



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

WORSHIP FOR JANUARY 25, 2026
 THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

“He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside, he came to those who knew him not. He speaks to us the same words: ‘Follow me!’ and sets us to the tasks which he has to fulfill for our time.”

Albert Schweitzer

PRELUDE *“Préambule,”* Op. 31. No. 1 Louis Vierne

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Bea Hicks, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

God said, “Let there be light,”

and God saw it was good.

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world,”

and those who follow him have the light of life.

Jesus said, “You are the light of the world,

so let your light shine.”

[Unison]

Let us worship God.

***HYMN 470 (vs. 1 & 2) “O Day of Radiant Gladness”**

**O day of radiant gladness, O day of joy and light,
O balm of care and sadness, most beautiful, most bright;
This day the high and lowly, through ages joined in tune,
sing "Holy, holy, holy" to the great God Triune.**

**This day at the creation the light first had its birth;
This day for our salvation Christ rose from depths of earth;
This day our Lord, victorious the Spirit sent from heaven,
And thus this day most glorious a triple light was given.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

We pause here, O God, to hold in your light our concerns about our world, our lives and all that is before us.

Let your light suffuse all we hold in our minds.

**In this time, let us become aware once more of your light in our lives
and the ways we may allow it to bring grace and strength to all we must do and decide.**

Bring your clarity to our understanding.

Illumine our way forward.

Let your light shine on us, in us, and through us. Amen.

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#470, vs. 4)**

**That light our hope sustaining, we walk the pilgrim way,
At length our rest attaining, our endless Sabbath day.
We sing to you our praises, our Hope, our Joy, our Sun:
the church its voice upraises to you blessed Three in One.**

ANTHEM “Ubi Caritas” Maurice Duruflé

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 “Adagio”, Op. 39, No. 1

Alexandre Guilmant

*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 Isaiah 9:1-4

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

***PSALM HYMN 179 "God is My Strong Salvation" (Psalm 27)**

God is my strong Salvation:

What foe have I to fear?

In peril and temptation

My light, my help is near.

Though hosts encamp around me,

Firm to the fight I stand;

What terror can confound me,

With God at my right hand?

Place on the Lord reliance,

My soul, with courage wait;

God's truth be thine affiance,

When faint and desolate.

God's might thy heart shall strengthen,

God's love thy joy increase;

Mercy thy days shall lengthen;

The Lord will give thee peace.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 4:12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

*** HYMN 345 (vs. 1 & 2) “Dear Lord, Creator Good and Kind”**

**Dear Lord, Creator good and kind,
Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.**

**In simple trust like theirs who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.**

SERMON “Carrying the Light”

***READING THE COVENANT OF CONGREGATIONAL UCC**

We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the Word and will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of Jesus Christ, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of the reign of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

***HYMN 343 “Called as Partners in Christ’s Service”**

**Called as partners in Christ’s service,
Called to ministries of grace,
We respond with deep commitment
Fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing,
Side by side and friend with friend,
Equal partners in our caring
To fulfill God’s chosen end.**

**Christ’s example, Christ’s inspiring,
Christ’s clear call to work and worth,
Let us follow, never faltering,
Reconciling folk on earth.
Men and women, richer, poorer,
All God’s people, young and old,
Blending human skills together
Gracious gifts from God unfold.**

**Thus new patterns for Christ’s mission,
In a small or global sense,
Help us bear each other’s burdens,
Breaking down each wall or fence.
Words of comfort, words of vision,
Words of challenge, said with care,
Bring new power and strength for action,
Make us colleagues, free and fair.**

**So God grant us for tomorrow
 Ways to order human life
 That surround each person's sorrow
 With a calm that conquers strife.
 Make us partners in our living,
 Our compassion to increase,
 Messengers of faith, thus giving
 Hope and confidence and peace.**

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE "In Thee Is Joy," Op. 28, No. 40 Marcel Dupré

Swanson, John August. Festival of Lights, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56546> [retrieved January 20, 2026]. Original source: Estate of John August Swanson, <https://www.johnaugustswanson.com/>.

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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
Annual Meeting of the Congregation	After Worship

	TUESDAY
❖ Gentle Yoga	Noon

	WEDNESDAY
❖ Zoom Bible Study	7:00 pm

	THURSDAY
❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal	6:30 pm

	SATURDAY
❖ Baby Shower	2:00 pm

	NEXT SUNDAY
❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Christian Education for All Ages	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am

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

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

- 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 AFTER WORSHIP THIS MORNING, SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, in the sanctuary. 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—men and women!

SAVE THE DATE FOR FEBRUARY 18 FOR ASH WEDNESDAY SUPPER: We'll gather to eat at 5:30, followed by the Ash Wednesday worship service at 7:00. Gather with your church family for a soup potluck, fellowship and worship. We hope you will join us. If you'd like to contribute to the meal, please sign up online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A084DA4A923A75-61501951-ashwednesday> or in Rockwood Hall. We only need a few food contributions, please join us either way!

THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELPED WITH THE HOPE LODGE DINNER on January 12: Andy Bertolatus and Dianne Atkins, Diane Dahl-McCoy, Rebecca Weatherford, Linda Muston, Ginny Clemons, Marsha Lowe, Sharyn Reitz, Ruth Bradley and Bruce Tarwater, Shelagh Hayreh, and Sue and Chuck Dayton. Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be Monday, March 16.

CHURCH PHOTO DIRECTORY: Our Membership Board photo directory is moving into its next stage. If you have some ability with desktop publishing and would like to help with this, please talk with Sue Dayton or Bill Lovin.

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.

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.