

Pastor's Report - March2022
Rev. Jessica Margrave Schirm

General Updates

March has flown by with big experiences for our family - a wonderful, spring break, family vacation that Matt was able to attend for the first time in our kids' lives because he wasn't required to be away from us that week now that he is no longer coaching college baseball, and Gabriel has officially completed his first week at Davis Elementary in Grinnell!

From a pastoral perspective this has been a month when I have felt the community wide impact of our ministries and reputation - as I have been contacted this month by folks in the wider Grinnell community to provide personal pastoral care, and to officiate at weddings and funerals. I am thankful that when folks in Grinnell and beyond think about their spiritual needs and well-being, our community of faith is a resource for them. It is an honor to serve this church in this broad ministerial capacity.

From an administrative stance this month's priorities have been getting a complete Director of Outreach and Education Job Description Draft completed (attached), and doing some leg work to ensure the smooth call and ordination process for our Member in Discernment, Dr. Henry Rietz (documents related to this are also attached).

Elizabeth has spent March focused on getting the office space ready for a new full time employee (rearranging, collaborating with Lee to have the DOE office painted and rearranged, etc); as well as working on updating our church wide directory; plus the million other things she is routinely responsible for related to weekly worship, newsletters, finances and reports.

Pastoral Care/Worship/Ministry Updates

Joanne M. Bunge, a long-time member of Grinnell UCC, passed away peacefully on Sunday, April 5, 2020, in Costa Mesa, California. I will be officiating at her celebration of life service which will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, April 1, 2022 at the Smith Funeral Home in Grinnell. A reception will follow in the Buckley Dining Room at the Mayflower Community.

Palm Sunday is 4/10, our Maundy Thursday service will be Thursday 4/14 at 6pm, and Easter is 4/17. A full description of Holy Week activities will be in the April Newsletter.

Wider Ministerial/Denomination/Continuing Education Updates/Miscellaneous

The Spring Meeting for the Central Association of the Iowa Conference UCC will occur via Zoom on 3/26. At that time I will become the chair for the Central Association Committee on Ministry.

I have been accepted into the Doctor of Ministry in Preaching program at Chicago Theological Seminary. I will be in Chicago (or remote learning as is the case for this summer) for three weeks each summer for the next three summers. The rest of the coursework happens remotely within this ministerial context. I am grateful for the support I have received from the Pastoral Relations Committee and the Mod Squad. I have submitted a proposed continuing ed and travel budget for the remainder of this year and with suggestions for what might be part of the 2023 budget conversation as per the recommendation of the PRC and Mod Squad (attached). My current travel and continuing education budget, with the suggested changes noted on the narrative budget, should be sufficient for this first ½ year. The program officially begins in May.

With Gratitude, Pastor Jessica