



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

WORSHIP FOR MARCH 9, 2025
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Today is a communion Sunday. If you are joining us online, you are invited to get whatever you eat and whatever you drink before the beginning of worship. 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.

“The struggle with evil in the world begins with the struggle with evil within ourselves, and that struggle depends upon self-knowledge: knowing and acknowledging our limitations and our capacities. Such introspection should take place at all times with us, but Lent is that particular time in the church year when we pay attention to that.”

Peter Gomes

PRELUDE “Jesus, I Will Ponder Now” setting by Paul Manz

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Randee Fieselmann, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Return to God who is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

**For God will comfort the people,
and will have compassion on those who suffer.**

*** HYMN (insert) “We Lay Our Broken World”**

**We lay our broken world
In sorrow at your feet,
Haunted by hunger, war, and fear,
Oppressed by power and hate.**

**Where human life seems less
Than profit, might and pride,
Though to unite us all in you
You lived and loved and died.**

**We bring our broken towns,
Our neighbors hurt and bruised;
You show us how old pain and wounds
For new life can be used.**

**We bring our broken hopes
For lives of dignity;
Workless and overworked you love
And call us to be free.**

**We bring our broken loves,
Friends parted, families torn;
Then in your life and death we see
That love must be reborn.**

**We bring our broken selves,
Confused and closed and tired;
Then through your gift of healing grace
New purpose is inspired.**

**O Spirit, on us breathe,
With life and strength anew;
Find in us love, and hope and trust,
And lift us up to you.**

*** CALL TO CONFESSION**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Merciful God, we bear the marks of a bitter and broken world. What a gentle and healing balm it is to come to you with our secret thoughts, our sad discouragements, and our noblest dreams, and find you here to listen, to forgive, and to renew us! Slow to trust, afraid of the unknown, we are cautious to follow in the way of Jesus Christ. We pray for ears to hear the cries of our neighbors and for hearts which resonate with your Spirit. Make us patient with our mistakes and frailties, even as we are patient with those of others. And remind us that we are precious, not because we are good but because you have accepted us and called us to be your very own. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#457, vs. 1, 3, & 5)

**We greet you, sure Redeemer from all strife,
Our only trust and Savior of our life,
Who pain did undergo for our poor sake;
We pray you from our hearts all cares to take.**

**You are the life, by which alone we live,
And all our substance and our strength receive;
Sustain us by your faith and by your power,
And give us strength in every trying hour.**

**Our hope is in no other save in you;
Our faith is built upon your promise true;
Lord, give us peace, and make us calm and sure,
That in your strength we evermore endure.**

ANTHEM “Psalm 130” Paul Manz

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory “O Christ, Thou Lamb of God” setting by Paul Manz

*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 Deuteronomy 8:1-10

PSALM 91:1-2, 9-16

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

**You shall say to the Lord,
"You are my refuge and my stronghold,
my God in whom I put my trust."**

Because you have made the Lord your refuge,
and the Most High your habitation,

**there shall no evil happen to you,
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.**

For God shall give the holy angels charge over you,
to keep you in all your ways.

**They shall bear you in their hands,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.**

You shall tread upon the lion and adder;
you shall trample the young lion and the serpent under your feet.

**Because they are bound to me in love,
therefore will I deliver them;**

I will protect them, because they know my name.

They shall call upon me, and I will answer them;

I am with them in trouble;

I will rescue them and bring them to honor.

**With long life will I satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 4:1-13

SERMON "Finding Strength When in the Wilderness"

THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION

HYMN 85 "What Wondrous Love Is This"

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!

What wondrous love is this, O my soul!

What wondrous love is this, That caused the Lord of bliss,

To bear the heavy cross,

For my soul, for my soul,

To bear the heavy cross for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing!

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing!

To God and to the Lamb, Who is the great "I AM, "

While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing!

While millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on!

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on,

**And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And through eternity, I'll sing on.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

REMEMBERING

On the night of his arrest...

Faithful God, in this communion, with this bread and with this cup, increase our faith and hope and love. Lead us in the path of Christ who brings your word of life. Amen.

SHARING OF ELEMENTS

(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

Let this meal we share with you, O God, center us, put our minds on the things that lead to life, and give us hearts to seek your kingdom and to lay up treasure in heaven. Amen.

* HYMN (insert) "Before the Cross of Jesus"

**Before the cross of Jesus
Our lives are judged today;
The meaning of our eager strife
Is tested by his way.
Across our restless living
The light streams from his cross,
And by its clear, revealing beams
We measure gain and loss.**

**The hopes that lead us onward,
The fears that hold us back,
Our will to dare great things for God,
The courage that we lack,
The faith we keep in goodness,
Our love, as low or pure -
On all, the judgment of the cross
Falls steady, clear, and sure.**

**Yet humbly, in our striving,
O God, we face its test.
We crave the power to do your will
With him who did it best.**

**On us let now the healing
Of his great Spirit fall,
And make us brave and full of joy
To answer to his call.**

***BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE “The Agincourt Hymn” John Dunstable

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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
Choir Rehearsal	11:30 am
Bible Study	11:30 am

SATURDAY

❖ Men’s Breakfast (Waterfront Hy-Vee)	8:00 am
❖ Women’s Reading Group	10:00 am

NEXT SUNDAY

❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Adult Education Only	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
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.

PLEASE NOTE: DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS ON SUNDAY, MARCH 9. Set your clock forward one hour before you go to bed on Saturday and you'll get to church on time.

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 9.** The choir will be having extended rehearsals after worship beginning Sunday March 9 to prepare Easter music and continue after Easter through Sunday, May 11. 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," next Saturday, March 15, at 10 a.m. in front of the fireplace in Rockwood Hall.

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.

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!\

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!

TODAY IS THE FINAL DAY OF THE 2025 SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE! 10:30 am—4:00 pm at 860 Quarry Road (the old Antique Car Museum) in Coralville.

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.

IMPORTANT DATES IN LENT AND EASTER

March 9—First Sunday in Lent; Communion Sunday

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.