

Ames First United Methodist Church



August 2026 Newsletter

Words from Rev. Nikki Ross Bishop

I always think of August as a 'Back To' month.

I decided I would Google 'Back to' and the 1st thing that came up was 'Back to the Future'...ALL 4 of the Back to the Future movies.

But next came back to school. This has always seemed too early to me, especially growing up. I also wanted to hang on to summer break as long as I could and not even think about back to school. But now that I'm the parent, I have to start thinking back to school this early. You know, there is a lot to do to get the kids ready for back to school—doctors appointments, readjusting bedtimes, school supply shopping, and schedule coordinating. But I must say, I do love going 'back to school' shopping to get pens & pencils, folders & book bags.

For those that have been on vacation or have crazy summer lives, it is 'back to a schedule' month. Time to get set bedtimes once again.

It can also be 'back to Church' month for those who have been gone a lot in the summer. I know that many of you do visit other churches when you are gone on vacation, but as you are getting back in town don't forget to get back in church. If you haven't been in church in a while, I encourage you to get 'back to Church' – you'll be blessed by it!

I'd also encourage you to get back to other things as well. Get 'back to giving': summer is always a challenging time for church finances, and your giving would make a big difference. And 'get back to helping'. We've got openings to serve at Food and First and to serve at Romero House. We also are collecting food and supplies to help our neighbors locally and around the world. Our small groups and Sunday school classes will be starting again soon—can you help teach or be a guardian angel? (or as I like to call them Sunday School grandparents)

Maybe you are feeling the need to get back to reading more Scripture – maybe some of our odd Bible stories have encouraged you to get out your Bible and read the story for yourself. Maybe adding a Bible Study to your routine would be a good. Or maybe you need some more prayer or journaling time. What spiritual practices do you want to get back to...or even try starting for the first time?

Even as we think of getting back to, we are really looking forward to where we are going. We are always called to be moving ahead – to the goal of living more and more like Jesus. How will you move ahead?

I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back. Philippians 3:14 The Message Bible

Back to ministry with you, Pastor Nikki



Appalachia Service Project 2026

We had a great week in Kanawha county, West Virginia. We were able to work on two houses. On the first house we finished the roof and insulation, and we started the siding. On the other house we worked on the bathroom and stained both decks. With your help, we were able to make homes warmer, safer, and dryer for two wonderful families! Thank you!

Join us for worship on August 1st and 2nd to hear stories from the team about our trip! A picture of the team is on page13.



The Precious Gift



We will never be able to express enough gratitude for this wonderful gift—our new Organ Rodgers Infinity 489— from the one who generously opened their heart to make this donation. This gift made possible the fulfillment of a dream. If the Bible would narrate this, it would be expressed like this:

“Then, The Lord moved the heart of X to provide what was necessary to the improvement of the worship through a musical instrument at Ames First United Methodist Church in Iowa.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.” The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with great joy.” Adapt. from Psalm 126: 2-3 ESV (<https://bible.com/bible/59/psa.126.2-3.ESV>)

It is a great joy to share with you a note about our new organ, "Rodgers Infinity 489." It didn't come to replace the Casavant organ, but to be added to it through a process called Hybridization. This way, all the pipes and chimes of the Casavant will be controlled from the new console. Also, the Rodgers has its own palette of sounds in its inner library, which makes possible a wider variety of repertoire to be rendered. There are many more details to be shared with you when the proper time comes. As you can see now in the Sanctuary, the missing pipes are back. We are waiting for the "Rodgers Pipe Integration Manager" "P.I.M." which will connect the pipes with the new console. The best estimate to have this work completed will be in September.

May the Lord preside over all the steps of this process and keep blessing our Church to fulfill the purposes He has for it.

Ilene Riitano

Church News



We hope everyone enjoyed the Christmas in July celebration. And the delicious Christmas goodies! Through July 20th, we had over \$4,900 in donations to the general fund. This came from 41 donors. Final numbers will be reported later in August.

Thank you for your support of Ames FUMC.

August Missions Moment

Missions and Outreach

Thanks to these folks who volunteered to serve at Food at First on June 25: Carter Sydnese, Eliana Sydnese, Alan Schwendinger, Diana Schwendinger, Charli Hanway, Steve Hanlin, Stephen Loucks, Darlys Orth, Paul Attema, Chef Dale Vander Schaaf, and Susan Zawacky (not pictured).



