



## THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ July 2025



Friends in Christ—

My mini-sabbatical in June was a productive time of writing, renewal, and planning. Once again, I thank everyone for making this possible. And I am grateful that some of our clergy church members, Craig Henderson, Bob Molsberry, and Ann Molsberry brought powerful sermons to our congregation each Sunday in June.

The chaos in our nation and in our world only increased during the month.

Which is why I am thankful for those holidays of freedom that we celebrate on June 19 and July 4. They remind us of who we are at our best as a nation and encourage us to be our best. Those occasions in the life of our nation have made all of us better off. We can celebrate the freedom we have as we move toward greater freedom for all. Yes, so many are still on the stony road—and we must look closely at what is required of us that we might continue walking under the guidance of the vision of freedom.

“Where there is no guidance,” the Book of Proverbs tells us, “a nation fails.” Or as the King James Version translates: “Without a vision, the people perish.”

Nothing in the Declaration of Independence is legally binding. But it provides something as important as the rule of law. Even with its fundamental sin of omission, it provides the vision for us as a nation. It gives us an identity as an American people to guide us in the way we might go if we so choose.

That vision was not fully grasped by everyone in 1776. Limited vision meant that many of the people perished without knowing the freedom that was declared.

But in increasing numbers over time—enough people were able to see what was self-evident. Enough people caught the vision of the equality of all people that those words have continued to prod and challenge, continued to inspire and encourage us in our evolving 250-year struggle for freedom and equality.

We are one in a world of nations, aware of the power that we hold and its potential for abuse as well as its many benefits. While appreciating the freedom and equality that we do see, we need to continually be aware of our lack of vision and the danger to ourselves and our nation when we miss self-evident truths.

Abigail Adams warned her husband: “Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could.”

We keep coming back to the life-giving guidance of the Declaration of Independence and its self-evident truths, that Abraham Lincoln called “a rebuke and a stumbling-block to tyranny and oppression.”

Let us seek to be open to the guidance and the vision without which we will fail and perish. May we continue to see and seek this nation’s good.

Peace,

Bill

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Congregational UCC Iowa City Christian Education



### Sundays in July

- No Sunday School
- Children & Youth church during 10:15 worship (led by Hope, Rachel or both)
- SUMMER NURSERY HOURS: 10-11:30

### SAVE THE DATE

- **August 18-20** (Mon-Wed) 8AM-11AM Vacation Bible School for all ages
- **week of August 11:** volunteer work week to organize, clean & revision children and youth spaces; times TBA
- **September 7:** Start the new Sunday school year with Kickoff Sunday @ 9:15. Breakfast and programming for Pre-K through high school!

*Hope will be in NC July 13-27. Feel free to contact 828-333-3074 or [hope.spragg@gmail.com](mailto:hope.spragg@gmail.com)*

## July 2025

June was an exciting month for our church family! We kicked off summer/ended the school year with a pancake breakfast followed by singing "This Little Light of Mine" during worship. Thank you Rachel Burchett and all of the students who were there to share in the fellowship and gift of music!

**Camp Stronghold:** Alex Butler, rising 7<sup>th</sup> grader, Peter Spragg, rising 9<sup>th</sup> and Hope Spragg spent a week at the Stronghold castle in Oregon, IL with students and leaders from Saint Andrew and First Presbyterian. From night games, sing-a-longs to Bible studies, this was a unique and memorable week for everyone. Hope delivered the nightly Bible talks themed "What is the Bible?", yoga and tried her best at chasing night games in the surrounding forest. Peter and Alex showed leadership, kindness and courage being in the Congregational "minority". Their "Pink" team won the week-long competition of gaming and cabin cleanliness AND each voluntarily led a group prayer before meals. Thank you to the church for supporting us, we hope to facilitate more enriching opportunities for our students like this in seasons to come!

Pride & Church Family picnic: Thank you to all who participated in the parade and picnic. It was a hot parade and cool picnic inside—a good and bonding time for our church community!



left: sing-alongs at Stronghold

right: Alex defying gravity during Leapfrog at camp



## CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

**THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON FRIDAY, JULY 4,** in celebration of Independence Day.

**OFFICE CLOSED**



### SUMMER JAZZ WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday, July 6, is the final day of the Iowa City Jazz Festival. We'll mark this occasion with a jazz worship service at 10:15 a.m. Our good friends in the Dick Watson quartet will provide the music. Join us—and bring a friend!

