



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

July 2026



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 and friends, Libby Conley, Bruce Williams, Bob Molsberry, and Mary Hubbard, brought powerful sermons and inspiring worship to our congregation each Sunday in June.

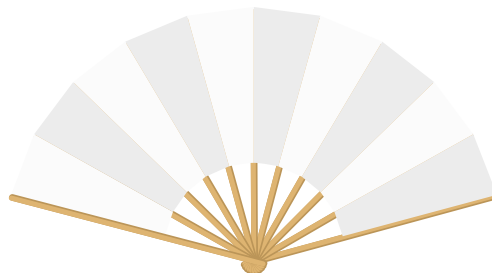
It is good to return in July as the heat and humidity are upon us. I love the “summer church”—those gatherings of God’s people on warm or hot summer Sunday mornings. The pace is slower. The dress is casual. The mood is relaxed. And thanks to the air conditioning, we don’t have to use our bulletins as makeshift fans. Throughout the worship service we become aware of God and our neighbor and ourselves in new ways as we rest in the stillness of the morning.

I used to lead worship once a month at a nursing home. During those times of worship, we would pray together, we’d listen to scripture, I’d do a little preaching. And we sang. The hymns were old ones, many of which were unfamiliar to me—like the one that began: “Take time to be holy.” In the UCC we are usually not too concerned with being “holy” in the sense of spiritually perfect or pure. We generally prefer to get our hands dirty and to run the risk that Jesus take of mingling with the hungry, the broken, the sick, and the outcast.

I came to appreciate this song, however. This happened in part because it reminded me—and, really, it encourages all of us—to “take time.” One of the verses of this 130-year-old hymn is up-to-date as it sings “the world rushes on.” If we are going to do anything important with our lives—raise children, feed the hungry, establish peace, be a congregation that “walk[s] together in the ways of Jesus Christ, made known and to be made known to us”—it will only be because we take time, carving out a space for those actions in the midst of the rush and demands of our world.

I hope that as the summer continues, as the hot and humid weather sometimes slows us down, that you can take time. You probably won’t become holy, perfect, or pure. But you might get a better sense of God’s call and God’s strength for your life.
Peace,

Bill



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

VBS

CHURCH SUMMER CAMP



Call
319-337-4301
to register!

EVERYONE BELONGS

AUGUST 17-19
Mon-Wed 5:00-7:30 PM
supper included!

ART • MUSIC • PLAY

So you are no longer outsiders and strangers. You are citizens together with God's people. You are also members of God's family. Ephesians 2:19

CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



**THE CHURCH OFFICE
WILL BE CLOSED ON
FRIDAY, JULY 3RD—In
Observance of Independence
Day. Happy 250th Birthday,
America!**

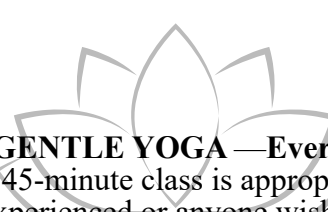


JULY 5—STREETS CLOSED DURING IOWA CITY JAZZ FESTIVAL

Summer brings great festivals to Iowa City—and closes off some of the streets! Sunday, July 5, 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.



**Ben Copeland
Trombone Recital
July 10—
@7:00 PM**

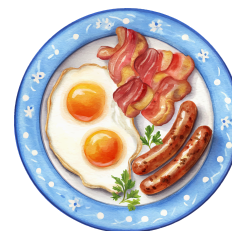


SUMMER GENTLE YOGA —Every Tuesday at 11 am! This 45-minute class is appropriate for beginners, experienced or anyone wishing to focus on body awareness, increased mobility, and relaxation. Guest instructor and congregant Elizabeth Taylor will teach 7/7 and 7/14! The \$10 suggested donation goes entirely to the Immigrant Welcome Network. We are pleased to announce we sent this year's first six month of donations totaling \$1,045! Thank you to all who participate. If you'd like to join us, call the office to register.



