

**Congregational
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

The Open Door

February 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 Becoming a "Go To" Church

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Many of you are aware that I was recently in Arizona for the fourth year of the Next Generation Leadership Initiative, a long-term educational endeavor sponsored by the UCC Pension Boards which aims to help create transformative pastors in the UCC. During this final core January session of the program, we focused on "Leading Congregations to Faithful and Fruitful Ministry." One piece that came up over and over again in the reading and class time was becoming a "go to" church rather than a "come here" church.

A "come here" church holds programs and services within its own building and hopes people will come. The church likely even publicizes their events, but ultimately the goal is to get people to come to them, to come to their building and their programs. I am guessing you are quite familiar with "come here" church as we hold worship, Bible study, Centering Prayer, potlucks, et cetera in our building. We even welcome folks from Progress Industries to "come here" (when the weather is a bit warmer) as we engage in service to our community.

A "go to" church, on the other hand, gets out of their building and goes to the people. They seek to meet people where they are. They pick up worship, education, service...all sorts of ministries and take them to where people gather. This is not a completely foreign concept within our congregation as we have participated in joint worship services outside in the streets and at Maytag Park. Also, a few years back, we served our "Welcome Dog" to folks as they gathered on the courthouse square for the annual Thanks with Franks event. More recently, we have also dabbled a bit in going to where folks are online through our Facebook page and website.

We have a bit of experience in being a "go to" church. However, we have really barely scratched the surface in responding to the Great Commission proclaimed in the Gospel of Matthew: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (28:19-20a).

One way we discerned that God is calling us to live out our mission is by reaching

out to our community. It seems to me that we have heard the call to be a “go to” church, to “go and make disciples of all nations,” to get up out of our building and go to where the people are. And, now is the time to start responding to that call and to actually get out there and engage with our neighbors.

So, how will we go to God’s people in our community? Will we gather at Uncle Nancy’s for Bible study or to talk about other matters of life and faith? Will we partner with a local vet clinic or the Jasper County Animal Rescue League to offer a Blessing of the Animals? Will we connect with the schools offering tutoring or other assistance while wearing a t-shirt identifying us as UCCers? The possibilities are endless!

One important piece to keep in mind as we go: We are called to go and engage with folks out in our community not so that they will then follow us back to our building (though that may happen). No, we are called to go and engage with folks for a greater purpose: to love and to serve them and all of God’s beautiful creation and in order to realize a more just and peaceful world.

So, how do you hear God calling us to go out and engage with our community? Please email me, call me, drop me a written note, or talk with me in person to share your ideas for us to try our hand at becoming more of a “go to” church.

**The church
has left
the building.**



... Worship

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

During worship on **Sunday, February 4th**, David Goos of Neighbors Helping Neighbors will speak about poverty and homelessness here in Newton and some of the group’s efforts to address these issues. Please join us for worship as we listen to his presentation and continue to discern how we, as a congregation, will respond to the call to build relationships with our neighbors living in economic, material poverty.

Lenten Sermon Series: The Last Week

During the season of Lent, you are invited to take a closer look at Jesus’ last week in Jerusalem, a week of great significance in our Christian tradition. Each Sunday during worship, we will explore one day of this last week following the Gospel of Mark as we consider what this story was about and what it means for us today so that we might follow the teachings of Jesus more closely as we live our faith.

Lenten Prayer Partners

Praying for another and knowing someone is praying for you can have a powerful impact on one's life. During the season of Lent (February 14th - March 31st), you are encouraged to begin a new prayer practice, namely to join with a partner in prayer.

How does this work?

You and your prayer partner talk on the phone or in person (no texting! no email!) once a week for fifteen minutes. You talk confidentially about things that really matter, and tell what you'd like your prayer partner to pray for you that week. Then you actually pray together, if both of you are comfortable doing that, or you covenant to pray individually later for your partner.

Interested?

Contact Rev. Petersen by **Sunday, February 4th** so that she can partner you with another interested pray-er.

Ash Wednesday Service

A service of worship will be held in on **Ash Wednesday, February 14th beginning at 12:15pm**. The formal service will be brief with words of welcome, scripture, and the imposition of ashes. Participants will then be invited to engage in prayer stations as their schedules allow. Please join us for a moment of prayer and reflection as we enter into the season of Lent.

