



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
January 2024



Friends in Christ:

Thank you.

As the New Year begins, I want to thank you first of all for the support and encouragement you have given to me and my family in recent days as we deal with the hospitalization and illness of Robin's mother. Many of you know that our short Christmas visit did not turn out as planned and I unexpectedly remained in Illinois over the December 31 weekend. Kevin Koepnick and Sue Dayton stepped up to lead the worship service, along with (of course) Bill Crouch, with special music by Rachel Burchett and Jing Qiao. All in all, it seemed like a good and fitting conclusion to 2023 and an wonderful way to welcome 2024.

I've said quite often that 2023 would be a year of rebuilding—and it was—but several aspects of our live together were strong all year long: concern for others in our community and in the larger world, a desire to grow in faith and understanding through programs of Christian education, and ongoing offerings of music that helped our spirits soar. In addition to all of this, throughout the year, we have consistently been a congregation that cares for one another.

I have recently been on the receiving end of that care and it means a great deal. I've said before that I'm used to being one of those who provides care and it's not always easy for me to receive the same from others. So, I thank you for this gift and this opportunity. Life doesn't always go as planned. When life is difficult, it is good to be a part of this congregation.

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 the year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

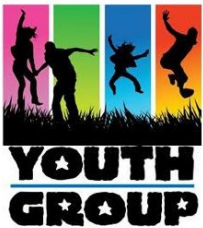
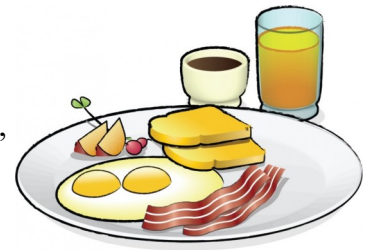
News from Christian Education

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!



Sunday School lessons this semester will focus on Jesus as our **exemplar**; we will be studying his life and his teachings.

Sunday School Breakfast. To encourage better attendance in our Sunday School, we have been offering a light breakfast at 9:00. We depend on members of the CE Board and the congregation to contribute tasty homemade treats like breakfast pizza, empanadas, and muffins to entice our sleepyheads to church. We are looking for chefs for the Second Semester (January-May)! Please look at the sign-up sheet on the fridge in the church kitchen...and volunteer!



NO Youth Group Gathering in January!

Children's Offerings This is a reminder for everyone, adults *and* children, to please place your offering in an envelope and place it in the Offering Plate during worship.



Childcare in the Church Nursery is offered every Sunday 9:00-11:15 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



EPIPHANY CELEBRATION ON JANUARY 7

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 7. 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 28

The Annual Meeting of the Congregational United Church of Christ will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 28, in the sanctuary, following our 10:15 worship service. We will receive reports of Boards and Committees, vote on the budget for 2024, and transact any other business that is fitting and necessary. Copies of the annual report will be available by Sunday, January 14.



Thanks

CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING UPDATE: We received \$1,022 for the Christmas Fund in December. 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.



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 January 9, 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 9TH!

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

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED on Monday, January 15th in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

ADULT EDUCATION CLASS WELCOMES MISSION PARTNERS DURING JANUARY AND 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 from January 7 -February 11 in Rockwood Hall at 9:15 a.m.

- January 7th – CommUnity Food Bank
Caleb Borden, Food Bank Supervisor
Jane Kinney – Mission Board
- January 14th – United Action for Youth
Talia Meidlinger, Executive Director
Hope Spragg – Mission Board
- January 21st - Inside Out Reentry Program
Zaria Rochester, Reentry Services Coordinator
Chuck Dayton, Mission Board
- January 28th – Shelter House
Christine Hayes, Director of Development and Communications
Donna Hirst, Mission Board
- February 4th - Domestic Violence Intervention Program
Alta Media, Fund Raising
Chuck Dayton, Mission Board
- February 11th - Open Heartland
Deb Dunkhase, Director



OUR NEXT HOPE LODGE DINNER WILL BE MONDAY, JANUARY 15.

If you would like to provide food see the sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall. As always, any congregation members are welcome to be there to visit with the Hope Lodge residents.

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 29 and if you are interested in helping in any way, please contact Vicki Thomae at vickithomae@gmail.com



MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR KEN KUNTZ

With sadness and in the hope of the resurrection, we announce the death of Ken Kuntz on Friday, December 8, 2023. A memorial service will be held in the sanctuary at the church at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 19, 2023. The following day, Saturday, January 20, a reception and celebration of Ken's life will be held at Oaknoll at 2:00 p.m. Ken would have turned 90 on January 20.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

ADVENT LUNCH—DECEMBER 10

After glorious music from the choir during worship, over 100 people gathered in Rockwood Hall for our first Advent Lunch in 4 years. It was a great time for everyone. A bit thanks goes to the Membership Board and all who helped them make this such a wonderful event: Kathi Koegle, Kevin Richards, Rick and Phyllis Ruppert, Vicki Thomae, Pam Willard, Marcy Kuchenmeister, Martha Ann Crawford, Ann Molsberry, and Chuck and Sue Dayton.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

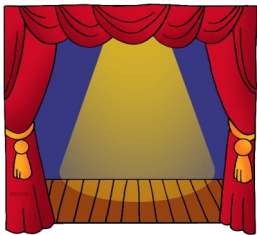
KITCHEN ORIENTATION—JANUARY 13: Please join the Diaconate for Saturday morning fun in the kitchen and afterwards for breakfast. The Deacons will have a kitchen orientation for anyone who has an interest in learning the few steps needed to host Sunday morning hospitality. On Saturday, January 13th at 9 AM, we will show where necessary supplies are kept, how to prepare the coffee, lemonade etc., and other kitchen secrets. We plan to go out for breakfast afterwards. There is a sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall. If there is inclement weather on January 13th, there will be a snow day of January 20th. We now have Theresa Messlein as our “kitchen czar”. She makes sure the kitchen is well supplied. If you notice something is needed, you can leave a note on the refrigerator or contact Theresa at messlein@gmail.com.



