



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
January 2023



Friends in Christ:

As 2023 begins, we are at a new place. It seems that we have come through the worst of the pandemic as a nation, community, and congregation. Because 2023 is not 2020, however, we need to discern and discover the new things that we want to create and do as a congregation. Even more, we need to discern and discover the new things that God is creating and doing among us, with us, and through us. This is never a simple or easy task.

I think this means that the coming year will be a time of rebuilding. We need to help all active members find meaningful ways to connect with one another and to be involved in the ministry and mission of our congregation. We need to reach out to members and friends who have been away for any of a number of reasons, so that they might find a renewed sense of belonging and purpose in our congregation. And we need to open ourselves to the changes in our life together that new members will make possible.

This will require finding new ways to talk openly and honestly with each other, new ways to meet together, and new ways to worship, pray, and learn together. This means making additional progress in becoming a hybrid church—with both an in-person and an online presence: for example, expanding our technological infrastructure so that meetings can better include all people and improving our website capabilities to allow for better communication between members.

This will require—let me be honest about it—“more” from each of us and all of us as we rebuild and become God’s new creation in this place. This is the joyful task that is set before us. And with Paul, I am convinced that by the power at work within us, God is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine. (Ephesians 4:20)

And this is where the past comes in—not just 2022, but the years before as well. There is much that is in place for our rebuilding. Over the past decade we have renovated, repaired, and restored our church building so that it is in very good condition. Over the past decade our generosity has not only met the needs of our community and the wider world, it has allowed us to build a strong financial foundation that stands even during the current economic upheavals. Over the past decade we have developed significant programs of Christian education for people of all ages so that we are able to grow in faith, hope, and love. Over the past decade solid preaching and inspiring music have anchored our worship and brought people into our congregation. By God’s grace and strength, we are more than up to our call to rebuild.

How do we proceed? Together.

Peace,

Bill

P.S.: I thank everyone in the congregation for your gift at Christmas. I am filled with gratitude, not only for your Christmas gift but also but also for the ongoing gift of your call to me to be your pastor. Thank you for your support and prayers throughout 2022. I’m looking forward to our continuing ministry in 2023.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

News from Christian Education



Sunday School will begin second semester on **Sunday, January 8th** at 9:15. We will spend our time during the second half of the year studying Jesus' ministry and teachings.

Children's Choir (all ages) Children's Choir will rehearse every Sunday during Children's Church. The Children's Choir will share on **Sunday, January 29th**, the last Sunday of the month.



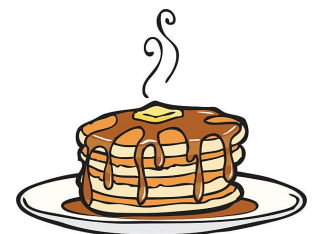
Youth Group Gathering Sunday, January 15th at our church The Congregational UCC at 3 to 4:30. We will be "tying" 3 new fleece blankets to donate to The Ronald McDonald House.

Children's Offerings We have collected \$190.00 for a Heifer Project Animal! This offering represents two years of offerings from the children and their families. What animal (s) shall we choose???



Childcare in the Church Nursery is offered every Sunday 9:15-11:15 for folks to attend adult education, sing in the Choir, teach Sunday School, and attend worship. Come enjoy adult education classes, adult choir, and even teaching Sunday School!

Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 22. The Board of Christian Education is planning on serving a Pancake Supper that evening 5pm-7pm...come help us celebrate Mardi Gras (-a day late!!)



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



EPIPHANY CELEBRATIONS ON JANUARY 8
Epiphany (the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles, the coming of the Magi) falls twelve days after Christmas, on January 6 each year. This year we'll celebrate Epiphany on Sunday, January 8. In our 10:15 worship service we will bring our observance of Christmas to a conclusion, hearing the story of the Magi from the Gospel of Matthew and celebrating the sacrament of communion.