WOMEN'S LUNCH-JULY 16

On July 16th, at 11:45 am, women's lunch will meet at, Red Ginger in Coralville. Please call or Text Martha Ann Crawford at 319-855-8340 to reserve a seat at the table.



MEN'S BREAKFAST—JULY 18

The May Men's Breakfast will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 18th, at the Waterfront Hy-Vee. All Congregational UCC men who eat breakfast are invited. This is a great way to catch up with old friends and meet new friends. Join us!



CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



SPRING BRUNCH

After the choral offering of Faure's Requiem during worship on May 31, members and friends gathered in Rockwood Hall for our Spring Brunch. In addition to celebrating the musicians, members who had joined our church in the past year were recognized as well as Shirley Woolums and John Johnson for their work on the photo directory. A splendid time was had by all.

A big thanks goes to our Membership Board for planning this event: Marcy Kuechenmeister, Pam Willard, Sheilah McKenna, Joyce Myers, Dean Logan, Randee Fieselmann, Marsha Lowe, and Martha Ann Crawford, all lead by the Membership Board chair, Sue Dayton. Also helping were Vicki Thomae, Chuck Dayton, Jean Koch, Rick and Phyllis Ruppert, Kathi Kogle, Ruth Bradley, and Bruce Tarwater.



CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Farewell

This is Dr. Chris Nakielski's final Sunday as our choir director. As he leaves to curate the Patsy Cline museum in Nashville—oh, wait, I may have that wrong.

Chris will be choral director at Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN, no doubt adding other gigs in the area as his many talents are discovered. Colette will be teaching at Invictus charter school in Nashville as well.

I met Chris when I sang in graduate conducting class. He was working on his DMA and accepted our choir position in 2016. When he graduated he got a job at a college in Washington State but headed back to the Midwest in 2020- 2021 when the job opened up at Cornell College.

We asked again and to our delight Dr. Nakielski accepted the church position again. He liked the choir, knew what a great gift it is to have Bill Crouch and wanted to do music in contrast and compliment to the work at Cornell.

Under his guidance the music programs have thrived, certainly improving things at the college. But also improving our group, sounding better and rising to the challenge of some new works and cherishing some traditional works as well. The numbers have expanded. We are known around the community as one of the best programs. Chris guides and educates us with his talent and good humor, earning our respect and love.

Beyond the afore mentioned duties he has sung, adjudicated, organized for the ICDA and ACDA communities and tended to his growing family. He has had more than a full plate but remains a positive force and wonderful colleague to all who have the good fortune to be in his orbit.

Thanks, Chris, for your time and giving so generously to us. We will miss you and wish you all the best in Nashville.

It just shows that much good can come from a second term, even an interrupted one. Maybe there will be a next time!



**Dr. David
Puderbaugh &
Dr. Richard
Bloesch**

Welcome

We are pleased to welcome Dr. David Puderbaugh as our choir director this fall. David is not new to the community, recognized from his 23 years as director of the Chamber Singers of Iowa City. He began that position as he began work on his DMA at the University of Iowa. After getting the degree he became assistant professor in the Choral department, a position held for years by Dr. Richard Bloesch. And he has now become head of the Choral Department at UI, replacing the retired Dr. Timothy Stalter.

Dr. Puderbaugh grew up in the Des Moines area, attended Drake University, Dr. Aimee Beckmann-Collier head of the program, and then received the MM from the University of Missouri with Dr. David Rayl. Both of these professors did their DMA studies at the University of Iowa. David is also an authority on Estonian music, studying there on a Fulbright Scholarship and returning several times.

This is a brief account, many more achievements and accolades to his credit. We feel very fortunate to have Dr. Puderbaugh join us. He states:

I'm excited to become part of the Congregational Church's long history of lovely people making beautiful choral music within worship! I look forward to picking up where my friend Chris Nakielski has left off, and I thank the choir, Pastor Lovin, and church leaders for putting their trust in me as the choir enters this next chapter in its history. Richard Bloesch was one of my professors at Iowa, and I eventually took his position there after he retired. Now I'm stepping into the position at the church he held for so many years; another circle is completed. I'm honored to follow Richard, Chris, and the many UI choral graduate students who have led the choir.



