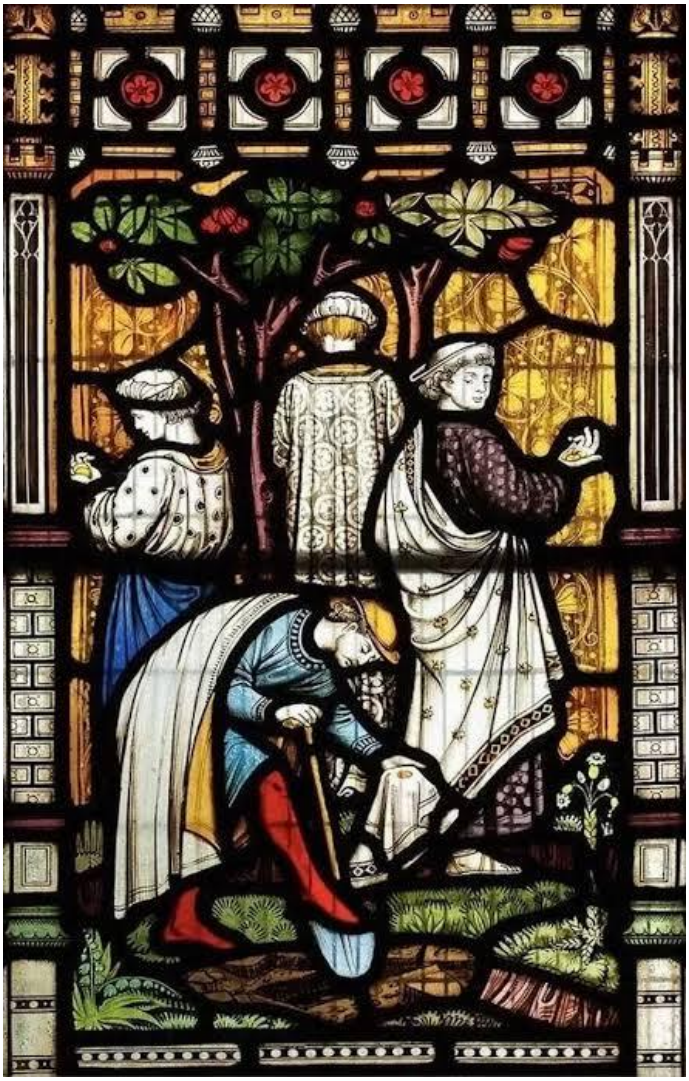


The Parable of the Talents

The Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

30 N Clinton St.
Iowa City, IA 52245
319-337-4301

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

30 N. CLINTON ST.

IOWA CITY, IA 52245

319-337-4301

WORSHIP FOR NOVEMBER 15, 2026
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Welcome to Congregational UCC.
We ask that you silence your cell phone as you enter the sanctuary.

LARGE PRINT BULLETINS ARE AVAILABLE. PLEASE ASK AN USHER.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS John Fieselmann, Liturgist

PRELUDE "Moderato" Simon Clark

CHORAL INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 19)
The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
[Unison]
Let us worship God.

*HYMN 288 "I Sing the Mighty Power of God"
I sing the mighty power of God
That made the mountains rise;
That spread the flowing seas abroad
And built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
The sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at God's command,
And all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord
That filled the earth with food;
God formed the creatures with a word
And then pronounced them good.
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed,
Where'er I turn my eyes;
If I survey the ground I tread,
Or gaze upon the skies!

There's not a plant or flower below
But makes Thy glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
By order from Thy throne;
While all that borrows life from Thee
Is ever in Thy care,
And everywhere that we can be,
Thou, God, art present there.

*OPENING PRAYER
Eternal God, you created the world and all that is in it, and declared each part of it good. Be with us this day as we gather to worship. Clear our minds of all the distractions which would draw us away from you. Open our hearts and spirits and let your healing and empowering love flow through us.

We gratefully acknowledge that to each one of us, you have given gifts which can be used to help others. Teaching, healing, inspiring, challenging, and creating are all among the myriad of gifts you have placed in our possession. When we hesitate to put them to use, fill us with the confidence of your Spirit. Direct our lives to use these gifts to show your love and healing mercy. Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#298)
There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in God's justice,
Which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of the mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful,
We would gladly trust God's word;
And our lives reflect thanksgiving
For the goodness of our Lord.

ANTHEM "Treasures in Heaven" Joseph Clokey

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 "Andante" Francis Linley
*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 Zephaniah 1:7, 12-14a
Be silent before the Lord God!
For the day of the Lord is at hand;
the Lord has prepared a sacrifice,
he has consecrated his guests.
At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who rest complacently on their dregs,
those who say in their hearts,
'The Lord will not do good,
nor will he do harm.'
Their wealth shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.
The great day of the Lord is near,
near and hastening fast.

