



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
January 2025



Friends in Christ:

Martin Luther once spoke of the coming of Christ as “the wonderful exchange.” Our wretchedness for God’s blessedness.

I do hope that you got what you wanted for Christmas. Even if not, we can take some comfort in the hope of the old song: “Sometimes, you get *what you need*.”

Our wretchedness for God’s blessedness. The wonderful exchange.

The good news of Christmas is that God has indeed given us what we need. God has fulfilled, if not our “Christmas wishes” at least our deepest hopes. The wholeness, the fullness of life that God brings in Jesus Christ might not be what we wanted—but it is what we need.

For years I have carried in my Bible a prayer that was written by an unknown Civil War soldier.

I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for health that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of human beings.
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I had asked for,
but everything that I had hoped for.

Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered;
I am, among all people, most richly blessed.

I do hope that you got what you wanted for Christmas.

But the good news that we celebrate in these days—and really, all year long—is the reality that we do indeed get what we need—God with us, Emmanuel.

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.

Christian Ed News:

2024

CONGREGATIONAL UCC IOWA CITY

THANK YOU!!!

Friends & Families



THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT WAS AMAZING!

Thank you to each one of our youth for showing up in various ways - we are so grateful for each and every one of you. Your participation was energetic and true to yourselves, and you brought the congregation so much joy!

JANUARY NEWS & BEYOND

Sunday School resumes January 5- celebrate the epiphany and our traditional cutting of the Three Kings' Day cake.

Monday, January 20 Meet your Congregational UCC friends at 8:30 at Java House for hot chocolate! We will walk from there to UAY to join our community in the annual MLK Jr. Day PEACE march!

Save the Date February 23: UCC hosts youth group Hide & Go Seek theme!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

WATCH OUT FOR EMAIL AND TEXT SCAMS

In November, several members received a text stating it was from “Rev. William Lovin” and asking them for a favor—apparently buying some gift cards. This is a common scam that has previously targeted some of our members, as well as members of other congregations.



Please know that Bill will never send anyone a text or an email asking for a “favor,” for gift cards, or the like. Always check the email address before replying to suspicious emails; if it isn’t from “@uccic.org,” it is a fake email address. And the main phone number Bill uses is the church’s landline: 319-337-4301. Any other number with a suspicious request is another indication of a scam.



EPIPHANY CELEBRATION ON JANUARY 5.

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 5. 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 26

The Annual Meeting of the Congregational United Church of Christ will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 26, 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 12.



THE MISSION BOARD ANNUAL ALTERNATIVE GIVING FAIR was a great success – due to you, our buyers, sellers, and volunteer church members. Thank you to the creative people who offered their work: Jo Benda, Robin Chambers, Martha Ann Crawford, and Hope Spragg. Thank you to Kathy Fait and John Fuller for continuing their Share the Harvest through a cold autumn season. Thank you to Ginny Clemons for her lovely calligraphy on the Heifer cards. Thank you to our other volunteers at the tables: Chuck Dayton, Jane Kinney, Linda Muston, and Julie Wittig. And a big thank you to John and Sharyn Reitz for coordinating all of this. The result? We sent over \$3,250 to the Heifer Project, exceeding all previous years, and \$382 to Church World Service. Locally, we sent \$820 from the craft sales and \$1051.95 from Share the Harvest to the CommUnity Food Bank, and \$257.50 to the Immigrant Welcome Network – a total of \$4,636.45 going out into the community and the larger world.

CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING UPDATE: We’ve received over \$2,000 for the Christmas Fund. 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.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES WELCOME 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 5 -February 23 in Rockwood Hall at 9:15 a.m. And because Lent starts so late this year (Ash Wednesday is March 5), there will be a special bonus session on Sunday, March 2!

