



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

WORSHIP FOR NOVEMBER 30, 2025
THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Today is a communion Sunday. If you are joining us online, you are invited to get whatever you eat and whatever you drink before the beginning of worship. It can be bread and grape juice or wine or as simple as a cracker or rice cake and water for use in our worship.

PRELUDE “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” Rudolf Moser

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Robin Chambers, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE Darcie Hutzel and Fielding Woolums

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Come friends and gather.

May we awake

that we might see the God of hope who comes among us.

[Unison]

Let us worship God.

***HYMN 3 “Comfort, Comfort You My People”**

Comfort, comfort you my people;

tell of peace, thus says our God;

comfort those who sit in darkness

bowed beneath oppression's load.

Speak you to Jerusalem

of the peace that waits for them;

tell them that their sins I cover,

and their warfare now is over.

**For the herald's voice is calling
in the desert far and near,
bidding us to make repentance
since the kingdom now is here.
Oh that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
let the valleys rise in meeting
and the hills bow down in greeting.**

**Make you straight what long was crooked;
make the rougher places plain;
let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits God's holy reign,
for the glory of the Lord
now o'er earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

**In your presence, God, and in the company of each other,
we see that our lives and the life of the world
are cast in shadow.
But we know a light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness does not overcome it.
Look with compassion on our human frailty.
Free us from our guilt, anxiety, and resentment.
Illumine our souls with the first glimmers
of the coming light of Christ, our Comfort and Redeemer.
Amen.**

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#602, vs. 1 & 3)**

**Blest be the God of Israel, Who comes to set us free;
Who visits and redeems us, Who grants us liberty.
The prophets spoke of mercy, Of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill that promise And bring the people peace.**

**On those who sit in darkness The sun begins to rise,
The dawning of forgiveness Upon the sinner's eyes.
God guides the feet of pilgrims Along the paths of peace.
O bless our God and Savior With songs that never cease!**

ANTHEM “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” Gustav Holst

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory “Adoro te devote” Richard Warner

***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 Isaiah 35:1-10

PSALM 146:5-10

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help!
whose hope is in the Lord their God;

**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;**

who gives justice to those who are oppressed,
and food to those who hunger.

**The Lord sets the prisoners free;
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind;**

the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous and cares for the stranger;

**the Lord sustains the orphan and widow,
but frustrates the way of the wicked.**

[Unison]

**The Lord shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.
Hallelujah!**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 11:2-11

*HYMN 337 "Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old"

**Isaiah the prophet has written of old
how God's earthly kingdom shall come.
Instead of the thorn tree the fir tree shall grow;
the wolf shall lie down with the lamb.
The mountains and hills shall break forth into song,
the peoples be led forth in peace;
for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God
as the waters cover the seas.**

**Yet nations still prey on the meek of the world,
and conflict turns parent from child.
Your people despoil all the sweetness of earth;
the brier and the thorn grow wild.
Lord, hasten to bring in your kingdom on earth,
when no one shall hurt or destroy,
when wisdom and justice shall reign in the land
and your people shall go forth in joy.**

SERMON "What Are You Waiting For?"

THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION

HYMN 9 (vs. 1 & 2) "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain:

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight. [Refrain]**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

REMEMBERING

**We thank you, O Christ, that you have not left us alone.
Each year you come to us, Emmanuel,
God with us, in a manger.
Each time, you come to us
in the broken bread and the cup we share.
May they speak to us
of the extraordinary found in the lowly,
of your coming to make all things new,
and of the hope for your realm among us.**

We remember that on the night of his arrest...

WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND SHARING OF BREAD AND CUP

(Communion will be served in the pews today. Please receive the bread or cup as they are offered to you by a deacon. Hold it until all have been served, and we will eat and drink together at the pastor's guidance. We serve grape juice, not wine. Gluten-free wafers are on the trays with the bread. In the Congregational United Church of Christ, we celebrate the Lord's Supper with openness and welcome. Everyone is invited to the table, regardless of church membership or denominational affiliation.)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**We give you thanks for this meal which strengthens us and encourages us in this season and every season.
Let it fill us with the grace to see you in those around us. Keep us alert to recognize the coming of your
realm among us. Amen.**

***HYMN "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

**O come thou Wisdom from on high,
and order all things, far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and cause us in its ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice!...**

**O come Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.**

Rejoice! Rejoice!...

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE “Veni, Emmanuel” Robert J. Powell

Opening Prayer: First Church Cambridge, Congregational, UCC, Cambridge, MA, alt.

“Isaiah the Prophet has Written of Old,” Words and Music - ©1961 Alfred Sacred, Contributors: Joy F Patterson, Robert Shaw and Alice Parker. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-715458. All rights reserved.

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

TUESDAY

❖ Gentle Yoga	Noon
Board of Christian Education	6:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

❖ Staff Meeting	11:00 am
-----------------	----------

NEXT SUNDAY—SECOND SUNDAY IN OF ADVENT

❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Church School for children and youth	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
Advent Potluck	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.

ADVENT BEGINS TODAY. 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 caroling 2-4

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

IN RESPONSE TO THE RECENT SUSPENSION OF SNAP BENEFITS, THE MISSION BOARD DONATED OVER \$14,000 to three area food pantries to support those affected. 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): Final meeting after worship this morning.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Saturday, Dec. 6 Nutcracker 1 PM Join your church family at the Englert to see Oscar and Malia Lewis in *The Nutcracker*! The Christian education board is generously sponsoring 8 tickets for children and youth. Talk to Hope to claim one ASAP! Cookies and Hot Cocoa at church following the performance!

Christmas Pageant Rehearsals: Sunday, Dec. 7 after the Special Music luncheon until 1 pm & Friday, Dec. 12 5:30-7:30, pizza provided. All children & youth are welcome to participate and encouraged to attend. The Christmas Pageant is on Sunday, Dec. 14 during worship.

Christmas Caroling on Sunday, Dec. 21 from 2-4! Mark your calendars for an intergenerational caroling experience. Sign-up in Rockwood Hall, more details to come!

CAN YOU PROVIDE BREAKFAST for our children & youth? We have a few more opportunities before the holidays: 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 this morning.

PLEASE PLAN TO VISIT ROCKWOOD HALL AFTER WORSHIP ON 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!

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.

SHARING OUR GIFTS TO SHAPE OUR FUTURE: Pledge/estimate of giving cards for 2026 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.

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.