



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

WORSHIP FOR FEBRUARY 23, 2025
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

“Jesus has a way of turning our values upside down, doesn’t he? He also makes us squirm.”
Peter Bower

PRELUDE “Prelude in G Major” William H. Harris

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Cassie Elsberg, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Just as a tree planted by the water
needs light to put down deep roots and flourish,

**so we need light to stand firm in our roots
and ever-flowing streams to reach out in hope.**

[Unison]

**Let us seek the light.
Let us find those streams.
Let us worship God.**

*** HYMN 474 “O Splendor of God’s Glory Bright”**

**O splendor of God’s glory bright,
From light eternal bringing light;
Thou light of life, light’s living spring,
True day, all days illumining.**

**Come, Holy Sun of heavenly love,
Shower down Thy radiance from above,
And to our inward hearts convey
The Holy Spirit's cloudless ray.**

**O joyful be the passing day
With thoughts as clear as morning’s ray,
With faith like noontide shining bright,
Our souls unshadowed by the night.**

**O Lord, with each returning morn
Thine image to our hearts is born;
O may we ever clearly see
Our Savior and our God in Thee!**

***OPENING PRAYER**

O God, we thank you for the day newly begun: for sleep behind us, light upon us, love around us; for the needs and hopes that we have in common with all people throughout the earth. God of darkness and dawn, shine into our lives at this hour. Awaken us with wonder; renew our hope and lift us above our despair. May we worship you now in spirit and in truth and serve you this day with gladness. Amen.

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#261, vs. 1)**

**God of compassion, in mercy befriend us;
Giver of grace for our needs all availing,
Wisdom and strength for each day do Thou send us,
Patience untiring and courage unfailing.**

ANTHEM “Bless the Lord, O My Soul” David Hurd

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 "Andante" John Stainer

*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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(The children are dismissed to Children's Church)

SCRIPTURE LESSON Jeremiah 17:5-10

PSALM 96:7-13

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

**Ascribe to the Lord the glory due God's name;
bring an offering, and come into the courts.**

Worship the Lord in holy splendour;
tremble before God, all the earth.

**Say among the nations, 'The Lord is sovereign!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
God will judge the peoples with equity.'**

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.

**Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the Lord, who is coming,
who is coming to judge the earth.**

[Unison]

**God will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with truth.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 6:17-26

SERMON "Reversal of Fortune"

*HYMN 332 “Live into Hope”

**Live into hope of captives freed,
of sight regained, the end of greed.
The oppressed shall be the first to see
the year of God's own jubilee!**

**Live into hope! The blind shall see
with insight and with clarity,
removing shades of pride and fear,
a vision of our God brought near.**

**Live into hope of liberty,
the right to speak, the right to be,
the right to have one's daily bread,
to hear God's word and thus be fed.**

**Live into hope of captives freed
from chains of fear or want or greed.
God now proclaims our full release
to faith and hope and joy and peace.**

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE “Voluntary in C Major “ Charles Vincent

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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

TODAY

❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Christian Education	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
Youth Group with 1 st Pres.	4-7 pm

TUESDAY

❖ Council	7:00 pm
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NEXT SUNDAY

❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Christian Education	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am

WE'RE GLAD THAT YOU HAVE JOINED US FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING.

Everyone is invited to Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall after worship.

BILL LOVIN IS TAKING NEXT WEEKEND OFF. The Rev. Craig Henderson, a UCC minister who has been worshipping with us, will be the guest preacher.

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 supper in Rockwood Hall from 6-7 p.m. Bring your family and friends and join others for soup, good company, and good conversation. 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.

ADULT EDUCATION: Join us around the fireplace in Rockwood Hall at 9:15 a.m. this Sunday, February 23. Mission Board member, John Reitz, will lead a discussion about how we make mission funding decisions.

On 2/9/25 the Immigrant Welcome Network spoke to the church's Adult Education session. Below is the link to their website for more information. <https://www.iwnjc.org/>

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 through 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!

BEN COPELAND'S SENIOR RECITAL will be held on Saturday, March 1, at 5:30 pm in the Voxman Music Building Recital Hall. Everyone is invited.

8-WEEK SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY: The Rev. Ann Molsberry is offering an 8-week Bible study that promises to do the whole Bible in one 8-week sweep. We will use *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible* by Bernhard Anderson, a progressive introduction/overview of the whole Bible. **We will meet AFTER worship at 11:30 in the library on Sunday March 9th.** The choir will be having extended rehearsals after worship beginning Sunday March 9th to prepare Easter music and continue after Easter through Sunday, May 11th. We will schedule our 8-week study within that time-frame.

This is a beginner class that will appeal to the "choir widow/widowers", teachers, Confirmed youth, and college students. We have childcare. We will provide a sub-sandwich lunch at our first session and decide what to do for lunch (if anything) after that first session.

Please purchase your own book (\$14.00...Amazon offers used copies for less.) and come to the class with the first chapter and Bible readings done.

THE WOMEN'S READING GROUP IS reading *In the Sanctuary of Women* by Jan Richardson. Join us for discussion of chapter 1, "The Beginning of All Things: The Book of Eve," on Saturday, March 15, at 10 a.m. in front of the fireplace in Rockwood Hall.

AT EASTER, IT HAS BEEN OUR TRADITION TO DISPLAY ALL KINDS OF SPRING FLOWERS on the chancel. Bulbs need to be planted soon to bloom in time. Would you be willing to plant, tend and then display a pot of flowers on Easter? Please contact Barb Sisly (319-430-2694, sisleywebb@aol.com) or Rebecca Weatherford (319-621-6862, weatherfordr1776@gmail.com) if you'd like to help so we can order enough bulbs. We'll have instructions for you, so no experience necessary!

ART CONTEST: The Climate Hope Art Contest that Izzy Brown won an 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 9" x 12" or 8.5" x 11" on any surface that can be scanned. Submit your artwork to Hope Spragg by March 7.

CAN YOU HELP PROVIDE BREAKFAST? To reduce single-use packaging and highly processed food in Sunday school-provided breakfasts, we are looking for help providing freshly baked or cooked breakfast items and fresh fruit. Label and drop off items in the refrigerator or kitchen the week before or in the morning before 9:05.

FEBRUARY YOUTH GROUP, 5th GRADE THROUGH 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.

CAMP STRONGHOLD: Youth entering 6th-9th grade next year are invited to summer church camp June 8-13 (Sunday-Friday) at Camp Stronghold, along the Rock River just south of Rockford, IL. We will join First Presbyterian and Saint Andrews for a week at 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! If you are interested in (partially) sponsoring a youth to attend, contact Hope Spragg. Fun fact: Ask the Strang about the history of the camp!

JOIN CHAMBER SINGERS OF IOWA CITY FOR AN EVENING OF CHORAL FAVORITES designed to chase away the lingering winter blues. Enjoy a diverse program featuring works by Morten Lauridsen, Handel, Haydn, and many more. This concert will transport you with its blend of poignant and uplifting pieces, offering a respite from the cold and a reminder of the beauty that awaits us in the spring. **Sunday, March 2, 7:00 PM Voxman**

Music Building Concert Hall. Buy tickets here:

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/chambersingersofiowacity/1356613>

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. Contact Donna Hirst (donna-hirst@uiowa.edu), member of the event steering committee, if you'd like to attend.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE 2025 SHELTER HOUSE 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.

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. 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.** (Please note, the sale cannot accept contributions of magazines, encyclopedias, reader's digest, books with no covers or water damage, moldy or musty books, textbooks, cassette tapes, or VHS tapes.)

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

Shelter House is 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.

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.

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.