

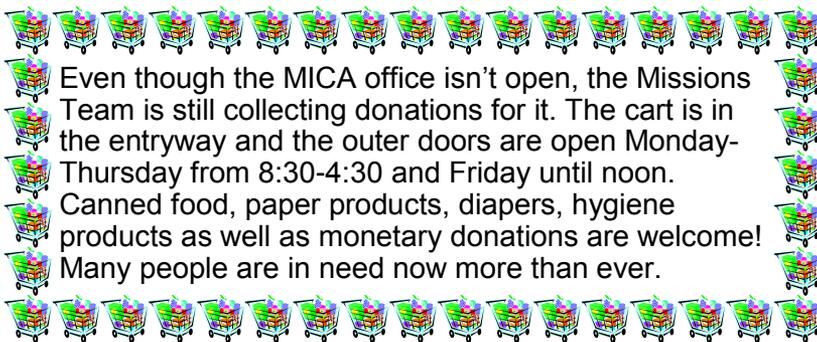
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
"A vital church connecting with God and with each other...driven to serve"
Connections for July 2020



FLORAL FUNDRAISER

As I have been delivering the Everts Fun Flowers Card to people for our Walk to End Alzheimer's fundraiser, I have received much gratitude for the opportunity to continue the flowers a month.

For those of you that bought the card last year from the churches youth, we can help you continue receiving the flowers. Contact us at dean.8843@gmail.com or (515) 509-7932. Judy & Dean Sampson



Even though the MICA office isn't open, the Missions Team is still collecting donations for it. The cart is in the entryway and the outer doors are open Monday-Thursday from 8:30-4:30 and Friday until noon.

Canned food, paper products, diapers, hygiene products as well as monetary donations are welcome! Many people are in need now more than ever.

The Margaret Smalling Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship was established in 1998 with memorial contributions after Margaret's passing. We now are able to give three \$500 grants with the money available. When my mother, Helen Smalling, passed away in 2010, we added her memorial money to the fund.

In order to qualify for the scholarship you need to be a member of 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 in the entry way at the church during office hours. If you are not awarded a scholarship, your application will be carried over for future consideration. The deadline to turn in your scholarship application is August 15, 2020.

Jack Smalling



It has been such a joy these last couple of weeks watching through the office window as the families have come to take care of the rainbow garden on the corner. The kiddos have ended up drenched in the watering process and there have been a lot of giggles!

But the laughter in the garden reminded me of a sign I once saw...**PARASITES R IN YOUR SOUL!** That's what I thought the sign said, at least at first glance. I figured out that I was driving past a lawn care business, and the sign actually read, "**PARASITES R IN YOUR SOIL.**"

The sign reminded me that we do have those things that try to burrow their way into our spiritual lives, stifling our Christian growth and preventing the seeds of faith to flourish. That can be especially true at this time of year: our thoughts turn more toward leisure and less toward learning, the holidays tend to be more toward the secular Fourth of July and Labor Day than to the sacred Christmas and Easter, and more and more activities try to pull us away from church than draw us there.

Perhaps the biggest spiritual parasite is apathy. We don't put in the time or effort to grow our faith. Especially with Covid-19 causing the church to be closed physically, it can be so easy to disengage. It becomes easier to sleep in rather than come to worship or to turn on the tv rather than spend time reading God's word or connecting with a small group. But when we fail to tend to our gardens, the weeds grow and the parasites come in.

We all could use some "weed and feed" in our lives. We need to weed out the things that move us away from God. We need to get rid of the distractions that pull us away. Then we need to feed. We need to spend more time doing those things that bring us closer to God. We need to be studying God's word, connecting with other Christians, spending time in worship, and praying continually.

I love the way the message paraphrase puts our charge from Hebrews, "*Strip down, start **running**—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this **race** we're in. Study how he did it.*

Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God.”

So this summer, let’s put that “weeding and feeding” into practice. Let’s get rid of the parasites that are weighing us down and instead fill our time and our life with Christ, the Living Water!

Working in the field of souls with you,
Pastor Nikki



WORSHIP FRAME FOR JULY

Eastertide and Beyond, 2020 “The Stories of Genesis”

Resource: Interpretation Commentary, Walter Brueggemann

July 5th through July 19th- Joseph

July 26th: Christmas in July

Joseph

July 5th: “The Power of the Dream” Love Feast Sunday

Preaching: Pastor Nikki

Genesis 37

July 12th: “The Dream-Walker”

Preaching: Pastor Kerrin

Genesis 41

July 19th: “Unleashing the Dream”

Preaching: Pastor Kerrin

Genesis 45

July 26th: “Join us in Celebrating Christmas in July”

This week will be a “rerun” of the December 29, 2019 Chancel Choir Cantata - “Morning Star: Celebrating the Everlasting Light of Christmas”.

