

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

September 19, 2021



***Come and Be Fed
Fed by Grace***

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN**

September 19, 2021

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

***CALL TO WORSHIP (From Psalm 98)**

- L: Sing to the Lord a new song, for God has done marvelous things!
- P: **We give thanks to you, Lord, for you have done marvelous things!**
- L: When we were walking in darkness,
- P: **You were there!**
- L: When we were kneeling in weakness,
- P: **You were there!**
- L: When we were needing forgiveness,
- P: **You were there!**
- L: When we were searching for your grace,
- P: **You were there!**
- L: We give thanks to you, Lord, for you have done marvelous things!
- All: **Come let us worship the God of grace who leads us into abundant life!**

***HYMN**

Lead Me, Guide Me

Congregation join on refrain:

***Lead me, guide me, along the way; for if you lead me, I cannot stray.
Lord, let me walk each day with thee. Lead me, oh Lord, lead me.***

***OPENING PRAYER**

Gracious God, **what a gift it is to be your people. We do not take this role lightly. We need unity; we need your guidance; we want to represent you well to a broken world. Thank you for rooting us in Christ, and gifting us with the Holy Spirit. Open our eyes to the Spirit's presence. When we fail, grant us grace. When we succeed, may we give you thanks and praise. May all that we do and say be a reflection of your great love for all of us in Jesus Christ. Amen.**

- L: Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we have all fallen short of the God's call.
- P: **So let us ask God for grace to be reconciled in faith to God, to neighbor and to ourselves.**
- L: In Christ and by grace, we are forgiven.
- P: **Thanks be to God.**

L: 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)**

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Give the glory and the honor to the Lord!

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 15:11-32

Hearing the Word

PSALM 41

R ***Rejoice and be glad! Blessed are you; holy are you!***
Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God!

L: Happy are those who consider the poor; the LORD delivers them in the day of trouble.

P: **The LORD protects them and keeps them alive; they are called happy in the land.**

L: You do not give them up to the will of their enemies.

P: **The LORD sustains them on their sickbed; in their illness you heal all their infirmities.**

L: As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you."

P: **My enemies wonder in malice when I will die, and my name perish. R**

L: And when they come to see me, they utter empty words, while their hearts gather mischief; when they go out, they tell it abroad.

P: **All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me.**

L: They think that a deadly thing has fastened on me, that I will not rise again from where I lie.

P: **Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted the heel against me.**

L: But you, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up.

P: **By this I know that you are pleased with me; because my enemy has not triumphed over me.**

L: But you have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in your presence forever.

P: **Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen. R**

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG OF BLESSING

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

Celebrating the Meal

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

The Invitation to the Meal

L: Come to this sacred table, not because you must, but because you may. Come not because you are fulfilled, but because in your emptiness you stand in need of God's mercy and assurance. Come not to express an opinion, but to seek a presence and to pray for a spirit. Come to this table, then, sisters and brothers, just as you are. Partake and share. It is spread for you and for me, that we might again know that God has come to us, shared our common lot, and invited us to join the people of God's new age.

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: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, ...

The Words of Institution

L: As we 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:

Gift of Love - Jubilee Ringers

Bind Us Together

Congregation join on refrain:

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken.

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, bind us together in love.

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.

SONG (Children preschool through grade 8 leave for Sunday School.)

***Love is flowing: love is flowing, love is flowing from the fountain of life;
Love is flowing: love is flowing, love is flowing from the fountain of life.***

***Grace is flooding: grace is flooding, grace is flooding from the fountain of life.
Grace is flooding: grace is flooding, grace is flooding from the fountain of life.***

Proclaiming the Word

SERMON

Come and Be Fed by Grace

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

How Can I Keep From Singing

Congregation join on refrain:

***No storm can shake my in-most calm, while to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?***

***STATEMENT OF FAITH** – from the Iona Ecumenical Community in Scotland

L: Let us affirm our faith.

