



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
February 2024



Friends in Christ:

Lent begins early this year. Unlike Christmas, which is always celebrated on December 25, the date for Easter moves around, determined by the sun and the moon. As you know, Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon falling on or after the vernal equinox. This year that Sunday is March 31. Our Lenten preparations for Easter begin roughly 40 days (not counting the Sundays) before that—on Ash Wednesday, February 14 this year.

In the days ahead we move from winter into spring, from darkness into increasing hours of daylight. We also move from ashes to resurrection. In the process we have the opportunity to become freshly aware of God's love, mercy, hope, and strength in our lives.

“Lent is not tidy,” writes Peter Mazar. “Days grow longer (the word ‘Lent’ comes from ‘lengthen’), the ground thaws, and the next thing we know, everything is filthy. Our windows need washing, our temples need cleansing, the earth itself needs a good bath. The English names for these months come from ancient words that reflect the need to roll up our sleeves this season: February (‘purification’) and March (‘the spirit of war’). Good names. Winter doesn’t leave without blustery battles that push things over and mess things up and even break things.”

Lent is a time of reconciliation. We face ourselves, we face our neighbors, we face our God and recognize that our relationships and our lives are not what they should be. As Lent begins, we hear once more the grace-filled invitation of Jesus: “Turn and believe the good news.” In faith we are invited to look and move in new directions. The old Shaker hymn tells us: “To turn, turn will be our delight.” These days are a time to reorient ourselves, to find our bearings once more—“Til by turning, turning, we come ‘round right.’”

We begin all of this together on Ash Wednesday, “a day of happiness,” as Thomas Merton wrote. “It cannot be otherwise, as it forms part of the great Easter cycle.” Lent is the “holy spring,” a season of healing, restoration, and new life. God has made a new beginning in Jesus Christ. The season of preparation that is Lent is a time to give yourself to being a part of that new creation.

This year, I invite you to begin this journey of renewal by joining others as we worship God on Ash Wednesday, February 14, at 7:00 p.m. As the days ahead unfold, use them as opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal.

Peace,

Bill

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

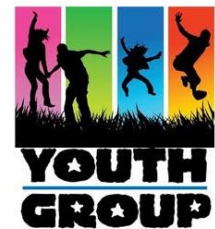
February 2024 News from Christian Education

Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 14th. The Board of Christian Education will be serving a **Pancake Supper** that evening 6pm-7pm...bring your **Valentine** to Pancake Supper! Worship will be at 7pm.



Sunday School lessons will be looking closely at how Jesus invites us into a ministry of LOVE.

Youth Group Gathering is Sunday, February 25th we will be hosting the youth group...bowling and putt-putt golf at Colonial Lanes!!!



Children's Choir will rehearse every Sunday during Children's Church. The Children's Choir will share music on **Sunday, February 25th**, the last Sunday of the month.



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!



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

ADULT EDUCATION CLASS WELCOMES MISSION PARTNERS DURING FEBRUARY

Each year in January and February, our Mission Board plans Sunday morning Adult Education sessions that give us a chance to learn about the work that we are doing in our community and in the larger world. This year the Mission Board is helping us develop closer relationships with some of the Iowa City area organizations that we support. Join us each Sunday through February 18 in Rockwood Hall at 9:15 a.m.



February 4th - Domestic Violence Intervention Program
Alta Media, Fund Raising
Chuck Dayton, Mission Board

February 11th - Open Heartland
Deb Dunkhase, Director

February 18th - United Action for Youth
Talia Meidlinger, Executive Director
Hope Spragg - Mission Board

ASH WEDNESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER AND WORSHIP SERVICE BEGIN THE SEASON OF LENT ON FEBRUARY 14



On Wednesday, February 14, our Board of Christian Education will host their annual pancake supper in Rockwood Hall from 6-7 p.m. Sure, it's a day after Mardi Gras, but we Congregationalist have never been ruled by the church calendar. Bring your family and friends and join others for pancakes, eggs, sausage, good company, and good conversation.