ANNUAL MEETING ON JANUARY 29

The Annual Meeting of the Congregational United Church of Christ will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 29, in the sanctuary, following our 10:15 worship service. We will receive reports of Boards and Committees, vote on the budget for 2023 and transact any other business that is fitting and necessary. Copies of the annual report will be available by Sunday, January 15.

**ANNUAL
MEETING**

**thank
you!**

CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING UPDATE: We received \$1,555 for the Christmas Fund in December—an increase of \$550 from 2021.
Thanks again for your generous giving!

Each year, the United Church of Christ's Christmas Fund Offering allows the UCC to assist retired pastors living on limited incomes as well as to supplement small retirement annuities and health premiums and to provide emergency grants to active and retired clergy and lay employees. The mission of the Christmas Fund is to provide assistance dollars in situations of critical need, while preserving the dignity of those who receive the aid.

There is still time to give to this offering. Please remember that your contributions can and do make a difference in the lives of many people.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASS EXAMINES THE HOLY SPIRIT

A new year brings a new Sunday Morning Adult Education Opportunity: *Who and What is the Holy Spirit?* Led by the Rev. Patte Henderson, we will explore biblical and theological thought on the Holy Spirit, at 9:15 a.m. on January 8, 15 and 22 in Rockwood Hall. Join us for discussion on this little-talked-about person of the Trinity.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



YOU CAN HELP WITH THE FREE LUNCH PROGRAM THIS MONTH. The Free Lunch Program is continuing to serve lunches. Members of Congregational UCC serve on the fifth Monday of any month. Our next serving date is January 30 and if you are interested in helping in any way, please contact Vicki Thomae at vickithomae@gmail.com

HOPE LODGE MEAL THIS MONTH: Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be on Monday, January 23. Please see the sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall if you would like to participate.



SEE SOMETHING—SAY SOMETHING: If you notice something in the building that needs attention—a leaky faucet, a loose railing, etc.—please let the church office or Trustee Chairperson, Kevin Richards, know right away. You can reach Kevin at (608) 807-7195 or at kdrichards1958@gmail.com. Thanks.

USHERS, GREETERS, AND HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES: There are still opportunities to greet people coming to worship, to usher, and to provide hospitality during coffee hour after worship during January and February. Please sign up on the sheets in Rockwood Hall or call the church office--319-337-4031.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO SERVE AS A LITURGIST ON SUNDAY MORNING? This is a great opportunity to welcome people and to lead them in worship. Bill Lovin provides the material. You provide the spirit. Contact Bill if you are interested or would like more information.



MEN'S BREAKFAST—JANUARY 21

The January Men's Breakfast will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 21, at the Waterfront Hy-Vee. All Congregational UCC men who eat breakfast are invited. This is a great way to catch up with old friends and meet new friends. Join us!

THE WOMEN'S LUNCH WILL BE HELD on Thursday, January 19th at 11:45A.M. If you are interested in attending, please check with Martha Ann on a location.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

SACRED CONVERSATIONS TO END RACISM: 1.5 day Intensive Workshop on Zoom March 24-25, 2023

The Congregational UCC Mission Board is sponsoring a 1.5-day workshop on Zoom for members of the congregation. Our instructor will be Rev. Dr. Velda Love; information follows. **If you are interested in registering send an email to: donna-hirst@uiowa.edu.**

"Our world is a neighborhood. . . We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." Martin Luther King, Jr., March 31, 1968

The United Church of Christ is guided by its faith and values, believing in, and affirming the full humanity of all people. However, we know that xenophobia, anti-BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) racism, anti-sexual orientation, and non-binary gender identities remain barriers to seeing and accepting all people as equal and worthy of respect.

"Race is not Real. Race does not exist biologically nor anthropologically, neither is there any reference to race in the 66 canonized books of the Bible. Race is neither scientific nor sacred. Race is an artificial social construct, and it serves a social function.

