

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

WORSHIP FOR JUNE 14, 2020
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRELUDE Trio, Op. 19, No. 1 Josef Rheinberger

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come Holy Spirit, bring us together—

People of all ages, all different generations

Come, let us know who you are—

Balm for our wounds,

Healer of our brokenness.

Fill us with your wisdom and vision—

Let us worship God.

HYMN “For the Beauty of the Earth”

For the beauty of the earth

For the glory of the skies,

For the love which from our birth

Over and around us lies

Lord of all, to Thee we raise

This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the beauty of each hour

Of the day and of the night,

Hill and vale and tree and flower

Sun and moon and stars of light,

Lord of all, to Thee we raise

This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of ear and eye,

For the heart and mind’s delight,

For the mystic harmony

Linking sense to sound and sight,

Lord of all, to Thee we raise

This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of human love,

Brother, sister, parent, child,

Friends on earth and friends above

For all gentle thoughts and mild,

**Lord of all, to Thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.**

OPENING PRAYER

We ask you today, O God, to be with the young, with those who hold dreams, with those who have had dreams postponed or denied. Come as a dove and rest on them. Give them the comfort of your presence and the gentle energy of your Spirit. In these uncertain times, steady us all. Help us find the ground of our being in you, help us to step forward, however tentatively, invited across the threshold of the future where we will still find you. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

SOLO “See How the Galaxies Are Always There”
 Kevin Koepnick

(We can't print the lyrics here because of copyright restrictions. [Here's a link to the lyrics.](#))

SCRIPTURE LESSON Joel 2:25-28

PSALM 34:1-8

At all times I will bless the Lord,
whose praise shall ever be in my mouth.

**I will glory in the Lord;
let the humble hear and rejoice.**

Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord;
let us exalt the name of the Lord together.

**I sought the Lord, who answered me
and delivered me out of all my terror.**

Look upon the Lord and be radiant,
and let not your faces be ashamed.

**I called in my affliction and the Lord heard me
and saved me from all my troubles.**

The angel of the Lord encompasses the God-fearing,
and the Lord will deliver them.

**Taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are they who trust in the Lord!**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Romans 8:35-39

SERMON “Forward”

A TIME OF GRATITUDE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

HYYMN “God of the Ages, by Whose Hand”
**God of the ages, by whose hand
Through years long past our lives were led,**

**Give us new courage now to stand,
New faith to find the paths ahead.**

**You are the thought beyond all thought,
The gift beyond our utmost prayer;
No farthest reach where you are not,
No height but we may find you there.**

**Lift up our hearts and set us free
From wild alarms and trembling fears;
In your strong hand eternally
Rests the unfolding of the years.**

**Though there be dark, uncharted space
With worlds on worlds beyond our sight,
Still may we trust your love and grace
And wait your word, "Let there be light."**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE All Glory Be to God on High, BWV 715 - J.S. Bach

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Minister:	The Rev. Bill Lovin
Director of Children’s Programs:	The Rev. Ann Molsberry
Organist:	Bill Crouch
Choir Director	Kristin Ramseyer

Thanks to Kevin Koepnick for singing this morning.

WE WANT TO SEE YOU! We would like to have members and friends be a part of the greeting time during our online worship. Please send us a brief—10-30 second—video of you or your family waving, saying “Hi,” singing, or whatever you would like. Or send a photo. We’ll start including a few of these in the worship service each week as a way to strengthen our connections with each other. Send your greeting videos to https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UcrZ4ya9xFir39cG_1x-SCO6dVPBbV0B?usp=sharing

THANKS TO EVERYON WHO GAVE TO THE STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING. We have received \$530 for this special offering. Each year at Pentecost we receive the “Strengthen the Church” offering to strengthen 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. This offering 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. Contributions to this special offering can still be made. Your generous gift will help the UCC create vibrant church communities of extravagant welcome.

THIS MORNING WE RECOGNIZE THE GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS.

Each year we recognize the high school graduates at Congregational UCC. Usually members and friends are asked to share their thoughts and good wishes with the graduates in a book that is presented to them along with a Prairie Lights gift certificate. And there is cake.

