



ANKENY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

602 SE Delaware Ave, Ankeny, Iowa 50021

DECEMBER 2016

Phone: 515-964-4647
E-mail: office@ankenyucc.org
Website: ankenyucc.org
National Website UCC.org
Pastor Nathan Willard
515-639-0602

December 1, 2016

2017 is nearly complete, and with it my third year as your pastor. It is somehow fitting, then, that once again my family will be trekking across the state in the dark for Christmas Eve (well, Christmas Eve Eve) as I drive them back from their 10:30pm arrival at the Omaha Airport on December 22.

In these past three years, we have said goodbye to too many saints of the church, whether as they went on to be reunited once again with Jesus in death, moved away, or moved to a new phase of their lives. But that change, though often unwelcome, reminds us that God's creation is never static, always changing, always moving forward and never backward. And so this year has been a year of thinking about change. 2017 brings another year of challenge for the mainline church. The role of church in the country is changing, and demanding that we provide an avenue for people's lives to be transformed by the Holy Spirit in ways we can articulate, communicate, and demonstrate. Over the past year, a number of groups in the church have begun thinking what it would look like to be a church focused on caring for our members by always looking to serve those outside our doors, on welcoming the next person in the door that we haven't yet met and do not expect. In 2017, we will have to hold ourselves accountable to change in the world by living into our call to be a Welcoming Church Family, Exploring Progressive Christian Theology, Caring Within and Serving Beyond. What will our future hold? Will we be a thriving individual church that looks very different than it does today? Will we have decided to take the bold step of exploring what life there is for a church after death? Will we have felt called to join with another congregation to better witness for Christ in the midst of changing demographics in culture? Or will we find some other future as-yet unimagined?

I don't know the answer. I do know that every day I come into the sanctuary and see the work Joan Moore and Annette Hong have done on the altar, every day I see the bright shining activity bags welcoming the next child in the door, every time I hear the voices of our choir raised in song or our children proclaiming the words of God recorded by the prophets, a chill runs down my spine, and joy fills my heart to be in this place with you all in these times of change and possibility.

Privileged to be your Pastor,

Nathan

CONTINUING PRAYERS for

Police officers, The victims of ongoing war in Syria. People living in fear across the world. Nicholas Schreiner, Glenn and Gayle Beckwith, Mary Hall, Jen Street, Hazel Glaze, Beth Yale and Martha and Teddy on their journey home, Chuck Howieson and his family for his brother in hospice care.

Ankeny UCC A Welcoming Church Family

Greeters: We are in need of greeters for the month of December. Please sign up to be a greeter for one or more of the Sundays this winter.

Choir: Choir practices are held on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm in the sanctuary. All are welcome.

Advent:

The advent craft workshop is Sunday, December 4th. There will be lunch after service before the craft activities.

Christmas Tree Ornament: We are asking all members of the congregation to please bring in a special ornament to hang on the tree during Advent. When Advent is over, we ask that you take your ornament home to put on display as a year-round reminder of the hope, peace, joy, and love of the Advent season.

Childrens' Christmas Program will be during the Sunday service on Dec. 18.

The quiet service will be December 18th at 4:30pm, followed by fellowship.

Christmas Eve Service will be Saturday, December 24th at 6:30pm.

Christmas: The Christmas Service will be Sunday, December 25th at **9:30am**. Come as you are, in your P.J.s or whatever!

Containers and Pans: Are you missing a favorite container or pan? Check the cart under the counter in the kitchen for your cooking dishes.

Ankeny UCC Exploring Progressive Christian Theology

Sunday School classes are on Sundays at 9:15 am. Meet in the sanctuary for our opening session each Sunday.

Ankeny Ministerial Association: Pastor Nathan is hosting the monthly meeting at our church on Thursday, December 22nd and would appreciate assistance providing lunch at 11:30am and clean-up after.

Emmanuale: This month's meeting will be Thursday, December 15th at 7pm at Firetrucker. There will be a Christmas theme discussion this month.

Unexpected Questions group will meet on Sundays at 9:15am in the Blue Room. Thank you to Misty DeReus and Jenn Howieson who will lead the group in discussing questions of faith, family and life. All are welcome.

2016 November Weekly Attendance

November 6	November 13	November 20	November 27	Average
28	44	32	28	33

November Yearly Attendance Averages

Nov. 2016	Nov. 2015	Nov. 2014	Nov. 2013	Nov. 2012	Average
33	50	46	52	54	47

December Birthdays	December Anniversaries
06 Beth Yale	27 Gale & Marlis Gilbert
09 Norman Pollock	29 Randy & Janice Ratcliff
10 Meagan Patterson	31 Rodney & Brenda Heston
11 Hayden Akins	
12 Geri Young	
14 Grace Hanley	
15 Rhonda Meyer	
20 Richard Shafer	
24 Jennifer Howieson	
24 Scot Storjohann	
27 Donald Zuck	
29 Megan Storjohann	

**Is there a birthday missing or listed incorrectly? Notify the office to update records*

Ankeny UCC Caring Within

Naomi Circle: Meets Wednesday, December 28th at 9:30 am in location to be advised at Millpond. All are welcome. Meetings will now be regularly held on the 4th Wednesday of the month. As the parking at Millpond is challenging while they complete their additions, we can arrange for pick up from your home or the church if you wish to attend. Contact Laura Beckwith.

