



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
MARCH 2017



Friends in Christ:

At the end of February, in a week's time, vandals toppled headstones in Jewish cemeteries in suburban St. Louis and Philadelphia. On campuses and in communities across our nation Jewish individuals and organizations have been threatened. These acts of anti-Semitism are deplorable and cannot be tolerated by any people of good will in this nation built on the principle of religious freedom.

Anti-Semitism is especially troubling for Christians in the season of Lent. Roman authorities sentenced and executed Jesus. As Jesus told his followers in Luke's gospel, he would be handed over to the Gentiles and they would kill him. His crucifixion resulted in the threat of persecution and death for all who followed him. Attempting to defend themselves and to gain some standing in a dangerous world, the early Christians often maintained that Jesus was innocent of any crime against Rome. They explained his crucifixion as the result of a Roman ruler bowing to pressure from religious leaders. Pilate, however, was known not for being weak and indecisive but for what one ancient writer called his "corruption, his cruelty, and his continual murders of people untried and unconvicted and his never-ending and gratuitous inhumanity."

The horrible reality is that when Christians gained power, they—we—went on the offensive and a twisted and hateful reading of the Passion story led to the persecution of the Jewish people. This happened throughout the year, but Lent and Holy Week have been times for some of the worst acts of anti-Semitism.

Writing in the *Washington Post* recently, Mark Oppenheimer said: "This isn't Germany in 1933. In the United States in 2017, the first to be targeted are Muslims or Mexicans — after which they will probably come for Jews, gays, blacks and all the other apparent undesirables... The real question a reporter who cares about Jewish safety should ask ... is about the health and safety of other minority groups." He concludes: "Right-wing and nativist violence does not always begin with Jews. But by fixating on attacks against Jews, we are forgetting the cardinal rule of Jewish self-survival: It may not start with us, but it always ends with us."

We also see anti-Muslim sentiment across Europe and in our own nation. There were multiple cases of anti-Muslim vandalism on college campuses across the nation last year—and another case of this at the United Church of Christ related Beloit College in Wisconsin in January.

And, of course, anti-Muslim actions spill over onto people of other religions, because hate doesn't really know boundaries. People have been attacked simply because their attackers assumed they were Muslim.

Our encounter with and support of people of other religious faiths takes on a special urgency for us in Lent this year. In worship and in the Sunday morning adult education sessions during Lent, we will explore how Christian faith has been deepened and enriched by encounters with people of different religions. We will look at familiar Lenten themes, such as temptation and fasting, to discover how Christian faith has burned brightly following an encounter with the religious other. More information about the 9:15 adult education sessions can be found in this newsletter.

I invite you to begin this journey with other members of our congregation on Ash Wednesday. It is especially important in these difficult and often sorrowful days that we come together to remember the empowering compassion and mercy of God. Maybe you weren't planning on being here. Please, join us.

And, please, be a part of the Sunday morning adult education sessions as well as worship in these days of Lent. Your presence is important. We are called to repentance and to a new way of life. Let us together seek the mercy of God who is compassionate toward all.

Peace, *Bill*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

ASH WEDNESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER AND WORSHIP SERVICE BEGIN THE SEASON OF LENT ON MARCH 1

On Wednesday, March 1, our Board of Christian Education will host a pancake supper in Rockwood Hall from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Bring your family and friends and join others for pancakes, eggs, sausage, good company, and good conversation. It will help with planning if you sign up on the sheet in Rockwood Hall or call the church office (337-4301) to let us know how many will attend. But please join us even if you haven't done this in the past.

After eating, we will hold our Ash Wednesday worship service in the sanctuary at 7:00. This will be a time of music and song, scripture and prayer, and the imposition of ashes for those who want them. The worship service is designed for people of all ages and child care will be available for toddlers and infants.

A RECOGNITION OF FERN WEIR

After worship on Sunday, March 5, the Deacons are hosting a celebration of Fern Weir's many years of service to our congregation as Fern "retires" from arranging members to serve as liturgists, greeters, ushers, and hospitality providers. If you have not already done so, there is a book in Rockwood Hall for members and friends to write their words of thanks and good wishes to Fern.

