



Faith

UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

Sunday Worship
10:00 AM

Faith United Church of Christ

3307 Mulberry Avenue
Muscatine, IA 52761
Phone: 563-263-5979
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www.faithuccmuscatine.com

FAITH U.C.C STAFF

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Get Vaccinated!

Good News! Stage 2 of our reopening process will begin May 2 with limited in-person worship services. More than anything else, what has made this step possible is the fact that many if not most of you have already received or are in the process of receiving your vaccinations, and that is even better news!

The reality is that we are still in a pandemic, and so if you haven't already done so, make sure you get vaccinated. Do it for yourself, your family, your neighbors, and for those people you just might be sharing a pew with. See page 3 for more information on area vaccination resources.

VOICE OF FAITH

Building and In-Person Gathering Policies Update

The Vestry decided to move the church to stage 2 of our reopening process. This means that beginning Sunday, May 2, the sanctuary will be open for in-person worship services under the guidelines set forth in our Building Safety Plan. The decision was based on several factors, including:

- The fact that more and more people (and church members) are being vaccinated.
- The fact that case numbers have generally fallen in the area.
- Confidence in our comprehensive Building Safety Plan.

Because we still want to make sure we are doing our best to keep everyone safe, the Building Safety Plan includes, in part, the following:

- In order to ensure safe social distancing, the number of people allowed in the sanctuary at any one time will be limited to 50 (not including the pastor, pianist/organist, musician/soloist, ushers)
- Congregants will be asked to register online for worship in advance. Congregants can also register by calling the church office. Registration forms will be opened up and made available the Monday before the next Sunday worship service.
- Anyone in attendance will be expected to stay at least six feet away from others.
- All attendees will be required to wear a face mask. A supply of face masks will be available upon entrance. The mask must completely cover the nose and mouth.
- The nursery will not be available for now.
- Because of the airborne nature of the COVID19 virus, there will be no congregational singing for now.
- If anyone has any announcements or prayer requests that they would like the Pastor to share, we ask that they be emailed to the Pastor ahead of time or written in a notebook which will be provided in the back of the sanctuary. Also, if privacy is a consideration, remember, our services are now on the internet for all to see.
- There will not be a Fellowship time before or after worship inside the building.
- The service will be live-streamed for anyone not yet comfortable with attending in person.
- If an attendee tests positive for COVID19 within a two-week span after having attended a service, then all other attendees will be notified, and in-person services will be put on hold for at least two weeks or until the Vestry deems it safe to begin meeting again.

You can review the complete Building Safety and Public health guidelines [here](#) or you can obtain a copy by contacting the church office. The Vestry will continue to monitor the ongoing pandemic.

- Vestry President Mark Odell and Pastor Ryan Downing

Monthly Musings From Pastor Ryan

“God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.”

- 1 John 4:16

“God is love.” These are always good words to remember, but perhaps even more so in these times of change, transition, and upheaval. Beautiful, succinct, and inspiring, these words from John focus us on the essential foundations of our faith:

God is love.

God gives in love.

God abides with us in love.

God's perfect love cast out all fear.

As a love letter should do, John's words leave us wanting more. We want to know this love, feel it, and experience it. However, as with any love letter, the words can only take us so far.

The cynic in us might say that John's letter is really nothing more than a collection of sweet-sounding platitudes such as: “All you need is love.” “Love will set you free.” “Love conquers all.”

Still, this biblical love letter insists, “God is love.”

So, what makes God's love different than any other kind of love?

First, God's love is different than what we usually associate with love. To describe God's love, John uses the Greek word, “Agape.” Agape love is entirely different from what we usually think of as love, and yet every other kind of love would be impossible without agape.

Agape love is radical love. Agape love is entirely giving and selfless. Agape love is sacrificial. Agape love is a deep and full love for all people and all creation. Agape is the highest form of love, and it is the kind of love that God revealed to us through Jesus. Agape love manifests itself as a kind of loving-kindness, compassion, and empathy that is universal, unassailable, and unending. While we may have rare glimpses into or fleeting encounters with agape love in our own lives, our everyday ideas and experiences of love generally tend to be a little more contained.

Generally, our everyday ideas of love tend to be limited and focused on forms of attraction, commonality, and comfortability. However, that only takes us so far. God's love always takes us further. Psychoanalyst Erich Fromm once pointed out that we expend a great deal of energy “falling in love,” and that we need to learn better ways to “stand in love” or to stay in love or to change through love. That's where the all-encompassing power and attraction of God's love comes in, should we allow it.

Brené Brown writes, “We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honor the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness, and affection. Love is not something we give or get; it is something that we nurture and grow, a connection that can only be cultivated between two people when it exists within each one of them – we can only love others as much as we love ourselves.”

To which I would add that we learn to love ourselves through all the ways we learn to let God's love into our hearts, minds, and spirits and then pass that love onto to others.

Because we are human, we only love in part. We love in pieces that we then put together with one another's help to make a quilt of kindness, grace, and acceptance. There is no set pattern or progression to our loving. We learn to love as we practice the art of loving with one another. And all this is made possible because of God's overflowing love.

God's love is Agape love. God's love makes it possible for us to grow in our love for one another, ourselves, and our planet. God's love makes so much of what may have previously seemed impossible possible.

As Walter Brueggeman points out, “When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment, he replied with a trick answer: ‘You shall love the Lord you God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength’ and ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ You can't have just one; you need to have both. And the link that unites them is God's limitless generosity, acknowledged and enacted.”

In the afterglow of Easter as we seek signs of resurrection and as we as a church move into stage 2 of our reopening process, we are reminded that all new beginnings and new starts are made possible by the limitless power of God's love and grace. While we can never be sure what tomorrow might bring, we can always be sure that God's love is being poured out for us so that we might always base our own decisions and actions, as best we can, in love and for the love of God and one another.

News From Around The U.C.C

UCC leadership expresses relief, resolve after jury returns guilty verdict in George Floyd’s murder

We share a collective breath of relief in the moments following the announced guilty verdict on all three counts against the now-convicted murderer who recklessly ended the life of George Floyd. There is no joy in this, instead of a deep and profound sense of relief in knowing that a white police officer who killed a Black citizen with neither regard for the law nor his responsibility to uphold it will be held accountable.

This trial and verdict were necessary steps forward in a long journey towards justice, steps we have taken over and over again and which we have way too often failed to complete.

We remember George Floyd is dead and his family still grieves him. May it be the case that his life is now remembered as a turning, the re-birthing of a movement for justice. May he be remembered as one whose death caused white Americans to turn their faces towards the pain and suffering of Black communities that have been the object of white derision and scorn, pain and suffering from which whites have too often and too easily hid their faces.

We continue to lift in prayer the family and friends of George Floyd who deserves this moment of justice and an assurance that his life was meaningful and worthy to all of us.

We pray for every Black mother and father who still have to sit with their children and warn them of the dangers of being pulled over by an officer of the law.

We call the church to engage in the hard and necessary work of reforming a police force still marred with the vestiges of white power, white privilege, and white supremacy and whose membership ranks reveal a growing number of actual white supremacists among them. There is a noble profession, but we must all do the work of ensuring that those who wear the uniform do so without bias and prejudice, free from the evils of a racial bias that has ruined or taken the lives of too many Black and brown people.

There are others to be held accountable for their actions. We cannot, we will not rest until justice is an expectation; and until the system that recruits, trains, and deploys our law enforcement officers does so free from racial bias and hatred.

Let us all breathe deeply. There is a grief to feel, a pain and suffering to acknowledge, and a life to commemorate.

Let us continue to engage in the struggle for justice and peace.

Let us commit to our individual and collective acts of love for all.

And let us rejoice in the power of a God who offers resurrection hope in the midst of all of our struggles with death, with evil, and with injustice.

Faithfully,

— The National Officers of the United Church of Christ:

- **The Rev. John C. Dorhauer** — General Minister and President
- **The Rev. Traci A. Blackmon** — Associate General Minister
- **The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson** — Associate General Minister

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

Strengthen the Church re-imagines and builds the future of the UCC. Shared at the conference and national levels, STC largely supports youth ministries and full-time leaders for new churches in parts of the country where the UCC does not have a strong presence. STC also provides support for the existing church's new initiatives. This offering will be on Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd. You may send it to the office on or before this Sunday, and we will add it to the collection. Please write the check out to Faith UCC and in the memo add "Strengthen the Church."

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY.

Weekly Church Event Calendar

Tuesday
Noon - Bible Study with Pastor Ryan, Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86528611562>

Wednesday
4:15 p.m. - Centering Prayer Signup [here](#) to attend, also on [Facebook](#)
6:00 pm - Youth C. E. Class @ the church.
7:00 p. m. - Adult Forum Class on zoom.