MEN'S BREAKFAST—JANUARY 20

Start the New Year off right, come to the January Men's Breakfast at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 20, 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!

Please join us at Rebecca Weatherford's favorite neighborhood bistro, Blackstone, for **THE WOMEN'S LUNCH** on Thursday, January 18th at 11:45AM. Call or text Martha Ann Crawford—319-855-8340—to reserve a seat.



***A CASE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD* at THE RIVERSIDE THEATRE**

Tickets are now on sale (\$15-\$39) for Riverside Theatre's production of "A Case for the Existence of God" by Samuel D Hunter. The play will run from Friday, January 19-Sunday, February 4, 2024, with a 2 p.m. Sunday matinee and talk back on Sunday, January 21. The talk back is free and open to the public.

The NYT gives it a critics choice award as one of the best of the year. Described as "Intimate," "Heartbreaking," "Riveting" and "Deceptively Simple," the play explores the themes of parenthood, financial insecurity and empathy through the struggles of two men to reconcile the confounding terms of a loan.

Though the play concerns two ordinary people, it open questions which the play's Director, Adam Knight, calls a thoughtful meditation on the nature of resilience.

Derek Willard is very interested in facilitating a discussion of the play for any of our members who attend. Please let Derek know if you would like to be a part of this.



LOOK AHEAD TO LENT AND EASTER

Easter is early this year—and that means an early start to the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday is February 14. The First Sunday in Lent is February 18. (*cont'd*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Palm Sunday is March 24.

Easter is March 31.

A full schedule of Lent and Easter events will be printed in the February newsletter.



2023 WARM WINTER WEAR DISTRIBUTION (WWWD)

Activities for Consultation of Religious Communities (CRC) annual distribution of warm winter wear were held October 8 – 14, at 340 Southgate Avenue (the alternative winter shelter), in Iowa City.

Faith communities with membership in CRC, and others in Iowa City and Coralville received information requesting donations and volunteers. Donations were received from 21 faith communities and 6 organizations (including KCRG, which provided 120 new coats via its

“Coats for Kids” program).

Volunteers from 24 faith communities and agencies / organizations signed up on SignUp Genius. They served as one-on-one assistants for each family representative, helped find desired items, kept track of the number of items selected, put items into bags, and helped them out to their cars.

Households served: 377 from: Iowa City 300 / Coralville 60 / North Liberty 8 / Tiffin 6 / Other 3

Coats Distributed: 1561

873 Children, sizes 0 – 18 and 688 Adults: Sizes S – XXXXL

(Comparison: 2022 - 342 households, 1867 coats)

We were unable to meet the needs of at least 100 children needing sizes 1 – 18; many high school youth needed coats that are adult sizes.

Our plans for the future include recruiting younger individuals for our Leadership Team, securing permission to use the 340 Southgate facility from the Johnson County Board of Supervisors by early Spring, having faith communities and community organizations start earlier to collect coats of all sizes, and increasing numbers of gloves / mittens, scarves, boots and snow pants for all ages.

Sincere thanks our faith community members, friends & community partners for their many lovely donations of warm winter wear and for volunteering for the many activities that made up the Warm Winter Wear Distribution.

- The WWWD Leadership Team

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 kd Richards1958@gmail.com. Thanks.



VOLUNTEER

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.

CHURCH CALENDAR

January 2024

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|-------------------------------|---|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| | 1 OFFICE CLOSED | 2 - Mission Board, 7:00pm | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service | 8 | 9 -CE Meeting, 6:30pm | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 - 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 | 15 OFFICE CLOSED | 16 - Membership Board, 5:30pm - Deacons meeting, 6pm - Trustees, 7pm - Stewardship, 7pm | 17 | 18 - Women's Lunch @ Blackstone in Iowa City at 11:45 am | 19 | 20 - Men's Breakfast @ Waterfront HyVee, 8:00 am |
| 21 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:00 Choir - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service | 22 | 23 - Council Meeting, 7pm | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:00 Choir - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service - Annual Meeting, 11:30 - Youth Group, 4:00pm | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

CELEBRATING JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1/7 Olivia Groff
- 1/8 Bryan Clemons
Eva Leighton-Dick
- 1/18 John Fieselmann
- 1/19 Connie Parsons
- 1/23 Susie Brown
- 1/24 Isaac Chen
- 1/25 Bea Hicks
- 1/28 Tyler Seidl
- 1/29 James Smith
- 1/30 Derek Lehman



FRIENDLY REMINDER!

The deadline to submit items for the February newsletter will be Friday, January 19th.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

JANUARY 2024 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

Dr. Chris Nakielski

Bill Crouch

Majesty Constable

Jenn Harden

Sharyn Huriaux Reitz

Douglas Herrera

Claudia Landaverde

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Contact the Office

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