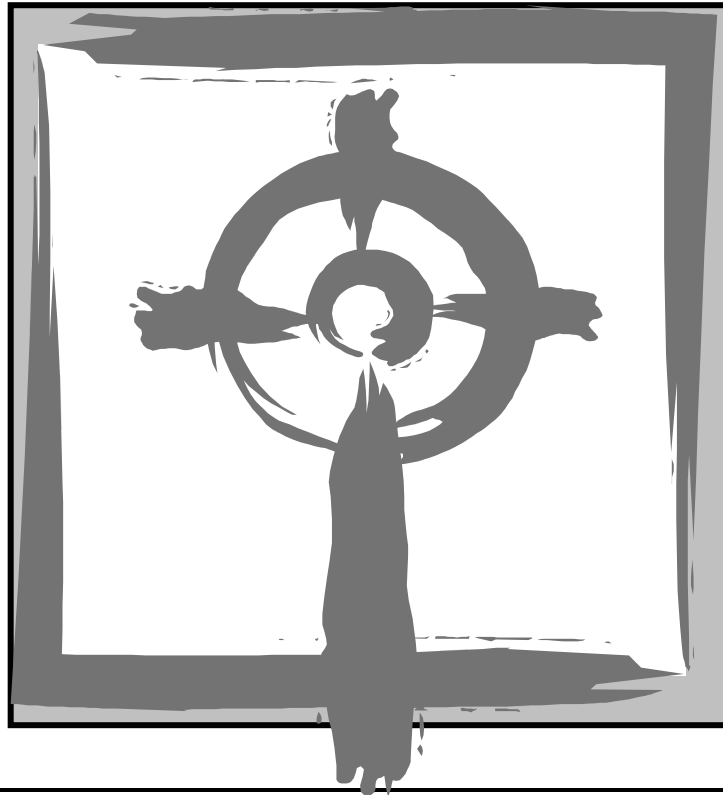

URBANDALE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

A Just Peace and Open and Affirming congregation



FEBRUARY 2012

THE CALL

The Season of **LENT** Begins February 22nd

- ◆ Ponderings from Pastor Davepage 2
- ◆ From the Moderator: The Introspection Process..... 3
- ◆ Ash Wednesday: Pancake Supper & Worship Service..... 3
- ◆ Child & Youth News ~ OWL Recognition..... 4-5
- ◆ Mardi Gras Carnival ~ Sunday School 5
- ◆ Ways to Serve ~ Church Weather Policy 6
- ◆ Small Groups ~ Caregivers' Corner..... 10-11

Ponderings from Your Pastor

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—Unless, indeed you fail to meet the test!”
(II Corinthians 13:5, New Revised Standard Version)

These words from the Apostle Paul come in the midst of some of the harshest words he wrote to the believers at Corinth. They had questioned his authority and integrity and insulted his sense of call. The church was divided and there were undercurrents of all that accompanies such conflict. But Paul refuses to wash his hands of the Corinthian Church. He is coming to see them again, and in preparation for his visit, he asks them to examine their lives, not to see if they are “right” or if their consciences are clear of any wrong-doing, but to see if they can find Christ in their actions. If not, they fail the test.

Lent begins on February 22nd this year, and it is traditionally a season for examining our lives. We look at temptations to which we may have given in and seek God’s forgiveness. We look at unhealthy habits and ask God’s help in overcoming them. We look at some of our excesses and ask God’s strength to give them up, even if only for a season. The overarching purpose of all of these observances is the same as for the people of Corinth—Is Jesus Christ in you?

We are currently in the process of introspection, in which we are taking an honest and sober look at our ministries and our roles in them. The process is a mirror for us into which we look to see how we are doing together, not to prove anyone right, not to point fingers at who may be wrong, but to ask that all-important question: Is God working through what we do? It is a courageous thing for any of us to look in such a mirror! We may see some administrative procedures that need to be corrected. We may find some gaps in our ministry or mission. We may discover that the very thing we hold most dear is the thing that is no longer effective in meeting the needs of our members or our community. We risk much by evaluating our church and ourselves.

