

# The Open Door

## April 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 Church and MBA 240

As you may recall, I began taking business classes at the end of January this year. I finished my first class entitled "Corporate Governance and Ethics" (MBA 240) in mid-March. As I explored the various concepts presented through the course, I was constantly thinking about how they connect to our life as a church. There were a few concepts that stood out above the rest that I find helpful for us to consider as we seek to live more faithful and fruitfully as a congregation.

Our major textbook raised the following question: For whose benefit and at whose cost should a business be managed? A slight alternation of the language makes this question relevant to us: For whose benefit and at whose cost should our congregation engage in ministry? Another aspect to consider is: who are the stakeholders? That is, who is impacted by the ministry of our congregation? We could easily name our members and employees as stakeholders. Then there is also our wider community and the wider church (the United Church of Christ and the church universal). How about other churches in our community and the companies with whom we do business to do ministry? And, what about the environment? What impact does our life and ministry have on all of these stakeholders? And, how does that impact the decisions we make?

There are many who believe that such decision-making requires trade-offs, some stakeholders will win while others will lose; some will benefit at the cost of others. However, in our secondary text, "Conscious Capitalism," authors John Mackey, co-CEO of Whole Foods, and Raj Sisodia deny that any such trade-offs need to be made. Rather they encourage organizations to find synergies through innovation, collaboration, and cooperation that create wins for all those impacted and involved. Indeed, they find that businesses often fail because they lack in innovation, collaboration, and cooperation, and I think the same could be said of churches. Yet, the church as an institution is often slow to change, to innovate, to try something new. It will likely not come as news to you that two phrases often heard in the church when a new idea is presented are "we've always done it this

way” and “we’ve never done it that way before.” And, cooperating and collaborating can be challenging even for us UCCers who belong to a “United and Uniting” denomination.

It seems to me that many in the church (both within our congregation and the wider church) have come to realize that what Mackey and Sisodia have found true in business is also true in the church. We must change, and we must work together. I am excited to have seen some of you move outside of our building and regular worship time to engage in deep, meaningful conversation through Pub Theology (a collaborative ministry offered with First Presbyterian Church). I am also interested to see what we discover as we explore collaborating and cooperating with another church in a more formal and permanent way.

One of the concepts lifted up in both of my course’s texts was having a clear purpose. Mackey and Sisodia go so far as to say that it is the glue that holds an organization together; without a higher purpose everything will fall apart. (All that work we put in a couple of years ago defining our purpose was not for nothing!) On page 47 of their book, they define purpose as “a definitive statement about the difference you are trying to make” and state that it should be articulated with clarity and passion. So, what do you think of our purpose statement found on the front page of this newsletter? Is it clear? Does it have passion? I find myself wondering if perhaps we would benefit from revising it to make it more compelling, passionate, and clear so that it might serve more effectively in attracting the “right” people to our congregation and serve to align them and us as we engage in ministry together.

Finally, when discussing marketing and advertising, Mackey and Sisodia find that satisfied and delighted customers are the most effective marketers for a company as they are loyal and passionate advocates of the organization. We have been talking a good deal about how to get the word out about our congregation, how to share who we are and what we are all about here at Congregational United Church of Christ. Yes, we can move our “No matter who you are... you are welcome” sign to the southeast of the building. Yes, we can invite the newspaper to write an article on the ways we are working with Progress Industries and another regarding our recent decision to become Open and Affirming. But, these efforts are a drop in the bucket in terms of connecting with more people in our community compared to you all sharing about why you are committed to this congregation. And, if you are hesitant to share because you aren’t very satisfied or delighted, then please, please talk with me, and let’s discuss how we can bring more satisfaction and delight to our members and committed friends.

These are a few of the concepts presented in my first MBA course that I found interesting as they are applied to our life as a congregation. I would be very glad to hear your thoughts regarding the items I’ve shared here. Please reach out in whatever way works best for you, and let’s continue the conversation.

