



# The Open Door

## OCTOBER 2021



CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
God is still speaking,

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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### Who We Are

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

## WHAT'S NEXT

Last month the Open Door reported that a candidate had expressed interest in our pastoral position. The two steps we were awaiting at that time, a background check and an updated profile posted with the conference, have been completed. The Search and Call Committee is now in contact with the candidate and arranging an interview date. We are so close, so close. . . .

Our large, comprehensive clean up project proceeds apace. Lin Chapé and Marti Barker surveyed the church and parish house, compiling a l-o-n-g list of tasks that needed doing. In fact, a good many of these tasks needed doing a decade or two ago. We were used to looking at our spaces. Some we never actually looked at, so "out of sight, out of mind" aptly described those. In general, we knew the church looked tired and cluttered, yet doing anything about it was overwhelming. We tackled this as we always do: with a bit of leadership and a bit of organization, we **came together** and dug into the job. We now look poised to move into new territory with a new pastor. We look forward to having a pastor walk through our open door.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

Our By-Laws state that we will hold an Annual Meeting on the third Sunday in October. This year that is **October 17th**. The meeting will commence following the Worship Service, at approximately 11:35 am.

The provisional 2022 budget will be presented for approval. Note that it is 'provisional' at this point because we have not yet obtained pledge commitments for next year.

We will be electing a Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer, the at-large member of the Personnel Committee, and the three members of the Nominating Committee. Below is the slate prepared by the Nominating Committee:

### **CHURCH COUNCIL** (two-year terms expire December 2023)

Moderator: Dorothy Raymond  
Assistant Moderator: Jane Ann Cotton  
Secretary: Jenni Pryke (2023)  
Treasurer: Larry Leitner (2023)

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE** (one-year terms expire December 2022)

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

### **AT-LARGE MEMBER OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** (3-year term expires December 2024)

Jan Turk

We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting!

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

### **Pastoral Care**

We are grateful to have Rev. David Raymond willing to provide pastoral care. Rev. Raymond has continued to be a care-giver to our congregation over this long period of the pandemic and our pulpit being empty. If you have a pastoral emergency, please reach out to Rev. Raymond directly at (641) 521-1506 or davidray@mediacombb.net, or through the church office (staffed Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:00am-3:00pm). Thank you, David, for sharing your warm spirit with us and blessing us with your care.



## Money Musings

As I prepare the interim Treasurer’s Report for the Annual Meeting on October 17 (PLEASE BE THERE!!), I thought I would share a summary of where we are for the year thus far. These figures will not exactly match what will be in the interim report as income and expenses may change slightly during the last three days of September.

In regard to income for the year, it looks like we are on pace to meet the amounts we budgeted. Our total projected income for the year was just under \$94,000.

(This total includes pledges, non-pledge donations, interest off of our endowment, and so on.) If collections are similar in the fourth quarter of this year as they have been thus far, we have a great shot of making that amount.

In terms of expenses, we had budgeted having a half-time pastor beginning April 1, 2021. Obviously, that did not happen and our payments to Rev. Mark Holmes for preaching on Sunday mornings amount to considerably less than what we had budgeted for a pastor. We are currently more than \$19,000 under budget for pastoral expenses. The net result is that I believe, for the second year in a row, we can end the fiscal year on December 31 without having to withdraw money from our endowment to meet our expenses.

We have three investment objectives. First, we have the Fuller Scholarship Fund for undergraduates. On January 1, we had almost \$663,000 invested for that purpose. The bulk of these funds (\$598,000) was in an Edward Jones account. We also had over \$52,000 in a United Church Funds account. The balance was in a money market account. We dispersed \$35,000 in scholarships to nine students. We currently are at about \$673,000 in Fuller Scholarship funds.

Second, we have Seminary Scholarship money. These funds started the year at approximately \$40,700 and currently are slightly over \$42,700. Lastly, our endowment (money we actually can draw on for operating expenses) has increased from approximately \$274,000 to over \$287,000.

Although things have gone well financially for the last two years, I end this musing with words of caution. The last two years contained unusual, to say the least, events. We received \$21,000 in 2020 from the Payroll Protection Program, saving our budget. This year, the length of time we have gone without a pastor has benefited our budget. I am optimistic that we will have a half-time pastor by the end of the year. With those increased expenses, I will present a budget for next year at the Annual Meeting. This budget has been reviewed by the Finance Committee and approved by Council for your consideration. It will show us with an operating deficit for 2022 somewhere in the range of \$5000-\$20,000. There are a number of factors that will determine where in that range the deficit actually falls, perhaps first and foremost, the result of the upcoming pledge drive.

