

The Open Door

January 2020



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.

Inside This Issue

Action to Help Immigrants	1-2
PPC Mass Meeting	2
Fellowship	3
Education	3-4
Service & Outreach	5-6
Worship Attendance	7
Birthdays	7
Take Note	7
Communications	8
Calendar	9
Worship Schedule	10
Homebound Members	10

A Look at the Texas-Mexico Border through the Lens of Faith: Take Action to Help Immigrants

On Sunday, December 22nd, Janet Cook offered us a thought-provoking and heart-wrenching look at the Texas-Mexico border. At the close of her remarks, she briefly shared ways that we can get help people seeking to immigrate to the United States through our southern border. These suggestions are shared below. Additionally, if you were not able to hear Janet's remarks in-person, you can watch her presentation on our Facebook page or request a printed copy of her remarks by contacting Rev. Petersen.

- Contact your senators and congressperson. **Tell them regularly that the devastating Migrant "Protection" Protocol aka "Remain in Mexico" must stop.**
 - In addition to narratives, a 10.19 study presents these findings:
<http://usipc.ucsd.edu/publications/usipc-seeking-asylum-part-2-final.pdf>
- **Learn** what could be functional immigration policy, e.g., at www.migrantjusticeplatform.org.
- **Tell presidential candidates you want them to talk about immigration policy changes and in ways that align with your values.**
- **Let go of the idolatry of capitalism.**
 - Study what the cooperative model has already manifested
 - The Mondragon Cooperative System in the Basque area of Spain:
<https://www.mondragon-corporation.com/en/about-us/>
 - Frontier Coop outside Norway, IA: <https://www.frontiercoop.com/>
- **Donate** to *Angry Tias & Abuelas*, *Team Brownsville* or *Grassroots Leadership* via their websites and follow them on Facebook.
- **Donate** to the Mexican organization called *El Buen Samaritano Migrante*:
https://www.gofundme.com/f/el-buen-samaritano-migrante-shelters-mpp?utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer&utm_campaign=p_na+share-sheet&rcid=1a32cb2d36354739a36892c324742e1d
- **Study** immigration issues:
 - <https://medium.com/s/story/timeline-us-intervention-central-america-a9bea9ebc148>
 - At Grassroots Leadership's website

- In books such as Dawn Paley's *Drug War Capitalism* or William R. Robinson's *Into the Tempest – Essays on the New Global Capitalism*

- Go to <https://greattransition.org/> for an extremely useful forum by and for those who seek a transformative vision and practice.

Janet concluded her remarks with a quote from Marianne Borg, and I leave you with those words to reflect upon: "The gospel stories are testimonies to the enduring power of hope and possibility even when circumstances defy the odds. They reflect the conviction that courage & vision will overcome the weight of Empire and its strategies of violence." May we unite our courage and vision to proclaim good news and bring peace and well-being to all of God's beloved.

Poor People's Campaign Mass Meeting

The Iowa Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival Mass Meeting with Rev. Drs. William J. Barber, II and Liz Theoharis in Des Moines will take place on **Wednesday, January 15th, 7:00pm-9:00pm** (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday). This powerful event will be held at **First Christian Church (2500 University Ave, Des Moines)**. As the United Church of Christ is a national partner of the Poor People's Campaign, it would be wonderful if we could bring a group of folks from Newton to this event where poor and directly impacted Iowans will take center stage along with faith leaders. If we will be bringing a group, seating can be reserved so everyone can sit together. Please contact Rev. Petersen if you are planning to attend (The sooner you let me know, the better the seats we can get.).

You are also encouraged to spread the word about this important event. The details for the event are below. Please share with ALL of your networks and encourage people to join the event in-person or online. This is an exciting time in the campaign as folks organize across this nation to build power to save the heart of our democracy and realize God's realm more fully here and now. Contact Rev. Petersen with any questions.

Who: Iowa Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival & Campaign Co-Chairs: Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis

What: Iowa Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival Mass Meeting

When: Wednesday, January 15 at 7 PM CT

Where: First Christian Church (2500 University Ave, Des Moines, IA 50311); Suzanne Hall Stout, Minister

Why: Join poor and directly impacted people, and faith leaders with the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival as we challenge the nation to do MORE! We are committed to mobilizing, organization, registration, and education to address systemic racism, poverty and inequality, the war economy and militarism, ecological devastation, and our nation's distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism.

