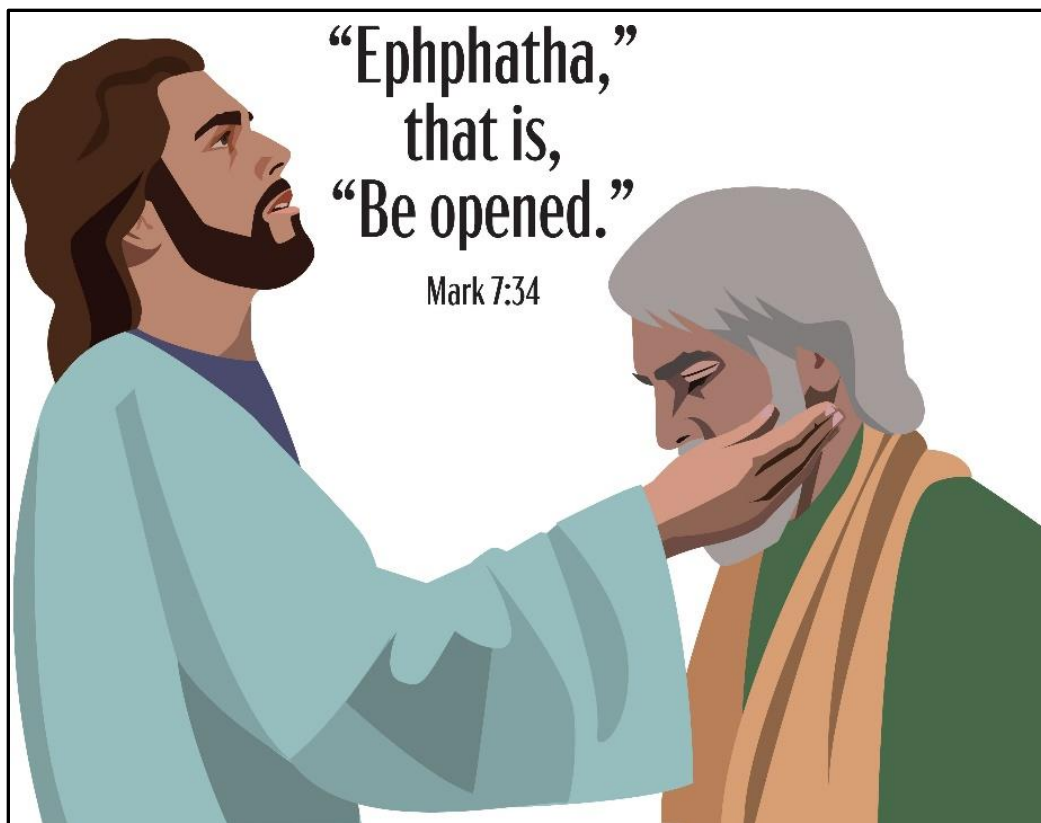


**First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
River Falls, Wisconsin**

**September 5, 2021**



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

September 5, 2021

*"Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost"*

9:30 am

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**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: God has given us holy hands:

**P: Hands to caress a deep ache, a tight knot of stress and tension;**

L: Hands to hold a hurt child, embrace a lonely friend, care for one who is ill;

**P: Hands to create a loving meal or a work of art;**

L: Hands to till the soil and make a bed;

**P: Hands to write to one in need or call another with good news.**

L: God has given us holy hands,

**P: Hands to bring God's touch to earth and to do God's will.**

L: On this Labor Day weekend let us use our holy hands in God's service.

**All: Come let us join together in worship, prayer and praise!**

**HYMN**

*"It Is Well with My Soul"*

*Congregation join on refrain:*

*It is well... with my soul..., it is well, it is well with my soul.*

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of all Creation, **we pray for all those who labor. We give you thanks for the skills and talents that enable us to do our work. We ask that you help us to do our best in whatever vocation you have called us to. We know that there is no job that is menial in your eyes. We lift up those who are currently without work, that they would soon find employment that utilizes their gifts. Help us, also, not to be consumed by our work, or by material desires. We are called to labor, but also to rest. Guide us so that we may lead balanced lives with time both to work and rest, serve and worship. We offer our prayers to you, trusting in your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Trusting God's mercy and grace, wisdom and instruction, let us live as God's people and be at peace. The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**P: And also with you.**

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**(Please greet one another with signs of peace)**

**\*GLORIA (Sung twice)**

*Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah, Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah  
Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah, Hallelujah, Hal-le-lu-jah*

**SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23**

**PSALM 146**



**L:** Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!

**P:** **I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.**

**L:** Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.

**P:** **When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish. R**

**L:** Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.

**P:** **The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.**

**L:** The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

**P:** **The LORD watches over the strangers; upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked God brings to ruin.**

**L:** The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.

**P:** **Praise the LORD! R**

**GOSPEL LESSON**

**Mark 7:31-37**

**HOMILY**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**HYMN**

***“Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior”***

*Congregation join on refrain:*

***Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry;  
While on others you are calling, do not pass me by.***

## **\*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.**

## **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.**

## THE COMMUNION

(All Christians, regardless of denomination, tradition or age are welcome at the table of our Lord.)

