



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

WORSHIP FOR APRIL 26, 2026
THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tina Koepnick, Liturgist

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

PRELUDE “Sheep May Safely Graze”

J.S. Bach

CHORAL INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Day by day

God calls us in and sends us out,

offering abundant life, to share with others.

Let us rejoice in this day.

[Unison]

Let us worship God.

***HYMN 464 “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”**

**Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!**

**All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.**

**Mortals, join the happy chorus,
Which the morning stars began;
Love divine is reigning o’er us,
Joining all in heaven’s plan.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music leads us sunward
In the triumph song of life.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

Eternal God, into the peace of your presence we bring our restless lives. We seek strength to continue on our journey just as people before us sought you to find a sure and steady calm in the midst of strife.

**Help us to continue in our struggles now
as we pray, as we study, as we work,
as we dare to risk, as we dare to wait.**

Refresh our faith, restore our confidence, and lead us on in your ways to share the gifts of your abundant life. Amen.

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#464)**

**Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing, all who live in joy are thine;
Teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.**

ANTHEM “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth” Flor Peeters

TIME OF PRAYER

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer

The 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 “Prayer” 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

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

(Children are dismissed to Children’s Church)

SCRIPTURE LESSON Ezekiel 34:1-6, 11-16

The word of the Lord came to me: Mortal, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel: prophesy, and say to them—to the shepherds: Thus says the Lord God: Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them.

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will

bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

PSALM 95:1-7

Come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

**Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving
and raise a loud shout to the Lord with psalms.**

For the Lord is a great God,
and a great Sovereign above all gods.

**The Lord holds the caverns of the earth,
and sustains the heights of the hills.**

The sea belongs to God, who made it,
whose hands have molded the dry land.

**Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee,
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.**

[Unison]

**For the Lord is our God,
and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.
Oh, that today you would hearken to God's voice!**

SCRIPTURE LESSON John 10:7-14

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me."

*HYMN (insert) "All My Hope on God Is Founded"

**All my hope on God is founded: who else can my hope renew?
Still through change and chance God guides me, only good and only true.
God unknown, grace alone, calls my heart to be God's own.**

**Well does the almighty Giver bounteous gifts on us bestow!
With delight our souls are nourished; pleasure leads us where we go.
At God's hand does love stand; joy awaits each new command.**

**In glad hymns to God eternal sacrifice of praise be done,
High above all praises praising for the love in Christ made known.
Hear Christ's call, one and all; those who follow shall not fall.**

SERMON "Shepherds, Leaders, and the Common Good"

* HYMN (insert) “Lead on, Eternal Sovereign
**Lead on eternal Sovereign, we follow in your way;
Loud rings your cry for justice, your call for peace this day:
Through prayerful preparation, your grace will make us strong,
To carry on the struggle to triumph over wrong.**

**Lead on eternal Sovereign, we follow not with fear,
For in each human conflict your words of strength we hear:
That when we serve with gladness, you will not let us fall,
Our trust is in your promise that love will conquer all.**

**Lead on eternal Sovereign, till sin’s fierce war shall cease,
And all your saints together will sing a hymn of peace;
Then all in your dominion will live with hearts set free,
To love and serve each other for all eternity.**

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE “Awake, My Heart, with Gladness” Flor Peeters

Cover photo by [Dave McDermott](#) on [Unsplash](#). Used with permission.

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
Christian Education for all ages	9:15 am
Worship Service	10:15 am
Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall	After Worship
Choir Rehearsal	11:30 am
AWE	11:30 am

TUESDAY

❖ <i>Reading Genesis</i> Group (Oaknoll)	10:00am
Gentle Yoga	11:00 am
Church Council	7:00 pm

THURSDAY

❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal	6:30 pm
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FRIDAY

- ❖ Rainbow Graduation 4:30 pm

NEXT SUNDAY

- ❖ Choir Rehearsal 9:00 am
- Christian Education for all ages 9:15 am
- Worship Service 10:15 am
- Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall After Worship
- Choir Rehearsal 11:30 am
- AWE 11:30 am
- Confirmation Class 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.

ADULT EDUCATION FOR MAY 3: The Adult Education Subcommittee and the Stewardship Board is sponsoring a talk on "Planned Giving" by Paul Morf, a prominent attorney from Cedar Rapids, in Rockwood Hall. During his presentation, he welcomes questions from participants. The presentation will be taped so that members of the choir or others unable to attend will be able to observe the presentation.

AFTER WORSHIP ENCOUNTER (AWE) MEETS THIS MORNING and on the Sundays that the choir meets after worship to rehearse for their Special Music Sunday on May 31. Rev. Ann Molsberry is leading the discussions—join them in the library.

WE ARE CONTINUING OUR DISCUSSION OF MARILYNNE ROBINSON'S *READING GENESIS* that we began last fall. We'll meet at Oaknoll from 10:00-11:30 on Tuesday morning, April 28 and May 5 & 12. If you would like to be a part of this group, talk with Bill Lovin or Chuck Dayton or sign up on the sheet in Rockwood Hall.

THE PRIDE ALLIANCE CENTER RAINBOW GRADUATION will be held at our church this coming Friday, May 1, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. The Rainbow Graduation Celebration recognizes the achievements of LGBTQ+ students and their allies. This is our second consecutive year hosting this event. Everyone is welcome to attend this joyous occasion and support the graduating students and organizers who are unable to use university spaces, funds, or staff as they have in previous years. For more information, contact Julie Wittig, David McCartney, or Bill Dickinson.

WOMEN'S READING GROUP—MAY 9: The Women's Reading Group is reading and discussing *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others* by Barbara Brown Taylor. They meet from 10-11a.m. in Rockwood Hall the second Saturday of each month through June. If you're interested, contact Marsha Lowe or Rebecca Weatherford or sign-up in Rockwood Hall.

HOPE LODGE: Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be held on Monday, May 11 at 6:00 p.m. If you are interested in helping or providing food please 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.

A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR SUSAN BOYD will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at 2 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Society in Coralville.

SAVE THE DATE! IOWA CITY PRIDE FESTIVAL IS SATURDAY, JUNE 20 and the Mission Board members invite you to participate in the parade, help at the booth, or both. Full event details and signup available in May. For more information or to get involved with the planning, please reach out to any member of the LGBTQ+ subcommittee: Dianne Atkins, Martha Ann Crawford, Carson Fixmer, Dean Logan, Linda Muston, Hope Spragg, Rebecca Weatherford or Julie Wittig.

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.