



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
February 2025



Friends in Christ:

As January came to an end, and our nation was reeling in the tumultuous post-inauguration days, there was a lot of talk about the plea for mercy from Episcopalian bishop, the Right Rev. Mariann Budde, during the prayer service at the National Cathedral on the day after the inauguration. She spoke from the “Canterbury Pulpit” in the cathedral, which, on its front has a stone carving of a disgruntled King John as he is forced to sign the Magna Carta, marking the first time power was taken from a king and given to the people.

“Millions have put their trust in you,” Budde said, addressing the President, “and, as you told the nation yesterday, you have felt the providential hand of a loving God. In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now.” There were words of appreciation, even praise, for what she said. There were also words of condemnation from many, including from the President himself. In our divided nation and in our free nation, we should expect this.

What struck me in the discussion of all of this was an article in *The New York Times* reporting that those words “electrif[ied] some liberal churchgoers in an era dominated by conservative versions of Christianity.” The title of the article stated: “Some Protestants Felt Invisible. Then Came Bishop Budde.” Liberal Christianity does not make it into the news very often. We liberal Christians might feel invisible because we often make ourselves that way, ignoring the advice of Jesus as we hide our light under a bushel basket.

At Congregational UCC, one of our callings is to make ourselves visible—to show the community around us that we are people who show the mercy, love, and acceptance of God to all people. We are liberal Christians who recognize the intrinsic worth of each individual, in whom we see the image of God; who honor and seek to protect human dignity; who seek to create a culture of tolerance, solidarity, and the equal enjoyment of individual rights in our city, state, and nation. Again, that doesn’t get a lot of press, so we have to make it known ourselves.

For several months last year, our Jefferson St. sign carried the message: “The Liberal Church You Have Been Looking For.” That says much about who we are. As recently as the last Sunday in January, a visitor to worship told me they are looking for a liberal congregation. Here we are.

The old hymn, “Jesus Calls Us” was left out of our hymnal. (Don’t get me started.) It tells us, “Jesus calls us o’er the tumult of our life’s wild restless sea....saying “Christian, follow me.” Let us continue to follow in ways that show others a way of faithful living that the media often misses or ignores or avoids.

Peace,

Bill

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christian Ed News:

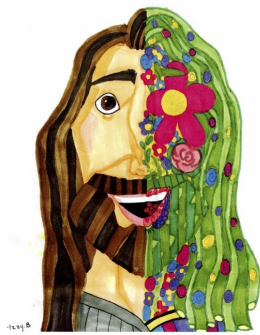


February News Children & Youth Christian Education

February Special Events	
Sunday, Feb. 9	5-8 PM Superbowl Party & Potluck @First Presbyterian Church 2701 Rochester Ave. 52245
Sunday, Feb. 23	Children's Choir performs during worship All children invited to participate
Sunday, Feb. 23	4-7 PM Youth Group Rockwood Hall/Dinner Provided

Special Announcements

Art Contest



The Climate Hope Art Contest that Izzy Brown won honorable mention for last year is sponsored by the National UCC Center for Environmental Justice. This year's theme is "Planting Seeds of Hope".

Sunday school lessons in February will feature stories and reflections on finding/creating hope in sustainability.

Artwork may be on 9" x 12" or 8.5" x 11" any type of surface that can be scanned. Submit your artwork to Hope Spragg by March 7.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christian Ed News, cont'd:

February Youth Group: 5th grade-high school

Sunday, February 23 from 4-7 PM, we will host our friends from 1st Presbyterian here at our church for supper, highly anticipated games and fellowship! Discover the nooks and crannies of our big beautiful church with a game of hide-and-seek.

Nursery/Sunday School/Children's Church

normal schedule all Sundays in February

High schoolers are welcome to help in the younger classroom or participate in the middle school Sunday school. We'd love to have you!