MIDWEEK MUSICAL MEDITATIONS

2017 will mark the ninth year of our popular Lenten Musical Meditations series beginning on Wednesday, March 8. The musical meditations will begin at noon and last for approximately 25 minutes. These midday recitals are free and open to the public. Please join us and bring a friend. The schedule for the Meditations in 2017 is:

March 8	T. Andrew Hicks, Organ
March 15	Betty Mather and Laura Paarman, Flute, Ruth Baldwin, Piano
March 22	Heidi Hansen, Organ
March 29	The Liros Quintet
April 5	Elizabeth Oakes and Nathalie Cruden, Viola
April 12	Richard Bloesch, Piano and Marie Von Behren, Soprano

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION IN LENT Returning Home: Christian Faith in Encounter with Other Faiths

During Lent, the Sunday morning adult education sessions will explore how Christian faith has been deepened and enriched by encounters with people of different religions. We will look at familiar Lenten themes, such as temptation and fasting, but with a different approach. This series does not necessarily emphasize common ground or dialogue. It is more about how Christian faith has burned brightly following an encounter with the religious other.

Christians who have lived alongside, and worked with, people of other faiths, often express their surprise and appreciation that their own Christian faith has been enriched by these encounters. How is this the case? Sometimes a practice such as fasting by Muslims in Ramadan has led Christians to think again about the ancient Christian practice of fasting, or the understanding of a concept such as suffering in an Indic faith has prompted Christians to interrogate Christian understanding of redemptive suffering.

The theologian John Cobb described his deep encounter with Buddhism in terms of a journey to another land and culture: the newness, sometimes strangeness of the other, can be an enriching experience. However when we return to the familiar, home is viewed with different eyes and a deeper, perhaps more profound, appreciation. This is why the series is called "Returning Home."

The themes of this study series will also shape our Sunday morning worship during Lent.

Join Bill Lovin in Rockwood Hall at 9:15 on Sunday mornings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS CONT.

FLOWERS FOR EASTER BRING COLOR TO THE SANCTUARY

Each year on Easter Sunday members and friends of Congregational UCC provide flowers for the sanctuary in memory of loved ones or to honor someone. Because so many people enjoyed the burst of color last Easter, our Diaconate invites you to bring any type of spring flower—lilies, yes, but also consider tulips, daffodils, crocuses, or any other spring flower. *If you would like to have the name(s) of those remembered in the Easter Sunday bulletin, please get that information to the church office (337-4301) by Tuesday, April 11.*

SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE, 2017

The Shelter House Used Book Sale will be March 25 and 26. The site will be the Johnson County Fairgrounds. As always, we need as many books as possible. Historically we have received 20,000 books for the sale, and last year we earned \$17,000 for the Shelter House. People are encouraged to drop off their books in late February and March at the Fairgrounds, but pick ups can be scheduled. We will definitely transport books from Rockwood Hall, and you can bring your book donations to the church at any time. **Contact Donna Hirst if you need assistance in transporting books to the sale site, donna-hirst@uiowa.edu.**

Because of the location we only have late February and March for the sorting. All the books will need to be boxed by subject in an adjoining building and moved to the sale building the week before the sale. We will need far more volunteers than we've had in the past. During March Sorting, Boxing, and Moving books will occur:

- 3/5, 3/12, 3/19 **1:00-3:00** (Sundays)
- 3/6, 3/13 **10:00-2:00** (Mondays)
- 3/1, 3/8, 3/15 **10:00-2:00** (Wed.)
- 3/4, 3/11, 3/18 **10:00-2:00** (Sat.)
- Set up for the sale will occur March 20-24 (**9:00-4:00**).
- Volunteering for a day does not commit you to 8 hours, but only as many hours as you have to donate.

Volunteer tasks:

- Incoming boxes of donated books will need to be sorted into subject categories. We will potentially receive 20,000 books.
- All books will need to be boxed according to their subject.
- Boxes of books will need to be moved to a staging area; beginning March 20 boxes will need to be moved into the sale building; and some unsold books will need to be moved out of the sale room.

A sign up sheet is in Rockwood Hall. For additional information contact Donna Hirst, donna-hirst@uiowa.edu, 351-5253.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS ON SUNDAY, MARCH 12.

Please remember to set your clock ahead one hour on Saturday evening so that you get to church on time.

