



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

WORSHIP FOR NOVEMBER 24, 2024
TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
THANKSGIVING SUNDAY

Welcome to Congregational UCC. We are glad that you are here this morning. While we affirm that God speaks to us in many ways, we ask that you silence your cell phone as you enter the sanctuary. Please use the time during the prelude to quietly prepare for worship.

“The greatest thing is to give thanks for everything. The one who has learned this knows what it means to live. That person has penetrated the whole mystery of life: giving thanks for everything.”

Albert Schweitzer

PRELUDE “Now Thank We All Our God” Gerhard Krapf

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kathi Koegle, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

* CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 100)

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship God with gladness;

come into God's presence with singing.

**Enter God's gates with thanksgiving,
and enter God's courts with praise.**

Give thanks to God, and bless God's name.

* HYMN (insert) "Heaven and Earth, and Sea and Air"

Heaven and earth, and sea and air,

All their Maker's praise declare;

Wake, my soul, awake and sing:

Now thy grateful praises bring.

See the glorious orb of day

Breaking through the clouds its way;

Moon and stars with silvery light

Praise God through the silent night.

See how God hath everywhere

Made this earth so rich and fair;

Hill and vale and fruitful land,

All things living, show God's hand.

God, great wonders workest thou!

To thy sway all creatures bow;

Write thou deeply in my heart

What I am, and what thou art.

*OPENING PRAYER AND LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

We give you thanks today, O God, for all the good that surrounds us. We recognize the many gifts of life—food, light, water, and air. We celebrate all that makes up our lives—the joy of using our minds, our hands, and our hearts. In whatever condition we find ourselves, we rejoice to be living on this earth and to be sharing our existence with all living things. We come before you in deep gratitude:

Give thanks to the Lord, who is good.

God's steadfast love endures forever.

Come, let us praise God joyfully.

Let us come to God with thanksgiving.

North: For the good world; for things great and small;
South: For seen and unseen splendors:
We give you thanks, O God.

North: For human life; for talking and moving and thinking together;
South: For common hopes and hardships shared throughout our lives:
We give you thanks, O God.

North: For work to do and strength to work;
South: For the exchange of good humor and encouragement:
We give you thanks, O God.

North: For bonds and connections with one another;
for family and friends;
South: For mutual forgiveness and burdens shared.
We give you thanks, O God.

North: For your help in times of doubt and sorrow;
South: For the healing in our diseases; for preserving us in temptation and danger:
We give you thanks, O God.

North: For the church into which we have been called;
South: For the good news we receive;
We give you thanks, O God.

Give thanks to the Lord, who is good.
**God's steadfast love endures forever,
and God's faithfulness to all generations. Amen.**

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#555 vs. 1 & 2)
**Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
Who, from our parents' arms, has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is our today.**

**O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in God's grace, and guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills in this world and the next.**

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Introductions: Rick and Robin Chambers, Jean Koch, Nathan Peters, Torie Tann

Owning the Covenant

**We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the Word and will of God. We
purpose to walk together in the ways of Jesus Christ, made known and to be made known**

to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the reign of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

Welcome of the Congregation

We welcome you with joy into the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hope and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

ANTHEM "For the Fruit of All Creation" setting by Hal Hopson

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 "Now Thank We All Our God" John Carter

*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

(The children are dismissed to Children's Church)

SCRIPTURE LESSON Habakkuk 3:17-19

SCRIPTURE LESSON I Thessalonians 5:12-28

SERMON "Three Ways Forward"

*HYMN 554 "Let All Things Now Living"

Let all things now living

A song of thanksgiving

To God our Creator triumphantly raise;

**Who fashioned and made us,
Protected and stayed us,
By guiding us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us,
Pure light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining forth in the night:
Till shadows have vanished
And darkness is banished,
As forward we travel from light into Light.**

**By law God enforces.
The stars in their courses,
The sun in its orbit obediently shine;
The hills and the mountains,
The rivers and fountains,
The depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.
We, too, should be voicing
Our love and rejoicing
With glad adoration, a song let us raise:
Till all things now living
Unite in thanksgiving,
To God in the highest, hosanna and praise.**

BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE “Now Thank We All Our God,” op. 135a no. 18 Max Reger

Litany of Thanksgiving, *Book of Common Worship*, Presbyterian Church USA, alt.