Racism is Real. Racism originates from the unholy belief that there are human groups with particular social and physical characteristics that make them superior or inferior to another human group. – *Rev. Traci Blackmon, Executive Minister, Justice and Local Church Ministries, United Church of Christ*

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Velda R. Love
February 2017 - Present

Lead for Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice; Minister for Racial Justice
United Church of Christ National Setting

Education

- 2006 Master of Arts in Theological Studies
North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL
§ Social Justice and Public Theology
- 2016 Doctor of Ministry Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL
§ African Centered Pedagogy and Social Transformation

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Friday, 6:00-8:30, March 24 Workshop I: EXPLORING OUR BEGINNINGS THROUGH HISTORICAL AWARENESS

- Cultural historical education: Pre-Human & Pre-Colonial Existence
- Human migration
- A History: The Construction of Race and Racism
- The Doctrine of Discovery: Domination and the Christian Church

LISTENING TO CULTURES BEFORE COLONIALISM

- The Impact of Intergenerational Trauma
- Our Siblings: North American Native Americans
- How You See Me

Breaks and small group dialogues will be scheduled to ingest and process the learnings from the workshop.

Saturday, 9:00-3:00, March 25 Workshop II: REFRAMING CHRISTIAN NARRATIVES: TRUTH-TELLING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

- The Origin of Race in America
- Dismantling the Myth of Race
- Cultural Theologies
- Understanding the Bible

HEALING: RESTORATION EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- Overcoming Blind Spots
- Don't Put People in Boxes
- What Does the Lord Require?

CHRISTIAN CHURCH WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE:

- Strategies for a movement towards justice for all
- Community affirmation and agreement

Preparation for the workshop will include some pre-work, prereading and viewing resources. Information will be shared as individuals register.

UCC-JCIC CORE TEAM: SUPPORTING THE JOHNSON COUNTY INTERFAITH COALITION

The Johnson County Interfaith Coalition (JCIC) is a multi-cultural, faith-based community coalition whose mission is to advocate for social justice and equity, first and foremost for persons of color.

Our congregation has had a "Core Team" supporting the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition since we joined the coalition in 2019. Thirty members of the congregation are currently members, and they receive general updates about activities of the organization and opportunities to support or volunteer throughout the year. Fewer than 1 update email is sent a month; we have a commitment that there will not be regular or irregular meetings. If you would like to be added to this group and receive the mailings, send an email to donna-hirst@uiowa.edu.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

CRC GIFTS FOR PARENTS REPORT



After a two-year absence, the Consultation of Religious Communities *Gifts for Parents* returned to St. Mark's United Methodist Church on Saturday, December 3rd. This event provided children, 4-14 years old, with the opportunity to select a free gift for three important adults in their lives. Information about the event was shared through the Iowa City Community District Student/Family advocates and the Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County. Families picked up a color-coded time-specific admission ticket at the CommUnity (formerly the Crisis Center) food bank during the prior two weeks.

A wide range of excellent gifts were donated by local faith communities & organizations. Items were received, sorted & organized by volunteers on December 1st & 2nd. Families were admitted at their assigned time (or later), and each child was welcomed by an adult escort who assisted them in making gift selections. Each gift was wrapped and labeled with the name of the intended recipient. Families had the opportunity to enjoy pancakes, turkey sausage, orange juice, milk & coffee provided by the St. Mark's Men's Group and other volunteers.

Although 131 families secured reservation tickets, only 59 families attend our event this year. None-the-less, 186 children experienced the joy of selecting gifts for others and all of the families appreciated our hospitality during this holiday season. Gifts not selected were shared with the following non-profit organizations: Crowded Closet, Domestic Violence Intervention Program, Goodwill, Open Heartland, Salvation Army, and Shelter House. Unopened milk & juice were donated to the Catholic Worker House.

Sincere thanks to our many welcoming, friendly and diligent volunteers! We were able to fill all but 30 of our 154 potential volunteer timeslots, with our biggest need being for 17 of 40 escorts. Fortunately, this deficit well-matched the limited participation of families during the late morning and noon hour.

Overall, the children, their adults and our volunteers seemed to have a positive and joyful experience at this year's *Gifts for Parents*.

The *Gifts for Parents* Leadership Team: John Barr, Sue Dayton, Suzanne Krogh, Brenda Mayer, & Edie Roberts

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS CONT.