After eating, we will hold our Ash Wednesday worship service in the sanctuary at 7:00. This will be a time of music and song, scripture and prayer, and the distribution of ashes for those who want them. The worship service is designed for people of all ages.

Easter is Sunday, March 31, this year.

IMPORTANT DATES IN LENT AND EASTER

- February 14—Ash Wednesday; Eggs, Sausage, and Pancakes from 6:00-7:00; Worship Service at 7:00 p.m.
- February 18—First Sunday in Lent
- March 3—Third Sunday in Lent; Communion Sunday
- March 24—Palm Sunday—Worship with Distribution of Palms; One Great Hour of Sharing Offering
- March 28—Maundy Thursday—Worship in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m.; Communion and Service of Tenebrae
- March 29—Good Friday—Worship in the Sanctuary at Noon
- March 31—Easter Sunday—Sunrise Service led by the Confirmation Class, 7:30 a.m.; Breakfast follows in Rockwood Hall; Festival Easter Service in the Sanctuary at 10:15 a.m.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

On Palm Sunday, March 24, we will dedicate our One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering. This offering has long been an important part of the life of our congregation. For many years now, we have been on the list of Top 50 giving churches.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) involves us in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, through our offering, we are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS we engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, our contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put us in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. We meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

This year we mark the 75th anniversary of OGHS. You can watch videos about the work that OGHS makes possible [by clicking here](#):

Let us join in this great tradition and give generously.

WOMEN'S LUNCH—FEBRUARY 15

The February women's lunch will be held at 11:45 a.m. on Thursday, February 15th, at the Bluebird Diner on Market St. Please call or text Martha Ann to reserve your seat: 319-855-8340

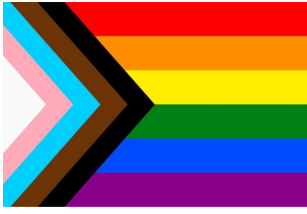
LADIES
LUNCH

MEN'S BREAKFAST—FEBRUARY 17

The February Men's Breakfast will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 17, 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!



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



THE LGBTQ+ SUPPORT SUBCOMMITTEE IS LOOKING FORWARD to a year of advocating and activism. Join us and mark your calendars for the following dates:

Monday, February 5: Lobby Day at the Capital- All day field trip to Des Moines leaving church @7:15 am, returning early evening. Contact Hope Spragg for a seat in the van and itinerary information. (Must register two weeks in advance to participate in the luncheon at the capital)

Saturday, June 15: Iowa City Pridefest 11:30-4-ish parade and booth shift opportunities

will be available.

WE'RE STILL LEARNING is a series planned by the Mission Board LGBTQ subcommittee for the entire congregation. After considerable deliberation about relevant issues and educational opportunities, the committee came to the conclusion that as a group and as individuals *all are still learning* about relevant LGBTQ+ issues and ever changing challenges.

The Mission Board invites you to stay for a potluck lunch after church on Sunday, February 18, and experience an important presentation "A Look at LGBTQ+ History in Iowa City presented by David McCartney, Congregational UCC member and retired University of Iowa archivist. David's information is designed to provide a foundation for future WE'RE STILL LEARNING sessions and to broaden understanding for longtime Iowa City residents and anyone new to the area.

David McCartney is university archivist emeritus at the University of Iowa, a position he held from 2001 until his retirement in 2022. He has master's degrees in history and in library science, both from the University of Maryland at College Park, and a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. David has served on the steering committee of the Society of American Archivists College and University Archives Section, is a past president of the Midwest Archives Conference, past chair of the Big Ten University Archivists Group, and past chair of the Consortium of Iowa Archivists. Before entering the archives field, David was a reporter for radio stations in the Midwest and in Alaska. David and his husband James live in Iowa City.