Congregational Conversation

Worship is central to who we are as a community of faith. In worship, we come together as a community of God's beloved to experience the presence of the divine that we might be comforted, inspired, and transformed as we offer our praise and prayers.

You are invited to join together in the Parlor for our first Congregational Conversation focusing on worship on **Sunday, February 11th at 10:45am** (immediately following morning worship). Please come share your ideas and questions, come listen and learn as we work together to make worship more meaningful for all those who gather in this sacred space.



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.

... Education

Racial Harmony and Justice Book Club

The Racial Harmony and Justice Working Group in Jasper County, which meets in the Parish House the final Tuesday of each month, 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 will meet at the library on the first Thursday of each month from **6:30pm-7:30pm**. All are welcome to participate. The book to be read and discussed at the **Thursday, March 1st** meeting is "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness" by Michelle Alexander. Books may be obtained by contacting the library at 641.792.4108 (library card required).



Listen Up! Bible Study: Romans

Paul's letter to the Romans is the first of Paul's letters in the New Testament canon, the longest of them (16 chapters), and, in many respects, the most significant. Though we are in the midst of our 12-session study, you are still invited to join us as we listen for God's still-speaking voice through this letter to the church and seek to discern what it means for us in our time and context.

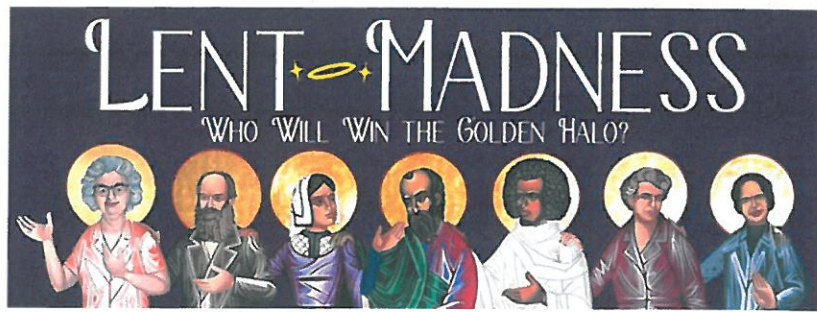
The group meets in the Parish House on **Thursdays, 5:00pm-6:00pm**. Contact Rev. Petersen with any questions or concerns.



Morning Circle

The next meeting of *Morning Circle* will be **Wednesday, February 21st at 9:30am** with Carolyn Hobbs as hostess and April Faidley giving devotions. The group is studying the book "Jesus: The Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary" by author Marcus J. Borg. During this meeting we will be studying Chapter 10 of the book.

All are welcome to join us as we deepen our understanding of who Jesus was and what that means for us as people of faith seeking to follow in Jesus' way. Want to participate? Join us on February 21st in the Parish House.



Lent Madness 2018

By now you've heard that Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day coincide this year. The real Lenten *love*, however, kicks off the next day on February 15th. Why? Because for the ninth year running, people of faith are gearing up for Lent Madness, the beloved "saintly smackdown!"

With its unique blend of competition, learning, and humor, Lent Madness allows participants to be inspired by the ways in which God has worked through the lives of saintly souls across generations and cultures. Throughout Lent, thirty-two saints will do battle to win the coveted Golden Halo. Based loosely on the NCAA basketball tournament of a similar name, this online devotion pits saints against one another in a bracket as voters choose their favorites throughout this penitential season.

Here's how to participate: on the weekdays of Lent, information is posted at www.lentmadness.org about two different saints. Each pairing remains open for 24 hours as participants read about and then vote to determine which saint moves on to the next round. Sixteen saints make it to the Round of the Saintly Sixteen; eight advance to the Round of the Elate Eight; four make it to the Faithful Four; two to the Championship; and the winner is awarded the coveted Golden Halo.

The first round consists of basic biographical information about each of the 32 saints. Things get a bit more interesting in the subsequent rounds as we offer quotes and quirks, explore legends, and even move into the area of saintly kitsch.

This year Lent Madness features an intriguing slate of saints ancient and modern, Biblical and ecclesiastical. 2018 heavyweights include John the Evangelist, Margaret of Scotland, Richard Hooker, Katharina von Bora, and the apostles Peter and Paul.

