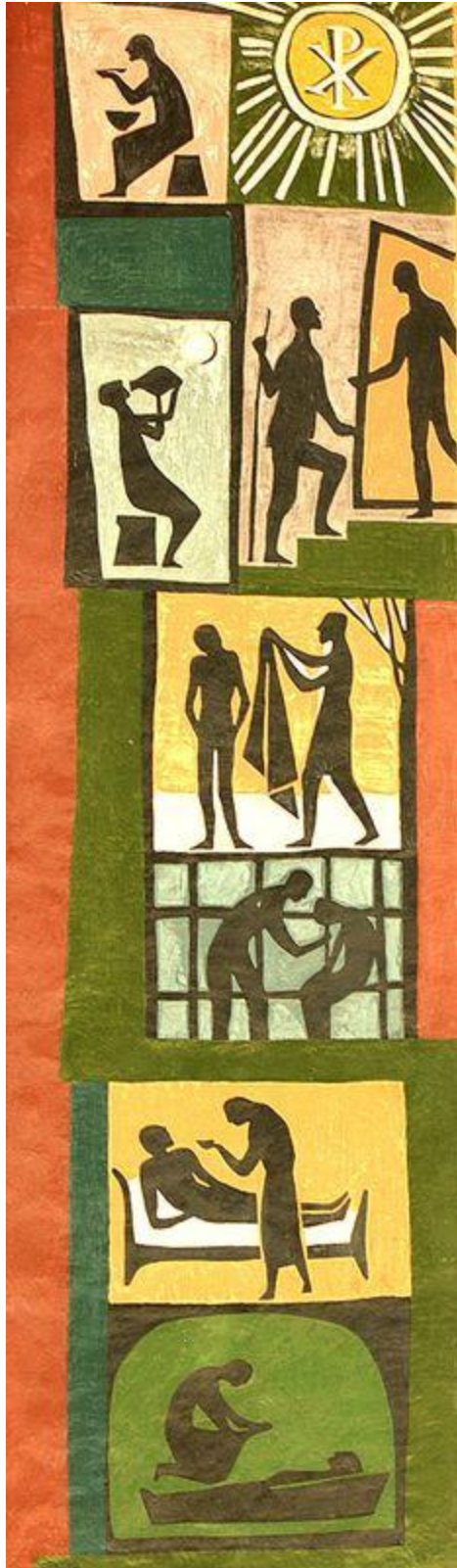




*The Congregational
Church
United Church of Christ*

*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 6, 2026
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Today is a communion Sunday. If you are joining us online, before the worship service you are invited to assemble what you will eat and what you will drink. It can be bread and grape juice or wine or something as simple as a cracker or rice cake and water for use in our worship.

Welcome to Congregational UCC. We ask that you silence your cell phone as you enter the sanctuary. Please use the time during the prelude to quietly prepare for worship.

LARGE PRINT BULLETINS ARE AVAILABLE. PLEASE ASK AN USHER.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ann Molsberry, Liturgist

PRELUDE “*Was wird es doch des Wunders noch*” Ludwig Senfl (c. 1486-1543)
Prairie Piffari

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Come, all who labor and are weighed down with responsibility, uncertainty, and worry.

We come with burdens too heavy to bear alone.

Come to the One who offers rest to your souls,
values your daily labor, and renews your strength.

**We gather to worship the Creator who works with us
and calls us to justice, love, and peace.**

[Unison]

Let us worship God together!

*HYMN (insert) “Awake, Awake, to Love and Work” (vs. 1 & 2)

Awake, awake to love and work!

The lark is in the sky;

The fields are wet with diamond dew;

The worlds awake to cry

Their blessings on the Lord of life,

As He goes meekly by.

Come, let thy voice be one with theirs,

Shout with their shout of praise;

See how the giant sun soars up,

Great lord of years and days!

So let the love of Jesus come

And set thy soul ablaze.

***OPENING PRAYER**

Creator God, out of your abundance you have given us skills and time to use both for our own good and for the good of the world.

