

Ames First United Methodist Church



October 2025 Newsletter

Words from Rev. Nikki Ross Bishop

It's that time of year again~ time for hoodies & boots, for bonfires & s'mores, for raking leaves & jumping in them, for caramel apples & hot cider. Yes, it is that wonderful time of year...Fall! My favorite time of year! But one of my absolute favorite things about this time of year is picking out pumpkins. I love picking the pumpkins not only to see kiddos run through the pumpkin patch looking for the best one, but also because of the great message of faith we find in carving a pumpkin. It's an old message, that I've heard many places and that I have shared in the newsletter before, but it still rings so true and is definitely worth sharing again. So, as you make your jack-o-lantern this fall, think about these steps and how you are God's lil' pumpkin! And make sure to share pictures of your pumpkins!

Step 1: Wash your pumpkin

Say - "We're not a pumpkin, but we're kind of like one. God picks us from the patch, brings us in and washes us clean. Just like a pumpkin, we have an inside and an outside. People only see the outside, but God sees the inside as well."

Bible Verse - 1 Samuel 16:7 – *"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

Step 2: Carve an opening in the top of the pumpkin large enough to fit your hand into

Say - "God wants to change our inside, but the only way he can do it is if we become open to Him."

Bible Verse - Revelation 3:20 - *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

Step 3: Put your hand in and pull out the insides

Say - “God scoops out all the yucky stuff, the sin, in our lives. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, impurity, and greed. Jesus was willing to get messy for us...He died on the cross to cleanse us from all our sins.”

Bible Verse - Ezekiel 36: 25b – 27 – *I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

Step 4: Carve the eyes and smiling face

Say - “Jesus gives you a new smiling face. When all the yucky stuff (sin) is gone, you feel so happy!”

Bible Verse – Proverbs 23:26 – *My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways.*

Step 5: Add a votive candle to the inside of the pumpkin

Say - “If we leave the pumpkin empty, it will just be hollow. We need God’s light inside of us to make us alive! When Jesus lives inside of you, you can glow! You will want to tell people about him, be kind to others and bless others more than yourself.”

Bible Verse - John 8:12 – *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

**Shinning the light of Christ with you,
Pastor Nikki**



SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 7

WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday at 10:00am--In person & Online
(OR Saturday at 5:30pm--In person)

COFFEE/FELLOWSHIP Begins at 9:15am

**CHILDREN & YOUTH
SUNDAY SCHOOL** 9:00 to 9:50am

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Coffee Talk, 8:50 to 9:35am (Conference Rm)
Faith & Reason, 11:15am (Multipurpose Rm)
Young Adults, 11:15 am (Conference Rm)

UP WITH PUPPETS 11:15am

World Communion Sunday is October 5, 2025

This is one of our six denomination wide (UMC) special offerings during the year recognizing the Unity and Interconnectedness of all Christians

DID YOU KNOW?

1. World Communion Sunday offering supports educational, training, and mentoring efforts.
2. The World Communion Sunday offering supports ethnic scholarships for undergraduate students.
3. World Communion Sunday offering provides scholarships for graduate students.
4. The World Communion Sunday offering provides racial and ethnic leadership development training programs.
5. World Communion Sunday donations are designated for recruitment, training, and retention of ethnic United Methodist persons.