The real question, though, is the same as it was in Corinth—Is God’s Realm in you? We can be forgiven lapses in programming if The Holy is experienced by those who participate. Our inefficiencies and lack of productivity can be overcome if God is known by those who work together. What is missing in our ministry can be made up for by experiencing the presence of the One in whose name we minister. If we fail to meet this test, then it won’t matter how much effort we put into programs, procedures, or planning. If we can’t find The Spirit in our common life together, then we will find ourselves worn, weary, and ready to give up.

Lent and our introspection process are two lenses that bring into focus something that is often hard for us to see. Jesus’ life and ministry offer us a template for change and new life. While we often find the mood of this season to be somber and reflective, it is also a time for great growth and learning. We find new energy to live faithfully and find the fruit of life in the Spirit. Freed from old ways that sap our energy and don’t give us any real sustenance, we find ourselves more eager than ever to sing God’s praise and share Christ’s gospel. What a marvelous thing it is to be a part of what God is doing! Amen.

God’s Peace with Justice,
Pastor Dave



The Introspection Process:

You are invited to join in our introspection process this January and February. It is designed to evaluate where we are as a church family and where we want to go in the future. Many of you in the past have asked for an evaluation process for our staff members. Realizing that as a congregation we are in covenant with God, our staff, and each other, it is the perfect time to assess our commitments. Our introspection team has worked hard to create three separate surveys that will allow us to take a look at our individual participation, how our congregation functions, and how we support our senior pastor. It is important that we take the time to do all three surveys to get a total picture of our covenant! We would LOVE to have all of our members participate, so we've provided a variety of ways to include your input.

Option # 1:

A link is available in the Friday email notes and also on the church website, which will take you to the current survey. Each survey will be online for two weeks. Your answers will be tabulated electronically and confidentially.

Option #2

Paper copies of each survey will be available on the narthex table every two weeks with an envelope for the completed surveys.

Option #3

For those of you that like to sort out your thoughts through conversation small group sessions will discuss the surveys together on Wednesday evenings at 6:00pm in Fellowship Hall beginning January 18th – February 15th.

Our hope is that this wealth of information will point out areas in which we need to improve and the gifts that we can celebrate as a congregation. It should prove to be a very helpful tool in future planning. Please take the time to fill out each survey. Your input is valuable to the health of our congregation!! *Bonita Wiley, Moderator*

Ash Wednesday, February 22nd

- ◆ There will be a **Pancake Supper** at 5:30pm in Fellowship Hall.
- ◆ An **Ash Wednesday Worship Service** will follow the supper at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. *Childcare will be available during the worship service.*
- ◆ **Adult Choir** will rehearse following worship but other Wednesday Night Alive rehearsals will not be held that evening.

☞🌸 Donate Chancel Flowers 🌸☞

You may donate flowers in memory of a loved one or to celebrate an important event. The cost is \$30—you may keep the flowers or donate them to a homebound member. Please check the Flower Donation Chart on the narthex door.

Caregivers 2 Meeting

Caregivers 2 (facilitated by Debbie Gannon and Laura Fefchak) will meet on **Sunday, February 5** in the Sanctuary immediately following worship. Our group has not gathered in some time so please attend and catch up with your fellow Caregivers!

From Rev. Amy Murray, Ministry Program Coordinator:

When faith takes on form and a shape, when duty turns into welcome responsibility, when love accepts both ease and struggle, when prayer includes a heart of acceptance, when living results in more giving than getting, when silence serves as a source of listening, when dying no longer frightens or dismays, when emptiness leads to paradoxical fullness, then we know how it is to engage with you as Joyful Journeyer on our road of life.” Joyce Rupp

As we move through the season of Lent, we are invited to go deeper and be intentional in our relationship with God. This time of year invites study, meditation, conversation and discernment. There are many ways to engage God, our community and individual faith journeys. Your Adult Spiritual Formation Team (Wendy Sontag, ReNae Vanden Broek and Karl Andersen) are planning offerings, including the meaning of Lent, spiritual practices, and sharing of faith stories within our own church family. We hope you are able to attend and participate.

