

**Congregational
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

The Open Door

April 2018

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.

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Pastor Petersen's Perspective: On Living Our Faith in Our Everyday Lives

I have had several conversations over the past few weeks in which folks have shared that they struggle to find the space to engage with God. The stuff, the busyness of everyday life seems to demand most of their time and energy, and God takes a backseat to the immediate demands of everyday life. Does this sound familiar? Can you relate?

Yet I believe that we are called to give our entire lives over to God and God's way of love, justice, and peace. Indeed Jesus states that this is the greatest commandment: to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Such an understanding didn't originate with Jesus but was foundational to his Jewish faith, a centuries-old tradition by the time he came on the scene.

To live our faith, to live trusting wholly in God is so simple, yet it seems so difficult to actually live out in reality. Indeed people have struggled to live out this faith since that first blessed breath was breathed into humankind. And to live our lives trusting wholly in God, giving ourselves over fully to God, will result in our lives look very different than they do now as such faith is transformative and life-changing.

So, where do we even begin? Well, we start from the only place we can start; we begin where we are. Living a life of faith is a journey, a process. Just as Jesus's earliest disciples were invited to follow Jesus on the way, so too are we. And we can only set off from where we already are.

So, let us begin where we are yet with a slight shift in perspective as we take that first step. As you are living your everyday life, engaging in whatever activities call for your attention, I invite you to ask yourself, "How am I loving God through this? How am I loving my neighbor as myself?"

Something I spend a decent amount of time doing is washing dishes. This activity can feel like a chore; it can feel like a distraction from all of the other things I think I should be doing to live out my faith, to give myself wholly to God. Yet, with a shift in perspective, I can see it as a way of doing just that, of loving God with my whole self and loving God's creation. And, indeed, it calls me to greater awareness and action in giving myself over to God's way of love, justice, and peace.

As I wash those dishes, I am being a good steward of these resources. Rather than throwing them all away and buying new ones or using plastic and paper so I can save time, I am taking the time and using the energy to care for what I have and thus caring for creation. I am caring for my family, any guests, and indeed myself who will eat using these dishes and utensils as we are much less likely to get sick than if we were using dirty dishes. And, I am called to further action as I consider whether or not others have access to clean running water and must be conscious of how I am utilizing this precious resource that I can so easily take for granted. I am living my faith even as I engage in the mundane chore of washing dishes.

I believe that God is at work everywhere, that God is present within and throughout all creation. And I believe that we can live our faith in our everyday lives loving God with our whole selves and our neighbors as ourselves. We often simply need eyes to see, a change in perspective to realize how we are already doing so. And if we truly struggle to make those connections, if this change in perspective reveals that our activities are not a way of loving God or others as ourselves, then I think we must question why it is we are engaging in such an action. If this is the case, we are called to repent, to turn back to God, and to let that thing go in favor of actions that are a reflection of our faith.

It seems to me that once we begin to see what is already there, the ways we are already living out our faith in the ordinary and everyday that we will be inspired to build on that. Day by day we will give ourselves more fully over to God and God's way of love, justice, and peace. And living our faith will not be one more thing we need to add into our already busy lives, but will become the one thing we do each day and simply expressed in a variety of ways.

So, where will you begin?

Worship ...

Easter Sunday, April 1st
10:00 am Worship



... Worship (cont.)



UCC Seasonal Choir

All those who enjoy singing are encouraged to join our seasonal choir. The choir will sing for the final time this season during worship on Easter Sunday, April 1st. Rehearsal will take place **Sunday morning at 9:15am** in the choir loft. Join us in making a joyful noise as we prepare to celebrate the resurrection of our savior!



Centering Prayer

You are invited to gather each Wednesday evening for a time of Centering Prayer. Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer that prepares us to experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. It is simply a wordless, trusting opening of one's self to the divine presence. The group will meet in the **Chapel**, just off of the Sanctuary, on **Wednesdays, 5:15pm-5:45pm**. Please contact April Faidley with any questions.