Thank
you
volunteers!

A stylized graphic of a hand with fingers spread, holding a large pink heart. The hand is drawn in a simple, cartoonish style with a brown skin tone. The heart is pink with a black outline and a small black dot in the center.

Thanks to these folks for serving at Ames Romero House on July 7: Charli Hanway and Pastor Nikki Ross Bishop. Items donated for ARH by church members were also delivered. Our next volunteer time at ARH is Tuesday, August 4. The sign-up clipboard is in the entryway.



We received a thank you note from Women at the Well for our recent donation of \$500. It is posted on the Missions bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Women at the Well is a United Methodist mission congregation led by Pastor Paul Witmer within the walls of the women's prison in Mitchellville, Iowa. They help women with reintegration into their communities. They just celebrated 20 years of Ministry!

If you wish to contribute to Missions, please write a check to FUMC and put Missions in the memo line.

Midwest Mission Update

YOU ARE CHANGING LIVES!! Those 4 wheel chairs mean 4 people who can now have some mobility! Those 2 sewing machines mean 2 people who can learn to sew and maybe even use those skills to improve their living conditions!

These items and more went in the Midwest Mission trailer in July. With the help of our friends at Collegiate UMC, we had quite a big load! Thanks to all of you who donated and changed someone's life!

We have the start of another load, so remember we can still take bikes, sewing machines, walkers, wheel chairs (non-electric), crutches and more.

If you have questions about what is accepted or need help getting something to the church, please contact Carol Miller (525-290-3843).

MICA

Our church has donated nearly 2000 pounds of food and supplies to the MICA food pantry so far this year! Thank you for your continued support; it makes a difference! Items especially needed at any given time are listed in the Main Entrance.





Ingathering



Ingathering 2026

Imagine a flood or tornado took away your home and everything in it - wouldn't it be nice to have someone hand you a bag with some things to help you clean up? We can make that happen for people who suffer such horrible loss! We can put together Personal Dignity Kits to send for Ingathering 2026.

Resealable bags with a list of needed supplies (note specific sizes) and a prayer card will be available near the office. Please consider taking one (or more!) and filling it with the needed items and signing the prayer card. Return the bag to the office along with a \$3 donation for toothpaste by October 1st. If you have extras such as a bar of soap, a washcloth, etc., please bring those, too. We can also send those.

In case you're shopping before you get a bag, this is the list for Personal Dignity Kits:

- * 1 hand towel - no kitchen towels
- * 1 wash cloth. - no dish cloths
- * 1 bar of soap - 3-4 oz.
- * 1 adult toothbrush - no multipacks
- * 1 shampoo - 12-19 oz.
- * 1 deodorant - 2-3 oz.
- * 1 lotion - 8-10 oz. (no pumps)
- * \$3 donation for the special toothpaste, carrying bag and shipping

We want to bless the kits in mid-October. Let's cover the altar and onto the floor with Personal Dignity Kits! How many people can we help?



United
Women
in Faith

Bake Sale!

United Women in Faith will have our final bake sale of the summer on August 22 from 9am-Noon inside the south entrance of the church. Items can be dropped off on Friday, August 21 from 5-7pm or on Saturday 8-9 before the sale. We will have free coffee available with small tables and chairs set up to encourage visiting and fellowship. We will have plenty of whole frozen pies, plus 'Pie by the slice' as well as lots of other delicious items from our wonderful bakers! Our last bake sale was very successful so we hope to have a repeat of that sale. These bake sales are a big support for UWF as we raise money for women, children and youth locally and around the world.

Delicious pies!

A dedicated group of UWFaith women makes a variety of fruit pies throughout the year. Availability of flavors vary, but some favorites include apple, cherry, peach, strawberry rhubarb, blueberry, and peach! They are available for purchase for \$14 from the church office. Pies are frozen and ready for you to take home, bake, and enjoy! Perfect for a summer evening (or any time of the year)!

Everyone is invited to **make casseroles** for the Ames Romero House on Sunday, August 30. After the worship service, join the United Women in Faith in the fellowship hall to prepare casseroles for the 40 guests that the Ames Romero House serves on an average day. When the executive director spoke at FUMC in July, he specifically mentioned how much their guests enjoy our casseroles, so let's re-stock their freezer before the school year begins.