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Minister:	The Rev. Bill Lovin
Interim Director of CE:	Hope Spragg
Organist:	Bill Crouch
Choir Director:	Dr. Chris Nakielski
Children’s Choir Director:	Rachel Burchett
Office Manager:	Jenn Harden
Financial Manager	Sharyn Huriaux Reitz

WE’RE GLAD THAT YOU ARE WORSHIPPING WITH US THIS MORNING. Everyone is invited to Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall after worship.

	TODAY
❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Christian Education for All Ages	9:15 am

Worship Service	10:15 am
Special Music Choir Rehearsal	11:35 am

THURSDAY & FRIDAY

❖ CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

NEXT SUNDAY

❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
No Christian Education Classes	
Worship Service	10:15 am
First Sunday of Advent--Communion	
Special Music Choir Rehearsal	11:35 am

PLEASE NOTE: THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY of this week in celebration of Thanksgiving. Items for next Sunday's bulletin should be in the office by Tuesday, November 26.

GIVING TOGETHER, GROWING TOGETHER: The Christian life is lived together. We gather to worship, we work with each other in mission, we study in groups, we bear one another's burdens, and we talk and laugh together over coffee. We give together. We grow together. Please return your 2025 pledge card as soon as possible. Extra cards are available on the table outside of the sanctuary.

**MISSION BOARD ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIVING FAIR
DECEMBER 1st and 15th**

Be sure to visit our Alternative Christmas Giving Fair in Rockwood Hall after worship on December 1st and 15th. There will be Heifer Project animal gift cards bearing Ginny Clemons' graceful calligraphy and Church World Service "ornaments". Proceeds from Christmas cards, jewelry, and gift baskets donated by artists and craftspeople in our congregation will go to local community agencies. The Mitten Tree is awaiting your new or gently used mittens, scarves, and hats for the Joan Buxton School project. The Angel Tree will have request cards from the Salvation Army for children's toys and envelopes for a holiday meal donation distributed by CommUnity. Photo and picture frame sales will benefit our Church Endowment Fund. Contact John Reitz at 319-333-9588, john-reitz@uiowa.edu for information.

Come have a cup of coffee and browse!

ADVENT LUNCHEON: There is a sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall for the Advent Luncheon (potluck) which will be held on December 8 following worship and the Special Music presentation. Plan to be part of this all church event and a time for fellowship together.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS CAROLING for all ages on Dec. 15 from 4-7. The CE board will sponsor dinner in Rockwood Hall followed by Christmas Caroling. We are inviting First Presbyterian to join us for this festive event! We'll begin with supper & fellowship, followed by a brief caroling practice and then break into groups with addresses to visit church family & friends with the gift of song. Sign-up is in Rockwood Hall along with requests for favorite songs and suggestions of caroling destinations.

THE IOWA UCC CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS invites all members and churches the opportunity to meet and talk with the Tri-Conference candidate for Conference Minister, Rev. Roberto Ochoa. On Sunday, November 24th, there will be a **Meet and Greet** at 2:00 pm. We welcome you to come meet and speak with Rev. Ochoa in person at Grinnell UCC or join the conversation via Zoom. Here's the link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87021686684#success>. **Meeting ID:** 870 2168 6684.

HELP WITH SLEEPING MATS STILL NEEDED: With our winter weather just around the corner, the need for more sleeping mats for the homeless is growing! By contributing your plastic bags from your purchases we can help the homeless! Bring your clean, unneeded, plastic grocery bags, or similar plastic bags from your purchases here, to Rockwood Hall. We will see to it that they are delivered.

