



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
March 2024



Friends in Christ:

We are moving through the season of Lent toward an early celebration of Easter on Sunday, March 31. And what a happy opportunity we have this year as we listen to the Sermon on the Mount together in many different ways. In worship, in study, in daily reflections we're finding the good news that, as Amy-Jill Levine puts it, "We are wondrous creatures with unlimited potential. We already have the gifts needed to live into the kingdom of heaven."

Of course, it wouldn't be Lent if I didn't encourage and even exhort you to give generously to our One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Palm Sunday, March 24. The need for money to fund medical care, disaster relief, and especially, relief for refugees has never been greater.

If you have already decided how much you are going to give, double that amount. If you haven't yet decided, surprise yourself—shock yourself, even—with how generous you can be. When you write that check you should be asking, "What am I thinking, giving this much?"

Parents, help your children to give using those banks that we handed out. It's hard to talk with children about other children who are suffering, but many of your children are aware of this already. Gently help them to see how they can help others.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gets around to talking about money. He always seems to get around to talking about money—and always in ways that help us find the good news. Jesus invites us to wisely use what we have and to let go of whatever it is that holds us captive or impoverishes us. Sharing what we have can help us to better see the image of God in each human being.

Take some time this month to remember all the doors that have been opened for you, all that has been shared with you, and all the help that you have received to get to where you are today. Great need now meets your great abundance. How do you want to respond?

Peace,

Bill

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2024 News from Christian Education



Sunday School will be getting ready for their **Palm Sunday Procession** during worship on **Palm Sunday, March 24th**. No Sunday School on Easter Sunday, March 31st... so you can attend church with family!

NO Sunday School Sunday, March 10 for Spring Break.

NO youth group during the month of March.



Children's Choir will continue practice during Children's Church during the month of March but will not be sharing in worship during the month of March.

Childcare in the Church Nursery will offer extended childcare during the month of March (9:15-12:30) due to extended practices for Special Music Sunday, April 28th.



BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SEEKS NEW DIRECTOR

This spring, Ann Molsberry will retire as our Directory of Children's Programs. Ann has done an excellent job both of keeping the Christian Education program going through the height of the pandemic and of guiding its development and growth in recent years.



The Board of Christian Education is beginning the search for a new Director who can build on the strong foundation that Ann established. As the search begins, the Board is looking for a Congregational UCC parent to join the search team. If you are interested or know someone you would like to recommend, please talk to Sally Strang or Bill Lovin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

IMPORTANT DATES IN LENT AND EASTER

March 3—Third Sunday in Lent; Communion Sunday

March 24—Palm Sunday

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

March 28—Maundy Thursday

Communion and Service of Tenebrae at 7:00 p.m.

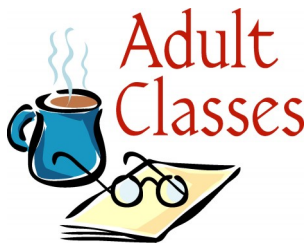
March 29—Good Friday

Worship at Noon

March 31—Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service at 7:30 a.m.; Breakfast in Rockwood Hall; Festival Easter Service at 10:15 a.m.

April 28—Spring Choir Music Sunday



Adult Classes

ADULT EDUCATION FOR LENT LOOKS AT THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: In March we will continue our five-session series, *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven*, using material by the New Testament scholar, Dr. Amy-Jill Levine. Join Bill Lovin in Rockwood Hall, Sunday mornings at 9:15.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS ON SUNDAY, MARCH 10.

Please remember to set your clock ahead one hour on Saturday evening, March 9, so that you get to church on time.



HOPE LODGE: Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be Monday, March 11. If you would like to participate, see the sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall for the March dinner. If you have questions, contact Sue Dayton, cdayton7@mchsi.com

WOMEN'S LUNCH—MARCH 14

The March 14, women's lunch will meet at Basta in downtown IC. Please call or Text Martha Ann Crawford at 319-855-8340 to reserve a seat at the table.



MEN'S BREAKFAST—MARCH 16

The March Men's Breakfast will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 16, 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



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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

WE'RE STILL LEARNING

Continuing our historic congregational and UCC commitment to be welcoming, opening, and affirming to all, the Mission Board created an LGBTQ+ subcommittee last year to address making that historic commitment real in the present day. Our first activity was to develop an appropriate logo and banner for our significant presence in the June 2023 Iowa City Pride Festival.