*We wish
you
all
the
Best*

CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

FAREWELL GATHERING FOR THE NAKIELSKI FAMILY

On June 19, members of the choir gathered to share memories and extend their best wishes to the Nakielski family. We are grateful to Sue and Chuck Dayton for graciously hosting this special event.





CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



PRIDE AFTER-WORSHIP PARTY—ON JUNE 14TH: THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO CELEBRATED AND PREPARED FOR THE IOWA CITY PRIDE FESTIVAL WITH US.



PRIDE BOOTH—ON JUNE 20TH: THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO VOLUNTEERED FOR THE IOWA CITY PRIDE FESTIVAL BOOTH. WE HAD A GREAT TURNOUT.





CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRIDE

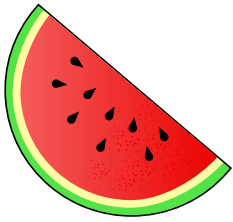
CELEBRATING PRIDE FESTIVAL 2026 TOGETHER

More than 40 Congregational UCC members, families and friends enthusiastically participated in the Iowa City Pride Parade and Festival on Saturday, June 20. Thousands of spectators lined the parade route to cheer on the marchers. We were the 63rd entry out of 64, saving the best for the last! Our group kicked off the procession carrying our welcoming banner, followed by marchers waving colorful signs and flags, by others handing out bubble wands to a joyful crowd, and our flag-waving van bringing up the rear. Meanwhile, over on the Ped Mall at Washington and Dubuque, volunteers welcomed a steady stream of Pride Fest visitors to our booth. With over 145+ participating organizations, we stood out by offering fun table giveaways, face painting, a Pride comment board, and information about our Open and Affirming Congregation.

It was a joyous celebration for everyone involved, providing a great opportunity for fellowship, visibility, and meaningful outreach. Thank you to everyone for your time, energy and enthusiasm! If you have comments or ideas for future years, please reach out to any member of the Mission Board LGBTQ+ Subcommittee: Dianne Atkins, Martha Ann Crawford, Carson Fixmer, Dean Logan, Linda Muston, Hope Spragg, Rebecca Weatherford, or Julie Wittig.



CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



ALL CHURCH PICNIC—SUNDAY, JUNE 28

Thirty five cool people gathered at City Park on a very warm Sunday afternoon, June 28, for the church picnic. There was good food and good conversation. Thanks all who braved the heat and joined in this fun event.



FREE LUNCH PROGRAM NEWS—MONDAY, JUNE 29

Providing Good Food and Hospitality since 1983. Our church served 147 lunches at the Free Lunch Program on Monday, June 29, 2026. Thank you so much to all who volunteered in so many ways: Sue Dayton, Bill Dickinson, Carson Fixmer, John Fuller, Craig Henderson, Betsy Henson, Jane Kinney, Kathi Koegle, Alfrieta Monagan, Linda Muston, John Reitz, Kevin Richards, Rick Ruppert and Julie Wittig.

Our next scheduled serving date is Monday, August 31. Our last remaining serving date this year is November 30. If you would like to begin receiving the signup sheet sent by email, please contact me at vickithomae@gmail.com

CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

Nametags help newer members and friends trying to put names and faces together. And—admit it—they help long-timers know who the new people are as well. They are available on the board outside of the sanctuary. Please wear them. And if you'd like one, please contact the church office.



VISITATION COMMITTEE

The Membership Board is forming a group of volunteers who would be willing to occasionally contact/visit church members who are homebound or would enjoy a visit. If you are interested see the sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall.