Financial Update:

We gave away \$2,461.87 in October, including \$2021.85 from the Hog Roast! Yay! Our General Fund income was \$7312.84 vs. expenses of \$10,13.26. Year to date, we've collected 103,596.04 vs. expenses of 114,394.61 (vs. budget of 133,170).

Thank you to Deacons, Trustees, and Council members who have served this past year(s). Thank you as well to those of you who have taken on these leadership roles for the coming year.

Snow Preparation and Bushes: Thank you to Scot Storjohann, and Gale Gilbert for helping to keep our church grounds tidy and for preparing us for winter.

New Address: Hazel Glaze has moved to Walnut Ridge. If you would like to reach out to her, her new address is 1701 Campus Dr, Apt 2112, Clive, IA 50025. Her new phone number is 515-221-4476.

Altar Decorations: Thank you to those who helped decorate the church for Advent and to the Deacons for leading the Hanging of the Greens Service.

Submitting Newsletter and Bulletin Items There are lots of ways you can submit something for the bulletin or newsletter. You can put your submission request in the "newsletter" mailbox in the narthex. You can call or email the office, or let Pastor Nathan know. Your feedback and submission requests are greatly appreciated! **Please make sure to put your name on communications left in case there are any questions.**

Service CDs available: Do you have trouble getting to church on Sundays? We've been recording services, and can burn a CD for you so you can still be connected with us as we worship God. If you would like one, let us know in the office. And if you are interested in delivering CDs, we'd love to know that, too.

Contact Information for Pastor Nathan Willard Pastor Nathan Willard will usually be available in the church office Monday through Thursday each week from 9:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. There may be some times when other obligations interfere with that, but he can be reached other times by phone or email. You are welcome to email him at pastor@ankenyucc.org or call his Cell Phone: 515-639-0602. If it is urgent, don't hesitate to call.

Ankeny UCC Serving Beyond

Holiday Assistance Families: We have received our family assignments for the Holiday Assistance Program through the Ankeny Service Center this year! Our first family is #84, consisting of a 49-year-old male, 54-year-old female, 10-year-old boy, 10-year-old girl, and 2-year-old girl. Our second family is #88, consisting of an adult female, 15-year-old male, 2-year-old boy, and 1-year-old girl. We are so fortunate to have the privilege of making their Christmas a little merrier! There are green and red gift tags on a card table just outside the sanctuary doors, with gift items written on them. If you'd like to participate, please take a tag of your choice, and make sure to attach it to the gift when you bring it back! You may place gifts under or on the card table when returning them, and we will store them for safekeeping. The last day for the collection of these donations is December 11th. A big thank you to Jen Street and Judy Hines for their work on this mission!

Advent Calendar Basket: Naomi Circle requests that each family set aside a basket in their home and place a food item, personal item, or clothing item in the basket each day of advent to donate a food pantry at the end of the Christmas season.

Christmas Fund Offering: On December 18th, we will have a special offering for the Christmas Fund. Your gift to the Christmas Fund will provide for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and provide Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks next December to low-income retirees. Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. You have the opportunity to be a part of this ministry that cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ through your participation in this year's Christmas Fund Offering.

Weekly Coin Collections for December will go to American Indian Relief Council to support programs for Native Americans living on the rural and remote reservations on the Northern Plains. The money will help to provide emergency support such as food, water, supplies, and shelter services, as well as things like Thanksgiving meals and tools and seeds to plant gardens.

Ronald McDonald House can tabs: We turn in can tabs to the Ronald McDonald House to support their fundraising for their support of children and their families that are receiving medical care. Feel free to drop off can tabs you collect in the outer office.

Thank you to those who contributed items to the food pantry during November and the special Thanksgiving offering. Items were delivered to IMPACT Thanksgiving week.

December DMARC Food Pantry request: Pasta

(Please make sure to check expiration dates before donating items.)

December 2016

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
				01	02	03
04 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship with communion 11:30 Potluck and Advent Craft Workshop	05 Deacons' Meeting 6:30 pm	06	07 Choir practice 7:30 pm	08 1:00 pm Café Diem Office Hours	09	10
11 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:30 Fellowship Time	12	13 Trustees' Meeting 7:00 pm	14 Choir practice 7:30 pm	15 7:00 pm Emmanuale	16	17
18 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship with Children's Service 11:30 Fellowship Time 4:00 Quiet Service	19	20 Council Meeting 7:00 pm	21 Choir practice 7:30 pm	22 Ankeny Ministerial Association Lunch 11:30 am	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 6:30 pm
25 Christmas 9:30 Worship Come as you are service	26	27	28 Naomi Circle 9:30 am Millpond NO Choir practice	29	30	31



Ankeny United Church of Christ

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9:15 am Sunday School

10:30 am Worship Time

11:30 am Fellowship Hour

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Ankeny United Church of Christ Newsletter