The full bracket is online at www.lentmadness.org. Copies will also be available at the church on Sundays, February 4th and 11th or can be accessed by contacting the church office. While not necessary to participate, you can order *The Saintly Scorecard: The Definitive Guide to Lent Madness 2018* at www.forwardmovement.org. This companion guide includes biographies of all 32 saints, a full-color bracket, information about how to fully participate, and a series of Pocket Lent trading cards.

Lent Madness began in 2010 as the brainchild of the Rev. Tim Schenck, an Episcopal priest and rector of St. John's Church in Hingham, Massachusetts. In seeking a fun, engaging way for people to learn about the men and women who make up the church's calendar of saints, Schenck devised this devotion. Combining his love of sports with his passion for the lives of the saints, Lent Madness was born.

Starting in 2012, Schenck partnered with Forward Movement executive director Scott Gunn, to bring Lent Madness to the masses. Schenck and Gunn form the self-appointed Supreme Executive Committee, a more-or-less benevolent dictatorship that runs the entire operation.

The formula has worked as this online devotional has been featured in media outlets all over the country including national television, the Washington Post, NPR, USA Today, and even Sports Illustrated (seriously). More importantly thousands of people have been inspired by the saintly stories of those who have come before us in the faith.

If you're looking for a Lenten discipline that is fun, educational, occasionally goofy, and always joyful, join the Lent Madness journey. Lent needn't be all doom and gloom. After all, what could be more joyful than a season specifically set aside to get closer to Jesus Christ?

... Service

Food Pantry Sundays

The first Sunday of each month we receive donations for the Salvation Army Food Pantry. On **Sunday, February 4th** a 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 is concluded until next spring. The church kitchen has been the center for the making and baking of dog treats over the past few months on the second and fourth Mondays. PI participants and church members Stormy Storms and Marti Barker have enjoyed the experience of mixing ingredients, rolling out the dough, using cookie cutters to make bone-shaped treats, and baking them with assistance from a PI staff person.

Stormy then transported the dog treats either to JCARL or to the Farmer’s Market where donations were accepted for the bagged treats. The funds received went to JCARL. Obviously, this combined PI and CUCC project has resulted in many happy dogs and dog owners.

Let Stormy know if you’d like to participate next spring when 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, February 18th**.

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 concluded until next spring. Under the guidance of Carolyn and Duane Hobbs a small group from PI has done some light cleaning and dusting in the sanctuary, library and other areas of the church building. This cleaning project took place two times per month, on Tuesdays at 10:30am.

If you are interested in helping with this ministry when it resumes in the spring, please contact Carolyn Hobbs.

See You In The





Prayers and Concerns

Please hold in prayer

- ◆ Karen Petersen
- ◆ Lori Goodman
- ◆ Davis Carter, grandson of Jane & Gary Johnson
- ◆ Sue Anderson

✝ 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.



Betty Hotchkin would like to thank all those who sent her cards and well wishes for her 95th birthday.

Community Meals Update

Ninety-five meals were served by CUCC volunteers at the Community Meal event held Wednesday, January 17th in the basement of First United Methodist Church. 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, February 21st**. 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.



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.

If you are willing to be a greeter, please contact Marti Barker. Additionally, there are a few members who may need transportation to worship and church activities. Please contact Duane Hobbs 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.

Worship Attendance

<u>January Attendance</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
First Sunday	27	25
Second Sunday	38	32
Third Sunday	39	33
Fourth Sunday	59	32



Birthdays to Celebrate in February

- 2-Tom Turk, Oliver Planer, Aiden Planer
- 3-Askel Joy
- 6-Carver Christenson-Vasquez
- 7-Todd Planer
- 14-Coridan McGinley
- 17-Nile McCoy
- 19-Emma Fresh, Jamie Sawin
- 21-Amber Christenson
- 23-Bonnie McGinley
- 27-Bev Edge, Larry Brody,
Kristina McNew, Les Morgan

Congratulations!

Jim and Linda Christenson's daughter Ashley gave birth to a baby boy, Bennett James Frank, on Monday, January 22nd. Congratulations to Bennett's parents, Ashley Christenson and TJ Frank!

The family is overjoyed!



Inclement Weather Policy

As we are all aware, Iowa weather is always unpredictable. In the event of inclement weather, please check television stations KCCI and WHO or radio station KCOB to learn of any cancellations of worship services or other church events.

Take note...

Church Council Meeting

The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday, February 14th 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 will meet regularly on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm.

