If you're new to UCC, or to Churches of Christ, welcome! We want you to feel at home.

BE OUR guest

Worship Practices

Why do we sing a cappella? Churches of Christ have a rich tradition of singing without musical instruments. This enables us to focus on the words of the songs and enjoy the harmony of our voices. Some sing various musical parts (as projected on the side screens). If this seems confusing, just follow along with the song leader (words projected in the middle).

Why do we stand when reading scripture? We do this as a sign of respect to distinguish the Word of God from any other words that are spoken during worship. For the Lord's Supper reading, we sit to signify sitting at the table with Jesus.

What is the Lord's Supper, and who takes it? The Lord's Supper (communion) originated when Jesus ate with his disciples before his crucifixion. During that meal, Jesus took bread and broke it for his disciples to eat. He also took cup of wine and shared it with them. Jesus said to them, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." When the communion trays are passed, you will have the opportunity to eat the bread and drink the wine (grape juice), just as Jesus and his disciples did. We welcome all who wish to remember and celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to participate.

Do I need to give during the offering? The offering is collected from UCC members to support the ministry of the church. Some give when the plates are passed. Many others give online. Anyone is welcome to give, but visitors should feel no obligation to do so.

Guest Information

What is Children's Church?
Listening to a sermon can be difficult for young children. Most weeks, we have an optional Children's Church service for children ages 3 through 2nd grade.
An announcement will be made when it is time for Jennifer Welch, our Children's Minister, to lead the children to the place they gather for worship. She will return them to the Sanctuary before the end of service.

What if my child is crying or needs to move around? We love the sound of babies! If your baby or toddler becomes restless, we have a toddler's area in the back of the Sanctuary to allow children to move around. A moms-only sitting room in the rear foyer provides a comfortable space for nursing or feeding your baby. A staffed nursery is also available in the Early Childhood Center.

Servicio Bilingüe en la Capilla – Si deseas adorar a Dios en español, te invitamos a unirte a nuestro servicio especial en la capilla at 10 a.m.
¡Todos son bienvenidos!

Next Steps

What are the Guest Connection Cards? These cards on the back of the pew in front of you provide a way for us to reach out to you and pray for you if you would find that helpful. Please complete the card and drop it in the collection plate when it is passed.

Who can I talk to if I have a spiritual, physical or emotional need? Our Lead Minister, Bradley Steele, would love to meet with you after service. Or feel free to call the church office if you'd rather come by at another time.

Campus Map
Scan this code for a map of our facilities.
uccabilene.org/map

Connection Card
Scan this code to fill out your connection card online.
uccabilene.org/card

WEEKLY focus

A GUIDE FOR WORSHIP & LIFE TOGETHER

Welcome to UCC!

We're so glad you've joined us for worship this morning. This guide is here to help you engage fully in today's service and to support your spiritual practices throughout the week. Inside, you'll find today's songs, Scripture readings, and the names of those participating in worship.

If you're a guest, the back page explains some of our worship practices—things that might be new or different to you. We hope these notes make you feel more at home as we worship and live life together here at UCC.

In the center pages, you'll discover family news, upcoming events, Bible classes, small group opportunities, and a list of our church family members who need prayer. You'll also find Scripture readings for the week to nurture your spirit, plus contact information for our ministers and shepherds.

We invite you to explore these pages, pray over the sick, rejoice with those celebrating milestones, lift up our ministers, shepherds and staff, and walk with us through the week's daily readings.

May this guide help you connect more deeply with God and with our church family.

Worship Slides
Scan this code with your phone camera for worship slides.

UCC UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

Worship

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Welcome & Call to Worship
Debbie Williams

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Shepherd's Prayer
Ted Presley

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Angels We Have Heard on High
Silent Night

Isaiah 7:10-16
Lou Seckler

Children's Church

Away in a Manger

Matthew 1:18-25
Today's Message

The First Noel
Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Communion & Offering
Matthew 26:26-29
Bill Fowler

God Moves in a Mysterious Way

Joy to the World

Benediction

Worship Leader: Greg Straughn

Today's Message

"God is with Us"

Matthew 1:18-25

Michael Santiago

December 21, 2025

Children's Ministry (Birth–5th Grade)

Thank you to all who participated in the caroling on Wednesday night. We had a great time and the residents at The Oaks and University Place appreciated the visit. Remember to be in the moment this holiday season and enjoy the little things. Merry Christmas!