### JULY 6—STREETS CLOSED DURING IOWA CITY JAZZ FESTIVAL

Summer brings great festivals to Iowa City—and closes off some of the streets! Sunday, July 7, is the final day of the Iowa City Jazz Festival. Clinton Street will be closed between College and Jefferson Streets. Access to the church will be available from Jefferson Street and from Clinton Street coming from the north. Join us for worship at 10:15 a.m., but plan on a slightly longer walk.



### OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



Our church is a wonderful place. Things run smoothly, needs are tended. The reason for this is you, board members cheerfully giving time and talents. To keep our church operating well we would like to fill vacancies on the various church boards: Missions Board, Diaconate and Trustees have openings at this time. Serving on one of these boards gives a chance to meet and work with others, current members always willing to offer guidance to a newcomer. A term on a board is three years with the option to renew for a second three-year term. There are also openings to serve remaining terms for open seats varying from one to three years. Below is an overview of the work of each board, as well as the monthly meeting date and time. Please consider how you might serve our church community. Let Marie Von Behren, David McCartney or Bill Lovin know of your interest. Thank you!

#### Christian Education

The Board of Christian Education supports the Sunday morning programming of children pre-k through 8th grade. Additionally the board supports the Christian Education Director by making collaborative decisions about Children Christian education as well as providing on-site execution before, after, and during special events. The Board of Christian Education also provides support for adult programming. Commitment to this board is not difficult since our church has been blessed with creative, talented, and nurturing directors both past and present. Meetings are FUN and at the church at 7:00pm on the first Tuesday of each month.

#### Diaconate

The Deacons meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 7 PM in Rockwood Hall. The responsibilities of the board are, including but not limited to, directing all matters pertaining to the spiritual life of the church in consultation with the pastor; preparing and serving communion; maintaining a system to provide greeters, ushers and hospitality for all scheduled worship services; and oversee the supplies needed for hospitality and communion.

#### Membership

The Membership Board develops ways to welcome everyone into our community of faith. The board organizes fellowship activities and events such as the Progressive dinner, special luncheons following the service, and the summer church picnic. Membership also maintains a system of communication to members in times of celebration, illness, grief, or emergency. Membership meets the third Tuesday of the month at 5:30pm at the church.

#### Mission

The Mission board responsibilities include education, advocacy, offerings, direct service and finances. Mission board organizes an annual adult education series focused on topics of social action. The board establishes priorities for action through direct service, special offerings or financial support. The Mission Board meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm at the church.



## CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Stewardship

The Stewardship Board consists of at least 5 members elected to serve a term of three years. The mission is to encourage the principles of Christian stewardship in the church. Their responsibilities include: planning and administering the church's yearly stewardship efforts to fund the annual operating budget; planning and carrying out fundraising efforts for specific programs, building needs, and other projects; encouraging gifts to the Endowment Fund; and educating and helping members with their long-range estate and special gifts planning for the church. The Stewardship Board meets the third Tuesday of each month via Zoom.

### Trustees

*Trustee: a legal term which, in its broadest sense, is a synonym for anyone in a position of trust or responsibility for the benefit of another; the holder of property on behalf of another; persons who serve on a board of trustees of an institution that operates for a charity or non-profit entity.*

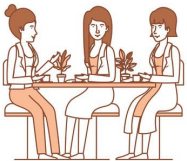
The Board of Trustees is advised by three sub-committees: Finance, Technology and Personnel. The Trustees administer the resources of the Church, including, but not limited to monetary funds, the operating budget, property, buildings, other resources of value and the maintenance thereof.

### HELP AT HOPE LODGE THIS MONTH

Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be Monday, July 14 at 6:00 p.m. If you would like to contribute food for the dinner see the sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall.



JOIN US



### WOMEN'S LUNCH—JULY 17

The July 17th women's lunch will meet at Thai Spice in Iowa City. Please call or Text Martha Ann Crawford at 319-855-8340 to reserve a seat at the table.

### MEN'S BREAKFAST—JULY 19

Breakfast does not take the summer off. The July Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, July 19. We'll gather at the Waterfront Hy-Vee at 8:00 a.m. Good food, great people. All Congregational UCC men who eat breakfast are invited. This is a great way to catch up with old friends and meet new friends. Please join us.