If you cannot make it in person, the event will be **livestreamed** on the Repairers of the Breach and Poor People's Campaign Facebook pages and at breachrepairers.org/live.

Facebook event: www.facebook.com/events/408089139837617/

Registration link: bit.ly/DesMoinesMORE

Poor People's Campaign
A NATIONAL CALL for MORAL REVIVAL

IOWA
We Must Do MORE
Mobilizing, Organizing, Registering, Educating
NATIONAL TOUR

The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II
National Co-Chair
Poor People's Campaign:
A National Call for Moral Revival
President, Repairers
of the Breach

Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis
National Co-Chair
Poor People's Campaign:
A National Call for Moral Revival
Co-Director, Kairos Center

Leading towards the
Mass Poor People's
Assembly &
Moral March
on Washington
June 20, 2020

Registering people
for a movement
that votes!

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15 – DES MOINES
7:00 pm • MASS MEETING
First Christian Church • 2500 University Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50311

Large bags and umbrellas are not permitted.
Small bags may be searched.

Fully accessible
*Interpretación en español

For more information, visit iowa@poorpeoplescampaign.org

REPAIRERS OF THE BREACH
KAÏROS
Poor People's Campaign
A NATIONAL CALL FOR MORAL REVIVAL

Fellowship

Monthly Game Night

We do much together in terms of learning, serving, and worshipping together, but rarely do we take time to play together. That is about to change!

We are launching a monthly game night in the new year. Friends and members of the congregation are invited to gather in the Dining Room on the third Friday of each month, 6:00pm-8:00pm. Our inaugural monthly **game night** will be held on **Friday, January 17th**. You are encouraged to bring your favorite board games and come enjoy some fun with your church family!



Education



UCC General Synod Resolutions

The General Synod of the United Church of Christ is the national decision-making body for the denomination, responsible for giving general direction to the evangelistic, missionary, and justice programs of the UCC. Because the UCC holds to a covenantal polity, any decisions made by the Synod are not binding upon the UCC's congregations (or its associations or conferences) in any way, though the national offices and the UCC's *Constitution and Bylaws* expect serious consideration to be given them.

The United Church of Christ's Thirty-Second General Synod was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 21st-25th, 2019. The theme for the 32nd General Synod was based on the scripture Matthew 5:16: "In the same way let your light shine before others . . ." Twenty resolutions were approved by the delegates to the 32nd General Synod. You are encouraged to read each of these resolutions and listen to how God is speaking to our local congregation through this witness of the wider UCC.

Two binders, each including all 20 resolutions, are available in the church library. The resolutions may also be accessed online at ucceverywhere.org/synod. Additionally, throughout the upcoming months, we will explore one resolution during worship on the first Sunday of each month.

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 Tuesday of each month at **The Cellar Peanut Pub** (403 W 4th St. N, Newton). Over the course of five monthly meetings (September-January), participants have been reading and discussing "Waking Up White: and Finding Myself in the Story of Race" by Debby Irving. For the final discussion of this book on **January 7th**, participants should read and come prepared to discuss Sections 8 and 9 (Outer Work and Reclaiming My Humanity) for the gathering (final meeting). Please contact Rev. Petersen with any questions.

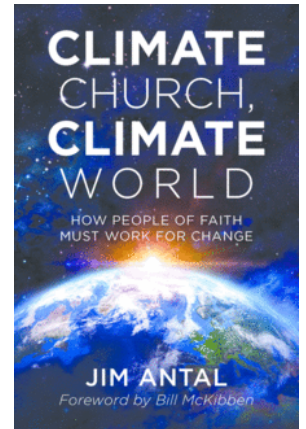


"Climate Church, Climate World" Study

All are invited to gather in the **Parish House** on **Thursday evenings, 5:00pm-6:00pm**, as we begin a new nine-session study of the book "Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change" by Jim Antal. The book "argues that climate change is the greatest moral challenge humanity has ever faced. Hunger, refugees, poverty, inequality, deadly viruses, war—climate change multiplies all forms of global social injustice. Environmental leader Reverend Jim Antal presents a compelling case that it's time for the church to meet this moral challenge, just as the church addressed previous moral challenges. Antal calls for the church to embrace a new vocation so that future generations might live in harmony with God's creation." (from amazon.com)

Participants should come prepared to discuss any thoughts, questions, and curiosities spurred by the weekly reading. The January meeting and reading schedule is as follows: January 2nd—no meeting; January 9th—Chapters 5 & 6; January 16th—Chapters 7 & 8; January 23rd—Chapter 9 and Epilogue (final meeting).

