



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

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 1, 2024
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Today is a communion Sunday. Before joining the worship service, you are invited to get whatever you eat and whatever you drink. It can be bread and grape juice or wine or as simple as a cracker or rice cake and water for use in our worship.

“Christmas...arrives in enveloping, sheltering darkness. The light needs shelter at first, and it is only within darkness that the light can be truly seen.”

Nancy Rockwell

PRELUDE “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” Cindy Berry

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE Matt and Hope Spragg, Nadia, Peter

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Across the universe, creation waits for

the prophets to speak their words of expectation and renewal.

**So come now, friends,
and gather in this meeting house
to let their longing take hold of us
and lead us through the coming days.
Let us worship God.**

***HYMN 3 “Comfort, Comfort You My People”**

**Comfort, comfort you my people;
tell of peace, thus says our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness
bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover,
and their warfare now is over.**

**For the herald's voice is calling
in the desert far and near,
bidding us to make repentance
since the kingdom now is here.
Oh that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
let the valleys rise in meeting
and the hills bow down in greeting.**

**Make you straight what long was crooked;
make the rougher places plain;
let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits God's holy reign,
for the glory of the Lord
now o'er earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

**In your presence, God, and in each other's company,
we see that our lives and the life of the world
are cast in shadow.
But we know a light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness does not overcome it.
Pardon our deliberate faults.
Heal our weaknesses and fears.
Give us strength to grow in the love we lack.
Illumine our souls with the first glimmers
of the Coming Light of Christ, our Comfort and Redeemer.**

Amen.

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

**Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.**

**By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.**

ANTHEM “Creator of the Stars of Night” Michael Larkin

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” 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 Isaiah 40:1-11

PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13

You have been gracious to your land, O Lord,
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.**

I will listen, O Lord God, to what you are saying,
for you are speaking peace to your faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to you.

**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.**

Mercy and truth have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

**Truth shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

O Lord, you will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness shall go before you,

and peace shall be a pathway for your feet.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Mark 1:1-8

SERMON “When Prophets Speak”

THE LORD’S SUPPER

INVITATION

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come thou Wisdom from on high,
and order all things, far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice!...**

**O come desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice!...**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

REMEMBERING

**We thank you, O Christ,
that scattered though we are, with different needs and hopes
you call us together at this meal and unite us as one body.**

**We thank you that you have not left us alone.
Each year you come to us, Emmanuel,
God with us, in a manger.
Each time you come to us
in the broken bread and the cup we share.
May they speak to us
of the extraordinary found in the lowly,
of your coming to make all things new,
and of the hope for your realm among us.**

We remember that on the night of his arrest...

WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND SHARING OF BREAD AND CUP

(Communion will be served in the pews today. Please receive the bread or cup as they are offered to you by a deacon. Hold it until all have been served, and we will eat and drink together at the pastor's guidance. We serve grape juice, not wine. Gluten-free wafers are on the trays with the bread. In the Congregational United Church of Christ, we celebrate the Lord's Supper with openness and welcome. Everyone is invited to the table, regardless of church membership or denominational affiliation.)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We give you thanks for this meal which strengthens us and encourages us in this season and every season. Let it fill us with the grace to see you in those around us. Keep us alert to recognize the inbreaking of your realm. Amen.

*HYMN 13 "Prepare the Way"

**Prepare the way, O Zion,
your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley
a level way appear.**

**Greet One who comes in glory,
foretold in sacred story.**

Refrain:

**O blest is Christ who came
in God's most holy name.**

**Christ brings God's rule, O Zion;
he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom,
and justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding,
for grace and joy abounding. [Refrain]**

**Fling wide your gates, O Zion;
your Savior's rule embrace,
and tidings of salvation
proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing,
their adoration voicing. [Refrain]**

BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE "The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns" David N. Johnson

Opening Prayer: First Church Cambridge, Congregational, UCC, Cambridge, MA.

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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—FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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| ❖ Choir Rehearsal | 9:00 am |
| Worship Service | 10:15 am |
| Special Music Choir Rehearsal | 11:35 am |

TUESDAY

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| ❖ Board of Christian Education | 7:00 pm |
| Mission Board | 7:00 pm |

SATURDAY

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| ❖ Music Rehearsal (instrumentalists) | 9:00 am |
| Music Rehearsal (choir) | 10:15 am |

NEXT SUNDAY—SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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| ❖ Choir Rehearsal | 9:00 am |
| Christian Education Classes | 9:15 am |
| Worship Service | 10:15 am |
| Second Sunday of Advent—Special Music Sunday | |

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—TODAY AND DECEMBER 15th! Be sure to visit our Alternative Christmas Giving Fair in Rockwood Hall after worship today. We will also be open on December 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. And the Angel Tree will have toy request cards from the Salvation Army 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!**

HODIE (THIS DAY): Ring Out! On Sunday, December 8, The UCC Choir and area guest instrumentalists will be performing Z. Randall Stroope's *Hodie! (This Day!)*, a three-movement work for choir, featuring brass, percussion and organ. The work contains fanfare, bold sonorities, moments of reflection, inclusion of a well-known work by Philip Nicolai, and an ecstatic ending full of sonic fireworks. Please join us for this momentous occasion!

ADVENT LUNCHEON: There is a sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall for the Advent Luncheon (potluck) which will be held next Sunday, 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.

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.