My prayer is that this Lenten season can be a time for all of us to take spiritual stock; to look deep within and focus on the pieces of our souls that need to be examined, dusted off, loved and restored. I have heard many times how our church family yearns for spiritual growth and nourishment. I see it happening as we love and care for each other, and yes, even challenge one another. Spiritual growth is an endeavor that we all yearn for and seek out within our faith community. We can share faith stories, how God is at work in our lives, how we struggle with our faith, and the countless questions that come throughout life’s many transitions. Lent invites all of this and to come as we are. I look forward to our journey together this Lenten season and growing together in our faith.

Shalom,
Rev. Amy

Child & Youth News

7th-12th Grade Youth Group

Janet Jones and Adam Dirks will gather with the Jr./Sr. High Youth on **Sunday, February 5** from 11:15-1:15 to finish painting the canvases. Lunch will be served. See you then!

OWL Worship Celebration

Please join us **Sunday, February 12th** in worship to celebrate and affirm our youth, as they have completed the Our Whole Lives program. We will honor them with a brief liturgy and prayer. We also look forward to their sharing their statement of faith in worship, and sharing what they have learned this past year with our Adult Spiritual Formation hour at 9am on February 12. Please show your support of our 2011-2012 OWL participants and its leaders, Kevin Gannon, Janet Jones, and Pastor Dave. Thank you for supporting our youth and the OWL ministry!

Eva Clark
Matthew Siegel
JR McCord
Tristan Trudeau

Jill Kolotsane-Wren
Anna Keeler
Ashley McCord

Maeve Greising
Aaron Mensing
Morgan Pech

Mardi Gras Carnival

Come celebrate New Orleans style at our annual Mardi Gras themed Carnival on **Sunday, February 19th** from 2-4pm in Fellowship hall. There will be a variety of carnival-like games, prizes, activities, silent auction, and a cake-walk. We need a variety of baked goods for our cake-walk and items for our silent auction. Please sign up on the sheets in the narthex. You can also make your very own Mardi Gras mask! Candy, popcorn, and pop will also be available for purchase. Tickets for games are 2 for \$1 or 12 for \$5. All proceeds go towards our camperships. Please see a member of the Christian Growth Team (Hattie & Heather Schott, Jim & Monica Sutter, Ken Briggs, and Chris Jordan) with any questions.

Calling ALL 2012 Campers & National Youth Event (NYE) Participants and Leaders.

What an exciting year this will be with both Pilgrim Heights Camps and the National meeting of the United Church of Christ Youth! If you are planning on attending either or both of these events please plan on lending a hand at the **Pancake Supper on Ash Wednesday, February 22**. The Bow Tie Boys will be making a delicious supper and need our help to set up, serve, and clean up. All donations from this dinner benefit camperships and monies for NYE participants and leaders.

EIW & Nursery Opportunities

We still need **4-5** additional volunteers each month to help with the EIW and nursery ministries. There are still opportunities available for this month. Please check the clipboard in the narthex and sign up. A childcare safety training must be completed before providing care. Please see Rev. Amy with your interest.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Christian Education at Urbandale UCC is a spirit-filled adventure for all ages from 3 years to adult. ~ **9:00-9:45am:**

Preschool Lower Level 2
Grades K & 1 Lower Level 1
Grades 2 & 3 Ed Wing 202
Grades 4-6 Ed Wing 203
Grades 7-12 Fellowship Hall NW & SE

Teachers will lead children to Fellowship Hall after Sunday School to join their families at 9:45.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT ALIVE

5:30-6:00.....SOS Choir.....(Grades 1-8)
6:00-6:30..... Youth Bells(4th-Sr. High)
6:30-7:00.....Adult Bells.....(Sr. High & up)
6:30-7:45.....OWL.....(Grades 7-8)
7:00-8:30.....Adult Choir....(Sr. High-Adults)

There will be no childcare on Wednesday evening unless requested. If your child is not in one of the scheduled activities, please honor the safety policy and supervise him/her so that children are not unattended in the building.