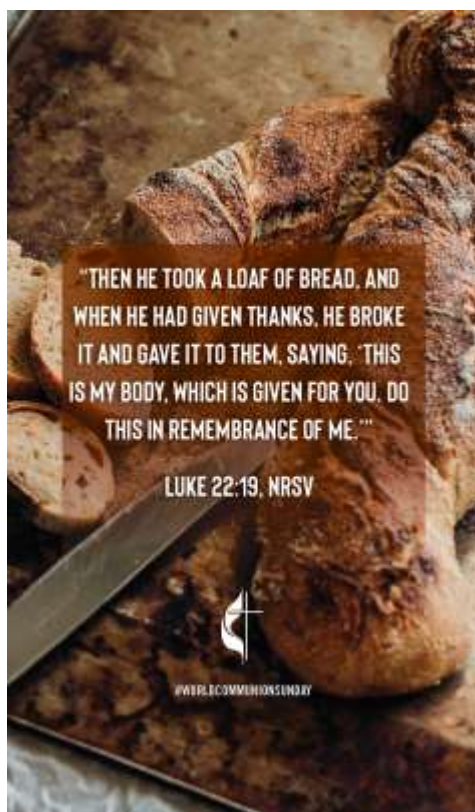
Special Sundays with Offerings

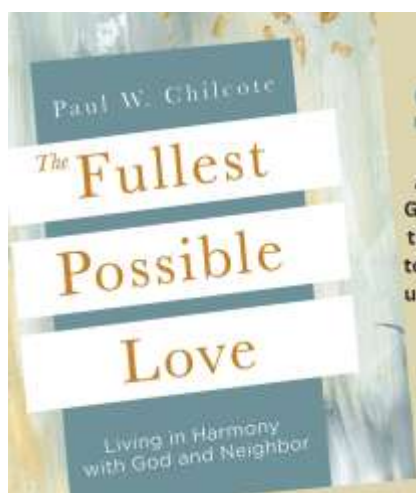
DID YOU KNOW?

1. There are six Special Sundays with offerings throughout the calendar year. These include: Human Relations Day, UMCOR Sunday, Native American Ministries Sunday, Peace with Justice Sunday, World Communion Sunday and United Methodist Student Day.

2. The Purpose of these Special Sundays with Offerings is to allow local churches to achieve global impact by giving through the United Methodist connection and to unite the Church in accomplishing missions that no single congregation could achieve on their own.

3. More information about these is available on the UMC website (umc.org), our Missions Bulletin Board, or talk to someone on the Missions team.





Fall Study & Sermon Series

September 6 to November 16

Are you yearning for a deep connection with God, others, and all creation? The practices of the Benedictine Wesleyan Way offer us a path to this deeper connection. Jesus does not call us to a shallow and superficial love; rather, the call of Christ is to the fullest possible love...through life together!

Purchase a copy of the book in the church office (\$15) or through an online retailer.



AMES FIRST
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DISCIPLE

FAST TRACK

Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study

12 Weeks in the Old Testament

12 Weeks in the New Testament

A GREAT overview of the Bible for those new to Bible Study or those looking to go deeper into the Scripture. Participation through daily reading and weekly classes is expected.

Led by Pastor Amanda

Wednesdays 5:30 - 7:00pm

Hybrid (In-Person OR Zoom)

Beginning October 22 **if we**

have at least 12 people
sign up by October 12.

For more info or to sign up:

amanda@amesfirstumc.org

OR sign up at the CFIM Table
on the 1st Floor!

Children, Family, and Intergenerational – Opportunities for ALL AGES!



CROP Walk

On Sunday, October 12 we want to see ALL of our Ames First UMC families participating in the Ames Area CROP Walk. Be at Moore Memorial Park by 1:00p.m. to check in. The walk begins at 1:30pm.

For ANYONE taking part in this year's CROP Walk, please go to <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/event/amesia>, find the First UMC Ames team, and click **Join the Team** to register and set up your donation page to share with family and friends!

October Missions Moment

Missions and Outreach

Food at First Upcoming Schedule:

October 23, 2025 – as usual 4th Thursday evening
November 27, 2025 – We will NOT need to volunteer as a church on the 4th Thursday evening in November because they are having a Thanksgiving lunch instead. If you want to volunteer at the Thanksgiving lunch you can go on-line to sign up individually.

December 25, 2025 – We WILL need to get volunteers for the 4th Thursday evening meal on Christmas Day, Dec. 25. So please sign up on our church clipboard for the Christmas Day evening meal if you can.

