



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

August 2026



Friends in Christ—

This summer, Iowa City placed number 8 on CNN's list of America's Best Towns to visit. Living here is pretty good, too—especially in the summer. One person was quoted as saying: "When the students disappear over the summer break, it's known as 90 days of heaven. It's so quiet. There's parking everywhere. It's clean and it feels like you have the place to yourself. In winter, when they go on their break, it feels depressing, and you miss them."

Winter or summer, we at Congregational UCC do miss the students when they're not around and worshipping with us. And while parking becomes less available this month, the arrival of new and returning students calls us to one of our most important ministries here.

Being a church with a generous spirit, a church that extends an extravagant welcome, means that we can be a place of refuge, a haven in an often heartless world. We've been doing this for some time now; which means that quite often we don't even think about what we're doing—how unique and how important this is. And we have to keep doing this because so many churches don't. Over the years we have grown as a generous, welcoming congregation. We've worked at it.

Loneliness is a problem for college freshmen, but my guess is that it's a problem for new graduate students and for continuing students of all classes and ages. In fact, in a survey of nearly 28,000 students on 51 campuses by the American College Health Association more than 60% of students said that they had "felt very lonely" in the previous 12 months. Many feel lonely even with all the people around.

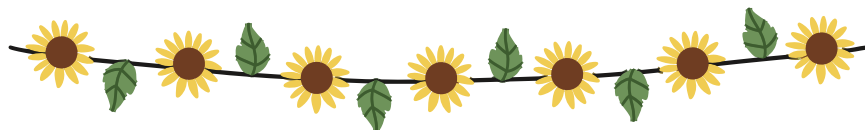
Once more we need to ask: what would an extravagant welcome look like to those who are alone? Can we welcome students in a way that addresses the emptiness that so many feel? Can we show them the new possibility of community?

One of the people interviewed by CNN said of Iowa City, "You can find your people here." You can. Let us continue to be a place where people find the welcome and acceptance they are seeking.

Peace.

Bill

P.S. I WILL BE ON VACATION FROM SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, THROUGH SUNDAY, AUGUST 9. The Rev. Libby Conley will preach on August 2 and the Rev. Mary Hubbard will preach on August 9.



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



WELCOME STUDENTS THIS MONTH

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 build on the new and reimagined events that we've held in recent years. It is a great way 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 the coming weeks. In the meantime, if you have suggestions or would like to help with the planning, please talk with Bill Lovin.



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

We are now half way through 2026. 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 Nancy LeaVesseur in the church office at 319-337-4301 or send her an email at uccicadmin@uccic.org. She'll be glad to send out a statement.

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

CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



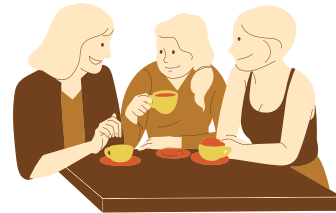
ASHMAN MEMORIAL SERVICE—AUGUST 1

The Memorial Service for long-time Congregational UCC member, Bob Ashman, will be held in the sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 1. A reception will follow, giving people a chance to talk with Bob's children and their families.



MEN'S BREAKFAST—AUGUST 15

The May Men's Breakfast will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 15th, 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!



WOMEN'S LUNCH-AUGUST 20th

On August 20th, at 11:45 am, women's lunch will meet at, The Olive Garden. Please call or Text Martha Ann Crawford at 319-855-8340 to reserve a seat at the table.

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM NEWS—AUGUST 31

Providing Good Food and Hospitality since 1983, our next scheduled serving date is August 31. If you would like to begin receiving the signup sheet sent by email, please contact me at vickithomae@gmail.com



HOPE LODGE—THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELPED WITH THE HOPE LODGE DINNER IN JULY

Jane Kinney, Marsha Lowe, Diane Dahl-McCoy, Rebecca Weatherford, Sally Strang, Julie Wittig, Dianne Atkins and Andy Bertolatus, Shelagh Hayreh, Bryan and Ginny Clemons, Linda and Ray Muston, Stephanie Frazee, and Chuck and Sue Dayton. The next Hope Lodge dinner will be **September 14**.



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.

