

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ September 2025



Friends in Christ—

September in Iowa City is like springtime! There's a sense of new life, of beginnings. Everyone from kindergarten children to post-doc adults are starting something new—people of all ages stretching and growing.

September in Iowa City is like the New Year. Even those of us who are not a part of the vast educational enterprise of our community know the way that the school year influences all our lives in this community. Maybe we all should be walking around with party hats, blowing noisemakers, and throwing confetti.

Beginning on Sunday, September 7 the choir will be singing, the church school classes will get going, new and familiar UI students will be worshipping with the rest of us, people who have been on various summer adventures return and reconnect. What happens here can give shape to the rest of the week—and if we engage in worship on a regular basis, it shapes the semester, it shapes our lives.

We stop to ask where God is in all of this—in our lives, in our world.

We pause to be still and seek the awareness that we live and move and have our being in the presence of God.

It is in some way a matter of expectancy—of putting ourselves in those places where God might be encountered: places of prayer, places of action, places where simple human decency might be shown to our neighbors, known and unknown, places that give free reign to the imagination and to the creation of beauty, places of exacting science and open exploration of truth.

In the sanctuary, in the world—God is present to us as we seek to make ourselves present before God. Peace.

Bill

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



September 2025



We have so much to look forward to in Christian education this fall!

We hope to build on the energy of our August projects: painting and restructuring of the upstairs classrooms, church school summer camp and our introductory confirmation class! It will be an exciting start to the new school year, breathing renewed life and color into our classroom spaces. I'm especially excited for our new Sunday School "shuffle" - adding a teen Sunday school class and rotating our confirmed youth into teaching our youngest children.

A HUGE THANK YOU to the many congregants who joined our August projects, from painting walls, serving full course breakfasts to creating a meaningful and memorable summer camp for our children and youth (in some cases, all 3!): Sandy Lacina, Erin Brown, Izzy Brown, Tom Mittman, Tina Koepnick, Kevin Koepnick, Sally Strang, Dianne Jetter, Nathan Peters, Matt Spragg, Allan Hogue, Betsy Hinson, Catharine Gartelos. We were especially grateful to have a Vacation Bible school music with Rachel Burchett and a wonderful mini-sermon with Bill Lovin appearing in "camp casual". And the HUGEST special thank you to two very special people who helped make camp run with their steadfast commitment and sharing of their gifts, showing up, ready to spend the entire time with us: Ms. Bea Hicks and Rebecca Weatherford.

CE Calendar

Tuesday, September 2 Christian Education board meeting 7PM

Sunday, September 7 Ready, Set, Shine Sunday 9:15 AM

Monday, **September 15 Service Opportunity 5:15 PM**Youth are invited to help serve, share dinner, and visit with families staying at the Hope Lodge, a free home away from home for cancer patients and their caregivers.

750 Hawkins Dr., IC 52246

Sunday, September 21 Confirmation 4 PM

Friday, **September 26 Iowa Homecoming Parade 5 PM**Come help sell refreshments and/or enjoy the parade with your church family from our prime viewing spot in front of the church. All proceeds go to CommUnity Food Bank. Sign-up (in Rockwood Hall) coming soon!

Every Sunday: Sunday School & breakfast at 9:15; Children's Church during 10:15 worship; School Year Nursery hours resume! 9-11:30

*Mark your calendar for our first youth group event Sunday, October 5, from 4-6!

Happy Birthday! September

4th Anika Gartelos turns 15!

5th Renn Morton turns 14!

6th Jasper Morton turns 16!

7th Lilliana Lewis turns 14!