PSALM 111
Hallelujah!
I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.
Great are the deeds of God!
they are studied by all who delight in them.
Full of majesty and splendor is the work of the Lord,

whose righteousness endures forever.

Gracious and full of compassion is the Lord,
whose marvelous works are to be remembered.

God has shown the chosen people works of power
in giving them the lands of the nations.

The hands of the Lord work faithfulness and justice;
all the commandments of the Lord are sure.

They stand fast forever and ever,
because they are done in truth and equity.

The Lord sent redemption to the chosen people,
commanding the covenant forever;
holy and awesome is the name of the Lord.

[Unison]

Awe of God is the beginning of wisdom;
those who act accordingly have a good understanding;
the praise of God endures forever.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 25:14-30

‘For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time, the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, “Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.” His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, “Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.” His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.” Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, “Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so, I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.” But his master replied, “You wicked and lazy servant! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So, take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless servant, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

*HYMN 351 “Give to Me, Lord, a Thankful Heart”

Give to me, Lord, a thankful heart
And a discerning mind;
Give, as I play the Christian’s part,

The strength to finish what I start
And act on what I find.

When, in the rush of days, my will
Is habit bound and slow,
Help me to keep in vision, still,
What love and power and peace can fill
A life that trusts in you.

By your divine and urgent claim,
And by your human face,
Kindle our sinking hearts to flame,
And as you teach the world your name
Let it become your place.

Jesus, with all your church I long
To see your kingdom come:
Show me your way of righting wrong
And turning sorrow into song
Until you bring me home.

SERMON "God's Trust in Us"

*HYMN 418 "God, Bless Your Church with Strength"

God bless your church with strength!
Wherever we may be,
up build your servants as we work
in common ministry.
Urge us from fledgling faith
to venture and to soar
through open skies to sing the praise
of Christ whom we adore.

God bless your church with life!
May all our branches thrive,
unblemished, wholesome, bearing fruit,
abundantly alive.
From you, one holy vine,
in freedom may we grow;
sustain us in our mission, Lord,
your love and peace to show.

God bless your church with hope!
Despite chaotic days,
may we in chaos shine to light
a pathway through life's maze.

May justice be our aim,
and kindness ours to share;
in humbleness O may we walk,
assured our God is there!

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE "Exultation" Richard Lloyd

Opening Prayer from Life in Liturgy, alt.

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Minister:	The Rev. Bill Lovin
Director of Christian Education:	Hope Spragg
Organist:	Bill Crouch
Choir Director:	David Puderbaugh
Children's Choir Director:	Rachel Burchett
Office Manager:	Nancy LeaVesseur

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

WE WELCOME BACK Madeleine Hartleip as our guest choir director this morning.

TODAY

- Choir Rehearsal 9:00 am
- CE for Children and Adults 9:15 am
- Worship Service 10:15 am
- Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall After Worship
- AWE After Worship
- Choir Rehearsal After Worship
- Youth Group 5:00 pm

TUESDAY

- Gentle Yoga 11:00 am
- Membership Board 5:30 pm
- Diaconate 7:00 pm

THURSDAY

- Women's Lunch at Big Grove 11:45 am
- Prairie Piffari Rehearsal 6:30 pm

SATURDAY

- Men' Breakfast—Waterfront Hy-Vee 8:00 am

NEXT SUNDAY

- CE for Children and Adults 9:15 am
- Worship Service 10:15 am
- Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall After Worship
- AWE After Worship
- Choir Rehearsal After Worship
- Youth Group 5:00 pm

PLEASE NOTE: Our Office Manager, Nancy LeaVesseur, will not be in the office this Tuesday, November 17.

AWE 3—YES! AFTER WORSHIP ENCOUNTER (AWE 3) WILL MEET AFTER WORSHIP TODAY. We are using *Living the Questions-The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity*. We are reading the third section: Transformation. Grab your coffee and meet us in the library!

Please plan to visit Rockwood Hall after worship on November 22, and December 13th for our **ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIVING FAIR!** There will be Heifer Project gift cards bearing Ginny Clemons' graceful calligraphy and Church World Service "ornaments". Proceeds from cards, jewelry, and gift baskets donated by artists and craftspeople in our congregation will go to local community agencies. You can trim the Mitten Tree with your new or gently used mittens, scarves, and hats for the Joan Buxton School project. And the Angel Tree will have toy request cards from the Salvation Army and envelopes for a holiday meal donation to be distributed by CommUnity. Contact John Reitz at 319-333-9588, john-reitz@uiowa.edu for information. Come have a cup of coffee and browse!

