

Finding the Good News in the Sermon on the Mount Fourth Sunday in Lent



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

WORSHIP FOR MARCH 10, 2024
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

“Birds and lilies are an example for the followers of Christ...According to Jesus, bread is not to be valued as the reward for work; he speaks instead of the carefree simplicity of the person who walks with him and accepts everything as it comes from God.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

PRELUDE “Andante espressivo” Flor Peeters

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kathi Koegle, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

Jesus says:

Look at the birds of the air.

Consider the lilies of the field.

In this hour, let us begin.

Let us open our senses.

Let us look and consider.

[Unison]

Let us worship God.

***HYMN 207 “How Lovely, Lord”**

How lovely, Lord, how lovely

is your abiding place;

my soul is longing, fainting,

to feast upon your grace.

The sparrow finds a shelter,

a place to build her nest,

and so your temple calls us

with in its walls to rest.

In your blest courts to worship,

O God, a single day

is better than a thousand

if I from you should stray.

I'd rather keep the entrance

and claim you as my Lord

than revel in the riches

the ways of sin afford.

A sun and shield forever

are you, O Lord Most High;

you shower us with blessings;

no good will you deny.

The saints, your grace receiving,

from strength to strength shall go,

and from their life shall rivers

of blessing overflow.

***OPENING PRAYER**

We come into your presence, God, acknowledging we are anxious people. Each of us brings our own worries and fears. We confess we spend most of our time worried about what we will eat and drink and what we will wear. Help us to take up your invitation to find life is

more than these things. Help us to consider the living things around us and to take in the care by which you uphold them. Give us the grace to understand that we enjoy this same care.

Yet, you see we have real trouble in our lives. Help us to listen you and to practice taking on only the trouble we find today. From this, give us the freedom to put our minds on others and to discover your realm. Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#286, vs. 1 & 4)

**Give to the winds your fears,
hope and be undismayed;
God hears your sighs and counts your tears;
God shall lift up your head.**

**On God the Lord rely,
And safe shall you go on;
Fix on Gods work your steadfast eye,
So shall your work be done.**

ANTHEM "Lead Me On" Brian Schmidt

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory "Lento" Flor Peeters

*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

CHILDRENS MESSAGE

(At this time, children are dismissed to attend Children's Church.)

SCRIPTURE LESSON Isaiah 49:8-16a

PSALM 37

Put your trust in the Lord and do good;
dwell in the land and feed on its riches.

**Take delight in the Lord,
who shall give you your heart's desire.**

Commit your way to the Lord; put your trust in the Lord,
who will bring it to pass.

**The Lord will make your righteousness as clear as the light
and your just dealing as the noonday.**

Be still before the Lord;

wait patiently for the Lord.

**Refrain from anger, leave rage alone;
do not fret yourself; it leads only to evil.**

In a little while the wicked shall be no more;
you shall search out their place, but they will not be there.

**But the meek shall inherit the land;
they will delight in abundant prosperity.**

The deliverance of the righteous comes from the Lord,
who is their refuge in time of trouble.

**The Lord will help them and rescue them;
the Lord will rescue and deliver them,
because in the Lord they seek refuge.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 6:25-34

SERMON “Today’s Troubles Are Enough”

* HYMN (insert) “Now Quit Your Care” (vs. 1, 2, 4, & 5)

**Now quit your care and anxious fear and worry;
For schemes are vain and fretting brings no gain;
Lent calls to prayer, to trust and dedication;
God brings new beauty nigh.
Reply, reply, reply with love to Love most high.**

**To bow the head in sackcloth and in ashes,
Or rend the soul--- such grief is not Lent's goal;
But to be led to where God's glory flashes,
His beauty to come near.
Make clear, make clear, make clear where truth and light appear.**

**For righteousness And peace will show their faces
To those who feed The hungry in their need,
And wrongs redress, Who build the old waste places,
And in the darkness shine.
Divine, divine, Divine it is when all combine!**

**Then shall your light Break forth as doth the morning;
Your health shall spring, The friends you make shall bring
God's glory bright, Your way through life adorning;
And love shall be the prize.
Arise, arise, Arise! and make a paradise!**

