



# ANKENY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

602 SE Delaware Ave, Ankeny, Iowa 50021

**JANUARY 2017**

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Pastor Nathan Willard  
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January 1, 2017

Dear Church-

There's been a lot of talk in our meetings about what it means to Explore Progressive Christian Theology. Progressive Christianity does not have the hard and fast rules of fundamentalism, but instead seeks questions in the margins of our lives and experiences. It stands in the tradition of Jesus, who asked many more questions than he gave answers. In lived experience, it means not settling for a simple quick answer or silencing Bible verse, but continuing to ask further questions about what that verse means, whether there are other traditions or passages that contradict or illuminate it, and what might have been going on when it was written. And even, what does it mean for us if the scripture is wrong? It was, after all, written by humans, who, while inspired, may have been motivated by forces other than God.

It also means always looking to the margins of society—who are the people being left behind? How can we work to bring them in in the way that Jesus healed the sick, brought the children to him, and rebuked his disciples for ignoring suffering. In practice, this means working toward equality and reconciliation with race, gender, and sexual and gender identity. Along the same lines, Jesus was suspicious of power, whether it was the Roman government specifically or the Pharisees who helped keep the boundaries between the sacred and the profane. In Progressive Christianity, we, too, try to find where the power is, who the gatekeepers are, and where our Christian love is being thwarted by our human fear of losing what power we have or wishing to be aligned with the powerful.

This theology that tells us there are always more questions and that easy answers are to be seen skeptically is hard. It requires work and commitment. But it also brings out creativity and reward, seeing the ways an ancient faith can be relevant in the modern world, can inform our sense of why and how to react to the what and how of science and history. And it always draws us toward the outcast and vulnerable that Jesus surrounded himself with, and away from the allure of power and wealth that he cautioned against.

Come, explore with us.

Nathan

## CONTINUING PRAYERS for

The victims of ongoing war in Syria. People living in fear across the world, especially in Istanbul. Nicholas Schreiner, Glenn and Gayle Beckwith, Mary Hall, Sally Brandhorst, Hazel Glaze, Chuck Howieson and his family.

## Ankeny UCC A Welcoming Church Family

**Greeters:** One of the joys of being a welcoming church family is to welcome old and new people into the church. We do this on a volunteer sign-up basis at the moment. If every active person in the church signed up, we'd all greet 2-3 times a year (accounting for people unable to greet and the need for pairs).

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

**Christmas Tree Ornament:** For the past few weeks, there has been a Christmas tree set up in the sanctuary. Thank you for bringing in your special ornaments to hang on the tree during Advent. We now 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.

**Giving Thanks:**

Thank you to Annette and Peter Hong and the deacons for providing the stew for the Advent Craft Workshop last month. Also, thank you to everyone who brought food and who participated in the craft activities. All of your combined efforts made it a success, and it's appreciated!

Thank you to Sarah Pamperin and all of the UCC youth who worked hard to put together a wonderful Children's Christmas Program for our service on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you to Nancy and the Deacons for organizing the quiet service on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you to Nancy Pingel, Paige Wonderly, and Sally Hanley for their gifts of special music during our Christmas Eve Service. We are blessed with your talents!

**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.

Thank you to Rich Pleva, Joan Moore, and Laura Beckwith for their assistance with lunch and clean-up for the monthly Ankeny Ministerial Association meeting hosted by Pastor Nathan in December.

**Emmanuale:** This month's meeting will be Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at Firetrucker. As we work through the dark and cold of winter, let's talk about our individual Christian practices.

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.

Our Winter Book Study will be on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's classic guide to Christian Community, Life Together. It's a short book designed for the community at the Finkenwald Seminary in Germany and used widely in different types of Christian communities today. Bring your own book (it's widely available), and come Monday January 30, February 6, and February 13 at 1pm.

