

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

June 13, 2021

*“Third Sunday after Pentecost”*

9:30 am

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**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: We gather as God's people:

P: **To seek direction in the living of our lives.**

L: We gather as God's people:

P: **To be still and hear what God would have us do.**

L: We gather as God's people:

P: **To be renewed, restored and recreated.**

L: We rejoice that we are God's people:

P: **To serve, to love and to sing God's praise.**

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

**SONG**

*“Rain Down”*

Refrain: *Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people.*

*Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life.*

*Faithful and true is the word of our God. All of God's works are so worthy of trust.*

*God's mercy falls on the just and the right; full of God's love is the earth. Refrain*

*God of creation, we long for your truth; you are the water of life for our thirst.*

*Grant that your love and your peace touch our hearts, all of our hope lies in you. Refrain*

**OPENING PRAYER (unison)**

Gracious God, **we are a people of many distractions, pulled in different directions, responding to multiple and often conflicting needs. We thank you for the gifts of Sabbath and worship, for a space and a time to set aside everything that tugs at us and instead focus our hearts and minds on you. Draw us more deeply into your presence. Grant us rest as we rely on your provision, and faith as we trust in your grace. Quiet our spirits so we may hear your Spirit speaking to us. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**2 Corinthians 5:1-7**

**PSALM 19:1-10 and 14**

L: The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.

P: **Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.**

- L: There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
- P: In the heavens God has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.**
- L: Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.
- P: The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple;**
- L: The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;
- P: The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.**
- L: More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.
- P: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**

**GOSPEL LESSON**

**Mark 4:26-34**

**HOMILY**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**SONG**

***“We Are Called”***

*Come! Live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord! We are called to be light for the kingdom, to live in the freedom of the city of God! Refrain*

*Refrain: We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly, we are called to serve one another; to walk humbly with God!*

*Come! Open your heart! Show your mercy to all those in fear! We are called to be hope for the hopeless so all hatred and blindness with be no more! Refrain*

**\*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)**

Lord in your mercy ...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.**

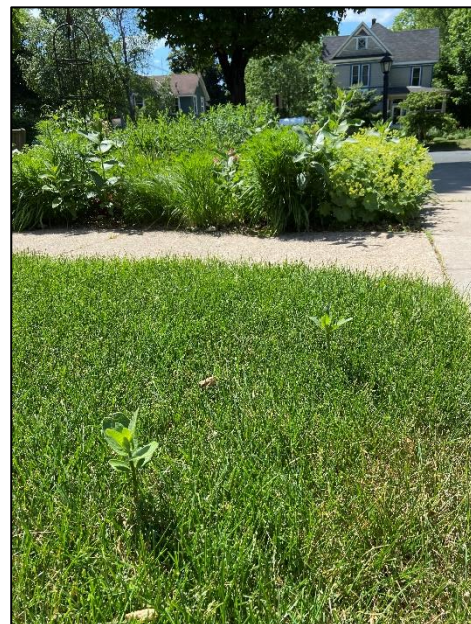
**SPECIAL MUSIC**

*"Bell Duo Fanfare"*

Emily Stifter, Andy Myers

**\*BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**



Milkweed abounds in our church garden and even the lawn!

**SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Corinthians 5:1-7**

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling — if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord — for we walk by faith, not by sight.

**GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 4:26-34**

He also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Worship participants for this week:

*Audio/Visual: Jeff Hoffman, Andy Myers*  
*Music: Jamie Mills, Marsha Pearson, David Reilly*  
*Liturgist: Jean Smith*  
*Preacher: Rev. Chris Myers*

**Treasurer’s Report**

	<u>June 6, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,833	\$ 252,851
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 213,026

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

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

## New Church Van Needed

Perhaps the most hopeful sign we are nearing the end of the pandemic is the need for a new church van. You may recall that when the pandemic began we sold our old church van (an aging 2004 Ford Econoline 15 passenger van that was rusting and had high mileage) rather than have it sit unused for a year. As we anticipate a more normal fall, we will need a church van to continue our current ministries. Below please find some details about the Church Van Campaign.

*Q: Do we really need a church van?*

A: Yes! In fact Stacy says on Wednesday afternoons when we pick up kids for Wednesday School, we could use two church vans! The church van is used to pick up Wednesday Schoolers, take our youth on trips to Feed My Starving Children, retreats, and monthly trips. The van is driven back and forth to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi for our annual mission trips saving us many dollars in baggage fees. We also hope to resume senior lunch trips in the fall.

