



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

WORSHIP FOR MARCH 16, 2025
SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Stand! In the end you'll still be you,
One who's done all the things you set out to do.
Stand! There's a cross for you to bear,
Things to go through if you're going anywhere.
Sylvester Stewart

PRELUDE "Fugue in F Minor" Charles Burney

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Nathan Peters, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

***CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 105:1-4)**

Give thanks and call upon the name of the Lord;
make known to the nations what God has done.

**Sing to God, O sing God's praise;
tell of all the wonderful deeds of the Most High.**

Exult in God's holy name;
let the heart of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

**Turn for help to the Lord your strength
and constantly seek God's presence.**

*** HYMN 476 (vs. 1-4) "O Worship the King, All Glorious Above"**

**O worship the King, all glorious above!
O gratefully sing God's power and God's love;
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.**

**O tell of God's might, O sing of God's grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space,
His chariots of heaven the deep thunderclouds form,
And bright is God's path on the wings of the storm.**

**The earth with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty, Thy power hath founded of old;
Hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast, like a mantle, the sea.**

**Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

**Holy and ever-living God, by your power we are created and by your love we are redeemed.
Open our ears to hear your voice and follow your call; open our hearts that true justice and
wisdom may abound; and open our hands that peace might prevail on the earth. In Christ,
you give us a friend and a guide through the shadow of death who leads us into light that
we may fear no evil. Strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give ourselves to your
service and live this day in love toward one another and toward you; through Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#476, vs. 5)**

**Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail.
Thy mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!**

ANTHEM

“In Remembrance” Jeffery L. Ames

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 “Adagio” John Alcock

*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 12:1-5

PSALM 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear?

**the Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?**

Though an army should encamp against me,
yet my heart shall not be afraid;

**and though war should rise up against me,
yet will I put my trust in the Lord.**

For in the time of trouble you, O God, will give me shelter;
you will hide me under the cover of your tent
and set me high upon a rock.

**Even now you lift up my head
above my enemies round about me.**

Therefore, I will offer in in your dwelling
a sacrifice of great gladness.

I will sing and make music to you, O Lord.

**Hear my voice, O Lord, when I call;
have mercy on me and answer me.**

Do not hide your face from me,
or reject your servant in anger.

**You who have been my help:
do not cast me off or forsake me, O God of my salvation.**

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.

**Wait for the Lord, be strong and let your heart take courage;
wait, I say, for the Lord.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 13:31-33

SERMON “Finding Strength Out in the Open”

* HYMN 525 “Here I Am, Lord”

**I, the Lord of the sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.
I who have made the stars of the night,
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?**

[Refrain]

**Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.**

**I the Lord of the snow and rain,
I have born my people' pain
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their heart's of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?
Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord?**

[Refrain]

**I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide**

**Till their hearts be satisfied
I will give my life to them
Whom shall I send?**

[Refrain]

***BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE “Toccatà in G Minor” Johann Pachelbel

Opening Prayer—alt. from *A New Zealand Prayer Book*.

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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

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|--|---------------|
| ❖ Choir Rehearsal | 9:00 am |
| Adult Education (No Church School for Children) | 9:15 am |
| Worship Service | 10:15 am |
| Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall | After Worship |
| Choir Rehearsal | 11:30 am |
| Bible Study | 11:30 am |

TUESDAY

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|--------------------|---------|
| ❖ Membership Board | 5:30 pm |
| Diaconate | 7:00 pm |
| Trustees | 7:00 pm |

NEXT SUNDAY

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|----------------------------------|---------------|
| ❖ Choir Rehearsal | 9:00 am |
| Christian Education for all ages | 9:15 am |
| Worship Service | 10:15 am |
| Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall | After Worship |
| Choir Rehearsal | 11:30 am |
| Bible Study | 11:30 am |

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

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

COMMUNITIES ACTING IN CRISIS: On the Sundays in Lent, Bill Lovin will lead the Adult Education sessions, looking at "Communities Acting in Crisis." We'll explore how Christian communities responded to protect people, stand up for the rights of others and themselves, and challenge authorities in difficult times. Join us around the fireplace in Rockwood Hall at 9:15 a.m.

8-WEEK BIBLE STUDY: The Rev. Ann Molsberry is offering an 8-week Bible study that promises to cover the whole Bible in one 8-week sweep. We will use *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible* by Bernhard Anderson. We had 12 disciples show up for the first class and we all fit nicely in the library!! We will meet AFTER worship at 11:30 in the library every Sunday in March and April except Easter Sunday. Everyone is invited. We decided not to have lunch together...but bring your book, your Bible and your curiosity!

A NEW MEMBER CLASS WILL BE HELD on Wednesday, March 26 & April 2 at 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in joining Congregational UCC or would like more information about who we are, please talk with Bill Lovin.