PASTOR'S

P O S T S

R E A L M

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

We are working towards publishing our own church directory this fall!! In the past, our directory was published by an outside company, but it took a lot of time to manually prepare the information every year. Over the past two years, we have been working to get our Realm database updated so that we could use the database software to generate our own directory. The information it generates for publication includes the names of adult members and the children who are living in the household, mailing/street address, primary household phone number (land line or cell), and cell numbers and emails for the adults in the household.

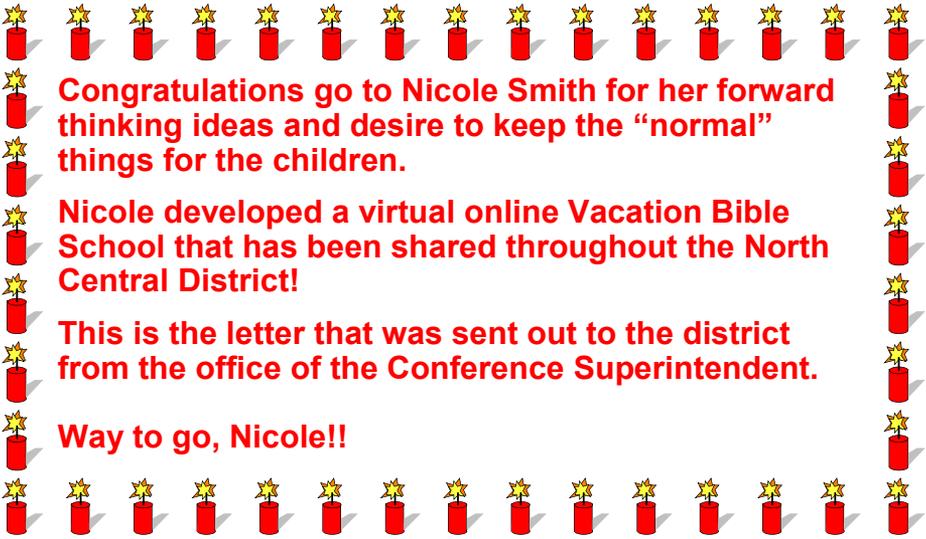
In order to publish an accurate directory, however, we need your updated information.

Please contact Deb at office@fumcames.org or 515-232-2750 to update your information if:

- You want to be sure the household listing and contact information we have for you and your family is correct.
- You want to clarify what contact information you do or do not want listed.
- You have a new street address, email, and/or phone number.
- You are no longer using a land line.
- You are a church member and do **NOT** want some or any of your contact information published.
- You are not a church member and you **DO** want to be listed in our directory.

The Realm database offers an on-line directory, communications, and the opportunity to manage your giving on-line. If you have not created your own login to the Realm database, please contact the office for more information to get started. Deb Benefield, our Office Manager, will need to send you a link.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.
Pastor Kerrin



Congratulations go to Nicole Smith for her forward thinking ideas and desire to keep the “normal” things for the children.

Nicole developed a virtual online Vacation Bible School that has been shared throughout the North Central District!

This is the letter that was sent out to the district from the office of the Conference Superintendent.

Way to go, Nicole!!

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT



Rev. Carol Kress
Conference Superintendent
carol.kress@iaumc.org

Alanna Warren
District Administrative Assistant
alanna.warren@iaumc.org

Free Virtual Vacation Bible School Curriculum

Contact: Nicole Smith - nicole@fumcames.org

Free virtual vacation Bible School to use this year complete with instructional videos, curriculum guides, materials list and where items can be purchased, and lots of other things with it too. Everything can be found here:

<http://fumcames.org/splash-bash-virtual-vbs-free-resources/>

**CHILDREN, FAMILY & INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRIES
NICOLE SMITH - COORDINATOR**

**“Happy Campers” Summer Sunday School –
An Intergenerational Opportunity**

We want to make Summer Sunday School an Intergenerational opportunity this year! This means ALL of you get to be a part of it by making one of the videos to be shared each Sunday with the children and families. You can sign up for the scripture reading and lesson connection part (already written!) OR the object lesson video part OR you can sign up for BOTH!

Once you sign up, Nicole will send you the information you need for your video. Be sure to send your video(s) to Nicole at nicole@fumcames.org by NOON on Friday before the scheduled Sunday. If you need help with recording or have any questions about it, be sure to contact Nicole.

