

Confirmation 2026

*Respecting Questions
Seeking Understanding*



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

WORSHIP FOR MAY 17, 2026
THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

PRELUDE “Dearest Jesus, We Are Here,” BWV 706 J.S. Bach

CHORAL INTROIT

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

The Spirit of the living God breathes upon us,
and on all that is finite and fragile.

**God is our refuge and our strength,
a help in times of trouble.**

Be strong and let your heart take courage.

**In the company of God
and joined with the company of God’s people,
let us worship together.**

*** HYMN (insert) “Come, Living God, When Least Expected”**

**Come, living God, when least expected,
when minds are dull and hearts are cold,
through sharpening word and warm affection
revealing truths as yet untold.**

**Break from the tomb in which we hide you
to speak again in startling ways;
break through the words in which we bind you
to resurrect our lifeless praise.**

**Come now, as once you came to Moses
within the bush alive with flame;
or to Elijah on the mountain,
by silence pressing home your claim.
So, let our minds be sharp to read you
in sight or sound or printed page,
and let us greet you in our neighbors,
in ardent youth or mellow age.**

**Then, through our gloom, your Son will meet us
as vivid truth and living Lord,
exploding doubt and disillusion
to scatter hope and joy abroad.
Then we will share his radiant brightness,
and, blazing through the dread of night,
illuminate by love and reason,
for those in darkness, faith's delight.**

*** OPENING PRAYER**

**We give you thanks, O God, for bringing us together in community.
We are grateful for the people who gather with us**

and magnify your presence.

**Hear the sighs of your people who bring
their weariness and distress, their hopes and dreams.
Open a pathway forward.**

**Send us your Spirit.
Renew our imagination and strength
to follow in your wonderful and unexpected ways.**

**Let the energy of this time
stream into the world
as you send us out to be signs of your love. Amen.**

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (Tune: TERRA BEATA, #293)**

**Teach us to use our lives with purpose and with power
for visions of a better world and for the present hour.
To choose the way of life, reject the way of death,
until the radiant grace of God fills mind and strength and breath.**

**Teach us to love in truth, to give and to receive
with joyful and with open hearts, with all that we believe;
to seek another's good, to honor what is right,
to let our will and our desire be held in holy light.**

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Introductory Words

Hymn "Confirm Us, O God" (Tune: LYONS, #476) Dosia Carlson

**Confirm us, O God, as seekers of light,
new saints in your church who strive for the right.
True ground of our being, illumine each mind,
so doubting or trusting your mercy we find.**

**Unite us, O God, in covenant ways,
the body of Christ responding in praise.
Our pilgrimage leads us to this time and place,
So now we are one through the gift of your grace.**

Introductions by Sponsors

Questions for the Confirmands

***Owning of the Covenant**

**We covenant with one another to seek and respond to the Word and will of God. We
purpose to walk together in the ways of Jesus Christ, made known and to be made known
to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in
all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our
forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us. We pray for the coming of**

the reign of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

Charge to the Confirmands

Welcome by the Congregation

We promise you our continuing friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow in the knowledge and love of God and be witnesses to the risen Christ.

Presentation of Bibles

Prayer

ANTHEM “Blessed Is the Name of the Lord” Dale Grotenhuis

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 “Come Down, O Love Divine” Philip Gehring

*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 are dismissed to Children’s Church)

SCRIPTURE LESSON Amos 9:5-8

The Lord, God of hosts, he who touches the earth and it melts, and all who live in it mourn, and all of it rises like the Nile and sinks again, like the Nile of Egypt, who builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the surface of the earth—the Lord is his name. Are you not like the Cushites to me, O people of Israel? says the Lord. Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir? The eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth—except that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob says the Lord.

PSALM 33:8-22

Let all who dwell in the world stand in reverence of God.

For the Lord spoke, and it came to pass;
the Lord commanded, and it stood fast.

**The Lord brings the will of the nations to naught
and thwarts the designs of the peoples.**

But the Lord's will stands fast forever,
and the designs of the Lord's heart from age to age.

**Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord!
happy the people you have chosen to be your own!**

O Lord, you look down from heaven
and behold all the people in the world

**From where you sit enthroned you turn your gaze
on all who dwell on the earth.**

You fashion all the hearts of them
and understand all their works.

