

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are invited and welcome here."



URBANDALE UNITED  
CHURCH OF CHRIST  
a just world for all

A Just Peace and Open and Affirming Congregation

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**December 31, 2023**

**10:00 a.m.**

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## First Sunday after Christmas

*The liturgical color for the Christmas season is white, symbolizing purity, light, and celebration.*

*Child care is available in the upper education wing for children ages birth through 7 years. Please escort your child(ren) to the Child Care Room and sign them in and out with child care staff.*

PRELUDE

“In dulci Jubilo”

Wilbur Held

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### THRESHOLD

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#### GREETING

“Beloved, in the tapestry of our shared humanity, let love be the thread that binds us together, and unity be the masterpiece we create. In a world marked by war and division, let the transformative power of love be our guiding light, stitching the fabric of compassion, understanding, and peace.” *- Chat-GPT, Generative AI*

- ❖ *This symbol invites the congregation to stand in body or spirit. **Bold** type indicates a unison response. NCH refers to the New Century Hymnal; SPP refers to Sing! Prayer and Praise songbook.*

#### ❖ CALL TO PRAYER AND PRAISE

One: In prayer, let us seek justice, lifting up the cries of the oppressed.

**Many: Make us instruments of justice and mercy.**

One: Lord, mend the wounds that divide us, and grant us the strength to bridge the gaps that separate us.

**Many: Unite us in fellowship and generosity.**

One: Lord, may unity be the melody that binds us together as one.

**Many: Let us strive to be the agents of unity in a world often marked by division.**

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### ENTER

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#### ❖ OPENING SONG

“Many Are The Lightbeams”

NCH 163

#### TAKING STOCK OF OUR BLESSINGS AND RESOURCES

As we gather in the spirit of celebration during this Christmas season, our hearts are filled with gratitude and joy. We come before you, recognizing that every blessing and resource we possess is a gift from your loving hand. In this moment, we pause to take stock of the abundant blessings you have bestowed upon us.

#### PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

In this time of reflection, we acknowledge the talents and resources you have entrusted to each one of us. As we celebrate, may we be mindful of our responsibility to use these gifts wisely and for the greater good. Open our eyes to

the needs of those around us, that we may share our blessings generously and be instruments of your love in the world. Amen

RESPONSE

“Halleluja”

NCH 236

TIME FOR THE YOUNG IN SPIRIT

*While we are singing, the young in spirit are invited to come forward for conversation with Mr. Walters.*

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### ENGAGE

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CAROL SING

Congregational Choice

SACRED READINGS

*The Inclusive Bible and Other Sources*

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

(Christianity)

<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup> Even so, the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Bhagavad Gita 4:13-14

(Hinduism)

<sup>13</sup> According to the three modes of material nature and the work ascribed to them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me. And although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable. <sup>14</sup> There is no work that affects Me; nor do I aspire for the fruits of action. One who understands this truth about Me also does not become entangled in the fruitive reactions of work.

Surah Al-Hujurat Chapter 49, Verse 13

(Islam)

<sup>13</sup> O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

Dhammapada Verse 5

(Buddhism)

<sup>5</sup> Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world.  
By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased.  
This is a law eternal.

Leviticus 19:18

(Judaism & Christianity)

<sup>18</sup> Do not seek revenge or hold a grudge against any one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am YHWH.

SERMON

“A Chat with AI”

Joe Walters & ChatGPT

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## RESPOND

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PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

**O God, our heavenly Father and Mother, may your name be sacred to us. May your realm become a reality for us. May your desires be fulfilled among us as they are in your courts. Give us today what we need for life. And forgive us for our wrongs as we forgive those who wrong us. Guide us in tempting situations, and protect us from the power of evil. For the realm that is coming, the power that is growing, and the glory that is building, all belong to you forever. Amen.**

❖ CLOSING HYMN                      "In Christ There is No East or West"                      NCH 394

❖ BLESSING

POSTLUDE                      "In dulci jubilo" (Fantasia)                      J. S. Bach

*You are invited to conclude your time of worship by remaining in your seat and listening to the Postlude.*

## **THIS WEEK AT UCC**

### Sunday, December 31

- 9:00 am Matu Sunday School
- 10:00 am Worship
- 12:30 pm Light Mission  
Pentecostal Church
- 1:00 pm Matu Bethel Church

### Monday, January 1

- New Year's Day
- Office Closed

### Tuesday, January 2

- 11:00 am Staff Meeting
- 5:30 pm Parenting Way

### Wednesday, January 3

- 6:00 pm Worship Team
- 6:00 pm Handbells
- 6:30 pm Adult Choir
- 7:30 pm AA

### Saturday, January 6

- 9:00 am Bow Tie Boyz
- 2:00 pm Light Mission  
Pentecostal Church
- 6:00 pm Matu Bethel Church

## **UPCOMING EVENTS AT UCC**

### Sunday, January 7

- 9:00 am Adult Spiritual  
Formation
- 9:00 am Church School
- 4:00 pm Search Team

### Monday, January 8

- 6:00 pm Grief Support Group

### Sunday, January 14

- 11:00 am Informational Budget  
Meeting

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **COVID**

Iowa COVID transmission is currently at a high rate. Masks are available in the Narthex if you would like to use one. Feel free to bring/wear your own mask, too.

## **CHURCH SCHOOL & ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

There will be no church school or Adult Spiritual Formation today. Both will resume on January 7 at 9 am.