Sign up to be a part of Happy Campers here:
<https://tinyurl.com/SummerSundaySchool2020>

Splash Bash Virtual VBS Water Mission Fundraiser

During our first ever Virtual VBS, the children and families were challenged to raise “Change for Change” to help Water Mission, a Christian non-profit focused on bringing clean drinking water to everyone in the world. On Sunday, August 1, we will have a “Change for Change” drop off event. You are all invited to take part in raising some change over the month of July and bringing it by on August 1. If you can't bring it August 1, there is a blue bucket in the south entrance of the church that you can drop your change in anytime during office hours. So find that loose change in those couch cushions, empty that jar or junk drawer of pennies, challenge your friends and neighbors to do the same, and bring in your change to help make a change in this world we all live in!

Summer Story and Song Times for Children and Families

We want to provide some special story and/or song times for children and families during the summer months. If you would like to make a video sharing a special song for children or reading a story for them, please let Nicole know. You can meet up with Nicole on Zoom to make your recording or you can make your own recording too. Send videos to Nicole at nicole@fumcames.org.

**CHILDREN, FAMILY & INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRIES
NICOLE SMITH - COORDINATOR**

All Ages



WELCOME

Intergenerational Pen Pals

Back in May, we had some children write letters to congregation members and a pen pal relationship started.

If you would like to be part of this Intergenerational Pen Pal activity, please contact Nicole at nicole@fumcames.org or call the office and give

Deb your name and address. We will make sure you get a letter from one of the children or youth of the church!

Rainbow Garden is Growing!

The Rainbow Garden is growing and we need your help to keep it growing strong! You can help by signing up to help take care of it. Weeding and watering will be the main things that need to be done but as we get later into the summer, we may need to pick some of the veggies and deliver to the Food at First free market. All information can be found at the sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/RainbowGarden2020> Please remember - one household sign up per date so we can continue to observe social distancing guidelines. Thank you!

JULY YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS - KIM HEIDEMANN



Hello Summer! For the first time, we are running a youth summer program. There are two separate Zoom meet-ups that meet each week. The Middle School (MS) meets every Wednesday at 5:30pm and the High School (HS) meets every Sunday morning at 10:30am. If you are not on Kim's email list to get the Zoom links, please contact her directly at kim@fumcames.org. We will continue with the summer Zoom sessions until the end of July.

Looking towards the fall we are planning to have several youth leader sessions for orientation and training purposes. The Youth Ministries Team has been working to get some structure into the youth program and has been meeting often to ensure that we are ready for the fall. Right now we are anticipating that our fall session will be looking at a blended type of program. We are anticipating that we will not always be face to face and we are making adjustments to our curriculum because of that.

So stay tuned for more good stuff from the Youth!

Hesitation: Are you waiting until things get back to normal?

From the Discipleship Ministries Team...

Over the past few months have you said or thought, "I'll return to church when this is all over...I will get more involved when things are back to normal...I'm just taking a few weeks off...Watching church on TV is not my thing."

While the phrase 'new normal' is definitely overused, it is our reality. Experts are now estimating that it may take up to two years before things will start to look as they did pre-pandemic. That is a long time to wait on reconnecting with your church and faith community!

The Discipleship Ministries Team has been working on ways to foster connections and build community in this new environment. Whether it's online, phone, email, snail mail, social media, or socially distant visits, we want you to stay connected with the church and each other. Our hope is that everyone will begin to move past the 'riding it out' mentality and take a step out of their comfort zones to try something different this month.

Don't know where to start? We have a few ideas!

- Join the live stream service on Sundays at 8:30 and experience worship in your living room & PJs!
- Say hello and connect with friends in the chat during the live stream service.
- Connect with (or create a new) small group, Bible study or Sunday school class.
- Make phone calls to fellow members.
- Check out the Ames First UMC website for a wealth of information under the "All Things Church During COVID-19" at <http://fumcomes.org/amesfirstumc-need-to-know-during-covid-19/>
- Not tech savvy? Contact the church office and we will help get you connected.
- We also welcome your fresh ideas! Please let us know if you have suggestions for us to explore!

Good Neighbor News

This will be my final Good Neighbor report. After 9 years on the board including 4 years as the President, I am stepping down.

On June 15, we had a ZOOM meeting for GNEA. For the month of May: the following totals were distributed to clients, Basic Needs (rent and utilities) assisted 27 households (81 members) for \$8597.20; Healthy Food Vouchers assisted 41 households (88 members) for \$2140.00; Transportation (CyRide tickets and gasoline vouchers) assisted 18 households (43 members) for \$630.00. May assistance was up approximately \$2000 more than April and \$3000 more than March. (continued on next page)

This is comparable to what is happening with the other agencies in Story County.