Sunday Adult Spiritual Formation (ASF) ~ 9:00-9:45am in Fellowship Hall:

February 5: *Travels to Turkey and Cyprus*, presented by Wendy Sontag.

February 12: *OWL Youth Experience*, presented by OWL Graduates.

February 19: *Another Side of Ireland*, presented by Karl Andersen.

February 26: *Journey to Kilamnjaro*, presented by Steve Rebelsky.

Ways to Serve:

The next Wednesday Night Spaghetti Dinner is February 8th
(served from 5:30-7:00pm).

Please check for a sign-up sheet on the narthex table for ways to help and food items needed.

◆ FOOD PANTRY FOR FEBRUARY ◆

The crisis with the Food Pantry continues to create hardship for those in need. The number of items a client receives was a 5-day supply but it has been reduced to a 3-day supply per month. We need to find the means to increase what we contribute in a situation where our resources are being continually stretched by large increases in prices. The economic recovery may help but it is not helping enough. On a happier note, our cash offering in December was \$1,000 and the cash in January seems to be coming in well. One special request for February is for **diapers**, especially sizes 4 and 5.

If you would like to visit the Urbandale Food Pantry, the address is 7611 Douglas Ave. # 34-35, Urbandale (515-251-6688). Call for hours.

Shelter Meal

Urbandale UCC will serve an evening meal at Central Iowa Homeless Shelter, 205-15th Street, on **Monday, February 20**. The Community Concerns Team will need volunteers to help buy food, prepare the meal and serve. Please look for the sign-up sheets in the narthex for volunteer opportunities—to buy food, help prepare the meal and serve. For more information, contact Tom Rendon, tom.rendon@urbucc.org.

Habitat for Humanity Work Day

Please join your UCC friends at a Habitat for Humanity work day on **Saturday, February 25**. The work will be inside so we won't have to fight the weather. All tools are provided. Last year 26 local families were able to move into their own affordable home due to volunteers helping Habitat for Humanity. Contact Jerry Woods at 270-0410 if you have any questions.

UCC's Inclement Weather Policy

The church office will be closed on any day that either Urbandale or Des Moines Public Schools are closed as a result of inclement weather. On those days, all church programming will be canceled. If classes are dismissed early, all events at the church will also be canceled.

On Sunday mornings with inclement weather, if possible, we will still have worship at 10:00am. In order to prepare the campus for people to safely arrive, please do not come to church until 9:30. Sunday School will be canceled for the morning. The outgoing message on the church answering service will be changed and television stations and other appropriate media outlets will be notified to publicize the announcement. Every effort will be made to make the decision by 7:30 and begin notification of the worship leaders and Sunday School teachers for the morning.

February 2012 Who... What... Where... When...

	February 5 Communion	February 12	February 19 Food Pantry	February 26
Scripture	Mark 1:29-39	Mark 1:40-45	Mark 9:2-9	Psalms 25:1-10
Preaching	Pastor Dave	Pastor Dave	Pastor Dave	Pastor Dave
Liturgist	TBD	Jim Sutter	TBD	TBD
Music Leadership	Adult Choir	Adult Choir Raggedy Band Adult Handbells	Adult Choir SOS Choir	Adult Choir
Ushers & Greeters	Jeff Couch Jennifer Gardner Heather Schott Hattie Schott	Jim Nervig Adam Dirks Jerry Woods Dianne Woods	Marty Mickle Nancy Boyer Diane Shoemaker Bob Shoemaker	Sandy Gahn Chris Gonzalez Sharon Johnson Margaret Christian
Acolytes	Drake-Trudeau Family	Carter-Shields Family	Karrie Schnachtner- Erin Haemer Family	Heather & Hattie Schott Family
Nursery	TBD Julanie Carter	Anjy Allen Avis Sllen Maleika Carter	Jackie Ward-Parks Julanie Carter	Debbie Gannon Maleika Carter
EIW Room*	TBD Lily Clark	Alma Sims Lily Clark	Susan Joynt Lily Clark	TBD Lily Clark
Opening the Church	Chris Jordan	Jeff Couch	Mark Siegel	Jerry Woods
Offering Recorders	Chris Jordan Ruth Rasmussen	Robert Kirkman Ray Bowler	Steve Chandler Mark Siegel	Karen Capps-Davis Jeff Couch Amy Christensen
Sound Booth	Jon Duvick	Scott Davis	Scott Gardner	Ray Bowler

*EIW Room stands for "Everyone Is Welcome" Room.

