

# The Open Door

## May 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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### Pastor Petersen's Perspective: On Your Wants, Values, and Passions

I have recently found myself at a bit of a loss regarding how to best serve you all as your pastor. I was lying in bed one Saturday night deeply wondering, "What does this congregation want? What do they value? What are they passionate about?" In order to serve most effectively as your pastor, I believe I need to have some answers to these questions. And what better way to get them than by simply asking you?

I have been seeking to gain some insight into your wants, values, and passions as I interact with folks face-to-face. But I find that, for me, I don't necessarily do my best thinking on the fly. Rather, when I am able to sit with a question and ponder it over time, I am able to offer a more complete, thoughtful, faithful response. Indeed, taking such time to consider questions of such meaning allows me to respond more fully as my truest self.

So, siblings in faith, I ask you to please consider these questions over the next days and perhaps even weeks. I ask that you write down your thoughts, your reflections as you ponder **what you truly value in a congregation, what you want to see in our church life together, and where your passion for ministry lies**. And then, once you've captured these thoughts in writing, send them to me. You can send them via email or snail mail. You can even hand deliver your responses bringing them with you to a church function or dropping them off at the church office.

Friends, I hope and I pray that you will take this time to share your wants, your values, and your passions with me that I might more faithfully and effectively serve you as pastor of this beloved congregation.

Additionally, I will be seeking to learn more about you all and how you experience worship by providing a brief survey each Sunday. I'm curious to learn more about how you experience worship to be comforting, challenging, and inspiring. In addition to providing me with helpful feedback, I am hopeful that your faith will also be enriched through reflecting on how meaningful worship is to you.

I thank you, dear ones, in advance for sharing of your deepest, truest selves in this way. Ever holding you in the light of God's love.

## Central Association Pulpit Exchange

On **Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**, our congregation and pastor will participate in the Central Association's Annual Pulpit Exchange. While Rev. Petersen is leading worship and preaching at Grinnell United Church of Christ Congregational, Rev. Eileen Gebbie will lead us in worship and preach the day's sermon.

Eileen Gebbie (she/her/hers) is a graduate of Chicago Theological Seminary. Her past work includes teaching at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; relational community organizing with an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation; and serving as the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Champaign County and Re-Store. She loves all facets of parish ministry, be it worship, visiting over coffee, or working for affordable housing.

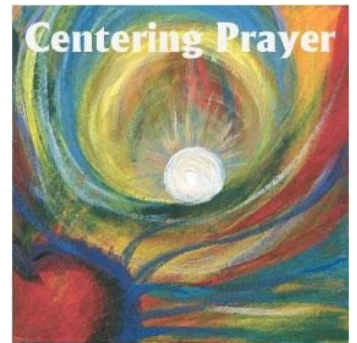
Pr. Eileen was called as the Senior Minister for Ames United Church of Christ in 2015. She and her wife live outside of Ames and work together on preserving wildlife habitat.

Pr. Eileen's ministry includes preaching and teaching, pastoral care, worship planning (along with other staff and congregants), supervision of the staff, and representing the church in the wider community.

Please extend a warm Congregational UCC welcome to Rev. Gebbie.

## Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer is being offered weekly during Eastertide (April 21<sup>st</sup>—June 8<sup>th</sup>). 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 meets in the **Chapel**, just off of the Sanctuary, on **Wednesdays, 5:15pm-5:45pm**, with the final gathering of the season on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Contact April Faidley with any questions.