By your grace, help us to set aside our worries about tomorrow so that we might enter into your rest.

In your compassion, strengthen us to work for those things that satisfy so that we might enjoy the fruit of our labor.

Nourish us with the bread of life and the cup of wholeness. Give us the confidence that in you our labor is not in vain; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (Tune: MORNING SONG)**

**The soundless whisper of your voice, O God, your presence near,
for these my longing spirit waits as for the morning clear,
as those who watch throughout the night till morning shall appear.**

**Because your love is steadfast, God, on you our hope relies;
you will redeem your faithful ones from all iniquities
and turn to songs of thanks and praise our sorrows and our sighs.**

ANTHEM

**“*Mon Seul*”
Prairie Piffari**

Nicolas Gombert (c. 1495-1560)

SERVICE OF GIVING

Invitation

Offertory

**“Song No. 66”
Prairie Piffari**

Philippe Rogier, *et al.* (1590s)

***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**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Jeremiah 12:1-5

**You will be in the right, O Lord,
when I lay charges against you;
but let me put my case to you.**

**Why does the way of the guilty prosper?
Why do all who are treacherous thrive?**

**You plant them, and they take root;
they grow and bring forth fruit;
you are near in their mouths
yet far from their hearts.**

But you, O Lord, know me;

You see me and test me—my heart is with you.
Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter,
and set them apart for the day of slaughter.
How long will the land mourn,
and the grass of every field wither?
For the wickedness of those who live in it
the animals and the birds are swept away,
and because people said, ‘He is blind to our ways.’*

If you have raced with foot-runners and they have wearied you,
how will you compete with horses?
And if in a safe land you fall down,
how will you fare in the thickets of the Jordan?

PSALM 55

Hear my prayer, O God;
do not hide yourself from my petition.
**Listen to me and answer me;
I have no peace, because of my cares.**
I am shaken by the noise of the enemy
and by the pressure of the wicked;
**My heart quakes within me,
and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.**
Fear and trembling have come over me,
and horror overwhelms me.
**And I said, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.**
I would flee to a far-off place
and make my lodging in the wilderness.
**I would hasten to escape
from the stormy wind and tempest.”**
But I will call upon God,
and the Lord will deliver me.
**In the evening, in the morning, and at noonday,
I will complain and lament,
and the Lord will hear my voice.**
God will bring me safely back from the battle waged against me;
for there are many who fight me.
**Cast your burden upon the Lord,
who will sustain you;
the Lord will never let the righteous stumble**

SCRIPTURE LESSON II Thessalonians 3:6-13

Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you,

and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

SERMON “The Real and the Artificial—Part IV: Artificial Intelligence and Real Life”

THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION

HYMN 305 “Jeus, Our Divine Companion”

**Jesus, our divine companion,
By your lowly human birth
You have come to join the workers,
Burden bearers of the earth.
You, the carpenter of Nazareth,
Toiling for your daily food,
By your patience and your courage,
You have taught us work is good.**

**Where the many toil together,
There you are among your own;
Where the solitary labor,
You are there with them alone.
You, the peace that passes knowledge,
Dwelling in the daily strife;
You, the Bread of heaven are broken
In the sacrament of life.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

REMEMBRANCE

**This morsel of bread becomes the bread of life when we share it together.
A sip from each cup when we drink together connects us to the living vine.
May the promise of life made new dwell among us.**

We remember that on the night of his arrest...

WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND SHARING OF ELEMENTS

(Communion will be served in the pews today. Please receive the bread or cup as they are offered to you by a deacon. Hold it until all have been served, and we will eat and drink together at the pastor's guidance. We serve grape juice, not wine. Gluten-free wafers are on the trays with the

bread. In the Congregational United Church of Christ, everyone is invited to the table, regardless of church membership or denominational affiliation.)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Loving God, we give you thanks that you have nourished us at this table. Send us out to our work with tender hearts and strong spirits. Help us to work out the problems that have perplexed us and to serve the people we encounter. May we see our work as a part of your great purpose and find significance in what we do. May we bring our creativity, energy, intelligence, imagination, and love to all our tasks and so give our hearts, minds, and wills to your glory; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