Contact Rev. Petersen with any questions.



Pub Theology

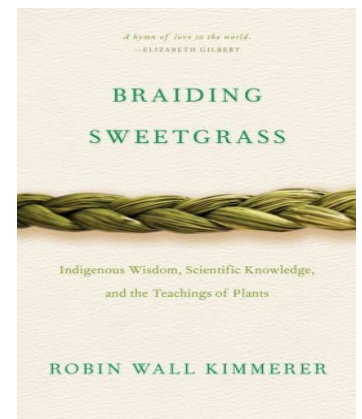
Pub Theology regularly meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month from **6:00pm-7:00pm** at **The Cellar Peanut Pub**. The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, January 28th**. The format is simple: beer, conversation, and God. Come bring your questions, your curiosity, and pull up a chair. Be ready to engage with people of varying religious traditions, philosophical perspectives, and life experiences. You'll be able to share your own wrestlings and thoughts while learning something new along the way.

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



Morning Circle will meet in the **Parish House** on **Wednesday, January 22nd at 9:30am**. Verla Van Scoy will host the group, and April Faidley will offer devotions. The group is studying "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants" by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Participants should read and come prepared to discuss pages 120-155.

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.



So Many Thank You's!

Throughout this holiday season, there have been many ways in which you have been invited to give of yourselves and your resources to share the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christmas. From providing hygiene products for Newton High School's *Body Shop* to ringing bells for

the joy of



giving

the Salvation Army holiday fundraising campaign, from donating to our special Holiday Compassion Offering to purchasing poinsettias in honor and in memory of loved ones, and who could forget your financial gifts to the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross? As each invitation was made, you responded joyously and generosity. Thank you for all of the compassionate support you shared this holiday season!

Katy Fresh Scholarship Blood Drive



A **blood drive** will be held in the **Dining Room** on **Saturday, January 25th, 9:00am-1:00pm**. This effort is being organized by Katy Fresh, daughter of Heidi & Neva Grandstaff-

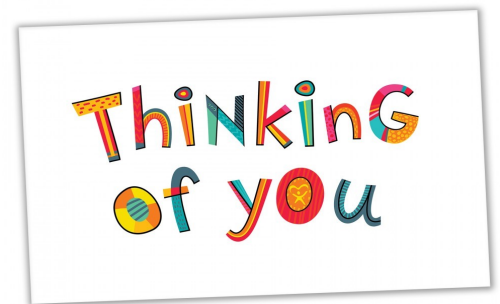
Fresh. She will be earn a scholarship from LiveServe if there are sufficient donations made, so please spread the word and plan to attend. Schedule your lifesaving blood donation appointment at www.liveservebloodcenter.org or contact Katy at 641-840-1749.

Communion Offering

Our Communion Offering will now be used to offer financial support to our members and friends who are facing monetary struggles. Previously these funds were used to fund our Worship & Music and Service & Outreach efforts; these expenditures are now included in the regular budget (funds previously collected will be used for their assigned purpose until those funds are exhausted). Please contact Larry Leitner, our Treasurer, or Rev. Petersen with any questions.

Notes of Support and Encouragement

Ayesha Munu, hosted by Bev Clark Floss a few years back, is starting her final year of college in Sierra Leone. You are invited to send notes of support her way as she completes her law degree. The best way to get in touch with her is via Facebook. If you are Facebook friends with her, you are encouraged to reach out to her directly. However, if you are not already connected, you may send a note of support and encouragement by sending your message to Rev. Petersen, and she will pass it on to Ayesha.



“Nuts and Bolts of Ministry” Volunteer List

Thank you to all who filled out and returned the “Nuts and Bolts of Ministry Inventory” for 2020. Lists with the names of those who have volunteered to help with the various tasks included on the inventory can be found in the church office and on the bulletin board in the Parlor. Those of you who have volunteered to help will be receiving an email or phone call soon to let you know when and how you can follow through with your offer of support. If you have not yet filled out and returned your inventory to the church office, you may do so at any time. Thank you!

Service and Outreach cont.

