



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
March 2025



Friends in Christ:

Eight years ago, I began a newsletter article writing: “As I said in my sermon on the last Sunday in January, national and world events are moving so fast that a sermon that seems appropriate on Thursday might be woefully out of date by the time Sunday morning arrives. After quickly rewriting my sermon on Saturday, I told you that I had a feeling that we are moving into a time when there might be a lot of incomplete and inarticulate sermons.”

Here we go again—but this is not simply “history repeats itself.”

The fast-moving disruption challenges all of us to keep up to date while we keep our mental and spiritual well-being. When I ask members to describe either how they are feeling and what they sense as the mood of our congregation, I hear words such as discouraged, depressed, anxious, apprehensive, and despair. People are worried about the University and about Iowa farmers. Economic uncertainty is back. And, as I said, national and global circumstances change so quickly and dramatically that what I’m writing today might once again be “woefully out of date” when you read it.

Which, in an unexpected way, brings us to the season of Lent, those 40 days of preparation for the joy of Easter. Lent encourages us to focus on who/what we are and on who/what we are not. We are, as Ash Wednesday reminds us, dust—fragile, provisional, temporary, mortal. This is true of all human beings. We are not God. This, too, is true of all human beings. And at the same we are deeply loved by God, who desires abundance of life for all human beings.

Lent challenges us to look with honesty at our lives and our world. At Congregational UCC, we are people who recognize that such honesty is best achieved as we live together in community with one another. Together, we look at our world. Together, we find the strength to do the often difficult and always hope-filled work of making this world more like the one God desires.

In the days ahead, remember each week that the Sundays in Lent are not technically a part of that season. They are little “days of resurrection,” weekly reminders not only of the grand celebration that we are moving toward but also of the hope in which we live each day, all year long.

So, I invite you, especially in this difficult year, to be a part of all that Congregational UCC offers as we prepare for the joy of Easter. Join us for a simple soup supper at 6:00 p.m. before our Ash Wednesday worship on March 5 at 7:00 p.m. Read the daily Lenten reflections—and write one. Participate in the adult education offerings. Give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing.

And in all things, seek the good.

Peace,

Bill

Christian Ed Congregational UCC March



Ask me about: Check out our headshots on the CE bulletin board in Rockwood Hall. Our students are asked to place a post-it note with a special interest or activity. Adults may have more in common with one or more of our youth than you knew! Take a moment and find that person to ask them about it!

Our church families had a busy February! Boy scout (outdoor!) camp events, choral concerts, a Hancher orchestra concert, basketball tournaments, and dance/show choir competitions that took families from Madison, WI (City High) to Disney World (North Liberty High), just to name a few events! We are so blessed to live in a community that has so many opportunities for our young people. Even so, our children's choir sang a sweet "Peace Like a River" during worship on the 23rd.

We hosted a youth gathering later that day, inviting our friends from First Presbyterian for fellowship and food. Thank you to Sally Strang, Betsy Hinson, Tom Mittman and Darcie Hutzell for their joyful helpfulness and welcoming presence. During our youth event, we potted several of the bulbs provided by Rebecca Weatherford for Easter Sunday. Once sprouted, we will gift two of the larger pots to FBC and keep two of the larger pots for our church, knowing that we co-planted these bulbs as a symbol of hope, prayer and friendship between our two congregations.

Composting & Sustainability: Inspired by the UCC Climate Hope Art initiative, we've been discussing what it means to be good steward's of God's creation in Sunday school. Our recent look at the Parable of the Sower shows us one way to integrate Jesus's lessons in our own lives spiritually and literally. One of the most useful ways to reduce waste is to turn our throw-aways into rich, fertile soil to provide for new growth. If you don't already compost on your own, there is a way to start with the help of your yard waste bin, if you live in Iowa City, North Liberty or Coralville. See our table in Rockwood Hall and feel free to take a "countertop" biodegradable liner and flyer. **ALSO: We are looking for all age congregational contributions to our "Planting Seeds of Hope" bulletin board!** Please feel free to add to the board creatively to inspire small (or big!) acts that encourage us to be good stewards of our natural resources including quotes, resources, personal testimony, or creative imagery.