This year, of course, is different. We still celebrate with these seniors, however. **We invite you to send your thoughts to Tom Mittman, the chair of the Diaconate, who will then compile these and present them to the graduates.** Information about each of the seniors and Tom’s email address were sent out to all members and friends. We will send this information out again in the coming week.

You will have to provide your own cake.

Stay in Place, Stay Alive, ORGANIZE: A Call for Moral Non-Cooperation.

The Mass Poor People’s Assembly & Moral March on Washington is going digital! On **June 20th**, the Poor People's Campaign will hold the largest digital and social media gathering of poor and low-wealth people, moral and religious leaders, advocates, and people of conscience in this nation’s history. A global pandemic is exposing even more the already existing crisis of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy and militarism, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism. [RSVP for June 20th here.](#)



RELAX

HAVE FUN

ENJOY LIFE

LIVE IN CHRIST

**The love of God has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.**

Good morning, I'm Bill Lovin, the minister at the Congregational United Church of Christ of Iowa City. Thank you for joining in our worship service today.

While we can't be together in person, I know other members would love to see you. So I invite you to send us a brief—10-30 second—video of you or your family waving, saying "Hi," singing, or whatever you would like. We're including these in the worship video each week as a way to strengthen our connections with each other. Send your greeting videos to the web address found in the announcements at the bottom of the bulletin.

Thanks to John Johnson and Mark Kenaston for recording, editing, and posting these services each week. Thanks, as well, to our organist, Bill Crouch. And thanks to Kevin Koepnick for singing today. As is our custom in the summer months, members of the congregation will be singing on some of the upcoming Sundays.

The Church Council has agreed to keep the church building closed to all activities and to most people through July. Please be in touch by calling the church office or through email.

After worship you can join us on the **Congregational UCC of Iowa City Group** Facebook page for a virtual coffee hour, starting at 10:55 on Sunday morning.

We are also holding our Zoom Coffee Hour on Sunday morning. The invitation went out on Saturday. If you have questions about either of these—please send me an email on Sunday morning.

Let us center our hearts, our minds, and our spirits. Let us worship God.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come Holy Spirit, bring us together—
People of all ages, all different generations
Come, let us know who you are-
Balm for our wounds,
Healer of our brokenness.
Fill us with your wisdom and vision-
Let us worship God.

HYMN “For the Beauty of the Earth”

OPENING PRAYER

We ask you today, O God, to be with the young, with those who hold dreams, with those who have had dreams postponed or denied. Come as a dove and rest on them. Give them the comfort of your presence and the gentle energy of your Spirit. In these uncertain times, steady us all. Help us find the ground of our being in you, help us to step forward, however tentatively, invited across the threshold of the future where we will still find you. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Each year we recognize and give thanks for the high school graduates in our congregation. This year we have four graduates—three from City High: Ellis, Ryan, and Temsegen, and one from West: Ed. Because this worship service is posted online and in order to maintain their privacy, I’m not going to say anything more about them right now, except to add that their accomplishments are many and significant and they are all planning to attend great universities or colleges in the

fall. More detailed information about each of the graduates has been sent out all our members. We'll have a chance to talk more about their lives now and their plans during the Zoom Coffee Hour and the Facebook Virtual Coffee Hour after worship today.

As part of our celebration and recognition each year, the Deacons give a Prairie Lights gift certificate to each graduating senior. These were mailed out last week. We also present them with a book containing the thoughts and good wishes of members. This year, of course, we are doing this online. You can still send your contributions to Tom Mittman, the chair of the Diaconate, or to the church office. Again, the information about this is included in the email that went out to members on Saturday.

And of course, our celebrations usually end with cake. But this year, as we've been saying, you have to provide your own cake. I hope you have some. And if you do, send us a picture or a video and we can share your celebration.

Once more, we give our deep congratulations to Ellis, Ryan, Temesgen, and Ed. And we keep you in our prayers as you enter this new phase of your lives. Go in peace to love and serve God.

PAUSE—KEVIN SINGS

God of light and life,
your Word is a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path.
Give us grace to hear what you say in faith and love,
that we may follow in the way of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The first lesson comes from Joel, chapter 2.

We know next to nothing about the prophet Joel himself. He seems to have been active around 400 to 350 B.C. The opening words of this book tell of a locust plague that wreaked havoc upon the country. Here Joel announces that after a time, the “northern army,” as he calls the locusts, will be removed and God will restore the land and the people.