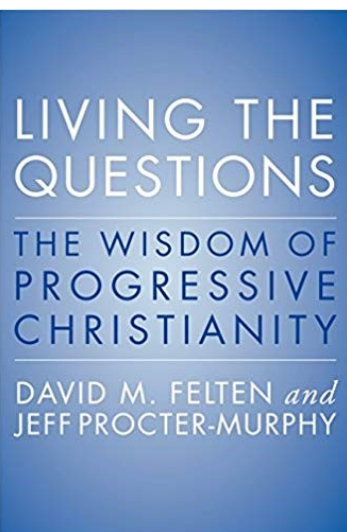
## Education

### "Living the Questions" Study

You are invited to join us in the Parish House on **Thursdays, 5:00pm-6:00pm, through June 6<sup>th</sup>** as we continue our study using the book "Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity" by David M. Felton and Jeff Procter-Murphy (pastors with more than 40 years combined experience in local church ministry). "Living the Questions explores matters many churches are afraid to address including the humanity of Jesus and homosexuality and examines in a new light traditional faith topics such as the Bible, atonement, salvation, the rapture, and more." (from back cover)

Participants should read the designated section of the book (approximately 20 pages) prior to our Thursday meeting and be prepared to discuss any thoughts, questions, and curiosities spurred by the weekly reading. The reading schedule for this month is as follows: May 2<sup>nd</sup>—Chapters 10 and 11 (Evil, Suffering, and a God of Love and The Myth of Redemptive Violence), May 9<sup>th</sup>—Chapters 12 and 13 (Practicing Resurrection and Debunking the Rapture), May 16<sup>th</sup>—Chapters 14 and 15 (Honoring Creation and A Kingdom without Walls), May 23<sup>rd</sup>—Chapters 16 and 17 (Social Justice and Incarnation), and May 30<sup>th</sup>—Chapters 18 and 19 (Prayer and Compassion).

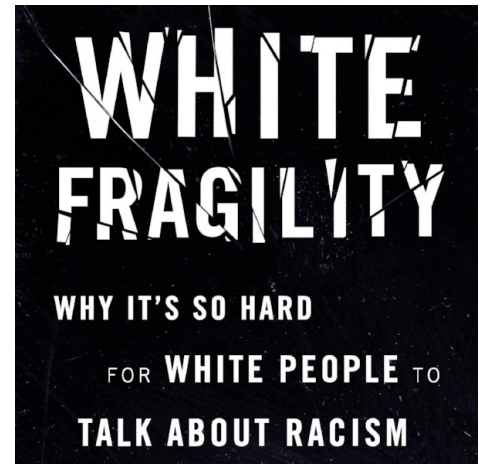
Participation in the earlier study of this book is not necessary. If you have not yet participated in our Thursday evening study, this is a great time to check it out! Please contact Rev. Petersen with any questions.



## Education cont.

### 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 Monday of each month at **The Cellar Peanut Pub** (403 W 4<sup>th</sup> St. N, Newton). Over the course of five meetings (March-July), participants are reading and discussing “White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism” by Robin DiAngelo. For the **May 6<sup>th</sup>** gathering, participants should read and come prepared to discuss Chapters 4-6. Please contact Rev. Petersen with any questions.



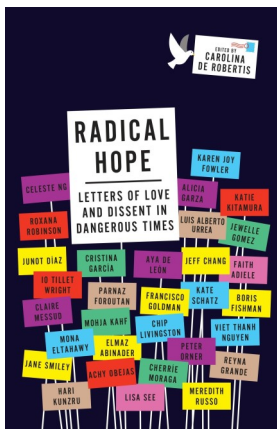
### Pub Theology

Pub Theology meets regularly on the fourth Monday of each month from **6:00pm-7:00pm** at **The Cellar Peanut Pub**. However, this month the group will meet on the third **Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup>** due to Memorial Day. 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!

#### **What Is Pub Theology?** (from pubtheology.com)

People have been gathering in pubs and public spaces for ages, talking about life, philosophy, faith, and deep questions of meaning. Increasingly, people all over are rediscovering the pub as a safe, open space where they can explore and express their own doubts and questions, learn from others, and engage people of varying religious traditions. In our increasingly fractured society, these spaces are not only welcome, but needed.

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, and hey—there’s likely to be a good craft beer you haven’t tried yet!



### MORNING CIRCLE **Morning Circle**

The next meeting of *Morning Circle* will be **Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9:30am**. Dorothy Raymond will serve as host, and Jan Turk will offer devotions. The group is concluding its study of “Radical Hope: Letters of Love and Dissent in Dangerous Times” edited by Carolina De Robertis. We will be discussing pages 222-240.

