



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

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 20, 2020
THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“We often see ourselves and our children reflected in the event. Christmas is a celebration of birth, of life; and Christ’s birth carries with it the promise of our own continuation from generation to generation.”

Fred Rogers

OPENING WORDS

PRELUDE

“Still, Still, Still”

Piano Duet: Bill Crouch and Tim Strang

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

Bill and Becky Hoefler, Katie, Ben

CALL TO WORSHIP

Raise your hearts and voices

Let us be glad

[Unison]

for great is God who comes to dwell among us.

HYMN 22 “Angels, from the Realms of Glory” (vs. 1-3)

**Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:**

Refrain:

**Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.**

**Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant light: [Refrain]**

**Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star: [Refrain]**

OPENING PRAYER

**Loving God, we open ourselves to you trusting that this is how you made us:
you created us with the capacity for joy.
You light our lives with the power of imagination.
Show us the creative power of hope.
Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared,
that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

TIME OF GRATITUDE

PIANO DUET “The First Noel”
Bill Crouch and Tim Strang

CHILDREN'S PAGEANT

[You can view and download the pageant with directions and carols here.](#)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Rise Up Shepherd and Follow”

Piano Duet: Bill Crouch and Tim Strang

The Staff of Congregational UCC wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We thank you for your support over the past year.

TODAY IS THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT. We light the fourth Advent candle as we prepare for the celebration of Christmas. As part of our worship we are including last year’s “Rhythm Christmas”—a delightful telling of the Christmas story filled with carols and lots of opportunities to make a joyful noise. You might want to gather any or all of the following for your use during the pageant: Wood blocks, sandpaper blocks, bean shakers, sand drums, rain sticks, small metal pots and wooden spoons, bigger metal pots and metal spoons, bells, tambourines, wooden blocks with knockers. And use your imagination to come up with other rhythm instruments!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP AND GALA RECEPTION: All of this will be online this year, but it will be wonderful if you join us. The worship service will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 24. Our gala reception will follow on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. This year you’ll have to provide your own cookies and hot cider. And we’ll be able to see and talk with everyone who shows up! If it gets crowded, we’ll set up some breakout rooms for small group conversations. The Zoom invitation will be sent out early in the coming week.

THE 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.

ALTERNATIVE GIVING-2020: There is still time to give online to Project Holiday and Church World Service.

PROJECT HOLIDAY Project Holiday is CommUnity Food Bank's annual holiday meal distribution. Typically held the week before Christmas, this distribution provides more than 1,500 Johnson County families with all the ingredients needed to make a traditional holiday dinner. Each \$25 donation will purchase a complete holiday meal for a local family in need. You can donate here: <https://builtbycommunity.org/project-holiday/> through December 31.

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

If you would like to give a gift through Church World Service, you can now do so through the special Congregational UCC site connected to the CWS site. Please note that this site will be available from November 29 through December 31. To reach the website, please follow this link: <https://fundraise.cwsglobal.org/uccic-best-gift>

CELEBRATE EPIPHANY (the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles, the coming of the Magi) and the beginning of a new year with us on Sunday, January 3, 2020. 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. January 10 will be a communion Sunday.

Stewardship Is Heart Work: Pledge/estimate of giving cards for 2021 have been sent out. If you have not received one, please contact the church office. If you have received a card, please prayerfully fill it out and return it to the church. 2020 has been filled with unexpected trials and tribulations. We anticipate more challenges in 2021. Your deeply considered, prayerful support will help us to continue our Church's mission in downtown Iowa City. **If you would like, you can now make your pledge online by clicking on this link:**

<https://forms.gle/yx7K5buGsJybRzAP8> Thanks again for your generous giving.

RECORDINGS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICES are posted by early Sunday morning each week at <https://vimeo.com/channels/1547852>. The recordings remain up permanently, so you can watch past worship services at your convenience or recommend them to a friend.

DO YOU HAVE A HYMN THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SING IN THE COMING MONTHS? Let Bill Lovin know. This is no guarantee that we will sing it, as the hymn will need to be covered by our reprint license, fit with the rest of the worship service and work for the person who will be leading the singing—but we'd like to hear from you and sing a new song.

WE WANT TO SEE YOU! We would like to have members and friends be a part of the greeting time during our online worship. Please send us a brief—10-30 second—video of you or your family waving, saying “Hi,” singing, or whatever you would like. Or send a photo. We'll start including a few of these in the worship service each week as a way to strengthen our connections with each other. Send your greeting videos to

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UcrZ4ya9xFir39cG_1x-SCO6dVPBbV0B?usp=sharing

