



**Congregational
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

The Open Door

November 2017

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 **servicing** 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 Why I Give

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Over the course of my time in professional ministry, I have seen many faithful people generously and joyously give of their resources to the life of the church. These resources are not only financial, but certainly funds are included; they are also gifts of time and talent. As I have witnessed this dedication, this investment that so many people make in their congregation, I have often found myself wondering what my life with the church would look like if I were not serving as pastor. I have wondered why these faithful folks give so generously, so freely to the ministry of the church. And, I am always blown away when I hear these reasons shared as they express what is at the core of their deep love and passion for the ministry of the church. I am happy to say that we will get to hear the stories from some such people, what motivates their giving, in the coming weeks during Sunday morning worship.

However, hearing their stories doesn't answer my initial question regarding my own giving if I were a lay person rather than clergy. And that question may remain unanswered as I don't plan on leaving this authorized ministry for quite some time. But, there is a simpler question I can answer: why do I give?

There is one simple reason I give of my resources to the ministry of this congregation. I give that the good news of God's love might be shared with more and more of God's beloved people. I give because I see such faithful ministry happening here at Congregational UCC. I give because through my engagement with you all, I am challenged and encouraged to share God's love more fully. I give because through my engagement with you all, I experience God's deep and abiding love for me. I give because I have witnessed God's love transform your lives through worship, study, prayer, service, and fellowship. I give because I believe that we as a congregation are truly seeking to follow in the way of Jesus.

I understand stewardship to be about how we manage, how we utilize the resources of this world (all of which belong to God) to share the good news of God's love for all of creation and to spread God's justice that all might have enough. I give to and through this congregation because I have experienced, I

have witnessed the sharing of the gospel, the good news here in this community and reaching out to a world that is in desperate need of such good news.

When I began looking for a new congregation with which to engage in ministry over six years ago, I came across this Iowa church that stated that they were dedicated to proclaiming God's love for all with their words and actions. I made a decision to give of myself to the ministry of that congregation and promised to do so when I was installed here as pastor and teacher on a Saturday afternoon in December 2011. Since that time, as a member of this community of faith, I have been inspired to give more freely and more generously of the resources for which I am responsible (as I stated previously, in my understanding they all truly belong to God) to the ministry of this congregation. I give out of gratitude for the love I have received from you all. I give because out of gratitude for God's transformative love, I seek to give all that I have and all that I am to God and God's ways of love, justice, and peace, and I am convinced that through giving to support the ministry of this congregation, I am doing just that.

... Worship



On **Sunday, November 5th**, we will be observing All Saints' Day during our 10:00am worship service. As part of the service, we will remember and give thanks for the departed saints who have touched the lives of the members and friends of Congregational United Church of Christ. Please plan to join us for this celebration of life even as we mourn the loss of these dearly departed ones.

Sermon Videos

Rev. Petersen records her sermon each Sunday and posts each video to our church's Facebook page and website. If you have to miss worship some Sunday, you are still able to hear Rev. Petersen's message for the week. Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/NewtonUCC if you haven't already; or check out our new website at www.uccnewton.org.

... Education

“Toxic Charity”: Sunday Morning Study

You are encouraged to join in our study group each Sunday morning. We are reading and discussing the book “Toxic Charity” by Robert D. Lupton. Throughout the book, Lupton reveals the shocking toxic effects that much of modern charity has upon the very people meant to benefit from it and shares new models proven to help—not sabotage—those whom they desire to serve.

This 10-week study is challenging and empowering participants to begin thinking about how we will develop relationships with our neighbors living in poverty and to engage in ministry with them in ways that will actually help rather than hurt them and our community. The group meets in the **Parlor each Sunday at 9:00am-9:45am** with our final session on December 10th (no meeting November 26th). Participants read one chapter prior to each meeting and come prepared to discuss questions and insights that were stirred during reading. Our reading schedule for November is: November 5th-Chapter 6; November 12th-Chapter 7; November 19th-Chapter 8.

