

The Open Door

August 2019



CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

God is still speaking,

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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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A Letter from UCC General Minister and President, Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer: A Second Term (from ucc.org, July 16, 2019)

I love what I do. This calling to serve on behalf of the United Church of Christ, and to experience and bear witness to what our collective agency in the world creates, is a joy beyond expectation.

To be sure, it is a delicate and arduous undertaking. The challenges are legion:

- The Church we serve is a Church going through a season of great turmoil and change. I don't at all feel threatened or beleaguered or despondent knowing that. In fact, I feel enlivened, engaged, called, and equipped to lead in such a time as this. But, helping an institution as large and as diverse as ours, and as committed to core values and traditions as ours is – helping it to live through this season of change is almost Sisyphean in nature. Daunting? Yes. Debilitating? No.
- We are a largely white, Euro-centric denomination moving at a glacial pace to absorb the enormity of societal changes that come with the browning of America. These are happening at warp speed. If we can't make this adjustment in real time, we could become irrelevant even though our mission matters and lives are changed by it. Daunting? Yes. Debilitating? No.
- We are living in a world threatening to tear itself apart by division. Political liberalism and conservatism, theological progression and fundamentalism, ethical humanism and orthodoxy, cultural pluralism and hegemony all collide today in ways that threaten to undo a way of being church that has always believed that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. Into this cultural milieu of foreboding intolerance of all others comes the reminder that our motto remains: that they may all be one. Daunting? Yes. Debilitating? No.
- There is a digital revolution unfolding in an institution populated largely by digital immigrants. At his insightful and provocative keynote address to General Synod delegates in 2015 in Cleveland, Paul Rauschenbusch talked about this revolution. As he did that, he implored the United Church of Christ not to sit on the sidelines for this revolution. He called us to invest ourselves because of our vision and mission in a digital infrastructure that

kept us in the game for future generations. Daunting? Yes. Debilitating? No.

- Our funding patterns and our donor bases are shifting. One of the adaptations we must make is to radically alter our understanding of how the work we do here in support of the mission of the local church is changing. We are transitioning out of a pattern of loyalty giving when those loyal to our institution send us money, without asking questions, as the obligation they bear for being a part of the institution. Only about 25 percent of our National Office budget is now supported that way. Moving into a new model of developing relationships with individuals whose hearts align with the mission and ministry of the church, who understand, appreciate, and have the capacity to fund our mission, and want to partner with us in it, is not an easy task. Daunting? Yes. Debilitating? No.

Aware of all of this, the United Church of Christ Board affirmed the work of two different Strategic Task Forces and established five priorities for the National Setting, a covenant partner to all local churches of the United Church of Christ called by the Spirit into mission on behalf of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those priorities were what the Board saw as essential if we were to pursue a pathway to future health, relevance and vitality. Knowing that each of the challenges listed above were threatening, they called the leaders in the National Setting to seek:

- Innovative exploration
- Digital sophistication
- Inclusive excellence
- Just World for All resources
- Alignment of human and financial resources with these priorities.

Each of these priorities is a response to one of the threats listed above. This is the work of good stewards trying to maximize the use of our resources for the good of our shared mission.

As I began to prayerfully deliberate whether or not to seek a second term in office, I thought about the work we had begun to achieve and what the Board had called for. It was important work – nothing short of realigning a denomination toward the future hopes, dreams, and expectations of new generations of leaders in a rapidly changing world for a mission that continued to matter.

I felt once again the clear tug of the Holy Spirit at my heartstrings, saying, “You are called to finish this work.”

This is the work that for four years, with both joy and toil, I have given myself to fully. It is work that, while underway, is yet unfinished. As I announced at General Synod, these will be my last four years in office. To be sure, when I leave this office, the work begun won’t be finished. My hope is that the foundations that will have been built will be secure enough to sustain a bright and hopeful future hope for my successor.

This is the hardest work I have ever done. And it is among the most rewarding work I have ever done. In the midst of leading through change, I continue to bear witness to what hasn't changed: your ability to move the world through love. The creation of the Three Great Loves campaign was less a way of asking the United Church of Christ to try something new than it was simply a way to remind us of what it is we do so well, and also call us to do it with reckless abandon in partnership with a Holy Spirit who trusts us, believes in us and authors our acts of life-changing love all over the world.

I covet your prayers every day, as I lift you all up in prayer every day. None of us do what we do alone or in a vacuum. I am sustained daily by your prayers for me and for the Church. And, together, let us continue to approach God’s throne of grace confidently, knowing that a still-speaking, generous God is with us.

I want to thank you for placing your trust in me to serve a second term. I covenant with you to bring my whole self to this every day. I will do all I can in partnership with the Holy Spirit and through the abiding love of Jesus to use my gifts to God’s greater glory in this undertaking. And I invite you to actively partner with me in actualizing a vision cast for a just world for all. Your hopes, strategic ideas, and Spirit-fed energy equip us for – and are essential to – the shared journey.

