



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

WORSHIP FOR FEBRUARY 22, 2026
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

“Hold on to your dreams. Never surrender. Keep hope alive.”
Jesse Jackson

PRELUDE “Andante espressivo” Op. 55, No. 17 Flor Peeters

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Sam Bierman, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

*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.
Let us worship God.**

*HYMN 360 “Hope of the World” (vs. 1-4)

**Hope of the world, thou Christ of great compassion,
speak to our fearful hearts by conflict rent.**

**Save us, thy people, from consuming passion,
who by our own false hopes and aims are spent.**

**Hope of the world, God's gift from highest heaven,
bringing to hungry souls the bread of life,
still let thy Spirit unto us be given
to heal earth's wounds and end her bitter strife.**

**Hope of the world, afoot on dusty highways,
showing to wandering souls the path of light;
walk thou beside us, lest the tempting byways
lure us away from thee to endless night.**

**Hope of the world, who by thy cross didst save us
from death and dark despair, from sin and guilt;
we render back the love thy mercy gave us;
take thou our lives, and use them as thou wilt.**

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

We confess, O God, what we are:

we are not the people we like others to think we are;

we are afraid to admit even to ourselves what lies in the depths of our souls.

**But we do not want to hide our true selves from you. We believe that you know us as we
are, and yet you love us. Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge; teach us to respect
ourselves for your sake; give us the courage to put our trust in your guiding power.**

**We also confess to you, O God, the unrest of the world, to which we contribute and in
which we share. Forgive us that so many of us are indifferent to the needs of other men and
women.**

**Raise us out of the paralysis of guilt into the freedom and energy of forgiven people. And
for those who through long habit find forgiveness hard to accept, we ask you to break their
bondage and set them free; through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#360, vs. 5)**

Hope of the world, O Christ, o'er death victorious,

Who by this sign did conquer grief and pain,

We would be faithful to Thy gospel glorious;

Thou art our Lord! Thou dost forever reign!

ANTHEM

“In Remembrance” Jeffrey Ames

TIME OF PRAYER

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer

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 “Andante nobile” Op. 55, No. 27 Flor Peeters

*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

MESSAGE FROM THE CHILDREN “To God All Praise and Glory”
(Children are dismissed to Children’s Church)

SCRIPTURE LESSON Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

PSALM 32

Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,
and whose sin is put away!

**Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,
because of my groaning all day long.

**For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

When I acknowledged my sin to you,
and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."

Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

**Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

You are my hiding-place;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

**"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;
I will guide you with my eye.**

Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle,
or else they will not stay near you."

**Great are the tribulations of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.**

Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord;
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

‘One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,’
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’”

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

*HYMN 373 "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)**

SERMON “Encounter in the Wilderness”

*HYMN 419 “How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord”

**How clear is our vocation, Lord,
When once we heed Your call:
To live according to Your word,
And daily learn, refreshed, restored,
That You are Lord of all
And will not let us fall.**

**But if, forgetful, we should find
Your yoke is hard to bear,
If worldly pressures fray the mind
And love itself cannot unwind
Its tangled skein of care:
Our inward life repair.**

**We mark Your saints, how they became
In hindrances more sure,
Whose joyful virtues put to shame
The casual way we wear Your name,
And by our faults obscure
Your power to cleanse and cure.**

**In what You give us, Lord, to do,
Together or alone,
In old routines or ventures new,
May we not cease to look to You--
The cross You hung upon--
All You endeavored done.**

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE "Andante con moto" Op. 55, No. 9 Flor Peeters

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	Nancy LeaVessuer

TODAY

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

TUESDAY

❖ Gentle Yoga	11:00 am
Church Council	7:00 pm

THURSDAY

❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal	6:30 pm
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NEXT SUNDAY

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

WE'RE GLAD THAT YOU HAVE JOINED US FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING.

Everyone is invited to Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall after worship.

THIS MORNING, OUR MISSION BOARD CONCLUDES THE ADULT FORUM

EXPLORING LOCAL IMMIGRATION ISSUES. Today will be a general discussion. We hope you will join us.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO A SUCCESSFUL ASH

WEDNESDAY SUPPER. Your generosity and teamwork made the evening a warm and welcoming start to the Lenten season.

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.

AFTER WORSHIP ENCOUNTER (AWE) WILL START UP AGAIN AFTER WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, MARCH 15. We will plan on two 5-week sessions. We will meet for 5 weeks and then take a break on Easter Sunday, April 5. Generally, we gather on the Sundays that the choir meets after worship to rehearse for their Special Music Sunday on May 31.

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!

OUR NEXT HOPE LODGE DINNER will be Monday, March 16 at 6:00 p.m. If you would like to donate to the meal, see the sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall.

The American Cancer Society Hope Lodge, which opened in 2008, offers 28 guest rooms located near treatment centers in the area. The program provides a free home away from home for cancer patients and their caregivers. More than just a roof over their heads, it's a nurturing community that helps patients access the care they need. Each Hope Lodge community offers a supportive, homelike environment where guests can share a meal, join in the evening's activities, or unwind in their own private room. Patients staying at a Hope Lodge must be in active cancer treatment.

THE SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE will be held March 28 & 29 at 860 Quarry Road, Coralville from 10:30am-4:00pm both days. You can bring your donations of books, CDs, DVDs, and puzzles to that location every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 10:00am-2:00pm, and Sundays from 2:00pm-4:00pm. Or drop your donations off in Rockwood Hall and we'll take them for you.

Many volunteers are needed to help sort books and help during sale days. Sign up to volunteer at: [Book Sale 2026: Community Volunteers](#).

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.