



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 27, 2026
EIGHTEENTH 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

PRELUDE “Romance” William Lloyd Webber

CHORAL INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 46)

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should quake,
though the mountains tremble in the heart of the sea,**

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

**God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.**

“Be still, and know that I am God!” says the Lord.

**“ I am exalted among the nations;
I am exalted in the earth.”**

[Unison]

Let us worship God.

*HYMN 289 “O God of Every Nation”

**O God of every nation,
of every race and land,
redeem the whole creation
with your almighty hand.
Where hate and fear divide us
and bitter threats are hurled,
in love and mercy guide us,
and heal our strife torn world.**

**From lust for wealth and power,
from scorn for truth and right,
from trust in bombs that shower
destruction through the night,
from pride of race and station
and blindness to your way,
deliver every nation.
Eternal God, we pray.**

**Lord, strengthen those who labor
that we may find release
from fear of rattling saber,
from dread of war's increase.
When hope and courage falter,
your still small voice be heard;
with faith that none can alter,
your servants undergird.**

**Keep bright in us the vision
of days when war shall cease,
when hatred and division
give way to love and peace,
till dawns the morning glorious
when truth and justice reign,
and Christ shall rule victorious
o'er all the world's domain.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

**We come to you this day, O God, as we are.
We are disturbed by the news.
We are frustrated by all that is left undone.
We are afraid of what the coming days will bring.
We are worried about people nearby and people far away.**

**We come into your presence seeking your light, your peace, and your grace. We ask you to
clear our minds so we may think
calm our hearts so we may rest
and refresh our spirits so we may meet the challenges of this coming week.**

**As we worship, grant us a sense of your love and strength that will sustain us this day and
in the days ahead. Amen.**

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (#261, vs. 1 & 2)**

**God of compassion, in mercy befriend us;
Giver of grace for our needs all availing,**

**Wisdom and strength for each day you will send us,
Patience untiring and courage unfailing.**

**Wandering and lost, you have sought us and found us,
Stilled our rude hearts with your Word of consoling;
Wrap now your peace, like a mantle, around us,
Guarding our thoughts and our passions controlling.**

ANTHEM “Sing to the Lord a New Song” Robert Lau

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. 49, No. 10 Josef Rheinberger

*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 Leviticus 19:33-34

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

*PSALM HYMN 191 “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength” (Psalm 46)

**God is our refuge and our strength,
Our ever-present aid,
And therefore, though the earth remove,
We will not be afraid;**

**Though hills amid the seas be cast,
Though foaming waters roar,**

**Yea, though the mighty billows shake
The mountains on the shore.**

**Where God abides a river flows;
That city will rejoice.
But nations fear and kingdoms shake
Before God's thundering voice.**

**Since God is in the midst of it,
The city walls shall stand,
Secure and safe with God's sure help,
When trouble is at hand.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 20:1-16

'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'

*HYMN 413 "All Who Love and Serve Your City"

**All who love and serve your city,
all who bear its daily stress,
all who cry for peace and justice,
all who curse and all who bless:**

**In your day of wealth and plenty,
wasted work and wasted play,
call to mind the word of Jesus,
"You must work while it is day."**

**For all days are days of judgment,
and the Lord is waiting still,**

**drawing near a world that spurns him,
offering peace from Calvary's hill.**

**Risen Lord, shall yet the city
be the city of despair?
Come today, our judge, our glory.
Be its name "The Lord is there!"**

SERMON "Belonging in America"

*HYMN (insert) "You Are Salt for the Earth, O People" (vs. 1-3)
**You are salt for the earth, O people, salt for the kingdom of God!
Share the flavor of life, O people: life in the kingdom of God!**

**Refrain:
Bring forth the kingdom of mercy, bring forth the kingdom of peace.
Bring forth the kingdom of justice, bring forth the city of God!**

**You are a light on the hill, O people, light for the city of God!
Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the kingdom of God!**

Refrain:

**You are a seed of the Word, O people, bring forth the kingdom of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the kingdom of God!**

Refrain:

*BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

POSTLUDE "Maestoso" Andrew Fletcher

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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

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| ❖ 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

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

THURSDAY

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| ❖ Prairie Piffari Rehearsal | 6:30 pm |
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NEXT SUNDAY

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
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| ❖ Youth Group | 5:00 pm |

THIS AFTERNOON JOHN REITZ'S RENAISSANCE WIND BAND, THE PRAIRIE PIFFARI, will be playing a free, short outdoor concert of sixteenth century music as part of the Front Porch Concerts on the East Side. Bring your chair or sit on the grass.

When: Sunday, September 27, from 2 to 2:30 pm.

Where: 701 Grant Street in the Longfellow School area

Parking: On the street or at Longfellow

For more information and a full schedule of all the groups during the afternoon, go to "frontporchmusicfestival.com." and click on "schedule."

WEEKLY YOUTH GROUP for grades 6-12 this afternoon 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 meet at Oaknoll in room 4 B, 735 George St., from 10:00-11:30 on

Tuesday mornings, September 29 & October 6. 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 and a \$25 registration fee needs to accompany the registration form. Scholarships are available. Questions? Contact Marsha Lowe or Rebecca Weathrford.

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.

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.