May the Holy Spirit of the living God and the risen Jesus continue to architect our future, bless us all along the way as we fulfill Her call to us to love one another as Jesus loved us, and sustain us as we seek to do the mission for which She birthed us. May what we do change hearts and lives through simple acts of love and help usher in a just world for all so that God’s vision of Shalom can be felt and seen.

The Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer has served as General Minister and President since 2015, when he was elected to his first term by the 30th General Synod. He was reelected in June 2019 by the 32nd General Synod, which met in Milwaukee.



Garden Gate Ranch

Lauren Gildersleeve will join us in worship on **Sunday, August 11th** to share information about **Garden Gate Ranch**. Garden Gate Ranch is a non-profit, faith-based, Christian organization providing assistance, resources, and training for sexually exploited and sex-trafficked women in a residential setting. She will also be available for discussion during refreshment time and will have t-shirts for sale (\$20 each) for those wishing to show their support in that way. A special offering will also be collected during the service to benefit this impactful ministry.

Welcome Back, Rev. Carla Cain!

We are excited to welcome back Rev. Carla Cain, our former seminary intern, as she will preach and join Rev. Petersen in leading us in worship on **Sunday, August 18th**. Please plan to attend worship that Sunday and offer Rev. Cain a warm Congregation UCC “welcome back” and listen for the good word she has to share with us.

Worship Downtown

On **Sunday, August 25th**, we will join together in worship and fellowship with six congregations for our Fifth Annual Worship Downtown. Worship will begin at **10:00am** and take place on the lawn of First Lutheran just east of our building. Bring a lawn chair to sit on and don't forget your sunscreen!

This year's recipient of the offering received will once again be Jasper County Elderly Nutrition (please make checks payable to “Jasper County Elderly Nutrition”). 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 Jasper County Elderly Nutrition. Refreshments will be served following the service.

In addition to our congregation, this year's participating congregations are First Presbyterian, First Lutheran, First United Methodist, United Presbyterian, and for the first time Holy Trinity Lutheran and St. Andrew's Lutheran (Sully). 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. Rehearsals will take place on **Wednesday, August 21st at 7:00pm** and **Sunday, August 25th at 9:20am** (prior to the service) at **First Presbyterian Church**. Norm Grimm will be directing the choir this year.

Education

Racial Harmony & Justice Book Club

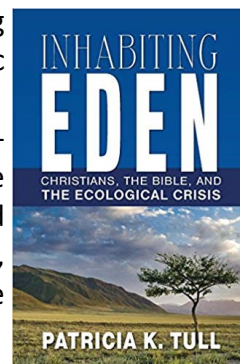
Those interested in promoting racial harmony and justice in our community are encouraged to gather for the Racial Harmony and Justice Book Club at **6:00pm-7:00pm** on the first Tuesday of each month at **The Cellar Peanut Pub** (403 W 4th St. N, Newton). Over the course of five monthly meetings (September-January), participants will read and discuss "Waking Up White: and Finding Myself in the Story of Race" by Debbie Irving. Participants should read and come prepared to discuss the Introduction and Section 1 (Childhood in White) for the **September 3rd** gathering. Please contact Rev. Petersen with any questions.



"Inhabiting Eden" Study

All are invited to gather in the **Parish House** on **Thursday evenings, 5:00pm-6:00pm**, September 5th through October 31st, as we engage in study and discussion of the book "Inhabiting Eden: Christians, the Bible, and the Ecological Crisis" by Patricia K. Tull. "In this thoughtful study, respected Old Testament scholar Patricia K. Tull explores the Scriptures for guidance on today's ecological crisis. Tull looks to the Bible for what it can tell us about our relationships, not just to the earth itself, but also to plant and animal life, to each other, to descendants who will inherit the planet from us, and to our Creator. She offers candid discussions on many current ecological problems that humans contribute to, such as the overuse of energy resources like gas and electricity, consumerism, food production systems including land use and factory farming and toxic waste." (from amazon.com)

For our September 5th gathering, participants should read Chapter 1 (The Problem of Change, Then and Now) and be prepared to discuss any thoughts, questions, and curiosities spurred by the weekly reading.



