



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

WORSHIP FOR NOVEMBER 23, 2025
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
THANKSGIVING SUNDAY

“Giving thanks to God can come in any form. You don’t have to get on your knees and give thanks. When I’m truly grateful for something I pray, and I pray when I don’t have anything.”

Wynton Marsalis

PRELUDE “Now Thank We All Our God” Jeffrey Honoré

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Nadia Spragg, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

* CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 100)
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

**Worship God with gladness;
come into God’s presence with singing.**

Enter God's gates with thanksgiving,
and enter God's courts with praise.

**Give thanks to God and bless God's name.
Let us worship God.**

***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 lives—the joy of using our minds, our hands, and our hearts. In whatever condition we find ourselves, we rejoice in living on the earth and in sharing this life 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 are 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 everyone. 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 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 "Sing to the Lord of Harvest" Healey Willan

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Introductions: Kris and Ron Bode, Jann Bowlus, Mark Hovey, Jessica Wiskus

Owning the Covenant

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.

Welcome of the Congregation

We welcome you with joy into the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hope and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

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" Flor Peeters

*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

(The children are dismissed to Children's Church)

SCRIPTURE LESSON Deuteronomy 8:12-18

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 Luke 6:17-26

SERMON “The Gift of Gratitude”

*HYMN 553 “For the Fruit of All Creation

**For the fruit of his creation,
thanks be to God.**

**For his gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God.**

**For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth’s safekeeping,
thanks be to God.**

**In the just reward of labor,
God’s will be done.
In the help we give our neighbor,
God’s will be done.
In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God’s will be done.**

**For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us,
thanks be to God.**

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE “Now Thank We All Our God” David Cherwien

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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
Office Manager	Jenn Harden

TODAY

❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Christian Education for all ages	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall	After Worship
Alternative Giving	After Worship
Choir Rehearsal	After Worship
AWE	After Worship
Confirmation Class	4:00 pm

TUESDAY

❖ Gentle Yoga	Noon
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THURSDAY AND FRIDAY

❖ Church Office Closed for Thanksgiving	
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SATURDAY

❖ Sanctuary Decorating	Noon
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NEXT SUNDAY—FIRST SUNDAY IN OF ADVENT

❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
No Christian Education	
Worship Service	10:15 am
Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall	After Worship
Choir Rehearsal	After Worship
AWE	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.

MISSION BOARD FOOD DRIVE IN NOVEMBER: The government shutdown resulted in a suspension of SNAP benefits, leading to significant problems for those depending on these benefits to purchase food. In addition, food banks have been very stressed as the price of food has risen considerably. The Mission Board is sponsoring a food drive in November to respond to this crisis. Please bring stable shelf items to the church on the Sundays in November and the MB will deliver to the local food banks. If you prefer a monetary gift, just place it in the offering plate and it will be sent. As you consider the items to donate, be aware that many boxed items require additional ingredients such as butter and milk for mac and cheese boxes, and meat for hamburger helper. If those items are not available, the food is not useful. Protein sources, such as tuna, canned chicken and peanut butter are often requested.

IN RESPONSE TO THE RECENT SUSPENSION OF SNAP BENEFITS, THE MISSION BOARD DONATED \$13,986.16 to three area food pantries to support those affected. The CommUnity Food Bank will

receive \$5,939.49, the Coralville Food Pantry will receive \$4,623.33, and the North Liberty Food Bank will receive \$3,423.34. This support was made possible through several sources: the current Congregational Appeal for Food Relief; the Operating Budget Mission Board Discretionary Account (funded through your pledges, giving estimates, and other budget donations); and money from Special Funds, given by individuals in the past to help with present needs. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and continued commitment to caring for our community. Your support allows us to respond in meaningful ways when our community faces hardship and to share Christ's love through action.

AFTER WORSHIP ENCOUNTER (AWE) meets today and on the Sundays that the choir meets after worship to rehearse for the Christmas Music Sunday on December 7. We are using *Living the Questions-The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity*. This is a beginning class that will introduce you to Progressive Christianity. Rev. Ann Molsberry will be leading the discussions. See you after worship in the library.

