

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

July 25, 2021



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

July 25, 2021

"Ninth Sunday after Pentecost"

9:30 am

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: The gift of a new day,

P: Unlived, untried, ready to be opened.

L: A new day with surprising miracles;

P: With love to be given,

L: Kindness to be shared

P: And peace to be enjoyed.

L: The gift of a new day,

P: God's gift to us.

L: Let us receive it with joy

P: And live it in expectation.

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

HYMN

"Down to the River Pray to Pray"

Colin Cosgrove

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Creating God, in love you moved over the waters of chaos and separated sea from dry land.

P: And yet, we cling tightly to rigid boundaries of our own making.

L: You claim us in the waters of baptism and declare us dead to sin and alive in Christ.

P: But too often we deny that call, conforming ourselves to the whims of culture.

L: And at Pentecost, you released your transforming spirit to flow through church and world.

P: But we want to tame that wildness, channeling your spirit through banks of ordered safety.

L: Transform us, we pray. Soften the unyielding edges of our hearts.

P: Loosen our grip on "the way it's always been" and prepare us for the joy of "the way it still can be," through Jesus Christ. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Friends, hear this good news. Jesus Christ is our peace.

P: His power is unequalled, his grace is unrestrained, his strength is steadfast, and his embrace is sufficient to carry all that we are and hope to be.

L: Friends, let us believe and live the good news!

P: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

L: The peace of the Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

*GLORIA

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Ephesians 3:14-21

PSALM 145:10-18

L: All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your faithful shall bless you.

P: They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, to make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

L: Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

P: The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds.

L: The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.

P: The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.

L: The LORD is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings.

P: The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

GOSPEL LESSON

John 6:1-15

HOMILY

Rev. Chris Myers

HYMN

“Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah”

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – The Apostles Creed (A Litany)**

L: I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth

P: And maker of black, brown, red, yellow, and white persons,

L: And in Jesus Christ – his only son, our Lord, conceived by the Holy Spirit

P: To live in eternity

L: Born of the virgin Mary,

P: To live on earth.

L: Suffered under Pontius Pilate,

P: And you and me

L: Was crucified, dead, and buried. On the third day, he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he shall come to judge the living and dead –

P: Including you and me.

L: I believe in the Holy Spirit;

P: Present in five o’clock traffic, present in family discussions, present in the lives of those on welfare, present in the people of America and Afghanistan, Africa and Iraq, present in this congregation and present in myself.

L: I believe in the holy catholic church,

P: Which includes Baptists and Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and a lot of others.

L: I believe in the communion of saints,

P: And the communion of all people around one universal table.

L: I believe in the forgiveness of sin,

P: For community leaders apprehended by the law, for people who spread rumors, for those who slam down phones, for proud professors – for bullies – for murderers – for pastors and parents, and even for me.

L: I believe in the resurrection of the body –

P: For people I can’t stand, for those who criticize my work, for my father and mother, for myself,

L: And the life everlasting,

P: I am trying Lord, but I need your help. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Garden Song” by Pete Seegar

Colin Cosgrove

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.

HYMN

"I'll Fly Away"

Congregation join on refrain:

*I'll fly away, O glory, I'll fly away.
When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away.*

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

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New Church Van: THANK YOU! Thanks to a matching \$5000 grant from a church member and your incredible generosity, we have reached our goal of buying a new church van. A small team of church leaders is contacting area Ford dealers to price and order our new vehicle. We are overwhelmed by your gifts and look forward to dedicating it this fall.

Peaches: Our Peach Fundraiser is back! Enjoy some delicious Washington State Peaches and support our youth ministry fund. Single layer box \$22.00 or two or more single layer boxes for \$20.00 each box. The peaches should be arriving early August. To order: sign up on the table or sign up online on the church website. Thank you for your support! **Order deadline is today!**

Coffee Fellowship Hosts Needed: Coffee Fellowship is back! Please sign up to help host and serve. Everything you need is provided, you just need to get there a little early to get things ready, serve and do a quick clean up. Sign up on the table or on the church website.

Liturgists Needed: Please sign up to be a Sunday liturgist. You will lead us in the Call to Worship and a Scripture text. The bulletin will be sent via email to you on Thursday. Please sign up on the table or on the church website.

Welcomers Needed: Please sign up to be a welcomer on Sunday morning before the 9:30 am worship service. One person is needed for at the bottom of the stairs at the 3rd Street Entrance. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to the Worship Service. Please sign up on the table or on the church website.

Worship participants for this week:

Audio/Visual: Jeff Hoffman
Music: Terry Mithun, David Reilly, Colin Cosgrove
Special Music: Colin Cosgrove
Liturgist: Jean Smith
Coffee Fellowship: Jean Smith
Preacher: Rev. Chris Myers

Upcoming Events

Mon., July 26	6:30 pm	Softball Game at Hoffman Park
Tues., July 27	9:00 am	Yoga in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom
Thur., July 29	9:00 am	Yoga in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom
Sun., Aug 1	9:30 am	In-Person Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream
	10:30 am	Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:00 am	WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM
Tues., Aug 3	9:00 am	Vacation Bible School
Wed., Aug 4	9:00 am	Vacation Bible School
Thurs., Aug 5	9:00 am	Vacation Bible School

Treasurer's Report

	<u>July 18, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,642	\$ 285,914
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 268,598

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

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, Sam (grandson of Jan and Glenn Hansen), Barbara Stephens, Marjorie Faulks, Bernie Van Osdale, Wendy MacDougall (wife of our Association Minister Rob), Troy Veith

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our congregation as it takes another step back to normal by moving worship to the sanctuary
- For the Among Friends program as they plan their October 5 re-opening, come Holy Spirit
- For those who will rest in and enjoy our church Memorial Garden, may it kindle peace, faith, and joy
- For the Youth Ministry Search team who are now interviewing potential Youth Ministers, that they may find someone who will love our church kids and help them grow in God's love
- For Coffee Fellowship Hosts, Welcomers and Liturgists who help enhance our Sunday morning
- 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 those who are not vaccinated and getting sick from the Delta variant, please talk to your doctor
- 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 return to worship in the sanctuary!
- For VBS and the way it brings together so many people in creative, intergenerational ways
- For Roger and Joyce Kampstra who celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary Sunday, July 11, may your love continue to grow
- For successfully raising money for a new church van!
- For healing from cancer for Megan (daughter of Janice Healy) and Jackie (sister of Marshall Skule), thanks be to God!
- For our church mowing team: Mike Stifter, Ryan Luedtke, Larry Peterson and Joel Larsen—hallelujah!
- For Jenna Lawrence 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 185 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Dick Reilly who died in May and whose graveside service will be Saturday, July 31 at 10am, may he rest from his labors
- For the family of Mark Mahoney, son of Barb and Terry Mahoney who died suddenly in an accident recently and whose Memorial Service was here at church, that they may be strengthened by our support and God's grace and peace
- For the family and friends John Hyland who died after getting lost during his morning walk, may his family and friends receive God's grace and peace
- For the family of Barb Greub who died last year and whose Memorial Service was held recently, that her husband Lou and their family may celebrate her life
- For the 610,000 Americans and over 4 million worldwide who have died of Covid, may they not have died in vain

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

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 6:1-15

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.