



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ

DECEMBER 2017



Friends in Christ:

The season of Advent begins with lamentation.

On the early Sundays of December we hear the prophet Isaiah crying out “O that God would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at God’s presence.” (Isaiah 64:1) and reminding us “The grass withers and the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass.” (Isaiah 40: 7) The Psalmist, too, cries out, “Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.” (Psalm 80:3)

In these days, the ancient anguish in scripture seems to find an echo in our own distressed spirits. Each day seems to bring new revelations of sexual misconduct by men in power. Each day brings a new mass shooting although many no longer make the news. Each day brings reports of the upheaval of nations, of war and rumors of war. The opioid crisis grows. Racism continues unabated. We, too, lament and cry, “O that God would tear open the heavens and come down!”

This, of course, is not the first December, the first Advent filled with distressing news. And even in distressing times we are called to the joy of these days as well.

Joy has very little to do with being happy—maybe nothing at all. It has little to do with our good fortune. It’s an energy that comes most often when things are grim or painful. Joy comes uninvited and at the most unexpected times.

Rejoicing. Exulting. Taking delight in something. Call it what you want. It’s one way that people find the energy to move toward compassion and sharing and beating swords into plowshares. Joy is one of the ways that we move into new life. We can learn by the careful observation of our own delight—and you will find that this delight, this *joy* has the capacity to energize.

There is a joy that is deeper than the good times and bad times that life hands out, stronger than our best attempts and worst failings—a joy that lifts us when we cannot lift ourselves, a peace that grasps us and returns us renewed.

Even in the worst of times, God is giving birth to a new possibility—the reconciliation of God and humankind. This creative birth, like all births, can be long and difficult. Christmas is not for children alone. It also comes to the often weary and jaded adults that we have become. We hear the good news that God is still at work in the world, so that the world that *is* more and more becomes the world as it *might be*.

In the days ahead, we draw closer to the heart of the meaning of this season. God moves toward humankind in Jesus Christ, reconciling a waiting world, redeeming all creation.

Peace,

Bill





ANNOUNCEMENTS



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

During worship on Sunday, November 12, we welcomed 5 men and women as members of our congregation. They are:

Michelle Birt Leeds—who grew up in Omaha and Ames and has lived in Iowa for several years. She works at Componica. Michelle and her husband, Keane, are the parents of Adelaide. She enjoys reading, hiking, and cooking.

Bea Hicks—is a recent retiree and new Iowa City resident. She has been an active member of UCC churches in Chicago and Washington, DC, for 30 years. She has taught Vacation Bible School, served on the trustee board finance committee, and on the Peoples' Jazz Society at Peoples' Congregational UCC in Washington, DC.

James O'Neill—a graduate student studying American Literature, especially the Transcendentalists and Walt Whitman. James was born in Detroit and graduated from Principia College. He is interested in folk music and healing ministry.

Matt and Hope Spragg—Matt is an ER physician at UIHC. Hope is a painter who teaches at the Preucil Preschool. They are the parents of Nadia and Peter and both enjoy hiking.

CHURCH NEWS

With sadness and in the hope of the resurrection, we announce the death of long-time member, Larry Parsons, on November 10.

ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, and EPIPHANY CELEBRATIONS AT CONGREGATIONAL UCC

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3: First Sunday in Advent— Lighting of the First Advent Candle. Celebration of the sacrament of communion during worship. Advent Pot Luck Lunch in Rockwood Hall after worship.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10: Second Sunday in Advent—Choir Special Music Sunday. Our choir will present *A Christmas Cantata* by the 20th century English composer Geoffrey Bush. This colorful composition features arrangements of traditional carols. Mission Board's alternative giving opportunities in Rockwood Hall after worship.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17: Third Sunday in Advent—Children's Pageant during worship and Caroling with the Choir in the afternoon.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24: Fourth Sunday in Advent—Worship at 10:15 a.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service at 5:30. Bring your family, your relatives, your friends, or come by yourself. A warm and joy-filled celebration of God's love shared with us in Jesus. Gala reception follows in Rockwood Hall after worship.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31: New Year's Eve—Worship at 10:15 a.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7: Epiphany Sunday—Celebration of the Lord's Supper during worship. Epiphany Cake and crowning of the king/queen in Rockwood Hall after worship.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Please note: The Church Office will be closed on the following days: Monday and Tuesday, December 25 & 26 and Monday, January 1.



