

*First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin*

December 3, 2017



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN**

DECEMBER 3, 2017

9:00 & 10:30 AM

"FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT"

At this Christmas season when Christ comes, will he find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern.
~Mother Teresa

Welcome to our guests who are visiting
with us today!
Join us for coffee in the Fellowship Hall
between the 9:00 & 10:30 worship services.

- ~The Nursery is available for young children.
- ~Church Mouse activity bags are available for children.
- ~Large print bulletins and hearing impaired devices are available from the ushers.
- ~Please stand when noted by the *
- ~Congregation responses are in bold.

*No matter who you are. No matter where
you are on your spiritual journey, you are
welcome here!*

*As Jesus' courageous disciples,
living God's grace, we strive to:*

- ~ *Worship faithfully*
- ~ *Welcome openly*
- ~ *Grow spiritually*
- ~ *Care passionately*
- ~ *Serve generously*

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SILENCE AND RINGING OF THE BELL

LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH

L: We gathering around the Advent wreath in anticipation of the coming of the Christ child. Let us open our hearts to this time of holy waiting. Today we light the first candle, the Candle of Hope. In our times of deepest darkness and despair, Christ came that we might have hope.

P: **The apostle Paul writes to the Romans: "And again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the nations; in him the Gentiles shall hope.' May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."**

All: Let us open our hearts to Christ, in whom all things are possible, as we light the flame of hope.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Come, Lord Jesus!

P: **Today we begin the journey of Advent. Let us pray that we may be ready and able to welcome the Christ child into our lives again.**

L: May the keeping of Advent be upon our hearts and lives.

P: **Come, Lord Jesus!**

L: May Advent remind us to prepare for Christ's coming.

P: **Come, Lord Jesus!**

L: Jesus came to give the world hope. Hope that gave people the courage to go on. Hope that a new and better way of living was possible.

P: **Because of our trust in what God has already done for us, we are bold to hope for what God will yet do with us.**

All: **Come let us worship the God who leads us into abundant life!**

*HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Song of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and neigh;
To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, we confess it is easy to be a naysayer rather than a beacon of hope. We regret the times when we have joined a chorus of negativity and despair, rather than a chorus lifting up words of comfort and hope. In this time of looking forward, grant us the grace to look forward with hope. May your hope be lit in our hearts that we might bring hope to those who are living through dark times. We ask this in the name of the child who is to come giving hope to all. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Friends, know and believe, that as we wait for the birth of the baby Jesus –

P: **And the return of our Savior –**

L: We are already forgiven. In Christ, God is at work in our world, reconciling us with God and one another. This is good news!

P: **Thanks be to God.**

L: May the peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: **And also with you.**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE (Please greet one another with signs of peace)

*GLORIA (Worship Ensemble will introduce then all join in)

Je - sus, name a - bove all names; beau-ti - ful Sav - ior,

6
glo-ri-ous Lord. Em - man - u - el God is with us;

12
bless-ed Re - deem - er, Liv - ing Word

TIME WITH CHILDREN (10:30 am)

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG OF BLESSING (10:30 am) (Children preschool through grade 8 may go to Sunday School. Worship bags and children's bulletins are available in the back.)

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

PSALM 130

(Praise group will sing verses, all join on response)

R

*Waiting, waiting, waiting for the Lord;
Waiting, waiting, waiting for the Lord.*

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 13:28-37

SERMON

"Stop, See, Live"

Rev. Chris Myers

"Canticle of the Turning"

Verses



1. My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2. Though I am small, my God, my all, you
 3. From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a
 4. Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, And my spir - it sings of the
 work great things in me, And your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait. You
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant from his throne. The
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp. This



fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the
 sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, So from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, You will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; There are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, 'Til the spear and rod can be

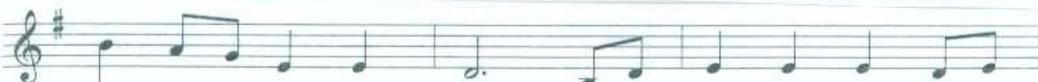


name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

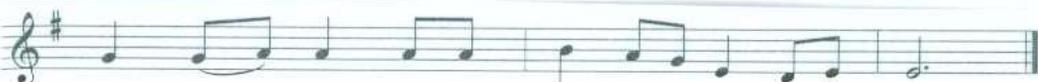
Refrain



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the



fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the



dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn!

***STATEMENT OF FAITH for Advent**

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the power of the gospel, which began in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a small village, of whose coming the shepherds saw the sign, and for whom there was no room at the inn.

