



Professor Robert Michaelson of the SUI School of Religion, the Rev. Lewis Dunnington, and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. are pictured (left to right) during King's 1959 visit to Iowa City and the University of Iowa.

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
30 N. CLINTON ST.
IOWA CITY, IA 52245
30 319-337-4301

WORSHIP FOR JANUARY 18, 2026
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. SUNDAY

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”
Martin Luther King, Jr.

PRELUDE “We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder” arr. Mark Hayes

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Rick Chambers, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 27)

God is our light and our salvation;
Whom shall we fear?

**God is the stronghold of our lives;
of whom shall we be afraid?**

We shall see the goodness of our God
in the land of the living.

**Wait for the sovereign God;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for our God!**

[Unison]

Let us worship God.

*** HYMN 291 “O God of Earth and Altar”**

**O God of earth and altar,
bow down and hear our cry;
our earthly rulers falter,
our people drift and die;
the walls of gold entomb us,
the swords of scorn divide;
take not your thunder from us,
but take away our pride.**

**From all that terror teaches,
from lies of pen and voice,
from all the easy speeches
that make our hearts rejoice,
from sale and profanation
of honor and the sword,
from sleep and from damnation,
deliver us, good Lord!**

**Awaken us to action
And forge us into one,
Defying sect and faction;
O God, Your will be done!
Oppressive systems snare us;
Our apathies increase.
Great God, in mercy spare us
For justice and for peace!**

***OPENING PRAYER (A prayer of Martin Luther King, Jr.)**

Most gracious and all wise God, before whose face the generations rise and fall; Thou in whom we live, and move, and have our being: We realize that we stand surrounded with the mountains of love and we deliberately dwell in the valley of hate. We stand amid the forces of truth and deliberately lie. We are forever offered the high road and yet we choose to travel the low road. For these sins, O God, forgive. Break the spell of that which blinds our minds. Purify our hearts that we may see thee. O God in these turbulent days when fear and doubt are mounting high, give us broad visions, penetrating eyes, and power of endurance. Help us to work with renewed vigor for a warless world, for a better distribution of wealth, and for a society that transcends race or color. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray. Amen.

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#452, vs. 1-4)**

**O day of God, draw nigh
in beauty and in power;
come with your timeless judgment now
to match our present hour.**

**Bring to our troubled minds,
uncertain and afraid,
the quiet of a steadfast faith,
calm of a call obeyed.**

**Bring justice to our land,
that all may dwell secure,**

**and finely build for days to come
foundations that endure.**

**Bring to our world of strife
your sovereign word of peace,
that war may haunt the earth no more,
and desolation cease.**

ANTHEM "City Called Heaven" arr. Josephine Poelinitz

TIME OF PRAYER

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer

The Prayer of Our Savior

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Choral Response

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" Setting by John Carter

*Response

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Christ, all creatures here below,
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(The children are dismissed to Children's Church.)

SCRIPTURE LESSON Micah 2:6-7,11

'Do not preach'—thus they preach—

'one should not preach of such things;
disgrace will not overtake us.'

Should this be said, O house of Jacob?

Is the Lord's patience exhausted?

Are these his doings?

Do not my words do good

to one who walks uprightly?

If someone were to go about uttering empty falsehoods,
saying, 'I will preach to you of wine and strong drink',
such a one would be the preacher for this people!

PSALM 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills;

from where is my help to come?

**My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.**

The Lord will not let your foot be moved,
and the One who watches over you will not fall asleep.

**Behold, the One who keeps watch over Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep;**

it is the Lord who watches over you;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
**so that the sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;
the Lord shall keep you safe.

**The Lord shall watch over your going out and your
coming in, from this time forth forevermore.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Romans 12:2, 9-13

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

* HYMN 404 “Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

**Precious Lord, take my hand
Lead me on, let me stand
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home**

**When my way grows drear,
precious Lord linger near
When my light is almost gone
Hear my cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home**

SERMON “King Still Speaks in Iowa”

*RESPONSE OF FAITH

[Adapted from the sermon, “Our God Is Able,” by Martin Luther King, Jr.]

Let us declare our faith and hope together:

**We believe in God, at work in the world,
transforming death into life.**

**We believe that God is able to change
desolate valleys into paths of joy;
to give tired feet strength
for striding toward the city of freedom;
to create courage in us
for facing the uncertainties of the future,
and to give us power to endure
that which cannot be changed.**

**When our days become dreary,
and our nights darker**

**than a thousand midnights,
we believe that God is able
to make a way out of no way
and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows.
This is our hope for becoming a better people.
This is our hope for making a better world.
Amen! Thanks be to God!**

***HYMN 332 “Live into Hope”**

**Live into hope of captives freed,
of sight regained, the end of greed.
The oppressed shall be the first to see
the year of God's own jubilee!**

**Live into hope! The blind shall see
with insight and with clarity,
removing shades of pride and fear,
a vision of our God brought near.**

**Live into hope of liberty,
the right to speak, the right to be,
the right to have one's daily bread,
to hear God's word and thus be fed.**