CHOIR SUNDAY—DECEMBER 10

On December 10th the UCC welcomes another Special Music Sunday Performance by the UCC Choir featuring *A Christmas Cantata* by 20th century English composer Geoffrey Bush. This colorful composition featuring arrangements of traditional carols will be joined by instrumentalists around the area and from the university, conducted by Christopher Nakielski. In addition, it will feature oboe soloist Wei Wang, soprano soloists Marie Von Behren and Sarah Gilbert.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

This year's dramatization of the Nativity presented by your children will take place on **Sunday, December 17 at 10:15 am.**

Rehearsals take place during Sunday School, 9:15-10:00 a.m. and during Children's Church Choir, 10:45 -11:15 on November 26, December 3 and 10. A dress rehearsal will be held on Saturday, December 16 at 10:00. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Patte Henderson or Collette Nakielski.

Thanks to all families who participate in the preparation and presentation of this most holy Christmas play.



GIVING AT THE END OF THE YEAR

The end of the year is a good time to remember the commitments we made during the year. Sometimes we forget about a gift we wanted to make: a gift to the food pantry; extra support for a particular program; a memorial gift for someone special; or even a commitment to the general work of Congregational UCC.

Now is the time to make that gift! The calendar year is rapidly coming to a close. If you want to include that gift in your charitable deduction for tax purposes this year, now is the time! Everything that happens here happens because we give. And thanks again for your generosity throughout 2017.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

Each year, the United Church of Christ's Christmas Fund Offering allows the UCC to assist retired pastors living on limited incomes as well as to supplement small retirement annuities and health premiums and to provide emergency grants to active and retired clergy and lay employees. The mission of the Christmas Fund is to provide assistance dollars in situations of critical need, while preserving the dignity of those who receive the aid.

We will receive the Christmas Fund Offering during our 5:30 p.m. worship on Christmas Eve. Please remember that your generous contributions can and do make a difference in the lives of many people.

MEMBER GATHERINGS

There will be NO Women's Lunch in December. The December Men's Breakfast will be on December 16 at the Riverfront Hy Vee beginning at 8:00 am.



ANNOUNCEMENTS cont.



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE AT 5:30

Join us for worship on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24.

At 5:30 p.m. we will have a service for people of all ages. This will include a special time for children, special music, Christmas carols, a reading of the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke, and lighting of candles. If you would like to be an usher for this worship service, please sign up in Rockwood Hall or call the church office.

Everyone is invited to the gala reception in Rockwood Hall after worship. This is a warm and wonderful time of fellowship and a chance to catch up with students and friends who are home for the holidays. The reception will be even better if you volunteer to bring some cookies or other goodies to share. Sign up in Rockwood Hall or call the church office to let us know what you're bringing.

Members and friends may provide poinsettias for the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve worship service. If you would like to remember or honor someone with a poinsettia, please let the church office know that you will bring a poinsettia and the name of the person by Monday, December 18.

JOIN WITH THE CHOIR AND BRING CHRISTMAS TO OTHERS

Each December members of our church choir join with other members of the congregation in singing Christmas carols at various locations on a Sunday afternoon. This is a great way to share the joy of the Christmas season. This year we will sing together on Sunday, December 18. Many voices make this a festive event for people of all ages. And we go out to eat when we're finished! What could be better?

The three places are set for December 17 for our caroling:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 2:30 pm: Chatham Oaks | 4515 Melrose Ave, Iowa City (319) 887-2701 |
| 3:30 pm: Briarwood | 605 Greenwood Dr, Iowa City (319) 338-7912 |
| 4:30 pm: Oaknoll | 1 Oaknoll Court, Iowa City (319) 351-1720 |

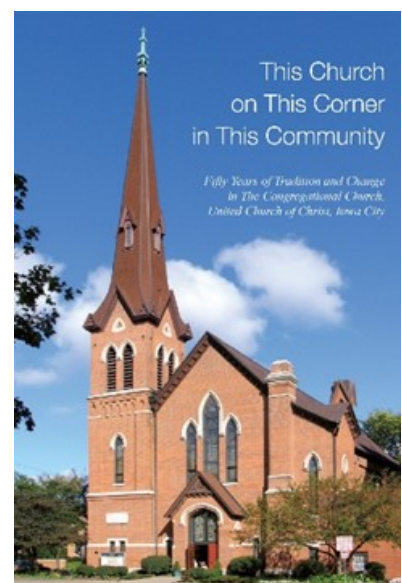
COMING SOON! A BOOK YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

You might have been interviewed or asked to contribute recollections. You might have wondered if the team would ever pull it off. Well it's almost here, the fifty-year history of our church. *This Church on This Corner in This Community* will be available in mid-December.