Update on the Consultation of Religious Communities (CRC)

Our church has been a part of the CRC for many years, actually decades. Currently, John Fuller and Sue Dayton are our representatives to the CRC which meets monthly for a program and business meeting. The CRC sponsors the winter clothing distribution and Gifts for Parents. The organization was instrumental in the formation of the Common Fund, The Center for Worker Justice, and, years ago, Ecumenical Towers. The group maintains close partnerships with Shelter House, Habitat for Humanity, Johnson County Affordable Housing, Inside Out, Veterans for Peace, HACAP, The Center for Worker Justice, and The Johnson County Interfaith Coalition (JCIC). Monthly programs highlight these and other non-profits and help our faith communities learn about ways to support these groups in our community.



The group is governed by an executive board made up of 5 officers. In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to find people who are willing to fill these offices. The current officers have been serving for several years in what are meant to be one-year positions. These individuals have given lengthy service to CRC and are no longer willing to continue to serve which has brought us to a crisis point for the organization.

At the November CRC meeting a motion was made and passed that the CRC would take a 6-month hiatus and reconvene in May to make a decision about the future, and possible dissolution, of the CRC. During these 6 months it is hoped that there will be conversation and reflection among our faith communities, and also a gathering of clergy to reflect and brainstorm ideas for the future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS CONT.



VOLUNTEER NEEDED

The Church Council is seeking a volunteer to scan and organize the historical Annual Reports. For more information, please contact the Church office.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Please note: The Church Office will be closed on Monday, January 16th in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.



WANT TO GIVE ONLINE? SCAN THE QR CODE FOR OUR GIVING APP.
Your giving makes a world of difference.



ONLINE DONATION

FRIENDLY REMINDER!

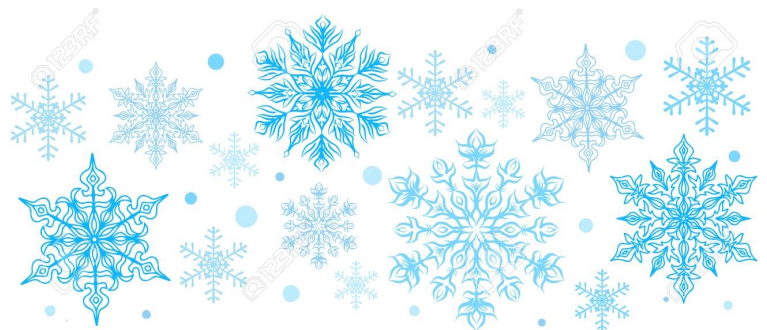
The deadline to submit items for the February newsletter will be **Wednesday, January 18th.**



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS CONT.

CELEBRATING JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1/4 Bryon Day
- 1/7 Kai Bouma
Olivia Groff
- 1/8 Bryan Clemons
Eva Leighton-Dick
- 1/18 Carol Searls
John Fieselmann
- 1/19 Connie Parsons
- 1/20 Kenneth Kuntz
- 1/21 Barbara McFarland
- 1/23 Susie Brown
- 1/24 Isaac Chen
- 1/25 Bea Hicks
- 1/28 Tyler Seidl
- 1/29 James Smith
- 1/30 Derek Lehman



**THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
30 North Clinton Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52245-1700**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

JANUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER



CHURCH STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 am to 1 pm

Phone: 319-337-4301

Visit our Web Site: www.uccic.org

Pastor:

Dir of Church School

Music Director

Organist

Children's Music Director

Office Manager

Financial Secretary

Custodians:

The Rev. William Lovin

Rev. Ann Molsberry

Chris Nakielski

Bill Crouch

Majesty Constable

Jenn Harden

Sharyn Huriaux Reitz

Douglas Herrera

Claudia Landaverde

uccicrev@uccic.org

anmolsberry@gmail.com

c.nakielski@cornellcollege.edu

Contact the Office

uccicadmin@uccic.org

sharynreitz@gmail.com

Contact the Office

For up to date announcements, check us out on Facebook.