**There is no ruler that can be saved by a mighty army;
a warrior is not delivered by great strength.**

The horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
for all its strength it cannot save.

**Behold, your eye, O Lord, is upon those who fear you,
on those who wait upon your love,**

to pluck their lives from death,
and to feed them in time of famine.

**Our soul waits for you, O Lord;
you are our help and our shield.**

Indeed, our heart rejoices in you,
for in your holy name we put our trust.

**Let your loving-kindness, O Lord, be upon us,
as we have put our trust in you.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Romans 12:2, 9-18

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

SERMON “Transforming Christianity”

*HYMN 420 “God of Grace and God of Glory”

**God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your power;
crown your ancient church's story,
bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.**

**Lo! the hosts of evil round us
scorn the Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.**

**Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.**

**Set our feet on lofty places;
Gird our lives that they may be
Armored with all Christ-like graces,
Pledged to set all captives free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
That we fail not them nor Thee!
That we fail not them nor Thee!**

**Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore**

***BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

**POSTLUDE “All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name” David Cherwien
“Come, Living God, When Least Expected,” Words - ©1991 Stainer & Bell Ltd. Contributors:
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Congregational Response: "Now in the Days of Youth," Words: Walter J. Mathams, 1913, adapt. Sylvia Dunstan - ©1992 The Pilgrim Press. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-715458. All rights reserved.

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
- Church School for Children and Youth 9:15 am
- Worship Service--Confirmation 10:15 am
- Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall After Worship
- Choir Rehearsal 11:30 am

TUESDAY

- ❖ Gentle Yoga 11:00 am
- Membership Board 5:30 pm
- Trustees 7:00 pm
- Diaconate 7:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

- ❖ Staff Meeting 11:00 am

THURSDAY

- ❖ Women's Lunch—Big Grove 11:45 am
- Prairie Piffari Rehearsal 6:30 pm

NEXT SUNDAY

- ❖ Choir Rehearsal 9:00 am
- ❖ Church School for Children and Youth 9:15 am
- Worship Service—Pentecost 10:15 am
- Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall After Worship
- Choir Rehearsal 11:30 am

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

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

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR—Nametags help newer members and friends trying to put names and faces together. And—admit it—they help long-timers know who the new people are as well. They are available on the board outside of the sanctuary. Please wear them. And if you'd like one, please contact the church office.

VISITATION COMMITTEE: The Membership Board is forming a group of volunteers who would be willing to occasionally contact/visit church members who are homebound or would enjoy a visit. If you are interested see the sign-up sheet in Rockwood Hall.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: A group of youth and adults from St. Lucas UCC in suburban St. Louis will be traveling to Sheyenne, ND in July. They would like to stay a CUCC overnight on July 18. For insurance purposes, in order to host them we need a couple of members to sleep at the church that evening as well. If you'd like to help in this way, please talk with Bill Lovin.

HOPE LODGE: Thanks to those who helped with the May Hope Lodge dinner: Dianne Atkins and Andy Bertolatus, Rebecca Weatherford, Sally Strang, Jane Kinney, Linda Muston, Chuck and Sue Dayton. Our next Hope Lodge dinner will be July 13.

***Requiem* PREVIEW—MAY 20:** Please join CUCC member and musicologist, Roberta Marvin, on Wednesday, May 20, at 7:00 p.m. for an illustrated talk on Zoom about the *Requiem* by Gabriel Fauré, which the choir will perform on Sunday, May 31. Roberta will discuss the composer, French culture and traditions at the time the work was composed, the music, and the work's performance history. Talk with Bill Lovin or contact the church office and we'll send you the Zoom invitation.

THE UNITED ACTION FOR YOUTH'S FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS—MAY 21

The Mission Board is a presenting sponsor for the United Action for Youth's Festival of Flowers, which provides us with a table for 8. This event, May 21, at the Graduate Hotel at 5 PM is the single fundraiser for UAY. Hors d'oeuvres and wine will be served. The show will feature over 100 floral arrangements from community members and professional florists, available to purchase in a silent auction. Dinner parties, travel packages and more will be featured in a live auction.