Thursday
9:00 a.m. - Coffee hour, zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88232955057>

Sunday
10:00 a.m. - Sunday morning worship at church ([Signup](#)) and on [Facebook page](#) & [YouTube](#)
11:00 a.m.. - Adult Forum Class on zoom.

Vestry Minutes from Monday, April 12, 2021

Present: Mark Butterworth, Bill Creasey, John Elshoff, Alice Ganzley, Deb Hagy, Sue Johannsen, Julie Kundel, Jon Merritt, Mark Odell, Melissa Schumaker, Tim Stelzner, Scott Warren, Rich Carroll, and Pastor Ryan.

Call to Order: President Mark Odell, Opening Devotions Jon Merritt offered devotions praying for us to build each other up.

Deacons' Report: Pastor Ryan asked the Deacons to function as ushers when in-person church resumes.

Elders' Report: Scheduling evaluations will begin by finding a date to meet.

Trustees' Report: There was water damage at the top of the steps/carpet from the rain over the weekend. Mark contacted EVC Roofing. Lisa created an electronic record in google drive to help organize and verify work to be done and completed projects with receipts, contact info, etc.

Pastor Ryan's Report:

Four weeks of CE classes. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter for a second time since the pandemic. Pastor Ryan is vaccinated and will see people face to face if they are comfortable. Rev. Brigit Stevens, Tri-Conference Minister, will be invited to join us for a Wednesday night Adult Forum meeting. The Presbyterians pledging anyone's donation up to \$30,000 for housing rehab. People are invited to swing hammers to rehab three houses downtown. Addiction Recovery Fund was established with Congregational Life Grant money. This idea is modeled after another church's mission.

Unfinished Business

- Capital Improvement Planning Committee Update: Downstairs bathroom renovations. Another meeting needs to be planned. We have not received bids from Scott Carver or Chase Oldfield. Jon Merritt met with a rep from Carpet One. He created a plan with a breakdown of the church spaces. Safety issues will be addressed first like the steps and hallways.

New Business

- Next Vestry Meeting: on Zoom or In-Person? Zoom will be continued for now.
- Church Building Policy – Stage 2 (In-Person Sunday Worship) Review recommendations from Building Safety Committee John Elshoff noted the number of 50 participants. He suggested two services and outside services. Mark Butterworth wondered about the risk to the church for the foreseeable future. The Building Policies were accepted. Scott Warren and Melissa Schumaker feel we should reopen. Mark Butterworth made a motion to open the church the first Sunday in May, May 2. Mark Odell second. Church will continue to be live-streamed. The motion carried.
- Offering boxes and Electrostatic sprayer. Last month we voted to purchase electrostatic sprayers out of the memorial fund. Motion by Scott Warren to make purchases with Wendel Day Fund. Second by Julie Kundel. Motion carried.
- Changing phone service to MPW will save over five years. motion carried.
- Host Blood Donation Drive - Miss. Valley Blood Bank. Pastor is interested in supporting this but not advertising. The issue of sanitizing was a concern. Donors would probably be scheduled by appointment to limit the number of people entering the church. A motion was made by Julie Kundel to host a blood donation drive and seconded by Mark Odell. Motion carried.
- School Recognition Sunday – May 16
- Pentecost and HS Graduate Recognition – May 23
- Sunday Service of Memory – May 30
- June 20 Outdoor worship at Discovery Park.

Next vestry meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

General Fund for 2021 - End of March



Faith United Church Youth Community

Congratulations to our 2021 Graduates!



Hallie Hanssen

Academic/Groups: Key Club, Student Council, and National Honor Society. Sports: Muskie pom team, track, and volleyball. Future plans: Attending Iowa State University in the fall.



Andy Kundel

Andrew is planning to major in some aspect of aviation. He is not sure whether he will work in Aerospace Physics/Engineering or pursue Airline Aviation. He has been accepted to the University of North Dakota and Embry Riddle (Prescott, Az) and will be deciding soon.



Isabelle Hartman

Zuzu is active in orchestra, band, and Scouts BSA. She is in the inaugural class of female Eagle Scouts. She will work this summer at the Summit Bechtel Reserve National Scout Camp in West Virginia as a counselor for their high adventure camp. This fall Zuzu will attend Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, and major in wildlife conservation.

