recommendation. We are awaiting paperwork from the remaining recipients so we can complete the disbursement of scholarships. Last year, that was completed in November.

Editor's Revery

"We without God cannot, and God without us will not."

St. Augustine

Wanting to reflect on this quote from St. Augustine, I thought I would start with an explanation of who St. Augustine was. So I did what we do now days, a Google search. To my surprise, before getting to any information about St. Augustine, the person, there was nearly a page of references for St. Augustine, the city on the Florida coast!! The here-and-now beats out history!

St. Augustine, the person, was the bishop of Hippo from 396 to 430. To locate this geographically, Augustine's Hippo is now Annaba, Algeria. Augustine was a renowned theologian and philosopher and a skilled preacher. His theology remains relevant today because he spoke and wrote about the problem of evil. Many people are baffled by how to reconcile an omnipotent (all-powerful) and omnibenevolent (all-good) God with ample evidence of evil in the world. Augustine of Hippo rejected the idea that evil exists in itself. Instead, he regarded evil as a corruption of goodness, caused by humanity's abuse of free will.

Enough theology. Back to the quote.

What I find fascinating about St. Augustine's aphorism, is the way it joins us with God in partnership. I think it comes readily, and maybe typically, to imagine God as an amazing, unapproachable, awesome essence, a spirit surpassing our ability to understand or comprehend. St. Augustine may well have completely agreed with God being that, yet he doesn't stop there. Instead, he elaborates further. He suggests an indwelling of God within us and us within God. God needs us and we need God. God depends upon us and we depend upon God. God is essential to us and we are essential to God. God is essential to the world and we are essential to the world. That's rather mind-boggling. And scary!

It starts to feel like maybe we are supposed to do amazing things, doesn't it? What I actually think it means is that going about our ordinary lives, doing whatever it is we do, we could keep this partnership in mind and what we do in our ordinary lives will, indeed, be amazing, whether we realize it or not. Each and every one of us, with God dwelling within us and us dwelling within God, is amazing.



SEPTEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
					National Food Bank Day	National Tailgating Day
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11am Worship in the sanctuary	LABOR DAY	10 am Video taping of Meditation and Musical Moments	6:00pm Church Council, Parish House	5:30 pm <i>The Gospel of Jesus</i> book study Parish House & Zoom		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
11am Worship in the sanctuary		10 am Video taping of Meditation and Musical Moments		5:30 pm <i>The Gospel of Jesus</i> book study Parish House & Zoom		Puppy Mill Awareness Day
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
11am Worship in the sanctuary		10 am Video taping of Meditation and Musical Moments		5:30 pm <i>The Gospel of Jesus</i> book study Parish House & Zoom		National Comic Book Day
26	27	28	29	30		
11am Worship in the sanctuary	Deadline for submissions to the newsletter	10 am Video taping of Meditation and Musical Moments		5:30 pm <i>The Gospel of Jesus</i> book study Parish House & Zoom		

Congregational United Church of Christ
308 E. 2nd St. N.
Newton, IA 50208

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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The Open Door is a newsletter for the members and friends of Congregational United Church of Christ.
Submissions are welcome. Deadline for submission is the date indicated on the Calendar.

Administrative Assistant	Anne Gerken	792-3773 (Office)	uccnewton@windstream.net
Organist	Bev Thomas	792-6465	thomasb@iowatelecom.net
Custodian	Jim Christenson	792-3773 (Office) 641-781-0596 (Cell)	uccnewton@windstream.net
Health Ministry	Carolyn Hobbs	792-2687	cdhobbs@iowatelecom.net
Moderator	Jane Ann Cotton	521-3547 (Cell)	jacotton@pcpartner.net
Pastor Emeritus	Rev. David Raymond	521-1506 (Cell)	davidray@mediacombb.net

Office hours: 10:00am to 3:00pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday



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United Church of Christ: www.ucc.org — Iowa Conference: www.ucctcm.org

Newton Congregational UCC: www.uccnewton.org