Mat Maker Update

The Mat is finished!

Thank you to all who helped work on it as well as those who brought in bags.

We still only need colored bags.

We will not meet in August until the 30th after church when United Women in Faith have another casserole time.



HANDS
TO SERVE, 
hearts
to love 

Mission u

On Saturday, July 18, nine members of Ames First UWFaith attended Mission u at the FFA Enrichment Center on the Ankeny DMACC campus. This year's study was "Experiencing Emmanuel" – God with us. We looked at scripture from Sarai and Hagar and Esther in the Old Testament; and The Woman at the Well and Jesus' genealogy in the New Testament. Mission u is open to all – women and men. Next year's study will be "Showing Hospitality: An Exploration of Christian Welcome" and will be on July 17, 2027, same location.

On Friday evening, July 17, four members attended a Mission Celebration Banquet at Ankeny First UMC Uptown Campus to celebrate how we are in mission. The theme was Unstoppable Pearls – if you see Jane Edwards, Carol Miller, Cheryl Weesner or Sharon Boen wearing pearls, ask us about the dinner. We were honored to have Bishop Kennetha stop by and speak briefly. In addition, the General Secretary/CEO of UWFaith, Sally Vonner, happened to be in Des Moines for a meeting and spent the evening with us.

Some comments from the others regarding Mission u:

I enjoyed the day and the lively discussions in our group.
–Carol

A full and enriching day. – Jane

A highlight was reconnecting with women I had met on the Civil Rights tour last year and at the Assembly in Indianapolis this year, and of course conversing with our carpool members as we drove to and from Ankeny –Charli

It always inspires me (and gives me hope!) to spend the day with strong, faith-filled women who recognize the injustice all around us and whose sacred duty is to fight those injustices. – Carolyn

I was particularly interested in the section on Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, since Pastor Amanda had just preached on “the difficult verses” around God’s request for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. – Becky

Pastor Amanda of the First United Methodist Church used Emmanuel as the theme of her sermon on Sunday. I learned a lot about the women of the Old Testament. – Jan

The Scriptures of various women who found Immanuel - God with us/me/them was an interesting way to think of some Scripture. We don't always think about from the perspectives of the women. – Cathy

To discuss Scripture with long time friends and brand new acquaintances is inspiring. Then to have a study leader who brought joy to the different aspects of Immanuel, filled my cup. – Cheryl

ASP Team



Disciple Bible Study

The 2025-2026 Disciple Bible Study Class will be recognized during worship on August 15 & 16. A few will share about their experience and encourage you to take a Disciple Bible Study starting this fall. Over the past couple of months, various members of the Disciple Class have written about what the class meant to them. You get to hear from two more this month!

From Kris Hinders: “Even though it seems like a long commitment, I would encourage others to take a Disciple Bible Study because it was a great opportunity to get to know and learn from other members of our congregation. I enjoyed having the chance to read through the Bible on my own and gather with others to discuss our collective questions and “a-ha” moments. Pastors Amanda and Dave provided the perfect guidance and balance of learning and discussing. It is not nearly as overwhelming as it sounds.”

From Jane Edwards: “The isolation during the Covid pandemic afforded time for William and me to prioritize daily devotions, which reminded me how much more there was to learn from study of the Bible. When Pastor Amanda offered the opportunity to participate in the Fast Track Disciple Bible Study, I knew it was time to make a commitment. Doing that meant I would give up attending some of the ISU sports activities we love and miss one of my three weekly exercise classes but once the class started, it was the right choice.

My first surprise was the number of other people who had decided to participate. They were longtime and new members, many of whom I only saw at the worship service. The daily assignments provided a discipline to our study, and the small group discussions allowed us to see our reading from the perspectives of others. By the end of the 24 weeks, our classmates were also a community.

The leadership of Pastor Amanda and Pastor Dave was very important in the success of this experience, as their Biblical training guided us to find answers to our questions and to realize that sometimes answers do not exist. They led with a sense of respect for the individuals in our class so that we were made to feel comfortable in sharing our thoughts. I hope this opportunity continues for others and additional classes can be offered in the future."