JOIN US FOR AN INTERGENERATIONAL SERVICE TRIP! Are you looking to deepen your connection with our church family while serving others? This summer, we are excited to pilot a **mini-service trip** to rekindle our church's tradition of traveling and making a difference in high-need communities. From **July 20-26, 2025**, we will journey to **Asheville, NC**, for a week of meaningful work and fellowship. To gauge interest and determine if we have enough participants for the trip, we invite you to see the **sign up in Rockwood Hall** for more information. If you're available and interested, please sign up—let's serve, grow, and connect together!

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.

HELP WITH MEALS FOR MEMBERS: Occasionally, members of our congregation who are injured or ill can use a meal prepared for them. Our Membership Board wants to be ready when the need arises. If you can help provide an occasional meal, please sign up on the sheet in Rockwood Hall. Thanks!

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.

AGUDAS ACHIM CONGREGATION AND IOWA CITY JEWS (THEIR PUBLIC SPACE DOWNTOWN INITIATIVE) ARE ORGANIZING THEIR SECOND PEACE & JUSTICE SEDER. *“At a time of vulnerability, the liberating message of Passover inspires us. Join us as we grapple with the challenges of justice, democracy, and peace at home and abroad. Help us to celebrate community and our common strivings for a better world.”* All welcome: whether you’re Jewish, Jew-ish, Jew-curious, Just Plain Human or any other faith/no faith!

They will be gathering before Passover and Easter on Sunday April 6th at the Senior Center in downtown Iowa City. Doors open at 6:15 pm, Seder starts 6:30 pm, festive potluck meal at (approx) 7:30 pm. Please bring a vegetarian dish (no flour or pasta products) to share. Dishes to be served at room temperature. Please RSVP at rsvp@agudasachimic.org (with ‘peace and justice seder’ in the header of your email) by April 3. Seating is limited.

JOHNSON COUNTY VETERANS FOR PEACE is sponsoring a public readings of two important speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. on the anniversary of his assassination. This year they will hold the readings on April 4, 11:00-6:00 at the Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center, 220 S. Gilbert Street. Members of the congregation can read a short segment of one of the speeches. Folks are encouraged to drop by anytime between 11:00-6:00 to read a segment or to listen to the speeches.

The VFP acknowledgment of Dr. King’s commitment to peace is one of the significant actions that VFP 161 takes each year. This event is an important way in which the chapter can lead the community in a public demonstration of our values and priorities -- values and priorities that the UCC shares.

- Is America Addicted to War?
MLK Jr. warned that Vietnam was a symptom of a deeper sickness—an endless cycle of militarism draining resources from justice.
- Does How We Spend Our Money Signal Spiritual Death?
MLK Jr. warned that prioritizing war over social uplift leads to moral and societal decline.
- Is It Already Too Late?
MLK Jr. warned that history is filled with nations that waited too long to act—justice demands action now.

Donna Hirst, member of the VFP-MLK Planning Team

THE AGAPE CAFÉ serves a free, hot, breakfast dine-in or to-go for our neighbors in the Iowa City area experiencing homelessness and/or food insecurity. We are celebrating our 32nd anniversary at our annual in-person fundraiser on Saturday, March 29, from 8 am - 11 am at Old Brick in Iowa City. Come have a great breakfast and support our good work! If you can’t attend in person, you can donate via the QR code below.



CONGREGATIONAL UCC DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND VISUAL ARTIST, HOPE SPRAGG, will be a part of “Elusive Balance”, a traveling group exhibition composed of Iowa Artist/Mothers that explores the challenges of finding balance within artist and mother/caregiver identities. As there is no one way to embody motherhood, there is a diverse range of artists and artwork. “Elusive Balance” will run March 14 - April 5, 2025 at Public Space One North Gallery, 229 N. Gilbert St, Iowa City. A family-friendly opening reception will be on Saturday, March 29, from 2-4 pm, with added kids’ activities in the art garden.

This exhibition embraces the dichotomies found in motherhood: ideas of rest and productivity, contentment and overwhelm, stability and transition, responsibility and absurdity/play, and societal expectations vs. personal intuition. The pieces visually explore how one finds personal balance, or simply lets go of this elusive state, celebrating imbalance within life and art.

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.

IMPORTANT DATES IN LENT AND EASTER

April 6—Fifth Sunday in Lent; Communion Sunday

April 13—Palm Sunday—Worship with Distribution of Palms; One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

April 17—Maundy Thursday—Worship in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m.; Communion and Service of Tenebrae

April 18—Good Friday—Worship in the Sanctuary at Noon

April 20—Easter Sunday—Breakfast in Rockwood Hall starting at 8:00 a.m.; Festival Easter Service in the Sanctuary at 10:15 a.m.

DON’T GIVE UP FOR LENT—FIND STRENGTH: Members and friends are helping to shore up each other’s strength with contributions to this year’s Lenten Devotional. Reflections by Congregational UCC members and friends help us search together for strength in these days. If you are not receiving these daily reflections, please talk with Bill Lovin or call the church office.

The themes for each week are:

Finding Strength in the Wilderness

Finding Strength Out in the Open

Finding Strength in Uncertain Times

Finding Strength in Unfamiliar Territory

Finding Strength among Friends and Family

Finding Strength to Face Life and Death

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.