**March 2012 CALL DEADLINE:
Wednesday, February 15 – 9:00 am**

Activities & Events

February 2012

February 2012							March 2012								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
5			1	2	3	4	9			1	2	3			
6	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	10	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	11	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	12	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9	26	27	28	29				13	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			February 1	2	3	4
			Tara away			1:00pm Outside Group 6:30pm Food for the Body, Food for the Soul
			5:30pm Wednesday Night Alive 6:00pm Introspection Discussion 7:30pm AA			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship: Communion 11:15am 7th-12th Youth Group 11:15am Caregivers 2	1:30pm Staff Meeting 6:30pm Christian Growth Team 7:00pm All Team Night	6:45pm Private Group	5:30pm Spaghetti Dinner 5:30pm Wednesday Night Alive 6:00pm Introspection Discussion 7:30pm AA	7:00pm Book Club		9:00am Bow Tie Boyz
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship: Baptism, OWL Recognition 11:15am 3rd-6th Grade Youth 12:00pm ASF Book Group 4:30pm Bible Pilgrimage	12:00pm Church Women United 1:30pm Staff Meeting 7:00pm Leadership Team		CALL Deadline 5:30pm Wednesday Night Alive 5:30pm Packing Food 6:00pm Introspection Discussion 7:30pm AA		6:30pm Private Group	8:30am Private Group
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship 2:00pm Mardis Gras Carnival 4:30pm Bible Pilgrimage	President's Day - Office Closed 5:00pm Shelter Meal	8:30am Staff Meeting 7:00pm Scout Leaders' Mtg	Ash Wednesday No SOS or Handbells 5:30pm Pancake Supper 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Worship 7:00pm Adult Choir 7:30pm AA			Rev. Amy away 8:30am Habitat Work Day 4:30pm Private Group
26	27	28	29			
Rev. Amy away	1:30pm Staff Meeting		5:30pm Wednesday Night Alive 7:30pm AA			
9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship 3:00pm Scouts' Blue & Gold Banquet 4:30pm Bible Pilgrimage						

Our Condolences...

To the family of **LuAnn Swinton**, who passed away on January 14, 2012. Services were held on Saturday, January 22nd at Urbandale United Church of Christ.

* * * * *

To **Carol Sharp and the family of Roger Sharp**, who passed away on January 23, 2012.

Small Groups:

February Book Club

The Book Club meeting will be on **Thursday, February 9th** at Chapters Café, the Urbandale Library, at 7pm. The title for February is *Me and Emma* by Elizabeth Flock. All who love to read are welcome! The book we're reading in March is *The Lion's Game* by Nelson DeMille.



Adult Spiritual Formation Theology Book Group

The ASF Book Group will be meeting at Gladys Julstrom's home (3907-98th Street, Urbandale) on **Sunday, February 12th** at 12 noon. All are welcome.

Women's Fellowship ~ Church Women United

Church Women United will meet at our church, **Monday, February 13th**. Women's Fellowship will serve the luncheon at 12:00 noon. The charge is \$3.00. Following the luncheon, Rev. Amy Murray will present a Bible Study. Everyone is welcome. Come and meet women of other Des Moines churches. Women's Fellowship will not have a regular meeting in February.

PRAYER SHAWL Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry provides prayer shawls to people experiencing difficult circumstances, such as serious illness, major surgery, loss of a loved one, or experiencing a life transition. Persons who know how to knit or crochet are welcome to participate. Meetings will be listed in the bulletin. Please contact the church office for more information, or email prayer.shawls@urbucc.org.