Sermon Series

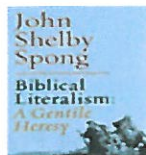
April 4th marks the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In an effort to honor the life he lived and continue the work that he and so many others were unable to complete, people are coming together across the nation in a new Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival (as mentioned in Rev. Petersen's March newsletter article). During Sunday morning worship throughout April, we will explore the four intertwined strands of injustice that this campaign seeks to address in challenging us to become a moral nation: systemic racism, poverty, militarism and the war economy, and ecological devastation. Jesus lived and died proclaiming justice for all of God's creation and, as followers of Jesus, as Easter people, we are called to do the same.

... Education

Racial Harmony and Justice Book Club

The Racial Harmony and Justice Working Group in Jasper County has started a book club in cooperation with the Newton Public Library in order to promote racial harmony and justice in our community. The book club usually meets at the library on the first Thursday of each month from **6:30pm-7:30pm**. All are welcome to participate. Books may be obtained by contacting the library at 641.792.4108 (library card required).

The book to be read and discussed at the **Thursday, April 5th** meeting is "Between the World and Me" by Ta-Nehisi Coates. The book for the Thursday, May 3rd meeting will be "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together In the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race" by Beverly Daniel Tatum. The April and May meetings will both take place in the Parish House at Congregational UCC due to library renovations.



New Bible Study

A new Bible study will begin on **Thursday, April 5th**. Throughout the 12-week study, we will read and discuss John Shelby Spong's book "Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy: A Journey to a New Christianity through the Doorway of Matthew's Gospel." The group will meet on **Thursdays from 5:00pm-6:00pm** in the Parish House. Participants should purchase a copy of the book and read Part I: Chapters 1 & 2 prior to our April 5th meeting. The reading schedule for the rest of April is: April 12 - Part I: Chapters 3-5; April 19 - Part II: Chapters 6-8; and April 26 - Part II: Chapter 9-11.

Please contact Rev. Petersen with any questions or concerns.



Morning Circle

The next meeting of *Morning Circle* will be **Wednesday, April 25th at 9:30am** with Dorothy Raymond as hostess and the person giving devotions is TBD. The group will decide on their next book for study during this gathering exploring three possibilities: "Radical Hope: Letters of Love and Dissent in Dangerous Times" edited by Carolina De Robertis, "A Bigger Table: Building Messy, Authentic, and Hopeful Spiritual Community" by John Pavlovitz, and "50 Women Every Christian Should Know: Learning from the Heroines of the Faith" by Michelle DeRuscha.

All are welcome to join us as we join together for fellowship, devotions, and study seeking to follow more closely in the way of Jesus.

... Service

Food Pantry Sundays

The first Sunday of each month we receive donations for the Salvation Army Food Pantry. On **Sunday, April 1st** cart will be in the west entrance to receive gifts for the food pantry. The Salvation Army is in special need of tuna helper (not hamburger), Ramen noodles, canned fruit cocktail (peaches or pears), canned tuna, and macaroni & cheese. Of course, other canned or packaged foods are always accepted. They also need any kind of personal care items: such as diapers, bath soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, feminine hygiene products, and laundry soap.



“Doggone Good Treats” Project

The PI and CUCC baking activity took a break during the winter months and will be starting up again soon. The church kitchen will once again serve as the center for the making and baking of dog treats on the second and fourth Mondays. PI participants and church members Stormy Storms and Marti Barker will work together to mix ingredients, roll out the dough, use cookie cutters to make bone-shaped treats, and bake them with assistance from a PI staff person.

The dog treats will then be transported either to JCARL or to the Farmer’s Market where donations will be accepted for the bagged treats. The funds received will go to JCARL. Obviously, this combined PI and CUCC project has resulted in many happy dogs and dog owners and will surely do the same into the future!

Let Stormy or Rev. Petersen know if you’d like to participate as the project restarts. You can participate one time or many times. Whatever works with your schedule.



Jasper County Animal Rescue League

On the third Sunday of each month we collect items to help the Jasper County Animal Rescue League (JCARL). The next collection date will be **Sunday, April 15th**.