FALL RETREAT—Saturday, October 10. A Fall Retreat Day based on Gratitude. The retreat is based on the book "Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks" by Diana Butler Bass. Mark your calendars now for this time of music, art, time in nature, and being together. The retreat day will be from 9-3 at The Unitarian Universalist Society in Coralville. Registration will be in Rockwood Hall on Sundays in September and a \$25 registration fee needs to accompany the registration form. Questions? Contact Marsha Lowe or Rebecca Weatherford. Watch the September newsletter and bulletins for more information.



COMING THIS FALL

SING(ING) A NEW SONG TO THE LORD: An Invitation to Join the Choir

Dear friends at UCCIC,

I am thrilled to be joining your congregation and its storied choir program on August 1! I have long known of the choir's important contribution to worship and this church's support of beautiful music through your past choir directors: my former professor Dr. Richard Bloesch; my former graduate students John Hughes, Patrick Zubiare, Kristin Ramseyer, and Chris Nakielski; and subbing for Chris in leading the choir several times. I look forward to making lovely music with the choir as I take over for Chris and build on his fine work.

This new chapter in the choir's history begins with our "Choir Round-up" on WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 7:00pm for our first gathering of the new season. We will meet in the sanctuary for rehearsal then adjourn to Rockwood Hall for refreshments as we celebrate this new beginning.

All are invited to our gathering—current members, former members, and those who are interested in joining for the first time! The Congregational UCC choir is a wonderful group of people who are dedicated to making great music and enjoying the community that a choir provides.

The choir's first Sunday back will be SEPTEMBER 13. We will meet at 9 AM sharp in the sanctuary and follow that with the 10:15 worship service.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at davidjpuderbaugh@gmail.com.

Dr. David Puderbaugh
Choir Director



Please mark your calendar for our **PROGRESSIVE DINNER** on Saturday, October 17. The registration flier is in this newsletter. Please make plans to join us. You are sure to learn at least one fascinating fact about another member of our congregation that evening, reinforcing your experience that we are a uniquely interesting group!



UI HOMECOMING PARADE

The Homecoming Parade is late this year. Join your friends here at the church for the best viewing in town—Friday, October 30.



WINTER CLOTHING DISTRIBUTION

As in past years, they are looking for donations of gently used or new WARM winter wear, with an emphasis on coats, snow pants, hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, boots & winter shoes. Heavy sweaters & sweatshirts are also appreciated. Your donations of quality winter clothing & your volunteer participation will be most greatly appreciated! Further details will be provided in coming weeks.



THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC PROGRESSIVE DINNER OCTOBER 17, 2026 5:00-9:30 PM



Dinner catered by Olive Garden
Cheese Ravioli with marinara sauce/meat sauce (salad & bread sticks)
\$18.00 per person (no charge for 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 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 8-12 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 October 4.

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.



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. 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 \$1045! Thank you to all who participate. If you'd like to join us, call the office to register.

USHERS, GREETERS, AND HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES: There are still some 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.

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.



Congratulations to Ella Lewis on being named Miss Congeniality at the Johnson County Fair! This award reflects the kindness, positivity, and genuine spirit you shared throughout the competition. Your friendly attitude and the respect you've earned from those around you make this recognition especially meaningful. Well done, Ella!



WANT TO GIVE ONLINE?

Scan the QR code for our giving app.
Your giving makes a world of difference.



CHURCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



BEN COPELAND TROMBONE RECITAL

Our good friend, Ben Copeland, returned to Iowa City in July, taking time out from his music studies at the University of Indiana. On Friday, July 10, Ben offered a trombone recital at the Congregational Church. It was an evening of great music and a delightful time to see Ben once again. Ben writes: To My Church Family: Thank you so much for hosting and supporting my trombone recital with the IOWinds Alliance! It was such a gift to play in that space for such a wonderful crowd. Thank you for always supporting me on my musical journey. And thank you for your support of the IOWinds Alliance. I truly believe in their organization and was very proud to support them. I see myself in so many of the students that organization helps, so your generosity means a lot. Thank you for everything and I hope to be back soon!