*Q: What kind of van are we looking for?*

A: Church Council has authorized a small team to research options for a used 15 passenger van that is safe, has about 50,000 miles on it and will be easy for both youth and seniors to enter and exit. Right now we are looking at both Sprinters and Transits in the used car markets.

*Q: Can we get an electric or hybrid church van?*

A: After carefully looking into this option, the short answer is no. While there are some exciting new possibilities for hybrid vans, they would have to be bought new which would double our price. An all electric van would not allow us to use it on trips to Back Bay.

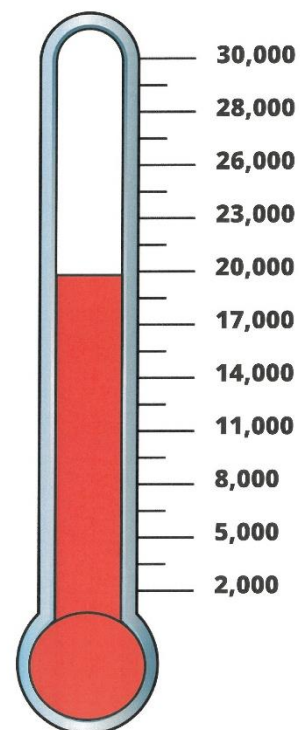
*Q: How much will it cost?*

A: We estimate it will cost between \$30—32,000 dollars used. The used car market is really hot now, driving up costs so we are starting a Church Van Campaign to raise \$32,000 to purchase a slightly used church van.

*Q: When will we get it?*

A: When we raise the money! We hope we can quickly raise the money in the next 8 weeks so we can purchase it, have it lettered with our church name and be ready for us by September. Please write 'Church Van Campaign' in the memo. You can also make donations on the church website under the 'give' option. No gift is too big or too small!

**Church Van Fund  
\$32,000 Goal!**



Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

**Those who are ill or recovering:**

Megan (daughter of Steve and Janice Healy), Augie (friend of Rose Rude), Peg Thompson, Roger Hirstein, Jim, TC (brother in law of Cori Fosmo) and his family, Mischa (friend of Bobbie Kuhn), Jodi (sister of Lori Johnson), Jackie Nesvig (sister of Marshall Skule), Dan (son of Betsy and Tom Westerhaus), Raelle, Jeff and Kim Jorae, Sam (grandson of Jan and Glenn Hansen), Barbara Stephens

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

- For those graduating from High School this year including...Ethan Cernohous, Nyssa George, Dennis Grisar, Zachary Johnson, Zachary Martin, Meridith Okal, Sophia Okal, Ellen Rayne, Kimberly Swanson, Erin Syverson, Olivia Vanasse
- For those who will rest in and enjoy our new Memorial Garden, may it kindle peace, faith and joy
- For the Youth Ministry Search team as they seek to find a new Youth Minister by the fall, that they may think creatively about future ministry possibilities with our young people
- For the Church Van Campaign, that we may quickly raise enough funds to purchase a used 15 passenger van
- For Carol Merriman who will be helping at Moon Beach Camp this summer
- For those who were vaccinated here at church on Wednesday, June 2 from 5-7pm, that it may speed our return to normal
- 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 peace and resolution to the intractable problems of our world, come Holy Spirit
- For an end to gun violence and the lives it destroys
- For the rest of the world as it navigates an increasingly aggressive pandemic
- 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
- That justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5:24)
- For students gearing up for exams, the last days of school and grad parties—may you finish strong!
- For our fractured nation that we may find ways to come together and solve our real problems

**Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

- For the Memorial Garden Committee (Lu Lueck, Marshall Skule, Susan Walden, JoAnne Friedell and Pastor Chris) who took the idea of a beautiful place for the saints of our church to rest and made it a reality—God bless you
- 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 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 Tim Bylander who is single handedly renovating the lower level bathroom—it looks mighty fine
- For the over 167 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God

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

- For Paul (friend of Janice Healy) who died recently
- For the family of Jenny Sperling who died recently at Comforts of Home and whose funeral was recently led by Pastor Roger Kampstra, and whose interment in Webster will be in early June, that she may rest in peace
- For those in mourning, including the Larson, Wymer, and Reilly 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.