HOPE LODGE

Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be on Monday, July 13. Dinner is served at 6:00 p.m. If you would like to contribute food for the dinner please see the sign-up sheet posted in Rockwood Hall.

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.

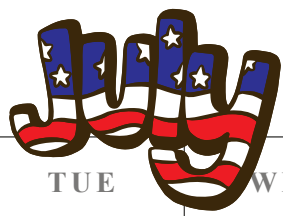


SENDING USED MEDICINE BOTTLES TO AFRICA FOR REUSE IN CLINICS—IMPORTANT REQUEST

1. Please donate only orange bottles; other colors should be recycled. Caps can be any color.
2. Bottles must have labels and all adhesive removed. Sticky bottles or bottles with residue should be recycled. I can't use them. If this is difficult for you, consider finding a partner who can help you prep the bottles.
3. Bottles should be washed in warm, soapy water. We don't want to inflict harm on individuals who could come into contact with foreign medicine.



100 Grannies, a local environmental activist group, is sending used plastic medicine bottles to Africa to assist clinics in distributing medication. Donna Hirst is in charge of this project and would be pleased to have participation from members of our congregation. For more information contact donna-hirst@uiowa.edu. She will pick up bottles on Sundays. Thank you for your assistance.



2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 Prairie Piffari 6:30 PM	3 Independence Day Observed Church Office Closed	4 
5 Worship 10:15 Coffee After Share the Harvest	6	Yoga 11:00 am Mission 7:00 PM Stewardship 7:00 PM	8	9 Trombone Practice 2:00 PM Prairie Piffari 6:30 PM	10 Trombone Music 7:00 PM	11
12 Worship 10:15 Coffee After Share the Harvest	13 Hope Lodge Dinner Served @ 6:00 pm	14 Yoga 11:00 am	15 Staff Meeting 11:00 AM	16 Women's Lunch@ Red Ginger in Coralville 11:45 am Prairie Piffari 6:30	17 Neems Wedding Rehearsal 5:00 PM	18 Men's Breakfast 8 AM Neems Wedding Youth Mission 8:00 PM
19 Worship 10:15 Coffee After Share the Harvest	20 Please submit items for the August Newsletter by Today	21 Yoga 11:00 am CE 6:00 pm Membership 5:30 pm Trustees 7:00pm	22	23 Prairie Piffari 6:30 PM	14	25
26 Worship 10:15 Coffee After Share the Harvest	27 Serving Free Lunch	28 Yoga 11:00 am Church Council 7:00 PM	29 Staff Meeting 11:00 AM	30	31	DEACON OF THE MONTH: Laurie Stunz



CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



2026 CHURCH CALENDAR

JULY 2026

Deacon of the Month—Laurie Stunz

Share the Harvest

- 3 Independence Day Observed
(Church Office Closed)
3-5 IC JAZZ FESTIVAL

AUGUST 2026

Deacon of the Month —Vicki Henderson

Share the Harvest

- 2 Communion
17-19 Vacation Bible School
24-29 UI Student Welcome Events
24 ICCSD School Year Begins
UI Fall Semester Begins
31 Serve at Free Lunch Program

SEPTEMBER 2026

Deacon of the Month—Chris Lewis

Share the Harvest

- 6 Communion
7 Labor Day—Church Office Closed
13 Church School/Adult Education,
Choir Singing Resumes
20 TEE College Offering

**SAVE THE DATE
FOR THE
PROGRESSIVE DINNER:
Saturday, October 17.**

Please submit items for the August Newsletter by July 20th.

**THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**30 North Clinton Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52245-1700**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**July 2026
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

CE Director: Hope Spragg

Music Director: Dr. Chris Nakielski

Organist: Bill Crouch

Children's Choir Director: Rachel Burchett

Office Manager: Nancy LeaVesseur

Financial Manager: Sharyn Huriaux Reitz

Sexton: Douglas Herrera

Custodian: Claudia Landaverde

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For up to date announcements, check us out on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UCCofIC>