## Worship

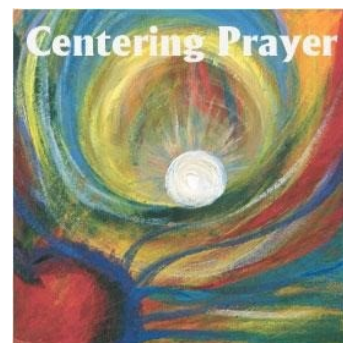


### Holy Week Worship

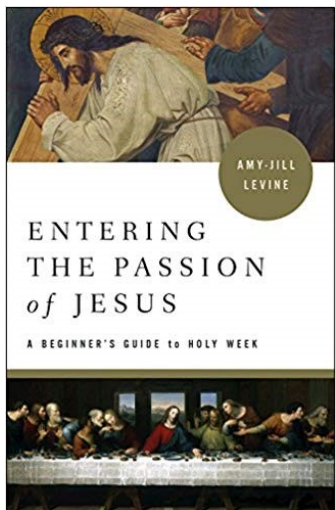
You are encouraged to gather for worship on **Maundy Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm**. We will recall Jesus’s last meal with his friends as we celebrate Holy Communion together and hear once again the new commandment Jesus gave us to love one another as we serve each other in a time of Holy Handwashing.

### Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer will be 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 will meet in the **Chapel**, just off of the Sanctuary, on **Wednesdays, 5:15pm-5:45pm**, with the final gathering of the season on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Please contact April Faidley with any questions.



# Education



## Lenten Bible Study: “Entering the Passion of Jesus”

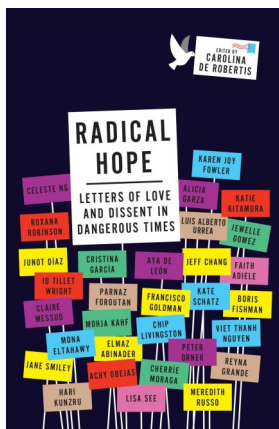
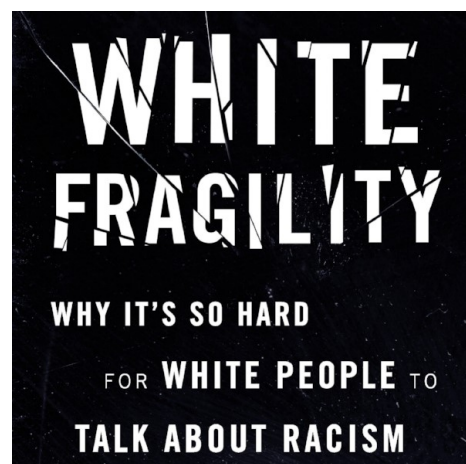
Throughout the season of Lent, a group has been gathering **in the Parish House on Thursday evenings, 5:00pm-6:00pm**, to explore the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. Our study will come to an end this month. Guiding us during this six-week study has been author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine, as we have been reading her book entitled “Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner’s Guide to Holy Week.” Through her work, Levine “shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience.” (from Amazon.com)

Participants read one chapter of the book each week prior to our Thursday meeting and come together to discuss any thoughts, questions, and curiosities spurred by the weekly reading. Our reading schedule for the final sessions this month is as follows: April 4<sup>th</sup>—Chapter 5; April 11<sup>th</sup>—Chapter 6 (final meeting).

Please contact Rev. Petersen with any questions.

## Racial Harmony & Justice Book Club

The Racial Harmony and Justice Book Club has begun meeting once again on a different day of each month and at a different location. Those interested in promoting racial harmony and justice in our community are encouraged to gather 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 **April 1<sup>st</sup>** gathering, participants should read and come prepared to discuss Chapters 2 and 3. Please contact Rev. Petersen with any questions.



## MORNING CIRCLE Morning Circle

The next meeting of *Morning Circle* will be **Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am**. Jane Ann Cotton will serve as host, and Carolyn Hobbs will offer devotions. The group is studying “Radical Hope: Letters of Love and Dissent in Dangerous Times” edited by Carolina De Robertis. We will be discussing pages 197-221.

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.

## “Living the Questions” Study

You are invited to join us in the Parish House on **Thursdays, 5:00pm-6:00pm, beginning April 25<sup>th</sup>** as we return to 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: April 25<sup>th</sup>—Chapters 8 and 9 (Restoring Relationships and The Prophetic Jesus).

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 Series on Poverty

During our 2017 Annual Meeting, we affirmed God’s call to focus on developing relationships with our neighbors directly impacted by poverty as we seek to live out our overall mission as a congregation. You are encouraged to continue learning about the state of poverty in our nation and to listen for ways we are being called to address this injustice as our six-month educational series on poverty continues (October-April, no meetings in January).

