

**O Christ, the healer, we have come
To pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored,
When reached by love that never ends?**

**From every ailment flesh endures
Our bodies clamor to be freed;
Yet in our hearts we would confess
That wholeness is our deepest need.**

**How strong, O Lord, are our desires,
How weak our knowledge of ourselves!
Release in us those healing truths
Unconscious pride resists or shelves.**

**In conflicts that destroy our health
We recognize the world's disease;
Our common life declares our ills:
Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?**

**Grant that we all, made one in faith,
In your community may find
The wholeness that, enriching us,
Shall reach the whole of humankind.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

O God, in mystery and in silence you are present in our lives. Out of your great compassion, hear our prayers and heal us. Bind all our wounds, cure our ills of body and soul, make your broken people whole again. Bring new life out of destruction, hope out of despair, growth out of difficulty. Help us to welcome every healing as a sign that, though death is against us, you are for us. Amen.

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#223)**

**O my soul, bless your Redeemer, all within me bless God's name.
Bless the Lord and so remember all God's mercies to proclaim.**

**God forgives all our transgressions, all who suffer, gently heals;
God redeems us from destruction, and with us so kindly deals.**

ANTHEM

"Thee, Lord, Would I Serve"

Mark Bender

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 "Larghetto" Jonathan Battishill

*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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(There is no Children's Church this morning. Children may stay with their families.)

SCRIPTURE LESSON Isaiah 35:3-6a

PSALM 36:5-10

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens,
and your faithfulness to the clouds.

**Your righteousness is like the strong mountains,
your justice like the great deep;
you save humans and beasts alike, O Lord.**

How priceless is your love, O God!
your people take refuge under the shadow of your wings.

**They feast upon the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from the river of your delights.**

For with you is the well of life,
and in your light we see light.

**Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you,
and your favor to those who are true of heart.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON John 9:1-12, 25b

*HYMN 340 "Eternal Light, Shine in My Heart"

**Eternal light, shine in my heart;
Eternal hope, lift up my eyes;
Eternal power, be my support;
Eternal wisdom, make me wise.**

**Eternal life, raise me from death;
Eternal brightness, help me see;**

**Eternal Spirit, give me breath;
Eternal Savior, come to me:**

**Until by Your most costly grace,
Invited by Your holy word,
At last I come before Your face
To know You, my eternal God.**

SERMON “A Healing Encounter”

*HYMN 427 “Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service”

**Lord, whose love through humble service
bore the weight of human need,
who upon the cross, forsaken,
worked your mercy's perfect deed:
we, your servants, bring the worship
not of voice alone, but heart;
consecrating to your purpose
every gift which you impart.**

**Still your children wander homeless;
still the hungry cry for bread;
still the captives long for freedom;
still in grief we mourn our dead.
As you, Lord, in deep compassion
healed the sick and freed the soul,
by your Spirit send your power
to our world to make it whole.**

**As we worship, grant us vision,
till your love's revealing light
in its height and depth and greatness
dawns upon our quickened sight,
making known the needs and burdens
your compassion bids us bear,
stirring us to ardent service,
your abundant life to share.**

**Called by worship to your service,
forth in your dear name we go,
to the child, the youth, the aged,
love in living deeds to show;
hope and health, good will and comfort,
counsel, aid and peace we give,
that your servants, Lord, in freedom
may your mercy know and live.**

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE “Fugue in D Minor” William Boyce

Cover Artwork: JESUS MAFA. Jesus cures the man born blind, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

<https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48383> [retrieved March 12, 2026].

Original source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact page: <https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>). JESUS MAFA is a response to the New Testament readings from the Lectionary by a Christian community in Cameroon, Africa. In this painting of the story in John's gospel, we see a caring Jesus bend over a blind man holding his walking stick.

Opening Prayer: Ruth Duck in *The United Methodist Book of Worship*.

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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
Office Manager	Nancy LeaVesseur

TODAY

❖ Choir Rehearsal	9:00 am
Adult Education Only	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
Coffee Hour	After Worship
Choir Rehearsal	After Worship
AWE	After Worship

TUESDAY

❖ Membership Board	5:30 pm
Diaconate	7:00 pm
Trustees	7:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

- ❖ Finance Committee 10:00 am

THURSDAY

- ❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal 6:30 pm

NEXT SUNDAY

- ❖ Choir Rehearsal 9:00 am
- Church School for All Ages 9:15 am
- Worship Service 10:15 am
- Coffee Hour After Worship
- Choir Rehearsal After Worship
- AWE 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.

ADULT EDUCATION IN MARCH—ENCOUNTERS AT THE TOMB: As we move through Lent this month, the 9:15 Sunday morning adult education sessions will explore the resurrection stories in the four Gospels. Each Gospel gives a different account, but all of them point to encounters that women and men had with one another, with various messengers of good news, and with the risen Christ. We'll look at these connections as we seek new understanding of the resurrection for our lives today.

March 15	Luke, chapter 24
March 22	John, chapter 20
March 29	General Discussion

Join Bill Lovin around the fireplace in Rockwood Hall.

UCC FAMILY SURVEY: Parents with school aged children are encouraged to fill out a survey regarding the spring/summer events. Surveys may be completed via email or see Hope in Rockwood Hall after worship.

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR CHILDREN'S CHURCH DURING WORSHIP SUNDAY, MARCH 15. Nursery is OPEN with expanded spring hours for choral music rehearsal 9AM-12:30 PM.

