

Ankeny United Church of Christ

A welcoming church family

Exploring progressive Christian theology

Caring within and serving beyond

An Open And Affirming Church

May 2, 2021, 5th Sunday in Easter

The Church in Action

**No matter who you are,
no matter where you are on life's journey,
you are invited and welcome here!**

5th Sunday in Easter

May 2, 2021

****Signifies the request to rise in body or spirit***

Gathering *(As we arrive to worship God, we greet new and old friends)*

Children are invited to participate in our worship and welcome as loved, squirmy, laughing, crying, children of God. A staffed nursery is also always available.

Words of Welcome

Responsive Call to Worship

ONE: I know that you are great, that you are above all gods.

ALL: You do whatever pleases you, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the deeps.

ONE: You bring up rain clouds from the ends of the earth; you send out lightning with the rain; you bring the winds out of your storehouse.

ALL: It was you who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, the firstborn of all creatures.

ONE: You sent signs and wonders into the midst of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants.

ALL: You overthrew many nations and put mighty kings to death:

ONE: Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan.

ALL: You gave their land to be an inheritance, an inheritance for Israel your people.

****Passing of the Peace (We share the hope for peace with one another)***

Congregational Preparation: Alleluia

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Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-u-ia, al-le-lu-u-ia, al-le-lu-u-u-ia.

Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-u-ia, al-le-lu-u-ia, al-le-lu-u-ia.

Following the silent prayer, Brad will sing again

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

Children's Sermon

As they gather, the congregation sings our welcoming song (tune 182)

**Gath-er with us chil-dren e-v-ery-where, near and far where'er you be.
We will wel-come you, and show you hope God brings from se-a to sea.**

Scripture

Acts 8:5–6 (CEB)

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and began to preach Christ to them. The crowds were united by what they heard Philip say and the signs they saw him perform, and they gave him their undivided attention....

An angel from the Lord spoke to Philip, "At noon, take the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) So he did. Meanwhile, an Ethiopian man was on his way home from Jerusalem, where he had come to worship. He was a eunuch and an official responsible for the entire treasury of Candace. (Candace is the title given to the Ethiopian queen.) He was reading the prophet Isaiah while sitting in his carriage. The Spirit told Philip, "Approach this carriage and stay with it." Running up to the carriage, Philip heard the man reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you really understand what you are reading?" The man replied, "Without someone to guide me, how could I?" Then he invited Philip to climb up and sit with him. This was the passage of scripture he was reading: Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent so he didn't open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was taken away from him.

Who can tell the story of his descendants because his life was taken from the earth? The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, about whom does the prophet say this? Is he talking about himself or someone else?" Starting with that passage, Philip proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him. As they went down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, "Look! Water! What would keep me from being baptized?" He ordered that the carriage halt. Both Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, where Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Lord's Spirit suddenly took Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. Philip found himself in Azotus. He traveled through that area, preaching the good news in all the cities until he reached Caesarea.

Sermon

"Unexpected Acts in Ethiopia"

-Pastor Nathan

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

ONE: On this day of re-gathering, we are called to examine our faithfulness to God's covenant with us. God, in whose presence we gather, promises us grace and pardon when we acknowledge our weakness and shame. Let us confess our sin to almighty God.

ALL: Eternal God, whose Word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path, we recognize and confess that we have failed to respond fully to your gracious presence in our lives. Through Jesus Christ you have offered us new life, fulfillment, and the freedom to serve you. We confess that we are captive to sin, that our sin binds us with false pride, and that the wrong we do is made worse by the good we leave undone. Reconcile us to you and to all people. God of mercy, forgive all our sin and strengthen us anew for life as you intend it; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Silence

ONE: Anyone in Christ becomes a new person altogether; the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

ALL: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven

INVITATION

ONE: This is the joyful feast for the people of God. No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, know that you are welcome to join us at this table. For it is where we remember that, on that last night with his disciples, Jesus joined with people who loved him, people who fled from him, people who denied him, and people who betrayed him. Here, together, know that you are all invited.