CAN YOU PROVIDE BREAKFAST for our children & youth? We have a few more opportunities before the holidays: Nov. 23, Dec. 7, Dec. 14 & Dec 21. Thank you to all who have provided breakfasts for Sunday School! They love it and parents appreciate one less thing to worry about on a Sunday morning. Instructions: Please provide 12 servings that can be shared or cut into more, if needed. Bring to the kitchen by 9 AM or place in the freezer/refrigerator in advance labeled "CE Sunday School". We ask that you consider no peanut, low (not no) sugar and not individually wrapped options. Sign-up is in Rockwood Hall.

FESTIVAL OF CAROLS BY FRANK FERKO: Go Tell it on the Mountain! On Sunday December 7, the Congregational UCC Choir and area guest harpist Abigail Brower will be performing *Festival of Carols* by Frank Ferko, a five-movement work for choir and harp, joined together with some volunteer singers from Cornell College. The work to be performed is based on five Christmas carol texts by 19th century American poets and hymn writers, and are not arrangements of previously existing tunes but entirely new melodies and harmonizations with the harp used both as an accompanying instrument and as an intrinsic thread within the larger musical fabric. Please join us for this momentous occasion!

THE ADVENT POTLUCK LUNCH ON DECEMBER 7! Our always-joy-filled Advent Potluck Lunch will be better than ever if you are a part of it. Join us in Rockwood Hall after worship and the Special Music Choral Offering on Sunday, December 7. There is a sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall to help the Membership Board with their planning. 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.

SOME MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ARE STILL INTERESTED IN PROVIDING A MEAL FOR TORI AND NATHAN after the birth of their daughter. If you'd like to do so, you can sign up on the Meal Train site at <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/vd120w>. As you can see on the meal train, for those who do not want to cook, they are also happy to receive gift cards for various restaurants. Nathan and Tori thank everyone who has delivered a meal.

HELPING OTHER MEMBERS: There are times when a helping hand is needed by a member to get groceries, run an errand, get a ride to an appointment, etc. If you would like to occasionally help out in this way, please see the signup sheet in Rockwood Hall.

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 again this morning.

PLEASE PLAN TO VISIT ROCKWOOD HALL AFTER WORSHIP THIS MORNING AND DECEMBER 14 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!

ADVENT BEGINS ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30. Each year brings festivity and celebration as we move through Advent and the joy of Christmas. Mark your calendars so that you can be a part of these special events: November 30—First Sunday in Advent; Communion

December 7—Second Sunday in Advent; Special Music Sunday

December 14—Third Sunday in Advent; Children's Christmas Pageant; Alternative Giving Fair

December 21—Fourth Sunday of Advent; Worship at 10:15 a.m.

Christmas Eve is Wednesday, December 24—Christmas Eve candlelight worship service at 5:30 p.m.;

Christmas Fund Offering; Gala reception follows.

December 25—Christmas Day; Church office closed Dec. 25 & 26.

December 28—Fourth Day of Christmas—Worship at 10:15 a.m.

January 4—Epiphany Sunday; Communion

HOLY ENVY: Starting Saturday, January 10, the Women's Reading Group will be reading and discussing *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others* by Barbara Brown Taylor. We'll meet from 10-11am in Rockwood Hall the second Saturday of each month through June. If you're interested, contact Marsha Lowe or Rebecca Weatherford or sign-up in Rockwood Hall.

THE CHAMBER SINGERS OF IOWA CITY kicks off it's 2025-26 season with a lively program that runs the gamut from Renaissance to Benjamin Britten to Elaine Hagenberg and Jake Runestad (the latter two composers recently performed by our church choir!) the afternoon at 3 p.m. at the Voxman Music Building. Buy tickets online at www.icchambersingers.org or at the door.

SING OUT!—JOIN THE CHOIR: Do you enjoy singing? Our volunteer choir rehearses at 9:00 a.m. and sings during the 10:15 worship service. Whether you're a long-time member or the new kid on the block, WE WANT YOU! The Congregational UCC choir is a wonderful group of people who work hard at making great music. You'll be sure to enjoy this experience. Questions? Please get in touch with our choir director Dr. Chris Nakielski at cnakielski@cornellcollege.edu.

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.

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.

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, Donna can provide a very brief orientation to bottle preparation (donna-hirst@uiowa.edu). Donna will pick up bottles on Sundays.

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.