



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

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 22, 2024
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PRELUDE “Low, How a Rose Is Growing” John Leavitt

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Kevin Richards, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE Darcie Hutzell and Fielding Woolums

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Let us wake to the dawn of this day and
the light coming into our lives.

**Let us watch for the signs of God’s realm
breaking into the life of our world.**

[Unison]

Let us worship God.

***HYMN 9 “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 Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. (Refrain)**

**O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace. (Refrain)**

***OPENING PRAYER**

In the quiet of this new morning, O God, help us find the peace of this season despite our preoccupations. On this day of celebration among friends and family may we cherish the bonds we share.

Help us to see your light in the darkness.

Help us to hear your voice of wisdom.

Please bring peace to our troubled world. Amen.

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#9)**

**O come, thou Wisdom, from on high,
and order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
and help us in that way to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!**

ANTHEM “Lift Up Your Heads” Petere Niedmann

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 "What Child Is This" Paul Manz

*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

SCRIPTURE LESSON Isaiah 7:10-16

SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 1:18-25

*HYMN 29 "Go, Tell It on the Mountain"

Refrain:

**Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.**

**While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.**

**The shepherds feared and trembled,
When lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angels chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth.**

**Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.**

SERMON "God with Us"

*ADVENT CREDO—Allan Boesak

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction—

This is true: I have come that they may have life, and that abundantly.

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever—

This is true: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called wonderful councilor, mighty God, the Everlasting, the Prince of peace.

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world—

This is true: To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo I am with you, even until the end of the world.

So, we leave Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice.

Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ—the life of the world.

*HYMN 31 “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!"**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time, behold Him come,
Offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.**

**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.**

BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

“Joy to the World” Wilbur Held

“Advent Credo” by Allan Boesak—Allan Boesak (born 1946) is a South African pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church, politician, anti-apartheid activist, and author of fifteen books. This Credo is taken from his book *Walking on Thorns* (Eerdmans, 1984).

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
Financial Manager	Sharyn Huriaux Reitz

WE’RE GLAD THAT YOU ARE WORSHIPING WITH US THIS MORNING. Everyone is invited to Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall after worship.

TODAY—FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- ❖ Choir Rehearsal 9:00 am
- Christian Education for Children 9:15 am
- No Adult Education**
- Worship Service 10:15 am

TUESDAY

- ❖ Christmas Eve Worship Service 5:30 pm

WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

- ❖ Church Office Closed in Celebration of Christmas

NEXT SUNDAY—THE FIFTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS

- ❖ No Choir Rehearsal
- No Christian Education Sessions
- Worship Service 10:15 am
- The Rev. Bob Molsberry Preaching

**ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, and EPIPHANY CELEBRATIONS AT
CONGREGATIONAL UCC**

December 22—Fourth Sunday of Advent; Worship at 10:15 a.m.
Christmas Eve is Tuesday, December 24—Worship at 5:30 p.m.
December 29—Fifth Day of Christmas—Worship at 10:15 a.m.
January 5—Epiphany Sunday; Communion

GIVING TOGETHER, GROWING TOGETHER: The Christian life is lived together. We gather to worship, we work with each other in mission, we study in groups, we bear one

another's burdens, and we talk and laugh together over coffee. We give together. We grow together. Please return your 2025 pledge card as soon as possible. Extra cards are available on the table outside of the sanctuary.

CHUCK CONNERLY AND MARTHA ANN CRAWFORD INVITE YOU to join them this afternoon, Sunday, December 22 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Chuck's recovery from sepsis. The event, "Staying Alive" will take place in Rockwood Hall from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Please RSVP by texting Chuck at 319-855-2256.

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON CHRISTMAS EVE, TUESDAY, 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. The reception will be even better if you volunteer to bring some cookies or other goodies to share. Sign up in Rockwood Hall or call the church office to let us know what you're bringing.

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 Monday, December 23.

THE 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.

A NOTE FROM THE DIACONATE: COOKIES GALORE AT CHRISTMAS EVE Please join the traditional cookie brigade on December 24th. 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. We'll have a special Christmas punch ready for everyone.

PLEASE NOTE Bill Lovin will be on vacation from Christmas Day through New Year's Day. The Rev. Bob Molsberry will be preaching next Sunday, December 29. Bill will be preaching on Sunday, January 5, Epiphany Sunday.

THE MISSION BOARD ANNUAL ALTERNATIVE GIVING FAIR was a great success – due to you, our buyers, sellers, and volunteer church members. Thank you to the creative people

who offered their work: Jo Benda, Robin Chambers, Martha Ann Crawford, and Hope Spragg. Thank you to Kathy Fait and John Fuller for continuing their Share the Harvest through a cold autumn season. Thank you to Ginny Clemons for her lovely calligraphy on the Heifer cards. Thank you to our other volunteers at the tables: Chuck Dayton, Jane Kinney, Linda Muston, and Julie Wittig. And a big thank you to John and Sharyn Reitz for coordinating all of this. The result? We sent over \$3,250 to the Heifer Project, exceeding all previous years, and \$382 to Church World Service. Locally, we sent \$820 from the craft sales and \$1051.95 from Share the Harvest to the CommUnity Food Bank, and \$257.50 to the Immigrant Welcome Network – a total of \$4,636.45 going out into the community and the larger world.

CELEBRATE EPIPHANY (the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles, the coming of the Magi) with us on Sunday, January 5, 2025. In our 10:15 worship service we will bring our observance of Christmas to a conclusion, hearing the story of the Magi from the Gospel of Matthew. We will also share in the sacrament of communion.

THE MORAVIAN STAR was given to Congregational UCC by the Williamson family. They came to Iowa City from Wisconsin and their family ancestry was Moravian. The Moravian Church took shape during the late 14th century, before the Protestant reforms of Martin Luther and John Calvin, following the simple religious practices of Jan Hus. The Moravian Star originated in Germany in the 1830s as a craft project to teach geometry and was quickly adopted by the Moravian Church as a symbol of the birth of Jesus, hanging in churches from the first Sunday of Advent until Epiphany, January 6. Our star has the traditional 26 points, although some can have up to 100. Each year John Johnson makes sure that it hangs at the front of our sanctuary for the Christmas pageant and through the 12 days of Christmas.

HELP WITH SLEEPING MATS STILL NEEDED: With our winter weather just around the corner, the need for more sleeping mats for the homeless is growing! By contributing your plastic bags from your purchases we can help the homeless! Bring your clean, unneeded, plastic grocery bags, or similar plastic bags from your purchases here, to Rockwood Hall. We will see to it that they are delivered.

RESULTS OF THE FALL DIAPER DRIVE FOR COMMUNITY FOOD BANK: Thanks to everyone who participated in the fall diaper drive for CommUnity Food Bank. Through your donations and efforts, over 2000 diapers and 40 packages of baby wipes were collected and delivered to the Food Bank. The church also received \$195 in donations that the Mission Board used to purchase additional diapers which helped extend our diaper deliveries into November and December. By supporting this drive, you made a difference in our community and in the lives of many local families in need.

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.