



The Open Door

August 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.

**Congregational
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

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Pastor Petersen's Perspective: On Standing in Solidarity

On Thursday, July 12th, I stood out under the hot sun for an hour in the middle of the day at a construction site (you may know it, the one just to the south of Walmart here in Newton) with about 25 other members of the Newton community and folks from across central Iowa (including a few other members of Congregational UCC J). We gathered not simply to feel the heat of the sun blazing down upon us or even to stand in awe of those who would dare to engage in manual labor wearing all of the hot and heavy gear required to do their work safely in such hot and humid conditions. Rather we gathered together to show our support and stand in solidarity with two brave men who are daring to demand that they be treated with dignity and respect in their workplace.

On Friday, June 15th, on behalf of themselves and their fellow co-workers, these two Bridge City Construction Workers walked out on strike in an effort to solve a variety of issues including a serious lack of safety on the job, wage theft, and discriminatory behavior, among others. We stood with them to offer support, as these workers continued to call on Bridge City Construction, which is based out of Ottumwa, and its owner Jason Blunt to meet with them to discuss a plan to resolve these substandard working conditions for the benefit of all current and future workers at Bridge City Construction.

Personally, I stood there because my faith calls me to. I went out to that worksite on that Thursday in the heat of the day because the God I have come to know through Jesus bids me to stand with the poor and the marginalized and to witness to their humanity, to the reality that they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. As I encounter Jesus, I hear God's call to join together with those who are being oppressed and exploited to demand equity and justice.

A couple of weeks earlier, I had the privilege of sitting down with Will and Jorge, these brave workers, to listen to them share about their low pay and lack of real benefits like retirement or health insurance along with stories about how workers who are injured on the job do not receive proper care or compensation. They spoke about Bridge City shirking responsibility for its employees by misclassifying many as

1099 (that is, naming them as independent contractors). I listened as they told me that workers are required to buy their own power tools and that they must provide their own safety equipment in addition to Bridge City making unauthorized pay deductions for broken tools or equipment and offering no safety training to workers. And on top of all of that, they shared that workers are threatened and intimidated for trying to make positive change. Will and Jorge bravely and boldly walked off the job demanding that Bridge City address these issues, so that workers can have dignity, safety, and respect on the job.

I recall that there is a very well-known story in the Bible about a man who exploited and oppressed his workers. According to that story, God clearly sided with the workers who called out in distress, who cried out for justice. According to that story, things didn't turn out too well for pharaoh. Now, I don't foresee any plagues coming, but I do hear a call for justice, an imperative to stand with those who are being mistreated and abused and to call the pharaohs of our day to account.

And Jesus did just that. He was always found with the least, the last, and the left behind. He was always found right there with the poor, the marginalized, and the exploited. He proclaimed their dignity and their worth; he announced their inherent value as children of God. And, Jesus challenged those in places of power, those who were exploiting these beloved ones for their own gain.

As a follower of Jesus, I believe I am called to do the same, so I strapped on Jabali (No need to be worried about him; we took regular breaks in the air conditioning, drank plenty of water, and he even got to try his very first popsicle!) and walked along the edge of that busy road to stand in support of and in solidarity with Will and Jorge and 20-some other folks to proclaim their worth and their right to dignity and respect. And, I will gladly do it again as doing so is simply the living out of my faith.

Worship ...

Worship Downtown

On **Sunday, August 26th**, we will join together in worship and fellowship with five neighboring downtown congregations for our Fourth Annual Worship Downtown. Worship will begin at **10:00am** and take place outside near our building (We are still exploring possibilities for the exact location as we search for some shade!). Bring a lawn chair to sit on and don't forget your sunscreen! Please contact Rev. Petersen if you are willing and able to contribute a canopy to provide some shade for the service and refreshment time. This year's recipient of the offering received has yet to be determined. However, if you would like your offering to go to our congregation, please make your check out to UCC and/or write UCC on your offering envelope. Any undesignated funds will be given to the chosen recipient.

Refreshments will be served following the service. For refreshment time, each congregation is being asked to recruit one volunteer (or a couple) to provide additional refreshments (bars, cookies, veggies, fruit, cheese and crackers, etc.). Please contact Rev. Petersen if you are interested in volunteering. Drinks, paper goods, and plastic ware will be provided.

Please spread the word as all are welcome to attend. And, of course, mark your calendars and plan to join in this time of worship and fellowship with our siblings in faith!

Worship Downtown Choir

Once again, members and friends of the participating congregations are invited and encouraged to join together to sing as an ecumenical choir during the Worship Downtown service. The choir will sing two anthems. Rehearsal will take place on **Wednesday, August 22nd at 7:00pm at First Presbyterian Church**. The choir will also assemble at **9:25am on Sunday, August 26th**, to run through the music prior to the service. Please contact Larry Anderson (641-521-1337) if you have any questions as he will once again be directing the choir.