8th Alex Butler turns 13!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Recap & Reflection on "Planting the Seeds of Social Justice" VBS 2025

We had a wonderful turnout for our Children's Church Camp—eleven children and youth, along with many young-at-heart congregants who cheered us on and helped make it all happen! We began bright and early on Monday morning with a delicious savory breakfast prepared by Tom Mittman and joyful music led by Rachel. She taught us a new song, "Everybody In" by Peter Mayer, which perfectly fit our first-day theme: **belonging**. Our guiding scripture was **Ephesians 2:19**: "So you are no longer outsiders and strangers. You are citizens together with God's people. You are also members of God's family." Together, we reflected on how important it is to know that we belong in God's love and within our church family, and how that confidence allows us to offer welcome, kindness, and service to others. Breaking into small groups, one led by Bea, discussing the "Five Finger Prayer," inspired by Pope Francis, which reminds us to pray for friends and family, teachers, community leaders, those who are hurting or vulnerable, and, last but not least, ourselves. We tie-dyed shirts, made bracelets, and enjoyed a creative (and delicious!) yogurt, fruit, and M&M bark treat provided by Rebecca.

Day 2 began with decadent sweet breads and fruit from Sandy Lacina and another joyful music time with Rachel. We read The Little Book of Joy by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu and talked about how kindness brings joy, and that outcome is the same, despite vastly different life experiences. Our scripture focus was Colossians 3:12: "You are God's chosen people. You are holy and dearly loved. So put on tender mercy and kindness as if they were your clothes. Don't be proud. Be gentle and patient." We affirmed the good news that all people are God's people and reflected on our calling to "clothe ourselves" in mercy and kindness. Together, we discussed acts of service, including caretaking and beautification of spaces. For snack, Diane Jetter brought sugar cookies that became a camp favorite. Bill Lovin graciously shared a message about the "clothes" we put on, both literally and figuratively, explaining why ministers wear robes and how we can choose to clothe ourselves in kindness. We ended the day in the Chapel, where Rebecca guided us through "Roses and Thorns" (sharing highs and lows of the day), and Bea led us in a group Five Finger Prayer. It was an intimate and meaningful time in a sacred space inside our building.

Day 3, our final day, began with Sally Strang's beloved breakfast cookies and a lively musical visit from Catharine Gartelos, mother of Alex and George Butler. We created masks as a symbol of how we can choose/beautify to show up in the world with imagination and creativity. Our original plan was to finish camp with an act of **service** by picking up litter downtown. But since it was student move-in week, and the city was already quite clean, we adjusted our plan. Instead, we set out on foot with open eyes and hearts, looking for both litter and symbols of social justice in our community. Using a map of downtown murals, we discussed the art and messages of belonging that we saw, picked up a little trash, and noticed signs of beauty and inclusivity in local businesses. It was especially heartening to return to our own church building, greeted by our banner, closing snacks, popsicles, and prayer.

I'll close with words from another song Rachel shared, by The Okee Dokee Brothers:

If you want love, give it away.
If you want love, give it away.
And the best place to start
Is inside your little heart.
If you want love, give it away.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS















SING OUT!—JOIN THE CHOIR

Do you enjoy singing? Our volunteer choir begins its season on Sunday, September 7, with a rehearsal at 9:00 a.m. and we will sing during the 10:15 worship service. This year's "Choir Roundup" will take place after worship that morning. From there we meet each Sunday morning at 9 a.m. sharp for a one-hour rehearsal before the worship service. Whether you're a long-time member or the new kid on the block, WE WANT YOU! The Congregational UCC choir is a wonderful group of people who work hard at making great music. You'll be sure to enjoy this experience. Questions? Please get in touch with our choir director Dr. Chris Nakielski at cnakielski@cornellcollege.edu.



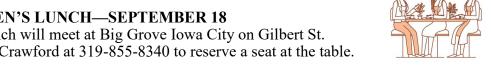
AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE AT HOPE LODGE THIS MONTH— **SEPTEMBER 15**



Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be Monday, September 15. If you would like to participate, see the sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall. If you have questions contact Sue Dayton cdayton7@mchsi.com

The American Cancer Society Hope Lodge, which opened in 2008, offers 28 guest rooms located near treatment centers in the area. The program provides a free home away from home for cancer patients and their caregivers. More than just a roof over their heads, it's a nurturing community that helps patients access the care they need. Each Hope Lodge community offers a supportive, homelike environment where guests can share a meal, join in the evening's activities, or unwind in their own private room. Patients staying at a Hope Lodge must be in active cancer treatment.