Prayers and Concerns



Please hold in prayer

- Family of Ann Raridon following her death on Monday, December 9
- Gary Wirt, grandfather of Katy, Niall, Liam, Heather, and Lauren Fresh
- Khloe Sassman, friend of the Pryke and Stonehocker families
- Jeannie Johnston
- Steve Holdsworth
- Bev Edge
- Hilary Montalvo

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

Congregational Conversation

In the gospels, Jesus is shown sending out his earliest followers “to fish for people” and “to make disciples of all nations.” You are encouraged to gather together in the Parlor on **Sunday, January 12th at 10:45am** (immediately following worship) for a congregational conversation regarding evangelism and outreach as we continue to work together to more effectively reach out to and connect with our wider community. Come share your experiences and ideas as we discuss and act on ways to share the



good news of God’s love for all creation and invite new people to join us in the meaningful ministry and authentic fellowship of this congregation.

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 need transportation to worship and church activities. Please contact the church office to volunteer.

Donation Wish Lists

We take up regular monthly collections for the Salvation Army food pantry (first Sundays) and the Jasper County Animal Rescue League (third Sundays). Here are their wish lists:

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

JCARL: paper towels, garbage bags, raw hides (for big dogs and small), peanut butter, bleach, dish soap, Fabuloso (the purple kind), laundry soap, liquid hand soap, rubber gloves, kitty litter, canned shredded and filet cat food, canned dog food (Purina), dry dog food (Purina), and dry cat food (Indoor Purina).



Worship Attendance

<u>December Attendance</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
First Sunday	32	27
Second Sunday	29	30
Third Sunday	28	20
Fourth Sunday	28	50
Christmas Eve	88	50
Fifth Sunday	16	20



Birthdays to Celebrate in January

- 2-Reece Caves, Larry Leitner
- 4-Ardelle Morgan
- 7-Robert Ramsey, Jr.
- 8-Betty Jean Hotchkin
- 11-Adam Hansch
- 12-William Shump
- 16-Jan Turk
- 21-Jim Christenson
- 22-Melissa Pearson, Stormy Storms
- 24-Eileen Gerken
- 26-Heather Fresh
- 27-Joy Faidley-Leitner
- 28-Diane Marvelli
- 29-Ed Van Zandt
- 31-Charlotte Ross

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.

Take note...

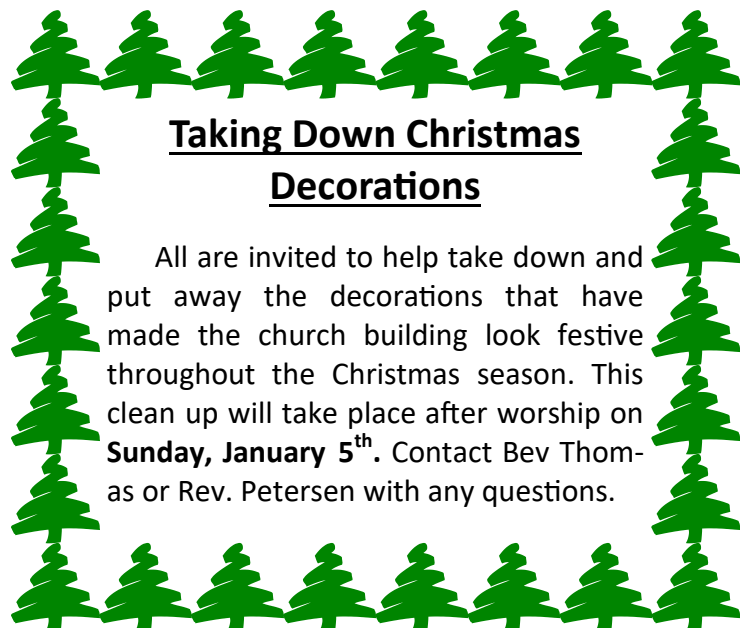
Church Council Meeting and Composition

The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday, January 8th at 6:00pm in the Parish House**. Please contact Sam Sledge, our Moderator, with any matters you wish for the Council to consider as they meet. The Council meets regularly at 6:00pm on the second Wednesday of each month.

Those who currently serve on Church Council are:

- Moderator:** Sam Sledge
- Assistant Moderator:** April Faidley
- Secretary:** Jenni Pryke
- Treasurer:** Larry Leitner
(Assistant Treasurer: Sonia Sledge)
- At-Large:** Lin Chapé
- At-Large:** Heidi Grandstaff-Fresh
- At-Large:** Norm Van Klompenburg
- Pastor:** Rev. Jessica Petersen

Many thanks to Jane Ann Cotton, Les Morgan, and Jamie Sawin who completed their terms as Moderator, Treasurer, and Secretary, respectively, at the close of 2019.