To make the book accessible to all members, the price has been capped at \$10.00. We hope this price will allow all members to read about our ministers, music, mission, Christian education, theology, building and finances, fellowship and affiliations. However, the actual printing cost of the book is \$20.00, so donations are welcome.

Our fifty-year history is brought to you by committee members:

Donna Hirst, Bryan Clemons, John Fieselmann, Randee Fieselmann, Pamela Willard, editor Gail Zlatnik, graphic designer Robyn Hepker, and with the help of many contributors.





ANNOUNCEMENTS cont.



This year, the theme for our church is "Who is Our Neighbor?" We have decided that our book study fits this theme very well. Therefore, we will continue our study in January of 2018 with Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. We would like to reach out to those of you who have an interest in this topic and strongly encourage you to join us in this journey. If you are just starting out, we recommend that you read *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving. If you would like to read and discuss this book before January, there will be a sign-up sheet downstairs at the church. Also, we will have a sign-up sheet for the January book study by Michelle Alexander. There will be copies of our book list for additional reading on the table as well.

As part of our "Who Are Our Neighbors?" adult education sessions this fall, Valerie Garr, from the Diversity Office at the UI College of Nursing met with the Sunday morning group. Afterwards she wrote: "I enjoyed the great conversation that we had and really do feel encouraged that community members in the Iowa City area are truly interested and engages in the holistic experiences of minority students who seek to make Iowa City and the UI their 'home away from home.' With congregations like yours at the forefront of taking an active stand on issues impacting diverse communities, I have no reservations that you and your members are walking the talk and as a result, making positive change to better our overall community."

NEW BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

For the past two years our adult education classes have taken time to examine and learn about issues of racial justice. We initially focused on a study prepared by the United Church of Christ on white privilege. When we completed this study, many of us felt that we had more to learn. We compiled a book list from various members of our congregation and formed two book study groups that met throughout the year. *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving was our introductory book. One group followed with *Tears We Cannot Stop* by Michael Eric Dyson and the other group read and discussed *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* as told to Alex Haley.

This has been a very meaningful, thoughtful, and life changing study as we listen to the voices of our fellow Americans. These writers are reaching out, sometimes in despair, to call attention to the fact that many in our country have been denied their rights as citizens by institutionalized racism. We have grown to understand that all of us suffer when racial barriers exist and that we can never become the country that our constitution promises until we all can understand and become allies in this journey.

(Continued Next Page)

JOIN THE CRC RAPID RESPONSE COMMITTEE

Immigrants in our community are under increasing threat of deportation and incarceration by ICE (Immigration Customs and Enforcement).

As part of the recent efforts of faith communities to provide support for immigrants in our community, the Center for Worker Justice has formed committees to work on material support (food, housing, childcare, etc.), legal assistance, sanctuary support, and "rapid response" to raids and detentions. **All of the committees need active participants and your help is needed!**

The "rapid response" committee in particular would like to encourage others to participate, either as committee members or as part of a rapid response network (see second point below.) They hope to do the following:

- Maintain contact with local government and law enforcement officials to receive notice of impending raids.
- Build a network of contacts throughout the community of people to be called on short notice to witness or document any deportation efforts by ICE or attend hearings of those in our community who are threatened with deportation or incarceration.
- Create a text message/ phone tree method to facilitate rapid contact.
- Investigate the kinds of rapid response mobilization efforts undertaken in other communities.

Please let the CWJ know if you can help as a committee member or as part of the rapid response network. **Rafael Morataya, CWJ Executive Director (319) 499-8363**

Join Us!



**LET'S GATHER TOGETHER TO
CELEBRATE THE SEASON!**

**Members and nonmembers of
all ages are invited.**



Please join us for the **Advent Potluck Lunch** immediately after worship on **December 3rd**. Tableware will be provided, and coffee and drink will be set up. Just bring the dish of your choice. No sign-up sheet of “what you’re bringing” is necessary because our Congregation always brings the perfect assortment of delicious food. If you would like to help with the event - especially clean-up - please let **Connie Parsons, Diane Jetter, Sharyn Reitz, or Phyllis Ruppert** know.



Our Children's Library

A Look Back At Some Favorites

"The Sandwich Shop"

By Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah with Kelly DiPucchio
Illustrated by Tricia Tusa



"This engaging title reminds children that having the courage to try new things can result in positive experiences."