I believe in the one whose life changed the course of history, for whom the kings of the earth had no power, and who was not understood by the proud.

I believe in the one to whom the poor, the oppressed, the discouraged, the afflicted, the sick, the blind, gave welcome, and accept as Lord and Savior.

I believe in the one who with love changed the heart of the proud and with his life showed that it is more important to serve than to be served, and that the greatest joy is giving your life for others.

I believe in peace, which is not the absence of war, but justice among all people and nations, and love among all.

I believe in reconciliation, forgiveness, and the transforming power of the gospel.

I believe that Christmas is strength and power, and that this world can change if, with humility and faith, we kneel before the manger.

I believe that I must be the first one to do so. Amen.

THE PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors)

...Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

OFFERTORY

(As we offer our gifts today and enter the season of Advent, ask yourself the question: "What are my hopes (and fears) at this time in my life?")

"We Give Thee but Thine Own"

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the hymn "We Give Thee but Thine Own". The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the hymn, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be; all that we have is
thine a - lone a trust, O Lord, from thee.

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Gracious God, in response to all that you have given us, we bring our gifts to you. We pray that our gifts might be used to build bonds of love in the broken places. Use us to do the building, O God, that through us others might know you. Let us give and give freely - for the sake of Jesus, who served you. Amen.

THE COMMUNION

All Christians, regardless of denomination, tradition or age are welcome at the table of our Lord.

When invited, please come forward down the center aisle. Receive a piece of bread (both wheat and gluten-free breads are available) and a cup from the tray (white is grape juice and red is wine). Children choosing not to commune are welcome to come forward and receive a blessing. Return to your seat using the outside aisle. If you are unable to come forward, communion will be brought to you.

The Invitation to the Supper

- L:** Beloved in Christ, the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week, Jesus Christ was raised from death, appeared to Mary Magdalene, on the same day sat at table with two disciples, and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.
- P:** **This is the joyful feast of the people of God. Men and women, young and old, come from the east and the west, the north and south, and gather about Christ's table.**
- L:** This table is for all people who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

The Great Thanksgiving

L: The Lord be with you.

P: **And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

P: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

L: We offer you praise, ...

The Words of Institution

L: We rejoice in this holy meal as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Prayer of Consecration

Distribution of the Elements

Hymns to be sung during the distribution of the elements:

"O Christ, Surround Me"

(Worship Ensemble Only)

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

Let us break bread together on our knees;

Let us break bread together on our knees;

Refrain: *When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.*

Let us drink wine together on our knees;

Let us drink wine together on our knees; Refrain

Let us praise God together on our knees;

Let us praise God together on our knees; Refrain

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: We give you thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***HYMN**

"All Earth is Waiting"

#121

***COMMISSIONING**

Be hopeful. Christ is coming to renew the world, including you and me. Wait. Watch. Live. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord your God. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE

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Wednesday School is one of the many ministries and programs supported through your tithes, offerings and gifts. Thank you!



Assisting in today's worship service are:

Ministers:		<i>The Whole Church</i>
Liturgist:	9:00 am	<i>Brian Miller</i>
	10:30 am	<i>Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn</i>
Coffee Fellowship:		<i>JoAnne Friedell, Norma Revels, Ruth McNamara</i>
Ushers:	9:00 am	<i>Peter Rayne, Bill & Martha Olson, Gloria Gardner, Suzanne Hagen</i>
	10:30 am	<i>Evelyn Purdy, Dan Herum, Matthew Myers, Cori Fosmo, Lee Lueck</i>
Welcomers:		<i>Sonny & Mary Miner, Loral Keil</i>
Nursery:		<i>Sheila Peterson</i>
Organist:		<i>Marsha Pearson</i>
Rover:		<i>Barb Peterson</i>
Trustee:		<i>Dan Meier</i>
Counters:		<i>Wendy Hill, Marie Roe</i>
Among Friends Coordinator:		<i>Norma Revels</i>
Music Coordinator:		<i>Marsha Pearson</i>
Choir Director:		<i>Scott Perau</i>
Bell Choir Director:		<i>Ross Fugl</i>
Church Moderator:		<i>Neal Prochnow</i>
Church Secretary:		<i>Missy Luedtke</i>
Youth Pastor:		<i>JaNae Westrich</i>
Minister for Community:		<i>Rev. Dave Ostendorf</i>
CE Minister:		<i>Rev. Stacy Johnson Myers</i>
Senior Pastor:		<i>Rev. Chris Myers</i>

*Altar table flowers are given by Sonny and Mary Miner
in celebration of their 55th wedding anniversary.*



