



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

WORSHIP FOR NOVEMBER 19, 2023  
TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
THANKSGIVING SUNDAY

“The greatest thing is to give thanks for everything. The one who has learned this knows what it means to live. That person has penetrated the whole mystery of life: giving thanks for everything.”

Albert Schweitzer

PRELUDE “For the Fruit of All Creation” Frank Stoldt

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Ben Copeland, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

\* CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 147:7-8)  
Sing to God with thanksgiving;  
make music to our God,

**who covers the heavens with clouds  
and prepares rain for the earth,  
making grass to grow upon the mountains.**

**\*HYMN 560 “We Plow the Fields and Scatter”**

**We plow the fields and scatter  
The good seed on the land,  
But it is fed and watered  
By God's almighty hand.  
God sends the snow in winter,  
The warmth to swell the grain,  
The breezes and the sunshine,  
And soft refreshing rain.**

**You only are the Maker  
For all things near and far;  
You paint the wayside flower,  
You light the evening star.  
The winds and waves obey you,  
By you the birds are fed;  
Much more to us, your children,  
You give our daily bread.**

**We thank you, then, Creator,  
For all things bright and good;  
The seed-time and the harvest,  
Our life, our health, our food.  
Accept the gift we offer  
For what your love imparts  
And what you most would welcome:  
Our humble, thankful hearts.**

**\*OPENING PRAYER**

**We come to give you thanks today, O God. We realize all the good that surrounds us. We recognize the many gifts of life—food, light, water and air. We celebrate all that makes up our life—the joys of using our minds, our hands, and our hearts. In whatever condition we find ourselves, we rejoice to live on this earth and to share our existence with others. We come before you in deep gratitude for all these things.**

**In this same moment, we are aware that suffering accompanies many in these days. Some face existence alone or in pain, some bear the grief of absence and loss. Some know fear and uncertainty because they struggle to find those basic gifts you intend for us all. The violence of war and the turmoil of the world threaten many lives. In the midst of our thanks, may our prayers for their deliverance come before you. Send your strength and wisdom into the world so we may all come to their aid. Amen.**

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#555 vs. 1 & 2)

**Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;  
Who, from our parents' arms, has blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love, and still is our today.**

**O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in God's grace, and guide us when perplexed,  
And free us from all ills in this world and the next.**

ANTHEM "For the Fruit of All Creation" Hal Hopson

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 "We Gather Together" Healey Willan

\*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.**

\*Litany of Thanksgiving and Dedication

For our families and communities where we are nurtured and fed, where we serve one another,

**O God, our hearts are filled with thanks.**

For those whose communities are shattered, whose families are torn apart,

**O God, give us grace to share each other's grief.**

For the abundance of goods and blessings that you have given us,

**O God, our hearts are filled with thanks.**

For those who have little, who hunger for daily food,

**O God, give us grace to share what we have.**

For lives that have been spared, and for lives restored,

**O God, our hearts are filled with thanks.**

For our grief over those taken from us,

**O God, give us grace to accept our living, even when others have died.**

For homes and comfortable places to sleep at night, for havens away from violence,

**O God, our hearts are filled with thanks.**

For our neighbors who have no homes, whose beds are the streets, who live in fear,

**O God, give us grace to open our hearts and to give shelter and comfort.**

**Accept the gifts we bring and use them for your purposes in the world.**

**Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(The children are dismissed to Children's Church)

SCRIPTURE LESSON      Joel 2:21-27

PSALM 65:1, 8-13

You are to be praised, O God, in Zion;

to you shall vows be performed in Jerusalem.

**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble  
at your marvelous signs;**

**you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.**

You visit the earth and water it abundantly;

you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water.

**You prepare the grain,  
for so you provide for the earth.**

You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges;

with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.

**You crown the year with your goodness,  
and your paths overflow with plenty.**

May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing,

and the hills be clothed with joy.

