



“Nativity” John August Swanson (Used with permission)

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
30 N. CLINTON ST.
IOWA CITY, IA 52245
319-337-4301

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 18, 2022
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Make me, God, your music-staff divine.
Write thereon your clef and key.
Choose a gently flowing meter;
Make my life your symphony.
Daniel Pinkham

PRELUDE “Collage on *Es Ist Ein’ Ros* ” arr. Allan Robert Petker

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT "The Lord said to me (you are my son)" William Ferris

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES
Matt and Hope Spragg, Nadia, Peter

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Let us open our hearts in welcome.

Let us rejoice and be glad.

Let us worship God.

***HYMN 13 "Prepare the Way"**

**Prepare the way, O Zion,
your Christ is drawing near!**

**Let every hill and valley
a level way appear.**

**Greet One who comes in glory,
foretold in sacred story.**

**O blest is Christ that came
in God's most holy name.**

**Christ brings God's rule, O Zion;
he comes from heaven above.**

**His rule is peace and freedom,
and justice, truth, and love.**

**Lift high your praise resounding,
for grace and joy abounding.**

**O blest is Christ that came
in God's most holy name.**

**Fling wide your gates, O Zion;
your Savior's rule embrace.**

**His tidings of salvation
proclaim in every place.**

**All lands will bow rejoicing,
their adoration voicing.**

**O blest is Christ that came
in God's most holy name.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

God of compassion, in these days of preparation, let us wait in hope and peace, for no one is lost to you.

Let us offer our sorrow with our praise, for you have made our pain your own.

Let us find joy in holy memories and give you thanks, for they promise the joy of your realm.

Let us bring freely before you our shadows and regrets, for you forgive and heal.

Let us wait with a quiet heart for the Christ to whom all are dear, for he has made his home with us. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#28, vs. 2)

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart, and soul, and voice;

**Now you hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!**

TIME OF PRAYER

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer

The Prayer of Our Savior

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Choral Response

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory "Meditation on *I Wonder as I Wander*" arr. Jan Sanborn

*Response

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Christ, all creatures here below,
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication

SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 1:39-45

HYMN 600 "Song of Mary"

**My soul gives glory to my God,
My heart pours out its praise.
God lifted up my lowliness
In many marvelous ways.**

**My God has done great things for me:
Yes, holy is this Name.
All people will declare me blessed,
And blessings they shall claim.**

**From age to age to all who fear,
Such mercy love imparts,
Dispensing justice far and near,
Dismissing selfish hearts.**

**Love casts the mighty from their thrones,
Promotes the insecure,**

**Leaves hungry spirits satisfied;
The rich seem suddenly poor.**

**Praise God, whose loving covenant
Supports those in distress,
Remembering past promises
With present faithfulness.**

A CHORAL OFFERING “Christmas Cantata” Daniel Pinkham

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE “Prepare the Way” arr. Stephen Weber

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Minister:	The Rev. Bill Lovin
Director of Children’s Programs:	The Rev. Ann Molsberry
Organist:	Bill Crouch
Choir Director	Chris Nakielski
Office Manager	Jenn Harden

WE’RE GLAD THAT YOU HAVE JOINED US FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING. We are putting the safety of both the vaccinated and the unvaccinated in our congregation and the community first. Masks are highly recommended. Everyone is invited to Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall after worship.

OUR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCES AND CELEBRATIONS renew some of our traditional activities and events and also bring some new possibilities. Here are some important dates:

December 18—Fourth Sunday in Advent; Special Music Sunday

December 20—Winter Solace Service

Christmas Eve is Saturday, December 24. There will be one worship service at 5:30 p.m.

Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25—Worship at 10:15 a.m.

WINTER SOLACE SERVICE: The days before Christmas can be difficult, especially for those who are dealing with loss, illness, and other challenges. On Tuesday, December 20, Bill Lovin will be leading a Winter Solace Service in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. This year the worship service will be in person and live streamed. We are trying to bring out as much joy as

possible in this season, but as we do so, we can also acknowledge our sorrow, our losses, our concerns and our fears. This will be a time of prayer and scripture reading and music.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE AT 5:30

Join us for worship on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24.

At 5:30 p.m. we will have a service for people of all ages. This will include a special time for children, special music, Christmas carols, a reading of the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke, and lighting of candles. If you would like to be an usher for this worship service, please sign up in Rockwood Hall or call the church office.

Everyone is invited to the gala reception in Rockwood Hall after worship. This is a warm and wonderful time of fellowship and a chance to catch up with students and friends who are home for the holidays. The reception will be even better if you volunteer to bring some cookies or other goodies to share. Sign up in Rockwood Hall or call the church office to let us know what you're bringing.

Members and friends may provide poinsettias for the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve worship service. If you would like to remember or honor someone with a poinsettia, please let the church office know that you will bring a poinsettia and the name of the person by Monday, December 19.

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.

CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING: 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.

We will receive the Christmas Fund Offering during our worship on Christmas Eve. Please remember that your generous contributions can and do make a difference in the lives of many people.

A NEW MEMBER CLASS WILL BE HELD IN JANUARY. If you are interested in joining Congregational UCC or would like more information, please talk with Bill Lovin.

USHERS, GREETERS, AND HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES: As we continue to reopen, there are new opportunities to greet people coming to worship, to usher, and to provide hospitality during coffee hour after worship. 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.



Want to give online? Scan the QR code for our giving app.
Your giving makes a world of difference.

WE LIVE STREAM OUR WORSHIP SERVICES AT 10:15 ON SUNDAY MORNING.
You can join us online in real time at <https://vimeo.com/event/1424751>. This streaming address is the same each week.

RECORDINGS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICES are posted after worship on Sunday at <https://vimeo.com/channels/154m7852>. The recordings remain up permanently, so you can watch past worship services at your convenience or recommend them to a friend.