



*The Congregational Church*  
*United Church of Christ*

*30 N Clinton St.*  
*Iowa City, IA 52245*  
*319-337-4301*

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

WORSHIP FOR SEPTEMBER 20, 2026  
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*Welcome to Congregational UCC.  
We ask that you silence your cell phone as you enter the sanctuary.*

**LARGE PRINT BULLETINS ARE AVAILABLE. PLEASE ASK AN USHER.**

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Nathan Peters, Liturgist

PRELUDE “Prelude on the Hymn Tune *Wedlock*” Setting by Wilbur Held

CHORAL INTROIT

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 24)  
The earth is God’s and all that is in it,  
**the world, and those who live in it.**  
[Unison]  
**Let us worship God.**

\*HYMN 136 “Sovereign Lord of All Creation”  
**Sovereign Lord of all creation,  
ground of being, life and love;  
Height and depth beyond description,  
only life in you can prove:  
You are mortal life's dependence:  
thought, speech, sight are ours by grace;  
Yours is every hour's existence,  
sovereign Lord of time and space.**

**Jesus Christ, the One for others  
we, your people, make our prayer  
help us love, as sisters, brothers  
all whose burdens we can share  
where your name binds us together  
you, Lord Christ, will surely be  
where no selfishness can sever  
there you love the world may see.**

**Holy Spirit, rushing, bringing  
wind and flame of Pentecost  
fire our hearts afresh with yearning  
to regain what we have lost  
may your love unite our action  
nevermore to speak alone  
God, in us, abolish faction  
God, through us, your love make known.**

**\*OPENING PRAYER**

**Eternal God, we come into your presence bewildered by who we are and how we are to live. We come before you seeking the wisdom of your presence. You know us better than we know ourselves or can know each other. Let us see our lives and the lives of those around us set in relation to your greater life and all you desire for us.**

**You ask us to love you, our neighbors, and ourselves. Help us to trust that we can love because you love us first. Out of this strength, may we find the ways we can love our neighbors. May we forgive, hold nothing against another, and find the path through our world filled with your compassion. Amen.**

**\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#317, vs. 2)**

**Author of the new creation,  
Come, anoint us with Your power.  
Make our hearts Your habitation;  
With Your grace our spirits shower.  
Hear, O hear our supplication;  
Blessed Spirit, God of peace!  
Rest upon this congregation,  
With the fullness of Your grace.**

**ANTHEM                      “God is My Strong Salvation”                      Austin C. Lovelace**

**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                      “Trio, Op. 39, No. 4”                      Josef Renner

\*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

(The children are dismissed to Children's Church)

#### SCRIPTURE LESSON      Romans 12:7-9

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

#### PSALM 100

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;  
serve the Lord with gladness  
and come before God's presence with a song.

**Know this: The Lord alone is God;  
we belong to the Lord, who made us,  
we are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.**

Enter God's gates with thanksgiving; go into the holy courts with praise;  
give thanks and call upon the name of the Lord.

**For good is the Lord,  
whose mercy is everlasting;  
and whose faithfulness endures from age to age.**

#### SCRIPTURE LESSON      Matthew 22:15-22

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' They answered, 'The emperor's.' Then he said to them, 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

\*HYMN 400      "When We Are Living"

**When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,  
and when we're dying, it is in the Lord.  
Both in our living and in our dying,  
we belong to God; we belong to God.**

**Through all our living, we our fruits must give.  
Good works of service are for offering.**

**When we are giving, or when receiving,  
we belong to God; we belong to God.**

**'Mid times of sorrow and in times of pain,  
when sensing beauty or in love's embrace,  
whether we suffer, or sing rejoicing,  
we belong to God; we belong to God.**

**Across this wide world, we shall always find  
those who are crying with no peace of mind,  
but when we help them, or when we feed them,  
we belong to God; we belong to God.**

**SERMON      “We Belong to God”**

**\*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            “Postlude on the Hymn Tune *Foundation*”    Setting by Wilbur Held

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|                                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Minister:                        | The Rev. Bill Lovin |
| Director of Christian Education: | Hope Spragg         |
| Organist:                        | Bill Crouch         |
| Choir Director:                  | David Puderbaugh    |
| Children’s Choir Director:       | Rachel Burchett     |
| Office Manager:                  | Nancy LeaVesseur    |

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

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

**TODAY**

- |                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| ❖ Choir Rehearsal              | 9:00 am       |
| ❖ CE for Children and Adults   | 9:15 am       |
| ❖ Worship Service              | 10:15 am      |
| ❖ Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall | After Worship |
| ❖ Youth Group                  | 5:00 pm       |

