

Rich Pleva Rich Pleva began his ministry as Iowa Conference Minister in October, 2005. In this role he works with the Iowa Conference staff and with the pastors and 180 congregations of the Iowa Conference, United Church of Christ. Before coming to Iowa, Rich served for over eight years on the staff of the Illinois Conference, where he was called to work with the 43 congregations of the Prairie Association in the northwestern part of the state. He also has 19 years experience as a local church pastor, having served churches in Wisconsin and Florida. Rich is married to Ruby, a banker in the Des Moines area. He has three young adult sons (each with a corresponding daughter-in-law) and a new granddaughter. He is a long-time (and long-suffering!) Chicago Cubs fan.

Jane Willan I began my ministry at the Creston United Church of Christ in Creston IA in 2003. I had just moved to Iowa from Providence, RI where I had been ordained in the RI Conference. Creston is my first church. Before coming to Iowa I worked as a science writer and editor in Boston. I am married to Don Lutz who works at Wells Fargo in Des Moines. I love to read fiction, drink good wine, talk with women friends, go running with my husband, and walk my very cool, 100 lb dog.

Ann Hester lives in Warsaw IL, and is very involved at St Paul's in Keokuck. She is a drama sponsor at the local high school and directs two plays a year. Ann enjoys scrapbooking, theatre, and all church activities. She is putting together a musical for first time in the history of the school but has not yet decided which musical to do. Ann's two boys are ages 5 and 2. She enjoys watching her son as he plays t-ball. Ann hopes we can find a YYAM that is energetic, willing to work hard, and not afraid to do new things.

Mackenzie Lorenzen: Mackenzie grew up in Tipton, IA. She eventually moved to Cedar Rapids where she now works at Mercy Hospital as a courier. Mackenzie is planning on becoming a professional photographer. She works in fine arts, photography, and does ink and water color drawings. She describes herself as a surrealist. She is active in her church where her dad is her pastor. Mackenzie has participated in the larger church activities for example she always went to youth events as a kid. Mackenzie has been to general Synod twice—once as a youth and this year to Hartford as a delegate. Mackenzie is 21, has a lot of house plants, lives with her younger sister. She loves the diversity within the UCC.

Ally Lloyd: I'm going to be a senior in high school. I'm involved in cheerleading, dance, theatre, girl scouts, 4-H, and many others activities. I am thinking about a career in zoology or marine biology.

Tony Paff: My name is Anthony David Portero Paff. I am married to Maria Aurora Portero Paff. Together, we are raising two children Christopher Marcos - a college sophomore and Sara Frances - a high school sophomore. We live in Council Bluffs, Iowa where I have served St. John's United Church of Christ since 1989. I graduated from Beloit College, received my Seminary education at the Pacific School of Religion, earned a Master's in Spiritual Direction

from Creighton, and have just finished my Doctoral work in Ministry at Chicago Theological Seminary. I like canoeing, traveling, embroidery, and the color blue.

Angie Witmer: Minister to Young Adults and Youth at Plymouth UCC in Des Moines for the past eight years. Married to Paul Witmer--he's a UCC minister serving Covenant Christian Disciples of Christ in Urbandale. Between us, we have three kids, one golden retriever and four cats. I am a brain-geek, having just completed a three year master's course in how to teach the way the brain learns (I graduate in July 2008). I also am working toward a black belt in taekwondo and teach kickboxing one or two times a week. Next January (2009), I have registered to run my first marathon (Disney World in Orlando) which means that I'd better take up running as a hobby one of these days, too. Other than that: I love to bake (pies, especially), knit, play the piano, hang out with friends, laugh a lot and drink good wine.

Karen Jares: from Council Bluffs Iowa. Graduate of Creighton University with a BSN, working now in the Diabetes Center at the Nebraska Medical Center. Married to Jerry, mother of two girls, Katie, 23 (graduate of Grinnell College--presently in Greece on fellowship) and Abby 21 (will be a senior at University of Iowa, Business Management). Member of First Congregational Church of Council Bluffs; serving as Chair of the Membership Committee, Vacation Bible School "Game Master", past Sunday School Teacher, past Chair Board of Christian Education, and past Adult Bible Study Leader. Member Iowa UCC Board of Directors 2006 thru the present. I enjoy swimming, biking, running, yoga, gardening, reading, travel, wine tasting, and my dog Max!!

Corey Larson is the pastor at First Congregational church in Eldora, IA. Corey has been involved in the wider church in numerous ways, beginning as a teenager serving on the Iowa Youth Council, attending and serving on the planning committees of Regional and National Youth Events, Conference Annual Meetings, church camp counselor and director, and as a youth/young adult delegate to General Synod. He was a Corporate Member of the former Board for World Ministries, represented Iowa on the UCC Executive Council, and currently serves as the Agenda Coordinator for the UCC's General Synods. Corey graduated from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa and the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in New Brighton, MN where he received the M. Div. degree in 1998. During seminary Corey served as the Director of Youth Ministries at Olivet Congregational UCC in St. Paul, MN. Corey and his wife, Nicole, are expecting their first child in August. In his spare time Corey enjoys reading, music, camping, and serves as the paramedic/director of his local ambulance service.

