

Ankeny United Church of Christ

A welcoming church family

Exploring progressive Christian theology

Caring within and serving beyond

An Open And Affirming Church

May 9, 2021, 6th 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!**

6th Sunday in Easter

May 9, 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 and Responsive Call to Worship

***Psalm 135:13-21 (St. Helena Psalter)**

© Order of St. Helena, used with permission

ONE: O God, your Name is everlasting; your renown endures from age to age. For you give your people justice and show compassion to your servants.

ALL: The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

ONE: They have mouths, but they cannot speak; eyes have they, but they cannot see.

ALL: They have ears, but they cannot hear; neither is there any breath in their mouth.

ONE: Those who make them are like them, and so are all who put their trust in them.

ALL: Bless God, O house of Israel; O house of Aaron, bless God.

ONE: Bless God, O house of Levi; you who fear God, bless God.

ALL: Blest be the Most High out of Zion, who dwells in Jerusalem. Alleluia!

***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, we 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 8:1-3, Acts 9:1-9 (CEB)

Saul was in full agreement with Stephen's murder. At that time, the church in Jerusalem began to be subjected to vicious harassment. Everyone except the apostles was scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. Some pious men buried Stephen and deeply grieved over him. Saul began to wreak havoc against the church. Entering one house after another, he would drag off both men and women and throw them into prison...He went to the high priest, seeking letters to the synagogues in Damascus. If he found persons who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, these letters would authorize him to take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. During the journey, as he approached Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven encircled him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice asking him, "Saul, Saul, why are you harassing me?" Saul asked, "Who are you, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom you are harassing," came the reply. "Now get up and enter the city. You will be told what you must do." Those traveling with him stood there speechless; they heard the voice but saw no one. After they picked Saul up from the ground, he opened his eyes but he couldn't see. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind and neither ate nor drank anything.

Sermon

"Indulging in Power"

-Pastor Nathan

Anthem

"Come Thou Dear Redeemer"

-Janet Ferrone

Commissioning

(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.ankenyuucc.org/anken-yucc-google-calendar>

Sunday

9:30am Junior Youth

9:30am Multiage

10:30am Worship

Monday

7:15am Trustees
Meeting

Wednesday

7:30pm New Member
Class

Saturday

9:00am Church Cleanup

Saturday

9:00am Spring Cleaning

Sunday

9:30am Junior Youth

9:30am Multiage

10:30am Worship



Choir Director

Laura Beckwith

Accompanist

Paige Wonderly

Organist

Nancy Pingel

Cantor

Janet Ferrone



Pastor

Nathan Willard

Office Manager

Gemmy Sigma



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Exploring Progressive Christian Theology:

New Member Class

We've scheduled a new member class! This is a chance to learn more about Ankeny UCC, the tradition of the United Church of Christ, and decide whether to move from members of the Ankeny UCC family to members of Ankeny UCC. I'll have some books coming this week to use in the new member class, and if you're interested, we're planning on meeting on Wednesday nights at 7:30 over the next few weeks.

"Jesus was different", from Progressive Christianity:

"Since writing the 2nd edition of my book [The Ending of Mark's Gospel: The Key to Understanding the Gospels and Christianity](#) in 2020 I have come to realize how different Jesus was and that his life before his baptism was the foundation for what became Christianity. Although his mission began suddenly when he was about 30, his previous experience must have provided the motivation for what he said and did.

...Jesus had to die as the Suffering Servant died. 'He poured out his life unto death.' (Isaiah 53:12) It was God's way of putting his spirit into the hearts of human beings. The Kingdom of God is thus the community of spirit-filled disciples. They are held in God's love, which goes out to the world through them. It is amazing to think that it originated in the love that a gay man felt for his God and God had for him." - Dr. Peter E. Lewis
Click [here](#) to read the full article!

Caring Within:

Happy Mother's Day!, from LSI:

Mother's Day is a time to celebrate the strong, loving women in your life. At Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), we see thousands of Iowa moms through their journey to build the brightest future for their children.

We see moms turning to LSI Behavioral Health Intervention Services to ensure their child is receiving the coping skills and behavioral supports they need to thrive. In our Early Childhood Services, we see first-time moms who are eager to join our parenting education classes and support groups. In 2020, LSI's Early Childhood programs provided support to more than 1,097 families of young children. We are so inspired to hear their stories and see their hard work pay off as they raise our next generation.

As you celebrate Mother's Day this year, remember how many Iowa moms are being empowered because of your support. If you are looking for a way to honor your mother this year, please consider making a gift in her name to LSI. For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or (563) 676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and [Facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa).

Serving Beyond:

From Heifer International:

No other organization is better equipped to respond to the current crisis in India and around the world than Heifer International. Our teams on the ground in India (and the other 20 countries where we serve) have been hard at work since the beginning of the pandemic — ensuring Heifer farmers continue to earn money so they can support their families. And with your compassionate support, we can continue to help them and countless other families survive this deadly pandemic.

100% of your gift will go directly to:

- Food
- Milk powder
- Rice
- Wheat
- Legumes
- Oil
- Soap
- Hand sanitizer
- Face masks
- Feminine Hygiene Product
- Medicine

[So please, give generously today. Your gift today can mean the difference between life and death right now. Heifer families are counting on you!](#)

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.**