



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

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 29, 2024
THE FIFTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS

“The mighty will be cast from their thrones, and the lowly will be lifted up. The hungry will be filled with good things, and the rich will be sent away empty.’

That’s not Karl Marx.
It’s the Gospel of Luke.”

Shane Clairborne

PRELUDE “O Come, All Ye Faithful” John Carter

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ann Molsberry, Liturgist

LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE Caitlin Suginaka, Amaya and Ravenna

Response: **O God, we too gather before the Christ who comes to us as a fragile child, sharing all that we face. In humble faith, we offer the small gifts of our lives, that we may bring your peace and love to others. Amen**

*CALL TO WORSHIP

God chose a backwater village under empire's oppression as the birthplace for the Messiah.

Our God is full of surprises!

God called an older woman and a young girl to be prophets and bear the promise.

Our God is full of surprises!

God calls ordinary people – you and me – to work for justice and healing in our land.

Our God is full of surprises!

Come let us worship our surprising God.

*HYMN 49 “Once in Royal David's City”

*OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, as the Prophet Mary tells us,

you sent Jesus into the world to turn things upside down and right side up.

As we celebrate the appearance of the Savior in our world, help us to remember his message:

To work for justice and fairness,

To bring balance to our living,

To share Your love with all people,

And to make your reign become real here on earth.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

ANTHEM “Mary, Did You Know?”
Caitlin Suginaka and Bob Molsberry

Mark Lowry, Buddy Greene

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.

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory “Silent Night/The First Noel” Gail Smith

*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

SCRIPTURE LESSONS Luke 2:41-50; Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 1:46-53

SERMON “Who IS this Child?!”

*HYMN 53 “What Child is This?”

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “Joy to the World” John Carter

Minister:	The Rev. Bill Lovin
Director of Christian Education:	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 WORSHIPING WITH US THIS MORNING. Everyone is invited to Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall after worship.

TODAY—THE FIFTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS

- ❖ No Choir Rehearsal
- No Christian Education
- Worship Service 10:15 am
- The Rev. Bob Molsberry Preaching

WEDNESDAY

- ❖ Church Office Closed in Celebration of New Year’s Day

NEXT SUNDAY—EPIPHANY SUNDAY

- ❖ Choral Ensemble Rehearsal 9:00 am
- Christian Education for all ages 9:15 am
- Worship Service--communion 10:15 am
- The Rev. Bill Lovin Preaching

**CHRISTMAS, and EPIPHANY CELEBRATIONS AT
CONGREGATIONAL UCC**

December 29—Fifth Day of Christmas—Worship at 10:15 a.m.

January 5—Epiphany Sunday; Communion

WE WELCOME THE REV. BOB MOLSBERY TO OUR WORSHIP THIS MORNING.

Bob is a retired UCC minister and a member of our congregation. Bill Lovin is on vacation through January 1. He will be preaching on January 5, Epiphany Sunday.

CELEBRATE EPIPHANY (the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles, the coming of the Magi) with us on Sunday, January 5, 2025. 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. We will also share in the sacrament of communion.

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.

THE MORAVIAN STAR was given to Congregational UCC by the Williamson family. They came to Iowa City from Wisconsin and their family ancestry was Moravian. The Moravian Church took shape during the late 14th century, before the Protestant reforms of Martin Luther and John Calvin, following the simple religious practices of Jan Hus. The Moravian Star originated in Germany in the 1830s as a craft project to teach geometry and was quickly adopted by the Moravian Church as a symbol of the birth of Jesus, hanging in churches from the first Sunday of Advent until Epiphany, January 6. Our star has the traditional 26 points, although some can have up to 100. Each year John Johnson makes sure that it hangs at the front of our sanctuary for the Christmas pageant and through the 12 days of Christmas.

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.

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.

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.