AFTER WORSHIP ENCOUNTER (AWE) WILL START UP AGAIN AFTER WORSHIP THIS MORNING, SUNDAY, MARCH 15. There will be two multi-week sessions. We will meet for 3 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 15 read Chapter 8: Restoring Relationships (the first chapter of Section Two: Reconciliation). See you on Sunday, March 15 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.

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.

GENTLE YOGA on Tuesday @11 will NOT meet on Tuesday, March 17 due to spring break.

ON PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29, WE WILL DEDICATE OUR ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING (OGHS) OFFERING. This offering has long been an important part of the life of our congregation. For many years now, we have been on the list of Top 50 giving churches. One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) involves us in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, through our offering, we are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS we engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, our contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put us in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. We meet immediate needs and address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Let us continue this great tradition and give generously.

YOU CAN HELP WITH THE FREE LUNCH PROGRAM THIS MONTH: The Free Lunch Program is continuing to serve lunches. Members of Congregational UCC serve on the fifth Monday of any month. Our next serving date is Monday, March 30. If you are interested in helping in any way, please contact Vicki Thomae or call the church office—319-337-4301.

AGAPE CAFÉ BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER—MARCH 28: The Agape Café continues to serve free, hot, breakfast for our neighbors in the Iowa City area experiencing homelessness or food insecurity. The Cafe is celebrating its 33rd anniversary at their annual in-person fundraiser on Saturday, March 28, from 8 am - 11 am at Old Brick in Iowa City. Come have a great breakfast and support their good work!

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](#).

IMPORTANT DATES IN LENT AND EASTER

- **March 29—Palm Sunday**—Worship with Distribution of Palms; One Great Hour of Sharing Offering
- **April 2—Maundy Thursday**—Worship in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m.; Communion and Service of Tenebrae
- **April 3—Good Friday**—Worship in the Sanctuary at Noon
- **April 5—Easter Sunday**—Easter Sunrise Service led by members of the Confirmation Class at 7:30 a.m. Breakfast follows in Rockwood Hall; Festival Easter Service in the Sanctuary at 10:15 a.m.

AGUDAS ACHIM INVITES EVERYONE THEIR ANNUAL PEACE AND JUSTICE SEDER. They will be raising funds for three worthy local causes: HOPE Foundation (rebuilding life in Gaza), One Iowa (LGBTQ rights) and the Immigrant Welcome Network of Johnson County (immigrant support). Please come participate in this joyous event full of song, food and liberation based on the traditional Passover Seder meal but open to all. You can bring a non-wheat-based vegetarian or dairy dish as a potluck contribution. Sunday March 29th, Robert A. Lee Recreation Center. Doors open: 4:15 pm, Seder begins: 4:30 pm. Please register before



March 25th via the QR code.

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:

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.

PLEASE JOIN UICHR FOR A TALK AND RECEPTION HONORING THE LEGACY OF JIM LEACH on March 24, 2:30 - 4:00 pm at the Stanley Museum of Art. Visual and political anthropologist and human rights scholar and educator Professor Winifred Tate (Colby College) will discuss community action and art in the wake of violence, dispossession, and collective loss. Tate will consider the intersections, possibilities, and limitations of rights activism and art through an exploration of the visual repertoires and material practices of

Colombian sculptor Doris Salcedo and Passamaquoddy artist Jeremy Frey. Professor Tate will also share memories of Jim Leach as a champion of the arts and discuss his commitment to human rights. For more information visit: <https://stanleymuseum.uiowa.edu/event/36576/0>. This program is free and open to all. Refreshments will be provided.

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.

Call to Worship

Draw near to the God of love,
who meets us not as we imagine we should be,
but rather as we are.

We draw near to God who calls us
from shadow into light,
from certainty into wonder.

Draw near to God
that our eyes may be opened,
and our seeing may be shaped by grace.

Let us worship God.

Gathering Prayer

Loving God,
You are the source of life and light.
You are the One who knows us fully and holds us gently.
You guide us like a shepherd who does not rush us,
walks with us through every valley,
and leads us toward places of rest and renewal.
Lord God,
we thank You that You see beyond appearances
and call out the goodness
which You have planted within us.

We praise You for your patience with us,
for Your steady love,
and for the hope You keep placing before us,
even when we lose sight of it ourselves.
And yet, when we pause in Your presence,
we recognise how easily we fall short...

(Pause)

Lord of light and truth,
we confess that we often prefer comfort to honesty,
familiar stories to grace that challenge us.
Forgive us when we fail to see our neighbour,
or turn away from truths that unsettle us.
Awaken us again...

(Pause)

Forgive us when we make quick judgments
rather than listening carefully;
when we cling to what feels safe

instead of trusting where You are leading;
when we overlook those on the edges
or stay silent when love calls us to speak.
Open our eyes, gracious God.
Help us to see one another as You see us —
with compassion, dignity, and hope.
Renew us by Your mercy,
reshape us by Your love,
and lead us forward in the light of Christ.
Amen.

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 here 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.

Merciful God, whose care never ceases, we come to you as we are. We are tired from trying to do more than we can manage. We are anxious about problems which go unresolved. We are worried about events beyond our control.

For mistakes we cannot redeem, for tasks left undone, for uncertain goals, we need your forgiveness and ask for your understanding. For recovery of strength and enthusiasm, we pray for your Spirit. For fullness of life, generous hearts, and resilient souls, we pray to be followers of Christ Jesus. In your mercy, restore us and lead us. Amen.