Thanks to these folks for serving at Food at First on Thursday, August 28, 2025: Chef Dale Vander Schaaf, Darlys Orth, Nancy Eischen, Julie Dressler, Nancy Tamashunas, Larry Valley Back row: Steve Hanlin, Stephen Loucks, Joel Dressler, Paul Attema.



August 12, 2025 Missions Disbursements:

Thank you to the folks who have donated to Missions so we are able to support these causes together.

\$500 – Self Help International – Iowa Advance #229

\$500 – UMCOR US Disaster Response Advance #901670

\$500 – UMCOR International Disaster Response Advance #982450

\$500 – Immigrant and Refugee Fund

This fund helps immigrants in Story County to continue to pay their rent, utilities payment, etc.

\$500 – Youth and Shelter Services

This donation will be supporting “Aftercare & Ember”:

“Aftercare” supports Iowa youth who age out of Iowa’s foster care system through the Iowa Aftercare Services Network. The program provides an advocate for each youth to meet with at least twice a month face to face. Support is related to education/employment/safe-housing/life skills/positive relationships, and also provides a financial stipend/support based on the needs of the youth.

“Ember” Ember Recovery, Residential Addiction Treatment, provides a successful, individualized, and evidence-based recovery program in a safe, homelike, nature-infused atmosphere for youth ages 12-17 and a separate young adult program for youth ages 18-24.

September 9, 2025 Missions Disbursement:

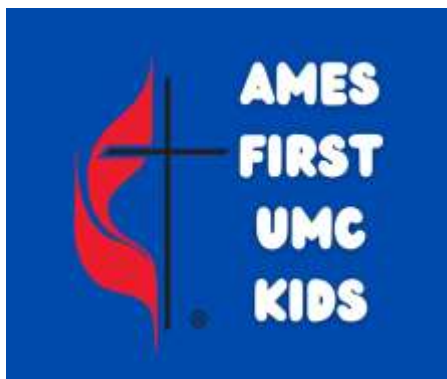
\$500 – Ames Hunger CROP Walk

First United Methodist Church received a thank you from Rick Santos, President and CEO of Church World Service for the \$1,350.00 donation FUMC gathered to honor Mother’s Day to provide blankets to migrants, refugees, and those experiencing weather disasters. The thank you is on the Missions bulletin board.



Halloween Fun House

Halloween has always been a good time for Ames First UMC to have some community fun! You are invited to join the fun for our Halloween Fun House. This will be the third year for this event after having Trunk or Treats for over 15 years. You can help by signing up to be a trick or treat "house" which will be a table in Fellowship Hall. You can sign up with someone else or have your own, decorate your "house" or let us decorate for you, provide candy or have us provide it for you. Please contact Nicole by Sunday, October 19 if you would like to do this. You could also help by signing up to run one of the fun house rooms where there will be games and/or activities for you to monitor and of course candy to hand out. Also – please let Nicole know if you want to do this by October 19. This is a great event for the community and a great way for us to show our hospitality to all! Let your friends and family know and invite them to come in for some fun!



Children & Family Ministries

Sunday School

Children's Sunday school meets at 9:00am. ALL children ages 2 through fifth graders will meet in the Sanctuary to start with music, announcements, and birthday celebrations for the month. From there, everyone will head to their classroom/rotation room for their lesson for the day. Preschoolers will meet in their own classroom each week. Kindergarten through fifth grade will study a bible story through various rotations such as art, drama, games, cooking, science, mission, movies, LEGOs, knitting, handbell choir, and more!

If you haven't yet, be sure to get your child registered TODAY for all things for the 2025-2026 church school year by going to <https://forms.gle/Jn4nr2PcqfBfMHPz8>.

Bibles and Bells Day

On Sunday, October 12, our third graders will receive their bibles. And our children will also get to play their handbells with our Handbell choir! Mark your calendars for this special day!