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE “Allegro maestoso” Flor Peeters

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

TODAY

- ❖ Choir Rehearsal 9:00 am
- No Church School
- Adult Education 9:15 am
- Worship Service 10:15 am
- Choir Rehearsal 11:30 am

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY

- ❖ Church Office Closed

MONDAY

- ❖ Serving at Hope Lodge 5:30 pm

WEDNESDAY

- ❖ Pastoral Support Committee 10:00 am

THURSDAY

- ❖ Women’s Lunch, Basta 11:45 am
- Staff Meeting Noon

SATURDAY

- ❖ Men’s Breakfast, Waterfront Hy-Vee 8:00 am

NEXT SUNDAY

- ❖ Church School Breakfast
- Choir Rehearsal 9:00 am
- Christian Education 9:15 am
- Worship Service 10:15 am
- Choir Rehearsal 11:30 am

WE'RE GLAD THAT YOU HAVE JOINED US FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING.

Everyone is invited to Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall after worship.

PLEASE NOTE—Jenn Harden will be on vacation from Monday through Wednesday this week.

IMPORTANT DATES IN LENT AND EASTER

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.

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

HOPE LODGE: Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be tomorrow, 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

CONGREGATIONAL UCC MEMBER, 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.

OUR UPPER SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSROOM HAS A VERY SPACIOUS CORNER AVAILABLE thanks to the Brock Family Music Company. Their Steinway trained piano movers work all across the United States. They were able to safely move and recycle our upright Schaefer piano. Theresa Brock said "We will be sure to find it a good heavenly home." We also give many thanks to Peter Bloesch who donated the much needed Clavinova that now takes the place of the Schaefer. Sally Strang, C.E. Chair

SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE—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.

LOOK FOR THIS YEAR'S LENTEN DEVOTIONAL arriving daily in your In Box. Each day brings a new reflection on words from the Sermon on the Mount from a member or friend of Congregational UCC. Thanks to Patte Henderson and Bryan Clemons for coordinating this project of the Diaconate. If you are not receiving these, please contact Bill Lovin or the church office to be put on the list.

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 100 giving churches. In a world where communities are being displaced by the catastrophes of war, famine, and natural disaster, our congregation joins with many others in standing in faith, hope, and love with those who seek to move beyond the trauma of displacement toward the promise of healing and peace. Your generous gift will support the relief work of not only the UCC but also many other denominations united in caring for refugees, in providing medical care, and in disaster recovery efforts. Let us join in this great tradition and give generously.

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.*

A NEW MEMBER CLASS will be held after Easter. If you are interested in joining Congregational UCC or would like to know more about us, we invite you to attend these sessions. For more information, please talk with Bill Lovin or call the church office, 337-4301.

PLEASE HELP WITH PARKING IN THE CHURCH LOT: Several people currently have mobility issues and need to park in our small parking lot on Jefferson St. If you are able, please park elsewhere so that the marked and unmarked spaces can be used by those who need them. Thanks.

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.

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 (319-337-4301) know right away. Thanks.

USHERS, GREETERS, AND HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES: There are still some 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.

RELAX HAVE FUN ENJOY LIFE LIVE IN CHRIST

On Sunday mornings during Lent, I'm leading the 9:15 adult education time, delving into sections of the Sermon on the Mount, using brief videos from the New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine to start our discussion. I would like to offer this study at another time as well—possibly Wednesday at noon—for those who can't make the Sunday morning sessions. If you're interested in that, please talk with me after worship.

Let us center our hearts, our minds, and our spirits. Let us worship God.

For the Choir:

Your ways are not our ways, O God. Your thoughts are not our thoughts. Help us
to see

that to be low is to be high,

that the broken heart is the healed heart,

that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit,

that to have nothing is to possess all,

that to give is to receive,

In so doing, may we find

your light in our darkness;

your joy in our sorrow,

your grace in our sin,

your riches in our poverty,

your life in our death.

Amen.

[At the beginning of worship—before you say anything else, before the announcements—say:]

**“God’s love and mercy are fresh every morning,
as sure as the sunrise.”**

[Welcome everyone, especially visitors, students, and those joining us online. Introduce yourself and greet the congregation in your own words. Invite people to stand and greet one another.]

