

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

"Earth Day"

"Fourth Sunday After Easter"

April 25, 2021

10:00 am

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: God is with us, right here and now.

P: **We open our lives to God our Creator.**

L: God cares for us and gives us glory.

P: **We open our hearts to God our Creator.**

L: God appoints us as keepers of the earth.

P: **We dedicate ourselves to God our Creator.**

L: God calls us to protect and nurture this precious gift.

P: **We remember our call as God's creatures.**

All: **So come let us worship the Creator of us all!**

SONG

"All You Works of God"

Refrain: *All you works of God, ev'ry mountain, star and tree, bless the One who shapes your beauty,
Who has caused you all to be one great song of love and grace, ever ancient, ever new.*

Raise your voices, all you works of God!

Sun and moon: Bless your Maker! Stars of heaven: Chant your praise!

Showers and dew: Raise up your joyful song. Refrain

All the earth: Bless your Maker! Hills and mountains: Chant your praise!

Green things that grow: Raise up your joyful song. Refrain

All who live: Bless your Maker! Men and women: Chant your praise!

Servants of God: Raise up your joyful song. Refrain

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Persistent God, **you are forever seeking for your will to be done on earth. You yearn for all creation and all creatures to live in harmony. Forgive us for growing weary of the struggle for peace and justice, and for courting despair. Loosen our need to see the full results and to feel hopeful. Sustain us with an abundance of friends and a great deal of faith. Give us the willingness to do the loving thing and to be faithful in the small acts of caring. God of the hidden seed and the promised resurrection, work your surprising and amazing grace in our lives and in our broken world. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 10:11-18

HOMILY

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG

“Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us”

*Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need your tender care;
In your pleasant pastures feed us, for our use your folds prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us, yours we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us, yours we are.*

*Let us always seek your favor; let us always do your will;
Jesus Christ our only Savior, with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.*

***STATEMENT OF FAITH (from a morning prayer liturgy at Eastern Mennonite Seminary)**

We believe in God:

**Whose love is the source of all life and the desire of our lives,
Whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth,
Whose love was crucified by the evil that waits to enslave us all,
And whose love, defeating even death, is our glorious promise of freedom.**

Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful and full of doubt, in God we trust; And in the name of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves in the service of others,

**To seek justice and to live in peace,
To care for the earth and to share the commonwealth of God’s goodness,
To live in the freedom of forgiveness and the power of the spirit of love, and in the company of the faithful, so to be the church for the glory of God. Amen.**

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

Good Shepherd, ...come and lead us.

...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.

FAREWELL TO JANA WESTRICH

SONG

“Let All Things Now Living”

Bells & Vocal Group

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving to God the Creator triumphantly raise; Who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us, who guides us and leads us the end of our days. God’s banners are o’er us; His light goes before us, a pillar of fire shining forth in the night; Till shadows have vanished, all fearfulness banished, as forward we travel from light into light.

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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), Peg Thompson, Miles Voster (friend of Grisars), Dorothy Shavers (Rene Bylander's mother), Roger Hirstein, Marc Otto, Jim, TC (brother in law of Cori Fosmo) and his family, Mike Moseman, Mischa (friend of Bobbi Kuhn)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For Katy Kapaun, our Wednesday Night Cook, Evelyn Purdy and Susan Walden who help in the kitchen, and our interns and JaNae Westrich who work together to make our Wednesday Family Meals a success
- For our confirmands and their families gearing up for Confirmation Sunday on May 2 who this year include: Murphy Beatty, Emma Cernohous, Sawyer Cudd, Quincy Johnson, Ellie Krueger, Jenna Lawrence, Ryan Luedtke, Connor Rude, Stella Theisen, Gabi Van Dell, Cheyenne Wilson—may they grow in faith and love
- For our Trustees planning their annual church clean up on Saturdays May 1 outside and May 8 inside from 9-11am, that many hands may make light work
- 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 on Sunday, April 25th. 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 jurors everywhere who are called to be a voice of justice and accountability in our society
- For those trying to be vaccinated and those who already have, that we may continue to act safely
- For justice, peace and healing as we try to move forward into a different future, that God's power of resurrection may be at work
- For police officers who are struggling with so many expectations
- For those in the military, especially for Jean Smith's grandson Jake who leaves for an overseas deployment
- For high school seniors contemplating college choices and plans, may they receive God's guidance
- 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 solve our real problems

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For the gift of Solvi Ramona born to Trisha and Scott Perau on April 19—7 pounds 10 ounces and 20 inches long, may she and siblings Hazel and Silas grow in faith, love and years!
- For Mikayla Peterson, one of our church interns, who successfully organized a blood drive at our church this past week that was completely filled—God bless you!
- For the RFHS Forensics Team who won the State Championship!
- For Nate Lawrence who soon graduates from the ROTC Honor Society program at SDSU
- For the birth of William Dystra, new great grandchild of Mary and Duane Church
- For JoAnne Friedell who retired this month after 33 years of social work in Rusk and St Croix counties—may you rest from your labors!
- For the over 120 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Jenny Sperling who died recently at Comforts of Home and whose funeral will be at O'Connell Benedict Funeral home Thurs, April 29 at 7pm with visitation from 5-7pm with Pastor Roger Kampstra officiating
- For Darren Hampton (friend of Trautmillers) who died this past week after a long battle with pancreatic cancer leaving behind a wife and four school age children
- For those in mourning, including the Wymer, Williams, Huber, Filkins, 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.



23RD PSALM

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: John 10:11-18

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

Worship participants for this week:

Audio/Visual: Jeff Hoffman, Andy Myers
 Music: Jamie Mills, Terry Mithun, David Reilly
 Preacher: Rev. Chris Myers

Treasurer’s Report

	<u>Apr 18, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 16,240	\$ 192,023
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 148,192

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.