Their current wish list is: paper towels, garbage bags, raw hides (for big dogs and small), peanut butter, bleach, dish soap, Fabuloso (the purple kind), laundry soap, liquid hand soap, rubber gloves, kitty litter, canned shredded and filet cat food, canned dog food (Purina), dry dog food (Purina), and dry cat food (Indoor Purina).

Cleaning Project with Progress Industries

In addition to our partnership with Progress Industries (PI) to bake biscuits for the Jasper County Animal Rescue League, we also work with PI participants and staff for a church cleaning project. This activity is back from its winter break! Under the guidance of Carolyn and Duane Hobbs a small group from PI will continue doing some light cleaning and dusting in the sanctuary, library and other areas of the church building. This cleaning project usually takes place two times per month, on Tuesdays at 11:00am. Check calendar for dates.

In order for this ministry to continue beyond May, new leadership is needed. If you are interested in helping with this ministry, please contact Carolyn Hobbs or Rev. Petersen.

... Service (cont.)

One Great Hour of Sharing

On Sunday, March 11th, we received our One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering. This special offering of the United Church of Christ enables us to reach people and communities affected by disaster, displacement, or poverty. Through OGHS, we provide assistance to families and communities around the world, helping them to become stronger, healthier, and better equipped to address hardships and catastrophes.

Thank you for your support. Because of your generosity, as a congregation we raised \$391.00. These funds will join together with other moneys raised throughout the UCC to respond to the many critical needs present in our world today. Thank you!

“Body Shop” Collection

We take up a collection of items for the “Body Shop” at Newton High School three times throughout the school year. Our spring collection date is **Sunday, April 8th**. The Body Shop is a method of providing high school students with personal care items and cleaning/hygiene supplies at no cost. The shop is free and open to any high school student.

The supplies that they can use include such things as hair care, shaving items, deodorant, oral hygiene, laundry detergent, feminine hygiene, body wash and spray. Sarah Patterson, the high school coordinator of the program says that like teenagers everywhere, students prefer brand name. They also prefer body wash to bar soap. She hopes that we will donate regular-size products. You may place your donations in a box labeled “Body Shop” in the entryway. There are tax deductible receipts in the box for your use.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting Newton students!



Opportunities to Serve

All volunteers/workers in the church are very much appreciated. Many of you are seen carrying on the work of the church and many things are done unseen, but just as appreciated. It takes many hands and minds to get everything done. Thank you so much for your willingness!

There are many different ways in the church to serve God and others. The more who help, the less work there is for each one. Signup sheets to provide flowers, greet, usher, serve as a lay reader, and host fellowship time are located in the vestibule. Please help if you can.

Additionally, there are a few members who may need transportation to worship and church activities. Please contact the church office to volunteer.

The office has great volunteers who come in monthly to assemble and ready this newsletter for mailing. If you would like to help, just call the office.



Prayers and Concerns

Please hold in prayer

- ◆ Judy Brody and family following the death of her husband Larry on Thursday, February 15th
- ◆ The family of Carol Robinson following her death on Saturday, February 10th
- ◆ The family of Art Anderson following his death on Tuesday, February 6th
- ◆ Mike Knop, uncle of Rev. Petersen
- ◆ Stormy's Mom
- ◆ Karen Petersen
- ◆ Lori Goodman
- ◆ Davis Carter, grandson of Jane & Gary Johnson

✝ If you know someone in need of support – a visit, a call, a note, or prayer – please contact Rev. Jessica Petersen.



Blood Pressure Monitoring

Carolyn Hobbs will offer blood pressure monitoring any Sunday during Fellowship Time. If you are curious about your blood pressure reading, please let Carolyn know.

Community Meal Update

Ninety meals were served by CUCC volunteers at the Community Meal event held Wednesday, February 21st in the basement of First United Methodist Church. We received a lot of compliments about the potato and ham soup and the cobbler and crisps for dessert. The assistance from all who participated including those who provided the dessert produced another very successful evening of reaching out to others in the community.