Listen for the Word of God speaking to you.

PSALM 34:1-8

At all times I will bless the Lord,
whose praise shall ever be in my mouth.

I will glory in the Lord;

let the humble hear and rejoice.

Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord;
let us exalt the name of the Lord together.

I sought the Lord, who answered me

and delivered me out of all my terror.

Look upon the Lord and be radiant,
and let not your faces be ashamed.

**I called in my affliction and the Lord heard me
and saved me from all my troubles.**

The angel of the Lord encompasses the God-fearing,
and the Lord will deliver them.

**Taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are they who trust in the Lord!**

The second lesson comes from Romans, chapter 8.

In this section of the longest, weightiest, and most influential of Paul's correspondence, he is writing about the ground and the assurance of the Christian hope. After his bold affirmation that "in all things God works for good," Paul recalls those conditions that might make us question such a statement.

SERMON

Gratitude is an act of worship.

It invites us to consider what we love.

What do you love?

Feeding the hungry,

Sheltering the homeless,

Nurturing children and youth,

Empowering adults,

Music that inspires,

Efforts toward peace and justice.

All these are made possible through this congregation

because of our generous giving.

Your offering toward the mission and ministry of our congregation can be sent to the church at 30 N. Clinton Street in Iowa City, 52245. You can also give through the Donate button on the website.

As I've said before, if you are joining our worship and are the member of another congregation, please remember that they need your support.

I keep encouraging you to give generously even in these days, especially in these days, because your giving makes a difference and as we've found, generosity leads to generosity.

As Bill plays, consider what you love
and how you can show your gratitude.

One of the great joys and privileges that we have as a congregation is to share our concerns and celebrations with one another, to bear one another's burdens, and in all this to show love for one another. You are invited to use the book at the entrance to the sanctuary to add to requests for prayer.

As we come before you in prayer, O God,
Let us be at peace within ourselves.
Let us accept that we are profoundly loved.
Let us be aware that you are the source of being that is common to all of us
and to all living creatures.
Let us be filled with the presence of great compassion toward ourselves and
toward all living beings.

In resurrection light we look at this world that you created and called good. We see the marks of destruction and carelessness that we have left. Help us to be wise stewards of the earth, walking lightly and living in harmony with the created order. Spirit of Life, renew your whole creation and through our actions restore the air and land and water on which all things depend.

In resurrection light we look at all people and see each one created in your image. Help us to honor and respect each person, to work against the racism that infects our lives and our country. May our cities, states, and nation create structures and systems that bring justice and equality, that all people might live together, sharing abundant resources in the peace that we make possible through your empowering love. Especially today we pray for the Iowa City Mayor, Bruce Teague, and members of the City Council.

In resurrection light we look at the ongoing suffering caused by the pandemic and pray for those who are ill, those who provide medical care, and each of us who take measures that promote public health. Be with business owners as they reopen and employees as they resume contact with customers. Help us to make wise and caring decisions that protect the well-being of all.

We lift up to you the hungry and the poor in our city, our nation, our world, the outcasts so often forgotten or ignored by those in places of power and prestige. In our actions may we do justice and love kindness, and walk humbly with you.

While much in our prayers brings the heavy sorrow and deep wounds of the world before you, keep us from despair, O God. Help us always to be aware of the beauty that surrounds us, the strength that empowers us, the hope that calls us forward and the love that embraces us. Make our hearts glad and generous that we might continue to share the goodness we know.

And so as school years come to their conclusion, we pray for all graduates who have finished a course of study and now move on to something new. We celebrate with Ryan, Ellis, Ed, and Temesgen and their families as we ask that you keep them in your care. Take away anxiety, or confusion of purpose; and give them a confidence in the future you plan, where energies may be gathered up and given to neighbors in love. May they always know this place and this congregation as a home and a place of welcome when they return.

With a week now past and new days dawning, keep us mindful of your sure presence with us. Hear the prayers that we lift to you in silence, trusting in your love and mercy.

[Concerns/Celebrations/Silent Prayer]

Gracious God, in whom all hearts are glad and all souls rejoice: Show us the path of your presence, that we may follow it in hope and be filled with resurrection joy; through Jesus Christ, who teaches us to pray: "Our Father...