

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

June 27, 2021

*"Fifth Sunday after Pentecost"*

9:30 am

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*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, not knowing where he was going. Hebrews 11:8*

**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Gather us in, Holy God, to worship and praise You with great joy!

P: It is such a blessing to be together in worship, God! We are blessed by You in ways we cannot count.

L: Center us in this place, God, and center our hearts and our spirits on You.

P: Open us to the indwelling of your Spirit, God, and be with us this day, this time, and always.

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

**SONG**

***"Come, We Who Love God's Name"***

*Come, we who love God's name, and let our joys be known;  
Together God's great love proclaim and thus surround the throne.*

*God's grace on earth is found, the seeds of glory sown;  
Celestial fruits on earthly ground from faith and hope have grown.*

*Then let our songs abound, and every tear be dry;  
We're traveling through Emmanuel's ground, to greater worlds on high.*

**OPENING PRAYER (unison)**

**Creator God, You have so richly blessed us! You have brought us through rough waters and blessed us on our way. You have given us the astounding beauty and joy of summer. You have gathered us once again in worship. You have given us children to bless and embrace, youth to lead us into the future, leaders to guide us. Be with us now as we lift our lives to you, in deepest gratitude and thanksgiving. Amen.**

**BAPTISM OF WESTON JOHN FULLER**

***Welcome and Presentation***

L: They were bringing children to Jesus that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant, and said to them.

P: **"Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."**

L: Members and friends in Christ, we gather to celebrate God's gift of grace in the baptism of Weston John. To us a child is given!

P: **Thanks be to God!**

## ***Address***

**L:** Baptism is the sacrament through which we are united to Jesus Christ and given a part in Christ's ministry of reconciliation. Baptism is the visible sign of an invisible event, the reconciliation of people to God. It shows the death of self and the rising to a life of obedience and praise. It shows also the pouring out of the Spirit on those whom God has chosen. In baptism, God works in us the power of forgiveness, the renewal of the Spirit, and the knowledge of the call to be a part of God's people.

**P:** **This is the water of baptism. Out of this water, we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ's body.**

## ***Questions***

**L:** As parents and sponsors of this child, will you encourage him to renounce the powers of evil and to receive the freedom of new life in Christ?

**Parents and Sponsors:** ***We will, with the help of God.***

**L:** Will you teach him that he may be led to profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by sharing with him the church's life, worship, and fellowship?

**Parents and Sponsors:** ***We will, with the help of God.***

**L:** Christ will first be known to Weston by the Christ seen in your home. By the grace of God, will you model the Christian life for him, provide instruction in the Christian faith, and live with him in the covenant of baptism so that he may lead a godly life until the day of Jesus Christ?

**Parents and Sponsors:** ***We will, with the help of God.***

**L:** Jesus calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Will you who witness and celebrate this sacrament, nurture one another in the Christian faith and include Weston in your love and prayer?

**P:** **We promise our love and prayer.**

## ***Act of Baptism***

**L:** The Lord be with you.

**P:** **And also with you.**

**L:** Let us pray. Gracious God, bless this water. By your Holy Spirit save those who confess the name of Jesus Christ that sin may have no power over them. Create new life in your servant Weston who will be baptized this day, that he too may rise with Christ. Glory to you, Eternal God, the one who was, and is, and shall always be, world without end. Amen.

I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit be upon you, Weston, child of God, disciple of Christ, member of the church.

**Baptismal Song**

**“Child of Blessing, Child of Promise”**

*Child of blessing, child of promise, baptized with the Spirit’s sign;  
with this water God has sealed you unto love and grace divine.*

*Child of God your loving Parent, learn to know whose child you are.  
Grow to laugh and sing and worship, trust and love God more than all.*

**Prayer**

**L:** Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God, for this child and the grace acknowledged here in water and the Spirit. Embrace us all as sons and daughters in the one household of your love. Grant us grace to receive and nurture this new member of the body of Christ.

**P:** **Give to the newly baptized: strength for life’s journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.**

**Name: Weston John Fuller**

**Born: July 19, 2020**

**Baptized: June 27, 2021**

**Weston’s parents are Farnum and Kahla Fuller**

**Weston’s sponsors are Luke and Paige Axley**

**PSALM 121:5-8**

**L:** God is your protector, there at your right side to shade you from the sun.

**P:** **You won't be harmed by the sun during the day or by the moon at night.**

**L:** The LORD will protect you and keep you safe from all dangers.

**P:** **The LORD will protect you now and always, wherever you go.**

**SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**Hebrews 11:8-12, 12:1-2**

**HOMILY**

**Rev. Dave Ostendorf**

**SONG**

**“Abraham Journeyed to a New Country”**

*Abraham journeyed to a new country; Sarah went with him, journeying, too.*

*Slaves down in Egypt fled Pharaoh’s army; Ruth left the home and people she knew.*

*Some heard the promise—God’s hand would lead bless them! Some fled from hunger, famine and pain. Some let a place where others oppressed them; All trusted God and started again.*

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH (taken from the New Zealand Church)**

**You, O God, are supreme and holy. You create our world and give us life.**

**Your purpose overarches everything we do. You have always been with us. You are God.**

**You, O God, are infinitely generous, good beyond all measure.**

**You came to us before we came to you.**

**You have revealed and proved your love for us in Jesus Christ, who lived and died and rose again. You are with us now. You are God.**

