



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

WORSHIP FOR FEBRUARY 21, 2021
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

“Providence means that there is a creative and saving possibility implied in every situation, which cannot be destroyed by any event. Providence means that the demonic and destructive forces within ourselves and our world can never have an unbreakable grasp upon us, and that the bond which connects us with the fulfilling love can never be disrupted.”

Paul Tillich

Thursday, **February 25, 7:00** is the UCC Racial Justice and Education Discussion. To register and get a zoom link, send a note to kyle-flippo@uiowa.edu. More information about the series is at the bottom of the bulletin.

PRELUDE

“Prelude in E Minor,” Op. 48, No. 15

Josef Renner

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We have gathered in the presence of God our creator,
Who sets before us the ways of life and death.

**We have gathered in the presence of Jesus the Christ,
Who calls us to accept the cost of discipleship
That we may know its joy.**

We have gathered in the presence of the Spirit,
Who sustains us in trial and rejoicing.

[Unison]

**In our living and in our dying,
We belong to God.
In the shadow of God's wings,
We sing for joy.
Let us worship God.**

HYMN "Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above"

(The words and music together can be found [here.](#))

**Sing praise to God who reigns above,
the God of all creation,
the God of power, the God of love,
the God of our salvation.
With healing balm my soul is filled
and every faithless murmur stilled:
To God all praise and glory!**

**What God's almighty power hath made
God's gracious mercy keepeth;
By morning glow or evening shade
God's watchful eye ne'er sleepeth;
Within the kingdom of God's might,
Lo! all is just and all is right:
To God all praise and glory!**

**The Lord is never far away,
but through all grief distressing,
an ever present help and stay,
our peace and joy and blessing.
As with a mother's tender care,
God helps us all our burdens bear:
To God all praise and glory!**

**Thus all my gladsome way along,
I sing aloud thy praises,
that all may hear the grateful song
my voice unwearied raises.
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart,**

**both soul and body bear your part:
To God all praise and glory!**

OPENING PRAYER

Merciful God, what a gentle and healing balm it is to come to you with our secret thoughts, our sad discouragements, and our noblest dreams, and find you hear to listen, to forgive, and to renew us. Slow to trust, afraid of the unknown, we are cautious to hear and do your will. We pray for ears to hear the cries of our neighbors and for hearts which resonate with your Spirit. Make us patient with our mistakes, even as we are willing to forgive others. And remind us that we are also precious, not because we are good but because you have accepted us and called us to be your very own. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE LESSON Deuteronomy 32:8-14

PSALM 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?

**My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.**

The Lord will not let your foot be moved,
and the One who watches over you will not fall asleep.

**Behold, the One who keeps watch over Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep;**

it is the Lord who watches over you;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
**so that the sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;
the Lord shall keep you safe.

**The Lord shall watch over your going out and your
coming in, from this time forth forevermore.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Mark 1:12-13

SERMON "Living in God's Care"

TIME OF GRATITUDE

ANTHEM "Wondrous Love" arr. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN “I Want Jesus to Walk with Me”

I want Jesus to walk with me; (Walk with me)
I want Jesus to walk with me; (Walk with me)
All along my pilgrim journey,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me. (with me)

In my trials, Lord, walk with me; (Walk with me)
In my trials, Lord, walk with me; (Walk with me)
When my heart is almost breaking,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me. (with me)

When I’m in trouble, Lord, walk with me; (Walk with me)
When I’m in trouble, Lord, walk with me; (Walk with me)
When my head is bowed in sorrow,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me. (with me)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “Voluntary in E Minor” John Stanley

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Minister:	The Rev. Bill Lovin
Director of Children’s Programs:	The Rev. Ann Molsberry
Organist:	Bill Crouch
Choir Director	Kristin Ramseyer

RECORDINGS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICES are posted by early Sunday morning each week 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.

During Lent Bill Lovin will be leading a five session series looking at chapters 13-17 of the Gospel of John. These chapters present John’s version of the meal that Jesus shared with his followers on the night of his betrayal and arrest. In this section of John’s Gospel, we hear Jesus’ words of encouragement for people entering an unknown future. We’ll gather by Zoom at 7:00 on Wednesday evenings, beginning on Wednesday, March 3, looking at one chapter of this book each week. If you are interested in being a part of this study, please let Bill know by calling him at the church (337-4301) or sending an email to him at uccicrev@uccic.org.

RACIAL JUSTICE–SOCIAL ACTION DISCUSSIONS: AN INVITATION

The Mission Board invites you to participate in any or all of five discussion groups to be held via Zoom during February, March, and April of this year.

We will come together with the hope of understanding and combating racism—within ourselves and in the world around us. Through the questions we ask and the answers we propose, we will seek specific projects and goals that can lift the burden of racism that our sisters and brothers of color—indeed, all of us—carry in our daily life.

Each session will highlight a different area for social action. Each will open with brief introductory remarks, and guided discussion will follow; we encourage *all* participants to voice their own thoughts! (If attendance warrants, Zoom will help us arrange smaller discussion groups.) The sessions are scheduled as shown below.

Registration instructions: please read carefully!

Registration will be handled through **Kyle Flippo, kyle-flippo@uiowa.edu**. Please email Kyle indicating the discussion(s) you'd like to join. Approximately a week before each session, registrants will receive a welcome letter with a Zoom link. Be sure to save space on your calendar for each session!

Affordable Housing	Feb. 25, Thursday, 7:00–8:30
Health Care	Mar. 9, Tuesday, 7:00–8:30
Immigration	Mar. 25, Thursday, 7:00–8:30
Environmental Justice	Apr. 27, Tuesday, 7:00–8:30

After you register, you'll also be offered a *few* pages of suggested reading for each session. After each discussion, you'll receive a list of proposed actions and activities.

We welcome you, and encourage you to pass our invitation on to others who may wish to join us. **If you have questions, please email Kyle Flippo, kyle-flippo@uiowa.edu.**

We need *you* for this project; please join us if you can. Few of us live without the benefits or harms of racial injustice. This is a chance for you to connect to the community and learn how you might help “to form a more perfect Union.”

DO YOU HAVE A HYMN THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SING IN THE COMING MONTHS? Let Bill Lovin know. This is no guarantee that we will sing it, as the hymn will need to be covered by our reprint license, fit with the rest of the worship service and work for the person who will be leading the singing—but we'd like to hear from you and sing a new song.

WE WANT TO SEE YOU! We would like to have members and friends be a part of the greeting time during our online worship. Please send us a brief—10-30 second—video of you or your family waving, saying “Hi,” singing, or whatever you would like. Or send a photo. We'll start including a few of these in the worship service each week as a way to strengthen our connections with each other. Send your greeting videos to https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UcrZ4ya9xFir39cG_1x-SCO6dVPBbV0B?usp=sharing