Larry Leitner, Treasurer



10/2 Kathryn “Kate” Stonehocker

10/4 Jill Sawin, Craynes McGinley

10/5 Josephine Turk

10/6 Donna McCoy

10/7 Marilyn Jagau

10/17 Judy Brody, Steven Joy

10/28 Aurora Schlichte

*Happy Anniversary*

10/6 Shirley & Bruce Nuzum

10/8 April Faidley & Larry Leitner

10/21 Diane & Mark Babcock

10/23 Kylee & Todd Planer

10/25 Dorothy & David Raymond



# Communications

## Church Council Catch Up

### September 8, 2021 Council Meeting

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

**Treasurer's Report:** Larry reviewed his draft of the 2022 budget. As it stands, there will be a deficit of approximately \$10,000 if pledges do not rise. Employee pay was discussed. Norm stated that we should offer a reasonable pay raise in line with the increase in cost of living in order to be fair and just. By consensus, council agreed to increase the 2022 budgeted salaries by 5.5%. The stewardship campaign will begin after the preliminary budget is approved at the Annual Meeting.

**Maintenance Report:** The new letters for the sign have arrived. Norm is organizing work that needs to be done (that is within the skill level of most of the laity) and we will hold a work day when the weather is cooler. A deposit has been sent to the company that will repair the derecho damaged stained glass. Norm has examined all of the old computers, printers, etc. Council agreed that the files be erased and we dispose of the outdated equipment. Council authorized the removal of a play house that is stored in the basement.

**Where We Are:** Rev. Holmes will have knee replacement surgery in October. Council agreed to request that the supply pastors engaged by the Lutheran Church be asked if they would also fill in for us. Other options were discussed. [Note: The supply pastors asked were not interested, so we are on our own to find supply for the weeks Rev. Holmes will be recovering.]

**Where We Are Going:** The Annual Meeting was discussed. We would like the following reports presented at the meeting: Search committee, Financial Review Report, Treasurer's Report and proposed budget. The Nominating Committee's report will be the ballot. (For further information see the Annual Meeting article on p. 2.)

A parishioner suggested we consider using our artificial flowers in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings when the season of fresh flowers is over. Jane Ann will ask Marti Barker if she would do an arrangement each month.

Meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm.

## THE OPENING OF THE OPEN DOOR

The Open Door has been published for 61 years!! During the recent church wide clean up we discovered the following letter, written to the congregation by Robert D. Watson on September 15, 1960.

Dear friends and brothers in Christ,

I would like to introduce you to the words, "The Open Door".

These words shall be the name of our weekly newsletter from my desk to your home. As such, they indicate the nature of this letter. For it is my hope that you will find the letter an open door into our Church.

I have on my office wall a certificate granted our Church in recognition of the fact that our Church doors are open at all times to all those who wish to draw near unto the Lord – whether for inspiration, comfort, courage, or fellowship. Our Church's doors are open to you and your family!

Unfortunately, it is not enough for the doors of a Church merely to be open. Somehow these doors must also offer a constant invitation to the persons who would enter them. There are those among the membership of every Church who need to be reminded again and again that men cannot live by bread alone. There are those who unwittingly suffer from spiritual malnutrition! – just as deadly a condition as any malnutrition!

Some men and women, and through them their children, become so engrossed in the demands of their bodies and minds, in the things of the world that they forget the one essential truth upon which their lives are based. That truth is that, just as the human body is meaningless without the mind, so are both the body and mind lifeless without the spirit. All of us need constantly to refresh the spirit at the fountain of God's Spirit.

May this newsletter be an instrument of invitation calling you to enter by the Open Door into communion with God and fellowship with others of His children.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

*Robert D. Watson*

We can be proud of this long-running publication, bringing news, inspiration, fellowship, and comfort to our church family. We are happy to continue the tradition.

**WHY are we called to be the United Church of Christ in this time and place? To live into God's extravagant welcome and advocate for justice. So that all may know love, safety, belonging and dignity.**

From the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota weekly eNewsletter

## EDUCATION

Our Book Study has resumed. We are pleased that our hybrid meeting has been successful. Some folks who were unable to Zoom in are now able to join us at the parish house and others who live out-of-state and out-of-town can also continue to participate. We are finding the book chosen for this study, *The Gospel of Jesus*, 2nd edition, by Robert W. Funk, Arthur J. Dewey, and the Jesus Seminar, to be an interesting challenge. If that statement is intriguing to you, stop in on the meeting at 5:30 pm on Thursdays and discover the nature of that challenge!