***HYMN 419 “How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord”**

**How clear is our vocation, Lord,
When once we heed Your call:
To live according to Your word,
And daily learn, refreshed, restored,
That You are Lord of all
And will not let us fall.**

**But if, forgetful, we should find
Your yoke is hard to bear,
If worldly pressures fray the mind
And love itself cannot unwind
Its tangled skein of care:
Our inward life repair.**

**We mark Your saints, how they became
In hindrances more sure,
Whose joyful virtues put to shame
The casual way we wear Your name,
And by our faults obscure
Your power to cleanse and cure.**

**In what You give us, Lord, to do,
Together or alone,
In old routines or ventures new,
May we not cease to look to You--
The cross You hung upon--
All You endeavored done.**

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE “Zucht, Ehr und Lob” Paul Hofhaimer (1459-1537)
Prairie Piffari

Cover Art: “Seven Works of Mercy,” by Alexander Rahm, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt University Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

<https://act.library.vanderbilt.edu/artworks/57787> [retrieved September 4, 2026]. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Diakoniegemaelde_Neuendettelsau.jpg. Used with permission. Diakonie Neuendettelsau is one of today's major independent Christian institutions for social welfare work in Germany. Founded in 1854, its motto is "...because we love life."

Congregational Response: "In Deep Despair I Cry to You (Psalm 130)" Words - ©1994 Selah Publishing Co., Inc. Contributors: Joy F Patterson. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-715458. All rights reserved.

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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.

THE PRAIRIE PIFFARI is a Renaissance Wind Band with Aaron Burmeister, Dennis Pedde, and John Reitz, cornetti; Russ Lenth, tenor cornetto; Charles Koster, curtal (dulcian), Nathan Platte and Mark Rheume, sackbuts. Their music for this Sunday features five- to seven-part wind band music from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They offer the music in this worship service as thanks for being able to practice regularly in the Sanctuary.

TODAY

- ❖ Worship Service 10:15 am
- ❖ Coffee Hour in Rockwood Hall After Worship

MONDAY

- ❖ CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY

TUESDAY

- ❖ Gentle Yoga 11:00 am

WEDNESDAY

- ❖ Staff Meeting 11:00 am
- ❖ Choir Roundup 7:00 pm

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

PLEASE NOTE: The Church Office closed tomorrow, Monday, September 7, in celebration of Labor Day.

CHOIR ROUND-UP— WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, AT 7:00 PM: Join us for our first gathering of the new season. We will meet in the sanctuary for rehearsal then adjourn to Rockwood Hall for refreshments as we celebrate this new beginning.

All are invited to our gathering—current members, former members, and those who are interested in joining for the first time! The Congregational UCC choir is a wonderful group of people who are dedicated to making great music and enjoying the community that a choir provides. The choir's first Sunday back will be SEPTEMBER 13. We will meet at 9 AM sharp in the sanctuary and follow that with the 10:15 worship service.

READY, SET, SHINE! SUNDAY IS SEPTEMBER 13! Christian education will celebrate our "back-to-Sunday School" with a combined breakfast, games and arts and crafts at 9:15. All pre-school-high school students are welcome. Kindergarten-8th graders will meet their Sunday School teachers. *High schoolers are encouraged to attend adult ed or inquire about helping with the younger classrooms.

WEEKLY YOUTH GROUP for grades 6-12 begins September 13 from 5-6:30! Join us for food, fellowship and fun. Dinner is provided and youth are encouraged to bring a friend!

OUR NEXT HOPE LODGE DINNER will be Monday, September 14 at 6:00 p.m. There is a signup sheet in Rockwood Hall for those who would like to participate.

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.

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 four Tuesday mornings, September 15, 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.

WOMEN'S LUNCH—SEPTEMBER 17 at 11:45 am, will meet at Oaknoll . Please call or Text Martha Ann Crawford at 319-855-8340 to reserve a seat at the table prior to September 15th. Parking will be available on George St.

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.

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