On **Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00pm-7:30pm**, you are encouraged to gather in the **Sanctuary** for our sixth and final video teach-in, entitled “A New Unsettling Force: Confronting Our Nation’s Distorted Moral Narrative.” This teach-in, along with all of the others in this series, consists of a panel speaking about poverty from various perspectives as part of this summer’s 40-day launch of the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. Previous participation not required.

Then on **Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-9:45am**, you are invited to gather in the **Parish House** to discuss the final segment of “The Souls of Poor Folk: Auditing America 50 Years After the Poor People’s Campaign Challenged Racism, Poverty, the War Economy/Militarism and Our National Morality” by the Institute for Policy Studies. Participants should read the following sections prior to our meeting: Conclusion, Appendices 1 & 2 (p. 112-116) as well as the Demands of Poor People’s Campaign (available at [poorpeoplescampaign.org/demands](http://poorpeoplescampaign.org/demands)).

Over the course of these six months, participants will read all of “The Souls of Poor Folk” audit, which is an assessment of these conditions today and trends of the past 50 years in the United States. It challenges us to take a look at how these conditions have changed since 1968, when the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., alongside a multiracial coalition of grassroots leaders, religious leaders, and other public figures, began organizing with poor and marginalized communities across racial and geographic divides to confront the underlying structures that perpetuated misery in their midst. The stark findings draw from a wide variety of sources, including primary and secondary data as well as interviews with and testimonies by people who have been living through and responding to these changes on the ground. “The Souls of Poor Folk” is available online at [www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/audit](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/audit). Contact Rev. Petersen if you would like a printed copy for \$7.00 (to cover the cost of printing).





# 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 March 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

- We opened our meeting by praying for 15 members of our congregation as we did last month and will do throughout this year.
- Minor errors on February meeting minutes. Minutes stated **yoking** would be on the back burner. Others believe *it must be on the front burner*.
- **Finances: Heating and electric bills** spiked higher this past month, as expected. Balance on hand February 28 was \$7,926.83. We will be selling stock to cover the deficit. Council members were encouraged to email Treasurer Les Morgan with specific requests for additional data in the monthly report that may be gleaned from QuickBooks.
- We will have a recognition of **Judy Brody's service** to the church as organist following her retirement.
- Excessive snow freeze/thaw cycle is creating ice dams and leaks on the roof. Maintenance done on all electric exit signs. The kitchen counter laminate edge has been repaired. Grinnell Mutual Insurance will be coming March 26 for a walk through of the buildings. Stains on the walls must be repaired before they come.
- The **Building & Grounds Committee** appointees will be: Lin Chapé, Jim Christenson, Don Deppe, April Faidley, Les Morgan, Samantha Sledge, and Norm Van Klompenburg. The committee will not have regular meetings but will focus on getting work done.
- Norm Van Klompenburg will lead the **financial check-in conversation** on Sunday, March 17. Our insurance provider has been contacted regarding reduction in rates. It was suggested we could raise our deductible. Specific figures should be coming soon. We haven't used our insurance for a long time, and rates go up when we do use it. Our "No matter who you are..." **sign** can be moved to the east side through filing a permit with the city. We will research options regarding **yoking/combining** with another church.
- **ONA:** Changing bathroom signs is not as simple as it would sound. We must be in ADA compliance, meaning the signs must include Braille. The signs will display "All gender restroom." We will review/update our newspaper listing. Rev. Petersen requested feedback from members on education topics that would engage the congregation.
- Our current **projector** is obsolete and the snow on the screen is problematic. We will order a new one that is wireless.
- If we agree to partner with **Progress Industries** allowing them more regular use of our building, we need a written agreement. We will send them a list of items such an agreement must address for their input. We will aim for it to be revenue neutral.


Jamie Sawin, Secretary

# Service and Outreach

## Prayers and Concerns

### Please hold in prayer

- ◆ 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.



## 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 on **Tuesdays, April 2<sup>nd</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1:00pm-2:30pm**, and **Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-10:30am**. In addition to holding the tours in our building, we will also be leading the second-grade students through five stations aimed at helping them to better understand the impact of a disability on one’s life. PI will provide necessary instructions and supplies. If you are willing and able to help, **please sign up on the sheets available in the Parlor or contact the church office**. Contact Rev. Petersen with any questions or concerns.