**Live into hope of captives freed
from chains of fear or want or greed.
God now proclaims our full release
to faith and hope and joy and peace.**

***BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE “Every Time I Feel the Spirit” Setting by John Carter

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Minister:	The Rev. Bill Lovin
Director of Christian Education:	Hope Spragg
Organist:	Bill Crouch
Choir Director	Dr. Chris Nakielski
Children's Choir Director	Rachel Burchett

	TODAY
❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Christian Education for All Ages	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
Coffee Hour	After Worship

	TUESDAY
❖ Gentle Yoga	Noon
Membership Board	5:30 pm
Diaconate	7:00 pm
Trustees	7:00 pm

	WEDNESDAY
❖ Staff Meeting	11:00 am
Zoom Bible Study	7:00 pm

	THURSDAY
❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal	6:30 pm

	NEXT SUNDAY
❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Christian Education for All Ages	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
Annual Meeting of the Congregation	After Worship

WE'RE GLAD THAT YOU HAVE JOINED US FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING. Everyone is invited to Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall after worship.

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED TOMORROW, Monday, January 19, in observance of the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

OUR MISSION BOARD IS SPONSORING THE ADULT FORUM THROUGH FEBRUARY 22, EXPLORING LOCAL IMMIGRATION ISSUES. Our scheduled speakers are:

- January 18: Jerilyn McCarty
- January 25: Stella and Brahm Elias, University of Iowa School of Law
- February 1: Sheriff Brad Kunkel
- February 8: Deb Dunkase, Open Heartland
- February 15: Alejandra Escobar, Escucha Mi Voz
- February 22: Discussion Sunday

This series promises to be informative and interactive, addressing timely and important topics. We hope you will join us.

GENTLE YOGA every Tuesday at noon! 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 directly to the Immigrant Welcome Network. More information and sign-up are available in Rockwood Hall.

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY: The winter months provide a great opportunity to meet and study together—all in the comfort of our homes! Join us for a Zoom Bible Study of Paul's Letter to the Galatians. We meet on Zoom from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Wednesday evenings through February 11. Bill Lovin will lead the study. Because we'll be

on Zoom, we expect to see local people and friends from other parts of the world. Let Bill know that you're interested (319-337-4301 or uccicrev@uccic.org) and he'll send you the link.

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST WILL BE HELD AT 11:30 A.M. ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, in the sanctuary, following our 10:15 worship service. We will receive reports of Boards and Committees, vote on the budget for 2026, and transact any other business that is fitting and necessary. Electronic copies of the annual report were sent out to members. Hard copies are available at the church for those who need one.

BABY SHOWER: Our Membership Board is holding a church baby shower for Nathan and Torie and Sylvie on Saturday, January 31 at 2:00 p.m. in Rockwood Hall. It will be a fun time to celebrate Sylvie's birth. Everyone is invited!

CHURCH PHOTO DIRECTORY: Our Membership Board is creating 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. John Johnson will be taking photos after worship this morning.

BETHEL AME CHURCH/EAST UNION MENNONITE CHURCH PRESENTS DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.—CELEBRATION 2026: "What Would Dr. King Say?" Monday, January 19, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 411 South Governor Street, Iowa City. Speaker: Tiffini Stevenson Earl, JD. Musical Selections: Bethel A.M.E. Choir, East Union Mennonite Choir, Ms. Dianna Penny, Cindy Shaw and much more. Everyone is invited!

USED MEDICINE BOTTLES NEEDED FOR REUSE IN CLINICS: 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 the congregation. If you are interested, the labels from the plastic bottles need to be removed, and the bottles need to be washed in soapy water. More information will be in the church newsletter. Donna will pick up bottles on Sundays.

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE AT THE BIKE LIBRARY offers free e-assisted bike rides originating from the Ashton House and looping through City Park. If you or someone you know would benefit from this "ride through the park" as a passenger, see the sign-up in Rockwood Hall or talk to Hope Spragg to arrange a ride. More info available at: <https://icbikelibrary.org/cycling-without-age!>

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.

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.

PLEASE HELP WITH PARKING IN THE CHURCH LOT: Several people currently have mobility issues and need to park in our small parking lot on Jefferson St. If you are able, please park elsewhere so that the marked and unmarked spaces can be used by those who need them. Thanks.

SEE SOMETHING—SAY SOMETHING: If you notice something in the building that needs attention—a leaky faucet, a loose railing, etc.—please let the church office (319-337-4301) know right away. Thanks.

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.



Want to give online? Scan the QR code for our giving app.
Your giving makes a world of difference.

WE LIVE STREAM OUR WORSHIP SERVICES AT 10:15 ON SUNDAY MORNING. You can join us online in real time at <https://vimeo.com/event/1424751>. This streaming address is the same each week.

RECORDINGS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICES are posted after worship on Sunday at <https://vimeo.com/channels/1547852>. The recordings remain up permanently, so you can watch past worship services at your convenience or recommend them to a friend.