AGAPE CAFÉ VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Agape Cafe is a pop-up style restaurant located in Old Brick Church where they serve free hot dine-in or to-go breakfasts for our neighbors every Wednesday from 7:30-9AM. Since the beginning of the academic semester, they have experienced a significant uptick in guests coming in for their services, averaging more than 105 meals served. With the higher demand, they are on the lookout for consistent volunteers who can help fulfill their mission of feeding our friends and neighbors experiencing homelessness and/or food insecurity. If you are interested in pitching in to help prep food, serve, or with clean-up, we would love to have you. Please email agapebreakfast@gmail.com for additional information.

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.

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/1547852>. 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

OUR FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES Continue to work on our budget for the coming year, which we will approve at our annual meeting in January. I want to say of word of thanks and appreciation to everyone who has filled out and returned a pledge card for 2025. Your generous giving will help us move forward in ministry and mission to our community. If you haven't turned in a pledge card, if you've misplaced it or didn't receive one, they are available on the on the table outside of sanctuary—or you can contact the office and have one sent to you. We are not yet at the level of giving that we need for the coming year, but I am confident with your generosity and commitment we will get there.

THE JOHNSON COUNTY INTERFAITH COALITION IS HAVING THEIR ANNUAL FRIEND AND FUND on Nov. 20. The church has purchased three tables. All you need to do is tell Jenn Harden (319-337-4301) or Donna Hirst that you'd like to attend. More in the bulletin.

ADVENT, OUR SEASON OF PREPARATION FOR THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS, begins on Sunday, December 1, this year—two weeks from today. We make our own online Advent devotional each year—a reflection from a member for each of the days in Advent. If you would like to prepare a reflection, talk with me. I'll provide a scripture lesson, you'll do the rest. It can be written, it could be a photo or drawing. Advent looks back to the birth of Jesus and forward to the coming of Christ at the end of time. This year's theme is "Between Memory and Hope: Standing in the Living Present."

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

For the choir:

God of the ages, you are our help and our hope. Because you are our eternal home, we recognize without fear that time soon bears us all away. Teach us to number our days and so to gain a heart of wisdom. In these days, strengthen us to love and serve you with gladness. In this time together, help us to sing your praise with power and to proclaim your good news with joy. Amen.

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

The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

[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.

David McCartney has an announcement
John Reitz has an announcement
I will have a few announcements

PAUSE FOR THE CHORAL INTROIT

* CALL TO WORSHIP

We arrive here at worship

bringing our prayers, our troubles, and our desires.

We cry out within this community

from our searching hearts and our struggling faith.

We trust that God hears us and holds us,

taking comfort in God's abiding love.

With bold hope and open hearts

let us worship God!

* HYMN 427 "Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service"

*OPENING PRAYER

Because you dwell in our hearts, Eternal God, you know the anger, the pain, and the grief of our lives. The noise of the world deafens us to your Word which can heal us. When trouble comes, when adversity plagues us, we wonder where you are; we often even wonder who you are. Dispel our gloom and despair. Transform our darkness into light. Heal our bodies, minds, and spirits. Restore our health and wholeness so that we may go forth to share the goodness of your

joy and justice with others. Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#223, vs. 1 & 2)

**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.**

**God forgives all your transgressions,
All diseases gently heals;
God redeems you from destruction,
And with you so kindly deals.**

[The liturgist leads the Psalm. After the first scripture lesson, go to the lectern and simply invite the congregation to join in reading Psalm 16 responsively.]

PSALM 16

Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you;
I have said to the Lord, "You are my Lord, my good above all other."

**All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land,
upon those who are noble among the people.**

But those who run after other gods
shall have their troubles multiplied.

**Their libations of blood I will not offer,
nor take the names of their gods upon my lips.**

O Lord, you are my portion and my cup;
it is you who uphold my lot.