The second half of the study continues through October:

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| October 7  | Chapters 10, 11, 12, & 13, pp. 47-57, and corresponding Notes, pp. 93-96             |
| October 14 | Chapters 14, 15, 16, & 17, pp. 59-68, and corresponding Notes, pp. 96-101            |
| October 21 | Chapters 18, 19, 20, & 21, Epilogue, pp. 69-77, and corresponding notes, pp. 102-104 |
| October 28 | Optional: Resources, pp. 106-118   |

Join Zoom Meeting:

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

Meeting ID: 835 9572 6192

Passcode: 377178

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

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

### THE CROP HUNGER WALK

By the Editor

I was a student at Prairie City High School in the 1960's and I remember the Crop Walk as a special event. My dad and I drove around in our pick-up to the homes of farmers in the vicinity. I was the front man, explaining what CROP was and asking if they would make a donation. My dad provided the physical labor, scooping the number of bushels of corn they donated into the bed of the truck. I can't swear to it, but I believe we did this on a school day, which made it extra fun. I also liked the partnership between my dad and me as we gathered corn that would be sold to help hungry people around the world. I understood that the farmers might not have much cash on hand when we came by, but they did have corn in their cribs and they were willing to help feed hungry people. (continued on p. 7)

(continued from p. 6)

The CROP Hunger Walk is a nationwide movement sponsored by Church World Service to raise funds to end hunger and poverty in the U.S. and around the world. Hundreds of religious groups, businesses, schools and others organize local Walk events in their communities each year, while others join the National Walk and choose their own location and experience.

- So far this year: **8,755 People have registered**
- **2,218 Teams have registered**
- **\$1,853,566 Has been raised from**  
**26,804 Donations**

A \$15 donation provides chickens for a family, \$25 gives a family a water filter, \$50 buys groceries for a family for two months. Imagine having fresh clean water for drinking, washing, and cooking when you didn't have it before!

You can participate by collecting donations and participating in the walk. It will launch from the Courthouse at 2pm on Sunday, October 3. Donations can be dropped off at the church office.

## Prayers and Concerns

Don Deppe    Craig Armstrong    Martha Ellsworth    Stormy Storms    Kelly Jo Zach

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



We miss our local homebound members and we imagine they miss us too!

Take a moment to pray for them, to call or write, or to visit them.

Marilyn Currant  
Park Centre #1  
500 1<sup>st</sup> St. N.  
Newton, IA 50208

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

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

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

## Editor's Revery

I think if some resonant voice from above boomed down to earth, "Stand up if you are tired of the Coronavirus pandemic!" the entire planet would rock with the movement of every living creature standing up. We want our life before the pandemic back. We wait for 'normal' life to resume. Life was pretty good before Covid-19. It was satisfactory. We were content. We especially liked that we could see a ways ahead and that the future looked relatively calm and secure. Precious little looks calm and secure now.

Sometimes we can barely juggle all of the uncertainties, the unknowns, and the difficulties with which we are inundated. Against that prevailing backdrop, the church eagerly looks forward to the possibility of rejuvenation with a new pastor bringing spiritual leadership. A question that arises for me is: How do we weave our spiritual life, our connection to what is larger than us, what is beyond us, into the uncertain future?

This is where I went as I contemplated that question. Life is layered. The universe is layered. The geography of the earth is layered. We live within the layers of our genealogy. Our interpersonal relationships layer around us. We live in the layers of the years of our lives. I have adopted "layering" as a primary component of my art, working to express layers, the quality of one layer against another, the liminal intervals, the interface of surfaces.

One option as we move ahead is to put our energy into regaining what we had before. Yet perhaps there could be something more substantial than "This is the way it was and I want to have it back." Perhaps we could have a go at some other layers. For example, instead of "We always sang three hymns in worship so let's do that again," we might explore what singing hymns means to us. It might be "I would rather sing just one hymn because there are so few of us gathering and the thinness of the sound of our singing is sad to me," or "I love to join with others to sing and Sunday worship is when I can do that," or "I've been singing these hymns since I was a child and they reverberate through my heart," or "Singing hymns makes me feel close to everyone else in the congregation," or "It's talking to God in a beautiful language." As we share these ways of feeling and viewing our spirituality and then designing our shared spiritual future, we access the rich layers of life each of us possesses and we deepen the layers of our communal experience. This is an opportunity to recognize what we mean to one another and how we can move together as a vibrant community on our path of faith.





# OCTOBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					World Smile Day	Int'l. Day of Non-Violence
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11am Worship in the sanctuary 2pm Crop Walk, Courthouse		10 am Video taping of Meditation and Musical Moments		5:30 pm <i>The Gospel of Jesus</i> book study Parish House & Zoom		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
11am Worship in the sanctuary	Indigenous Peoples Day	10 am Video taping of Meditation and Musical Moments	6:00pm Church Council, Parish House	5:30 pm <i>The Gospel of Jesus</i> book study Parish House & Zoom	Int'l. Day of Rural Women	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
11am Worship in the sanctuary 11:35 am Annual Meeting		10 am Video taping of Meditation and Musical Moments		5:30 pm <i>The Gospel of Jesus</i> book study Parish House & Zoom		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
11am Worship in the sanctuary	Deadline for submissions to the newsletter	10 am Video taping of Meditation and Musical Moments		5:30 pm <i>The Gospel of Jesus</i> book study Parish House & Zoom		National Candy Corn Day
31						
11am Worship in the sanctuary						

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

xxx

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

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

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



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