



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

WORSHIP FOR FEBRUARY 1, 2026
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

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 “Adagietto” Noel Rawsthorne

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Cassie Elsberg, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

The Psalmist says: “God makes all things new.”

**And so, we come today to say:
“O God, make all things new.”**

We long to be comforted.

We long for words to heal.

We long for something new to open a way.

And so, we come today and say:

“O God, make all things new.”

[Unison]

Let us worship God.

***HYMN “We Lay Our Broken World” (vs. 1-5)**

1. We lay our bro-ken world in sor - row at your feet, haunt -
 2. Here hu - man life seems less than pro - fit, might and pride, though
 3. We bring our bro-ken towns, our neigh-bours hurt and bruised; you
 4. We bring our bro-ken loves, friends part - ed, fam - ilies torn; then

Dm /F G C/E C6 G/B G7 Am C/E Gsus4-3 C

ed by hun - ger, war and fear, op-pressed by power and hate.
 to u - nite us all in you, you lived and loved and died.
 show us how old pain and wounds for new life can be used.
 in your life and death we see that love must be re - born.

5. We bring our broken selves, confused and closed and tired; then through your gift of healing grace new purpose is inspired.

*OPENING PRAYER

O God, we come to worship you.

In this place you invite us to be in communion with you; you call us to be in conversation with others. We come before you and recognize how limited we are. Alone, we do not possess the knowledge that we need. Help us to recognize the knowledge in others and bring us into community so we are able to talk with each other. Help us to see that we are all part of your creation and that in you all the parts are made whole.

Be among us. Give the hopeful satisfaction. Give the weary and worried support.

Carry us all on into the world you are creating still. Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (“We Lay Our Broken World,” vs. 6)

**O Spirit, on us breathe,
With life and strength anew;
Find in us love, and hope and trust,
And lift us up to you.**

ANTHEM “Blessed Are You” Craig Courtney

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory “Meditation” James Patten

*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 61:1-4

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

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 11:2-6

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.’

SERMON “What Do You Expect?”

THE LORD’S SUPPER

INVITATION

HYMN “As We Gather at Your Table”

**As we gather at your table,
As we listen to your word,
Help us know, O God, your presence;
Let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story
Till we claim it as our own;
Teach us through this holy banquet
How to make Love’s victory known.**

**Turn our worship into witness
In the sacrament of life;
Send us forth to love and serve you,
Bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion
To forgive as you forgave;
May we still behold your image
In the world you died to save.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

REMEMBERING AND GIVING THANKS

Now, we remember Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.
He took his place among us as one with human frailty.

**We remember that he called disciples and ministered to all.
He confounded the haughty and gave hope to the poor.
He ate with sinners and fed the multitude.**

On the night of his arrest...

WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND SHARING OF BREAD AND CUP

(Communion elements are served in the pews. 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 minister’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.)

PRAAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Let this meal that we have shared, O Christ,
put our minds on the things that lead to life
and give us strength to go out
to face all that life will require of us this week.
Send us out with tender hearts and strong spirits
to share in our everyday world
the promise of your wholeness. Amen.**

*HYMN 339 “Be Thou My Vision”
**Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art--
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.**

**Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.**

**Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE “Fanfare” June Nixon

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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

❖ Choir Rehearsal	TODAY
Christian Education for All Ages	9:00 am
Worship Service	9:15 am
Coffee Hour	10:15 am
	After Worship

TUESDAY

❖ Gentle Yoga Board of Christian Education	Noon 6:00 pm
❖ Zoom Bible Study	WEDNESDAY 7:00 pm
❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal	THURSDAY 6:30 pm
❖ Choir Rehearsal Christian Education for All Ages Worship Service Coffee Hour Confirmation Class	NEXT SUNDAY 9:00 am 9:15 am 10:15 am After Worship 4:00 pm

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

BILL WILL BE TAKING NEXT WEEKEND OFF. The Rev. Bob Molsberry will be preaching on Sunday, February 8. Bill will be working this coming week, Monday-Thursday.