As the subcommittee met in the fall to assess the most effective way to expand and reinforce this church's leadership status, it became clear that the issue is an emerging, ever evolving challenge. Repeatedly it was recognized that we are still learning and there is much to learn and do. This realization grew into the **We're Still Learning** series organized by the Mission Board to increase understanding, advocacy and commitment to timely and timeless LGBTQ+ issues. Four members of our congregation attended a lobbying day in Des Moines in early February to focus on the specific threatening legislative proposals.

The **We're Still Learning** series kick-off took place at an after-worship service potluck on February 18. David McCartney, a member of our congregation and Archivist Emeritus of the University of Iowa, presented "A Brief Look at History of LGBTQ Life in Iowa City." His presentation was appreciated by the more than 50 congregation members attending and all were surveyed for future ideas of impact going forward. The results showed an overwhelming interest in keeping informed on legislative developments targeting the LGBTQ+ community in order to advocate and help prevent onerous proposed bills from being voted into law. In keeping with that interest, there will be information inserts in the Sunday bulletin during the legislative session and you will find postings on the special bulletin board in Rockwood Hall. Please check the inserts and bulletin board to see how you can help! Ideas, questions or suggestions are welcome by subcommittee members: Julie Wittig, Hope Spragg, Rebecca Weatherford, Carson Fixmer, Martha Ann Crawford, Dianne Atkins and Linda Muston.

While the focus for the next month remains on the legislative threats and Des Moines activity, plans are underway for a second in the **We're Still Learning** series tentatively scheduled for mid-May. And it's time to get the June 15, 2024, Iowa City Pride Fest on your calendar. There will be multiple opportunities to join the celebration in the parade or in the booth, including special tee shirts to tell everyone who we are!

We are all still learning together!

FLOWERS FOR EASTER BRING COLOR TO THE SANCTUARY

Each year on Easter Sunday members and friends of Congregational UCC provide flowers for the sanctuary in memory of loved ones or to honor someone. Because so many people enjoy the burst of color, our Diaconate invites you to bring any type of spring flower—lilies, yes, but also consider tulips, daffodils, crocuses, or any other spring flower. *If you would like to have the name(s) of those remembered in the Easter Sunday bulletin, please get that information to the church office (337-4301) by Tuesday, March 26.*



THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO GAVE TO THE SOUPER BOWL OF CARING—a grassroots hunger relief initiative. Members and friends had the opportunity to vote for their favorite and the results are in: San Francisco: \$157; Kansas City: \$112; Taylor Swift: \$148; for a Total of \$417. Everyone wins, however, as all the money received will go to the CommUnity Crisis Center Food Pantry.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW BOOKS FROM CONGREGATIONAL UCC MEMBERS

Megan Carnes' debut novel, *The Celdan Heresies*, will be published on Wednesday, March 6. Annie Dillard says of this book: "Megan Carnes has written a work of startling imagination. Here is a world, both strange and deadly, that feels at once feudal and extremely current. Along the way, Carnes acquaints us with heretics, horse smugglers, poisoners, and church thieves. These medieval people are criminals. They are also wonderful company. Grab this book now. You won't put it down." *Kirkus* calls it: "A deeply-imagined tale of faith and revolt." And Megan says that Congregational UCC has "helped me become both faithful and revolting, in all the best ways." **Megan will be reading from her book at Prairie Lights on Wednesday, March 6, at 7:00pm**



Marilynne Robinson's new look at the first book of the Bible, *Reading Genesis*, will be published on March 13. It includes the full text of the King James Version of Genesis and is a powerful consideration of the profound meanings and promise of God's enduring covenant with humanity. This magisterial book radiates gratitude for the constancy and benevolence of God's abiding faith in Creation.

Congratulations to both Megan and Marilynne.

Congratulations!

BEA HICKS RECEIVES "I AM BLACK EXCELLENCE" AWARD

The Black Voices Project honored Congregational UCC member, Bea Hicks with their "I Am Black Excellence" award in February. The award stated: "Your remarkable contributions have not only shaped our community but have also become an integral part of the rich tapestry of Black history. Your 'Excellence' resonates strongly through the voices you amplify and the thriving culture you help cultivate."

Congratulations, Bea.

SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE MARCH 23-24 860 QUARRY ROAD

Event Dates:

Sorting and Book Drop Off: Sunday, February 18 – Wednesday, March 20
Sale: Saturday, March 23 and Sunday, March 24 from 10:30am-4:00pm both days
Sorting Shifts are Mondays 10:00am-2:00pm, Wednesdays 10:00am-2:00pm, Saturdays 10:00am-2:00pm, Sundays 2:00pm-4:00pm



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 at <https://bit.ly/booksale2024> or just show up at 860 Quarry Road in Coralville, Iowa River Landing.

John Fieselmann, Kathy Fait, and Donna Hirst are on the Steering Committee. If you have questions, please contact one of us. You are welcome to bring book donations to the church and one of us can take them to the sale site.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



AMES, IA, UCC THEOLOGIAN IN RESIDENCE

The Ames UCC Theologian in Residence Program brings noted religious theologians – biblical scholars, historians, ethicists, musicians. Our programs are free and open to the public. John Pavlovitz Speaks Out in Ames April 4-7, 2024: Finding Courage and Compassion When Cruelty Is Trending.

The Program

Thursday, April 4, 6:00 pm

“Flipping the Table on Christian Nationalism,” Public Lecture, Sun Room, Memorial Union, Iowa State University. This lecture will be recorded and made available at a later date. No online access on Thursday.

Friday, April 5, 1-4 pm

“Compassion Fatigue,” a special discussion led by John Pavlovitz for pastors and faith leaders seeking continuing education credit, Fellowship Hall, Ames UCC Church, 217 Sixth St., Ames IA. Open to any interested persons. In-person only.

Saturday, April 6, 9:00 am to 3 pm

The first two Saturday sessions will be presented at Ames United Church of Christ, 217 Sixth St., Ames IA and also will be available via Zoom to those who register.

John Pavlovitz will lead all three sessions. The third session will utilize a workshop format and will not be available by Zoom. *(cont'd)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, April 7

9:00-9:40 am. Q&A with John Pavlovitz, Fellowship Hall, Ames UCC church. Note: This session will not be available via Zoom.

10:00-11:00 am. Worship Service at Ames UCC with John Pavlovitz providing the sermon. Available in person or via Zoom.

Note: Those who register for the event will receive a Zoom link a few days before April 6. There is no charge for registration.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ANNUAL TABLE TO TABLE DINNER ON APRIL 24



T2T Annual Dinner: Wednesday, April 24 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Come together to share a meal and celebrate the impact T2T's food recovery efforts make in our community.

New this year: updates to the meal experience and a new format for impact stories! Our Annual Dinner raises key funds for food recovery in Johnson County. Last year, this event raised enough for T2T to rescue food for over 150,000 meals. Help us deliver food for our neighbors' tables through supporting our event!



THINK AHEAD FOR ANNUAL OUTERWEAR DISTRIBUTION

Each year in the fall, Congregational UCC joins with other congregations in providing winter coats for people of all ages, especially children. As winter items start to go on sale in the stores, now is a great time to let your dollar go further and purchase coats. Please store them at your home until the fall when they can be brought to the church and then taken to the distribution site.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

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

March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service with communion	4	5 -CE Meeting, 6:30pm -Mission Board, 7:00pm	6	7	8	9
10 - Choir Rehearsal - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	11 - Hope Lodge dinner	12	13	14 - Women's Lunch @ Basta in Iowa City at 11:45 am	15	16 - Men's Breakfast @ Waterfront HyVee, 8:00 am
17 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:00 Choir - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	18	19 - Membership Board, 5:30pm - Deacons meeting, 6pm - Trustees, 7pm - Stewardship, 7pm	20	21	22	23
24 - 9:00 Church School breakfast - 9:00 Choir - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Palm Sunday Worship Service - Confirmation class, 4pm	25	26 - Council Meeting, 7pm	27	28 - Maundy Thursday service, 7pm	29 - Good Friday, 12pm	30
31 - Sunrise service, 7:30am - Easter breakfast - Festival Easter Service 10:15am						

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

CELEBRATING MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 3/1 Sandra Lacina
- 3/4 Barb Hanson
- 3/5 Lyle Tonne
- 3/6 Melissa Reynolds
- 3/10 James Jetter
- 3/13 Joan Buxton
Izzy Brown
- 3/15 Sylvia Woolums
Malia Lewis
- 3/19 Willem Maybaum Morton
- 3/22 Nathaniel Savage
Chris Lewis
- 3/23 Isabella Myers
- 3/24 Carrie Whitaker



FRIENDLY REMINDER!
The deadline to submit items for the April newsletter will be
Friday, March 22nd.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

MARCH 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

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