Nursery	Sunday School	Children's Church/Choir
Open 9 AM -worship &/or adult choir rehearsal	9:15 Breakfast served in class Pre-K -4th upstairs 5th-Middle School downstairs	10:15 Pre-K-High school Begin in worship/dismissed after children's message

Sunday School Breakfast

This year, we've been pleased to offer breakfast to our children and youth in classrooms, during Sunday School hours. We offer a light breakfast that includes a regular stock of packaged items. In an effort to reduce single-use packaging and processed foods, we are looking for volunteer help to provide freshly baked or cooked breakfast items and/or fresh fruit. Items can be dropped off before Sunday, labeled and placed in the refrigerator (we will make serve-ready by heating, cutting or slicing) or brought the day @9 AM. Thank you for considering! Here is a sign-up genius to help: [Click this link for the sign-up!](#)

Camp Stronghold

We are VERY excited about this opportunity for our middle school age youth! We are invited to join the youth groups from First Presbyterian and Saint Andrew this summer: June 8-13 (Sunday-Friday) in Oregon, IL along the Rock River just south of Rockford, IL. Camp Stronghold is a Presbyterian camp housed in a 1930's castle on 360 acres including a swimming pool. Activities include Bible studies, singing, night games, skits and more! Cost is \$525 for the week and we plan on creatively funding partial scholarships for families and depending on interest, transportation will be included from the church. Link to brochure: [Click here for Camp Stronghold brochure](#). This is a wonderful opportunity we hope you will consider! Fun fact: Ask the Strangs about the history of the camp!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES WELCOME MISSION PARTNERS DURING 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 in February in Rockwood Hall at 9:15 a.m. as we continue our series of guest speakers. And because Lent starts so late this year (Ash Wednesday is March 5), there will be a special bonus session on Sunday, March 2!

- 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 & **How Our Mission Money Is Used**
March 2 John Reitz

WOMEN'S READING GROUP STARTS FEBRUARY 1

Women of the church are invited to attend the Women's Reading Group tea on Saturday, February 1 from 10:30 to noon in Rockwood Hall. The Christian Education Board has approved Jan Robertson's book, *In the Sanctuary of Women* for our first read. It will be introduced at the tea by Rebecca Weatherford. We will conduct a survey of attendees to determine the most convenient day and time to meet thereafter. RSVP to attend by phone, text, or email to Rebecca Weatherford, weatherfordr1776@gmail.com or 319-621-6862.





SOUPER BOWL OF CARING—SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9

The big contest on February 9 is the daily struggle against food insecurity and hunger here in Iowa City and across our nation. After worship on that Sunday, we will participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring, a grassroots effort that has been raising money for local hunger relief for over 30 years. Whether you're watching the Big Game and eating some of the 65 million avocados that Americans will eat or not, we encourage you to join in putting some money in the soup kettles that the young people of our congregation will have both upstairs and downstairs after worship. The original request with this project was to give \$1.00 if you're watching the game. This year, whether you're watching or not, please give whatever you'd like. All money will go to the CommUnity Crisis Center Food Pantry.

LOOK AHEAD TO LENT AND EASTER

Easter is last this year—and that means a late start to the season of Lent.
Ash Wednesday is March 5.
The First Sunday in Lent is March 9.
Palm Sunday is April 13.
Easter is April 20.
A full schedule of Lent and Easter events will be printed in the March newsletter.



WRITE A REFLECTION FOR THE LENT DEVOTIONAL



Each year during Lent, members and friends write reflections that are shared with the congregation and the larger community. We're inviting you to write a short, one paragraph reflection on a particular Biblical text—we'll provide the text, you'll provide the reflection. If you are interested in being a part of this or have any questions, please contact Bill at uccicrev@uccic.org or call the church office at 337-4301 or call Patte Henderson at 594-7185 or Bryan Clemons at 330-7882.

Lent begins on Wednesday, March 5. Easter is Sunday, April 20.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

ASH WEDNESDAY SOUP SUPPER AND WORSHIP SERVICE BEGIN THE SEASON OF LENT ON MARCH 5

On Wednesday, March 5, our Board of Christian Education will host a soup supper in Rockwood Hall from 6-7 p.m. Bring your family and friends and join others for a light meal, good company, and good conversation. It will help with planning if you sign up on the sheet in Rockwood Hall or call the church office (337-4301) to let us know how many will attend.

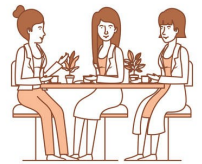
After eating, we will hold our Ash Wednesday worship service in the sanctuary at 7:00. This will be a time of music and song, scripture and prayer, and the distribution of ashes for those who want them. The worship service is designed for people of all ages.

Easter is Sunday, April 20, this year.