SOUPER BOWL UPDATE

Thanks to everyone who gave generously to the “Souper Bowl of Caring” offering after worship on February 5. We received \$500—our largest offering for this cause since we started in 2008! All the money will go to the food pantry at the Crisis Center.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS CONT.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

On Palm Sunday, April 9, we will dedicate our One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering. This offering has long been an important part of the life of our congregation—so much so that in 2015 **and once again in 2016** we were recognized as one of the Top 100 OGHS giving churches in the UCC!

One Great Hour is a Christian effort to empower, provide water, supply food, and give relief from disasters. It began in the Episcopal Church in 1946 when a goal of one million dollars per year was set for World Relief. That year members were challenged to raise “one million dollars in one hour.” Since 1949 this offering has united Christians of many denominations, including the UCC, in a common cause.

In a world where communities are being displaced by the catastrophes of war, famine, and natural disaster, our congregation joins with many others in standing in solidarity with those who seek to move beyond the trauma of displacement toward the promise of healing and peace. Your generous gift will support the relief work of not only the UCC but also many other denominations united in caring for refugees, in providing medical care, and in disaster recovery efforts. You can watch videos about the work that OGHS makes possible here: http://www.ucc.org/oghs_oghs-videos.



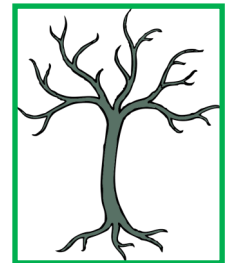
Let us join in this great tradition and give generously, not because we have to, but because we can.

THINK AHEAD FOR ANNUAL OUTERWEAR DISTRIBUTION

Each year in the fall, Congregational UCC joins with other congregations in providing winter coats for people of all ages, especially children. As winter items start to go on sale in the stores, now is a great time to let your dollar go further and purchase coats. Please store them at your home until the fall when they can be brought to the church and then taken to the distribution site.

THANKS JIM!

Thanks to Jim Jetter for building us a Worship Bag Tree! Now the bags that hold activities for children are displayed in a much more user-friendly fashion. The tree and bags may be seen at the rear of the sanctuary.



THE HUMAN THREAD

On **March 2nd from 11 am to noon**, St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa is sponsoring a program on “The Human Thread” in the Rogalski Center Ballroom. The presenter, Chris Cox, began this campaign in 2016 to promote understanding of where our clothing comes from and the true cost of the clothes we wear. This lecture is free and open to the public.

SKILL BUILDING FOR EFFECTIVE ACTIVISM

The UI School of Social Work is holding a series of teach-ins during the late winter and early spring to help community members strengthen their abilities for activism. These workshops are open to the public without charge and will be held from 12:00-1:00 p.m. in North Hall, room 322.

3/22: How to lobby

4/19: Interventions for bystanders

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS CONT.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES AT UCC

- **April 9** Palm Sunday - Worship with Distribution of Palms, 10:15 am
- **April 13** Maundy Thursday - Congregational meal in Rockwood Hall at 5:30 pm
Worship in the Sanctuary at 7:00 pm; Communion and Service of Tenebrae
- **April 14** Good Friday Worship in the Sanctuary at noon.
- **April 16** Sunrise Service, Easter Breakfast, Festival Easter Service with Brass and Choir

MONTHLY DINING

The Women's Lunch is scheduled for March 16 at Basta in downtown Iowa City, beginning at 11:45 am. The Men's Breakfast will be on March 18 at The Market Café, Waterfront Hy-Vee, Iowa City beginning at 8:00 am.

JOHNSON COUNTY CROP WALK—APRIL 9

As in past years, we will be participating in the Johnson County CROP Walk on Sunday April 9th. CROP stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty. It is an interfaith organization under Church World Service, but is not limited to faith groups. The program was started after WWII when Midwestern farmers donated part of their grain to European countries recovering from the war. It has evolved to become a worldwide program helping people in countries that struggle with hunger and poverty. CROP also plays a huge role right here in Johnson County. Last year we raised over \$27,000! A quarter of that amount, nearly \$7000 went directly to the Johnson County Crisis Center.

Please note that the walk will begin and end this year at the Crisis Center at 1121 Gilbert Court. Registration will start at 1:00 and the walk will begin at 1:30.

If you would be willing to walk with us or to donate to CROP, there will be a table set up in the narthex each Sunday beginning in March. We had a great team last year and hope to have even more people walk with us this year.