Advent/Christmas Events



Dec 3—Advent Begins: Advent Workshop at 11:30 am

Dec 10—Advent 2: Youth Cookie Delivery 11:30 am

Dec 12—Christmas Luncheon from 11:30 am-1:00 pm

Dec 17—Advent 3: Children's Advent Musical during 10:30 am Worship Service

Dec 24—Morning Worship at 9:00 am (no 10:30 am Worship)

Christmas Eve Worship Services at 4:00, 6:00 and 11:00 pm

Dec 31—New Year's Eve Worship at 9:00 am (no 10:30 Worship)

First Congregational UCC, 110 N. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

Tel: 425-2052 Email: office@firstchurchrf.org Fax: 425-9800

- Sun., Dec 3
8:00 am - Music Practice
9:00 am - Worship Service
9:00 am - Adult Forum
10:00 am - Coffee Fellowship
10:30 am - Worship Service
10:30 am - Sunday School
11:00 am - WEVR Broadcast
11:30 am - Advent Workshop
- Mon., Dec 4
5:30 pm - Endowment Grant Committee Meeting
- Tues., Dec 5
9:00 am - Yoga
9:00 am-3:00 pm - Among Friends
1:00-2:30 pm - Bible Study
- Wed., Dec 6
3:45-5:15 pm - Wednesday School
5:15 pm - Family Meal
5:30 pm - Spirit & Health Meeting
6:00 pm - Jubilee Ringers
6:30 pm - Pre-Confirmation (6th Grade)
6:30 pm - Confirmation Year 2 (8th Grade)
7:00 pm - Church Interns
7:00 pm - Chancel Choir
9:00 pm - Worship Service on Channel 16
- Thurs., Dec 7
9:00 am - Yoga
- Sun., Dec 10
8:00 am - Music Practice
9:00 am - Worship Service
9:00 am - Adult Forum
10:00 am - Coffee Fellowship
10:30 am - Worship Service
10:30 am - Sunday School
11:00 am - WEVR Broadcast
11:30 am - Youth Cookie Delivery
- Newsletter Deadline

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Those who are ill or recovering:

- Marlee (relative of Diane Welsh), Wayne Petersen, Audrey Johnson (mother of Linn Lawrence), Avis Thompson (Alice Hanson's sister), Dale Purdy (husband of Evelyn), Janine Schulze (Dale Olson's sister), Steve (brother in law of Carole Mottaz), Howard (uncle of Barry Butenhoff), June (friend of Carol Merriman), Marlene Wells, Rae and Mike Farley, Scott (son of Del Hirstein), Linda (friend of Angie Burke), Davey Keatley, Barb (sister of Sue Simmonet), Neal Prochnow, Delores Herum (mother of Dan Herum), Lucille (mother of Joann Herum), Larry Wesson (son of Margaret Wesson)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For the Worship Ensemble leading us in praise and song today
- For those families enjoying the Advent Workshop today after late worship that it may bring Christ close to them
- For the Endowment Grant Committee meeting this week
- For the ministry of this church as we begin budget planning for 2018 (please turn in your pledges!)
- For our youth delivering cookies and singing carols to our shut-ins
- For those who set, serve and clean up after our Wednesday Night Meals
- For those organizing the Christmas Luncheon on Tuesday, December 12
- For our Sunday School kids gearing up for the big Christmas program on Sunday, December 17
- For our choir and bell choir providing Christmas joy on Sunday, December 10 during both worship services
- For parents caring for sick children (there is a nasty bug going around)

Prayers for our world:

- For those who have been abused that they may find hope, healing and peace
- For our nation that we might heal our political divisions and work justly to solve our real problems
- For cleaning up and rebuilding after Irma, Harvey, Jose and Maria
- For peace on the Korean peninsula
- For those serving in the military on active duty and the reserves
- For those struggling with politics
- That we all might be better stewards of God's creation

Prayers of thanksgiving:

- For the two beautiful Christmas trees given to us from Lorilynn Farms (Linn Lawrence's folks)
- For the joy of beautiful music during this Advent and Christmas time
- For Sheila Peterson our tireless nursery worker
- For Jan Hansen who celebrated her 80th birthday this week
- For the Wednesday Night Family Meal program and those who make it possible. Sign up!
- For those who are providing coffee fellowship this week (could you provide this in the future?)

Those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Harriet Christianson, who died recently
- For those who are grieving that God may comfort and strengthen them

If you have people you wish to include on our prayer list, please see the pastor
or use the blue prayer cards in the pews or on the back sign-up table.

NOTES

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 13:28-37

‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

