



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

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 14, 2025
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

PRELUDE "O Come Little Children"

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE Nathan Peters and Torie Tann, Sylvie

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Come friends and gather.

Look forward

and see God coming among us.

[Unison]

Let us worship God.

*HYMN 31 (vs. 1 & 3) "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Hark! The herald angels sing,

"Glory to the newborn King.

Peace on earth, and mercy mild,

God and sinners reconciled!"

Joyful, all ye nations rise,

Join the triumph of the skies;

**With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

Refrain:

**Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that we no more may die.
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

**Loving God, this is how you made us:
you created us with the capacity for joy.
Light our lives with the power of imagination.
Show us the creative power of hope.
Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared,
that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#28, vs. 1)**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart, and soul, and voice;
Give you heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before him bow, And he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!**

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.

***HYMN 36 (vs. 1, 2, & 4) "In the Bleak Midwinter"**

**In the bleak midwinter,
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter,
Long ago.**

**Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away**

**When He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate,
Jesus Christ.**

**What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man,
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him:
Give my heart.**

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory “What Child Is This?” Lani Smith

*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

HYMN 41 (vs. 1) “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

**O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him,
Born the King of angels!**

Refrain:

**O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!**

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

*CAROL (in pageant insert)

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

**Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.**

Refrain:

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo;
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

**Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;**

**Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow” Mark Hayes

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

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| ❖ No Choir Rehearsal | |
| Church School for all ages | 9:15 am |
| Worship Service—Christmas Pageant | 10:15 am |
| Alternative Giving Fair | After Worship |
| Confirmation Class | 4:00 pm |

TUESDAY

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| ❖ Gentle Yoga | Noon |
| Diaconate | 7:00 pm |
| Trustees | 7:00 pm |

THURSDAY

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| ❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal | 6:30 pm |
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SATURDAY

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| ❖ Men’s Breakfast—Waterfront Hy-Vee | 8:00 am |
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NEXT SUNDAY—FOURTH SUNDAY IN OF ADVENT

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| ❖ Choir Rehearsal | 9:00 am |
| Church School for all ages | 9:15 am |
| Worship Service | 10:15 am |
| Christmas Caroling | 2:00 pm |

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

EACH YEAR BRINGS FESTIVITY AND CELEBRATION AS WE MOVE THROUGH ADVENT

toward the joy of Christmas. Mark your calendars so that you can be a part of these special events:

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

PLEASE PLAN TO VISIT ROCKWOOD HALL AFTER WORSHIP THIS MORNING 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!

OUR OFFICE MANAGER, JENN HARDEN, WILL BE OUT OF THE OFFICE TOMORROW MONDAY, DECEMBER 15.

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!

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON CHRISTMAS EVE, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, AT 5:30 P.M.: This is a service for people of all ages. Our worship includes a time for children, special music, Christmas carols, a reading of the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke, and lighting of candles. If you would like to be an usher for this worship service, please sign up in Rockwood Hall or call the church office. Everyone is invited to the gala reception in Rockwood Hall after worship. This is a warm and wonderful time of fellowship and a chance to catch up with students and friends who are home for the holidays. Members and friends may provide poinsettias for the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve worship service. If you would like to remember or honor someone with a poinsettia, please let the church office know that you will bring a poinsettia and the name of the person by Tuesday, December 16.

A NOTE FROM THE DIACONATE—SHARE COOKIES ON CHRISTMAS EVE: Please join the traditional cookie brigade on December 24. If you are able and willing to bring two dozen cookies, there will be plenty of mounded plates for filling the tables after our Christmas Eve Candle Light Worship Service. You can bring the cookies on Christmas Eve or earlier in the week. We'll have a special Christmas punch ready for everyone.

CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING—CHRISTMAS EVE: Each year, the United Church of Christ's Christmas Fund Offering allows the UCC to assist retired pastors living on limited incomes as well as to supplement small retirement annuities and health premiums and to provide emergency grants to active and retired clergy and lay employees. The mission of the Christmas Fund is to provide assistance dollars in situations of critical need, while preserving the dignity of those who receive the aid. We will receive the Christmas Fund Offering during our worship on Christmas Eve. Please remember that your generous contributions can and do make a difference in the lives of many people.

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.

HOPE LODGE: Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be Monday, January 12. If you would like to contribute to the meal see the sign-up sheet posted in Rockwood Hall.

SHARE THE HARVEST UPDATE: Summer and fall are past. The snow in November covered the final kale crop and meant the end of the harvest. \$1300 was sent to the CommUnity Crisis Center Food Pantry from the proceeds of the sale of produce and flowers. Thanks to John Fuller and Kathy Fait for coordinating this effort, for others who also brought flowers and produce from their gardens and for all who made purchases.

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.

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.

SOME MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ARE STILL INTERESTED IN PROVIDING A MEAL FOR TORIE 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 Torie 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.

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.

GENTLE YOGA on Tuesdays at noon, this 45-minute class is appropriate for beginners, experienced or anyone wishing to focus on body awareness, increased mobility, and restorative practice. The \$10 suggested donation goes directly to the Immigrant Welcome Network. No need to sign-up, you can simply show up! The next three Tuesdays will follow Advent themes of peace, joy and love! There will not be yoga Tuesday, Dec. 28, and we'll resume on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

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.