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING—FEBRUARY 11



On February 11 we will participate in the **Souper Bowl of Caring**, a grassroots hunger relief initiative. It is a time to lift up the reality that there is another contest going on today—the daily struggle against food insecurity and hunger here in Iowa City and across our nation. So whether you're watching the game and eating some of the 65 million avocados that Americans will eat or not, we encourage you to join in putting some money in the soup kettles that the young people of our congregation will have both upstairs and downstairs after worship. The original request with this project was to give \$1.00 if you're watching the game. Now—

whether you're watching or not, give whatever you'd like. All money will go to the CommUnity Crisis Center Food Pantry.

IOWA FACES THE '60'S—A TALK BY CUCC MEMBER AND PROFESSOR EMERITUS, SCHOOL OF PLANNING AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, CHUCK CONNERLY

Thursday, February 22, 2024, 4:00 pm; Kollros Auditorium--101 Biology Building East

As Iowa entered the 1960s, it faced issues that reflected the transition from an agricultural, rural state to one that had become majority urban with consequent tensions between its urban and rural communities—tensions that continue to this day. At the same time, Iowa's food-based economy seemed increasingly out of sync with a national economy driven proportionately less by the consumption of food and more by growing consumer demand for homes, cars, televisions, hi-fis, and clothes—items that the Iowa food-based economy did not produce to a significant degree. The talk will focus on these changing conditions as well as the key policy responses and debates that would characterize Iowa politics and public policy into the 1960s. The talk represents the first part of the Chuck's current book project-- *Iowa in the 1960s: Politics, Public Policy, and Governance in an Era of Change*.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



To ALL knitters, crocheters, embroiderers and anyone else who works with a needle and thread of some sort: We are going to gather together once again to share our crafts and get to know each other. Please join us with your current project on Tuesday February 13th, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. in Rockwood Hall. It will be terrific to see former creators as well as get to know new ones!

See you on the 13th!

(Need more information? Call Patte at 319-594-7185)

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM NEWS

Providing Good Food and Hospitality since 1983

Our church served **162** lunches at the Free Lunch Program on **Monday, January 29, 2024.**

Thank you so much to all who volunteered by donating food: **Dianne Atkins, Bill Dickinson, Diane Duncan-Goldsmith, Randee Fieselmann, Betsy Henson, Donna Hirst, Cynthia Kemp, Linda Muston, Connie Parsons, Rebecca Weatherford and Julie Wittig**

Additional thanks to **Bill Dickinson, John Fieselmann, Betsy Henson, Kathi Koegle, John Reitz, Edie Roberts, Rick Ruppert and Julie Wittig** for their valuable onsite support.

Our next scheduled serving date is **Monday, April 29, 2024!** *Vicki Thomae*



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM HOLDS SOUPER BOWL

DVIP's 27th Annual Souper Bowl is coming up on **February 29, 2024 from 5-7pm** at the Hyatt in Coralville, IA and tickets are now live!

The **Souper Bowl** was created by DVIP Executive Director, Kristie Fortmann-Doser, to challenge the myth that more violence occurs against women around the NFL Super Bowl. Violence against women, men, and children happens every day. **1 in 4 women, 1 in 7 men, and 1 in 15 children** will be affected by intimate partner abuse in their lifetime. This event is essential to our agency because it provides financial support to ensure our advocates are there when victim/survivors need them. It demonstrates that we, as a community, support and believe victim/survivors.

You can save the date, order in-person dining tickets, and order delivery & take-out tickets [here](#).

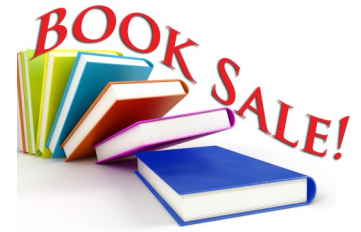
Volunteer shifts are open for this event. Get involved! Help the cause and make this event run smoothly, efficiently, and successfully! You can sign up to volunteer [here](#).

As always, kids 12 and under eat for free.