- January 5 **Shelter House**
Christine Hayes, Director of Development
- January 12 **Free Medical Clinic**
Lisa Steigleder, Director of Development & Marketing
- January 19 **Healing Prairie Farm**
Heather Bopp, Director
- January 26 **Iowa City Free Lunch Program**
Diane Platte, Co-Director
- February 2 **Little Creations Academy**
Kaitelyn McQuown, Director
- February 9 **Immigrant Welcome Network**
Mazahir Sahir, Executive Director
- February 16 **Dream City**
Fred Newell, Pastor of The Purpose Place and Founder/Director of Dream City
- February 23 &
March 2 **How Our Mission Money Is Used**
John Reitz



FIVE NEW MEMBERS JOINED OUR CONGREGATION IN NOVEMBER

Rick and Robin Chambers are known to many here already. Rick is a semi-retired electrical contractor who operates a small business that has taken care of our building’s electrical needs for decades. He teaches continuing education classes to electricians statewide. He also plays drums and sings in three bands. Robin is a retired librarian and educator who enjoys sewing, handiwork, cooking, baking, reading, music, and meeting new people.

Jean Koch grew up in LeSueur, MN, moved to Spirit Lake as a freshman in high school, attended the University of Dubuque, and graduated with a B.A. degree in Education from the UI. She taught first grade, raised children, and then worked in the Trust Department at U.S. Bank for 22 years. In “retirement” Jean worked as a receptionist at Oaknoll for 20 years and then retired again at 80.

Nathan Peters and Torie Tann have been married for four years. Nathan is an attorney for Johnson County. He’s an avid fan of Minnesota United, local foods, and outdoor adventures with Torie. He ads that “She sometimes drags me to dance events.” Torie is a psychiatrist at UIHC. Born in Columbus, she went to “THE Ohio State University” and is both a Buckeye and an Hawkeye. She enjoys spending time outside, cooking, film, and dancing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



OUR NEXT HOPE LODGE DINNER WILL BE MONDAY, JANUARY 20. 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.

ADVENT LUNCH—DECEMBER 8

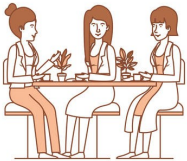
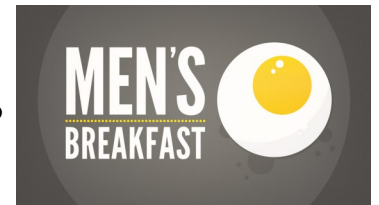
After glorious music from the choir during worship, 115 members and friends gathered in Rockwood Hall for our annual Advent Lunch. It was a great time for everyone. A big thanks goes to the Membership Board and all who helped them make this such a wonderful event: Sue Dayton, Rick and Phyllis Ruppert, Kathi Koegle and Kevin Richards, Vicki Thomae, Jean Koch, Edie Robers, Nathan Peters and Torie Tann, Chuck Dayton, Marcy Kuchenmeister, Martha Ann Crawford, Pam Willard, Joyce Myer.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

MEN'S BREAKFAST—JANUARY 18

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!



THE WOMEN'S LUNCH WILL BE HELD on January 16th at Thai Spice in IC. Call or text Martha Ann Crawford—319-855-8340—to reserve a seat.



**SEE SOMETHING
SAY SOMETHING**

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, Bea Hicks, know right away. You can reach Bea at (301) 775-1431 or at beacuz@gmail.com. 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 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.

UPDATE

Results of the Fall Diaper Drive for CommUnity Food Bank

Thanks to everyone who participated in the fall diaper drive for CommUnity Food Bank. Through your donations and efforts, over 2000 diapers and 40 packages of baby wipes were collected and delivered to the Food Bank. The church also received \$195 in donations that the Mission Board used to purchase additional diapers which helped extend our diaper deliveries into November and December. By supporting this drive, you made a difference in our community and in the lives of many local families in need.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE IOWA LEGISLATURE THIS UPCOMING SESSION?