**May the meadows cover themselves with flocks,  
and the valleys cloak themselves with grain;  
let them shout for joy and sing.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON      Matthew 6:25-33

SERMON      "Thanksgiving in Memory and Hope"

\*HYMN 414 "As Those of Old Their Firstfruits Brought

**As those of old their firstfruits brought**

**of vineyard, flock, and field**

**to God, the giver of all good,**

**the source of bounteous yield,**

**so we today our firstfruits bring,**

**the wealth of this good land:**

**of farm and market, shop and home,**

**of mind and heart and hand.**

**A world in need now summons us**

**to labor, love, and give,**

**to make our life an offering  
that all may truly live.  
The church of Christ is calling us  
to make the dream come true:  
a world redeemed by Christ-like love,  
all life in Christ made new.**

**In gratitude and humble trust  
we bring our best today,  
to serve your cause and share your love  
with all along life's way.  
O God who gave yourself to us  
in Jesus Christ your Son,  
help us to give ourselves each day  
until life's work is done.**

**\*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE "Now Thank We All Our God" Op. 135a, No. 18 Max Reger

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Minister:	The Rev. Bill Lovin
Director of Children's Programs:	The Rev. Ann Molsberry
Organist:	Bill Crouch
Choir Director	Chris Nakielski
Children's Choir Director	Majesty Constable
Office Manager	Jenn Harden

**TODAY**

❖	Church School Breakfast	9:00 am
	Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
	Christian Education	9:15 am
	Worship Service	10:15 am
	Children's Church	During Worship
	Choir Rehearsal	After Worship

**THURSDAY & FRIDAY**

❖ **CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING**

**NEXT SUNDAY**

❖	Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
	<b>NO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION</b>	
	Worship Service	10:15 am

Choir Rehearsal

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. Masks are welcome.

**THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY THIS WEEK** in celebration of Thanksgiving. Please have any material for the bulletin to the office by Tuesday, November 21.

**BILL LOVIN WILL BE ON VACATION THIS WEEK**, from Tuesday through Sunday. The Rev. Bob Molsberry will be our guest preacher next Sunday.

**THERE WILL BE NO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR CHILDREN'S CHOIR NEXT SUNDAY**, November 27.

**ADULT EDUCATION LOOKS TOWARD ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS:** Join Marsha Lowe around the fireplace in Rockwood Hall at 9:15 on Sunday mornings. Come and experience Scripture passages leading up to and including the Christmas story.

*11/26 Sunday after Thanksgiving - no adult education*

12/3 The Magnificat-Mary's Song Luke 1:46-55 Lectio Divina

*12/10 Special Music Sunday-no adult education*

12/17 The Christmas Story Luke 2:1-20 What does this say about God? about people? about the relationship between God and people?

**PLEASE HELP WITH PARKING IN THE CHURCH LOT:** A number of people currently have mobility issues and need to park in our small parking lot off of 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.

**CONTRIBUTE TO THIS YEAR'S CONGREGATIONAL UCC ADVENT CALENDAR—** "Keeping Watch Together." Submit a brief thought, a quote, an image, photo, drawing, or some other *brief* contribution for the days of Advent, December 3-23. Talk with Bill Lovin or Bryan Clemons for more information.

**THE ADVENT LUNCH IS MAKING A COMEBACK!** It will be held following worship and Special Music on Sunday, December 10. There is a sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall. The Membership Board is providing a main dish and the rest of the meal will be potluck. Plan to bring a salad, vegetable, bread, dessert, etc. to share.

**THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO GAVE TO OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED (NIN)**

**OFFERING ON NOVEMBER 5:** We received \$1075 for this special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the [Council for American Indian Ministry](#) (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in

their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. If you would still like to give to this offering, please write “NIN” in the memo line of your check.