## 2016 December Weekly Attendance

December 4	December 11	December 18	December 25	Average
66	52	85	17	55

## December Yearly Attendance Averages

Dec. 2016	Dec. 2015	Dec. 2014	Dec. 2013	Dec. 2012	Average
55	60	50	51	51	53

January Birthdays	January Anniversaries
01 Brenda Braun 02 Brian Holmes 02 Patricia Kreimeyer 02 Ilene Scholes 11 Terri Muehlenthaler-Holmes 12 Margaret Whiteley 14 Jane Underwood 15 Kathy Barton 15 Brian Butcher 15 Richard Pleva 16 Pat Hykes 19 Ruby Pleva 21 Jack Howieson 22 Lisa Carr 23 Allie Barber 23 Paige Wonderly 26 Teressa Clark 27 Brennan Kreimeyer	06 Dennis & Nancy Pingel

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

## Ankeny UCC Caring Within

Naomi Circle: Meets Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am in location to be advised at Millpond. All are welcome. Meetings will now be regularly held on the 4<sup>th</sup> 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 sent \$1180 to our mission partners in November, bringing yearly giving to \$12,565. Our general fund giving was \$17,599 against expenses of 11,432, meaning we spent roughly \$4631 more than we brought in over the first 11 months of 2016 on giving of \$121,494.

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 Joan Moore for providing altar decorations.

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](mailto: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: Thank you to everyone who donated gifts to the Holiday Assistance families this year. The office was overflowing with your kindness and generosity in the form of packages! Once again, a big thank you to Jen Street and Judy Hines for their work on this mission.

TAKE: Do you need to make room in your closet for new clothes you received for Christmas? Or maybe you received a wonderfully well-intentioned clothing gift that doesn't fit or isn't quite your style, but don't want to try to return it to the store? Please consider donating clean new or used clothing or linens to The Ankeny Klotting Exchange! The Ankeny Klotting Exchange (TAKE), which serves north Polk County, is open from 9:30 -11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday and every second Saturday of the month 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. TAKE is located at 406 SW School Street in room 310. TAKE distributes donated clothing at no cost to the recipient; there is no criteria to meet to receive items. A committed group of volunteers runs this program solely on donations from the community.

Weekly Coin Collections for January will go to Ankeny Ministerial Association Travelers' Fund. Cash donations will be given to this fund, administered by the Ankeny Police Department. The Fund provides necessary money for people travelling through Ankeny, to help pay for things such as gas or a hotel room.

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.

January DMARC Food Pantry request: Hot Cereal

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

# January 2017

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
<b>01</b> 9:15 <i>Sunday School</i> 10:30 <i>Worship with communion</i> 11:30 <i>Fellowship Time</i>	02	03 Deacons' Meeting 6:30 pm	04 Choir practice 7:30 pm	05 Café Diem Office Hours 1:00 pm	06	07
<b>08</b> 9:15 <i>Sunday School</i> 10:30 <i>Worship</i> 11:30 <i>Fellowship Time</i>	09	10 Trustees' Meeting 7:00 pm	11 Choir practice 7:30 pm	12 Café Diem Office Hours 1:00 pm	13	14
<b>15</b> 9:15 <i>Sunday School</i> 10:30 <i>Worship</i> 11:30 <i>Fellowship Time</i>	16	17 7:00 pm Emmanuale	18 Choir practice 7:30 pm	19 Café Diem Office Hours 1:00 pm	20	21
<b>22</b> 9:15 <i>Sunday School</i> 10:30 <i>Worship</i> 11:30 <i>Fellowship Time</i>	23	24 Council Meeting 7:00 pm	25 Naomi Circle 9:30 am Choir practice 7:30 pm	26 Café Diem Office Hours 1:00 pm	27	28
<b>29</b> 9:15 <i>Sunday School</i> 10:30 <i>Worship</i> 11:30 <i>Fellowship Time</i>	30	31				



**Ankeny United Church of Christ**

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Ankeny, Iowa 50021-9364

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9:15 am Sunday School

10:30 am Worship Time

11:30 am Fellowship Hour

*January 2017*

*Ankeny United Church of Christ Newsletter*