



Urbandale  
United  
Church of  
Christ

God is still speaking

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

*A Just Peace and Open and Affirming congregation*

September 12, 2021

10:00 a.m.

## SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST HOMECOMING SUNDAY

*The liturgical color for the Sundays after Pentecost is green, representing the growth and vitality of the Church.*

PRELUDE

Meditation on “Nettleton”

Charles Callahan

GREETING

“Unraveling external selves and coming home to our real identity is the true meaning of soul work.”

*Sue Monk Kidd*

❖ *This symbol invites the congregation to stand in body or spirit*  
***Bold type indicates a unison response***

### ❖ CALL TO PRAYER AND PRAISE

ONE: Come! The God of New Beginnings invites you to embark upon a season of challenge and growth!

**ALL: We accept the call to be in the world as a corrective to selfishness and hate.**

ONE: Come! The God of Second Chances scans the horizon for signs of lost children finding their way home!

**ALL: We repent of rash decisions made without thought for the needs of others and we turn our steps toward God.**

ONE: Come! The God of Love and Mercy waits with open arms, so that all might find their place in the grand celebration of life restored!

**ALL: We worship the God who forgives and claims us, whose love gives us new life, whose desire for us never ebbs! Let us praise God together!**

ANTHEM

“I Will Sing Praise”  
Adult Choir

Joseph Martin

### COMMISSIONING OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, YOUTH LEADERS & VOLUNTEERS

#### TAKING STOCK OF OUR BLESSINGS AND RESOURCES

When the Prodigal Child takes stock of their life, they find that there is not much left. The one thing that remains is the prospect of life as a servant in the estate of a family that was estranged from them. But that small asset, more of a hope than a promise, became the surprising gift of reconciliation. We all have material things that can make our lives more comfortable and provide food and shelter for us and our families, but what about the gift of our relationships? Have we allowed the families and communities of which we are a part to wither and die because we cannot invest in them? Who do we need to contact to re-establish connections and strengthen our circles of support? How can we be a human family if we aren’t talking to each other? Isn’t it time we came home? Isn’t it time we welcomed others who have come to themselves?

Disaster relief: [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org). (Haiti)

Local church support: [www.urbucc.org](http://www.urbucc.org)

Jot down what you have that you can share with others –

Think about how the people around you need to know you are ready to restore the human family to abundant life.

## PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

Great and Gracious God, we thank you for the open door of your forgiveness and the open arms of your love. We thank you for all of those who have come to the realization that life apart from you is not as full and rich as you intend it to be, and that the pursuit of self-gratification is not all that gratifying. We thank you for the relationships we have in this community of faith and for the many ways they feed our spirits. May we always point the way to abundant life, and may our forgiveness and welcome mirror yours. May all your children find a home in the sphere of your love and in the community whose welcome we celebrate. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE

**Luke 15:11-24**(The Inclusive Bible)

<sup>11</sup>He added, “A man had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to their father, ‘give me the share of the estate that is coming to me.’ So the father divided up the property between them. <sup>13</sup>Some days later, the younger son gathered up his belongings and went off to a distant land. Here he squandered all his money on loose living.

<sup>14</sup>“After everything was spent, a great famine broke out in the land, and the son was in great need. <sup>15</sup>So he went to a landowner, who sent him to a farm to take care of the pigs. <sup>16</sup>The son was so hungry that he could have eaten the husks that were fodder for the pigs, but no one made a move to give him anything. <sup>17</sup>Coming to his senses at last, he said, ‘How many hired hands at my father’s house have more than enough to eat, while here I am starving! <sup>18</sup>I’ll quit and go back home and say, “I’ve sinned against God and against you; <sup>19</sup>I no longer deserve to be called one of your children. Treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ <sup>20</sup>With that, the younger son set off for home.

“While still a long way off, the father caught sight of the returning child and was deeply moved. The father ran out to meet him, threw his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>The son said to him, ‘I’ve sinned against God and against you; I no longer deserve to be called one of your children.’ <sup>22</sup>But his father said to one of the workers, ‘Quick! Bring out the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. <sup>23</sup>Take the calf we’ve been fattening and butcher it. Let’s eat and celebrate! <sup>24</sup>This son of mine was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and now he’s found!’ And the celebration began.”

*The drama of the prodigal’s return is more intense than most of us realize. His offense in leaving home with 1/3 of the estate’s assets was not just against his father. As his rehearsed speech indicates, he also sinned against God. The villagers would have likely stoned him to death if they had gotten to him first, so when the father runs to him, he is literally running for his son’s life! Embracing him and kissing him is a clear indication to anyone watching that no “honor” needs to be defended.*

## MEDITATION

“Treated Like Family”

Pastor David Sickelka

## PASTORAL PRAYER

Take a moment now to check your own prayer list. Add the names that need to go on it, review the names of those for whom you have been praying. Has an answer or resolution come? If so, make gratitude known to others.

## LORD’S PRAYER

O God, our heavenly Father and Mother, may your name be sacred to us. May your realm become a reality for us. May your desires be fulfilled among us as they are in your courts. Give us today what we need for life. And forgive us for our wrongs as we forgive those who wrong us. Guide us in tempting situations and protect us from the power of evil. For the realm that is coming, the power that is growing, and the glory that is building, all belong to you forever. Amen.