OUR MISSION BOARD IS SPONSORING THE ADULT FORUM THROUGH FEBRUARY 22, EXPLORING LOCAL IMMIGRATION ISSUES. Our scheduled speakers are:

- February 1: Sheriff Brad Kunkel
- February 8: Deb Dunkase, Open Heartland
- February 15: Alejandra Escobar, Escucha Mi Voz
- February 22: Discussion Sunday

This series promises to be informative and interactive, addressing timely and important topics. We hope you will join us.

GENTLE YOGA every Tuesday at 11:00 a.m.! 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.

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY: The winter months provide a great opportunity to meet and study together—all in the comfort of our homes! Join us for a Zoom Bible Study of Paul's Letter to the Galatians. We meet on Zoom from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Wednesday evenings through February 11. Bill Lovin will lead the study. Because we'll be on Zoom, we expect to see local people and friends from other parts of the world. Let Bill know that you're interested (319-337-4301 or uccicrev@uccic.org) and he'll send you the link.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR YOUTH GROUP SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15 FROM 4-6 PM! All middle and high schoolers are invited to join us for food, fellowship and fun! Please bring any cake baking or decorating ingredients, as we will be making birthday cake kits for donation. (Cake mixes, pre-made frosting, aluminum pans, etc.)

SAVE THE DATE FOR FEBRUARY 18 FOR ASH WEDNESDAY SUPPER AND WORSHIP SERVICE: We'll gather to eat at 5:30, followed by the Ash Wednesday worship service at 7:00. Gather with your church family for a soup potluck, fellowship and worship. We hope you will join us. If you'd like to contribute to the meal, please sign up online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A084DA4A923A75->

61501951-ashwednesday or in Rockwood Hall. We only need a few food contributions, please join us either way!

MISSION BOARD LGBTQ+ SUBCOMMITTEE is looking forward to a year of learning, advocating and activism. Join us and mark your calendars for the following dates:

Monday, February 23: LGBTQ Day on the Hill- all day field trip to the State Capitol. Agenda includes a morning session held at the State Historical Society of Iowa on the legislative process, current anti-LGBTQ+ bills impacting LGBTQ+ Iowans, how to take action and advocate for LGBTQ+ rights in Iowa. A march to the Capitol and rally in the rotunda follow in the afternoon with opportunities to meet with legislators. Contact Julie Wittig if you would like to join the carpool and for more information visit:

<https://oneiowa.org/event/doth2026/>. Registration deadline is February 13 to participate in the luncheon at the Capitol. Plan to leave from church at 8:00am, returning early evening.

Friday, May 1: Rainbow Graduation for the Pride Alliance Center- afternoon graduation ceremony for LGBTQ+ students will be held at our church. Details and opportunities to help will be announced soon.

Saturday, June 20: Iowa City Pridefest- 11:30am-4pm parade and booth shift opportunities will be available.

CHURCH PHOTO DIRECTORY: Our Membership Board photo directory is moving into its next stage. If you have some ability with desktop publishing and would like to help with this, please talk with Sue Dayton or Bill Lovin.

THE MEMBERSHIP BOARD IS ONCE AGAIN TAKING ORDERS FOR OUR CHURCH'S T-SHIRTS that have the church rainbow logo. Orders will be taken at church on February 8 and February 15. Cost is \$20 per shirt. If you have any questions, call or text Martha Ann Crawford at 319-855-8340. Order forms will be available at a special table during coffee hour on those dates.

AFTER WORSHIP ENCOUNTER (AWE) WILL START UP AGAIN AFTER WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, MARCH 1. We will plan on two 5-week sessions. We will meet for 5 weeks and then take a break on Easter Sunday, April 5th. Generally, we gather on the Sundays that the choir meets after worship to rehearse for their Special Music Sunday on May 17th.

We will be using *Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity*. In this study we will be meeting again progressive theologians that were introduced in the original Living the Questions series: Borg, Crossen, and Spong. This is a beginning class that will introduce you to Progressive Christianity.

Rev. Ann Molsberry will be leading the discussions. Please purchase your own book and for Sunday, March 1st read Chapter 8: Restoring Relationships (the first chapter of Section Two: Reconciliation). See you on Sunday, March 1st in the library!

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, the labels from the plastic bottles need to be removed, and the bottles need to be washed in soapy water. More information will be in the church newsletter. Donna will pick up bottles on Sundays.

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.

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.