



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

WORSHIP FOR FEBRUARY 8, 2026  
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

“My friends, do not lose heart. We were made for these times. Yes. For years, we have been learning, practicing, been in training for and just waiting to meet on this exact plain of engagement. “

Clarissa Pinkola Estes, “Letter to a Young Activist During Troubled Times”

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chuck Connerly, Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (*Based on Psalm 80:1-7*)

Our God, restore us.

**Show us your true face and empower us.**

We make enemies of the weak and poor and leave them to fend for themselves.

You were poor.

**Show us your true face and empower us.**

As a country we have fallen short.

We are comfortable with outlandish disparities.

You knew how it felt to be treated Less Than.

**Show us your true face and empower us.**

We are caught in a cycle, not understanding mercy.

Even our prayers are vengeful.

You taught us to pray.

**Show us your true face and empower us.**

\*HYMN 434

Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples

**Today we all are called to be  
disciples of the Lord,  
to help to set the captive free,  
make plowshare out of sword,  
to feed the hungry, quench their thirst,  
make love and peace our fast,  
to serve the poor and homeless first,  
our ease and comfort last.**

**God made the world and at its birth  
ordained our human race  
to live as stewards of the earth,  
responding to God's grace.  
But we are vain and sadly proud;  
we sow not peace but strife.  
Our discord spreads a deadly cloud  
that threatens all of life.**

**Pray justice may come rolling down  
as in a mighty stream,  
with righteousness in field and town  
to cleanse us and redeem.  
For God is longing to restore  
an earth where conflicts cease,  
a world that was created for  
a harmony of peace.**

**May we in service to our God  
act out the living word,  
and walk the road the saints have trod  
till all have seen and heard.  
As stewards of the earth may we  
give thanks in one accord  
to God who calls us all to be  
disciples of the Lord.**

**\*OPENING PRAYER**

**Life-giving God, your love and light guide us on the path of courage, compassion, generosity, and grace. Lead us as we seek to follow your transformative love that turns sorrow into joy, and despair into hope. O God, help us embrace your guiding love that calls us to live as your faithful witnesses who reflect your grace and redemptive love. God, open our hearts to receive your gracious love, and strengthen us to carry the Good News of your healing power found in the light, love, and life of Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

ANTHEM

“The Call” Z. Randall Stroope

## 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

\*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 day of redemption draws near**

**For all who labor but do not eat,**

**For all who are hated for how they love,**

**For all who live with a sense of foreboding,**

**wondering what injury will be inflicted on their bodies**

**because of the color of their skin or assumed nationalities.**

**We offer these gifts as a taste of the equitable world to come.**

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(Children are dismissed to Children's Church)

## SCRIPTURE LESSON      Matthew 25:31-40

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And

the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

#### PSALM 107

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.  
For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.

**He turns a desert into pools of water,  
a parched land into springs of water.**

And there he lets the hungry live, and they establish a town to live in;  
they sow fields, and plant vineyards, and get a fruitful yield.

**By his blessing they multiply greatly,  
and he does not let their cattle decrease.**

When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, trouble, and sorrow,  
he pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes;

**But he raises up the needy out of distress,  
and makes their families like flocks.**

The upright see it and are glad; and all wickedness stops its mouth.

**Let those who are wise give heed to these things,  
and consider the steadfast love of the Lord.**

#### SCRIPTURE LESSON      Matthew 5:8-16

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

#### SERMON      “*Sal Y Luz*”

\*HYMN      #386      “O For a World”

**O for a world where everyone  
respects each other's ways,  
where love is lived and all is done  
with justice and with praise.**

**O for a world where goods are shared  
and misery relieved,  
where truth is spoken, children spared,  
equality achieved.**

**We welcome one world family  
and struggle with each choice  
that opens us to unity  
and gives our vision voice.**

**The poor are rich, the weak are strong,  
the foolish ones are wise.**

**Tell all who mourn, outcasts belong,  
who perishes will rise.**

**O for a world preparing for  
God's glorious reign of peace,  
where time and tears will be no more,  
and all but love will cease.**

**\*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

**POSTLUDE**

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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

**TODAY**

❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Christian Education for All Ages	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
Coffee Hour	After Worship
Confirmation Class	4:00 pm

**TUESDAY**

❖ Gentle Yoga	Noon
Mission Board	7:00 pm

**WEDNESDAY**

❖ Zoom Bible Study	7:00 pm
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	THURSDAY
❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal	6:30 pm
SATURDAY	
❖ Women's Reading Group	11:00 pm
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.

**WE WELCOME THE REV. BOB MOLSBERRY** to our pulpit this morning. Bob is a retired UCC minister and a member of Congregational UCC. The Rev. Bill Lovin has this morning off and will be back at the church on Monday afternoon.

**SOUPER BOWL OF CARING:** Today we are participating in the **Souper Bowl of Caring**, a grassroots hunger relief initiative. Whether you're watching the game and eating some of the 65 million avocados that Americans will eat that day or not, we encourage you to join in putting some money in the soup kettles that the young people of our congregation will have both upstairs and downstairs after worship. The original request with this project was to give \$1.00 if you were watching the game. Now—whether you're watching or not, give whatever you'd like. All money will go to the CommUnity Crisis Center Food Pantry.

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW OFFICE MANAGER:** The Church Council is happy to announce that we have hired a new office manager, Nancy Leavessuer. A search committee made up of Bea Hicks, Sharyn Reitz, John Fieselmann, Andy Bertolatus, and Bill Lovin received and reviewed over 20 applications for the position. We personally interviewed the two best candidates.

Nancy was chosen based on her skills, office management experience, and references. We think that Nancy offers what we are looking for in an office manager and that she will be a good fit with our congregation. She will work 20 hours/week, from 9-1, Monday-Friday. Nancy will start working on Monday, February 9. We invite members and friends to stop by the church office in the coming weeks to meet her.

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

- 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](mailto: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 5<sup>th</sup>. 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!

**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 signup sheet in Rockwood Hall.

**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/](http://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.