PLAN TO ATTEND THE ADVENT LUNCHEON ON DECEMBER 6, following the Special Music worship service. The Membership board will provide a main dish and you are asked to bring a dish to share. There is a sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall. This will be a great time of fellowship and time together as a church family.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR 2027 PLEDGE CARD: Pledge/estimate of giving cards for 2027 were sent out in early October. If you misplaced yours or did not receive one, please contact the church office—319-337-4301. If you have received a card, please prayerfully fill it out and return it to the church as soon as possible. Your deeply considered, prayerful support will help us to continue our Church's ministry and mission in the Iowa City area and around the world.

THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED WITH THE HOPE LODGE DINNER on November 9: Marsha Lowe, Andy Bertolatus, Diane Duncan-Goldsmith, Sally Strang, Linda and Ray Muston, Diane Dahl-McCoy, Darcie Hutzell, Stephanie Frazee, Jane Kinney, Sue and Chuck

Dayton. Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be Monday January 11. Watch for a sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall.

WE HAVE A PEW CUSHION that needs a couple of buttons sewn onto it. If you can help with this, please talk with Shirley Woolums.

GIVE THANKS, GIVE FOOD: Youth Group Soup Drive for CommUnity. Please bring cans of soup or other shelf stable items to our collection table in Rockwood Hall through Sunday, November 22. Collected items will be delivered to CommUnity Monday, November 23.

ADULT EDUCATION SESSION RECORDINGS NOW AVAILABLE: If you were unable to attend a Sunday morning adult education gathering, you can now watch the event at your convenience. Please contact Nancy LeaVesseur in the church office (319-337-4301) and she will send you a link to the recording. Please note, the recordings are only available for four weeks after the session.

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. If you'd like to join us, call the office to register.

SHARE THE HARVEST: Members and friends are invited to bring produce and flowers from their gardens to sell after worship each Sunday. And members and friends are invited to buy the abundant harvest. All proceeds go to the Food Pantry and CommUnity Crisis Center. So far this year we have "harvested" over $800. Our goal for this year is $1000. Eat your vegetables (they're good for you), pick up some flowers (they're good for you, too), and contribute to a great cause. Thanks!

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.

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.

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.

Howard Thurman:
Our little lives, our big problems—these we place upon Your altar!
The quietness in Your temple of silence again and again rebuffs us:
For some there is no discipline to hold them steady in the waiting,
And the minds reject the noiseless invasion of Your spirit.
For some there is no will to offer what is central in the thoughts—
The confusion is so manifest, there is no starting place to take hold.
For some the evils of the world tear down all concentrations
And scatter the focus of the high resolves.
We do not know how to do what we know to do.
We do not know how to be what we know to be.
Our little lives, our big problems—these we place upon Your altar!
Pour out upon us whatever our spirits need of shock, of life, of release
That we may find strength for these days—
Courage and hope for tomorrow.
In confidence we rest in Your sustaining grace
Which makes possible triumph in defeat, gain in loss, and love in hate.
We rejoice this day to say:
Our little lives, our big problems—these we place upon Your altar!

Altered:
Our little lives, our big problems—these we bring before you, O God.
We do not know how to do what we know to do.
We do not know how to be what we know to be.
Pour out upon us whatever our spirits need of shock, of life, of release
That we may find strength for these days—
Courage and hope for tomorrow.
In confidence we rest in Your sustaining grace
Which makes possible triumph in defeat, gain in loss, and love in hate.
We rejoice this day to say:
Our little lives, our big problems—these we bring before you, O God.

Happe:
God of remembrance, do not forget your mercy. Remind us of your desire for us to share the fullness of life with all your children. We forget those who deserve our gratitude. We take our friendships too much for granted. Too often we do not remember the right gesture until it is too late.
Make us thankful and generous with all that has been given us. Restore to us the joy of your salvation. Inspire us that we may rightly remember the past by building a legacy of hope for those who follow us, that they also may know the goodness of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Happe, alt:
God of remembrance, do not forget your mercy. Remind us of your desire for us to share the fullness of life with all your people. Make us thankful and generous with all that has been given us. Restore to us the joy of your salvation. Inspire us that we may rightly remember the past by

building a legacy of hope for those who follow us, that they also may know the goodness of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Happe—last used in 2025

Creator of our lives, source and destiny of all that is, we come to you in partial awareness of the hallowed nature of each human life, and in need of your reviving Spirit for comfort and grace. In the beauty of this place set aside, in the solemn reverence of time set apart to hear your Word, in the strength of mutual care, in the silence and in the songs which attend your redeeming power, we come to worship and to wait for you.

May every bitter thought and each nagging worry about what we have done and what we have failed to do be washed out into the ebbing sea of your boundless mercy. Let every noble thought and every impulse of love be stirred anew by the breath of your Spirit. So lead us by your gentle inspiration to sense in each moment eternal depths, immeasurable goodness and the possibilities of tomorrow. Amen.