Youth Ministry (6th–12th Grade)

The Youth Group will not meet for Sunday morning class until January 4. Huddles will resume on January 7.

Campus Ministry (Students & Non-Students)

The Campus Ministry slows down during Christmas Break but to find out about any activities we may have, subscribe to our GroupMe Group: bit.ly/campusgroupme.

Bilingual Ministry (Open to All)

The Bilingual Ministry will meet for worship at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 21 & 28.

News & Notes

Carols and Candles — Join us for Carols and Candles on Wednesday at 5 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

December Worship Times — On Sunday 28, we will only have worship at 10 a.m. On Wednesday, December 24 & 31, we will not have Wednesday Night Bible Classes.

Church Office Hours — The Church Office will be closed December 24-26.

End-of-Year Contributions — Thank you for supporting the Lord's work here at UCC throughout 2025. Like most charitable entities, UCC is in need of year-end contributions in order to meet our annual budget. If you are able, those donations can be made online (uccabilene.org/give) or by check/cash. If you have questions on how to donate investments, or through your IRA (for those over age 70.5), please contact Jill at the church office (673-6497, jill@uccabilene.org). Thank you for your generosity.

Shepherds

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Ted Presley
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Kris Southward
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James Thompson
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2025 Elder Chair

Chris Shupe
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(903) 556-1138

Ministers

Bradley Steele
Lead Minister
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Jennifer Welch
Children's Minister
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Michael Santiago
Youth Minister
michael@uccabilene.org

Jason Craddock
Campus Minister
jason@uccabilene.org

Online Giving

uccabilene.org/give

Nurseries Available

A nursing room is located in the foyer at the back of the Sanctuary. An attended nursery is available during worship in the Early Childhood Center for your convenience.

Abilene Marriage Seminar, January 31, 2026

A one-day marriage seminar for couples in the Abilene and Big Country area. Hosted by University Church of Christ.

Who doesn't dream of a thriving marriage? In this seminar couples will learn about 7 pathways that can lead them to a more rewarding and sacred marriage: (1) Spiritual Intimacy, (2) Healthy Communication, (3) Appreciation, (4) Commitment, (5) Investing in One Another, (6) Shared Interests, and (7) Sexual Intimacy. Get ready to be encouraged and supported in your effort to cultivate a thriving Christian marriage.

Speaker: Dr. Heidi Morris
Date: January 31, 2026 from 9am-3:30pm
Location: DoubleTree by Hilton Abilene Downtown Convention Center
500 Cypress St, Abilene, TX
Price: $50 a couple (Early bird special through December 31), $75 a couple after December 31
Register at: uccabilene.org/marriageworkshop

Daily Readings

Our Readings for this week from the *Revised Common Lectionary*

Monday, December 22
Luke 1:46b-55; Isaiah 33:17-22; Revelation 22:6-7, 18-20

Tuesday, December 23
Luke 1:46b-55; 2 Samuel 7:18, 23-29; Galatians 3:6-14

Wednesday, December 24
Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96, Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-14

Thursday, December 25
Isaiah 62:6-12, Psalm 97, Titus 3:4-7, Luke 2:1-7

Friday, December 26
Isaiah 52:7-10, Psalm 98, Hebrews 1:1-4, John 1:1-14

Saturday, December 27
Psalm 148; Wisdom 4:7-15; Acts 7:59-8:8

Lift Up In Prayer

Don Baber
Shirley Baber
Lucy Hatch
Marshal Kellar
Eddie Mahanay
Peggy Marler
Imogene McAnulty
Tom Milholland
Mike Nance
Kelly Roberts

Prayer Prompts

Pray for trust in the promise of Immanuel. Is. 7:10-16

Pray for hope when God's signs seem hidden. Is. 7:10-16

Pray for renewal in our life together. Ps. 80:1-7

Pray for faithfulness in sharing the gospel. Rm. 1:1-7

Pray to know and reflect "God with us." Mt. 1:18-25

"When joy is gone and hearts are sick, O God, you give us Christ as our healing balm. He came in human flesh that he might give himself as a ransom for our salvation and anoint us with the Spirit of consolation and joy. Hear the cry of your people, that we may rejoice in the richness of your love and be faithful stewards of your many gifts. Amen."

Reproduced from *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers*