

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

March 14, 2021

"Fourth Sunday in Lent"

10:00 am

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**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME**

**SONG** *"You Are My All In All"*

*You are my strength when I am weak. You are the treasure that I seek. You are my  
All in All. Seeking you as a precious jewel, Lord, to give up I'd be a fool.  
You are my All in All. Jesus, Lamb of God, worthy is your name.*

*Taking my sin, my cross, my shame, rising again I bless Your name. You are my  
All in All. When I fall down, you pick me up; when I am dry, You fill my cup.  
You are my All in All. Jesus, Lamb of God, worthy is your name.*

**PSALM 107:1-9**

**L:** Praise the Lord, who is so wonderful, whose faithful love endures forever.

**P:** **Those whom the Lord saved, tell the story!**

**L:** How God rescued them from enemy powers, gathering them from all lands,

**P:** **From East and West, from North and South.**

**L:** Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no place to live.

**P:** **From hunger and thirst their spirits failed.**

**L:** In their distress they cried to the Lord, who rescued them from their torments,

**P:** **Leading them in the right way to a city where they could make their home.**

**L:** Let them praise the Lord for faithful love, for wonders done for all.

**P:** **Truly God satisfied the thirsty, filled the hungry with good things.**

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**John 3:1-17**

**HOMILY**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**SONG** *"The Gift of Love"*

*Though I may speak with bravest fire, and have the gift to all inspire,  
and have not love, my words are vain, as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.*

*Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control, our spirits long to be made whole.  
Let inward love guide every deed; by this we worship, and are freed.*

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH – United Church of Christ**

**We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:**

**You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.**

**You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.**

**You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.**

**In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.**

**You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.**

**You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.**

**You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.**

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

**L: ...Lord in your mercy**

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**...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.**

**SONG**

***"Over My Head"***

*Over my head I hear music in the air. Over my head I hear music in the air.*

*Over my head I hear music in the air, there must be a God somewhere.*

*Over my head I see Jesus in the air. Over my head I see Jesus in the air.*

*Over my head I see Jesus in the air, there must be a God somewhere.*

**BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

***"Glockenspiel"***

**Youth Bell Choir  
On Livestream Only**

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

**Those who are ill or recovering:**

Gary (Ann Gustafson's brother in law), Bernice Larson, Megan (daughter of Steve and Janice Healy), Teddi (friend of Janice Healy), Nancy Hove (Pierce County Sheriff diagnosed with brain cancer), Jason Kuhl (cousin of Rose Rude), Darren (friends of Trautmillers), Peg Thompson, Miles Voster (friend of Grisars), Dorothy Shavers (Rene Bylander's mother), Roger Hirstein, David Anderson, Mark Otto, LaVon (sister of Darlene Sumption), Jim, Barb Stephens, Judie Henning, JoAnn Matthews

**Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:**

- For pastors, musicians, deacons and our web team leading the resumption of in-person Sunday worship, our Wednesday night online Lenten worship services and planning for Holy Week services
- For the Church Council and Committees that meet next week, that they may have the mind of Christ
- For Katy Kapaun, our Wednesday Night Cook, Evelyn Purdy and Susan Walden who help in the kitchen, and our interns (Kim S, Evan L, Monty W, Mikayla P and John S) and JaNae Westrich who bring family meals to cars each Wednesday during Lent
- For all the 'angels' who give of their time, talent and treasure to enable our church community to reach out to others
- For our church staff as we paint the first floor office, hallways and fellowship hall which involve a lot of moving and shuffling of things—may God give us strength!
- For our Youth Minister JaNae Westrich and her husband Adam (pastor at St. Paul's UCC in Ellsworth) who have accepted a call at First UCC in Green Bay and will be moving there in May. We are planning on a farewell celebration for JaNae later this spring. Please pray for strength and guidance for them during this transition and for our church as we begin the search for a new Youth Minister
- For those who continue to support our church's ministry with their tithes, offerings and gifts--you are all a blessing.

**Prayers for our World:**

- As we live through the one year mark of the pandemic, let us pause and remember those who have died, those who survived, how life has changed and the ways God has led us through it all
- For peace and justice in the Twin Cities as the trial for Derek Chauvin begins
- For Middle and High School students and families as they shift to four day a week classes
- For those who have been vaccinated (hallelujah!), for those who are anxiously awaiting their turn
- For our fractured nation that we may find ways to come together and heal our divisions
- For all of us as the pandemic drags on and our energy wanes

**Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

- For the RFHS Wildcat Basketball team who made it to the state basketball tournament this year for the first time in 16 years!
- For Lu Lueck and Linn Lawrence who painted the church nursery after Tim Bylander re-sheet rocked it from our summer flood—bless you all for your efforts!
- For the over 65 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God
- For Diane Welsh who delivered this month's shut-in bags to seniors and special church friends with a special St Patrick's Day theme!
- For Brad Richter who has graciously and patiently been reworking our church webpage which went live on March 1 and is now working on a mobile phone app—you are an angel of blessing
- For the gift of COVID vaccines and the hope that this will all end sooner rather than later

**For those grieving the loss of loved ones:**

- For Polly Wymer who died peacefully at home recently and whose funeral was March 6, that she may rest in God's strong care after so many years of serving others
- For the family of Stafford Williams, brother of Bradley Williams who died recently
- For Phyllis Huber who died recently at her group home in Ellsworth. For many years Phyllis was with us in worship and will be remembered for her wonderful sense of humor and achievements in Special Olympics. Funeral services will be in Ellsworth this summer. May she rest in God's strong care
- For those in mourning, including the Filkins, Ostendorf/Schichtel, Reilly, Zeman and Greub families as well as all those who have died from Covid-19

If you have people you wish to include on our prayer list, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.

**SCRIPTURE LESSON: John 3:1-17**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

**Treasurer's Report**

|                                | <u>Mar 7, 2021</u> | <u>Year to Date</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund Income*           | \$ 5,455           | \$ 116,919          |
| General Fund Operational Needs | \$ 9,262           | \$ 92,620           |

A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

***Worship Participants:***

Audio/Visual: Jeff Hoffman, Andy Myers

Music: Jamie Mills, Marsha Pearson, David Reilly

Preacher: Rev. Chris Myers

**Lent 2021 Themes: Teach Us To Pray**

February 17 (Ash Wednesday) - **Lord's Prayer** from Matthew 6:5-15

February 24 - **Withdraw**: Luke 5:16 *He would withdraw to a deserted place to pray*

March 3 - **Embody**: Daniel 6:10 *He got down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God*

March 10 - **Silence**: Habb 2:20 *The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence*

March 17 - **Creation**: Ps 148:3-4 *Praise God sun and moon, praise God shining stars, praise God highest heavens!*

March 24 - **Imagine**: Is 43:19 *I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*