MEN'S BREAKFAST—SEPTEMBER 20

The September Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, September 20. It's an "Away" game that day, but we'll be in town for breakfast. 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

before watching the Game or however you will spend your day.

TEE OFFERING WILL BE RECEIVED ON SEPTEMBER 21 What is TEE?

TEE stands for the Theological Education by Extension College 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 <u>United Congregational Church of South Africa</u>. From its start, TEE was open to both men and women and to people of all races.



Our annual 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. Please plan to give generously—our support makes a difference.

For more information about this amazing program, please visit their website at at https://teec.co.za/.

UI HOMECOMING PARADE

The Homecoming Parade is early this year. Join your friends here at the church for the best viewing in town—Friday, September 26. The Mission Board will sell cookies and, depending on the weather, cold or warm drinks during the parade. We are asking for donations of one dozen homemade cookies or bars that are \$1 (larger) size. Items do not need to be individually wrapped but please bring a display card labeling what type and if they contain pea-

nuts or tree nuts. Baked goods may be dropped off in the kitchen between 9-1 or 5-5:45 the day of the parade. We also need volunteers to sell the cookies and drinks. There will be a sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall or you can sign up here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054BA9AA2DA7FAC07-58238112-homecoming#/

HELP AT THE FREE LUNCH PROGRAM THIS MONTH—SEPTEMBER 29 Providing Good Food and Hospitality since 1983

When there is a fifth Monday in the month, our congregation serves at the Free Lunch Program, one of the "quiet services" in the Iowa City area that strives to do one thing well: provide a **free**, **filling** and **healthy lunch** to **anyone** who comes to us. Volunteers bring a spirit



of caring and compassion to our program as the people we serve are treated as guests. We come together knowing that we're all deeply connected and dependent on one another, no matter our current circumstances. We will serve on Monday, September 29. You can help by providing food or by serving at the site at 1105 Gilbert Court. Please sign up in Rockwood Hall. If you would like to begin to receive the signup sheet sent by email, please contact Vicki Thomae at vickithomae@gmail.com

MISSION BOARD DIAPER AND TOILET PAPER DRIVE IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

The Mission Board is sponsoring a diaper and TP drive during September and October. Items received will go to the CommUnity Crisis Center or the North Liberty Food Pantry. Please drop off diapers and training pullups, as well as toilet paper in the box in Rockwood Hall. Large boxes are acceptable, as the pantries will divide them into smaller packets. If you want to contribute cash to this effort, the Mission Board will do the shopping—just put "Diaper Drive" on your envelope or check. Let's all get "behind" the effort and delight others with our generosity!





CONGREGATIONAL UCC RECORDS AT THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As many of you may know, the State Historical Society of Iowa announced in June that it will close its Iowa City research center in 2026. This closure will affect over 37,000 linear feet of records, including our church's historical archives.

Our main concern, of course, is the fate of our records. At the direction of the church council earlier this summer, I contacted Anthony Jahn, state archivist who is overseeing this undertaking, about this matter. Here is his response, in italic.

As of today, staff and I have not made any decisions regarding which collections are moving to Des Moines nor approached collecting repositories about potential collection transfers. However, we've had a number of organizations express their interest to be of assistance to us.

- By early August we are hoping to start communicating more process details & next steps with donors as well as the statewide community.
- We appreciate you letting us know the council's desire that Congregational Church United Church of Christ of Iowa City records remain in Iowa City.
- If you have a recommendation regarding an Iowa City collecting organization that will accept the Church records, just let us know.
- All collections held in the custody of the State Historical Society are the responsibility of the State of Iowa and will be afforded protections outlined in Iowa Code and Administrative rule.