WOMEN'S LUNCH—FEBRUARY

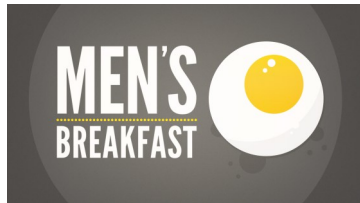
The February women's lunch will be held on February 20th at Tabooleh in Coralville at 12:00pm.

Call or text Martha Ann Crawford—319-855-8340—to reserve a seat.



MEN'S BREAKFAST—FEBRUARY 15

The February Men's Breakfast will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 18, 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!



THANKS!

Dear Congregational UCC—

Thank you, guys, for all your thoughts and prayers. I appreciate how you guys helped and supported me getting back on my feet after the hurricane. Thanks to the congregation I was able to get a new bed and dresser and couch. Thank you again. It means the world to me.

--Sylvia Woolums



THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED WITH the Hope Lodge dinner on Monday, January 20: Hope and Peter Sprague, Marsha Lowe, Ginny and Bryan Clemons, Diane Dahl-McCoy, Dianne Atkins and Andy Bertolatus, Rebecca Weatherford, Darcie Hutzell and Fielding Woolums, Shelagh Hayreh, Ann Molsberry, Linda and Ray Muston, and Sue and Chuck Dayton. Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be March 17.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE MARCH 8-9 860 QUARRY ROAD



Mark your calendars for Shelter House's biggest fundraiser of the year—the 2025 Book Sale! This two-day sale will be hosted on Saturday, March 8 and Sunday, March 9 from 10:30 am—4:00 pm both days at 860 Quarry Road (the old Antique Car Museum) in Coralville.

Each year, Shelter House creates a wonderland of adventure, mystery, and curiosity at the annual Book Sale. Tens of thousands of used books are generously donated by members of the community and sold at low prices to support Shelter House's lifesaving work. This is truly a community fundraiser, as so many community members like you donate books, volunteer their time, and shop for treasures at the Book Sale.

If you have gently used books, CDs, DVDs, vinyl records, and puzzles, you can drop those off during off at 860 Quarry Road in Coralville **starting Sunday, February 2**. Donation times will be *Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays* from 10:00 am-2:00 pm, and *Sundays from 2:00 pm-4:00 pm* from February 2 until the week of the sale. Now is the time to start going through your bookshelves and deciding which books you'll return to and which books have served their purpose and are ready to inform or entertain another lucky reader. If you have many books to donate, you can take them directly to the site. **YOU CAN ALSO BRING BOOKS TO THE CHURCH AND DROP THEM OFF IN ROCKWOOD HALL AND JOHN FIESELMANN OR DONNA HIRST CAN TAKE THEM FOR YOU.**

[Click here](#) for all you need to know about the 2025 Book Sale!

Shelter House could never do a Book Sale of this scale and scope without the help of their wonderful volunteers. 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 today at bit.ly/booksale2025.

please note

A MESSAGE FROM LAURA HUNTER, DIRECTOR, OUTREACH & ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS, FREE LUNCH PROGRAM

In just the few months as the new Director of Outreach and Administrative Operations at Iowa City's Free Lunch Program, I've already been amazed by the generosity of our community. Because of donations like yours, we've been able to provide **an average of**

3,466 meals each month for the past 6 months. Your steadfast commitment is vital to sustaining our work.

Here are several ways that you can see the impact of your contributions right now:

Watch a brief video produced by City Channel 4 that **showcases our work and the lives you're touching.**

- **Visit us on-site** (if you haven't yet) to experience the impact of your generosity in person—we'd be thrilled to show you around!

Explore our website to learn more about our **history and our mission.**

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for more updates and to see how your contribution is making a direct impact on our mission.

Thank you for believing in our mission to provide an open door, a full plate, no questions asked.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

TIME FOR ACTION: IMMIGRATION ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT LETTER FROM IOWA'S ECUMENICAL LEADERS

To our migrant siblings in Christ:

As we celebrate the life and witness of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, and his call to beloved community, we stand with our Catholic colleagues in extending to you our prayers, our solidarity and our witness in these trying times. We are aware of the uncertainty, fear and threat you face as migrants, immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. We want you to know that you are loved and valued by God and by us. You are not alone.

We are neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Together, we are part of the household of God. Despite the harmful rhetoric we hear, we are all made in God's image and precious and honored in God's sight (Isaiah 43:4). We recognize and are thankful for the immense gifts contributed to the collective culture and shared experience.