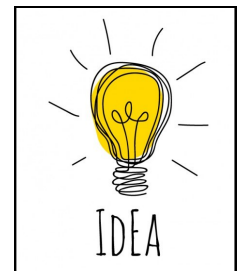
"The day Lily stops eating her peanut butter and jelly sandwich to tell Salma her hummus and pita sandwich looks yucky—and vice versa—is the day they stop being friends. Their collaborative art projects end. They no longer play on the swings or jump rope together, and, at lunch time, they sit at different tables. As their story spreads across the school, so does intolerance. Students begin choosing sides in the cafeteria and calling each other 'Jelly heads' and 'Chickpea brains.' When the two girls get caught in the middle of a food fight and called to the principal's office, they decide it's time to make some changes. This engaging title reminds children that having the courage to try new things can result in positive experiences."—Tanya Boudreau, *School Library Journal* (K–Grade 2)

"What Do You Do With An Idea"

By Kobi Yamada
Illustrated by Mae Besom

*A New York Times Best Seller

*Gold medal winner of the Independent Publishers Award, the Washington State Book Award, and the Moonbeam Children's Book Award.



"This is the story of one brilliant idea and the child who helps to bring it into the world. As the child's confidence grows, so does the idea itself. And then, one day, something amazing happens. This is a story for anyone, at any age, who's ever had an idea that seemed a little too big, too odd, too difficult. It's a story to inspire you to welcome that idea, to give it some space to grow, and to see what happens next. Because your idea isn't going anywhere. In fact, it's just getting started."—Amazon Books (K–Grade 3)

"What makes this message so unique is the simple but beautiful way it's delivered, in narrative and illustration, through the eyes and voice of an innocent and hopeful child. *What Do You Do With An Idea?* is a spectacular book for all ages and is a wonderful treasure for any home or school library."—*The Children's Book Review*

"A Christmas Story"

By Brian Wildsmith

"In this tale of Christ's birth from a child's point of view, Rebecca journeys from Nazareth to Bethlehem to reunite a lonesome young donkey with its mother, found braying happily in a humble stable. From the endearingly fuzzy baby donkey to the glorious gold stars and angel wings, this Greenaway Medalist's illustrations beautifully mix the simple and the sublime."—*The Washington Post*



"This book would be a creative addition for family Christmas reading. Its storyline not only includes the traditional Bible narrative but also the introduction of a fictional character, Rebecca, and a little donkey, who add a twist to the 'story' without changing its underlying meaning. A winning illustrator for several of Britain's Kate Greenaway Medals, Wildsmith created intricate artwork with eye-catching gold inserts that will capture the attention of both children and adults."—Better World Books (Ages 3 and up)

Our Adult Library

"An American Family; A Memoir of Hope and Sacrifice" by Khizr Khan

"I am an American patriot not because I was born here but
because I was not"--Khizr Khan

Quoted from the book cover:

"In fewer than three hundred words, Muslim American Gold Star father Khizr Khan electrified viewers around the world when he took the stage at the 2016 Democratic National Convention. And when he offered to lend Donald Trump his own much-read and dog-eared pocket Constitution, his gesture perfectly encapsulated the feelings of millions. But who was that man, standing beside his wife extolling the promises and virtues of the U.S. Constitution?" "In this urgent and timeless immigrant story, we learn that Khizr Khan has been many things. He was the oldest of ten children born to farmers in Pakistan and a curious and thoughtful boy who listened rapt as his grandfather recited Rumi beneath the moonlight. He was a university student who read the Declaration of Independence and was awestruck by what might be possible in life. He was a hopeful suitor, awkwardly but earnestly trying to win the heart of a woman far out of his league. He was a brilliant and diligent young family man who worked two jobs to save enough money to put himself through Harvard Law School. He was a loving father who, having instilled in his children the ideals that brought him and his wife to America--the sense of shared dignity and mutual responsibility--tragically lost his son, an Army captain killed while protecting his base camp in Iraq. He was and is a patriot, and a fierce advocate for the rights, dignities, and values enshrined in the American system."

"An American Family" shows us who Khizr Khan and millions of other American immigrants are, and why--especially in these tumultuous times--we must not be afraid to step forward for what we believe in when it matters most."

"I'd like to say to Mr. and Mrs. Khan: Thank you for immigrating to America. We're a better country because of you. And you are certainly right; your son was the best of America, and the memory of his sacrifice will make us a better nation--and he will never be forgotten." ---Senator John McCain

Khizr Kahn holds a B.A. degree from the University of Punjab, an LL.B. from Punjab University Law College, and an LL.M. from Harvard Law School. He is a practicing lawyer living with his wife Ghazala in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Judy Doorenbos, Library Committee



Serving Our Church

In the Congregational United Church of Christ, we all share in performing duties for the worship service.