Call attention to the announcements in the bulletin.

I will have a few announcements.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus says:

“You are the salt of the earth.

You are the light of the world.”

We come to maintain that savor.

We come to rekindle that light.

[Unison]

We come to worship God.

*HYMN 454 “Blessed Jesus, at Your Word”

*OPENING PRAYER

As this day and week begin, O God, help us to see the new things you are doing in our lives and in the world.

When we are worn out by what is immediately in front of us, lift our eyes toward the horizon, that we might see the possibility of your realm before us.

When we are held back by what we have done or failed to do, remind us of your forgiveness and put a new spirit within us.

When we are unsure of where we are going, give us strength to follow in the ways of Jesus Christ.

Accept our prayers and our worship as you have accepted us. Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#223, vs. 1)

**O my soul, bless your Redeemer;
All within me, bless God's Name;
Bless the Savior, and forget not
All God's mercies to proclaim.**

[The Psalm this morning is a hymn, so after the congregational response you may leave the chancel and sit with the congregation.]

Gracious God, we call upon you to open our eyes and hearts to your Word and your Spirit today, so that we may be able to discern your guiding voice and to seek to be your faithful servants. Stir our imaginations and help us to share your love in word and in deed. Amen.

The first lesson comes from Amos, chapter 5.

In a time of great territorial expansion and national prosperity for Israel, during which the military security and economic affluence were taken by many as signs of God's favor, Amos came on the scene preaching harsh words in a smooth season. He denounced Israel and its neighbors for reliance on military might and shallow, meaningless piety.

This book was written after Amos was expelled from the royal sanctuary at Bethel and commanded not to prophesy there again.

Here Amos reinterprets the idea of the "Day of the Lord" as a time of judgment not only against the enemies of Israel but also against Israel itself and calls the people to the way of justice.

Listen for the Word of God speaking to you.

The second lesson comes from Matthew, chapter 5.

On these Sundays in Lent, we're taking some time to listen to the teachings of Jesus commonly called the Sermon on the Mount, found in chapter 5 through 7 of the Gospel of Matthew. In this section Jesus speaks about the characteristics of those who follow him and of their witness in the world.

One of the great joys and privileges that we have as a congregation is to share our concerns and celebrations with one another, to bear one another's burdens, and in all this to show love for one another. You are invited to use the book at the entrance to the sanctuary to add to requests for prayer.

God our Creator and Redeemer and Sustainer, we stand in awe before your wondrous. We praise you for your greatness; yet even more we rejoice that you do not forget us, that you search us and know us, that you come to care for us, your new creation in Jesus Christ. Trusting in your goodness and compassion we come to you in prayer.

At times, O God, we are like strangers on this earth, taken aback by all the violence, the harsh oppositions. We pray for those who are refugees, driven from their homes by warfare, violence, or human greed. We pray for those who live among gunfire and bomb blasts. Guide the leaders of nations in ways of compassion. Like a gentle breeze, breathe upon us the Spirit of peace. Transfigure the deserts of our doubts, and prepare us to be bearers of reconciliation.

At times we despair for our country, disturbed by the animosity and contentiousness that seems to grow daily. Help us to respect neighbors whose views differ from ours, so that without partisan anger, we may work out issues that divide us and serve the common welfare.

At times we are reluctant to call ourselves "Christian," troubled by the actions of some who claim that name. We pray for your church throughout the world. May we live in the power of the resurrection. May your Spirit work within us the redemption and reconciliation of all things. Keep us in your peace.

At all times, O God, we are grateful that we can come to you with our inner thoughts, our sad discouragements, and our heartfelt dreams, and find you here to listen, to forgive, and to renew us. Hear us as we pray in the silence.

[Silent prayer]

Hear our prayers, God of grace, and help us to fulfill them, working according to your purpose, in peace, justice, and mercy, in all that we do; through Jesus Christ, who teaches us to pray together: "Our Father..." Amen.

Heaven and earth are yours, O God,
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share:
ourselves, our time, and our possessions.
Use us and what we bring before you
to feed the world with your love;
through Jesus Christ. Amen.