COMING EVENTS:

Look for details of this and other events on the *Community Events Bulletin Board!*

Tuesday, February 7: *One Iowa Lobby Day*—One Iowa is the state's largest organization working to protect the freedom to marry for gay and lesbian couples. The 2012 Iowa Legislative session is now convened and we are getting ready for our Lobby Day. One Iowa needs all our friends and allies to join us on this day in order to ensure legislators hear from their constituents on the importance of protecting equality. We will gather at the Capital at 11:00am and then have a training session before we connect with legislators at 1:00 till 3:00. To volunteer and take part in this event please call the One Iowa office, 288-4019.

The Kingdom of God

By Don Walters

Last month I wrote on the topic of spirituality, using Marcus J. Borg's book entitled *The Heart of Christianity, Rediscovering a Life of Faith, How We Can Be Passionate Believers Today*. The essence of my article was that our individual spiritual life is one of actively working on our relationship with God. Through this process we grow in the Christian life as we come to know God in deeper and deeper ways.

Borg states on page 126 that the Bible is about 'being born again' as individuals, and the 'Kingdom of God.' He states that the Bible is both personal and political in content. The political aspect of the Bible combines sharp political criticism of domination powers with passionate political advocacy. He goes on to state that the Bible's criticism and advocacy are grounded in its understanding of the character and nature of God: a God of love and justice whose passion for our life together is the Kingdom of God.

On page 133 Borg states that for Jesus the Kingdom of God was something now *for the earth*. We have come to hear about the Kingdom of Heaven as the place we go to after death and live with God for eternity. Borg goes on to state that a big reason for this misunderstanding is that the writer of the gospel of Matthew changed the phrase 'Kingdom of God' to 'Kingdom of Heaven.' The writer of Matthew may have done so because Jews often avoided saying or writing the word 'God.'

Borg goes on to say that we really shouldn't be surprised that the Kingdom of God is not about heaven; it is for the earth. Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer we pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God, praying: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it (already) is in heaven." Borg quotes another scholar who wrote: "Heaven's in great shape; earth is where the problems are."

So what is the political meaning of the Kingdom of God? In a sentence Borg states: it is what life would be like on earth if God were king and the rulers of the world were not. The Kingdom of God is about God's justice, in contrast to systemic injustices of the kingdoms and domination systems of this world. God cares about systems of injustice and domination because God cares about human suffering.

As Christians we confess, "Jesus is Lord." To confess this is to say that those other people and powers in the world are not our lord. Here in the United States, to state that Jesus is our Lord is to say that Jesus is my commander-in-chief and the president is not. The lordship of Christ, versus the so-called lordship of world leaders, is the same contrast that we see in the Kingdom of God versus the kingdoms of the world.

The Kingdom of God is where on earth there is enough daily bread for everyone. It's the place where our debts are forgiven as we forgive our debtors. It is where the last shall be first and the first shall be last. The Kingdom of God is where we, as followers of Jesus our Lord, work to identify and transform the earthly systems of injustices and domination. The Kingdom of God is God's dream for the earth. As Caregivers we actively participate in living out God's dream!

*For pastoral care, please contact Pastor Dave at 276-0625 (church office),
515-720-6389 (cell phone) or david.sickelka@urbucc.org.*

URBANDALE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

3530-70th Street ▪ Urbandale, Iowa 50322
Phone: 515.276.0625 ▪ Fax: 515.276.2451
www.urbucc.org

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage Paid
Des Moines, IA
Permit No. 3049

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



*“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s
journey, you are invited and welcome here.”*

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

9:00am Sunday School
10:00am Worship

The Rev. David P. Sickelka, Senior Pastordavid.sickelka@urbucc.org
The Rev. Amy Murray, Ministry Program Coordinator amy.murray@urbucc.org
Steven Linn, Music Program Director steven.linn@urbucc.org
Bobby Stinnett, M.M., Organist,
 Children/Youth Choirs and Handbells Director.....bobby.stinnett@urbucc.org
Tara McConnell, Office Coordinator.....staff@urbucc.org
Sadmira & Umihana Omerhodzic, Custodians sadmira.omerhodzic@urbucc.org
The Rev. Gayle Strickler, Jr.,
 Adjunct Minister for Community Concernsgayle.strickler@urbucc.org

Church office hours are 9:00am – 3:00pm