Three copies of “Toxic Charity” are available at the church for your use. If you would like your own copy, you are welcome to purchase the book on your own. Contact Rev. Petersen with any questions or concerns.



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. You are encouraged to join in a 12-session study 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 will meet in the Parish House on **Thursdays, 5:00pm-6:00pm beginning on November 9th**. We will take a break around the upcoming holidays. There will be no meeting on Thanksgiving, November 23rd.

Please contact Rev. Petersen by Thursday, November 2nd if you plan to participate so that she can get you a study booklet. The cost of each booklet is \$5.00. There are two booklets that contain six lessons each, resulting in \$10.00 per participant for the entire study.

Contact Rev. Petersen with any questions or concerns.

Free Fall Film Series

The Racial Harmony and Justice Working Group in Jasper County, which meets in the Parish House the final Tuesday of each month, is sponsoring a free fall film series open to the public. The series began on the first Thursday of October and will continue on the first Thursday of November and December. Each film will begin at 6:30pm, and there will be a time for discussion after. The films will be shown in the DMACC Auditorium on the Newton campus.

On **Thursday, November 2nd at 6:30pm** "Fruitvale Station" (Rated R; 1 hour 25 minutes) will be shown. Though he once spent time in San Quentin, 22-year-old black man Oscar Grant is now trying hard to live a clean life and support his girlfriend and young daughter. Flashbacks reveal the last day in Oscar's life, in which he accompanied his family and friends to San Francisco to watch fireworks on New Year's Eve, and, on the way back home, became swept up in an altercation with police that ended in tragedy. Based on a true story.



Centering Prayer

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



Morning Circle

The next meeting of *Morning Circle* will be **Wednesday, November 15th at 9:30am** with Jamie Sawin as hostess and 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 9 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 November 15th in the Parish House.

... Service



Food Pantry Sundays

The first Sunday of each month we receive donations for the Salvation Army Food Pantry. On **Sunday, November 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 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, November 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

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



Journey to Generosity: The Way of Jesus

During this year's stewardship campaign, we are called to "Journey to Generosity" following in "The Way of Jesus" as we prayerfully consider our commitment to supporting the ministries of this congregation. Our stewardship campaign will consist of four parts:

- 1) Three members of the congregation will briefly share their stories of why they choose to be a part of this community of faith during regular Sunday morning worship (November 5th, 12th, and 19th).
- 2) Rev. Petersen will shape worship around the theme "Journey to Generosity: The Way of Jesus" preaching specifically about what stewardship is about at its core on Sunday, November 12th.
- 3) A stewardship packet will be mailed out to you all on Monday, November 6th inviting you to faithfully and generously respond to the call to follow in the way of Jesus. This mailing will include a commitment/pledge card for you to plan your financial giving to the ministry of our church.
- 4) Then on Sunday, November 19th as we give thanks for our many blessings, we will dedicate our commitment/pledge cards during morning worship and ask God to bless them and us as we seek to honor our commitment to make the "journey to generosity" living in the way of Jesus throughout the upcoming year.

As we enter this time of discernment, let us open ourselves to hear how God calls us to be stewards of our resources as we seek to live ever more faithfully as God's beloved people. Please contact Rev. Petersen if you have any questions.



The Care ♥ Share ♥ Help Initiative

Our congregation's initiative to focus on developing relationships with our neighbors who are living in material poverty has a name! The name was selected through a congregational vote on Sunday, October 8th. Thank you to all those who submitted names and to all those who voted. Now let's get this thing going!

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.



Prayers and Concerns

Please hold in prayer

- ◆ Austin Leytham, grandson of Vicky Hutchins
- ◆ Ed & Suzanne Van Zandt and family following the death of Ed's father George Van Zandt on October 4th
- ◆ The family of Carrie Osborne following her death on Friday, September 29th
- ◆ Lori Goodman
- ◆ Martha Ellsworth
- ◆ Davis Carter, grandson of Jane & Gary Johnson
- ◆ Sue Anderson
- ◆ Julia Snyder, daughter of Stormy Storms

✝ 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 in November during Fellowship Time. If you are curious about your blood pressure reading, please let Carolyn know.