**ALTERNATIVE GIVING FOR CHRISTMAS:** Our Mission Board is ready to help you with your Christmas giving. Our annual Alternative Giving Fair will be held in Rockwood Hall after worship on November 19 and December 3 & 17. If you have an idea for a sale item or would like to help in other ways, please contact Laurie Stunz ([laura-stunz@uiowa.edu](mailto:laura-stunz@uiowa.edu)). If you knit, please consider making mittens and scarves for the Mitten Tree. Donations of mittens and scarves will be directed to the Iowa City Schools. Think outside of the box and let your giving help others. Gifts can be made in honor of friends and family to the Heifer Project, Habitat for Humanity and Church World Service. We will put up the Mitten Tree and have gift tags available for CommUnity Crisis Center’s Project Holiday and Toys for Tots. Members are providing quilts, jewelry, artwork and more for sale—cash or checks only, please.

**OPEN HEARTLAND CHRISTMAS GIVING OPPORTUNITY:** Our friends at Open Heartland are working to support Latino immigrant families during the Christmas season. They are hosting their 5<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas celebration on Sunday, December 10. They plan to give a cash gift to each family to spend as they feel best accommodates their individual needs (rent, groceries, medical bills, etc.). Our Mission Board is providing \$400 toward this effort. If you would like to support this project you can send a monetary donation, payable to Open Heartland, PO Box 3357 Iowa City, IA 52244 or use VENMO@Open-Heartland. Last year OH was able to give each family a gift of \$100 to spend on what the family determines is needed.

**OPEN HEARTLAND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:** Open Heartland, an organization meeting a variety of needs of the Spanish speaking population of Iowa City, is seeking volunteers. Our youth are going to be getting involved, and this is an opportunity for adults in our congregation as well. Volunteer times and activities of sorting donations, packaging bulk foods and other needs are varied and flexible. If you are interested, contact Deb Dunkhase, the director, at [debunkhase@gmail.com](mailto:debunkhase@gmail.com) or call or text her at 319-321-5528. Or for a little more information, ask /Ray Muston or Jane Kinney about the organization.

**ADVENT BEGINS ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3.** Our Advent and Christmas observances and celebrations renew some of our traditional activities and events and also bring some new possibilities. Here are some important dates:  
December 3—First Sunday in Advent; Lighting of the Advent candles begins; Communion.  
December 10—Second Sunday in Advent; Special Music Sunday; Advent Lunch after worship.  
December 17—Third Sunday in Advent; Children’s Christmas Pageant  
December 20—Service of Solace—at 7:00 p.m.  
December 24—Fourth Sunday of Advent; Worship at 10:15  
Christmas Eve is Sunday, December 24—Worship at 5:30 p.m.; Gala Reception follows in Rockwood Hall  
January 7—Epiphany Sunday; Communion

The Mission Board continues to identify opportunities to learn about and support LGBTQ+ understanding and issues. Tomorrow, Monday, November 20, you can virtually join a Trans Day

of Remembrance Vigil from 6-7 PM, provided by the United Church of Christ. It is part of an observance of Transgender Day of Remembrance, honoring the memory of trans siblings lost to violence against their personhood. The webinar can be viewed on line on the United Church of Christ's YouTube channel and/or you can register via this link <https://www.ucc.org/event/trans-day-of-remembrance-vigil/>

**NEW FURNACES AND AIR CONDITIONERS WERE INSTALLED IN THE SUMMER. HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:** We received a major gift from a family in the congregation to help pay for the new units. Many other members would like to be a part of funding this project. Your gifts to the HVAC Fund will mean that we will need to use less of our reserves for this project. Thanks for your generous giving.

**DO YOU HAVE A CHURCH KEY?** We have made new keys and are working at getting a better list of people who have keys. If you have a key to the church, please contact Trustee Chairperson, Kevin Richards, at (608) 807-7195 or at [kdrichards1958@gmail.com](mailto:kdrichards1958@gmail.com). 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 or Trustee Chairperson, Kevin Richards, know right away. You can reach Kevin at (608) 807-7195 or at [kdrichards1958@gmail.com](mailto:kdrichards1958@gmail.com). 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/154m7852>. The recordings remain up permanently, so you can watch past worship services at your convenience or recommend them to a friend.



