

For the opening ceremony description:

Rev. Mark Stringer and members of our host congregation, the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, will welcome us with a multimedia presentation in story and song of roles Des Moines UUs have played in social change for more than 133 years.

For the Sunday service

"Believing It Matters"

For this multi-generational service, Rev. Mark Stringer will reflect on Mattering, and Believing and It. The Prairie Star District Choir, culling singers from all over the District, will lift its voice in song and celebration.

### **Biography of Reverend Mark Stringer:**

While serving as minister of the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines since August 2001, Reverend Mark Stringer has been an active leader in the central-Iowa Industrial Areas Foundation affiliate AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy). He served as a board member of the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa, an organization he chaired from 2004-2006. Supporting marriage equality in Iowa, Mark is a strategy team member of Faithful Voices, an organization of Iowans of faith and goodwill. To the delight and pride of our congregation, Mark had the honor of officiating Iowa's first legally recognized same-sex wedding in the front yard of his home. Nominated by Prairie Star District staff Mark received the Unitarian Universalist Association's 2007 Westwood Grant, a memorial to three Unitarian Universalist ministers. This award goes to a Unitarian Universalist minister who has shown exceptional entrepreneurial spirit in congregational leadership. Our congregation continues to grow in spirit and size in part because of Reverend Stringer's forward-looking leadership. Mark served as the evening vespers leader for the first two seasons of the Prairie Star District's Camp Star Trail, and remains on the planning committee. He was delighted that the Des Moines congregation was honored as a 2009 Unitarian Universalist Association Breakthrough Congregation. Mark and his wife Susan are proud parents of their daughter Leah.