**My boundaries enclose a pleasant land;
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.**

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
my heart teaches me, night after night.

**I have set the Lord always before me;
because you are at my right hand I shall not fall.**

My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices;
my body also shall rest in hope.

**For you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor let your holy one see the pit.**

[Unison]

You will show me the path of life;

**in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

[After the Psalm, you may leave the chancel and sit with the congregation.]

Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh upon us as your Word is read and proclaimed.
Speak to us your word of life
to restore, support, and strengthen us
as we follow in the way of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The first lesson comes from Daniel, chapter 12.

The six stories and four dream-visions of the book of Daniel are not actual history, but, through symbols and signs, are interpretations of current history and predictions of a future where tribulations and sorrow will give way to triumph and peace. The “Michael” mentioned here is the patron angel of the Jewish people, who, earlier in Daniel was said to have helped Daniel against the patron angel of the Persians. The second verse in this reading provides the first clear reference to resurrection in the Bible.

Listen for the Word of God, speaking to you.

The second lesson comes from Mark, chapter 13.

The thirteenth chapter of Mark, with its predictions of earthquakes and famines, of wars and persecutions, is often called the “little apocalypse.” *Apocalypse*, as you know, means “revelation” or “uncovering.” It is, in a sense, a literary lifting of the curtain of time so that we can see what’s coming our way. In apocalyptic literature, we enter the realm of the symbolic rather than the literal—a world revealed to us in signs and visions rather than in photojournalism.

Here, with apocalyptic language and images Jesus speaks to his disciples about destruction and the coming of God’s new age.

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 at the entrance to the sanctuary to add to requests for prayer.

Thanksgiving for the life of Richard Loughran, the brother of Ginny Clemons, who died last Sunday.

You, O God, have indeed been our help in the past, guiding us through times of change and uncertainty, providing for us when we have had little, sustaining us when our own strength was gone. You are indeed our hope for years to come, calling us forward into a future that is always unknown and always in your care. You call us from the busy lives we lead; you call us from our preoccupations and selfishness; you call us to put away our wrath and our anger, to be kind to one another, tender hearted and forgiving toward all people, all nations and all of creation. Help us, we pray, to live out your calling and hear us as we pray.

We come to you, seeking your courage, strength, and guidance, knowing that without you we are lost. Renew us and guide us in your love:

- teach us how to be open to the community in which we live, that we may hear and understand its needs;
- teach us how to frame your good news for our time;
- teach us how to trust you in the journey of life;
- teach us how to live your peace in our broken world;
- teach us how to live and share your abundant grace.

We thank you for the human family: for people of other faiths and of none, especially those who are our friends and neighbors. And we pray to you that people of all faiths may enjoy the freedom to set forth their convictions with integrity and listen to one another in humility; that the Church may perform a reconciling ministry in a world divided by suspicion and misunderstanding, and bring healing to those places where religious intolerance fractures human community; that we may bear a true and loving witness to Jesus, whose way we seek to follow.

As you grant us sensitivity and wisdom in our dealings with people, we pray that you would guide the leaders of our nation and all nations along the same path

that leads to peace. When we feel unsure or afraid, grant us tender hearted voices, gentle words and grace filled actions.

We remember before you those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of work; those who those who wander the streets without a home, those who are imprisoned. You, O God, are the comfort of the sad and the strength of those who suffer. Hear the prayers of all who cry out to you.

[Concerns/celebrations]

In this hour of rest and renewal, as we take time away from our work and the cares of the day, help us to be aware of your love that enfolds us at all times. Hear us O God, as we silently lift our hearts to you.

[Silent prayer]

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

Almighty and merciful God,
from whom comes all that is good,
we praise you for your mercies,
for your goodness that has created us,
your grace that has sustained us,
and your love that has redeemed us.
Help us to love you,
and to be thankful for all your gifts
by serving you and delighting to do your will,
through Jesus Christ.

Amen.