To quote CWS President and CEO Rev. John L. McCullough: "If God is for us, who is against us? I love those words from Romans 8:31. I think they sum up much of what has made the CWS community such a force to be reckoned with in the last 70 years. While others may have been dismayed or discouraged by the injustices in the world, the CWS community – including people like you - has had the courage of our faith to move forward. Together, we've stood tall and spoken out. And in community after community, day after day, we have made a difference."

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY AT TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES

With a new year comes new opportunities to volunteer at Ten Thousand Villages in Iowa City. With the store now being a successful permanent store, volunteers are needed to help assist customers every day. Contact Cassidy at iowacity@tenthousandvillages.com or **319-519-2104** if you can help occasionally or on a regular basis. Your volunteer spirit provides a livelihood for artisans in 38 countries. Take a shopping trip to the Village store at 105 S Dubuque St, Iowa City.

LET'S THINK ABOUT SUMMER

Vacation Bible School is "just around the corner". This summer's fun, "Animal Crackers", will begin on June 5 and run through June 7 from 9 am to 11:30 am. All kids aged 4 to 10 years are invited and encouraged to join the fun!

WAKING UP WHITE: FINDING MYSELF IN THE STORY OF RACE

Interested in understanding more about White Privilege, systemic racism, racial justice or just learning how to talk about race? Over the next two months, many members of our church have committed to reading Debby Irving's *Waking Up White: Finding Myself in the Story of Race* and then coming together in small groups to discuss the book. This opportunity is open to all in our church and we would love for you to join us for meaningful discussions about an issue that affects us all. To accommodate various schedules, we have scheduled three different dates for discussion; you can pick the one that works best for you. The different meeting times/locations are listed below. Anyone who has read the book is welcome to come and join in the discussion but we do ask that you read the book if you plan to participate. If you have questions about a particular meeting, please contact the facilitator(s) associated with that session. (Interested individuals can order the book from Prairie Lights or other vendors.)

"Debby Irving's powerful *Waking Up White* opens a rare window on how white Americans are socialized. Irving's focus on the mechanics of racism operating in just one life — her own — may lead white readers to reconsider the roots of their own perspectives — and their role in dismantling old myths. Readers of color will no doubt find the view through Irving's window fascinating, and telling." – *Van Jones, author, [Rebuild The Dream, The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems](#); President, [Rebuild The Dream](#); Co-host, [CNN Crossfire](#)*

Tuesday, March 28, 2017

6:30-7:30 PM

Bread Garden

225 S Linn Street, Iowa City, IA 52240

Facilitator - Emily Legel (815) 297-7361

Thursday, April 20, 2017

1:30-2:30 PM

Oaknoll Retirement Residence – 6th floor lounge

1 Oaknoll Dr., Iowa City, IA 52246

Facilitators - Pam Willard (Pamela-willard@uiowa.edu or 319-530-6584) and Sally Strang (319-325-2373)

Sunday, April 23, 2017

11:30-12:30 PM

Congregational Church (after church on Sunday – “Melon Room” lower level at the church)

30 N Clinton St., Iowa City, IA 52245

Facilitator - Beth Oakes beth@geneandbeth.com

The 16th ANNUAL USED BOOKS AND BAKE SALE FUNDRAISER

This upcoming sale is sponsored by Presbyterian Women's Council and Iowa City Four Oaks to be held *Friday, March 31, 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. & Saturday, April 1, 8 - 11:30 a.m.* in the **upper level** of First Presbyterian Church, 2701 Rochester Ave, Iowa City, 351-2660.

Proceeds from the sale go to help local human service organizations the Women's Council supports and Iowa City Four Oaks that provides a multitude of vital social services to the children and families in Johnson County.

Serving Our Church

In the Congregational United Church of Christ, we all share in performing duties for the worship service. A list is provided each month for the assignments of Greeters, Ushers and Hospitality.

Please arrive one-half hour before the service, which begins at 10:15 am.

If you cannot serve on the assigned date, please call someone else on the list to arrange a trade with them.

Please let the Deacon of the Month, **Vicki Thomae**, know of any changes.