In 2023, Congregational UCC committed \$25,000 over a five-year period to help DVIP build its new shelter. DVIP opened its first shelter for people threatened by domestic violence in 1980, and now DVIP covers eight counties in southeastern Iowa — Johnson, Iowa, Cedar, Des Moines, Henry, Lee, Van Buren and Washington. The nonprofit provides emergency shelter, pet shelter, peer-to-peer counseling, education and prevention at the state and federal level, youth advocacy, a 24-hour hotline and other services to victims and survivors.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE MARCH 23-24 860 QUARRY ROAD



Mark your calendars for Shelter House's biggest fundraiser of the year—the **2024 Book Sale!** This two-day sale will be hosted on Saturday, March 23 and Sunday, March 24 from 10:30 am-4:00 pm both days at 860 Quarry Road in Coralville.

Each year, Shelter House creates a wonderland of adventure, mystery, and curiosity at the annual Book Sale. Tens of thousands of used books are generously donated by members of the community and sold at low prices to support Shelter House's lifesaving work. This is truly a community fundraiser, as so many community members like you donate books, volunteer their time, and shop for treasures at the Book Sale.

If you have gently used books, CDs, DVDs, vinyl records, and puzzles, you can drop those off during off at 860 Quarry Road in Coralville **starting Sunday, February 18th.**

Donation times will be *Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays* from 10:00 am-2:00 pm, and *Sundays* from 2:00 pm-4:00 pm from February 18 until the week of the sale. Now is the time to start going through your bookshelves and deciding which books you'll return to and which books have served their purpose and are ready to inform or entertain another lucky reader. If you have many books to donate, you can take them directly to the site. **YOU CAN ALSO BRING BOOKS TO THE CHURCH AND DROP THEM OFF IN ROCKWOOD HALL AND JOHN FIESELMANN OR DONNA HIRST CAN TAKE THEM FOR YOU.**

[Click here](#) for all you need to know about the 2024 Book Sale!

Shelter House could never do a Book Sale of this scale and scope without the help of their wonderful volunteers. They are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help sort books, organize donations, and prepare the space for the big sale. There are more than one hundred slots that need to be filled: add your name to one today! Sign up today at <https://bit.ly/booksale2024>.



JOHNSON COUNTY INTERFAITH COALITION HAS NEW VOLUNTEER OPENINGS

Are you passionate about advocating for justice and equity within our community? Do you believe in the power of collaborative efforts to bring about meaningful change? If your answer is a resounding "Yes," then the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition (JCIC) invites you to join our Integrated Voters Engagement Committee (IVEC) – a dedicated team driving transformative change in Johnson County.

Since its inception in 2018, JCIC has been at the forefront of building a vibrant, multicultural faith-based community organization. Our vision is clear – to champion justice and equity for the residents of Johnson County, particularly for persons of color. Through our Voter Engagement Committee, we've been instrumental in influencing legislative processes, educating the community, and ensuring that every voice is heard.

Our accomplishments speak volumes about our commitment and impact:

- We've successfully hosted candidate and legislative forums from 2018-2022, fostering direct dialogue between residents and candidates. (cont'd)

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

- Our educational initiatives included, production of issue brochures available in six languages, informative video series in three languages, and a comprehensive online Voter Engagement Toolkit for congregations.
- Collaboration is at our core. We work hand-in-hand with local black churches, the South District Neighborhood Association, the League of Women Voters, the Center for Worker Justice, the NAACP, and the Black Voices Project, ensuring a united front for justice and equality.

As we look ahead to 2024, a pivotal year for democracy, our mission is more critical than ever. We aim to extend our outreach and impact, with plans to submit articles to local media, distribute flyers in local communities of color, partner with the League of Women Voters for voter registration drives, and host issue-based forums and community events that foster meaningful dialogues with candidates and elected officials.

This is where you come in. JCIC's IVEC is actively seeking individuals, especially people of color, to join us in both leadership and support roles. Your voice, your passion, and your commitment can significantly contribute to shaping the 2024 election and beyond.

