

An invitation to the pastors, priests, ministers & deacons of Northeast Iowa

Northeast Iowa Faith Leaders Retreat

Presented by **AMOS** · an overnight gathering across our traditions

WHEN

Tuesday, November 10 · 11:30 a.m.
through Wednesday, November 11 · 12:00
p.m.

WHERE

Camp EWALU
near Strawberry Point, Iowa

Come away for a day and a night with fellow faith leaders from across our region — to know one another beyond our congregations, to root our common work in Scripture and tradition, and to discern together the ministry God is calling us toward.

Build relationships

Across denominations and communities, forming the trust that sustains shared ministry.

Reflect together

On the theological traditions of social change that ground us as people of faith.

Strategize ahead

Toward an AMOS “organization of organizations” in northeast Iowa, and our regional assembly on February 6.

JOINING US

Courtney Dufford, AMOS organizer, with two religious leaders from AMOS in central Iowa — and **Tom Chapman**, Executive Director of the Iowa Catholic Conference, the public-policy voice of Iowa’s Catholic bishops.

COST

\$100 — includes retreat materials, meals, and lodging (two per room). Single rooms available for an additional **\$15** (very limited).

ACCESSIBILITY

ADA-accessible rooms are available.
Please request one when you register.

REGISTER

Complete the registration form at forms.gle/kgKYK8Tan5KMeeYn9.

PAY

Online at amosipl.org/donate (memo: **retreat**), or by check to **AMOS IPL**, c/o Central Presbyterian Church, 3829 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50312. Financial support is available if needed — please don’t let cost keep you away.

Please register by **Friday, October 30**

“...to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

MICAH 6:8

What Is AMOS — and Why Northeast Iowa?

An ecumenical invitation to the pastors, priests, sisters, ministers, deacons & seminarians of our region

An ecumenical group of religious leaders across Northeast Iowa is exploring a new way of working together — across denominations, communities, and the lines that so often divide us — to strengthen our congregations and parishes and make our region a better place to live.

The **Northeastern Iowa Synod (ELCA)**, the **Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church**, and the **Archdiocese of Dubuque** have invited **AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy)** to help us discern what broad-based community organizing could look like in our corner of the state. Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, and other leaders — from Dubuque to Decorah, Waterloo to West Union — are part of the conversation.

AMOS is a nonprofit, grassroots network of some 40 congregations, nonprofits, unions, and associations representing more than 10,000 families in central Iowa. Founded 30 years ago by eleven Des Moines congregations and inspired by the prophet Amos' call to "let justice roll down like waters," AMOS is part of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) — the oldest and largest community organizing network in the country.

AMOS is strictly non-partisan. It does not endorse candidates or political parties; it works through the relationships you already have, and belongs to no side but the one we stand on together — you and your neighbors, side by side.

The practices of organizing are practices that strengthen faith communities

Here is what may surprise you: the core arts of community organizing are not something *added on* to the work of ministry. They *are* ministry — the same practices that build up a faith community, send its members outward, and raise up its leaders.

- **Relational visits** — the one-to-one, 30-minute conversation where we listen for what stirs another person's heart. It is the same practice that renews a faith community from within and carries it outward: the pastoral call, the newcomer welcomed by name, and the knock on a neighbor's door. This is accompaniment and evangelization in their oldest form — going out to meet people where they are, listening before speaking, trusting that God is already at work in them.
- **Small groups and house meetings** — gathering a handful of people in a home or hall to share stories and name what our communities need. The same practice that forms disciples, surfaces the gifts already among our people, and opens our doors to the community around us.
- **Large-group celebrations** — the public assembly where many congregations and parishes stand together, celebrate what God is doing, and act with decision-makers for the common good. The same practice that reminds a tired community it is not alone, and shows our neighbors that people of faith are a public friend to the whole community.

Learn these arts for the common good, and you will find they also deepen your congregation or parish, draw in new people, strengthen your ties to the wider community, and develop leaders you didn't know you had. A faith community that knows how to listen to its neighbors is a vital, growing one.

Good ideas get shelved. Organized people get them off the shelf.

Every one of our communities has seen it happen. A genuinely good idea — a plan to help families, a fix a neighborhood has been asking for — gets studied, praised, and then quietly set on a shelf to gather dust. Not because it was wrong, but because no one with enough organized relational power was standing behind it to push it forward. Inertia wins, and people shrug and assume that's just how things go.

This is exactly what broad-based organizing is for. When ordinary people are organized — when they have built relationships, done their homework, and can act together — the good ideas come down off the shelf. Roadblocks that looked permanent turn out to move once enough committed people lean on them together. That is the power the church can help bring to its community.

Lines worth crossing

Northeast Iowa holds farmers and factory workers, immigrants and lifelong locals, Catholics and Lutherans and Methodists and more — people with every reason the world gives us to stay apart. Broad-based organizing is how we build relationships and public power **across denomination, across class, and across race**, and across the miles that separate our towns. It is how we move from being a scattering of congregations, parishes, and communities into a region that can act together.

We are building toward a founding assembly of Northeast Iowa organizations. This retreat is an early, vital step — a chance to know one another, to learn the practices, and to discern together the ministry God is calling us toward.

"...to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." — Micah 6:8

QUESTIONS? REACH ANY MEMBER OF THE RETREAT PLANNING COMMITTEE

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