



The Open Door



January 2021



CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

God is still speaking,

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Who We Are

We are a community of God’s beloved dedicated to **following** the teachings of Jesus as we live our faith by **loving** and **serving** all of God’s creation and **striving** for justice and peace throughout our community, our nation, and the world.

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What’s Next: Presentation and Profile

What’s Next this month has two parts: “presentation” is about how we present ourselves to our community and “profile” is about the document we have been preparing, the first step in the search and call process.



Compared to several other churches in the area, we suffered relatively little damage from the derecho. Still, we have been in the process of making repairs to the damage that did occur, the most obvious being the complete destruction of our sign, which was taken down by the tree that was felled by the winds of the storm. The businesses and individuals we needed to assist us in creating a new sign were needed all across the community. We took our place in line. Now the brickwork has been completed. The sign that will be inserted into this brick frame has been ordered. We expect it will be installed in January. We will complete the landscaping around the sign in the spring. Many thanks to everyone who searched for the artisans needed for the job,

made contacts, negotiated contracts, and supervised the creation of our new sign!
On the conference website I came across the phrase that describes where our church is in our journey. We are “in a season of ministerial transition!” Lovely isn’t it? It describes “we need a halftime pastor” so elegantly. The first work that needs to be done is the
(cont.)

(What's Next continued)

Completion of the Local Church Profile. We have been referring to this process in every Open Door since Rev. Petersen-Mutai moved to her new position. We have mentioned the work on the Profile repeatedly, without, however, actually describing what the Profile IS. So here goes.....

The Profile is a position posting. We explain what we are looking for, in our case a halftime, settled pastor. In addition, we describe the duties of the position and the compensation package.

The Profile goes on to describe our congregation. Specifically, we respond to three questions:

- Who are we now?
- Who is our neighbor?
- Who is God calling us to become?

This section draws together statistics, stories, hopes, imagination, and information about the congregation. The Profile Instructions explain: "As the Spirit moves throughout the process, congregations will shape a collective articulation of Christ's leading." The last question, Who is God calling us to become, is probably the first section that will be read by searching ministers, and is the "boldest and most actionable piece for faithful leadership into the future." This section is about 8-10 pages.

Here are a few examples of the questions our Ministerial Options committee responded to in the Profile:

- Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.
- Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.
- Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.
- Describe your congregation's life of faith.
- Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.
- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?

We provide demographic information about the congregation, our community, and our staffing, detailed financial information, and historical information. These sections constitute another 8-10 pages. In short (which, I acknowledge this has not been), the Profile acts to answer all the questions you might have if you were considering applying for our position. It "jump starts" the search and call process by helping prospective candidates get a good idea if this is a congregation and a position that is a good fit with their gifts and their goals of ministry.

This brings us to where we are in the preparation of our Profile. References are requested from three individuals, whom we choose, who are not members of our congregation, but know it well. The references are asked to describe some areas of strength in the church's ministry, some areas for improvement, a significant experience they have had of the church's ministry, and to add anything else they wish to share. Our reference requests have gone out to three people and we are awaiting their responses. This will complete our Profile. (cont.)

(What's Next continued)

We have already sent a draft to the Search and Call conference minister and received positive feedback.

Just as our Presentation will be completed in January, so will our Profile! These are significant accomplishments and we extend our gratitude to all those who have given time and thoughtful participation to our achieving them.

And remember, "God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)

Service and Outreach

Pastoral Care

If you have been (faithfully) reading this section of the Open Door every month, you will be well aware that we have considered a variety of possibilities for securing pastoral care, expecting that we would be directing you to the individual who would be taking over this part of our ministry until we secured a settled pastor. Well, forget everything you have read so far. We are ever so grateful to have Rev. David Raymond available and willing to continue to provide this service to our congregation. If you have a pastoral emergency, please reach out to Rev. Raymond directly or through the church office (staffed Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:00am-3:00pm). Rev. Raymond can be reached at (641) 521-1506 or davidray@mediacombb.net. Thank you, David, for blessing us with your care.

Prayers and Concerns

Please hold in prayer

- Richard Hagedorn as he faces the first new year without Kay
- Stormy Storms as she deals with family concerns
- Larry Leitner as he recovers from a rotator cuff revision
- Linda and Jim Christenson as Linda recovers from back surgery
- The family of Patricia Friedeman, who died 12-2-20. Phillip and Pat Friedeman served our church from 1970 to 1979.

If you know someone in need of support—a visit, a call, a note, or a prayer—please contact the church office.