The Mission Board LGBTQ Subcommittee is continuing the “We Are Still Learning” series Sunday, January 12, 2025. **Senator Zach Wahls** will give a preview of the upcoming state legislature session for everyone interested during an expanded coffee hour in Rockwood Hall at 11:30. Senator Wahls represents Senate District 43 which includes Coralville, North Liberty, Solon and part of western Iowa City and rural northeast Johnson County. Zach has served in this post since 2018. The West High, University of Iowa, and Princeton grad lives in Coralville with his wife Chloe and their son Elijah.

Zach grew up in a non-traditional family and has served as an advocate for Iowans who do not always have a voice. He is widely respected for sharing his experiences with a bestselling book, presentations, and continued advocacy for LGBTQ people. He will share with us the major issues anticipated in the next legislative session and include the special concerns for threatened populations.

Plan to stay after the 10:15 worship service to meet with Senator Wahls and get some insight into the 2025 happenings in Des Moines. For more information on Senator Wahls:

<https://www.senate.iowa.gov/senator/wahls/>



FREE LUNCH PROGRAM NEWS

Providing Good Food and Hospitality since 1983

Our church served 157 lunches at the Free Lunch Program on Monday, December 30, 2024.

Thank you so much to all who volunteered by donating food: Dianne Atkins, Chuck & Sue Dayton, Diane Duncan-Goldsmith, Randee Fieselmann, Betsy Henson, Donna Hirst, Cynthia Kemp, Linda Muston, Connie Parsons and Rebecca Weatherford

Additional thanks to Diane Dahl-McCoy, John Fieselmann, John Fuller, Betsy Henson, Kathi Koegle, John Reitz, Kevin Richards, Edie Roberts and Rick Ruppert for their valuable onsite support.

Our next scheduled serving date is Monday, March 31, 2025!

Vicki Thomae

CHURCH CALENDAR

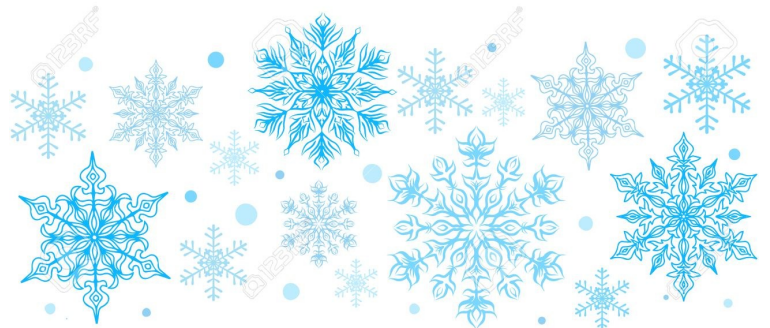
January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5 - 9:00 Choir Ensemble Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	6	7 -CE Board, 7:00pm - Mission Board, 7:00pm	8	9	10	11
12 -9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	13	14	15	16 - Women's Lunch @ Thai Spice in IC, 11:45am	17	18 - Men's Breakfast @ Waterfront HyVee, 8:00 am
19 - 9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	20 - Hope Lodge, 5:30pm	21 -Membership Board, 5:30pm - Deacons meeting, 7pm - Trustees, 7pm	22	23	24	25
26 - 9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service -Annual Meeting, after worship	27	28 - Council Meeting, 7pm	29	30	31	

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

CELEBRATING JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1/7 Olivia Groff
- 1/8 Bryan Clemons
- 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



ARTICLES FOR THE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER
are due to the office by Monday, January 20th.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

JANUARY 2025 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:

Interim Director of CE

Music Director

Organist

Children's Choir Director

Office Manager

Financial Secretary

Custodians:

The Rev. William Lovin

Hope Spragg

Dr. Chris Nakielski

Bill Crouch

Rachel Burchett

Jenn Harden

Sharyn Huriaux Reitz

Douglas Herrera

Claudia Landaverde

uccicrev@uccic.org

c.nakielski@cornellcollege.edu

Contact the Office

uccicadmin@uccic.org

sharynreitz@gmail.com

Contact the Office

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