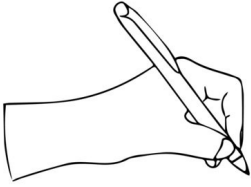
Notes for March:

- Please join us for the CE board sponsored Ash Wednesday Supper March 5, 6-7 PM followed by worship.
- We've been working on our submissions for the Climate Hope Art Contest. If your child/youth plans on a submission outside of Sunday school, please let me know asap. I will begin formatting and preparing art for digital submission Friday, March 7. They have added a \$1000 award to the existing top prize of an all expense paid trip to Washington D.C. with a parent or guardian.
- There will be no Sunday School Sunday, March 16. There will be Children's Church. This is ICCSD spring break.
- Sunday School WILL be held Sunday, March 23, the second week of spring break.
- Mark your calendar for Youth Group Community Clean-up event April 6! (4-7 PM)

Feel free to call, email or text Hope Spragg at 828-333-3074 or hope.spragg@gmail.com with questions, concerns or hopes for Christian education in our church.

CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

WRITE A REFLECTION FOR THE LENT DEVOTIONAL



Each year during Lent, members and friends write reflections that are shared with the congregation and the larger community. We're inviting you to write a short, one paragraph reflection on a particular Biblical text—we'll provide the text, you'll provide the reflection. If you are interested in being a part of this or have any questions, please contact Bill at uccicrev@uccic.org or call the church office at 337-4301 or call Patte Hender-son at 594-7185 or Bryan Clemons at 330-7882. Lent begins on Wednesday, March 5. Easter is Sunday, April 20.

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 soup supper in Rockwood Hall from 6-7 p.m. Bring your family and friends and join others for a light meal, 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.

IMPORTANT DATES IN LENT AND EASTER



- March 5—Ash Wednesday; Soup Supper in Rockwood Hall from 6:00-7:00; Worship Service at 7:00 p.m.
- 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.

OUR NEXT HOPE LODGE DINNER WILL BE March 17. There is a sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall for those who would like to provide food. Food should arrive by 5:15 as dinner is served at 5:30. Helpers (and others) are welcome to join in to eat and visit with the residents at Hope Lodge.



CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

On Palm Sunday, April 13 we will dedicate our One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering. This offering has long been an important part of the life of our congregation. For many years now, we have been on the list of Top 50 giving churches.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) involves us in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, through our offering, we are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS we engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, our contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put us in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. We meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

This year we mark the 75th anniversary of OGHS. You can watch videos about the work that OGHS makes possible [by clicking here](#):

Let us join in this great tradition and give generously.

BEN COPELAND'S SENIOR RECITAL

Ben Copeland's trombone recital will be held on Saturday, March 1, at 5:30 pm in the Voxman Music Building Recital Hall. Everyone is invited.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

8-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

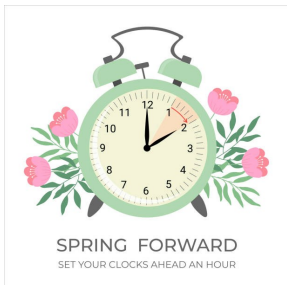
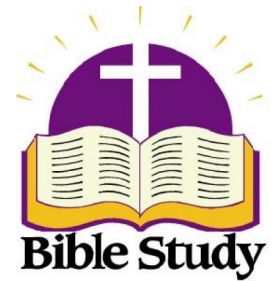
The Rev. Ann Molsberry is offering an 8-week Bible study that promises to do the whole Bible in one 8-week sweep. We will use *The Unfolding Drama of the Bible* by Bernhard Anderson, a progressive introduction/overview of the whole Bible.

We will meet AFTER worship at 11:30 in the library starting 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.

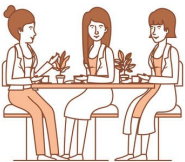


DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS ON SUNDAY, MARCH 9.

Please remember to set your clock ahead one hour on Saturday evening, March 8, so that you get to church on time.

THE WOMEN'S READING GROUP

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.

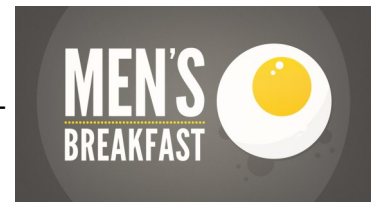


WOMEN'S LUNCH—MARCH 20

The March 20, women's lunch will meet at Exotic India. Please call or Text Martha Ann Crawford at 319-855-8340 to reserve a seat at the table.

