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
Sara Trammell

Praise the Lord

Shepherd's Prayer
James Thompson

Joy to the World

Isaiah 63:7-9
Bo Green

Magnificat

Matthew 2:13-23
Today's Message

Salvation Belongs to Our God
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Communion & Offering
Luke 22:14-20
Cole Bennett

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

A New Anointing

Benediction

Worship Leader: Eric Lemmons

Today's Message
"Out of Egypt"
Matthew 2:13-23
Bradley Steele

December 28, 2025

Children's Ministry (Birth–5th Grade)

A prayer by Van Varner, "Heavenly Father; At midnight, when the old year dies and the new comes bounding in, I draw strength from knowing that in the next twelve months, the snows will go, the buds will burst, the heat will rise, the leaves will fly. That all these things will happen according to your schedule and in your time; that there is order in Your universe, and that I am part of it. In Jesus Name Amen."

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.

News & Notes

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.

Church Office Hours— The Church Office will be open Monday-Wednesday from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., and closed on Thursday.

Wednesday Night Bible Classes— There will not be any Wednesday Night Bible Classes this week.

Shepherds

Alan Caffey
alanrcaffey@att.net

Mac Ice
macice27@gmail.com

Jason Morris
morrisj@acu.edu

Ted Presley
ted_presley@eli360.com

Kris Southward
kris@abilenecpas.net

James Thompson
thompsonja@acu.edu

2025 Elder Chair

Chris Shupe
cwshupe68@gmail.com
(903) 556-1138

Ministers

Bradley Steele
Lead Minister
bradley@uccabilene.org

Jennifer Welch
Children's Minister
jenniferw@uccabilene.org

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 31st, 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 29
Psalm 20; Jeremiah 31:15-22; Luke 19:41-44

Tuesday, December 30
Psalm 20; Isaiah 26:1-9; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Wednesday, December 31
Psalm 20; 1 Kings 3:5-14; John 8:12-19

Thursday, January 1
Numbers 6:22-7, Psalm 8, Galatians 4:4-7, Philippians 2:5-11, Luke 2:15-21

Friday, January 2
Psalm 20; Genesis 12:1-7; Hebrews 11:1-12

Saturday, January 3
Psalm 72; Genesis 28:10-22; Hebrews 11:13-22

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 gratitude for God's steadfast love. Is. 63:7-9

Pray that all creation praises God. Ps. 148

Pray for faith in Christ's saving work. Hb. 2:10-18

Pray for safety and care for children and families. Mt. 2:13-23

Pray for courage to follow God's leading. Mt. 2:13-23

"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*