SUMMER CAMP FOR CHRISTIAN YOUTH

Both Pilgrim Heights and the Christian Conference Center are planning to hold camps this summer with covid protocols in place. If anyone is interested in going to summer camp, they can use these websites to find information and register online or for camp brochures. The church will help pay for your registrations, so please let us know you are going.

Pilgrim Heights camp

Montour, Iowa: <https://www.pilgrimheights.org>

Christian Conference Center -

Newton, Iowa: <https://www.uppermidwestcc.org/about>

Christian Ed. Dates in May

May 12th - Last Spring Wed. night CE class until fall.

May 16th - Recognition Sunday for Teachers and Graduates.

The Kids Are Alright!

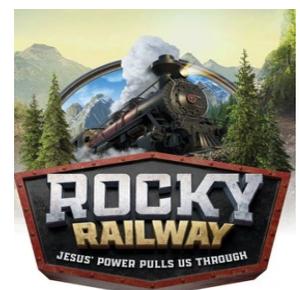
Youth CE classes started meeting again in-person on March 24.



SUMMER IS COMING: And that means Vacation Bible School!

Our theme this summer will be the Rocky Railway. Here are some things to start saving for crafts and supplies. There is a box in the front entryway at church to drop things into or you can call me and I'll come to get things from you.

- **Empty spools of thread** (for smokestacks and train wheels)
- **Small boxes** to use for train cars (tea bag, aspirin, Mac and cheese, rice, Girl Scout cookie, sandwich bag, Velveeta cheese ones would be perfect, checkbook boxes, TP paper towel tubes, Kleenex boxes if they aren't too big) Please leave all the flaps on if possible - Or save the flaps and we'll tape back together.
- (If in doubt about size - drop it in and I'll recycle if it's too big.)
- **Clean paint sticks or yardsticks** for train tracks
- **Large Pringle cans** (for tanker cars) with lids.
- Or any other plastic container about that size)
- frozen juice containers with lids??



Thank you! Beth Elshoff

Faith UCC Community

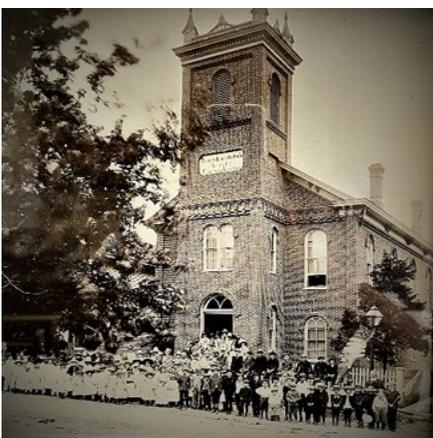
- Since March of 2020 - these incredible teachers have been meeting with their classes weekly on zoom. Then on March 24th, the Children's classes started meeting in person. Boy was it good to be back in person with the CE kids again! I want to thank the following persons for their dedication to the CE program for all these months both online and in person. Adult Class; Sue and Mike Johannsen and Ryan Downing, 6-9th grade: LeeAnn Weggen and Kim Warren; 3-5th grade: Julie Kundel and Tom Emerick; psh-2nd grade: Mary Silberger and Beth Elshoff. The teachers will be recognized in church on May 16th. Please attend if you can.
- To the bell quartet for sharing a special song: Janelle DuSavage, Caleen Pagel, Sarah Harvey, and Pat Pagel. Julie Kundel for special music during worship time for Palm Sunday. Bill Creasy singing "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today."
- Mark Odell, Scott Warren, and Tim Steltzner for all the care in the church building repairs and purchasing of needed items.
- John Jones for taking great care in the church gardens.
- Thank you to Faith United for our Easter service with Bill Creasey's mellow voice and the Bell quartet. Hurrah for them!" Mary Lynne and David Cooley
- I would like to extend my thanks to all church members who offered their prayers and encouragement, and for sending cards during my brother Pauls' hospitalization and after his passing, to clarify what transpired, he was diagnosed with a blood staph infection, non-COVID related, which damaged his heart valves and shut down his kidneys. He wasn't strong enough to survive heart surgery and ultimately passed due to heart failure. In his memory, the family is asking that everyone perform an act of kindness. Thank you all. John Elshoff.
- Dear Faith United Church of Christ, Thank you to everyone for your cards, prayers, and sweet thoughts upon the loss of my sister, Jane. Such a loss is never easy, but I take comfort knowing my Faith Family is there always to support me. Special thanks to Ryan for his personal calls and support. Sincerely, Jan Collinson.
- Dear Friends, as spring awakens us to renewed life, with the emergence of budding flowers and new blooms, I am reminded life begins long before evidence of such newness is visible. Just beneath the surface seeds are sprouting roots making ready for what shall soon appear. In many ways, your generosity through strengthen the church offerings does just this. Your generosity seeds the work and witness of the national setting. It is your faithful support in giving that gives root to the many signs of ever-emerging life that springs forth in the form of new ministries. With deep gratitude and love, Rev. Traci D. Blackman.
- Hello Faithful Friends! I wanted to thank you on behalf of the conference staff for your generosity in giving \$500 to OCWM and friends of the conference each month! Your gift makes a difference to persons in crisis both locally and around the world. What a joy it is to share in ministry and mission beyond the local setting. Thank you! In Christ, Rev Kendy Miller, ACM.