Neighbors in Need

Thank you to everyone who contributed to *Neighbors in Need*. This year we collected a total of \$306.00. These funds will be joined with those given throughout the UCC to support ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

Community Meals Update

Seventy-five meals were served by CUCC volunteers at the Community Meal event held Wednesday, October 18th 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, November 15th**. 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>October Attendance</u> | <u>2016</u> | <u>2017</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| First Sunday | 50 | 43 |
| Second Sunday | 23 | 28 |
| Third Sunday | 34 | 36 |
| Fourth Sunday | 29 | 34 |
| Fifth Sunday | N/A | 31 |



Birthdays to Celebrate in November

- 2-Brent Parker
- 3-Ginger Dack
- 4-Jessica Petersen
- 5-Martha Ellsworth, Dorothy Raymond, Gary Kahn
- 7-Brad Johnson
- 8-Richard Hagedorn
- 9-Jennifer Pryke
- 12-Jeannie Johnston, Adam Holdsworth
- 17-Lin Chapé
- 18-Macey Caves
- 23-Bob Kilfoil, Steve Holdsworth
- 30-Greg Ellcey, Brandon Pickard



Anniversaries to Celebrate in November

- 11-Brad & Sarah Penick
- 25-Ed & Suzanne Van Zandt

Take note...

Congregational Meeting

A special meeting of the congregation will be held on **Sunday, November 5th**, immediately following the regular 10:00am worship service. The purpose of this meeting is to review and adopt Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation to be filed with the State of Iowa's Secretary of State.

UCC Seasonal Choir 2017

UCC Seasonal choir rehearsal will be starting on **Sunday, November 5th at 9:15am**. If you have been going to the "Toxic Charity" study please pick up your music and take it home. Sometimes you can look the music up on the internet and you can listen to the music. We will be doing primarily the melody line. December music will be different. Contact Bev Thomas with any questions.

Christmas Decorating

The Worship Committee and the Service & Outreach Committee are responsible for decorating the church for Christmas. We will be doing the decorating on Wednesday evening, **November 29th from 6:00pm-9:00pm**. Anyone interested in helping that evening is welcome. We always have a good time together putting the decorations in the sanctuary, the entry, and the church parlor. We had such a great group of helpers last year that we finished everything before 9:00pm. If need be, we can finish decorating at 9:30am on Thursday, November 30th.

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.



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

God is still speaking.

Reorganization around Mission Realigns UCC National Setting

Excerpts from the October 06, 2017 written by Connie Larkman

Full article available at ucc.org

A reorganization of the United Church of Christ national offices was announced on October 5th, consolidating the departments of communication and philanthropy, and finance and administration. The new organizational structure also distributes oversight of the workforce among the three national officers of the church and realigns the work of Justice and Local Church Ministries.

The restructure, which is creating several new roles, also prompted a reduction-in-force, with fourteen employees notified that their positions had been eliminated.

"I call for prayers for all those who were let go," said General Minister and President John Dorhauer. "They gave many years of faithful service to this denomination. Their work, their passion, their commitments helped shape what we have become. I call for prayers for co-workers here who are their friends and companions – and who now grieve the absence of those companions."

Two years of preparation has gone into the staff reorganization, one which clarifies the mission of the United Church of Christ and aligns the national setting workforce to better articulate the vision and the goals of the denomination. The move is expected to save more than a million dollars in 2018.

The two Executive Ministers will report to the General Minister and President, and their new titles reflect the organizational realignment that begins Jan. 1. The Rev. Jim Moos' new title will be Executive Minister for Global Engagement and Operations and the Rev. Traci Blackmon's new title will be Executive Minister for Justice and Local Church Ministries. Much of the structural staff changes come in the Office of General Minister and President.