A list is provided each month for the assignments of Greeters, Ushers and Hospitality.
Please arrive one-half hour before the service, which begins at 10:15 am.

If you cannot serve on the assigned date, please call someone else on the list to arrange a trade with them. Please let the Deacon of the Month, ED MURPH, know of any changes.
He can be reached at 319-338-0288..

| DECEMBER | GREETERS | USHERS | HOSPITALITY |
|----------|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 3 | Sheryl Amos Ann Aschoff | Kate Edwards Derek Lehman Rick and Phyllis Ruppert | Dean Logan Jeff Schabilion |
| 10 | Kai and Amanda Bouma | Lenore Maybaum Margaret Beck Shelagh Hayreh Chris Lewis | Chris and Vernetta Knapp |
| 17 | Deb and Stuart Cobb | Margaret MacInnis Roger Mills Andrea Rauer Pat Goeldner | Dale and Patty Roberts |
| 24 | Nicole Pearson Vicki Thomae | Bill and Becky Hoefer Darin Wells Diane Olson | James Robinson Megan Carnes |
| 31 | TBD | Scott and Patricia Hansche Jane Murphy Connie Parsons | Dick and Mary Lea Kruse |

DECEMBER 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---------|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | | | 1 - Set up Gifts for Parents at St. Mark's UMC | 2 - Gifts for Parents at St. Mark's UMC. 8:30am—1pm |
| 3 -- 1st Sunday in Advent Worship Service 10:15 am - Communion - Choir 9:00 am - Sunday School 9:15 am - Choir Rehearsal 11:30 am - Advent Lunch | 4 | 5 - Weekly Meditation 9:30 am - CE Board 6:30 pm - Diaconate 6:30 pm - Mission Board 7:00 pm | 6 - FRC Luncheon Noon - Choir Rehearsal 7 pm | 7 | 8 | 9 - Choir Rehearsal 10:45 am |
| 10 - 2nd Sunday in Advent Worship Service 10:15 am - Choir 8:30 am - Sunday School 9:15 am - Choir Rehearsal 10:30 am - Alternative Giving After Worship | 11 | 12 - Weekly Meditation 9:30 am | 13 | 14 - Last FRC Luncheon for Fall Semester Noon | 15 | 16 - Men's Breakfast @ Riverfront Hy Vee 8 am. |
| 17 - 3rd Sunday in Advent Worship Service 10:15 am - Children's Christmas Pageant - Caroling with UCC Choir 2pm | 18 | 19 -- Weekly Meditation 9:30 am - Membership Board 5:30 pm - Stewardship 7:00 pm | 20 | 21 NO Women's Lunch in December | 22 | 23 |
| 24 - 4th Sunday in Advent Worship 10:15 am Christmas Eve Worship Service 5:30 pm - Christmas Fund Offering | 25 - | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 - New Year's Eve Worship 10:15 - | | | | | | |



Many Happy Returns of the Day!!

**THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
30 North Clinton Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52245-1700**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DECEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

PARKING INFORMATION

Parking is available evenings and all day Sunday at the IMU or North Hall Parking Ramps.

Ask your usher for a voucher (or get one from the church office).

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

10:15 a.m. Worship
11:15 a.m. Fellowship

Church Office is open Monday - Friday 9-3pm

OUR CHURCH STAFF

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Pastor: | The Rev. William Lovin |
| Music Director: | Chris Nakielski |
| Organist: | Bill Crouch |
| Dir of Children's Programs | The Rev. Patte Henderson |
| Children's Choir Director | Colette Nakielski |
| Office Manager: | Nan Martin |
| Financial Secretary: | Sharyn Huriaux Reitz |
| Communication Assistant: | Christina Patramanis |
| Custodians: | Douglas Herrera Claudia Landaverde |

HOW TO CONTACT US

Monday - Friday 9 am to 3 pm

Phone: 319-337-4301

E-mail:

Minister.....uccicrev@uccic.org
Office Manager.....uccicsec@uccic.org
Financial Secretary.....sharynreitz@gmail.com
Music Director... christopher-nakielski@uiowa.edu
Dir of Children's
Programs.....pattehenderson@ gmail.com
Children's Choir Dir....colette.nakielski@gmail.com
Communication Assist....cpatramanis@yahoo.com