A Just Peace and Open and Affirming congregation

April 2021

Ponderings from Pastor Dave .................................................. 2
Child & Youth News & Small Groups ........................................ 3
Ways to Serve...................................................................... 4

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

Since you’ve been resurrected with Christ, set your heart on what pertains to higher realms, where Christ is seated at God’s right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things of earth. (Colossians 3:1-2, The Inclusive Bible)

We have a lot to celebrate! Many of us have received our vaccinations and no longer fear the worst of the pandemic. (But let’s not forget about those who are still unvaccinated.) Many of us are finally able to visit family and neighbors in residential facilities. (But let’s not forget those who are still under restrictions.) And we are now closing in on opening our sanctuary for in-person worship! (But let’s not forget those who still are not willing to be in large crowds.) Celebrations always carry with them the danger of forgetting things. We know about the danger of leaving Christ out of Christmas and forgetting the sacrifices of soldiers on Memorial Day. But we often leave our workforce out of Labor Day, and racial justice out of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. And Easter can become all about eggs and chocolate, baskets and bows if we don’t guard against it. We can even tell the Easter story as a standard Triumph of Good over Evil story, where the hero we thought had died really didn’t and the world goes back to normal.

The Easter narratives are more than a happy ending. They point us into a different future. They open us to an alternate outcome and place us squarely in a parallel universe. The resurrection didn’t just happen to Jesus, we are raised right with him! Paul says elsewhere that he considered himself to be raised with Christ. And that the life of the believer is “hidden with Christ in God. There is nothing normal or usual about this! It is an entirely different way of thinking about our reality!

There is certainly enough going on around us to distract us from what God is doing. Humanity turns its weapons on each other, hatred erupts into violence and genocide, hunger and starvation, disease and riots, poverty and hedonism all grab the headlines and erode our capacity to care and act for good. But note how Paul (or Paul’s follower) instructs the believers in Colossae. “…set your heart on what pertains to higher realms….” It’s almost as if the reader is being asked to keep their head in the clouds and not care what happens in the gritty everyday lives of God’s most oppressed people. How can that be? That doesn’t sound like the Jesus we know from the Gospels or the kind of religion that takes life seriously. Who wants to wander around with a dopey, out-of-touch expression, preaching sweetness and light when there is so much wrong in the world?

But here’s the thing. We cannot hope to overcome what is wrong in the world as long as we are enmeshed in it. At some point, we have to be able to step out of the world’s striving and values in order to be the kind of people who can do something about it. Hence, Resurrection. We have died to what is wrong in the world so that we can focus on what God intends for the world. We can be in the world what the world most needs…people who don’t care about worldly things. So, let’s celebrate the coming of Easter with a new commitment to live the resurrection. Amen.

Pastor Dave
### April 2021

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**Events & Activities**

Staff: staff@urbucc.org

Date: 3/30/2021 11:54 AM
Preschool-5th Grade Sunday School is Back in the Park!
April 11th & 25th Lions Park at 11am

Spring is here! We have missed gathering in person and would like to get together at Lions Park. Last fall, the Sunday School met in the shelter in the NE corner of the park. Please RSVP by April 5th so we can plan accordingly. Light snacks will be available. Please wear your masks as we continue to practice gathering safely. We look forward to sharing bible stories, engaging in springtime activities, and sharing God’s love together. Please RSVP the Friday before to Rev. Amy at amy.murray@urbucc.org.

April Team Meetings

- Wednesday, April 7th at 7:00 pm ~ Worship Team
- Thursday, April 8th at 7:00 pm ~ Leadership Team
- Saturday, April 10th at 9:00 am ~ Bowtie Boyz
- Wednesday, April 14th at 9:30 am ~ Caregivers
- Saturday, April 17th at 9:00 am ~ UUCC Women
- Monday, April 19th at 6:00 pm ~ Book Club
- Saturday, April 24th at 9:00 am ~ Bowtie Boyz

Bowtie Boyz are meeting Saturdays, April 10th and 24th at 9:00 am in Lions Park in the NW corner, weather permitting...if the weather is bad, we will do a Zoom call as an alternative.

Book Club will be meeting Monday, April 19th at 6 pm via Zoom. This month’s book is, “Blood Work” by Michael Connelly.

“When Graciella Rivers steps onto his boat, ex-FBI agent Terrell McCaleb has no idea he’s about to come out of retirement. He’s recuperating from a heart transplant and avoiding anything stressful. But when Graciella tells him the way her sister, Gloria, was murdered, Terry realizes he has no choice. Now the man with the new heart vows to take down a predator without a soul.”

If you haven’t already done so, please register in advance for this meeting: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUvceupqT0uGN3fepFovpA-dlkUMIT6ZHw After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Please join us if you enjoy reading and chatting about books.

UUCC Women Have Connection!

Come join us April 17th at 9:30 am for our women’s fellowship. We invite ALL UUCC Women who would like to explore Mind/Body/Spirit/Heart topics through conversation and to feel connected despite the limitations for in-person attendance. And if you can’t be with us that day, we welcome your presence at our ongoing 3rd Saturday Gatherings!

If you haven’t already done so, please register in advance for this meeting: Previous registrations will work through June. https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUpfuCorzwtGdWE_9YVgQKRc7jbYe6mzQn1 After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.
Also, this month’s personal item is “laundry soap”. Canned goods and money donation are always needed. Checks can be made to the church with UFP donation on the memo line.

**CENTRAL ASSOCIATION SPRING MEETING**
April 10, 9:00-11:30 a.m. via Zoom

We are connected to other UCC congregations in central Iowa via the Central Association of the United Church of Christ, which meets twice per year to conduct its business and to educate and inspire our members. On April 10, we will connect via Zoom to have a business meeting and elect people to the Advisory Council. Our own Liz Colton is the Association Moderator and if any would like to be more active in this group, please contact Pastor Dave. We will need a number of voting delegates for the meeting and beyond that, anyone can join in as a visitor.

**RESOURCES FOR RACIAL JUSTICE**

Many of us struggle to understand how we might make a difference in the world regarding the bigotry and racism we witness all around us. Pastor Dave has gotten involved with a group of clergy (through the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa) who have pooled their resources and connections to generate the following clearinghouse for print, video, and denominational resources as well as connections with organizations doing important work. If you are looking for a Lenten project, why not explore the [Faithful Voices for Racial Justice website](#)!  

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

**SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE—Spring**
10:00 am ~ Worship

The Rev. David P. Sickelka, Senior Pastor.................................david.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
Sophiap Eng, Office Coordinator .................................................staff@urbucc.org
Sadmir & Umihana Omerhodzie, Custodians.................................sadmir.omerhodzie@urbucc.org

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