Taking Down Christmas Decorations

All are invited to help take down and put away the decorations that have made the church building look festive throughout the Christmas season. This clean up will take place after worship on **Sunday, January 5th**. Contact Bev Thomas or Rev. Petersen with any questions.



Communications

Church Council Catch Up

In an effort to keep our congregation more informed regarding the various matters that impact our life together, notes from Church Council meetings are shared with our friends and members via this newsletter. Complete minutes of each Council meeting are available in the church office. Below please find highlights from the December 11th Council meeting submitted by Jamie Sawin, Secretary.

- ◆ **Opening devotions** included praying for church members; we have not prayed for our entire membership by name. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
- ◆ **Treasurer's Report:** We have \$78,470 in 2020 pledges so far, which is below projections. The fourth stewardship letter goes out early next week. It was decided by consensus to share the funds raised through the communion offering with members who are in serious financial need as determined by Pastor Jessica.
- ◆ **Maintenance Report:** There have been a couple of minor problems with thermostats and a smoke alarm that have been resolved.
- ◆ **Scouting Committee Update:** They have not met since the last Council meeting. Jessica met for a third time with Congregational UCC in Baxter; it was decided this would not be a good fit theologically. She met with Melbourne UCC's search committee last night; they have an interim right now and are not in a hurry to replace her; they will meet again in January. Jessica met with the full search committee at Bethany UCC in Baxter; they will meet again next Tuesday. Rev. Darrell Goodwin serves our Association and will meet with our scouting committee after the new year. The committee is working on a job description for a half-time pastor. It was suggested we consider going back to our committee structure.
- ◆ **Spring Emergency Response Training:** Will be held in March or April for church members.
- ◆ **Building Use Request:** Al-Anon withdrew their request.
- ◆ **Blood Drive:** This will be held January 25 from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Katy Fresh will lead this.
- ◆ **Monthly Game Night:** Families in the church who have children were consulted, and the 3rd Friday of the month was found to be a good date. Will begin January 17 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Snacks and popcorn will be available, and participants will bring their own games (non-electronic).
- ◆ **Open & Affirming:** We have received our certificate, and press releases have been submitted. Bumper stickers have been ordered, and we will add a rainbow to our church sign. We will consider hanging our banner outside in the spring. We will try to distribute our brochures at DMACC, the library, and other public locations. We will put them in the church brochure rack and our pews.
- ◆ **Suicide Prevention Training:** Will be held later in the spring.
- ◆ **Visitation Plan:** Will develop to connect with members we don't often see. We are unsure how to do this. Members have signed up for this need. Thanksgiving cards were sent to 15 members with health concerns and mobility issues that keep them from attending.
- ◆ **Appreciation:** Les Morgan, Jane Ann Cotton, and Jamie Sawin were thanked for their years of service to the church.

Sundays
10:00am Worship
11:15am Refreshments

January



Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

			1	2	3	4
			New Year's Day!			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Communion Food Pantry Donations 11:15am Christmas Decorations Take Down		6:00pm Racial Justice Book Club	6:00pm Church Council	5:00pm Ecojustice Bible Study		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10:45am Congregational Conversation		10:00am PI Cleaning	7:00pm PPC Mass Meeting @ First Christian Church, DM	5:00pm Ecojustice Bible Study	6:00pm Game Night	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
JCARL Collection			9:30am Morning Circle	5:00pm Ecojustice Bible Study		9:00am-1:00pm Blood Drive
26	27	28	29	30	31	
		10:00am PI Cleaning 6:00pm Pub Theology				

Worship Schedule for January

Date	January 5	January 12	January 19	January 26
Christian Calendar Date	Epiphany Sunday	Baptism of Jesus Sunday	Second Sunday after Epiphany	Third Sunday after Epiphany
Special Events	Communion	Congregational Conversation		
Special Offerings	Food Pantry Donations		JCARL Collection	
Scriptures	Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14	Matthew 3:13-17	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Galatians 1:1-12
Worship Color	White	White	Green	Green

White symbolizes purity, holiness, and virtue, as well as respect and reverence.

Green is the color of growth. It symbolizes the renewal of vegetation and the promise of new life.



**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 1st St. N.
Newton, IA 50208

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

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
Moderator	Samantha Sledge		
Pastor Emeritus	Rev. David Raymond		

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



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United Church of Christ: www.ucc.org — Iowa Conference: www.ucciaconf.org

Newton Congregational UCC: www.uccnewton.org