### *The Invitation to the Supper*

**L:** Beloved in Christ, the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week, Jesus Christ was raised from death, appeared to Mary Magdalene, on the same day sat at table with two disciples, and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**P:** **This is the joyful feast of the people of God. Men and women, young and old, come from the east and the west, the north and south, and gather about Christ's table.**

**L:** This table is for all people who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

### *The Great Thanksgiving*

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

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

**L:** Lift up your hearts.

**P:** **We lift them up to the Lord.**

**L:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**P:** **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**L:** We offer you praise, ...

### *The Words of Institution*

**L:** We rejoice in this holy meal as we together proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:** **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

### *Prayer of Consecration*

### *Distribution of the Elements*

*Hymns during the distribution of the elements:*

***"I Come With Joy"***

***"You Are Mine"***

*Congregation join on refrain:*

***Do not be afraid, I am with you. I have called you each by name.***

***Come and follow me, I will bring you home; I love you and you are mine.***

### *Prayer of Thanksgiving*

**All:** **We give you thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## HYMN

### ***“Every Time I Feel the Spirit”***

*Congregation join on refrain:*

***Every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart I will pray.  
Yes, every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart I will pray.***

## \*BLESSING

## POSTLUDE

*Note about offering: During the pandemic we are not passing the offering plate. We thankfully receive your gifts, tithes and offerings in the offering plate on the back table. Your generosity is the engine that powers our church community. Thank you.*

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### *Worship participants for this week:*

*Preacher: Rev. Chris Myers*  
*Audio/Visual: Jeff Hoffman*  
*Music: Jamie Mills, David Reilly*  
*Organist: Marsha Pearson*  
*Liturgist: Jean Smith*  
*Deacons: Kathy Rausch, Karen Lloyd, Traci Hagberg*  
*Coffee Fellowship: Beatty Family*  
*Welcomer: Kimberly Swanson*  
*Trustee: Bob Ferguson*

*Altar table flowers are given by JoAnn Mathews  
in memory of Harvey Mathews.*

### **Treasurer's Report**

	<u>Aug 29, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 3,691	\$ 329,015
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 324,170

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, Wendy MacDougall (wife of our Association Minister Rob), Troy Veith, Edna (friend of the Danielsons and Petersons), Rosalie Harper (cousin of JoAnn Lentz), Carolyn Larrabee, Donna Moseman, Kelly (friend of Barb Stephens), Don Larson, Pat (friend of Jean Smith), Neil (son of Yvonne Benson)

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

- For church ministries gearing up for the fall, may God guide them as they seek to find creative and faithful ways to gather
- For the Among Friends program as they plan their October 5 re-opening, come Holy Spirit
- For our chancel choir and music groups who are starting up, may they safely gather and spread their joy
- For Coffee Fellowship Hosts, welcomers and liturgists who help enhance our Sunday morning
- For Gus de Souza and Wayne and Marian Wolfe who returned home and were recently interred in the Church Memorial Garden, may they rest from their labors
- 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 teachers and kids starting school, may they have a much better year
- For those cleaning up after another deadly hurricane along the Gulf and East coasts, may God bless the recovery efforts
- For the people of Afghanistan, especially its women
- For our troubled creation as climate change rears its ugly head, that we may collectively change our behavior
- For those fighting forest fires, may God speed their work
- For healthcare workers who are exhausted, may they be given God's strength
- For renters who are worried about paying their rent and landlords wondering how they can maintain their properties

**Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

- For Matthew Bylander who graduated from Army Prime Power School August 26 and who will be deployed to Saudi Arabia, thank you for your service
- For the birth of Thomas Jay Crosby first grandson to Allen and Dianne Barnes (11pounds!), may he bring great joy
- For the weekly Mini Farmers Market in our Fellowship Hall when people (Roland Roe and others) bring in their fresh veggies for us to enjoy, bless you
- For the birth of Ella Suzanne Middlestaedt, new and first grandchild to Ann and Scott Jameson
- For Bailey Plackner who is recently engaged to Alex Boyer and planning a July 2022 wedding, may you grow in love
- For the nearly 190 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God

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

- For the families of the 13 Marines killed in Kabul, may they be comforted
- For those in mourning including the families of Mark Mahoney, John Hyland and Barb Greub, that they may receive the peace of Christ
- For the 630,000 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: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23**

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,  
and favor is better than silver or gold.

The rich and the poor have this in common:  
the LORD is the maker of them all.

Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity,  
and the rod of anger will fail.

Those who are generous are blessed,  
for they share their bread with the poor.

Do not rob the poor because they are poor,  
or crush the afflicted at the gate;  
for the LORD pleads their cause  
and despoils of life those who despoil them.

**GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 7:31-37**

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."