Friendship Circle Meeting in May

The Friendship Circle group will meet Thursday, May 6th at the Family Restaurant, near Walgreens, at 10:00. Please call Connie 563-299-7262 or Sharon 563-260-1088 for a reservation by May 4th. If anyone will need a ride, please let us know when you make your reservation. We hope you can come; it has been a long time.

Our New Faith UCC Website is Now Live!

faithuccmuscatine.com



Do You Remember?

St. John's Evangelical & Reformed Church was located on Sycamore Street across from the old Fire Station and Leu's Ice Cream Parlor. Many of us still remember the very steep steps that led upstairs to the sanctuary and the lovely windows. Many meals were served from that church as a way to raise funds. The E & R church and the Congregational church merged in 1957 to create Faith United Church of Christ.

Faith United Members & Friends

MAY BIRTHDAY CARD SHOWER

May 1st - Ron Nichols
846 Leroy
Muscatine IA 52761

May 9th - Margaret Heerd
930 Eisenhower
Muscatine IA 52761

May 9th - Lanette Morgan
3301 Anastasia Pl.
Muscatine IA 52761

May 16th - Lorna Hartman
5424 S. Pyrite Circle
Gold Canyon AZ 85219

MAY BIRTHDAYS

1 – Ron Nichols
1 – Nicole Elshoff
6 – Michelle Ditmars
6 – Kim Warren
7 – Cheryl Weaver
8 – Erin Elshoff
9 – Linda Hardin
9 – Lanette Morgan
9 – Allison Hartman
9 – Margaret Heerd
10 – Abbianna Adams
11 – Mark Odell
16 – Gabrielle Hartman
16 – Allison Odell
22 – Jayne Manley
24 – Leigh Ann Matkovich
25 – Mary Wildermuth
27 – Kathy Hiyane-Brown
28 – Cory Wangberg

Please Keep in Your Prayers

All who are sick or ill and all their caregivers.

Grace Duggleby
Marletta Warren
Kathy Harris
Becky McCaw
Sandra Roth
Lane Clausen
Carol Schlagenhauer
Margaret Heerd
Kelly Ingstad
Alan Arkema
Bob Sharar
Neal Kleindolph
Bernard Roth
Mike Crahan
Shirley Johnson
Bob Harrison
Murry Estabrook
Barb Noble
Robert Meyer
Cheryl Mann
Marcia Wofford
Keith & Nancy Stych

CONGRATULATIONS

To Donna Reed in honor of the birth of her new Great Grandson Miles Daniel Stucko, he was born on April 19th in Stamford Ct.

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

10 – Alison & Sam Rauchwarter
18 – Kate and Nick Pierson
20 – Jeff & Marcie Hanssen
25 – Doug & Barb Littrel

CONDOLENCES

Rich Carroll & Jan Collinson, for your thoughtfulness & prayer for the passing of Jan's sister, Jane McNeely. Cards can be sent to the family at 1721 Lindle Avenue, Muscatine, IA 52761

John Elshoff and his family on the death of his brother Paul. Paul passed away on April 12th at the age of 67 years. Paul was the long-time drummer for Lefty and the Spinners. Cards and condolences can be sent to the Elshoff family, 106 Lord Avenue, Muscatine Iowa 52761.

