



THIS SUNDAY

August 3, 2025 10:30AM
Worship Service

SERMON TITLE

Joy of a Renewed Life

SCRIPTURE TEXT

Colossians 3:1-11 & Luke 12:13-21

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH LAST
SUNDAY'S SERVICE](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday July 30

6:15 PM Dinner
6:45 PM The Gathering

Sunday August 3

9:30 AM ONA Chapel Chat

Tuesday August 5

7:30 AM Men's Breakfast
6:30 National Night Out

Saturday August 9

9:00 AM Women's Breakfast

JULY 27 Sermon Recap

True joy comes not from what we do, but from who we belong to. In Christ, we are made fully alive—set free, filled with the Spirit, and rooted in gratitude. This “alive life” is where real joy begins.

Reflection Question Where is God inviting you to move from surviving to fully living?

A Note of Sympathy

We extend our condolences to Rich Thuesen and his family on the passing of his older sister, Marcia Williams, who died this week in Cresco, Iowa. While many in our congregation may not have known Marcia personally, words of comfort and care are always appreciated. Please keep Rich and his loved ones in your prayers during this time.

Future of the Church Meeting

This past Sunday, we had a great conversation about the direction our church is headed. One element is that each of us has gifts to share—and there's a place for everyone to get involved.

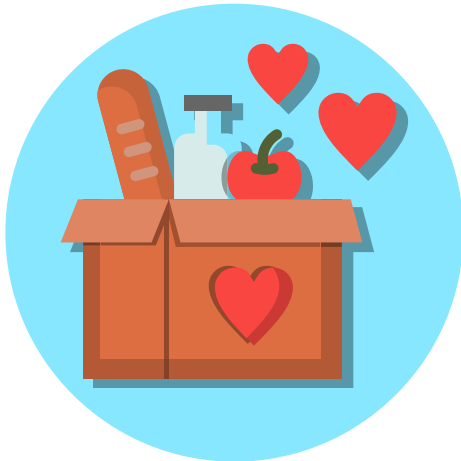
If you haven't yet, please take a moment to fill out the Serving Our Church form. You can grab a paper copy at church or fill it out online here:

<https://forms.gle/GBoR112SVS7qvcvN6>

Let's keep building a church where everyone has a role and every gift makes a difference!



July 30, 2025



Pantry Update

Thanks to your generous support, a delivery was made last week—and someone had food when they needed it.

New drop-off location: Donation Station across from the elevator.

Most-needed items: peanut butter, canned meats/meals, protein bars (no chocolate), canned beans, and cereal. Thank you for caring for our neighbors!

LET'S PARTY

Join us for **National Night Out** on Tuesday, August 5 at 6:30 PM at Washington Park—right across the street from church!

It's a great chance to connect with our neighbors and show we're here, present, and ready to listen.



A BIBLICAL WELCOME

As we talk about what it means to be Open and Affirming, it's worth remembering that this isn't a new idea we've added to the faith — it's deeply rooted in the story of Scripture.

Throughout the Bible, God's love shows up on the margins. Jesus welcomed the outcast, spoke with the excluded, healed those others called "unclean," and broke bread with those whom religion had left behind. His table was wide. His grace was for all.

Being ONA is a way of living into that welcome. It's a declaration that love and justice are not optional in the church: they are central. It's a commitment to follow Jesus by making sure every person knows they are seen, heard, and valued at God's table.

Have questions? Submit them through the question box or the online form here: <https://forms.gle/rXmGKAzuSCzzqnez8>.

And please consider joining one of our chapel conversations before worship on August 3 or 31 at 9:30am.



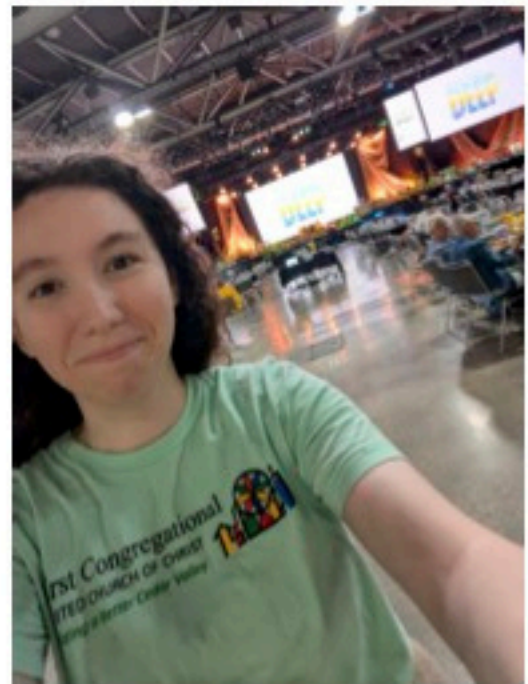
Let's keep listening for God's voice, Pastor Brandyn

UCC GENERAL SYNOD 35

I was once again grateful to be able to attend the church-wide gathering of the UCC at the beginning of July! While the previous two Synods (2021 and 2023) I was a voting delegate for the Iowa Conference, this Synod I participated as a delegate for the UCC Mental Health Network (MHN), of which I serve as the vice chair. Over 600 clergy and laity in total participated as voting delegates, representing their regional conferences or other groups within the UCC. Not everyone that goes to Synod is a delegate though, and there were close to 2,000 attendees as a whole who attended Synod's worship services, workshops, exhibitors booths, participated in service projects, and networked with other UCC-ers.

Aside from the many opportunities to gather and engage as faith-filled people doing the work of the Church all over the country (and world!), one of the primary reasons for General Synod is to "discern resolutions of witness, church structure, and function." You can read about the variety of resolutions, addresses, and other joyous moments from Synod on its news feed (generalsynod.org/news-listings), but I wanted to share a few highlights with our church specifically:

- A resolution was passed denouncing the federal government's immigration rollbacks and affirming its support of immigrants, refugees, pacific island communities, and antiracist work, a response that has already garnered national attention.
- We celebrated 25 years of Our Whole Lives (OWL), which is a joint effort with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) that provides faith-based and comprehensive sexuality education across the lifespan. Our own Conference Minister, Rev. Roberto Ochoa, highlighted the significance of the OWL curriculums, particularly in STAR (Small Town and Rural) churches.
- Speaking of STAR churches: a resolution recognizing the STAR Coalition of the UCC as a formal group was passed. Our neighbor Pastor Sue Weier of Cedar Falls UCC has played a big role in advocating for STAR churches and for the official recognition of the STAR Coalition.
- I had the absolutely *awesome* privilege of helping to write one of the approved resolutions myself, and was the official "proponent" that spoke on behalf of the resolution. Put forth by the MHN, it centered on the importance of paying attention to how we talk about mental health: recognizing the historical harm done by the words we use and emphasizing the importance of adapting our language as it continually evolves.
- The next General Synod will be in late July of 2028 in Cleveland. I hope you will consider going and connecting with our wider denomination, or even serving as a delegate for our Conference! Let me know if the opportunity interests you, and I can make sure to get you in contact with the appropriate people 😊



-Abbie Chronister

PS: I of *course* had to proudly wear my FCUCC shirt on one of the days of Synod!