Youth Ministries

Sunday School

Youth Sunday school is underway and meets at 9:00am starting in the High School room where they can play games and make a drink at one of the keurigs. Youth at Ames First UMC are grades 6th-12th with Middle School Youth being 6th-8th grades and High School Youth being 9th-12th grades. During October, youth will be exploring lessons from the Grow curriculum unit "Stretch." The lessons include games, scripture, videos, and great discussion questions perfect for these two age groups. See description on the next page.

If you haven't done so yet, be sure to get your youth registered TODAY for all things for the 2025-2026 church school year by going to

<https://forms.gle/Jn4nr2PcgfBfMHpZ8> .



Confirmation Corner

The confirmation class will meet again for their online session on October 5 from 6:30pm – 8:00pm with dinner option from 6-6:30pm. Our students will be learning more about the stories of Jesus this month along with the sacrament of holy communion. They will learn how to set up, serve, and clean up along with other important information about it!



If your faith were a muscle, how flexible would it be? Could it stretch to your knees? Your shins? Your toes? Or are you not sure you even have any faith to stretch in the first place? Just like your body, if you want a faith that is strong, growing, and capable of carrying you through difficult challenges, you're going to need to stretch it. It might be fun. It might be challenging. But it will definitely be worthwhile. In this series, we'll discover four ways we can stretch our faith from Paul, the author of the book of Romans and a man whose life was completely transformed by Jesus. Thanks to Paul's words, we know we can stretch our faith by making a commitment, by starting something new, and by letting something go. We can even stretch our faith when we feel like we've failed.



High School Students Join Together for Faith Filled First Fridays



**First Fridays at North Grand Starbucks
7:00am-7:30am & 7:30-8:00am
October 3!**

High School Youth – Faith Filled First Fridays

High school youth are invited to come get a free drink and have some devotional and prayer time on the first Friday of every month. October 3 will be our next one. We have a 7:00-7:30am session and a 7:30-8:00am session. You are welcome to join all of one, part of one, or both! Friends are welcome too!

Find us on Instagram and Tiktok! Also check out our Spotify playlist all at @amesfirstumcyouth





We know how much you love cheering others on so we are creating the all new Ames First UMC Cheer Squad! This group will support our high school youth at their various extra curricular events. From figure skating to football, volleyball to show choir, musicals, dance team, soccer and more! All members will get a t-shirt to wear to the events so our youth can spot you and know their church family is there for them! Contact Nicole at nicole@amesfirstumc.org or sign up in Fellowship Hall by the bulletin board just inside the door. Schedules will be hung up on the bulletin board and members can make plans with each other to attend the various events and cheer our kids on!



Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

SUNDAYS

Coffee Talk 8:50am - 9:35am, Sundays

This class is designed to help persons grow in their personal relationship with God. Through videos and discussion, we delve deeper into the topics presented through the current sermon series. Coffee and donuts are welcome at the table! This class wraps up in time to still grab that coffee and have some fellowship time before worship begins. **Conference Room**

Faith and Reason 11:15am, Sundays

This group has a strong focus on faith and social action. They use a variety of video-based lessons, articles from various organizations, and books from noted writers and thinkers from around the world, as they discuss the relationship between religious fundamentalism and democracy, equality, and human rights. Join them for an invigorating discussion! **Multipurpose Room and Zoom**

Friends in Faith 6:00 PM Second and fourth Sundays

We use the Serendipity Bible as a starting point, but you can use any Bible you have. We open with Joys and Concerns. There will be an opening question. Then we will read a passage and consider questions from the Serendipity Bible and have discussion. We close with a prayer as close to 7:00 as possible. If you happen to have something YOU would like to talk about some Sunday, feel free to bring it up for discussion.