**Remember
Our Homebound Members**

**We continue to remember our
local homebound members.
You are missed and continue
to be cared for and held in our
heartfelt prayers.**

Marilyn Currant
Park Centre #1
500 1st St. N.
Newton, IA 50208

Bev Edge
Village Assisted Living
2571 Guthrie Ave, Apt. 1402
Des Moines, IA 50317
(515) 299-1845

Betty Hotchkin
Park Centre #40
500 1st St. N.
Newton, IA 50208
(641) 791-4687

Norma "Jeannie" Johnson
200 S. 8th Ave E.
Newton, IA 50208
(641) 275-5393

1/2– Reece Caves, Larry Leitner

1/4– Ardelle Morgan

1/7– Robert Ramsey, Jr.

1/8– Betty Jean Hotchkin

1/9– Laura Parker

1/11– Adam Hansch

1/12– William Shump

1/16– Jan Turk

1/17– Bob Van Drimmelen

1/21– Jim Christenson

1/22– Melissa Pearson, Sue "Stormy" Storms

1/24– Eileen Gerken

1/27– Joy Faidley-Leitner

1/28– Diane Marvelli

1/29– Ed Van Zandt

1/31– Charlotte Ross



"Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." Dalai Lama



Communications

Church Council Catch Up

In an effort to keep our congregation informed regarding the various matters that impact our life together, notes from Church Council meetings are shared with our friends and members via this newsletter.

December 9, 2020 Council Meeting

Maintenance Report: The sanctuary is decorated and the sound system is adjusted to improve the sound on our devotional broadcasts. The thermostat in the nursery has been repaired without expense. All of the thermostats have been reset to the Council's specifications. We are negotiating for snow removal. **

Committee on Profile and Ministerial Leadership Options: Rev. Darrell Goodwin reviewed our Profile draft and had many good things to say about it. Some comments from a congregant have been received and are being reviewed by the committee for incorporation. We are in a position to look for a super-supply minister to provide pastoral care as well as worship services. It was noted that we will need this supply minister for an indefinite, and possibly prolonged period of time, and that should be conveyed in any interviews.

In regard to our previous contacts with Grinnell UCC and Jessica Shirm, despite their inability to provide pastoral support or a service videoed in our sanctuary, we continue to have a solid, supportive relationship with them. Rev. Schirm mentioned that Judy Scherrer might be available to provide some services as a supply minister. Norm suggested we consider an appropriate monetary gift to Grinnell UCC for our appreciation of the continued use of their Sunday morning services.

There was discussion about whether or not we actually need to move towards worship services being videoed in our sanctuary. Some thought it wasn't particularly important. Others thought it could help to anchor us and keep us connected as a congregation. One suggestion was that we could use our sanctuary as a background behind a minister preaching from a location other than our sanctuary.

Instituting some of the recent changes into our ongoing ministry was also discussed. It was noted that life will move forward, not necessarily just return to the way it was before COVID-19. Thus, we will want to be aware of ways our ministry will join this movement forward, such as continuing to offer on-line worship services and holding book club on-line.

Online Devotions and Music: Jane Ann and Lin Chape are working on finding individuals to offer devotion that will be paired with Bev Thomas's music. Norm brought up that we were contacted by YouTube in regard to whether or not we have licenses for the music we are posting online. We do and this will be cleared up.

Christmas Eve: Jennifer Pryke and her grandchildren (who are a COVID-19 safe bubble) have volunteered to plan and tape a Christmas Eve service, along with Bev Thomas. The service will consist of a welcome, the lighting of the Advent candles and Christ candle, the reading of the Christmas story with carols played by Bev and spoken by Jenni, and Silent Night with candles.

Conference Assistance: Our Conference is offering grants (up to \$200) to help churches with tech expenses as we try to video or stream services. We could use a tablet, microphone and accessories to record devotions and music that we post on-line. Norm will research our needs, choose equipment, and complete the application for the grant.

**An update of snow removal since the Council meeting: We have arranged for a volunteer crew to do snow removal. The Church snowblower has been revived and we hope it will help make the task easier. Jim Christenson is the primary operator and Norm Van Klompenburg the chief mechanic. We have additional help available if required.

Church Council Composition

Moderator:	Jane Ann Cotton
Assistant Moderator:	April Faidley
Secretary:	Jennifer Pryke
Treasurer:	Larry Leitner
At-Large:	Les Morgan, Heidi Grandstaff-Fresh, Norm Van Klompenburg

EDUCATION

His Truth is Marching On Book Study

Evening book study resumes on January 7th with *His Truth is Marching On: John Lewis and The Power of Hope* by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jon Meacham.