**You, O God, are Holy Spirit. You empower us to be your gospel in the world.**

**You reconcile and hear; you overcome death. You are our God. We worship you. Amen.**

## RITE OF CONFIRMATION FOR JENNA MARIE LAWRENCE

*Welcome*

*Questions of the Candidates*

*Prayer*

*Act of Confirmation*

*Prayer of Confirmation*

**All: O Merciful God, we rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in the Spirit's power to awaken us to new truth and to inspire us to venture into the fullness of life. We give you thanks that Jenna has been moved to affirm her baptism. Help her to live not for herself but for Christ and those whom Christ loves. Keep her steady and abounding in hope, never giving up, pressing toward the goal of life with you in Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Welcome*

**L: Let us, the people of First Congregational United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.**

**P: We promise you our continuing friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

*Presentation of Cross*

*The cross presented to our Confirmand was hand-made by Bob Johnson, a church member.*

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

**...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

***"We Are Marching in the Light of God"***

*We are marching in the light of God, we are marching in the light of God.*

*We are marching in the light of God, we are marching in the light of God.*

## \*BLESSING

## POSTLUDE

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

**Those who are ill or recovering:**

Augie (friend of Rose Rude), Peg Thompson, Roger Hirstein, Jim, Mischa (friend of Bobbie Kuhn), Sam (grandson of Jan and Glenn Hansen), Barbara Stephens, Marjorie Faulks

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

- For those who took part in the family conversations as we plan for the fall, may the Holy Spirit guide us
- 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 who are now searching for a new Youth Minister, that they may find someone who will love our church kids and help them grow in God's love
- For the Church Van Campaign, that we may quickly raise enough funds to purchase a used 15 passenger van
- For Carol Merriman who is helping at Moon Beach Camp this summer
- For those who received their second vaccine here at church on Wednesday, June 23, that it may speed our return to normal
- For the UCC General Synod meeting online July 11-18, that they may help us grow in love of Christ
- 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 rain for farmers and gardens enduring a drought
- 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 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 our fractured nation that we may find ways to come together and solve our real problems

**Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

- For the gift of a beautiful week full of something for everyone—hot, cold, rain and sun
- For Marjorie Faulks who turned 98 on June 14—congratulations!
- For Dave Mountain who polished our communion table candles—they look brand new!
- For Carole Mottaz who has been nominated as this year's UWRF distinguished alumnus—what an honor!
- For healing from cancer for Megan (daughter of Janice Healy) & Jackie (sister of Marshall Skule), thanks be to God!
- 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 our church mowing team: Mike Stifter, Ryan Luedtke, Larry Peterson and Joel Larsen—hallelujah!
- For Sawyer Sitz, son of Heather and Dan Sitz who was 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 Jenna Lawrence to be confirmed on June 27 and Cheyenne Wilson to be confirmed on August 15 (due to Covid), that they may grow in the faith and love of Jesus
- For Tim Bylander who is single handedly renovating the lower level bathroom and tiling the serving counter in the Fellowship Hall—it looks mighty fine
- For the nearly 180 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God

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

- For the family of Mark Mahoney, son of Barb and Terry Mahoney, who died suddenly in an accident this past week, that they may be strengthened by our support and God's grace and peace
- For the family of friends of Scott Ainsworth who gathered this Saturday at Hoffman Park to remember and celebrate his life (Scott died in December), may they receive God's grace and peace
- For the 600,000 Americans who died of Covid, may they not have died in vain
- For the families of Ruth Reilly, Ruth Bowman and Phil Stewart who gathered this past week to remember and celebrate their lives

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



## **PEACH FUNDRAISER**

It's time to place your order for the delicious Washington State Peaches! Single layer box \$22.00 or two or more single layer boxes for \$20.00 each box. The peaches should be arriving early August. We will call when pick up begins.

### **There are 3 ways to order:**

1. Email: [office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org)
2. Sign up link on website: [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://www.firstchurchrf.org)
3. Call: 715-425-2052 – order Mon-Thurs from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm or leave a message

**Order deadline is July 25.** When placing an order, please provide your name, phone number and the number of boxes you would like to order. Thank you for your support!

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### **Unto Us A Child Is Given!**

Please welcome Sawyer Thomas Sitz, son of Dan and Heather, grandson of Maxine and Tom Sitz, who was baptized into the Christian faith in a water-filled service on Sunday, June 20. Please pray for strength, wisdom, and courage as together we help him grow into the love and grace of Jesus.



### **Memorial Garden**

The Church Memorial Garden was dedicated on May 30 and has welcomed home our first church saint, Ruth Reilly, on Saturday, June 19 after her Memorial Service. The Memorial Garden is intended to be a peaceful resting place for our church saints and a place of healing for family members. More details can be found on the church website which can also be requested from the church.



Many thanks to our Memorial Committee for getting this ready (Susan Walden, Lu Lueck, Marshall Skule, JoAnne Friedell and Pastor Chris).





## **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!

**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Hebrews 11:8-12, 12:1-2**

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

*Worship participants for this week:*

<i>Audio/Visual:</i>	<i>Jeff Hoffman, Mike Stifter</i>
<i>Music:</i>	<i>Marsha Pearson, David Reilly, Emily Stifter</i>
<i>Liturgist:</i>	<i>Jenna Lawrence</i>
<i>Preacher:</i>	<i>Pastor Dave Ostendorf</i>
<i>Baptism:</i>	<i>Pastor Katie Jo Bielke, St. John’s UCC, Collinsville, IL</i>
<i>Confirmation:</i>	<i>Pastor Stacy Johnson Myers</i>

**Treasurer’s Report**

	<u>June 20, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,440	\$ 273,284
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 231,550

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

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.