This month CUCC is responsible for the Community Meal on **Wednesday, April 18th**, and the Community meal will be held **here at Congregational UCC** instead of First United Methodist. This would be a great time for our church family to come see what we do in this outreach program. Please contact Bev Edge, April Faidley, or Marti Barker if you would like to join us from 5:00pm-7:00pm, or for even part of that time, or to provide a dessert. The more help there is, the sooner we are finished. Any and all help is greatly appreciated.

Save the Date!

Our beautiful building turns 100 this year! May 5th marks the 100th anniversary of the dedication of our building. We are going to celebrate the occasion with a special worship service on **Sunday, May 6th** followed by an all-church potluck as we look back on and give thanks for the past 100 years. Please bring a dish to share along with your own table service. Drinks and napkins will be provided.

Our building can't turn 100 without inviting the community into the celebration as well! Plans are in the works for a community-wide event, and details will be forthcoming.

RAGBRAI UCC Team

As you are likely aware, Newton is the Wednesday, July 25th overnight stop for this year's RAGBRAI riders. A group of those riders will be fellow UCCers from across the state. This UCC team will be made up of approximately 12 riders, and each rider is in need of a bed and a shower. Though host homes need not provide food for regular meals, offering food boxes with non-perishable items such as Gatorade, water, and protein bars (no candy please) that riders can grab in the morning and carry in their backpacks would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Rev. Petersen or the church office if you are interested and able to host one or more of our UCC siblings in faith.

Worship Attendance

<u>March Attendance</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
First Sunday	58	40
Second Sunday	60	22
Third Sunday	45	44
Fourth Sunday	57	30



Birthdays to Celebrate in April

- 3-Marilyn Currant, Kelly Zach
- 4-Lora Caves
- 8-Diane Babcock, David Raymond
- 9-Aaron Wilson
- 12-Karen Dont
- 13-Larry Richardson
- 19-Cindy Pollard
- 21-Karen Petersen
- 23-Ailcia Mitchell, Brent Deppe, Kendall Morgan
- 26-April Faidley
- 28-Jon Turk



Anniversaries to Celebrate in April

- 4-Rick & Leslie McNew
- 15-Norm & Pat Van Klompenburg
- 21-Brent & Suzanne Parker

Take note...

Church Council Meeting

The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday, April 11th at 6:00pm in the Parish House**. Please contact Craig Armstrong, our Moderator, with any matters you wish for the Council to consider as they meet. The Council meets regularly on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm.

Congregational Conversation

To serve God's people and creation and engage in God's mission as a community of faith and in our daily lives is central to who we are as Congregational UCC. Jesus modeled servant-leadership as he washed the feet of his disciples and called on those who sought to follow in the way of God to do the same. You are encouraged to gather together in the Parlor on **Sunday, April 8th at 10:45am** (immediately following worship) for a congregational conversation regarding service and mission. Come share your experiences and ideas as we discuss and act on ways to love and serve all of God's creation through reaching out to our community and by living our faith in our daily lives. Come listen and learn how we put our faith in action as individuals and as this community of faith.

Sponsor Radio Spot

In an effort to get the word out about who we are as a congregation, we have sponsored a weekly airing of a podcast by UCC General Minister and President, the Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, on KCOB (95.9 FM and 1280 AM) on Sunday mornings at 7:35am. In an effort to better connect listeners with our local congregation, we are shifting the content of this early morning message as Rev. Petersen will now offer a weekly reflection. ("Into the Mystic" can be accessed through our website or by visiting www.ucc.org/into_the_mystic.)

The weekly cost is \$25. You are invited to sponsor a Sunday or two or four or more to increase our community's awareness of what we are all about here at Congregational UCC. We are engaging in wonderful ministry together, and it's time that more folks know about it! Please send your donation into the office referencing "radio" if you are interested in donating.