If you're ready to make a lasting impact and help shape the future of our community, we encourage you to reach out. Please contact Pastor Frederick Newell at fnewell@purposeplaceia.org or Donna Hirst at donna-hirst@uiowa.edu to express your interest or to get more information.

Together, let's empower our community, advocate for justice, and ensure that every voice in Johnson County is heard.

ANOTHER WAY TO HELP THE HOMELESS

Trinity United Methodist Church of Riverside Iowa has purchased a loom and is using clean, plastic bags to construct Sleeping Mats for the homeless. These are lightweight, waterproof, and easy to pack and carry. By contributing our clean, plastic bags, we can help them help others. Bring your clean, unneeded, plastic grocery bags, or trash bags, any color, any size, here, to Rockwood Hall. We will see to it that they are delivered.



INSIDE OUT IS EXCITED TO BRING ANOTHER *ART FROM THE INSIDE OUT* ART SHOW - TO BE HELD AT PUBLIC SPACE ONE.

You can put a person's body behind bars but it is impossible to cage the imagination. Throughout time, incarcerated people have turned to the arts to express their thoughts and emotions: memories, hopes for the future, regrets, work that expresses love for family, political commentary, humor, and doodles that have helped pass the hours. *Art from the Inside Out* is an art show featuring the work of people who have been incarcerated. It is meant to celebrate the talent and hard work of these artists as well as promote public awareness of the humanity and resilience of incarcerated people.

Join us for the opening reception featuring comments from the artists directly:

Reception: Feb 2nd from 6 - 8 pm

Location: Public Space One - 538 S Gilbert St, Iowa City, IA

(cont'd)

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Art will also be displayed from February 2-16 during open hours.

**Together we can provide support for - and lift the voices of -
those impacted by mass incarceration.**

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 know right away. 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 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.

CHURCH CALENDAR

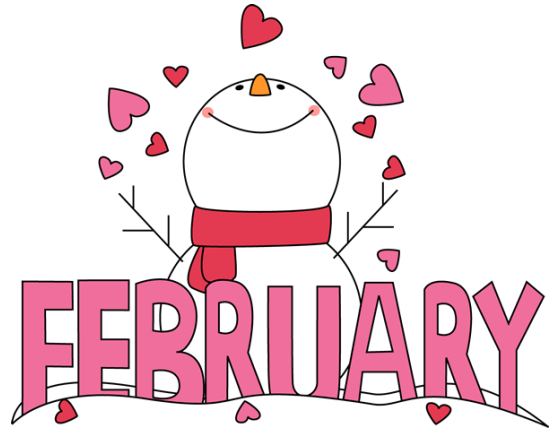
February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	5	6 -CE Meeting, 6:30pm -Mission Board, 7:00pm	7	8	9	10
11 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:00 Choir - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service - Confirmation class, 4:00pm	12	13	14 - Pancake Supper, 6:00 p.m. - Ash Wednesday Worship, 7:00 p.m.	15 - Women's Lunch @ Bluebird Diner in Iowa City at 11:45 am	16	17 - Men's Breakfast @ Waterfront HyVee, 8:00 am
18 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:00 Choir - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	19	20 - Deacons meeting, 6pm - Trustees, 7pm - Stewardship, 7pm	21	22	23	24
25 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:00 Choir - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service - Youth Group, 4:00pm	26	27 - Council Meeting, 7pm	28	29		

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

CELEBRATING FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2/3	Beth Parker
2/11	McKenzie Brown
2/13	Steve Bowers
2/14	Laura Gabel
2/15	Sharyn Reitz
2/21	Nicole Pearson
2/23	Ethan Buck
2/24	Eugene Buck
2/25	Andrew Gabel
2/27	Niki Neems
2/28	Tom Mittman



FRIENDLY REMINDER!

The deadline to submit items for the March newsletter will be Friday, February 16th.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER



CHURCH STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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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

Dr. Chris Nakielski

Bill Crouch

Majesty Constable

Jenn Harden

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