

Pastor's Report
February 19, 2020
Rev. Jessica Margrave Schirm

Staff Updates

Administrative

After putting together our 2019 Annual Report, which is no small task, Elizabeth has turned her attention to updating the Church directory. She is compiling a text update for now with a new photo directory scheduled for this fall. Elizabeth has oriented Bill, our building maintenance custodian, and is meeting with him on a weekly basis to ensure the cleaning and maintenance schedule for the week is in sync.

Programming

Erin is currently hard at work on the Lenten Seekers study, in collaboration with myself and Rabbi Rob, which will focus on what it means to be ONA in 2020 - this will be a film based discussion series. Middle School OWL is wrapping up and the upper elementary OWL is about halfway through. The curriculum for senior adult OWL has recently arrived and Erin will soon turn her attention to planning an adult OWL session for the summer. As part of our 2020 celebration of the 20th anniversary of being an ONA church we are looking to support a community wide PRIDE even in October. Initial conversations for that effort are scheduled thanks to Erin.

Music

The choir has sounded amazing lately with the addition of several new college students to round out our already beautiful and faithful core group. I am grateful to Ken for selecting music that is appropriate for the worship themes and the voices he has to work with.

Custodial

Bill is now two weeks into the job and things are going well. His first task was to help us get the crow mess under control. Bill installed a noise maker/crow deterrent and secured a crow carcass which is currently laying under a tree by our church sign. Both of these remedies seem to be working. Bill and Elizabeth are collaborating to ensure that we have all the in house supplies we need and to find a rhythm for cleaning and maintenance.

Pastoral Care/Ministry Updates

Meals on Wheels

We have recently been in conversation with NEI3A/Meals on Wheels about the possibility of becoming their new home as their use of the former First Baptist Church building will end on 4/1/2020. Darlis met with Elizabeth and I last week to tour the building and get a feel for how things might go if this becomes their new hub. The Outreach Ministries Committee is discussing this via email and will discuss it at their first meeting next week, however we are all in agreement that inviting them into our space makes excellent sense. This is exactly the type of situation that was part of the motivation for remodeling our

building. NEI3A/Meals on Wheels would lease the space from us so we would make a bit of income, they have their own insurance which assumes all liability. The preschool agrees that having Meals on Wheels in the kitchen would not impact them in any way. From a building use perspective they ensure that the kitchen is cleaned and sanitized to meet code requirements and they clean up any extra messes made, so no additional janitorial responsibilities would fall on Bill.

2020 Programming and Art Installation

As I mentioned before our 2020 Programming theme is “What it means to be ONA in 2020” in honor of our 20th anniversary of becoming an ONA church. Now that the building is updated, we’d like to commission Karen Edwards to do a large scale, mosaic art installation on the cinder block walls in the stairwell of the Broad Street entrance reflecting our welcoming commitment as a community of faith. Karen would invite the church’s participating in this project as she collects materials to use in the mosaic and would like the church’s input on which phrase becomes part of the design. This is in line with other commissioned works of art, such as the musical composition John Romereim created for the church’s 150th anniversary, that honor Grinnell UCC’s rich history and evolution.

Upcoming events in the life of our church

Ash Wednesday service 7 pm 2/26; Lenten Seekers Study 3/1- 4/5; Pastor Jessica on Vacation 3/16-3/24; Lenten Lunch 4/1; Maundy Thursday Service 4/9; Holy Saturday Vigil 4/11; Easter Sunday 4/12; Creation Care Sunday 4/19

Grinnell Ministerial Association / Denominational Duties

I am now attending a monthly community wide inter-agency meeting as a representative of the Grinnell Ministerial Association on a regular basis, and am part of a community wide task force working to address homelessness and housing insecurity in Grinnell. It is an honor to serve our broader community in this way. I am thankful for resources from the GMA which allows our office to provide gas, grocery and hot meal vouchers to folks in need in our community and to our Outreach committee who funds my pastor's discretionary fund allowing us to assist with rent and utility needs as well. The GMA organizes the community wide Lenten Lunches and this year our theme is Lenten Meditations on the Psalms.

I currently serve on the Committee on Ministry for the Central Association of the Iowa Conference and our next meeting is 2/20; we have a training in South Dakota on 4/24-25. In addition I have been invited to be on a team of process partners for churches in the conference who are beginning the ONA process. I will be attending a training for this on Saturday 2/22 in Ames.

Blessings,
Pastor Jessica,