Worship (cont.)...

Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer will no longer be offered weekly but instead will be offered seasonally. The group will not meet during the month of August but will reconvene during "Harvestide" (September through October) and once again in the spring during Eastertide. 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**, during the seasons mentioned above. Please contact April Faidley with any questions.

... Education



Bible Study

Our weekly Bible study has been on a break for the summer and will begin again in September. More information will be made available as the start date approaches.

Please contact Rev. Petersen with any questions or concerns.



Morning Circle

The next meeting of *Morning Circle* will be **Wednesday, August 22nd at 9:30am**. Dorothy Raymond will serve as hostess, and April Faidley will offer devotions. The group is studying "Radical Hope: Letters of Love and Dissent in Dangerous Times" edited by Carolina De Robertis. We will be discussing pages 49-72.

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

... Education (cont.)

Open and Affirming Task Force

Church Council has appointed an Open and Affirming (ONA) committee (Larry Leitner, Sonia Sledge, and Jamie Sawin). The purpose of the committee is to initiate the process where we can become an ONA church – a church that explicitly informs people identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and/or Transgender that they are very welcome here. It is easy to say that we do not need to undergo the process of becoming an official ONA church because we already are very welcoming here at Congregational UCC. However, we believe such an attitude ignores the extremely long history of harsh and punitive treatment LGBTQ people have experienced at churches throughout our nation and the world.

To quote from the ONA website (<https://openandaffirming.org/ona/why/>):

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people of faith often experience emotional and spiritual injury in churches that condemn their capacity to love and seek love. Because they've learned that "All Are Welcome" usually doesn't apply to them, they can't assume that any church will be safe for them and their families.

A public welcome by an Open and Affirming (ONA) church sends a clear message to LGBT seekers that they have a home in the United Church of Christ.

A congregation's affirmation and support through an ONA covenant can be a life-changing and life-saving experience...

Of over 300,000 Christian congregations, the best guess is 6,000 (2%) may be open and affirming to *some extent*. Many of these 6,000 would not be open and affirming enough to make LGBT seekers feel comfortable.

The Congregational UCC ONA Committee will be engaging in a process of first educating ourselves about issues relevant to becoming an ONA church. We also will be scheduling a series of meetings where we will encourage *all members* of the congregation to honestly reflect on and share their views on becoming an ONA church. The Committee would like its first meeting to be held with congregation members who identify as LGBTQ. We are looking forward to hearing what your experience is like at Congregational UCC. We believe that, based upon your experience, we can better understand where we need to go next in becoming an ONA church. So, we are inviting all members and friends of our congregation who identify as LGBTQ to meet with us **Sunday, August 5th at 9:00am**. We will provide some refreshments!



... Service

Food Pantry Sundays

The first Sunday of each month we receive donations for the Salvation Army Food Pantry. On **Sunday, August 5th**, 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 Progress Industries partnership with UCC of making and baking all natural dog treats takes place on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 2:00pm. PI participants and church members Stormy Storms, Marti Barker, and Suzanne Van Zandt 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 are then transported either to JCARL or to the Farmer’s Market where donations are 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!

Contact Stormy Storms or Rev. Petersen if you’d like to participate. You can participate one time or many times. Whatever works with your schedule.

You will have a very gratifying experience!



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, August 19th**.

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

Thanks to the dedication of Carolyn and Duane Hobbs, we were able to work with PI participants and staff for a church cleaning project. Under their guidance, a small group from PI did some light cleaning and dusting in the sanctuary, library and other areas of the church building twice each month. This ministry is on hiatus for the summer and will begin again in September under new leadership. Thank you to Heidi Grandstaff-Fresh for her willingness to work with PI to continue this ministry.

“Neighbors Helping Neighbors”

At Church Council meeting in July it was suggested that I write a note about the organization “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” that was created a year ago as we considered our congregation’s potential support of their work. First Lutheran, United Presbyterian, First Methodist, First Presbyterian, St. Stephen’s Episcopal and First Christian Churches and The Salvation Army are currently involved.

I have attended a few monthly meetings and want to explain the focus of this group within our community. Financial support for this initiative is provided by donations. Volunteers for the various projects are from the churches involved. My comments are made from my notes and some information provided at the meetings I attended.