P: We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of the One God, maker and sustainer of earth, sea and sky. Born of Mary, faithful to the God of Abraham and Sarah, Jesus healed the sick, served the poor, and proclaimed heaven on earth. Condemned by the religious, crucified by the state, He died but transformed even death and rose to life everlasting. He blessed the disciples with his Holy Spirit and sent them forth, east and west, north and south. We commit ourselves to Jesus, to one another as brothers and sisters and to the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Turn To Us and Give Us Grace

Jubilee Ringers

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.

Sending

***HYMN**

God of Grace, and God of Glory

***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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Assisting in today's worship service are:

Liturgist:	<i>Steven Koecher</i>
Coffee Fellowship:	<i>Susan Walden</i>
Deacons:	<i>Marshall Skule, Cindy Gandrud, Traci Hagberg</i>
Welcomers:	<i>Steven and Lara Koecher</i>
Nursery:	<i>Kahla Fuller</i>
Organist:	<i>Terry Mithun</i>
Video Team:	<i>Jeff Hoffman, Mike Stifter</i>
Trustee:	<i>Tim Bylander</i>
Counters:	<i>Trish Graves, Jane Truesdill</i>
Music Coordinator & Bell Director:	<i>Jamie Mills</i>
Choir Director:	<i>Sarah Plum</i>
Church Moderator:	<i>Joel Larsen</i>
Office Administrator:	<i>Missy Luedtke</i>
Youth Pastors:	<i>Alex and Sarah Plum</i>
Minister for Community:	<i>Rev. Dave Ostendorf</i>
CE Minister:	<i>Rev. Stacy Johnson Myers</i>
Senior Pastor:	<i>Rev. Chris Myers</i>

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Sept 12, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 10,421	\$ 336,886
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 342,694

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 on JoAnn Lentz), Carolyn Larrabee, Donna Moseman, Kelly (friend of Barb Stephens), Don Larson, Pat (friend of Jean Smith), Neil and Kamilla (relatives of Yvonne Benson), Joyce Kampstra, Duane Church, Dan and Mari

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For the return of our bell choir and its director, Jamie Mills, may they glorify God together
- For Middle Schoolers meeting for their first Youth Group Meeting today, may they grow together in love and grace
- For those who gathered for the Youth Bonfire this past Wednesday, that it may nourish your souls
- For those who will receive college packs, that they may bring the love of God close to our college students
- For the Among Friends program as they plan their October 5 re-opening, come Holy Spirit
- For Coffee Fellowship Hosts, welcomers and liturgists who help enhance our Sunday morning
- 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 stressed out world, may we find the peace of Christ and the joy of faith
- For the 12,500 Afghani refugees at Fort McCoy, WI, that they may be strengthened in their journey
- 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 after the pandemic, may you be given God's strength

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For a return of choir and bells, may they make beautiful music together
- For Darlene Sumption who celebrates her 95th birthday on Sunday, September 19
- For the 35th wedding anniversary of Yvonne and Fred Benson who unfortunately celebrated in Covid quarantine
- 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 nearly 205 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 665,000 Americans and over 4.55 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.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 15:11-32

Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

Tues., Sept 21	9:00-10:00 am	- Yoga in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom
	6:30-7:45 pm	- Boards and Committees Meetings
	7:45-8:45 pm	- Church Council Meeting
Wed., Sept 22	1:00-2:30 pm	- Adult Bible Study
	6:00-7:00 pm	- Jubilee Ringers
	6:30-7:30 pm	- Middle School Youth Group
	6:30-7:30 pm	- Confirmation Year 3 (Grade 9)
	7:00-8:00 pm	- Chancel Choir
Thurs., Sept 23	9:00-10:00 am	- Yoga in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom
	3:00-4:30 pm	- Book Club Meeting
Sun., Sept 26	8:45-9:45 am	- Adult Forum in the Youth Room
	9:00-9:45 am	- Music Rehearsal in the Fellowship Hall
	10:00-11:00 am	- Worship Service in the Fellowship Hall and Livestream
	10:00-10:30 am	- Children in Worship
	10:30-11:15 am	- Sunday School (Pre-School – Grade 8)
	11:00-11:30 am	- Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:15 am-12:30 pm	- High School Brunch/Meet and Greet