John Lewis was the great-grandson of a slave and the son of an Alabama tenant farmer. At the age of twenty-five he marched in Selma, Alabama, and was beaten on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Lewis was inspired by the Bible and his teachers in nonviolence, Reverend James Lawson and Martin Luther King, Jr., to put his life on the line in the service of what Abraham Lincoln called “the better angels of our nature.” At the age of four, Lewis, already ambitious to become a minister, practiced by preaching to the family’s chickens. When his mother cooked one of the chickens, he refused to eat it — his first act, he wryly recalled, of nonviolent protest. Join us to learn about John Lewis and be inspired by his life and faith.

Book club meets on Thursdays from 5:30pm to 6:30pm. Don’t be intimidated by the book’s 354 pages. The final 100 pages are the appendix, source notes, bibliography, illustration list and credits, and index. The actual reading is only 254 pages! Here is our schedule:

January 7: Overture: The Last March & Chapter 1: A Hard Life, A Serious Life

January 14: Chapter 2: The Spirit of History

January 21: Chapter 3: Soul Force

January 28: Chapter 4: In the Image of God and Democracy

February 4: Chapter 5: We are Going to Make You Wish You was Dead

February 11: Chapter 6: I’m Going to Die Here

February 18: Chapter 7: This Country Don’t Run on Love

February 25: Epilogue: Against the Rulers of Darkness & Afterword by John Lewis

Join the Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83595726192?pwd=cm9FTXkrVlhrQmkvalEwVitGZW9nZz09>

Meeting ID: 835 9572 6192

Passcode: 377178

If you need assistance, contact Jane Ann Cotton or April Faidley.

A Revery from the Editor

What's in a Name?

The bard has a point. A rose by any other name still smells as sweet. Yet the story unfolds to reveal the life or death significance of being a Montague or a Capulet. My mother's name was Birdy. Birdy was the name on her driver's license, it is the name on her tombstone, it was the name absolutely everyone knew her by. I didn't even know it wasn't the name on her birth certificate until I was well into my teens. Her actual given name then became a mystery worthy of a detective. I solved that mystery, but to honor all her efforts to NOT be known by that given name, I won't reveal it here. She was Birdy, from the time she was born until she died. She wanted Birdy to define and describe her, and so it did. Names make a difference.

In our family we are doubly fortunate to have two super-descriptive names, Joy and Hope. Joy, is, of course, our daughter, whom you all know. Hope is our daughter-in-law. Some of you have met her; I think it was a Christmas Eve service that she attended. These names define and describe the wonderful women to whom they belong. Joy is indeed joyful. She finds joy in her life, smiles a lot, and spreads joy with her smiles. Hope is such a positive, supportive, always-looking-on-the-bright side person that you can't help but be uplifted by her hopeful spirit.

Hope and joy. During the last 10 months of coronavirus crises and political chaos these have sometimes been in very short supply. Every time I hear a brief eulogy on television of someone who has died of COVID-19, I struggle to find joy and hope again. I have never met any of them, but they were good people, contributors to the common good, and I join their families and friends in mourning their deaths. The partisanship in our legislative bodies makes the future look bleak and not at all hopeful. Their prime goals seem to be to hold power and to vilify the other side. Gosh, I learned in high school government, that Congress and the House of Representatives were supposed to care about their constituents and govern in ways that moved our entire populace to a more joyful and more hopeful future. What ever happened to that?

Viktor Frankl was an Austrian Holocaust survivor, a neurologist, psychiatrist, philosopher, and author. He wrote of his experiences during the Holocaust in *Man's Search for Meaning*. This famous quote comes from that book:

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.”

His words are truly a guide for our times. It is up to us. We can **choose** hope and joy. Week after week, day after day, hour after hour, minute after minute, we can choose hope and joy. Amen.

Sundays

Online Worship—viewed at your convenience

11:30am Zoom Refreshments



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					NEW YEAR'S DAY!	National Cream Puff Day
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Online Worship w/ Grinnell UCC	National Thank God It's Monday Day			5:30pm <i>His Truth is Marching On</i> book study via Zoom		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Online Worship w/ Grinnell UCC	National Human Trafficking Awareness Day		6:00pm Church Council via Zoom	5:30pm <i>His Truth is Marching On</i> book study via Zoom		National Religious Freedom Day
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Online Worship w/ Grinnell UCC	Martin Luther King Jr. Day			5:30pm <i>His Truth is Marching On</i> book study via Zoom	Celebration of Life Day	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Online Worship w/ Grinnell UCC	Deadline for submissions to newsletter			5:30pm <i>His Truth is Marching On</i> book study via Zoom	National Puzzle Day	
31						
Online Worship w/ Grinnell UCC						

Congregational United Church of Christ
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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The Open Door is a newsletter for the members and friends of Congregational United Church of Christ. Submissions are welcome. Deadline for submission is the date indicated on the Calendar.

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Office hours: 10:00am to 3:00pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; not open to the public



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