Beginning in July, the “Healthy Food Vouchers” will be changing to “Good Neighbor Food Vouchers” and be for emergency use only. The vouchers will only be good for 10 days after being issued. The “gasoline vouchers” will also only be good for 10 days after issue date. For ease in counting and sorting each month, the gas vouchers will be printed on pink paper and the food vouchers will remain blue.

A new assistance program is being discussed. It would be a \$100 family assistance program to help with cell phones/internet. Many individuals have had to choose between daily needs in order to have their cell phone for contact or access to the internet for school or work.

The assistance for the “Covid 19 Immigrant Fund” has been increased from \$50 to \$100 and because of our excellent standing GN has received an additional \$13,000 from United Way to use for this fund. GN received the final “change for good” check from Wheightsfield Grocery in the amount of \$1300. This is the third check that has been received and we have been sharing this donation with “Food at First” since Mid-March. In total we have received \$3000 from this fund.

The group “100 Women Who Care About Ames”, held their first fundraiser for GN and donated \$4000. Donations continue to come in daily from individual donors. Because of all of the donations we have received, GN has been able to give greater assistance to more families. Lori is very grateful to all organizations and individuals who have stepped up in this time of need to help their fellow Story County residents.

There probably will not be a live concert in November, unless many things change in the coming months with Covid 19. The Fall Choral Concert could be either recorded events put on YouTube or a Zoom event.

Lori has stayed in contact with the volunteers and is planning to have one or two of them come in on Mondays and Thursdays to answer phones, conduct interviews or do follow ups with clients via the phone. At this time, GNEA has no plans to reopen in the near future. GNEA is now more of a 24/7 assistance agency with easy access online, by phone or email.

Submitted by Steve J. Hanlin;
representative to
GNEA for First United Methodist Church,
Story County Ecumenical Housing board
and Mission Committee.



THANK YOU!

The "Bake sale" of coffee cakes for UMW was a wonderful success. 71 coffee cakes were sold and with generous donations \$677.00 was raised. PRAISE GOD!

Marlene Erickson-Baker
Beth Cheville- Marketing and communication



UMW Continues to Raise Funds

Thank you to everyone who purchased strawberries. The money raised will go to the Holiday Fair.

**We hope you enjoyed them!!!
Joan Peterson - FUMW**

UMM AUCTION

The United Methodist Men don't know if and when they will have their Fun(D) Auction. There has been some discussion about having online auctions.

We would like to have some input from church members as to whether or not they would participate in such an auction. Please contact me at dean.8843@gmail.com. Dean Sampson



Like a lot of events this year, the CROP Walk will be going virtual. There will be no event at Brookside Park on October 11, but we're hoping you'll take a walk and remember the people who walk long distances to access healthy food and clean water. You can donate online to the FUMC Team at - <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/amesia/>

Although this year's event will be different, the mission has not changed. We're still working to end hunger in Story County and around the world. Questions? Call/text Ellen Johnsen at 515-708-1472. If you take your own walk, send a picture!

Currently, there are no committee meetings being held in the church. Contact your committee chair to see if your committee is having their meetings online.

**Stewardship Moment –
Thanks for Your Generosity!**



**Thanks
for Your
Support!**

We all want to invest in things that matter. When you invest in what God is doing at Ames First UMC you are making a difference in the lives of real people in our community and around the world. For example, the coronavirus threatened to derail this year's Vacation Bible School (VBS), but thanks to the dedication and creativity of Nicole Smith, the Children, Family and Intergenerational Ministries Team and your generosity, **Splash Bash Virtual VBS** became a reality. From Proverbs 22:6, *"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it."* We believe the church is the hope of the world, and funding the church is one of the greatest investments you can make in your life.

We sincerely appreciate your giving during these troubling times.

During the first five months of the year, including the Covid-19 disruption, about half of our giving families have increased their giving compared to last year. We are truly grateful for your dedication to Ames First. For many, these are difficult times due to feeling disconnected and financial worries. Please let your church family know how we can help you.

In early July, a special finance letter will be mailed out with the financial statements to all Ames First families with a more detailed financial update. Our goal is full transparency of our past financial status and an honest projection for the future if current trends continue.

- Our monthly offering income continues to be below our budgeted need.
- The Payroll Protection Program loan has helped, but those funds have been spent.

If you have financial questions or want to learn more about electronic giving, please contact either Reid Cummer, Business Manager, at 515-232-2750/ reid@fumcomes.org OR

Bruce Wight, Finance Co-Chair, bruce.wight06@gmail.com

THANK YOU for all the support you have given and prayerfully consider how you can continue to provide assistance to Ames First United Methodist Church (FUMC).

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

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Member Care Committee will meet via
Zoom at 5:30 on July 14.