**TUESDAY**

- |                                          |          |
|------------------------------------------|----------|
| ❖ <i>Reading Genesis</i> Group (Oaknoll) | 10:00 am |
| ❖ Gentle Yoga                            | 11:00 am |

**THURSDAY**

- |                             |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| ❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal | 6:30 pm |
|-----------------------------|---------|

**NEXT SUNDAY**

- |                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| ❖ Choir Rehearsal            | 9:00 am  |
| ❖ CE for Children and Adults | 9:15 am  |
| ❖ Worship Service            | 10:15 am |

- |                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| ❖ Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall | After Worship |
| ❖ Youth Group                  | 5:00 pm       |

**WEEKLY YOUTH GROUP** for grades 6-12 begins TODAY from 5-6:30! Join us for food, fellowship and fun. Dinner is provided and youth are encouraged to bring a friend!

**READING GENESIS:** Our group that has been reading and discussing Marilynne Robinson's *Reading Genesis* will resume in September for four final sessions. We'll meet at Oaknoll in room 4 B, 735 George St., from 10:00-11:30 on Tuesday mornings, September 22, 29 & October 6. The first session will cover pages 121 to 147. Everyone is welcome, even if you haven't been a part of earlier sessions. If you would like to be a part of this group, talk with Bill Lovin or Chuck Dayton or call the church office—319-337-4301.

**YOU ARE INVITED TO A FALL RETREAT DAY ON GRATITUDE ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10.** The retreat day will be based on the book *Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks* by Diana Butler Bass. Mark your calendars now for this time of music, art, time in nature and being together. The retreat day will be from 9-3 at the Unitarian Universalist Society in Coralville. Registration will be in Rockwood Hall on Sundays in September and a \$25 registration fee needs to accompany the registration form. Questions? Contact Marsha Lowe or Rebecca Weathrford. Watch the September newsletter and bulletins for more information.

**SHARE THE HARVEST:** Members and friends are invited to bring produce and flowers from their gardens to sell after worship each Sunday. And members and friends are invited to buy the abundant harvest. All proceeds go to the Food Pantry and CommUnity Crisis Center. So far this summer we have "harvested" \$593. Last year's total was \$1300. Eat your vegetables (they're good for you) and pick up some flowers (they're good for you, too) and contribute to a great cause. Thanks!

**GENTLE YOGA** every Tuesday at 11 AM! 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 entirely to the Immigrant Welcome Network. We are pleased to announce we sent this year's first six month of donations totaling \$1045! Thank you to all who participate. If you'd like to join us, call the office to register.

**THE SHELTER HOUSE BBQ BASH IS THIS COMING FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25:** Enjoy an evening of delicious food from Pop's BBQ, foot-stomping music by Marc and Brandi Janssen, refreshing drinks from Big Grove, and fun with friends and family. Support Shelter House's life-saving work in the community by purchasing your ticket today! Tickets are on sale now at [www.shelterhouseiowa.org/bbq-bash/](http://www.shelterhouseiowa.org/bbq-bash/).

**TIME TO THINK WINTER:** The annual Consultation of Religious Congregations Warm Weather Clothing Distribution will be held in October. Your new or gently used/clean items will benefit our neighbors who are in need of **warm** winter wear. The following items are needed in infant, child, youth & adult sizes: Coats, snowpants, hats, gloves & mittens, scarves, boots / winter shoes, warm socks, sweatpants, sweatshirts, vests & sweaters, long underwear & warm pants/jeans. Donations can be dropped off at The River Community Church, 3001 Muscatine Ave, Iowa City at 1-4 pm on Sunday 10/11, 9 am-6 pm on Monday 10/12, & 9 am-6 pm on

Tuesday 10/13. Please use the marked driveway on Muscatine Ave. & enter by the Gymnasium door on the southeast side of the building.

**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.

**SENDING USED MEDICINE BOTTLES TO AFRICA FOR REUSE IN CLINICS—IMPORTANT REQUEST:**

1. Please donate only **orange** bottles; other colors should be recycled. Caps can be any color.
2. Bottles must have labels and all adhesive removed. Sticky bottles or bottles with residue should be recycled. I can't use them. If this is difficult for you, consider finding a partner who can help you prep the bottles.
3. Bottles should be washed in warm, soapy water. We don't want to inflict harm on individuals who could come into contact with foreign medicine.

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 our congregation. For more information contact donna-hirst@uiowa.edu. She will pick up bottles on Sundays. Thank you for your assistance.

**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.