As it currently stands, any collection that is not able or ready to be transferred to or accepted by another institution by June 30, 2026 will move to Des Moines. No collections will be disposed of in a haphazard manner as they are held by our organization in the public trust.

Bill Lovin and I acknowledged Mr. Jahn's email and thanked him for his response. There remain numerous concerns about this undertaking and how it is being managed, specifically whether it is in accordance with best practices as articulated by the Society of American Archivists and other professional organizations. We understand from published reports that only about 60 percent of the Iowa City archives will be moved to Des Moines due to that location's limited space, with the remaining 40 percent to be dispersed or even destroyed. This appears to contradict the above fourth and fifth points.

I, along with the church council, will continue to monitor this situation and keep you apprised of any developments. Our utmost concern is the fate of our records and we will do all that we can to ensure their continued secure and accessible custody.

David McCartney

Wings of Hope Gala— **Immigrant Welcome Network** Sponsored by the Mission Board

Date: Saturday, September 20, 2025 Time: 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Location: Unitarian Universalist Society Fellowship Hall

Join us for an inspiring evening featuring dancing, live music, and delicious food! As a sponsor, our church has reserved seven seats for attendees. If you would like to join us, please contact Jenn Harden at the church office: uccicadmin@uccic.org About the Immigrant Welcome Network (IWN)

Founded in 2024 by immigrants, refugees, and passionate Iowans, the Immigrant Welcome Network of Johnson County is dedicated to empowerment and solidarity. Their services include temporary housing, employment assistance, permanent housing support, help navigating new environments, ESL courses, mentorship programs, and advocacy.

Learn more at: www.iwnjc.org.



COMING IN OCTOBER—

Please mark your calendar for our **PROGRESSIVE DINNER** on Saturday, October 4. The registration flier is in this newsletter. Please make plans to join us. This is a great way to meet new people and make new friends. We'll start the evening with appetizers at Oaknoll from 5-6. After that, we'll break into small groups and go to host homes for the main course from 6:15-7:45. The evening will end with dessert at Steve and Sue Wolken's home from 8:-9:30.

A registration sheet is included in this newsletter.

WINTER CLOTHING DISTRIBUTION COMING IN OCTOBER

The Winter Clothing Distribution (WCD), sponsored by the Consultation of Religious Congregations, will be from the afternoon of Sunday, 10/12, through the early afternoon of Saturday, 10/18. Over the span of these days we will set up, accept clothing donations, sort & organize clothing, distribute the clothing, & clean up after the event. A detailed schedule will be provided in September.

The event will be held at The River Community Church (RCC), 3001 Muscatine Avenue, in Iowa City. This facility has plenty of parking space and is on a bus route.





Our Membership Board is pursuing plans to create an "in house" photo directory to help everyone put names and faces together. If you have a photo that you would like us to use, please email it to Jenn Harden at uccicadmin@uccic.org.

This fall we will have opportunities for photos to be taken at the church if you would prefer that option. Please watch for more information.

CARBON OFFSET HELPS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Have you ever wanted to compensate for CO2 emissions from a flight or other carbon intensive activity? Carbon offsets are a recognized way to make an activity carbon neutral. Carbon offsets are also often viewed with skepticism due to concerns about whether the money given is truly decreasing carbon emissions and whether the action would have happened without the donation.



Those concerns can be assuaged with a donation to put solar arrays on Habitat for Humanity homes. The homeowners do not have the resources to make an upfront investment in a solar array and once installed the system is likely to stay in place for the lifetime of the panels. In addition to reducing CO2 emissions the donor would be helping a low income Iowa family with their energy bills.

With our energy mix in Iowa, the cost of a solar array, and production from solar panels over 25 years; the cost per kilogram CO2 reduced for solar panels is 22 cents per kilogram CO2. (Based on Iowa's current energy mix.) This means a single seat flight from New York to Los Angeles could be offset for a \$68 contribution to the Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity solar fund (307 kg CO2 emitted).