Conference Room or Zoom

WEDNESDAYS

Men's Weekly Study 6:00 AM Wednesdays

We read the Bible passage for the upcoming Sunday service and discuss how these scriptures relate to us and our lives. All are welcome. **Panera**

Wonderful Wednesday Women 10:00 AM Wednesdays

This group is not only a bible study but a way to look at the meaningful design of the worship service and find varying ways we can each connect to it. We are also a great support system for one another as we go through different times and events in our lives and share our own life experiences and faith journeys. Contact Nicole Smith, nicole@amesfirstumc.org for more information. **Conference Room and Zoom**

Save the Date: October 23-26, 2025
2025 Ames United Church of Christ
Theologian-in-Residence:
Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III



Senior Pastor, Trinity United Church of Christ (Chicago) and one of the country's most renowned and beloved spiritual and civil rights leaders. He is the author of [Dancing in the Darkness: Spiritual Lessons for Thriving in Turbulent Times](#).

October 23rd:

Democracy According to Jazz. Public lecture, Iowa State University Memorial Union, 6 p.m.

October 24th:

Continuing Education session for Clergy at Grinnell IA UCC

October 25th:

Spiritual Lessons for Thriving in Turbulent Times. Ames UCC church, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

****Morning session will also be available via Zoom**

October 26th:

Question & Answer Session, 9 a.m.

Preaching at Ames UCC, 10 a.m.

Registration will begin
September 1, 2025 on the
Ames UCC website
(www.amesucc.org)

Event is free and
open to the public!

2025 Charge Conference

For the following United Methodist Churches in Story County:

Zearing, Bethel; Story City, Grace; Nevada, First; Ames, Calvary; Cambridge; Ames, Collegiate UM Church and Wesley Foundation; Ames, First; Collins; Colo; Ames, Korean



*Sunday, October 19 at 2:00 pm
Ames First UMC Multipurpose Room
Ames First UWF will serve refreshments.*

Finance Update (through 9/23)

Year to Date Income: \$510,456

Year to Date Expenses: \$546,229

Heads up: Quarterly giving statements and 2026 pledge forms will be available mid-October. Giving has been down in August and September, but this church has a history of stepping up in the Fall! Thank you to all who give and support Ames First UMC financially...each and every gift is important!

We are glad you are here!

CHURCH ATTENDANCE			
DATE	IN PERSON	ONLINE	TOTAL
8/2&3	139	73	212
8/9&10	102	87	189
8/16&17	138	77	215
8/23&24	150	75	225
8/30&31	113	119	232

Great thanks to all who donated towards the Utilities in August! You make our days bright.

Keith & Jean Bailey, Carol Deppe, William & Jane Edwards, Steve & Mary Beth Hanlin, Kevin & Kristin Hinders, Becky Jordan, Steven & Jean McBreen, Jim & Carol Miller, Pete & Sally Peterson, Zella Studer, Janet Tryon, Larry Vallery, Neil & Barb Van Slyke, Lee & Cathy Webb, Joe & Karen Whyms

Greeters

10/05 Alice Moore, Steve Hanlin
10/12 Karen Kerper, Brenda Bright
10/19 Cheryl Weesner, Margaret Torrie
10/26 Nancy Tamashunas, Diana Schwendinger

If you are interested in being a greeter, please email Paige Brincks at nickpaigebrincks@gmail.com. Paige is our Worship Team Volunteer who coordinates greeters.

**Ames First United Methodist Church
516 Kellogg Ave Ames, IA 50010**

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Amanda Gordon,
Senior Pastor

Rev. Nikki Ross Bishop,
Associate Pastor

Nicole Smith
Christian Education Director

Ilene Riitano, Organist and Music Director

Julie Minot, Office Manager

Vivian Severson, Office Assistant

Reid Cummer, Business Manager

Kris Hinders, Digital Coordinator

James Minot, Maintenance Custodian

Matt Woodworth, Part-time Custodian

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Mon-Thurs 9:00 - 4:00
Friday 9:00 - 1:00

Email: office@amesfirstumc.org

515.232.2750 / www.amesfirstumc.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 188
Ames, IA