MCSA Sponsors for Room #5 for May

May 2 - Sylvia Trumbull in memory of mothers. Happy Mother's Day
May 9 - Kim Warren in honor of Maddox's birthday
May 16 - A gift in honor of Pat Mundell
May 23 - Kim Warren in honor of Stella's birthday
May 23 - Donna Reed in honor of the family
May 30 - Jim Trosen in celebration of the ministry of Pat Mundell
May 30 - Sue and John Muir in celebration of Aaden's 2nd birthday



MCSA Support A Room

For a \$25.00 donation you can sponsor a room for someone at the local shelter. You may pick a Sunday of your choice. See Lisa in the Church office for available Sundays in 2021 or check out this weblink to the list of choices on the "Signup Genius" [Website](#). Please write the check out to Faith UCC, and in the memo you may add MCSA donation.

Thank you for helping with this Outreach fundraiser while honoring someone you love, celebrate, or for in memory of. We will include your name and your reason to honor a special person or event in the weekly update on the Sunday of your choice.

Dates available for 2021: July 18, Aug. 29, Sept.19, Oct 3, 10, 24, Nov.14, 21, Dec. 5, 19



**Faith United
Church of Christ**
3307 Mulberry Avenue
Muscatine, Iowa 52761

VOF MAY 2021

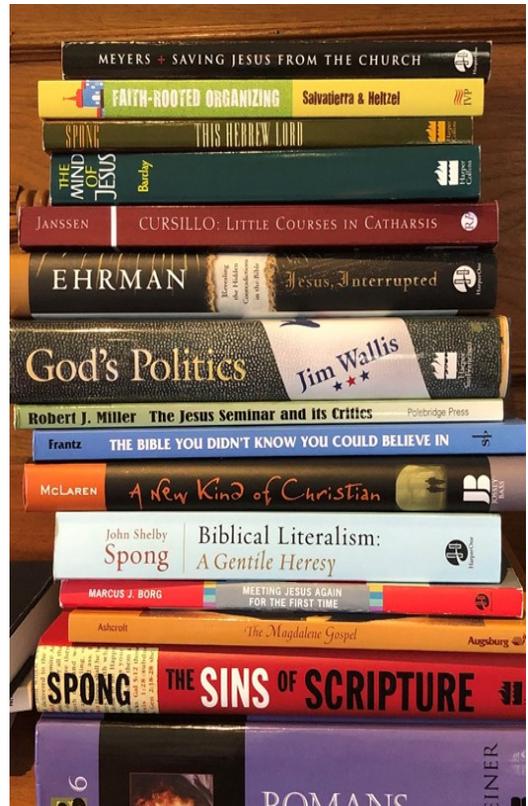
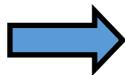
**Faith Family
& Friends**
Contact Information

If you have changed your contact information, please let the office know.

Looking for
Some
Good
Summer
Reading?

Don't forget to check out the church library.

Pictured is a set of books that were donated over the past year.



Faith United Church of Christ Open and Affirming Statement

We the members of Faith United Church of Christ declare ourselves to be an open and affirming church.

We affirm all people are individuals of sacred worth created in the image of God.

We embrace and celebrate the diversity of the human family and God's unconditional love for ALL, including but not limited to people of all ages, races, ethnicities, cultures, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, socio-economic conditions, physical, mental and emotional abilities, faith backgrounds, nationalities, marital status, languages, and education levels.

We invite and encourage all persons into full participation by sharing in the life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of membership in our Faith community.

We welcome all to journey together in faith toward greater understanding, compassion and mutual respect.

We believe that in meeting each other in Christian love, God's spirit frees us all to give, to grow, to be ourselves, because, **"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE."**

- adopted April 7, 2019

Where to get your vaccine in Muscatine County
Updated: April 6th, 2021

Doctor Offices
Mercy Medical, UnityPoint and University of Iowa doctor offices will call patients ages 65 and older when the office can give the vaccine

Community Health Care
Call 563-327-2140 or follow Community Health Care Inc on Facebook for vaccination events

Hy-Vee Pharmacies
Sign up at www.hy-vee.com/my-pharmacy/covid-vaccine

Wester Drug
Sign up at (563) 263-7044 or www.westerdrug.com

Walmart
Sign up at walmart.com/pharmacy

Walgreens
Sign up at <https://www.walgreens.com> or call 1-800-925-4733




**CREATION CARE:
UNDERSTANDING OUR
COMMITMENT TO
ECO-JUSTICE**

IA, NE & SD CONFERENCES OF THE UCC | JOINT ANNUAL MEETING 2021