MEN'S BREAKFAST—MARCH 15

The March Men's Breakfast will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 15, at the Waterfront Hy-Vee. All Congregational UCC men who eat breakfast are invited. Celebrate the end of the first week of Daylight Saving Time. This is a great way to catch up with old friends and meet new friends. Join us!



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING: Thanks to everyone who gave to the **Souper Bowl of Car-ing** grassroots hunger relief initiative last Sunday. We received \$325.00, all of which will go to the CommUnity Crisis Center Food Pantry—so everybody won! Thanks again.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

CHAMBER SINGERS OF IOWA CITY—MARCH 2

Join the 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/chambersingersofiwacity/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.

SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE—MARCH 8-9—860 QUARRY ROAD, CORALVILLE

March is here and it's time for Shelter House's biggest fundraiser of the year—the 2025 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.



Each year, Shelter House creates a wonderland of adventure, mystery, and curiosity at the annual Book Sale. Tens of thousands of used books are generously donated by members of the community and sold at low prices to support Shelter House's lifesaving work. This is truly a community fundraiser, as so many community members like you donate books, volunteer their time, and shop for treasures at the Book Sale.

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 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.**

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Shelter House could never do a Book Sale of this scale and scope without the help of their wonderful volunteers. They are 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.

SEE SOMETHING—SAY SOMETHING: If you notice something in the building that needs attention—possums in the pews, racoons in Rockwood, a leaky faucet, a loose railing, etc.—please let the church office know right away. Thanks.



SEE SOMETHING
SAY SOMETHING



USHERS, GREETERS, AND HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES: Each Sunday morning brings 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.

CHURCH CALENDAR

March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 - Women's Reading Group, 10:30am
2 - 9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	3	4 -CE Board, 7:00pm - Stewardship Board, 7:00pm	5 -Ash Wednesday Soup Supper, 6pm - Ash Wednesday worship, 7pm	6	7	8 - Mission Board Retreat at Oaknoll, 10-2pm
9 -9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service w/ communion - 11:30 Choir Rehearsal - 11:30 Bible Study	10	11	12	13	14	15 - Men's Breakfast @ Waterfront HyVee, 8:00 am - Women's Reading Group, 10am in Rockwood Hall
16 - 9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service - 11:30 Choir Rehearsal - 11:30 Bible Study	17 - Hope Lodge, 5:30pm	18 - Membership, 5:30pm - Deacons meeting, 7pm - Trustees, 7pm	19	20 - Women's Lunch @ Exotic India in Coralville, 11:45 am	21	22
23 - 9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service - 11:30 Choir Rehearsal - 11:30 Bible Study	24	25 - Council Meeting, 7pm	26	27	28	29
30 - 9:00 Choir Rehearsal - 9:15 Christian Education - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service - 11:30 Choir Rehearsal - 11:30 Bible Study	31					

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

CELEBRATING MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 3/1 Sandra Lacina**
- 3/4 Barb Hanson**
- 3/5 Lyle Tonne**
- 3/6 Melissa Reynolds**
- 3/10 James Jetter**
- 3/13 Joan Buxton
Izzy Brown**
- 3/15 Sylvia Woolums
Malia Lewis**
- 3/19 Willem Maybaum Morton**
- 3/22 Nathaniel Savage
Chris Lewis**
- 3/23 Isabella Myers**
- 3/24 Carrie Whitaker**



ARTICLES FOR THE APRIL NEWSLETTER
are due to the office by Wednesday, March 19th.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER



CHURCH STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 am to 1 pm

Phone: 319-337-4301

Visit our Web Site: www.uccic.org

Pastor:

Interim Director of CE

Music Director

Organist

Children's Choir Director

Office Manager

Financial Secretary

Custodians:

The Rev. William Lovin

Hope Spragg

Dr. Chris Nakielski

Bill Crouch

Rachel Burchett

Jenn Harden

Sharyn Huriaux Reitz

Douglas Herrera

Claudia Landaverde

uccicrev@uccic.org

c.nakielski@cornellcollege.edu

Contact the Office

uccicadmin@uccic.org

sharynreitz@gmail.com

Contact the Office

For up to date announcements, check us out on Facebook.