Pub Theology

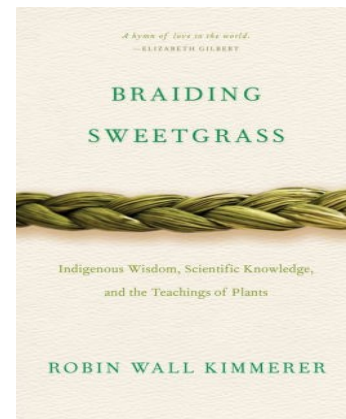
Pub Theology meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month from **6:00pm-7:00pm** at **The Cellar Peanut Pub**. The next meeting of the group will take place on **Tuesday, August 27th**. The format is simple: beer, conversation, and God. Come bring your questions, your curiosity, and pull up a chair. Be ready to engage with people of varying religious traditions, philosophical perspectives, and life experiences. You'll be able to share your own wrestlings and thoughts while learning something new along the way.

We are offering this ministry in cooperation with First Presbyterian Church. Participants are responsible for purchasing their own beverages and encouraged to drink responsibly. No purchase is required. Contact Rev. Petersen with any questions. Hope to see you there!



The next meeting of *Morning Circle* will be **Wednesday, August 28th at 9:30am**. Pat Van Klompenburg will serve as the host for the group. We are still in need of someone to offer devotions. The group will begin studying "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants" by Robin Wall Kimmerer (Preface and pages 1-21).

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.





Communications

Church Council Catch Up

In an effort to keep our congregation more informed regarding the various matters that impact our life together, notes from Church Council meetings are shared with our friends and members via this newsletter. Complete minutes of each Council meeting are available in the church office. Below please find highlights from the June 12th and July 10th Council meetings submitted by Jamie Sawin, Secretary.

June 12th Meeting

- **Treasurer's Report:** We are under budget for the month. Checking account balance is \$5,689.76. There was discussion on honoraria for future presenters of educational programs. We have budgeted \$500. It was agreed by consensus to offer mileage.
- **Maintenance Report** was provided in writing via email. Water control is a big issue. The fire escape needs work.
- **Personnel Matters:** Job descriptions were reviewed and approved. The administrative assistant and organist contracts will be in effect as of March and the custodian contract as of January.
- **PI Partnership** draft agreement was provided in writing. It needs more clarification regarding their use of the building when we need it. To be noted: repairs to be paid by PI; they need to provide a current certificate of insurance. It was decided to send revisions to PI and then have a face-to-face meeting with them regarding the agreement.
- **Facing Our Financial Reality:** The congregational discussion on June 9 was a difficult one. We will request another meeting with conference staff to gain input on variables. A mailing will go out per our by-laws regarding a special congregational meeting.
- **Outreach:** Having a Farmers Market presence with a possible partnership with JCARL was discussed, as was the end of summer event.
- **Upcoming dates of note** were reviewed; more people encouraged to attend the IA-NE-SD Annual Meeting in Omaha.
- It was noted that the Ames UCC church had its sign burned apparently due to anti-LGBTQ sentiment.

June 10th Meeting


- **Finances:** Monthly expenditures and income were reviewed. Memorial balance is \$4,630.86. Total expenditures for the month were \$98,838.08. Checking balance is \$2,737.29. A few wrinkles with Quickbooks prompted several questions, so we will invite Larry Leitner to our next meeting.
- **Insurance:** Grinnell Mutual representative Rick Mohon was consulted. There will be about a \$60 increase in our insurance premium. We would save "very little" if we reduced liability coverage; decided not to.
- **Garden Gate Ranch** (sex trafficking ministry): Approved \$50 honoraria plus a special offering for them. This is *not* to be a precedent.
- **Maintenance report:** Water damage is priority #1. Grateful for all volunteers for the work they have done. *There is a mystery: Who patched the crack in the floor in the furnace room?* After extensive discussion, it was decided to focus on conservation and keep thermostats at 74 degrees. There is mold in the basement, which will be addressed. The water table is high.
- **Matters of note:** Personnel contracts are in the process of being signed; PI Partnership—a meeting has been requested; IA-NE-SD Joint Meeting—no quorum so no official business done but much discussion was had, pastor's salary package for next year is to rise 1.5%, next annual meeting will be in West Des Moines June 19-21.
- **Facing Our Financial Reality:** Reviewed meeting with Associate Conference Minister Jonna Jensen—sharing with a non-UCC church might work better; searching for a part time minister would be "exceedingly challenging"; we need to move rapidly; need "scouting" committee.

Service and Outreach

Prayers and Concerns

Please hold in prayer

- Hilary Montalvo
- Karen Petersen

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



“Doggone Good Treats” Project

The Progress Industries (PI) and CUCC baking activity has started back up after an extended break. The church kitchen serves as the center for the making and baking of dog treats on the second and fourth Mondays at 1:30pm (see calendar for dates). 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 to JCARL 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!

Please contact Stormy if you'd like to help!



End of Summer Celebration

We are planning an **end of the summer celebration** for **Saturday, August 24th, 4:00pm-7:00pm** (similar to last year's 100th birthday party for our building). Sign-up sheets are available for you to volunteer to:

- 1) bring your grill and cook up some tasty hot dogs and brats (meat will be provided);
- 2) bring a batch or more of bars, cookies, cupcakes, etc. for our cake walk;
- 3) let us borrow your yard games.