## **REFUGEE MINISTRY**

USCRI, our refugee resettlement partner, has informed us that they have received **65 new clients**. Our congregation continues to be very generous with in-kind donations and monetary donations. Thank you so much. With so many new clients arriving, USCRI is still in need of **kids and adult winter coats, blankets/comforters, towels, and skillets/pans**. If you are able to clean out your linen closets and cupboards again or to make a monetary donation to the church's Refugee Ministry, it would be very much appreciated.

## **GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP**

8 Sessions, one per week beginning Monday, Jan. 08, 2024.

This support groups offer a safe, evidence-based environment for griever to take effective and lasting action, no matter the type of loss experienced. These groups are led by Grief Recovery Method Specialists, trained and certified by the Grief Recovery Institute.



The Grief Recovery Method®

## **Noisy Offering Collection First Sundays**

Don't forget to bring your coins and paper money too for our children to collect during worship on January 7. This is a chance to bring back the movement and joy of giving a little extra. This offering will support Heifer Project. Our children will collect the first Sunday of the month through the program year.

## **BUDGET MEETINGS**

Come learn about our 2024 budget on Jan. 14, 2024. Then attend the Congregational Budget Meeting to vote on the 2024 budget on Jan. 28, 2024.

## **ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

Would you like to be known better and get to know other people better in our congregation? Starting January 7 (and meeting each second Sunday of the month), ASF is hosting “Questions and Conversations.”

Jan. 7 — Sunday Questions and Conversations

Come for a time of fellowship, coffee, and conversation. You are invited to bring any leftover sweet treats from the holidays and come to reconnect with your church family after the holidays. There is no leader or topic for Sunday, Jan. 7.

Jan 14 -- 2nd Sunday Questions and Conversations

Believing that better questions generate better conversations, interesting questions will be suggested as an invitation to dialog. Always Coffee and Tea; sometimes goodies. Maryellen Knowles.

### **UUCC's Inclement Weather Policy**

The church office will be closed on any day that either Urbandale or Des Moines Public Schools are closed as a result of inclement weather. On those days, all church programming will be canceled. If classes are dismissed early, all events at the church will also be canceled.

On Sunday mornings with inclement weather, decision will be made by 7:30 am. The recorded message on the church phone system will be changed. (Press 3 for cancellations.) Local television stations will be notified to publicize the announcement and the information will also be posted on UUCC's Facebook page

**SERVING AT URBANDALE UCC THIS SUNDAY**

**Opening/Closing the Church:** Bob Shoemaker

**Liturgist:** Anne Clark      **Child Care Volunteer:** Susan Joynt

**Worship Team Coordinator:** Michelle Thies

**A/V Booth:** Ryan Nussbaum (Video) and Scott Davis (Audio)

**URBANDALE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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[www.urbucc.org](http://www.urbucc.org)

[www.facebook.com/UrbandaleUCC](http://www.facebook.com/UrbandaleUCC)

*"We welcome into this community of faith and affirm the participation in all aspects of church life, persons of every age, race, gender identity and expression, nationality, ability, and sexual orientation. We will continue our efforts toward inclusiveness and stand against all forms of discrimination. We will empower ourselves, our children, and one another to be fully present in the world, living in Christ's image and striving for justice and peace."*

**Staff**

The Rev. Amy Galarowicz, Ministry Program Coordinator

[amy.galarowicz@urbucc.org](mailto:amy.galarowicz@urbucc.org)

Steven Linn, Music Program Director

[steven.linn@urbucc.org](mailto:steven.linn@urbucc.org)

Bobby Stinnett, M.M., Organist,

[bobby.stinnett@urbucc.org](mailto:bobby.stinnett@urbucc.org)

Children/Youth Choirs and Handbell Director

[staff@urbucc.org](mailto:staff@urbucc.org)

Abigail Sinclair, Communications & Office Coordinator

Jamie Jones, Nursery staff

Sadmir & Umihana Omerhodzic, Custodians

[sadmir.omerhodzic@urbucc.org](mailto:sadmir.omerhodzic@urbucc.org)

**Covenant Ministers**

Rev. Kendy Miller

Tri-Conference Ministries UCC

Rev. Lisa Griffith Tierney

Immanuel

**Ministry Leaders**

**Caregiving Ministries:**

Caregivers, Homebound.....Rachel Siegel

[caregivers.1@urbucc.org](mailto:caregivers.1@urbucc.org)

Listening Room .....Maryellen Knowles

[listening.room@urbucc.org](mailto:listening.room@urbucc.org)

Prayer Circle

[prayer.circle@urbucc.org](mailto:prayer.circle@urbucc.org)

Prayer Shawl Ministry

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**Leadership Team:**

Moderator .....Jennifer Gardner

[moderator@urbucc.org](mailto:moderator@urbucc.org)

Vice-Moderator .....Wesley Keeler

[vicemoderator@urbucc.org](mailto:vicemoderator@urbucc.org)

Treasurer .....Jim Nervig

[treasurer@urbucc.org](mailto:treasurer@urbucc.org)

Financial Secretary.....Steve Looney

[financial@urbucc.org](mailto:financial@urbucc.org)

Recording Secretary.....Taena Fowler

[uuccrecorder@urbucc.org](mailto:uuccrecorder@urbucc.org)

At Large Members: Bob Brandhorst, Sandy Hecht, Becky Swift, Kris Thompson

**Other Contacts:**

Building & Grounds

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Social Media Team

[social.media@urbucc.org](mailto:social.media@urbucc.org)

Membership .....Jon Greising

[membership.team@urbucc.org](mailto:membership.team@urbucc.org)

*For pastoral care, please contact the Rev. Amy Galarowicz or the church office.*