SHARING THE STORY AND THE FEAST

Communion Anthem

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you, God, for this meal. Thank you for the fellowship you began in Christ so many years ago. And thank you for showing us the world you ask us to create with you. Amen. *(We share the church's actions in the world)*

***Benediction**

***Congregational Response: #241 (black) Joy Dawned Again on Easter Day v3**

Translated by John Mason Neale, 1851

O Sov-ereign One, with us a-bide in this our joy-ful Eas-ter-tide;
From ev-ery weap-on death can wield, your own re-deemed for-ev-er shield.

Postlude

You are a valued part of the family of God just as you are. We at Ankeny United Church of Christ celebrate the diversity our Creator has given all people. Our community is incomplete and broken when our siblings in Christ are excluded because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, mental ability, race, age, nationality, faith background, relationship status, family structure, economic situation, or any of the numerous other aspects of identity that make us each who we are. Your differences make you unique and should be celebrated in God's family. You are wonderfully and purposefully made in the image of our Creator, and you have a place here in fellowship with other members of God's Church. This is a place where you can praise, question, worship, laugh, mourn, doubt, wonder, celebrate, and otherwise live as part of a community with other people seeking God and loving their neighbors. We the members of Ankeny UCC promise to affirm your worth as an individual and your place in our community. You are joyously welcomed to join us just as you are.

Church Activities:

Our full calendar is online at <http://www.ankenyucc.org/ankeny-ucc-google-calendar>

Sunday

9:30am Junior Youth
10:00am Multiage
10:30am Worship

Monday

6:00pm Deacons

Sunday

9:30am Junior Youth
10:00am Multiage
10:30am Worship



Choir Director

Laura Beckwith

Accompanist

Paige Wonderly

Organist

Nancy Pingel



Pastor

Nathan Willard

Office Manager

Gemmy Sigma



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A Welcoming Church Family:

Welcome back

If you are in worship with us, welcome back! If you are following along at home, thank you for being with us! As always, we invite your feedback as we move forward on our journey together.

New Member Class

Last call for our new member class! If you're interested in joining our new member class, please email Pastor Nathan and let him know, so we can set up our schedule ahead of a hoped-for May 23 date to join.

Caring Within:

Mowing:

The wonderful weather has led our grass to jump out a little early, which means it's mowing season. We lost one of our great mowing servants last year, so we'll have a lot more openings and need for lawn care this year. The good news is that you don't have to worry about the prairie! Sign up here! Thanks, Tom for being the first one signing up!

Our Prairie Updates:

It's the dandelion season in the prairie. The soil is a little harder this week, but we've also got some new tools for pulling them, thanks to Judy Hines! There are plenty to tend to, but we can definitely see an improvement from last year. Any that you pull can be placed on the pile in the parking spot on the south side of the parking lot. We'll probably have another batch after the mowing of the prairie in the next few weeks.

Spring Cleanup:

Join us 9am on May 15 for our Spring Cleanup! We'll be tending to some of the plants outside, cleaning in and out of the church, and generally taking our time to beautify and maintain the building and grounds we steward. Can't make it then? We'll have a posted list of things we don't get to!

A note on our worship:

In Ankeny UCC, we encourage the **Holy Spirit** to flow in our service to all who are called to be in this place. As we get our feet under us in our return to in-person worship, we have changed some of our practices for the time being.

First, we have limited our sanctuary capacity somewhat, and **we invite you and whoever you are worshiping with to space yourselves around our pews**. Due to the ongoing pandemic, please wear a mask during the service.

Second, **we are distributing communion on the way into the sanctuary**, rather than circulating and serving communion during the liturgy. Know that no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, the table is set for you. Likewise, **we invite you to share any offerings you may have in the plates outside the doors to the sanctuary** as you exit.

Third, **we are holding off on a return to congregational singing** during the service. We miss it, too!

Finally, it's not yet time to return to our indoor fellowship time, but invite you to socialize out of doors. **Pastor Nathan would be delighted to see you there following the service.**