She can be reached at 319-541-8774 or vickithomae@gmail.com

MARCH	GREETERS	USHERS	HOSPITALITY
5	Leah DeGrazia Paula Forest	Bob and Betty Stein Ann Romanowski Jody Murph	Kathi Keogle Kevin Richards
12	Bob and Yvette Jury	Jo and Steve Bowers Shirley Wyrick Carroll Hanson	Steve and Sue Wolken
19	Roger and Melissa Jensen	Ann Gabel Terri Macey Sharon Garton Gloria Hanson	Kristy Nabhan Warren Steve Warren
26	Ray and Linda Muston	Larry and Joan Parsons Willis Sisley Roger Mills	Kathy Thede- Reynolds Bruce Reynolds

MARCH 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 ASH WEDNESDAY - Midday Prayer/Meditation Noon - Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper 5:30 pm - Ash Wednesday Worship 7:00 pm	2 - Foreign Relations Luncheon—Noon - Literacy Class 6:00pm -Voices of Soul 6:30pm	3	4
5 - Sunday School 9:15am - First Sunday in Lent Worship 10:15am Communion -Confirmation Class 11:30am - Chinese Class 1:30 pm	6	7 - Diaconate 6:30pm - Mission Board 7 pm	8 - Lenten Meditation with T. Andrew Hicks Noon	9 - Foreign Relations Luncheon—Noon - Literacy Class 6:00 pm - Voices of Soul 6:30 pm	10	11
12 - Choir 9 - Sunday School 9:15am - Worship 10:15am - Chinese School 1:30 pm START OF SPRING BREAK	13	14	15 - Lenten Meditation with Betty Mather and Laura Paarman, Flute , Ruth Baldwin, Piano Noon	16 - Women's Lunch at Basta 11:45 am --Foreign Relations Luncheon Noon - Literacy Class 6:00 pm -Voices of Soul 6:30 pm	17	18 - Men's Breakfast at at 8 am
19 - Choir 9 - Sunday School 9:15am - Worship 10:15 am - Confirmation Class 11:30 am - Chinese School 1:30 pm	20	21 - -Stewardship Board 4 pm - Membership Board 5:30 pm - Trustees 7:00 pm	22 - Lenten Meditation with Heidi Hansen, Organ, Noon	23 - Foreign Relations Luncheon Noon - Literacy Class 6:00 pm - Voices of Soul 6:30 pm	24	25 SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE
26 - Choir 9am - Sunday School 9:15 -Worship 10:15am - Choir Rehearsal 11:30 am - Chinese School 1:30 pm SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE	27	28 - Church Council 7 pm - CE Board 7 pm	29 - Lenten Meditation with The Liros Quintet, Noon	30 - Foreign Relations Luncheon Noon - Literacy Class 6:00 pm - Voices of Soul 6:30 pm	31	

Happy

BIRTHDAY

- 3/1 Sandra Lacina
- 3/2 Sandra Miller
- 3/4 Barb Hanson
Ian Wells
- 3/5 Lyle Tonne
- 3/9 Willem Norton
- 3/10 James Jetter
- 3/13 Joan Buxton
Izzy Brown
- 3/14 Diana Baculis
- 3/15 Sylvia Woolums
- 3/22 Nathaniel Savage
- 3/23 Isabella Myers
- 3/34 Carrie Whittaker
- 3/29 Rachel Anderson
Becky Keogh



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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
30 North Clinton Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52245-1700**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

MARCH 2017 NEWSLETTER

PARKING INFORMATION

Parking is available evenings and all day Sunday at the IMU or North Hall Parking Ramps.

Ask your usher for a voucher (or get one from the church office).

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:15 a.m. Sunday School for All Ages
10:15 a.m. Worship
11:15 a.m. Fellowship

Church Office is open Monday - Friday 9-3pm

OUR CHURCH STAFF

Pastor:	The Rev. William Lovin
Music Director:	Chris Nakielski
Organist:	Bill Crouch
Dir of Children's Programs	The Rev. Patte Henderson
Children's Choir Director	Colette Nakielski
Office Manager:	Nan Martin
Financial Secretary:	Sharyn Huriaux Reitz
Communication Assistant:	Christina Patramanis
Custodians:	Douglas Herrera Claudia Landaverde

HOW TO CONTACT US

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Financial Secretary.....sharynreitz@gmail.com
Music Director... christopher-nakielski@uiowa.edu
Dir of Children's
Programs.....pattehenderson@ gmail.com
Children's Choir Dir....colette.nakielski@gmail.com
Communication Assist....cpatramanis@yahoo.com