You can also contribute by:

- 1) donating new or gently used items for Bingo! prizes;
- 2) coming, and inviting your friends, neighbors, family, everyone to join us in the celebration!

Please contact Heidi Grandstaff-Fresh or Rev. Petersen with any questions.

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.



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, host fellowship time, mow the church lawn 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.

CUE Special Offering

We have received \$141.00 for our **CUE special offering**. These funds are joined with those contributed by other UCC congregations throughout the country to support three local historical UCC seminaries: Chicago, United (St. Paul, MN), and Eden (Webster Groves, MO) and the quality education they offer to prepare leaders in the church for ministry and mission. If you would like to contribute to this offering, you may still do so by stopping by the office or designating your offering “CUE” and placing it in the offering plate. Thank you for your generosity!

Chicago • United • Eden

CUE SEMINARIES OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Take note...

Worship Attendance

| <u>June Attendance</u> | <u>2018</u> | <u>2019</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| First Sunday | 46 | 33 |
| Second Sunday | 25 | 35 |
| Third Sunday | 27 | 17 |
| Fourth Sunday | 24 | 21 |
| Fifth Sunday | N/A | 32 |
| <u>July Attendance</u> | <u>2018</u> | <u>2019</u> |
| First Sunday | 41 | 37 |
| Second Sunday | 21 | 37 |
| Third Sunday | 25 | 40 |
| Fourth Sunday | 42 | 34 |
| Fifth Sunday | 25 | N/A |



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

Rainbow Comma Pins

Show our congregation's welcome and affirmation of "persons of every gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ability, age, race, nationality, economic and social status, faith background, marital standing and family structure" (from our ONA Covenant) by wearing a rainbow comma pin. Pins are available for \$3.00 each and can be purchased by seeing Rev. Petersen or stopping in the office.



Church Council Meeting

The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday, August 14th at 6:00pm in the Parish House.** Please contact Jane Ann Cotton, 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.

Results of Special Congregational Meeting

During a special meeting of the congregation on Sunday, July 14th, our congregation authorized the Church Council to seek out a relationship with another congregation with whom to share resources (at the minimum, this would mean sharing a pastor) and affirmed the appointment of a temporary committee of the Council to carry out this work. Please contact Jane Ann Cotton, Moderator, or Rev. Petersen with any questions.

Donation Wish Lists

Food Pantry: tuna helper (not hamburger), pasta sauce, canned soups, cereal, and boxed macaroni & cheese (of course, other canned or packaged foods are always accepted)

JCARL: 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

Sundays

10:00am Worship

11:15am Refreshments

August



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---------------------|--|--|----|----|---|
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Communion Food Pantry Donations | | | | | | |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| Garden Gate Ranch Speaker and Special Offering | 1:30pm PI Baking | 10:00am PI Cleaning | 6:00pm Church Council | | | |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Rev. Carla Cain preaching JCARL Collection | | | 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal @ First Pres. | | | 4:00pm-7:00pm End of Summer Celebration |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
| 9:20am Choir Rehearsal @ First Pres. Worship Downtown | 1:30pm PI Baking | 10:00am PI Cleaning 6:00pm Pub Theology | 9:30am Morning Circle 8 | | | |

Worship Schedule for August

| Date | August 4 | August 11 | August 18 | August 25 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Christian Calendar Date | Eighth Sunday after Pentecost | Ninth Sunday after Pentecost | Tenth Sunday after Pentecost | Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost |
| Special Events | Communion | Guest Speaker, Lauren Gildersleeve of Garden Gate Ranch | Rev. Carla Cain preaching | Worship Downtown |
| Special Offerings | Food Pantry Donations | Garden Gate Ranch | JCARL Collection | Jasper County Elderly Nutrition |
| Scriptures | Exodus 20:1-17 | Mark 10:45 | Luke 12:49-56 | Various texts |
| 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.



| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <u>We continue to remember our homebound members.</u> | | |
| <u>You are missed and continue to be cared for and held in our heartfelt prayers.</u> | | |
| Marilyn Currant Park Centre #1 500 1 st St. N. Newton, IA 50208 | Betty Hotchkin Park Centre #40 500 1 st St. N. Newton, IA 50208 | Ann Raridon St. Frances Manor 2021 4 th Ave. Grinnell, IA 50112 |

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. 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 | Barbara Vasquez | 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 |
| Pastor Emeritus | David Raymond | | |

Office hours: 2:00pm to 4:00pm Monday and Tuesday and 2:00pm-5:00pm Wednesday and Thursday



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Newton Congregational UCC: www.uccnewton.org