DISCIPLE

FAST TRACK

Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study

**Disciple I led by Pastor Amanda &
Co-Leader TBD**

A GREAT overview of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, for those new to Bible Study or those looking to go deeper into the Scripture. Participation through daily reading and weekly classes is expected. *If you have never taken a Disciple Bible Study, start with Disciple I.

DISCIPLE

FAST TRACK

Into the Word, Into the World

**Disciple II led by Pastor Dave &
Cheryl Weesner**

Disciple II continues the same weekly reading structure as Disciple I and more thoroughly covers Genesis, Exodus, Luke, and Acts. There is a focus on how you will respond to Scripture in terms of ministry in the world.

Each class is 24 weeks total.

Both will be held on Wednesdays from 5:30 - 7:00pm. Hybrid (In-Person OR Zoom)

Classes begin September 9. Sign Up by Aug. 30. (Minimum of 12 needed to offer each class.)

Email amanda@amesfirstumc.org OR sign up at the Info Table by the Office.



A winter shelter for those
needing a warm bed to sleep
during cold weather.

TRIVIA *Fundraiser*



HELD AT

SPARK BY HILTON

2609 University Blvd., Ames, Iowa 50010



AUGUST 8, 2026



6:00 PM

CASH BAR &
LIGHT APPETIZERS



7:00 PM

LIVE AUCTION



TRIVIA

TO FOLLOW



TO PURCHASE A TABLE:

ameswarming.place



RESERVE YOUR TABLE TODAY!

\$200 PER TABLE



SEATS UP TO
8 GUESTS
PER TABLE



**BRING YOUR OWN
FOOD TO EACH TABLE!**

Price awarded for the
BEST FOOD TABLE!



**PRIZES FOR THE TOP 3
TRIVIA WINNERS!**

Great prizes for
our top three teams!



ALL PROCEEDS GO TO
PURCHASING ESSENTIAL
SUPPLIES FOR THE AMES
WARMING PLACE NEXT WINTER.



YOU'RE HELPING PROVIDE
WARMTH, SAFETY, AND DIGNITY
TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST.



ADDITIONAL DONATIONS ACCEPTED AT THE EVENT

Thank you for supporting our community!

Please note that the church is not planning this fundraiser, but we wanted to share the information in hopes that some of you may want to attend and support The Warming Place!

Margaret Smalling Memorial Scholarship

(Applications Due by August 15)

The Margaret Smalling Memorial Scholarship was established in 1998 by her family, Jack and their four sons, with memorial contributions after Margaret's passing. The endowment is able to give three \$500 scholarships with the money available.

In order to qualify for the scholarship, a student needs to be a member of Ames First United Methodist Church, be a full-time student (12 hours or more) and have completed one year in college.

Applications may be picked up at the church office and must be **submitted by August 15th** to be considered for the upcoming year. The winners will be announced in church in late August or early September, depending on the family's availability.



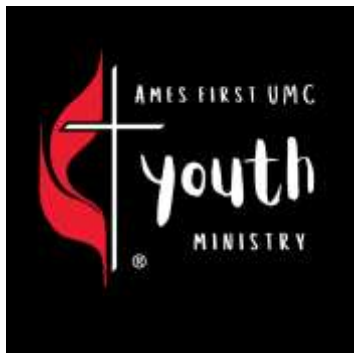


Back to School Blessing will be August 23 at the 10:00am service. We will also be collecting supplies for school kits so be on the look out for those summer deals as they pop up. Donations can be dropped off at the church any time this summer! See the shopping list below.

Following Worship on August 23, we will assemble school kits. All ages are invited to help out with this annual event!

- 3 Notebooks (1 Subject Spiral 8"x 10 1/2")
- 1 Ruler (12" Long with Metric)
- 6 pencils (Unsharpened)
- 1 pencil Sharpener
- 1 Pencil Eraser (2" or Larger)
- 1 Box of 12 Colored Pencils
- 1 Box of 24 Crayons
- 1 Pair of Student Scissors
- 1 Handmade One-Handled Bag

The pattern for the one-handled school bags is also available in the office for those who want to get a jump start on making some bags!



Youth News!

Be sure to follow us on instagram @amesfirstumcyouth

We share about events and other fun things happening with and for our youth!

Nicole will be connecting with the youth yet this summer to do some special event planning for the 2026-2027 school year.