MEN'S  
BREAKFAST

### WOULD YOU LIKE A GIVING STATEMENT? PLEASE LET THE CHURCH OFFICE KNOW

We are now half way through 2025. It's the time of year when some people like to see what they have given and to make sure that their giving to our church is current. If you would like a half-year financial giving statement, please contact Jenn Harden in the church office at 319-337-4301 or send her an email at [uccicadmin@uccic.org](mailto:uccicadmin@uccic.org). She'll be glad to send out a statement. Statements will be ready by July 12.

And thanks again for your generous giving as we move forward!



### TEE OFFERING WILL BE RECEIVED ON SEPTEMBER 21

Our annual offering to support the Theological Education by Extension College in South Africa (TEE Offering) will be received during worship on Sunday, September 21. This offering has been a tradition in our congregation for several decades. It was initially started when the brother of our then minister, the Rev. Ed Heininger, worked for TEE in South Africa. TEE is a private, nonprofit, distance learning institution serving five south African countries. The mission of the college is to equip men and women for Christian ministry. Students come from 28 denominations across southern Africa including the [United Congregational Church of South Africa](http://www.tee.co.za). For more information about this amazing program, please visit their website at [www.tee.co.za](http://www.tee.co.za). Please plan to give generously—our support makes a difference.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Save  
the  
Date!

**SAVE THE DATE:** Our Membership Board is happy to let you know that the **PROGRESSIVE DINNER** will be held this fall, on **Saturday, October 4**. Stay tuned for further details and sign-up information.

### WELCOME STUDENTS IN AUGUST

When the UI Fall Semester begins in late August, Congregational UCC will once again welcome the new and returning students. The exact dates and details are still in the works, but this will be an event designed to let students know who we are, what we value, and how they might find a spiritual home here while studying at the University. More information will be available in early August. In the meantime, if you have suggestions or would like to help with the planning, please talk with Martha Ann Crawford or call the church office at 337-4301.

*Welcome*  
**BACK**  
to school

### FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS

Through our Mission Board, Congregational UCC was a presenting sponsor for the United Action for Youth's Festival of Flowers on May 22, at the Graduate Hotel. UAY's mission is to nurture the potential for all youth to create, grow and succeed. They provide crisis and mediation programs, counseling, health education, music programs, LGBTQ+ programs, homeless youth services, and a young parent program. In 2024, the counseling services provided 3146 sessions for 314 families, safe and stable housing for 46 youth, and support to 65 families including 102 children. UAY supports three of the six Mission Board priorities for 2025: Medical/Mental Health, Children/Youth, and LGTBQ+. CUCC members who attended are seen here at the photo booth.





## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### PRIDE PARADE KICKS OFF IC PRIDE FEST—SATURDAY, JUNE 21

The cheers. The smiles. The greetings. Happy people of all ages along the Pride Parade route rewarded the 25 hardy marchers from our church on Saturday, June 21. On one of the hottest days of the year, our CUCCIC welcoming banner was preceded by trombonists Ben Copeland and his friend Brady playing “Dancing Queen”. The marchers enjoyed personal contact with joyful spectators lining the streets, passing out bubble wands and rainbow crayon hearts with identification from our church. On the ped mall at Washington and Dubuque, the strong winds and hot day did not deter the fun and enthusiasm for our booth with the white, sturdy canopy and rainbow cloth covered table—and face painting available. Needless to say, the cups of cold water were most welcome as Pride Fest visitors learned more about our historically inclusive congregation. We were one of 72 organizations in the parade, including 10 faith groups, and we were one of 155 organizations and vendors with booths.

Building on past years experience, it was a remarkable time of fellowship, outreach and ally-ship despite the weather. If you participated or observed or just have ideas for future years, please pass them on to anyone on the Mission Board LGBTQ+ Subcommittee: Dianne Atkins, Martha Ann Crawford, Carson Fixmer, Linda Muston, Hope Spragg, Julie Wittig or Rebecca Weatherford.





## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### PICNIC SUNDAY!—JUNE 22

When the weather heated up on June 22, our Membership Board stayed cool. They quickly transformed Rockwood Hall into a park pavilion and held our annual church picnic in air- conditioned comfort.





## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### GRADUATION CELEBRATION

During worship on May 25, we recognized the high school graduates in our congregation. This year Dylan Beerends, McKenzie Brown, and Noam Morton all graduated from City High. The Diaconate gave each graduate a gift certificate from Prairie Lights and the books in which members and friends shared their thoughts and good wishes. In addition, we recognized our three nursery care providers, Norah Kauper, Lanira Siron, and Thalia Svec, who also graduated from City High. And after worship—cake for everyone!





## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



### BOOK TALKS BY CONGREGATIONAL UCC AUTHORS

On Sunday, July 20, following the worship service and fellowship, Allan Hogue and Randee Fieselmann will present book talks about their recently published books: *Farming on the Oxbow* and *The Union First: Community and Commitment in the First Iowa Infantry*. They will provide “small bites” and beverages, location to be announced. If you are interested in attending, and to help with the food order, please sign up on the sheet in Rockwell Hall or RSVP to: Allan Hogue [allanhogue@verizon.net](mailto:allanhogue@verizon.net) or Randee

Fieselmann [randeegr@gmail.com](mailto:randeegr@gmail.com)

### WOMEN'S READING GROUP

On July 19th at 10:00 we will discuss chapter 5, "The Mysteries of Making, The Book of Harriet Powers" at Women's Reading Group. I have fond memories of summer reading, and I'd gladly share a copy of In the Sanctuary of Women by Jan Richardson to anyone interested. All are welcome!

**WOMEN'S READING GROUP "FIELD TRIP":** The Women's Reading Group field trip to the Hardin Medical Library John Martin Rare Book Room will be July 8, 10:00-12:00; you won't have to stay the entire time. If you'd like to attend, let Donna Hirst know. Spouses and significant others are welcome. The curator will be displaying: Hildegard von Bingen's Medicine book, a table of medieval manuscript facsimiles, a couple of original edition Books of Hours will be brought over from the Main Library, the Nuremberg Chronicle, and maybe others items. There is a very small parking lot at the base of the Hardin Library; take the elevator to the fourth floor. There's one handicapped spot. Parking is available in the Newton Rd ramp opposite the Med School, and it's a short walk down the hill to the Hardin Library. If you are able to attend, you will be blown away.



### THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who contributed to the Strengthen the Church congregational offering. We received a total of \$1205 that will be put to good use!

### THANKS!

The Immigrant Welcome Network of Johnson County is very grateful for your donation! This gift will go directly toward covering the rent for the Welcome House, providing a safe and welcoming space for the families we serve. We especially want to thank Hope Spragg, the yoga teacher whose efforts made this possible. Please give her a big shout-out from all of us!

Your church is doing amazing work in our community, Keep up the incredible work, and thank you again for standing with us and the families we support.

With Appreciation,  
Grace Kelly

Community Navigator and Social Justice Intern



**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.



# CHURCH CALENDAR

## July 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<b>1</b> -Stewardship, 7pm (Zoom)	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> - Mission Board, 7pm	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> -Tom Kinney memorial service, 11am
<b>13</b> - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> -Membership Board, 5:30pm -Diaconate, 7:00pm -Trustees, 7:00pm	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> - Women's Lunch, 11:45am at Thai Spice, IC	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> - Men's breakfast, 8am
<b>20</b> - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> -Church council, 7:00pm	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		

**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.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### CELEBRATING JULY BIRTHDAYS

Bob Hanson 7/3  
Adelaide Birt-Leeds 7/3  
Vicki Thomae 7/4  
Nadia Spragg 7/5  
Bill Lovin 7/8  
Benjamin Hoefer 7/9  
Kathy Fait 7/10  
Colin Beerends 7/10  
Pam Willard 7/11  
Ella Lewis 7/15  
Jo Ann Benda 7/18  
Ruth Kuntz 7/22  
Steve Wolken 7/24  
David Wilder 7/24  
Chuck Dayton 7/25  
Marie Von Behren 7/26  
Hope Spragg 7/26  
Jane Kinney 7/30  
Ann Romanowski 7/30  
Kathleen Wilder 7/30  
Christine Taylor 7/31  
Linda Muston 7/31  
John Henson 7/31  
Stuart Cobb 7/31



**ARTICLES FOR THE AUGUST NEWSLETTER**  
are due to the office by Friday, July 18.





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

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

JULY 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](http://www.uccic.org)

**Pastor:**

Interim Director of CE

Music Director

Organist

Children's Choir Director

Office Manager

Financial Secretary

Sexton:

Custodian:

**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](mailto:uccicrev@uccic.org)**

[c.nakielski@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:c.nakielski@cornellcollege.edu)

Contact the Office

[uccicadmin@uccic.org](mailto:uccicadmin@uccic.org)

[sharynreitz@gmail.com](mailto:sharynreitz@gmail.com)

Contact the Office

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