To estimate your flight emissions and send an offset to Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity go to www.habitatsolar.org/. Please contact Jamie McCoy or see the bulletin board in Rockwood Hall for more information.

UPDATE

NEWS FROM SHELTER HOUSE

In mid-August, a man intentionally drove into an encampment near Shelter House, injuring the individuals who were in their tents when the attack occurred. Shelter House staff and first responders worked quickly and effectively, and though none of the injuries were critical, four people went to the hospital. All victims have been released from the hospital and returned to homelessness. We continue to provide trauma-informed care and street outreach services as we work toward helping these individuals—and dozens more like them—to find safe, secure housing they can afford.

Everyone—the folks in nearby tents, the staff who responded, the entire Shelter House team—is profoundly shaken. Shelter House is offering counseling resources to all staff, which is our practice after traumatic events. The victims' status as individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness amplifies the risk to their safety. But sleeping outside is never truly safe. You can be certain these folks wouldn't have had their homes or apartment buildings driven into. The fact they are sleeping outdoors makes them more vulnerable in every way: to natural forces like extreme weather, to social stigma, and to human aggression.

Anti-homelessness language in <u>recent executive orders</u> and proposed legislation in the Iowa <u>House</u> and <u>Senate</u> have increased hostility nationwide. Notably, the State's bills are written and advanced by an organization with no ties to Iowa that <u>rejects research-backed</u>, <u>proven solutions and pushes criminalization in identical legislation</u> across all 50 states.

Moving encampments might make some folks more comfortable, but it <u>does nothing to help the people in crisis</u>. It only hides the problem. As <u>we watch what unfolds in Washington, D.C.</u> in the wake of calls to "clean up the streets" and institutionalize the people sleeping unsheltered, it is critical that we talk about the dire state of affairs locally.

Shelter House is our community's lowest-barrier intervention in a state with an appalling lack of resources. Indeed, Iowa ranks <u>last in the nation for mental health bed availability</u> with just two beds per 100,000 Iowans. In recent years, Shelter House has seen more and more individuals coming to us from hospitals due to a lack of mental health beds. Approximately 55% of individuals staying in Emergency Shelter self-report having a diagnosed mental illness, though estimates from the mental health providers who come to provide services on site put that number at closer to 70%. In our Permanent Supportive Housing, 100% of tenants have one or more diagnosed mental or behavioral health conditions.

Shelter House is the only general use shelter for anyone experiencing homelessness in our community. With just a 70-bed capacity and layers of systemic barriers to finding housing—poor credit, no recent landlord references, and discrimination against voucher holders, to name a few—this means that the people in crisis stay in crisis longer, lengthening stays at shelter, extending waits for a shelter bed, and magnifying frustration as folks wait for assistance.

Financially, our Emergency Shelter is holding on by a thread. Public investment is inadequate, and <u>the state spends 1.2x more on corrections than it does on housing and community development</u>. Indeed, the cost for Shelter House to provide Emergency Shelter—and this includes ONLY the cost of direct services—is just 35% publicly funded; we fundraise to cover the gap.

Gap? No. Chasm.

Put another way, of the 70 beds at Emergency Shelter, only 25 shelter beds are funded. In all of Johnson County, Iowa—12 cities and the entire rural area—public dollars pay for only 25 beds.

25 shelter beds in a community where even households who earn at or above the median income struggle to find housing they can afford.

Because homelessness is, ultimately, a housing problem. As we work with partners to improve the affordable housing situation throughout the community, we know what works for the vulnerable population we serve at Shelter House: permanent housing that individuals and families can afford with wraparound services available to keep them safe, healthy, and housed. And, in most cases, this more than pays for itself by <u>decreasing costs to other systems like hospitals and emergency services</u>.

It is one thing to know something is a problem, and another thing entirely to witness it. But folks, everything is broken. It is time to lean into our collective discomfort and not look away from others' pain. The people in crisis in our community do not deserve our ire: they need our respect, our support, and <u>our investment</u>.

With heavy hearts,

Christina M. Canganelli, Executive Director Christine Hayes, Director of Development & Communications

USHERS, GREETERS, HOSPITALITY AND LITURGIST OPPORTUNITIES: Sunday morning brings an abundance of opportunities to be involved in making the morning a time of joy and renewed energy. Everyone is invited to greet people coming to worship, to usher, to lead the congregation in worship 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.



STUDENT WELCOME

On Monday, August 24, we welcomed new and returning UI students and let them know who we are, what we value, and how they might find a spiritual home here while studying at the University.









PROGRESSIVE DINNER 2025

OCTOBER 4

5:00-9:30 PM

Dinner provided by Olive Garden Cheese Ravioli with marinara sauce/meat sauce \$18.00 per person (no charge for students and children under 18)

We start as a group for appetizers from 5-6, then move in small groups to host homes for the main course from 6:15 – 7:45, and regroup for dessert from 8-9:30.

We/I would like to participate by attending:

Name(s):
Phone:
Email:
Address:
Linda & Ray Muston and Bill Dickinson will host appetizers for the whole group at the Oaknoll Retirement Residence.
Steve & Sue Wolken will host desserts for the whole group.
Please sign up for one of the following. We/I would like to participate by providing the following:
Providing appetizers for 12 people
Providing dessert for 12 people
Hosting the main course for 8-10 people. Please indicate how many people,
including yourself, that you can host Can host children - yes/no
Please check other options to help us plan:
Bringing children Need transportation
Need accessible location Vegetarian/Gluten Free
I/ we can provide transportation for those that may need it.

Make checks payable to Congregational UCC with Progressive Dinner in the note section. Put check and reservation form in the offering plate or drop off at the church by September 21.

CHURCH CALENDAR

September 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesda	y Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 - Mission Board, 7pm -Stewardship, 7pm (Zoom) - CE, 7pm	3	4	5	6
7 - 9:15 CE all ages - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	8 - Serve at Hope Lodge	9 -Gentle Yoga, Noon	10	11	12	13
14 - 9:15 CE all ages - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	15	16 -Gentle Yoga, Noon -Membership Board, 5:30pm -Diaconate, 7:00pm -Trustees, 7:00pm	17	18 - Women's Lunch, 11:45am at Big Grove IC	19	20 - Men's breakfast, 8am
21 - 9:15 CE all ages - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	22	-Gentle Yoga, Noon -Church council, 7:00pm	24	25	26 -Homecoming Parade	27
28 - 9:15 CE all ages - Children's Church During Worship - 10:15 Worship Service	- Serve at Free Lunch Program	30 -Gentle Yoga, Noon				

CELEBRATING SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 9/3—Kathi Koegle, Noam Morton
- 9/5—Renn Morton, Sophie Neems
- 9/6—Kevin Koepnick, Jasper Morton, Alison Seidl
- 9/7—Robyn Hepker, Liliana Lewis, Doug Parsons
- 9/9—Patte Henderson
- 9/12—Dean Logan
- 9/13—Charley Platz
- 9/15—Nathaniel Lovin, Jean Willard
- 9/16—Shirley Woolums
- 9/19—Lenore Maybaum
- 9/21—Noel Carver, Matt Spragg
- 9/26—Bruce Reynolds
- 9/28—Cindy Parsons, Gail Zlatnik





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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SEPTEMBER 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: The Rev. William Lovin uccicrev@uccic.org

Interim Director of CE Hope Spragg

Music Director Dr. Chris Nakielski c.nakielski@cornellcollege.edu
Organist Bill Crouch Contact the Office

Organist Bill Crouch
Children's Choir Director Rachel Burchett

Office Manager Jenn Harden uccicadmin@uccic.org
Financial Secretary Sharyn Huriaux Reitz sharynreitz@gmail.com
Sexton: Douglas Herrera Contact the Office

Custodian: Claudia Landaverde

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