FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

March 21, 2021

"Fifth Sunday in Lent"

10:00 am

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

SONG

"Lord Listen to Your Children Praying"

Small Group Choir

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Holy God, we thank you for this season of Lent, during which you invite us to be renewed and healed. In Lent, we remember that like Jesus in the wilderness, there are things which need to be lost so that better things may be found. Grant us courage to set aside easy answers and quick fixes in favor of your Word that penetrates and transforms us. Enable us to see past our immediate wants that we may choose instead the grace of your resurrecting presence. Embolden our faith that we may trust you. Thank you for walking with us throughout this Lenten journey. May we emerge from it prepared to serve you with renewed passion and joy. Amen.

PSALM 119:9-19

- L: How can young people keep their way pure? By guarding it according to your word.
- P: With my whole heart I seek you; do not let me stray from your commandments.
- L: I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you. Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes.
- P: With my lips I declare all the ordinances of your mouth.
- L: I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches.
- P: I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways.
- L: I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.
- P: Deal bountifully with your servant, so that I may live and observe your word.
- L: Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.
- P: I live as an alien in the land; do not hide your commandments from me.

GOSPEL LESSON

John 12:20-26

HOMILY

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG

"Open Our Eyes"

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus, to reach out and touch him, and say that we love him. Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen, open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

*STATEMENT OF FAITH - Indonesia

I believe in God, who is love and who has given the earth to all people.

- I believe in Jesus Christ, who came to heal us, and to free us from all forms of oppression.
- I believe in the Spirit of God, who works in and through all who are turned toward the truth.
- I believe in the community of faith, which is called to be at the service of all people.
- I believe in God's promise to finally destroy the power of sin in us all, and to establish the kingdom of justice and peace for all humankind.
- I do not believe that suffering need be in vain, that death is the end, that the disfigurement of our world is what God intended.
- But I dare to believe, always and in spite of everything, in God's power to transform and transfigure, fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where justice and peace will flourish. 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

"Guide My Feet"

Guide my feet, while I run this race. Guide my feet, while I run this race. Guide my feet, while I run this race. For I don't want to run this race in vain.

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

"A Medley of Faith"

Adult 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, Marc Otto, LaVon (sister of Darlene Sumption), Larry, Jim, Julie, Barbara Stephens, Judie Henning, JoAnn Mathews

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For pastors, musicians, deacons and our web team leading Sunday worship, our Wednesday Night online Lenten worship services and planning for Holy Week services
- For Katy Kapaun, our Wednesday Night Cook, Evelyn Purdy and Susan Walden who help in the kitchen, and our interns and JaNae Westrich who brought St. Patty's Day cheer in the form of corned beef and cabbage this past Wednesday
- For Pastor Stacy as she leads the 'Picture the Bible' resources discussion for Wisconsin Conference churches who each received a one month sample of the curriculum
- For our church staff as we paint the first floor office, hallways and fellowship hall which involves 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:

- For the joy of Spring Break (even in a pandemic—stay safe please!)
- For Asian Americans fearful after an alarming increase in attacks
- For those worried about the future, may they turn their worries into prayer
- For high school seniors contemplating college choices and plans, may they receive God's guidance
- For peace and justice in the Twin Cities as the trial for Derek Chauvin begins
- 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 warmer weather
- For the return of in-person confirmation classes in April
- 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 75 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 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.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 12:20-26

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Worship participants for this week:

Music: Preacher:

Audio/Visual: Jeff Hoffman, Andy Myers Jamie Mills, Marsha Pearson, David Reilly *Rev. Chris Myers*

Treasurer's Report

	Week of	
	<u>Mar 14, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,180	\$ 155,011
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 101,882

A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office. *Includes annual and monthly gifts.

Holy Week Worship

Holy Week is the most important week for Christian people. In it we see the depth and power of God's love at work in the world and our call to carry to embody that love in our living today. All the services will offer both in-person and livestream options and our Sunday services are also broadcast on WEVR radio. Our Holy Week schedule will be:

Palm Sunday – Worship at 10:00 am

Maundy Thursday – Worship at 6:30 pm

Good Friday – Worship at 6:30 pm

Easter Sunday – Worship at 8:00 am Outdoors (weather permitting)

Worship at 9:00 and 10:00 am

(All Easter services will include communion)