## 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, and host fellowship time are located in the vestibule. Please help if you can.

Additionally, there are a few members who may need transportation to worship and church activities.

## One Great Hour of Sharing

The theme for the 2019 One Great Hour of Sharing Special (OGHS) Offering is “More than we can imagine!” The theme, based on Ephesians 3:20, reminds us that we are not alone in our imagining a better world for all of God’s children. For it is God’s imagination that fuels and empowers ours! You see, God imagines a world where:

- No one is left to face the ravages of natural disaster alone—neighbor helps neighbor, stranger helps stranger—for we are the church together
- Even if things will never quite be the same after a disaster, God can work through all events to bring new life, new hope, and even more resilience
- Clean and abundant water and ample sanitation facilities are available to every person u Work brings security from hunger and the land is treated with respect
- Families displaced from their homes are able to build new lives
- Women are no longer subject to discrimination and gender-based violence

And God also imagines Christians of many traditions, coming together to help make these things ever more a reality for more and more people! For you see, our imagination of what might be is founded and grounded in what God envisions and hopes for. We can help—through our gifts of treasure and talent, prayer, and presence to make this world ever more like the way God imagines it would be! Please, give generously to the OGHS special offering on **Palm Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**, as our gifts join with those of others to reach people and communities around the world affected by disaster, displacement, or poverty so that your imagination might indeed be ever more joined with God’s!



One Great  
HOUR  
OF SHARING

## Pub Theology

Pub Theology meets on the fourth Monday of each month from **6:00pm-7:00pm** at **The Cellar Peanut Pub**. This month the group will meet on **Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>**. 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 Body Shop Collection

We will receive the third of our three collections for the school year for the “Body Shop” at Newton High School on **Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>**. The Body Shop is a method of providing high school students with personal care items and cleaning/hygiene supplies at no cost. The shop is free and open to any high school student.

Helpful supplies include such things as hair care, shaving items, deodorant, oral hygiene, laundry detergent, feminine hygiene, body wash and spray. Students prefer brand-name products and body wash over bar soap. Regular-size products are appreciated. You may place your donations in a basket labeled “Body Shop” in the entryway. There will be tax deductible receipts for your use.

Thank you for your generosity and love.

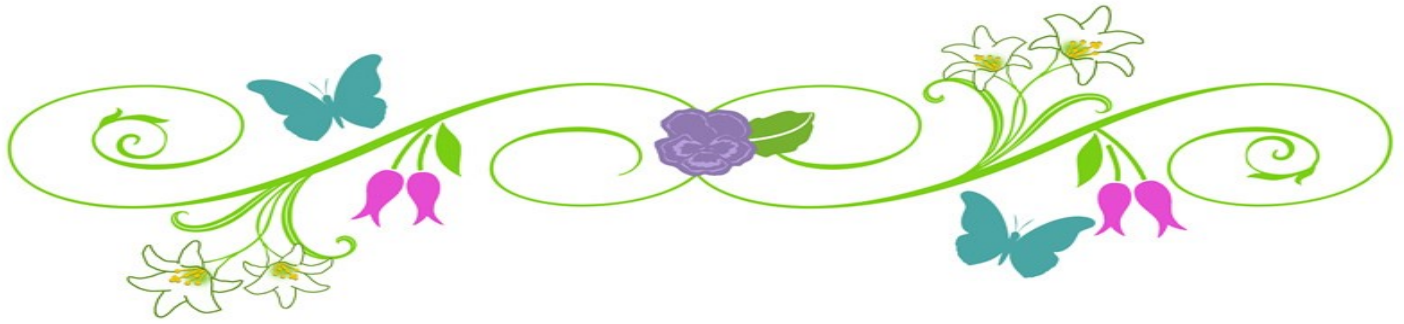
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## Easter Lilies

If you would like to help decorate the sanctuary with lilies on Easter Sunday, you may give a gift to the Flower Fund in the memory or in honor of a loved one(s). Attached, please find a donation form that may be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church office. Please return forms and your accompanying donation no later than **Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>**.

Your name(s) and the name(s) of the person(s) you are remembering or honoring will be provided in a special insert to the bulletin on Easter Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Alternatively, you may provide the information requested below in an email to the church office ([uccnewton@windstream.net](mailto:uccnewton@windstream.net)) and place your donation in the offering plate or deliver it to the church office by the deadline stated above (please include "Easter lilies" on your check or envelope).



cut on along the dotted line



## Easter Lilies Form

If you would like to help decorate the sanctuary with lilies on Easter Sunday by giving a gift to the Flower Fund in the memory or in honor of a loved one(s), please complete this form and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office (308 E. 2nd St. N., Newton, IA 50208) to be received by **Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>** along with your check in any amount. A list of donors and memorials/honoraria will be shared on Easter Sunday. Thank you.

This gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for Easter lilies is from \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name/names)

In remembrance of / In honor of (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_



## Take note...

### Worship Attendance

<u>March Attendance</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
First Sunday	40	27
Second Sunday	22	22
Third Sunday	44	32
Fourth Sunday	30	35
Fifth Sunday	in May newsletter	



### Birthdays to Celebrate in April

- 3-Marilyn Currant, Kelly Zach
- 4-Lora Caves
- 8-Diane Babcock, David Raymond
- 9-Aaron Wilson
- 12-Karen Dont
- 13-Larry Richardson
- 19-Cindy Pollard
- 21-Karen Petersen
- 23-Ailcia Mitchell, Brent Deppe, Kendall Morgan
- 26-April Faidley
- 28-Jon Turk



### Anniversaries to Celebrate in April

- 4-Rick & Leslie McNew
- 15-Norm & Pat Van Klompenburg
- 21-Brent & Suzanne Parker

### Transition to Electronic Newsletter

During our Congregational Conversation regarding church finances on January 13<sup>th</sup>, the idea to transition more fully to an electronically-delivered newsletter was suggested as a way that we might be better stewards of our resources. Beginning last month, we discontinued mailing out a hard copy of the newsletter unless explicitly requested and continued to email a pdf version to our entire email list.

If you have not already done so, **please contact the church office if you would like to continue receiving a printed copy of this monthly newsletter.** You are also encouraged to **notify the church office of your preferred email address** if you are not currently receiving this newsletter via email to ensure proper delivery.

### Congregational Conversation

There will be no Congregational Conversation during April due to Palm Sunday and Easter. Our next such conversation will take place after worship on Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. More information regarding that conversation will be available in next month's newsletter.

### Inclement Weather Policy

As we are all aware, Iowa weather is always unpredictable. In the event of inclement weather, please check television stations KCCI and WHO or radio station KCOB to learn of any cancellations of worship services or other church events.

## Sundays

**10:00am Worship**

**11:15am Refreshments**

# April



**Sunday**

**Monday**

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

**Thursday**

**Friday**

**Saturday**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	6:00pm Racial Justice Book Club	1:00pm Second-Grade Tours	6:00pm Poverty Series Video Teach-in	5:00pm Bible Study		
7 Communion Food Pantry Donations	8	9 10:00am PI Cleaning 1:00pm Second-Grade Tours	10 6:00pm Church Council Easter Lilly Deadline	11 5:00pm Bible Study	12	13
14 OGHS Offering Palm Sunday	15	16	17	18 Deadline for Open Door Articles 6:00pm Maundy Thursday Service	19 12:00pm Cross Walk	20
21 JCARL Collection Easter	22 6:00pm Pub Theology	23 10:00am PI Cleaning	24 9:30am Morning Circle 5:15-5:45pm Centering Prayer	25 5:00pm Bible Study	26	27
28 Body Shop Collection 9:00am Poverty Reading Group	29	30				

## Worship Schedule for April

Date	April 7	April 14	April 21	April 28
Christian Calendar Date	Fifth Sunday in Lent	Palm Sunday	Easter Sunday	Second Sunday of Easter
Special Events	Communion			
Special Offerings	Food Pantry Donations	One Great Hour of Sharing	JCARL Collection	Body Shop Collection
Greeters*		Lin Chapé		
Ushers*				
Lay Readers*				
Scriptures	John 12:1-8	Luke 19:28-40	Luke 24:1-12	John 20:19-31
Worship Color	White	Violet	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.

**Violet** is the ancient royal color and therefore a symbol of the sovereignty of Christ; it is also associated with repentance from sin.



**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

xxx

***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)