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 being 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 April 10<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

- **Treasurer's report:** Les Morgan reported that our current balance is \$15,638.09, but *we have spent \$16,000 more than we have brought in.* The insurance report presented in writing for change in liability coverage showed a slight savings. Our current coverage is \$4.6 million. We will continue to research other plans and companies. Renewal is due in June.
- **Maintenance report:** Norm Van Klompenburg has compiled a list of chores for regular attention.
- **Fuller Scholarship Committee:** Bev Thomas reported for the committee that the committee agreed to use 5% of the fund's growth. There were 10 applications submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup>. The committee will meet again next week to sort the applications.
- **Personnel Matters:** Barbara Vasquez has agreed to stay on at 10 hours/week. A slightly revised job description has been prepared. It has been reviewed by Barbara and the Personnel Committee. Judy Brody has retired but will substitute if available and given notice in advance. Bev Thomas is willing to serve as organist. A job description is in development and will be followed up with Personnel. Personnel has also discussed compensation. The by-laws will be reviewed for clarification regarding scope of Personnel's authority. Job descriptions should be reviewed annually.
- **ONA:** Inclusive restroom signs have been installed. Rainbow comma pins have been ordered. Newspaper listing changes are done. We have not received our certificate yet.
- **PI Partnership:** The second grade tours have gone well. There has also been good newspaper and Facebook coverage.
- **New Projector:** Norm researched projectors. It was agreed by consensus to purchase an Epson wireless for about \$549 plus tax through Amazon.
- **Active Shooter Trainer:** Lin Chapé will offer a couple of dates to the chief of police as options.
- **Facing our Financial Reality:** Associate Conference Minister Jonna Jensen was present on April 9<sup>th</sup> for a good conversation. Our pastor does NOT know amounts of personal giving, but the Treasurers notify her if there is significant change in giving by individuals. We need a why for our church: home for all, available for mission/service, fellowship and worship together. Samantha Sledge provided a list of community events for our presence, which would show people we are friendly. We also need to reach out to seldom seen members. *Relationships are key.*
- **Other:** Banners are available from UCC. They cost \$125 for a 4 x 8 banner saying, "Be the Church." We will prepare brochures for DMACC. Rev. Petersen requested topics for educational programs. Mayor Pete Buttigieg was suggested; Jessica will reach out. Upcoming dates were reviewed. It was suggested we return to quarterly communion rather than monthly.


Jamie Sawin, Secretary

# Service and Outreach

## Prayers and Concerns

### Please hold in prayer

- ◆ Joshua Cotton, grandson of Jane Ann Cotton
- ◆ Kit Chapé, brother of Lin Chapé
- ◆ Emma Raymond, granddaughter of David & Dorothy Raymond
- ◆ Hilary Montalvo

 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.



## Second-Grade Tours

As a part of our deepening relationship with Progress Industries (PI), we will host PIs regular “second grade tours” here in our building once more on **Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-10:30am**. In addition to holding the tours in our building, we are also leading the second-grade students through six stations aimed at helping them to better understand the impact of a disability on one’s life. PI provides necessary instructions, supplies, and additional volunteers. **If you are willing and able to help, please contact the church office.** Contact Rev. Petersen with any questions or concerns.

## 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, and 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.

## One Great Hour of Sharing

A widespread disaster with no end in sight has kept a massive area of the U.S. Midwest under water for more than a month. As communities begin to assess needs, UCC Disaster Ministries is working to support local UCC congregations in their initial response and already has provided \$15,000 (\$3,000 each) to five UCC food pantries and hot meals programs in hard-hit Nebraska and Iowa. This early financial support to communities is made possible through giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing’s Emergency USA Fund.

Thank you for giving generously to the OGHS special offering on Palm Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, as we received \$280.00 in gifts. These gifts will join with those of others to reach people and communities around the world affected by disaster (such as the one mentioned above), displacement, or poverty so that your imagination might indeed be ever more joined with God’s!