## CLOSING HYMN

“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

Hymnal 23

*The candles are extinguished.*

*God’s Spirit remains as a living flame in the hearts of God’s people!*

## BLESSING

How will you show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God? Will you grasp and hoard whatever you can scrape together? Will you live as if your own needs and desires are all that matter? Will you only invest yourself in shallow relationships without ever taking a deep dive into the truths that are most important? If any of those are true for you then it is time to repent... to turn from living large and instead seek the One who offers you life and love. Go from this service to start the long journey home. Amen.

## POSTLUDE

“God of Grace”

Paul Manz

## **“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”**

**Hymnal 23**

There’s a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;  
there's a kindness in God’s justice, which is more than liberty.  
There is no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than in God’s heaven;  
there’s no place where earthly failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of our minds;  
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.  
If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God’s Word,  
and our lives would show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God.

## This Week at UCC

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### **Sunday, September 12**

#### ***Homecoming Sunday***

9:00 am Adult Spiritual Formation  
10:00 am Worship  
11:00 am Homecoming Picnic  
12:30 pm Matu Bethel Church  
12:30 pm Light Mission Pentecostal Church

### **Monday, September 13**

5:00 pm Interim Hiring Committee

### **Tuesday, September 14**

5:30 pm Parenting Way

### **Wednesday, September 15**

6:45 pm 7-9<sup>th</sup> Grade OWL  
7:00 pm Adult Choir  
7:30 pm AA

### **Saturday, September 18**

12:00 pm Stampin w/ Jennifer  
3:00 pm Light Mission Pentecostal Church

## Upcoming Sundays

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### **Sunday, September 19**

9:00 am Adult Spiritual Formation  
10:00 am Worship: 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders Receiving Bibles  
12:30 pm Matu Bethel Church  
12:30 pm Light Mission Pentecostal Church

### **Sunday, September 26**

9:00 am Adult Spiritual Formation  
10:00 am Worship  
12:30 pm Matu Bethel Church  
12:30 pm Light Mission Pentecostal Church

## Homecoming Sunday

We are so excited to get back to our regular fall lineup. Below is what's happening today!

- ✓ Adult Spiritual Formation will be meeting at 9am in the Fellowship Hall
- ✓ Commissioning of Sunday School Teachers, Group Leaders, and Volunteers
- ✓ Picnic at Lions Park by Bowtie Boyz following worship
- ✓ Preschool-5th Grade & 6-12th Grade Sunday school classes will meet briefly during the picnic.

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## Homecoming Picnic

Be sure to come to the all-church Homecoming Picnic at the Lions Park (72nd Street and Aurora Avenue) following worship. The Bowtie Boyz will grill burgers, brats, hotdogs and condiments. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. This year we ask for you to bring your own beverages and tableware. Please bring whatever sporting equipment or outdoor games you like.

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## Little Free Pantry

We need your help to restock the pantry. You are also invited to use it, and let people know about it. Please DO NOT leave donations of food or clothing outside the building when no one is present. Call or email the church office to arrange a drop off time.

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## UCAN Clothing Closet

Donation Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 9am-1pm  
Drop off location: 75<sup>th</sup> St & Douglas Ave (old Palmers Deli)

The Clothing Closet is in need of children's clothing, new packages of medium size men's briefs and Size 5 diapers.

# URBANDALE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

3530 70<sup>th</sup> Street, Urbandale, IA 50322

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[www.urbucc.org](http://www.urbucc.org)

[www.facebook.com/UrbandaleUCC](https://www.facebook.com/UrbandaleUCC)

*"We welcome into this community of faith, and affirm the participation in all aspects of church life, persons of every age, race, gender identity and expression, nationality, ability, and sexual orientation. We will continue our efforts toward inclusiveness, and stand against all forms of discrimination. We will empower ourselves, our children, and one another to be fully present in the world, living in Christ's image and striving for justice and peace."*

## **Staff**

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 Handbell Director ..... bobby.stinnett@urbucc.org  
Sophiap Eng, Office Coordinator..... staff@urbucc.org  
Sadmire & Umihana Omerhodzic, Custodian ..... sadmir.omerhodzic@urbucc.org

## **Ministry Leaders**

### **Caregiving Ministries:**

Caregivers, Homebound ..... Rachel Siegel..... caregivers.1@urbucc.org  
Care Connectors..... care.connectors@urbucc.org  
Listening Room..... listening.room@urbucc.org  
Prayer Circle ..... prayer.circle@urbucc.org  
Prayer Shawl Ministry ..... prayer.shawls@urbucc.org

### **Leadership Team:**

Moderator..... Diane Dornburg..... moderator@urbucc.org  
Vice-Moderator..... vicemoderator@urbucc.org  
Treasurer ..... Jim Nervig ..... treasurer@urbucc.org  
Financial Secretary..... Steve Looney ..... financial@urbucc.org  
Recording Secretary..... Becky Swift ..... uccrecorder@urbucc.org  
Ad Ministry Liaison ..... Wesley Keeler ..... ad.ministry@urbucc.org  
Christian Growth Liaison ..... Mariana Villa Drees ..... christian.growth@urbucc.org  
Membership Team ..... Jon Greising..... membership.team@urbucc.org  
Small Groups Liaison ..... small.groups@urbucc.org  
Worship Team ..... Patricia Goldberg..... worship.team@urbucc.org  
At Large Members: Kathy Marean & Jennifer Gardner

### **Other Contacts:**

Building & Grounds..... B&G.team@urbucc.org  
Social Media Team ..... Sandy Gahn ..... social.media@urbucc.org

*For pastoral care, please contact Pastor Dave at 276-0625 (church office), 720-6389 (cell) or david.sickelka@urbucc.org. Pastor Dave is off on Mondays but will still respond to emergencies if you call or text.*