

Pastor's Report - May 2025

Rev. Jessica Margrave Schirm

Staff Updates

May has brought significant staff preparations for Lindsey's maternity leave including program planning for the 25-26 program year - which will include Sunday School for a Connect Age Class, a 6-9th grade confirmation class/Sunday School, and 5-6th grade OWL. We are celebrating our 25th anniversary of Grinnell UCC being an Open and Affirming congregation with a fundraising campaign for our OWL programming in support of our Grant Writing efforts and the DOE Task Force had their final meeting will be May 4th with their final report to be reviewed at this Governing Board Meeting.

Elizabeth took some time off in May. I also took some time off in May. Lindsey hopes to be able to work up until her due date which is the first week of July.

Pastoral Care

We have had quite an intense pastoral care caseload this spring with the passing of several church members and folks acquainted with our church. We will have had two funerals in May, one on the 2nd and another on the 30th, and we will have another on July 5th. The Care Connections team and prayer team continues to stay on top of pastoral care routine needs and emergencies - especially when I am away.

Worship/Ministry Programming Updates

We were able to honor our program staff and volunteers during worship on the last day of our 2024-25 program year on May 11th with a donation being made by the Outreach Committee to Link Mentoring on behalf of all of our programming team. We will have a Pentecost Picnic after church on June 8th.

Continuing Education Updates/Wider Denominational Meetings

I am so grateful for the successful completion of my doctoral program and graduation on April 25th from Chicago Theological Seminary. I am incredibly grateful for the support of the Governing Board, the church members who served as part of my Parish Project Group, and all of the church members who participated in surveys and gave encouragement along the way. I also attended the Central Association Spring Meeting which took place at St. Paul's UCC in Oskaloosa on May 4th.

While I will not be away this summer on study leave for doctoral work any more, I will have some time away for General Synod (finances and family obligations do not allow me to travel to Kansas City but I plan to attend virtually and to use any downtime as sermon preparation time for the fall) and I will also be using the comped pilgrimage week from my sabbatical last

year during the last week of July to attend a week-long Grace Filled Turnings Retreat at Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center which will be good for my soul. I will follow that retreat with a week of family vacation before we hit the ground running with back to school chaos at the end of August.

Gratefully, Pastor Jessica