## Worship Attendance

<u>April Attendance</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
First Sunday	Easter 61	41
Second Sunday	36	34
Third Sunday	27	Easter 60
Fourth Sunday	33	30



## Birthdays to Celebrate in May

- 1-Lori Goodman
- 2-Jerry Sawin
- 5-Azalea Mastio
- 8-Gary Yoder
- 12-Allison Pryke
- 16-Lynne Cottrell
- 17-Norm Van Klompenburg
- 21-Emma Stonehocker, Heather Hicks
- 25-Gary Johnson
- 27-Jasmine Yoder
- 28-Jabali Mutai
- 29-Craig Armstrong



## Anniversaries to Celebrate in May

- 1-Duane & Carolyn Hobbs
- 17-Don & Marilyn Deppe

## **Take note...**

### 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, May 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Congregational Conversation

"We are a community of God's beloved dedicated to following the teachings of Jesus." Following the teachings of Jesus requires lifelong education. Join in our next Congregational Conversation after an abbreviated worship service on **Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>** as we share and implement ideas regarding how we will continue learning the ways of God that Jesus teaches.

### Ordination of Carla Cain

A Service of Ordination into Christian Ministry for Carla Cain will be held on **Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm at Plymouth UCC** (4126 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines). Following the service, the celebration will continue at the home of Jo and Brice (4004 Grand Ave. #304, Des Moines). Food and drink will be provided. Families and kids are welcome!

If you are unable to attend but would like to offer your well wishes to Carla, please contact Rev. Petersen for her email and/or mailing address.

## Sundays

**10:00am Worship**

**11:15am Refreshments**

# May



**Sunday**

**Monday**

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

**Thursday**

**Friday**

**Saturday**

			1	2	3	4
			5:15pm Centering Prayer	5:00pm Bible Study		
5  Communion  Food Pantry Donations	6  9:00am PI 2nd Grade Tour  6:00pm Racial Justice Book Club	7	8  5:15pm Centering Prayer  6:00pm Church Council	9  5:00pm Bible Study	10	11
12  Mother's Day	13	14  10:00am PI Cleaning	15  5:15pm Centering Prayer	16  Deadline for Open Door Articles  5:00pm Bible Study	17	18
19  JCARL Collection  10:45am Congregational Conversation	20  6:00pm Pub Theology	21	22  9:30am Morning Circle  5:15pm Centering Prayer	23  5:00pm Bible Study	24	25
26	27  Memorial Day	28  10:00am PI Cleaning	29  5:15pm Centering Prayer	30  5:00pm Bible Study	31	

## Worship Schedule for May

Date	May 5	May 12	May 19	May 26
Christian Calendar Date	Third Sunday of Easter	Fourth Sunday of Easter	Fifth Sunday of Easter	Sixth Sunday of Easter
Special Events	Communion, Pulpit Exchange	Mother's Day		
Special Offerings	Food Pantry Donations		JCARL Collection	
Greeters*	Lin Chapé	Heidi Grandstaff-Fresh and Kids	Heidi Grandstaff-Fresh and Kids	Marti Barker
Ushers*	Craig Armstrong, Bart Teed	Lin Chapé, April Faidley	Duane Hobbs, _____	Suzanne Van Zandt, _____
Lay Readers*	Jane Ann Cotton	April Faidley	Judy Brody	Suzanne Van Zandt
Scriptures	Acts 10:1-6, 9-17, 34-41, 44-48	Acts 9:36-43	Acts 11:1-18	Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5
Worship Color	White	White	White	White

***\*Please sign up on the clipboards in the vestibule or by contacting the church office.***

**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.**

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

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

Ann Raridon  
St. Frances Manor  
2021 4<sup>th</sup> 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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United Church of Christ: [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org) — Iowa Conference: [www.ucciaconf.org](http://www.ucciaconf.org)

Newton Congregational UCC: [www.uccnewton.org](http://www.uccnewton.org)