As members of the Body of Christ, we stand together, reminding our nation of its historic commitments to human rights. We will renew our commitment to live out God's second greatest commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). We will work to protect inherent dignity and insist on fair, lawful and compassionate treatment of everyone. All of us in the Church of Jesus Christ are sojourners, "For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come," (Hebrews 13:14). We invite all people of Iowa to join us in sojourning with you in ways that are just and respectful of our shared humanity. May God bless you and give you peace as we walk together this common journey.

In Christ,

Rev. Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai, bishop of the Iowa Annual Conference and Illinois Great Rivers Conference of the United Methodist Church

Rev. Amy Current, bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Rt. Rev. Betsey Monnot, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa

Rev. Roberto Ochoa, conference minister of the Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ

Rev. Kendy Miller, associate conference minister of the Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ

Rev. Lorna H. Halaas, bishop of the Western Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Ian McMullen, executive presbyter, Presbytery of Des Moines, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Elder Amgad Beblawi, ministry and mission executive, Presbytery of Des Moines, Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Kevin Jones, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The resources compiled by [ELCA AMMPARO](#) can help communities stay generally informed, prepared and united in support of immigrant neighbors.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



2025 NIGHT OF 1000 DINNERS

Congregational UCC members and friends are invited to attend the **2025 Night of 1000 Dinners**, hosted by the Johnson County United Nations Association. This community celebration of International Women's Day will be held Thursday, March 6, 6:00-8:00 at the Unitarian Universalist Society.

Theme. Sustainable Development Goal #3 "Good Health and Well-Being." The event will honor and raise funds for two local groups and an international project. The honored groups serve the health and well-being of refugees and immigrants, both here in Johnson County and in Africa. Net proceeds will support JCUNA's educational work as well as Free Medical and Dental Clinic, Prairielands Freedom Fund, Healthy Start for Refugee Children, and will recognize the Coralville Public Library for its services to refugees/immigrants.

The event will include an international buffet, entertainment by local performers from varied cultural traditions and recognition of the honored groups. Our congregation has 5 free tickets. Contact Donna Hirst (donna-hirst@uiowa.edu), member of the event steering committee, if you'd like to attend.

SEE SOMETHING—SAY SOMETHING: If you notice something in the building that needs attention—possums in the pews, racoons in Rockwood, a leaky faucet, a loose railing, etc.—please let the church office know right away. Thanks.



**SEE SOMETHING
SAY SOMETHING**



USHERS, GREETERS, AND HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES: Eash Sunday morning brings 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.

CHURCH CALENDAR

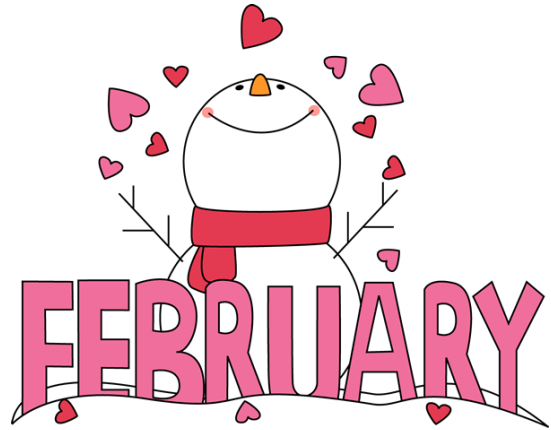
February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 - Women's Reading Group, 10:30am
2 - 9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	3	4 -CE Board, 7:00pm - Stewardship Board, 7:00pm - Mission Board, 7:00pm	5	6	7	8
9 -9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	10	11	12	13	14	15 - Men's Breakfast @ Waterfront HyVee, 8:00 am
16 - 9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	17	18 - Deacons meeting, 7pm - Trustees, 7pm	19	20 - Women's Lunch @ Tabooleh in Coralville, 12:00 pm	21	22
23 - 9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service - Youth Group with First Presbyterian	24	25 - Council Meeting, 7pm	26	27	28	

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

CELEBRATING FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2/3	Beth Parker
2/11	McKenzie Brown
2/13	Steve Bowers
2/14	Laura Gabel
2/15	Sharyn Reitz
2/23	Ethan Buck
2/24	Eugene Buck
2/25	Andrew Gabel
2/27	Niki Neems
2/28	Tom Mittman



ARTICLES FOR THE MARCH NEWSLETTER
are due to the office by Monday, February 17th.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FEBRUARY 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

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