Projects:

- Laundry night is held each month on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at a local laundromat. Money and laundry detergent are provided to those attending. Children are present, and books, crayons and paper are provided for the children to enjoy. Fruit and bottled water is available plus pizza is donated by Dominos. Transportation is provided for those participating, if necessary, by local cab companies; vouchers are submitted to Neighbors Helping Neighbors to reimburse the cab service. During the winter months, some warm-weather clothing was available to those needing coats. Hygiene bags for the participants are available. In addition, at all laundry sessions, a Resource File is available with applications for services such as Medicaid, WIC, housing, United Way, etc.
- In June and fall 2017 sharing of clothing was held at First Lutheran Church and clothing donations came from many sources. Seventy-seven people attended and impacted 200 people. Some clothing donated was shared with The Salvation Army and Goodwill Career Center.
- Blessing Boxes are located in various locations and contain food, supplies and clothing items.
- Assisting with the schools with the “school clothing closets”, etc.
- One church has set aside money for auto repairs.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors has had a positive impact in our community.

Jane Ann Cotton

Community Meal

The regular Wednesday evening community meal is on break during the summer and be back in September! Stay tuned for more information!



Helping Marshalltown

Brothers and sisters among the UCC in Iowa, I know that many of you are touched by the tornado damage in Marshalltown, IA last week. For some people, it is tempting to go to the location and just show up 'without an invitation' expecting you will find a way to help. This 'self-deployment' creates extra burdens on the community.

HOWEVER, if you have the time, energy, and desire to help with the initial recovery, here is a contact number for you: United Way of Marshall County 641-752-4688. Call this number, they will give you information as to when, where, and what you might do.

At this point, the work is largely tree and debris removal, shovels are handy, chainsaw expertise is valuable. Again, please do not show up unannounced as you create more work for an already overburdened response force. Call the number.

Thank you,

Brice Hughes

Iowa Conference Disaster Coordinator

P.S. If you go, please take photos, maybe write a little story about your experience, send to me at bricehughes@hotmail.com. I would love to share your stories with UCC Disaster Ministries nationwide.

May God bless you for your faithful response.





Prayers and Concerns

Please hold in prayer

- ◆ Chuck Stanley, step-father of Heidi Grandstaff-Fresh
- ◆ Stormy's Mom



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.

Thank You!

Thank you so much for gifting us with food, places to shower, and a beautiful air conditioned place to sleep. It was really nice after a long hilly day of riding to find such a welcoming place.

Love,
Team UCC, RAGBRAI 2018

Fuller Scholarships

Eve Fuller fulfilled the wishes of her husband, Max, and her own by leaving the bulk of their estate to our church to establish scholarships for the children of our members. To be eligible for these scholarships, the student's parents or the student must be a member of this church and the student's intention must be to complete a four-year degree program at an accredited college or university.

Applications are available to those who have received scholarships in the past and to those who are applying for the first time. Please contact the church office for an application. **Applications are due no later than Monday, August 6th and should be returned to the church office.** Decisions will be made at the August 8th Church Council meeting.

Please contact the church office with any questions and someone will get back to you.



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, mow the lawn, 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.

Worship Attendance

<u>June Attendance</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
First Sunday	31	46
Second Sunday	28	25
Third Sunday	43	27
Fourth Sunday	33	24

<u>July Attendance</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
First Sunday	24	41
Second Sunday	26	21
Third Sunday	36	25
Fourth Sunday	(at First Pres.)	42
Fifth Sunday	N/A	25



Birthdays to Celebrate in August

- 5-Mark A. Babcock
- 6-Ron Marvelli, Carolyn Hobbs, Megan Kahn, Mollie Kahn, Don Deppe
- 7-Kay Hagedorn
- 12-Jenessa Koedam
- 14-Cienna Christenson-Baker, Jane Johnson
- 15-Jane Ann Cotton
- 17-Kenny Caves
- 18-Kathy Current



Anniversaries to Celebrate in August

- 1-Clarence & Marilyn Planer
- 13-Katie & Steven Stonehocker
- 15-Samantha & Sonia Sledge
- 16-Gary & Jane Johnson

Take note...

New Email Address

We have changed internet providers and are now using Windstream. In doing so we had to set up a new email address which is: uccnewton@windstream.net. Please use this new address to contact the church office beginning August 6th.

Church Council Meeting

The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday, August 8th at 6:00pm in the Parish House**. Please contact Re. Petersen 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

One way we have discerned to live out God's mission for us is by reaching out to our community. You are encouraged to gather together in the Parlor on **Sunday, August 12th at 10:45am** (immediately following worship) for a congregational conversation regarding evangelism and outreach. Come share your experiences and ideas as we discuss and act on ways to share the good news of God's love for all creation. Come listen and learn how we have been sharing this message as Congregational UCC.

Sponsor "God Is Still Speaking"

In an effort to get the word out about who we are as a congregation, we have a weekly airing 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, Rev. Petersen now offers a weekly reflection regarding how "God Is Still Speaking."

The weekly cost is \$25. You are invited to sponsor a Sunday 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" or "God Is Still Speaking" if you are interested in donating.