UAY's mission is to nurture the potential for all youth to create, grow and succeed. They provide crisis and mediation programs, counseling, health education, music programs, LGBTQ+ programs, homeless youth services, and a young parent program. UAY supports three Mission Board priorities for 2025: Medical/Mental Health, Children/Youth, and LGTBQ+. If you would like to attend, please let Nancy LeaVesseur (uccicadmin@uccic.org or 319-337-4301) know.

WEAR RED ON PENTECOST SUNDAY, MAY 24. This day completes the long arc from Ash Wednesday through Easter resurrection to the coming of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Christ—a journey “from ashes to fire.” Pentecost marks God's gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church and our morning will be a spirited time together. The traditional color for Pentecost is red. We invite everyone to please consider wearing “flame colors”—red, orange, yellow—to worship on Sunday, May 24.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING WILL BE RECEIVED ON PENTECOST SUNDAY—MAY 24. Each year we receive a special offering that helps the church's love to grow and thrive. The “Strengthen the Church” offering grows the United Church of Christ's future by supporting new and renewing churches, youth and young adult ministries, and lay and pastoral leadership development—especially among women and people of color. It also funds the “Stillspeaking” Ministry, spreading the message of God's extravagant welcome, reaching out

especially to those who have felt there is no room for them within Christianity and the church. On Sunday, May 24—Pentecost Sunday—we will receive this offering. Your generous gift will help the UCC create vibrant church communities of extravagant welcome.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CELEBRATION: Join us on Special Music Sunday, May 31, for our last Sunday School class of the year as we celebrate a great year together and welcome the start of summer.

REQUIEM—SUNDAY, MAY 31: Please join us in worship on Sunday, May 31, for what promises to be a memorable performance of Faure's *Requiem Mass*, featuring the Congregational UCC Choir, conducted by Dr. Christopher Nakielski and accompanied by organist William Crouch. Additionally, this performance will feature an orchestra comprising area professionals, in addition to vocal soloists Marie Von Behren (soprano) and Dr. Benjamin Laur (baritone). You won't want to miss this timeless classic!

THE MEMBERSHIP BOARD IS HOSTING A SPRING BRUNCH in Rockwood Hall after our worship that morning on May 31, our spring Special Music Sunday. During this time, we will recognize members who joined the church this past year. The brunch will be catered, so, no need to bring anything. To help us plan, we would like to get an approximate count of how many people will attend. Please indicate on the sign-up sheets in Rockwood Hall if you plan to attend and how many may be coming with you. We are looking forward to this time to celebrate spring and enjoy beautiful music.

A STRAWBERRY FIELD: Early in our church history, it was recorded that women [sic] of the church often made strawberry desserts for celebrations or fundraisers held in the spring, when local strawberries were in season. We invite anyone who wishes to bring a strawberry dessert to the May 31 brunch which will follow the Special Music Sunday service. The Membership Board provides the main meal.

We will set up a special table called “Strawberry Field” for desserts, or strawberry salads. This might become a spring tradition.

If you have questions, please contact anyone on the Membership Board: Sue Dayton, Martha Ann Crawford, Randee Fieselmann, Marcy Kuechenmeister, Dean Logan, Marsha Lowe, Sheilah McKenna, Joyce Myer, or Pam Willard.

P.S. When the Beatles wrote their famous song “Strawberry Fields Forever,” they were familiar with a Salvation Army children’s home in Liverpool, UK, named “Strawberry Field.”

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE AT THE BIKE LIBRARY offers free e-assisted bike rides originating from the Ashton House and looping through City Park. If you or someone you know would benefit from this "ride through the park" as a passenger, see the sign-up in Rockwood Hall or talk to Hope Spragg to arrange a ride. More info available at: <https://icbikelibrary.org/cycling-without-age!>

THE IOWA CITY PRIDE FESTIVAL AND PARADE IS SATURDAY, JUNE 20 IN DOWNTOWN IOWA CITY. Our church family will again participate in the noon parade and host a booth from 1 to 4 p.m. Sign-up sheets are now posted in Rockwood Hall for parade participants, booth volunteers, and setup/takedown crews. Mission Board members invite you to

join in the Pride festivities as we honor, celebrate, and support our LGBTQ+ community. More announcements are coming soon.

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.