

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

"Mother's Day"

"Sixth Sunday of Easter"

May 9, 2021

10:00 am

GATHERING MUSIC

"Near to the Heart of God"

Brass Group

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: God is love. We are created in God's image to reflect and share that love.

P: **We celebrate human love as a gift. We are given families, friends and communities in which to receive and nurture love for one another.**

L: On this Mother's Day, we give thanks to our mothers who gave us the gift of life.

P: **We give thanks for all the women who have loved and shaped us, comforted and encouraged us, taught us and believed in us.**

L: We ask your blessing upon these women, O Lord. May your love strengthen and support them each day.

P: **Grant them your grace and wisdom and anoint them with your presence and peace.**

All: **Gracious God, thank you for your gift of love. As we gather together for worship help us to grow in your love as we follow in the way of Jesus Christ. Come let us worship!**

SONG

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n to earth come down!

Fix in us your humble dwelling, All your faithful mercies crown.

Jesus, source of all compassion, Love unbounded, love all pure;

Visit us within your salvation, Let your love in us endure.

Come, almighty to deliver, Let us all your life receive;

Suddenly return and never, Never more your temples leave.

Lord, we would be always blessing, Serve you as your hosts above,

Pray, and praise you with-out ceasing, Glory in your precious love.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Gracious God, in your eternal and divine wisdom you made us for relationship, and we celebrate the people you have brought into our lives, especially our mothers. For all those who teach us to love, we praise you. For those who inspire us to be generous, just and kind, we thank you. For those who nurture our relationship with you, we rejoice. And, for those who disappoint us, we ask for grace to be compassionate and forgiving. In all our relationships may we live the truth of your love for us which knows no bounds. Amen.

PSALM 98

L: O sing to the LORD a new song, for God has done marvelous things.

P: **God's right hand and holy arm have gained victory.**

L: The LORD has made known victory; and revealed vindication in the sight of the nations.
P: God has remembered steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
 L: All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.
P: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
 L: Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.
P: With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.
 L: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.
P: Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the LORD, for God is coming to judge the earth. God will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 15:9-17

HOMILY

Rev. Chris Myers

SPECIAL MUSIC

"The Gift of Love"

Brass Group

***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)

Gracious God, ...help us to abide in your love.

...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

"I've Got Peace Like a River"

*I've got joy like a fountain, I've got joy like a fountain,
 I've got joy like a fountain, in my soul. I've got fountain in my soul.*

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Those who are ill or recovering:

Bernice Larson, Megan (daughter of Steve and Janice Healy), Augie (friend of Rose Rude), Peg Thompson, Dorothy Shavers (Rene Bylander's mother), Roger Hirstein, Jim, TC (brother in law of Cori Fosmo) and his family, Mischa (friend of Bobbie Kuhn), Elaine Diken, Jodi (sister of Lori Johnson), Jackie Nesvig (sister of Marshall Skule), Jacob Helmricks (son of Jodie and Kurt), Paul (friend of Janice Healy)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For those confirmed last Sunday, including: Murphy Beatty, Emma Cernohous, Sawyer Cudd, Quincy Johnson, Ellie Krueger, Ryan Luedtke, Conner Rude, Stella Theisen, Gabi Van Dell—that they may grow in faith and love, and for Cheyenne Wilson and Jenna Lawrence who could not be there and who are awaiting confirmation
- For our Trustees who cleaned the church inside and outside these past two Saturdays and for all who helped in this endeavor
- For Tim Bylander who is gutting and renovating the old downstairs unisex bathroom, the only part of the church building that did not get renovated in 2014—God bless you!
- For our incredibly faithful and flexible musicians, webteam and deacons who are willing to put in the extra work each week for worship
- 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 our mothers and all those called to be mothers, that they may grow in God's love
- For those trying to be vaccinated and those who already have, that we may continue to act safely
- For police officers who are struggling with so many expectations
- For High School Seniors gearing up for exams, the last days of school and grad parties—may you finish strong!
- For those gearing up for final exams, that they may study hard and end on a strong note
- For those in the military, especially for Jean Smith's grandson Jake who leaves for an overseas deployment
- For our fractured nation, that we may find ways to come together and solve our real problems

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For Catherine Engstrom and Steve Papp who are the proud parents of Margaret Jean Papp born April 29 at 7 pounds 5 ounces and 20.5 inches long in Hudson with happy siblings Brandon, Wes and Trudy—may she grow in love and trust!
- For Carole and Tim Hoopman who celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on May 7th
- For Mike Noreen, member of our church and conservation officer for the City of River Falls who has made River Falls second in the nation in its use of renewable energy.
- For Sawyer Sitz, son of Heather and Dan Sitz to be baptized on June 20 and Weston Fuller, son Kahla and Farnum Fuller to be baptized on June 27—that they may grow in grace and years
- 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 recently that was completely filled—God bless you!
- For the over 149 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Amanda, sister-in-law of Lori Johnson and wife of Mike, who died recently and whose memorial service is in early May, that they may receive God's comfort
- For the family of Jenny Sperling who died recently at Comforts of Home and whose funeral was recently led by Pastor Roger Kampstra, may she rest in peace
- For the family of Phyllis Huber who will be interred at St Paul's UCC cemetery on Saturday, May 15 at 2pm
- For those in mourning, including the Wymer, Williams, 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.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Worship participants for this week:

Audio/Visual: Jeff Hoffman, Andy Myers
Music: Jamie Mills, Marsha Pearson, David Reilly
Brass Group: Andy Myers, Emily Stifter, Tim Mills, Jamie Mills,
 Marsha Pearson
Preacher: Rev. Chris Myers

Treasurer's Report

	<u>May 2, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 8,275	\$ 213,795
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 166,716

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.