New Church Bylaws

The revised bylaws that came before the congregation during our 2017 Annual Meeting held on Sunday, January 21st were unanimously approved. Copies are still available in the Sanctuary or may be obtained by contacting the church office.

The Caring Crew

Some of you may wonder "What is the Caring Crew?" It is the name given to several members who call on those of the congregation who are unable to attend worship. The present group consists of Marti Barker, Donna McCoy, Duane & Carolyn Hobbs, and Tom Turk.

Other than occasional visits, we usually accompany Rev. Jessica when she offers home communion. Anyone in the congregation is welcome to become part of the crew. Also, we welcome suggestions of those who may want visitors. Please contact Carolyn Hobbs for more information.

Sponsor "Into the Mystic"

In an effort to get the word out about who we are as a congregation, we sponsor 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. 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 "Into the Mystic" if you are interested in donating.

Worship Schedule for February

Date	February 4	February 11	February 18	February 25
Christian Calendar Date	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Transfiguration Sunday	First Sunday in Lent	Second Sunday in Lent
Special Events	Communion			
Special Offerings	Food Pantry Donations		JCARL Collection	
Greeters	Lin Chapé	Craig Armstrong	Lin Chapé	Bev Edge
Ushers	Les Morgan, Ed Van Zandt	Duane Hobbs, Ed Van Zandt	Craig Armstrong, Lin Chapé	Lin Chapé, Duane Hobbs
Lay Readers	David Raymond	Larry Leitner	Bev Thomas	Suzanne Van Zandt
Scripture	Mark 1:29-39	Mark 9:2-9	Mark 11:1-11	Mark 11:12-19
Worship Color	White	White	Violet	Violet

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

Violet is the ancient royal color and therefore a symbol of the sovereignty of Christ; it is also associated with repentance from sin.

We continue to remember our homebound members.

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

Larry Brody
Accura of Newton West
2130 W. 18th St. S.
Newton, IA 50208

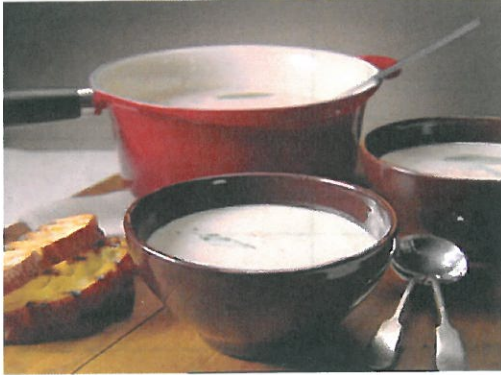
Marilyn Currant
Park Centre #1
500 1st St. N.
Newton, IA 50208

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

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

Carol Robinson
Newton Village #114
110 N. 5th Ave. W.
Newton, IA 50208

Tuscan White Bean and Garlic Soup



INGREDIENTS

Servings: 4-6

Yield: 8 cups

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 shallots or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup red onion, chopped
- 1 fresh sage leaf
- 2 (15 ounce) cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 4 cups low sodium chicken broth
- 4 garlic cloves, smashed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- salt, to taste

DIRECTIONS

In a large soup pot, sauté shallots or onion and garlic with butter and olive oil until soft, about 3-5 minutes.

Add drained beans, sage, and broth. Bring to a simmer and simmer for about 10 minutes.

If using an immersion blender: blend soup until smooth. If using a regular blender: pour half of mixture into blender and puree until smooth.

Pour blended soup back into pan and blend remaining soup, then pour the rest of the blended soup back into pan.

Add cream, black pepper, and salt to taste. Keep warm over very low heat!

Sundays

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

FEBRUARY 2018



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	01	02	03
04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Communion Food Pantry Donations			5:15pm Centering Prayer	5:00pm Bible Study		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10:45am Congregational Conversation - Worship			Valentine's Day 12:15pm Ash Wednesday Worship 5:15pm Centering Prayer 6:00pm Church Council	5:00pm Bible Study	Deadline for Open Door Articles	9:00am - 3:00pm GSA Education Event
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
JCARL Collection			9:30am Morning Circle 5:15pm Centering Prayer 5:30pm Community Meal	5:00pm Bible Study		
25	26	27	28	01	02	03
		6:00pm Racial Justice Group	5:15pm Centering Prayer			

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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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Website: www.uccnewton.org

Iowa Conference: www.ucciaconf.org

United Church of Christ: www.ucc.org