

# *A Festival of Carols*



## *The Second Sunday of Advent*

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

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 7, 2025  
THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“If I should ever die, God forbid, let this be my epitaph: The only proof he needed of the existence of God was music.”

Kurt Vonnegut

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

## LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE

Darcie Hutzell and Fielding Woolums

### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Let us raise our hearts and voices.

**Let us be glad, for great is God who comes to dwell among us.**

**[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 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]**

**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!...**

### **\*OPENING PRAYER (A prayer of Howard Thurman)**

**May the sounds of Advent stir a longing in your people, O God. Come again to set us free from the dullness of routine and the poverty of our imaginations. Break the patterns which bind us to small commitments and to the stale answers we have given to questions of no importance. Let the Advent trumpet blow, let the walls of our defenses crumble, and make a place in our lives for the freshness of your love, well-lived in the Spirit, and still given to all who know their need and dare receive it. 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 cause us in its ways to go.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel!**

### **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      *“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 40:1-5

\*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.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON      II Corinthians 6:1-2

SCRIPTURE LESSON      Luke 2:78-79

“A FESTIVAL OF CAROLS”

Frank Ferko

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (by Howard Thurman)

Open unto me

**light for my darkness.**

Open unto me

**courage for my fear.**

Open unto me

**hope for my despair.**

Open unto me

**peace for my turmoil.**

Open unto me

**joy for my sorrow.**

Open unto me

**wisdom for my confusion.**

[Unison]

**Lord, Lord, open unto me!**

\*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

Opening Prayer: Howard Thurman in *The Mood of Christmas*.

Congregational Response: Howard Thurman in *The Mood of Christmas*.

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
Church School for children and youth	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
Advent Lunch	After Worship
Christmas Pageant Rehearsal	After Worship

MONDAY

❖ Church Council	7:00 pm
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TUESDAY

❖ Gentle Yoga	Noon
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THURSDAY

❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal	6:30 pm
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FRIDAY

❖ Christmas Pageant Rehearsal	5:30 pm
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NEXT SUNDAY—THIRD SUNDAY IN OF ADVENT

❖ No Choir Rehearsal	
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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

**WE'RE GLAD THAT YOU HAVE JOINED US FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING.** Everyone is invited to the Advent Potluck Lunch 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 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

**FESTIVAL OF CAROLS BY FRANK FERKO:** This morning, the Congregational UCC Choir and guest harpist Abigail Brower are performing "A Festival of Carols" by Frank Ferko, a five-movement work for choir and harp. They are joined by some volunteer singers from Cornell College. The work 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 an accompanying instrument and as an intrinsic thread within the larger musical fabric.

**THE ADVENT LUNCH IS AFTER WORSHIP!** Our always-joy-filled Advent Lunch will be better than ever if you are a part of it. Please join us downstairs in Rockwood Hall.

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EVENTS IN DECEMBER**

**Christmas Pageant Rehearsals:** Sunday, Dec. 7, after the Advent Lunch 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!

**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](mailto:john-reitz@uiowa.edu) for information. Come have a cup of coffee and browse!

**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](mailto:uccicadmin@uccic.org). John Johnson will be taking photos after worship this morning.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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/](http://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.