Worship Schedule for April

Date	April 1	April 8	April 15	April 22	April 29
Christian Calendar Date	Easter	Second Sunday of Easter	Third Sunday of Easter	Fourth Sunday of Easter	Fifth Sunday of Easter
Special Events	Communion	Congregational Conversation			
Special Offerings	Food Pantry Donations	Body Shop Collection	JCARL Collection		
Greeters	Lin Chapé	Lin Chapé	Marti Barker	Les Morgan	Ed & Suzanne Van Zandt
Ushers	Ed Van Zandt, Larry Leitner	Ed & Suzanne Van Zandt	Lin Chapé, Les Morgan	David & Dorothy Raymond	TBD
Lay Readers	Jerry Sawin	Larry Leitner	TBD	David Raymond	Les Morgan
Scripture	Mark 16:1-8	James 2:1-17	Luke 10:25-37	Job 12:7-10	1 Samuel 15:1-11
Worship Color	White	White	White	White	White

White symbolizes purity, holiness, and virtue, as well as respect and reverence.



We continue to remember our homebound members.

You are missed and continue to be cared for and held in our heartfelt prayers.

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

Betty Hotchkin
Park Centre #40
500 1st St. N.
Newton, IA 50208

Ann Raridon
St. Frances Manor
2021 4th Ave.
Grinnell, IA 50112

Recipe Corner...

Cottage Cheese Muffins by Jan Turk
from *Windows Into our Kitchens*
(Congregational UCC Cookbook from 1981)



1/3 cup sugar
3 tbsps. Butter
1/2 cup cream-style cottage cheese
1 tsp. grated lemon peel
1 egg
3/4 cup packaged biscuit mix
1/2 cup milk

Preheat oven to 400°

In mixer bowl, cream together sugar and butter; beat in cottage cheese and lemon peel. Add egg, beat well. Stir in biscuit mix and milk just until moistened. Spoon into greased 1 3/4 inch muffin pans. Bake in 400° oven for 20 minutes or until done. Makes about 20 muffins.



Church Directory 2018

We are currently preparing to issue new church directories by the end of May 2018. If there are any changes to be made to your information, please fill out this form and put it in the offering plate or return to the church office.

Deadline for any changes is April 30th, 2018

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____


Cell Phone: _____

Sundays

7:35am "Into the Mystic" on KCOB
 95.9 FM & 1280 AM
 10:00am Worship
 11:15am Fellowship Time

APRIL 2018



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
01 Easter Sunday Communion Food Pantry Donations	02	03 11:00am Pl Cleaning	04 5:15pm Centering Prayer	05 5:00pm Bible Study 6:30pm Racial Justice Book Club	06	07
08 10:45am Congregational Conversation Body Shop Collection	09	10 11:00am Pl Cleaning	11 5:15pm Centering Prayer 6:00pm Church Council	12 5:00pm Bible Study	13	14
15 JCARL Collection	16	17 11:00am Pl Cleaning	18 5:15pm Centering Prayer 5:30pm Community Meal	19 5:00pm Bible Study	20 Deadline for Open Door Articles	21
22 	23	24 6:00pm Racial Justice Group	25 9:30am Morning Circle 5:15pm Centering Prayer	26 5:00pm Bible Study	27	28 Central Assoc. Spring Meeting @Congregational Christian Church UCC, Truro
29	30	01	02	03	04	05

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

Pastor	Rev. Jessica Petersen	792-3773 (Office) 641-840-2672 (Cell)	revjessicapetersen@gmail.com
Administrative Assistant	Patricia Castline	792-3773 (Office)	uccnewton@mediacombb.net
Organist	Judy Brody	792-8129	ljbrody@windstream.net
Choir Director	Bev Thomas	792-6465	thomasb@iowatelecom.net
Custodian	Jim Christenson	792-3773 (Office) 641-781-0596 (Cell)	uccnewton@mediacombb.net
Health Ministry	Carolyn Hobbs	792-2687	cdhobbs@iowatelecom.net
Pastor Emeritus	David Raymond		

Church office hours: 9:30am-2:30pm Monday through Thursday (The office will be closed on Fridays.)



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Iowa Conference: www.ucciaconf.org

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