CELEBRATING THE WEDDING OF SOPHIE NEEMS AND GRIFFIN MURPHY



On Saturday, July 18, Sophie Neems and Griffin Murphy were married in our sanctuary. After the service, a brass band (including Ben Copeland on trombone) led everyone in a parade through the downtown streets from the Congregational Church to the reception at the Englert Theater.

AUGUST 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	DEACON OF THE MONTH: Vicki Henderson	Communion August 2nd.	Vacation Bible School Aug 17-19 5:00 pm- 7:30 pm			1 Bob Ashman Memorial Service 10:00 AM
2 Worship with Communion 10:15 Coffee After Share the Harvest	3	4 Yoga 11:00 am CE 6:00 PM Mission 7:00 PM Stewardship 7:00 PM	5	6 Prairie Piffari 6:30 PM	7	8
9 Worship 10:15 Coffee After Share the Harvest	10	11 Yoga 11:00 am	12 Staff Meeting 11:00 AM	13 Women's Lunch@ The Olive Garden 11:45 am Prairie Piffari 6:30 PM	14	15 Men's Breakfast 8 AM
16 Worship 10:15 Coffee After Share the Harvest	17	18 Yoga 11:00 am Membership 5:30 pm Trustees 7:00pm	19	20 Prairie Piffari 6:30 PM	21	22
	Vacation Bible School 5:00 pm-7:30 pm					
23 Worship 10:15 Coffee After Share the Harvest	24 Student Welcome 11am -1 pm Please submit items for the September Newsletter by Today	25 Yoga 11:00 am Church Council 7:00 PM	26 Staff Meeting 11:00 AM	27 Prairie Piffari 6:30 PM	28	29
30	31 Serving Free Lunch					

Happy Birthday

8/1 Kate Edwards 8/7 Betty Mather
8/9 Phyllis Ruppert & Craig Fallis
8/11 Shirley Wyrick 8/16 Emily Koepnick
8/24 Bill Dickinson & Tina Koepnik 8/30 Jean Koch
8/31 Betsy Boyd & Donna Hirst



2026 CHURCH CALENDAR

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
- 9 Hope Lodge
- 13 Church School/Adult Education,
Choir Singing Resumes

OCTOBER 2026

Deacon of the Month—Kris Bode

Stewardship Presentations in Worship

Share the Harvest

- CRC Winter Wear Distribution
- 4 World Communion Sunday
- 17 Progressive Dinner
- 25 Reformation Sunday
- Deacons change paraments
to white after worship
- 30 Homecoming Parade

NOVEMBER 2026

Deacons of the Month—Alfrieta Monagan &

Diane Dahl-McCoy

Alternative Giving

- 1 All Saints Sunday—Jazz Service
- Communion
- Neighbors in Need Offering
- Deacons change paraments to green after worship
- 9 Hope Lodge
- 22 Thanksgiving Sunday
- Last Sunday of the Church Liturgical Year
- Deacons change paraments to blue after worship
- 26 Thanksgiving—Church Office Closed
- 27 Church Office Closed
- 29 First Sunday of Advent
- 30 Serving at Free Lunch Program

DECEMBER 2026

Deacon of the Month—By Committee

Alternative Giving

- 6 Second Sunday of Advent
- Special Music Sunday
- Advent Luncheon
- 13 Children's Pageant
- 20 Fourth Sunday in Advent
- Deacons change paraments to white after worship
- Deacons set up crèche
- 24 (Thursday) Christmas Eve Worship at 5:30
- Christmas Fund Offering
- 25 & 28 Church Office Closed (Friday and Monday)
- 27 First Sunday after Christmas
- Christmas candle only in the Advent wreath
(light before worship)
- After worship on 12/28, deacons move crèche
to upper narthex and reset the altar

**Please submit items for the August
Newsletter by August 24th.**

**THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**August 2026
NEWSLETTER**



CHURCH STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 am to 1 pm
Phone: 319-337-4301

www.uccic.org

Pastor

CE Director
Music Director
Organist
Children's Choir Director
Office Manager
Financial Manager
Sexton
Custodian

The Rev. William Lovin

Hope Spragg
Dr. David Puderbaugh
Bill Crouch
Rachel Burchett
Nancy LeaVesseur
Sharyn Huriaux Reitz
Douglas Herrera
Claudia Landaverde

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Contact the Office
Contact the Office

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