Church Council Notes

Notes from June 13, 2018 Church Council meeting

- From Treasurer's Report: The final cost for the stained-glass window project was \$18,137.48, although the original bid was \$16,700. Norm Van Klompenburg monitored the workmanship and reported that we had an excellent craftsman.
- Travis Padgett is now our contact with our Edward Jones investments due to the resignation of Bret Doering. QuickBooks is now installed on the church computer. Detailed treasurer's reports are available in the church office.
- Fuller Scholarship Review Committee is working to re-examine our policy in order to better live out the purpose of the Fullers. Their work will be ongoing.
- Personnel Committee will meet to further discuss the performance evaluation tool for the pastor.
- The ONA Committee is in the learning stages and committed to carrying the project forward.
- Rev. Petersen continues to be active in the Poor People's Campaign. The group is planning a retreat for August 11th for the purpose of planning the next steps.
- The next Congregational Conversation will be August 12th on Evangelism/Outreach.
- Plans continue for UCC bike riders in RAGBRAI who will stay overnight inside the church.
- Plans continue for the 100 Year Building Anniversary Celebration.
- Rev. Petersen will be on vacation July 15th through July 19th.
- Norm Van Klompenburg is reviewing Internet service providers for the church.

Notes from July 11, 2018 Church Council meeting

- Helen Diehl bequeathed \$5,000 to the church in her will.
- Internet service study revealed multiple problems. To do what we discussed last month would require rewiring the whole church. Moving on to Plan B.
- Fuller Scholarship Review Committee members agree that interpretations of the early parameters of the scholarships are invalid as conditions have changed. They continue their detailed study to propose new guidelines to the congregation.
- Lisa J. Griffith Tierney applied for the Seminary Scholarship. She will be given \$750.
- 100th Year Birthday Celebration will be August 25th from 4:00pm to 7:00pm. This will involve food, music, games, and building tours.
- ONA Committee is hosting a meeting of LGBTQIA individuals in our church for Sunday morning, August 5th before church. The purpose of the meeting is to learn of their experiences when they first encountered our church.
- NHN (Neighbors Helping Neighbors) has had strong turnouts for their laundry events and clothing donations. Clothing can be taken to the Salvation Army and designated for NHN. We are not listed as participants in this community endeavor.

Jamie Sawin, Secretary

Complete minutes of Church Council meetings are available in the church office.

Worship Schedule for August

Date	August 5	August 12	August 19	August 26
Christian Calendar Date	Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost	Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost	Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost	Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Special Events	Communion			Worship Downtown
Special Offerings	Food Pantry Donations		JCARL Collection	
Greeters	Bev Edge	Carolyn Hobbs, Sherry Bachman	Ed & Suzanne Van Zandt	Pat & Norm Van Klompenburg
Ushers	Jerry Sawin, Larry Leitner	Ed & Suzanne Van Zandt	Duane Hobbs	
Lay Readers	Les Morgan	Larry Leitner	Suzanne Van Zandt	N/A
Scripture	John 6:24-35	Psalm 130	Proverbs 9:1-6	TBD
Worship Color	White	Green	Green	Green

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

Green is the color of growth. It symbolizes the renewal of vegetation and the promise of new life.



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

Broccoli-Rice Casserole by Betty Hotchkin

from *Windows Into our Kitchens*

(Congregational UCC Cookbook from 1981)



2 cups cooked rice
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 pkg. frozen broccoli
Soft bread crumbs

Pour boiling water over the frozen broccoli to separate it. Combine all ingredients in a casserole dish, except for the bread crumbs. Sprinkle bread crumbs over the top. Bake in a pre-heated 350° oven for 25-30 minutes.

Scalloped Potatoes with Cheese by Dorothy Raymond

from *Windows Into our Kitchens*

(Congregational UCC Cookbook from 1981)



4 large potatoes
1 large onion, chopped
1 can cream of chicken soup
1/4 cup milk
Sharp cheddar cheese, sliced
Parmesan cheese

Beat soup and milk until smooth. Place layer of potatoes and onions in a greased casserole. Another layer of same and cover with soup mixture. Completely cover with cheddar cheese slices. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese. Bake in pre-heated 350° oven for 1 1/2 hours.

Sundays

7:35am "God is Still Speaking" on KCOB
 95.9 FM & 1280 AM
 10:00am Worship
 11:15am Fellowship Time

AUGUST 2018



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	01	02	03	04
05 9:00am ONA Conversation Communion Food Pantry Donations	06	07	08 6:00pm Church Council	09	10	11
12 10:45am Congregational Conversation	13	14	15	16	17 Deadline for Open Door Articles	18
19 JCARL Collection	20 2:00pm PI Baking	21	22 9:30am Morning Circle	23	24	25 4:00pm-7:00pm 100 Year Birthday Celebration
26 Worship Downtown	27 2:00pm PI Baking	28	29	30	31	01

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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@windstream.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@windstream.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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