"The work of Local Church Ministries and Justice and Witness are intertwined. Romans 10:14 comes to mind," said Blackmon. "The ecclesia, the church, the gathered body of believers called out from various places for the purpose of advancing the message of the gospel, requires both the message and the messengers. I look forward to new insights and greater reach through the intentionality of maximizing our intersections."

"The next few months will be a time of deep transition and change," said Dorhauer. "We will be looking to nurture the development of new teams, new collaborations. We will be refining in greater detail work that will no longer be carried out by the national setting. We ask not only for your prayers, but your patience. We have an enormously talented, and for a time short-handed, staff that will seek to transition to new orientations, new responsibilities, and a new future."

In addition to the staff changes, the national setting is reducing its travel budget, and looking at changes in health care benefits to meet a goal of realizing \$1.4 million in cost savings.

"We are committed to aligning the National Setting with where we hear the Spirit leading us," Dorhauer said. "There is joy and hope in that. The pain and grief that accompany this, however, is felt deeply when good people, hard workers all, are transitioned out to make room for new positions we deem mission critical. It will take some time for these wounds to heal. Our fervent prayer is that God's Holy Spirit abide with us through this. For a season we grieve. May the hope of the Risen Christ, and the deep wells of faith that sustain us, strengthen us for the work to which we are called for the sake of a mission that matters."

Worship Schedule for November

| Date | November 5 | November 12 | November 19 | November 26 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Christian Calendar Date | Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost | Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost | Twenty-four Sunday after Pentecost | Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost |
| Special Events | Communion All Saints' Sunday | | Consecration Sunday | |
| Special Offerings | Food Pantry Donations | | JCARL Collection | |
| Greeters | Donna McCoy | Duane & Carolyn Hobbs | Adam Hansch, Craig Armstrong | Ed & Suzanne Van Zandt |
| Ushers | Richard Hagedorn | David & Dorothy Raymond | Larry Leitner, Brent Parker | Lin Chapé |
| Lay Readers | Craig Armstrong | April Faidley | Bev Thomas | Jerry Sawin |
| Scripture | Romans 12:1-8 | Matthew 9:35-10:23 | 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 | TBD |
| Worship Color | White | Green | Green | Green |

Green is the color of growth. It symbolizes the renewal of vegetation and the promise of new life.
White symbolizes purity, holiness, and virtue, as well as respect and reverence.

We continue to remember our homebound members.

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

Larry Brody
Accura of Newton West
1743 S. 8th Ave. E.
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

Jim Lukefahr
Newton Village #14
110 N. 5th Ave. W.
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

Sundays

7:35am "Into the Mystic" on KCOB
 95.9 FM & 1280 AM
 9:15am Choir Rehearsal
 10:00am Worship
 11:15am Fellowship Time



NOVEMBER 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 |
| 05 9:00am-9:45am "Toxic Charity" Study All Saints' Sunday Communion Food Pantry Donations 11:15am Cong. Mtg. | 06 | 07 5:00pm Worship & Music Mtg. | 08 5:15pm Centering Prayer 6:00pm Facilities & Finance Mtg. | 09 5:00pm Bible Study | 10 5:00pm Bible Study | 11 Turn back clocks before going to bed |
| 12 9:00am-9:45am "Toxic Charity" Study 11:30am Service & Outreach Mtg. | 13 | 14 2:00pm TTT Cheese Ball Making | 15 9:30am Morning Circle 5:15pm Centering Prayer 5:30pm Community Meal | 16 5:00pm Bible Study | 17 Deadline for Open Door Articles | 18 |
| 19 9:00am-9:45am "Toxic Charity" Study JCARL Collection Consecration Sunday (return pledge cards) | 20 | 21 | 22 5:15pm Centering Prayer | 23 <i>Happy Thanksgiving</i> | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 6:00pm Racial Justice Group | 29 5:15pm Centering Prayer 6:00pm Church Council Mtg. | 30 5:00pm Bible Study | 01 | 02 |

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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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