Confirmation

To all of our incoming 7th & 8th graders and up, please contact Nicole if you need information about the upcoming Confirmation year that will officially begin August 21 with our first retreat at Wesley Woods! We want to make sure any youth interested in the confirmation class have the information they need to get going with this class during the 2026-2027 school year.

And - if you already have the information, make sure you have your mentor by August 8! Let Nicole know if you need help finding a mentor.



Did you hear the buzzzzzz?!? This school year we are going to “bee” a part of the **Helpful Hive!** We will explore stories from the bible that will help us learn more about ways we can “Bee a Blessing” as well as connect with Midwest Mission. The lessons will also spill over into special events throughout the school year inviting everyone to be a part of the Hive. The hope is that during this time, we will have the opportunity to do a Family Mission Day Trip to Midwest Mission! It is going to be an AMAZZZZZZING year!

If you are interested in helping lead a session or assist with children’s Sunday school, please contact Nicole.



We are in need of volunteers to staff the nursery off and on throughout the summer. We would love to build a pool of volunteers who can sit and snuggle and care for a little baby - with the possibility of an additional child or two being present if there are summer visitors looking to use the nursery. Having a large pool of volunteers means you may only be needed 1-2 times all summer.

There will be at least one adult and one additional person (can be a high school youth) staffing the nursery. Anyone interested will go through our Safe Sanctuary training if they have not already done so. The worship service audio is “piped in” to the nursery so you can still hear the service! Please contact Nicole if you are interested!



YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Young Adults meet once a month for a meal, and small groups gather at other times for Bible study. This group nurtures faith in ways that are not stressful, but fit each person's comfort level. This is an opportunity to share life's blessings and struggles with one another, work on a central faith together, and look for ways to make a difference in this world. Please contact AFUMCYA@gmail.com if you would like to join or would like more information.

SUMMER ADULT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Friends in Faith 6:00pm 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 6:00am 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**



Reminder! You can access the Sunday morning livestream (10 am) and previous streams on our YouTube page www.youtube.com/@amesfirstumc. Need help getting

the livestream set up on your device...we have "FAITH" -- Friendly, Accessible, Informed Technology Helpers. Whether it's troubleshooting or some basic instruction, we'll do our best to resolve your technology irritations. Remember: this is a FREE service provided by church volunteers! You can find (this kind of) FAITH via email (amesfirstumcfaith@gmail.com) or phone (515-329-5182). (Text messages work too!) And if you have technology and people skills to share -- we're always looking for more Helpers!

Access Our Church Engagement Software (Realm can actually be your friend!)

The Member Care Committee reminds us that Realm is a useful tool in maintaining church engagement and connection. Realm is the online database for which each person can create an individual login for access to personalized details and connection with Ames First UMC, including:

- contact information (you can update your own details if you move or make other changes)
- giving data (you don't have to wait for your quarterly statements)
- groups (information, documents, communications, and rosters)
- privacy settings (opting in/out of the online directory, messages, etc.)

Realm can be accessed on the Church website (<https://www.amesfirstumc.org>) by direct link at <https://onrealm.org/fumcames> (QR code is below). Kristin Hinders is always happy to help you create your personalized login, get started, or answer questions. You can reach her at kris@amesfirstumc.org.



Attendance

Date	5:30	10:00	Online	Total
6/6&7	19	117	79	215
6/13&14	11	101	80	192
6/20&21	24	88	76	188
6/27&28	22	105	59	186

June Utilities

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

Keith & Jean Bailey, Georgia Bluhm, William & Jane Edwards, Jennifer Groat, Steve & Mary Beth Hanlin, Kevin & Kristin Hinders, Lee Huey, Marian Jansen, Karen Kerper, Steven & Jean McBreen, Jim & Carol Miller, Pete & Sally Peterson, Jo Schoning, Joel & Aileen Sullivan

Greeters

August 2	Becky Jordan, Karen Kerper, Steve Hanlin
August 9	Jan Tryon, Donna Banker, Kris Hinders
August 16	Diana Schwendinger, Cheryl Weesner, Brenda Bright
August 23	Diana Schwendinger, Nancy Tamashunas, Ben Smith
August 30	Becky Jordan, Karen Kerper, Steve Hanlin

If you are interested in being a greeter, please email Paige Brincks at nickpaigebrincks@gmail.com.

**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

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