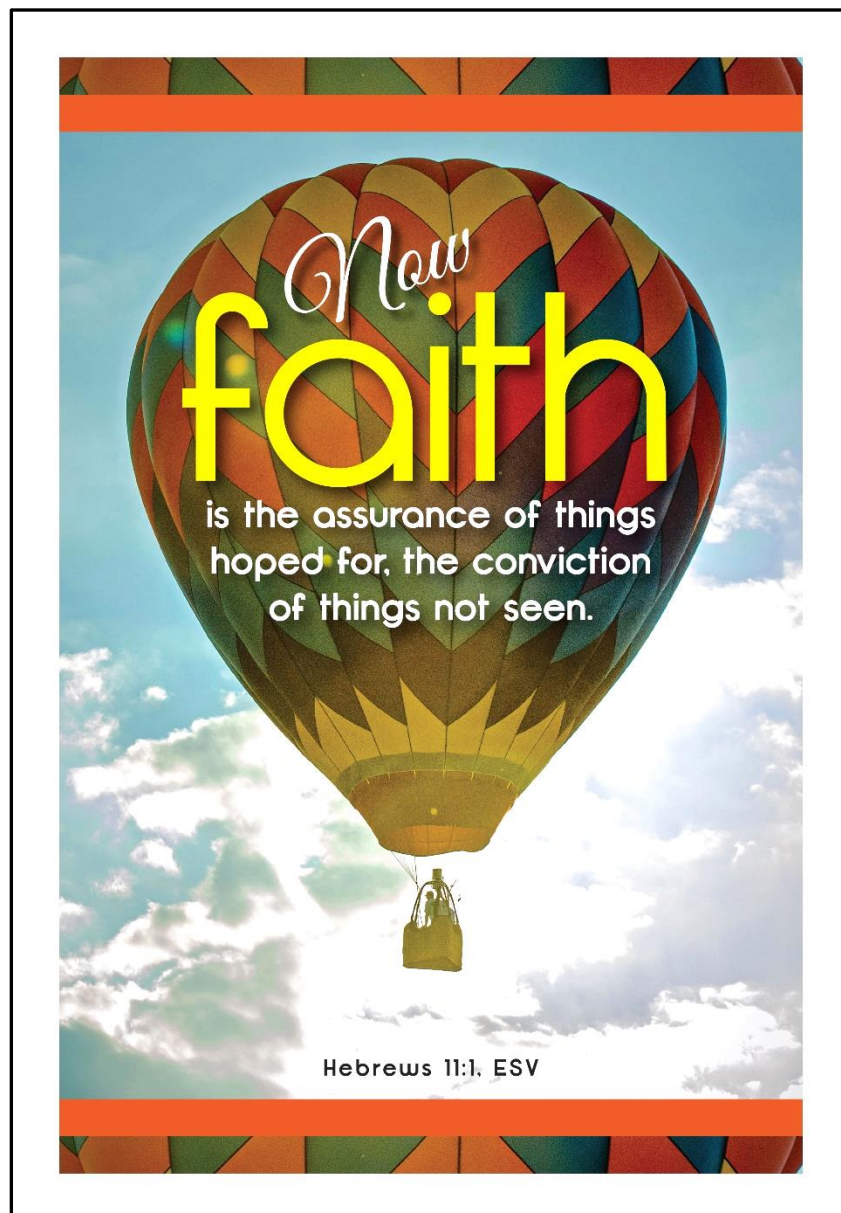


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

November 7, 2021



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

All Saints Sunday

November 7, 2021

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Creator God, in the midst of the swirling world we gather to give you thanks.

P: Open our hearts and minds and spirits to the indwelling of your Holy Spirit.

L: Clear our minds, our worries, our unease, our disappointments and be with us this holy day.

P: Renew us, lift us, heal us, strengthen us to live as your people.

L: Grant us joy! Grant us wonder!

P: And let us be ever-grateful for the life and love you have so generously given us and all the human family.

All: Come! Worship the Living God!!

***HYMN**

Let Us Build a House

Congregation join on refrain:

All are welcome, all are welcome

All are welcome in this place

***OPENING PRAYER**

Merciful God, be gracious to us today, for we are in need of your mercy and love and guidance. We are often quick to doubt and slow to pray. We are tempted to let go of faith when we need to hang on to it. We are discouraged by wrong when we need to be encouraged by your unbounded love. Open our hearts and spirits to the indwelling of your Spirit and help us remember that you are with us all our days. Amen.

L: God's forgiveness is gifted to all who seek God in faithfulness.

P: Hear and believe the Good News: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God!

L: May 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**

He Came Down That We May Have Love

He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;

He came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Kings 17:8-15

PSALM 95:1-7; 96:1-2

R *Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*

L: Come, let us sing to God; let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

P: **Let us come before the presence of God with thanksgiving, raising a loud shout with psalms.**

L: For Our God is a great God, and a great Sovereign above all gods.

P: **In your hands, O God, are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the hills are yours also. R**

L: The sea is yours, for you made it, and your hands have molded the dry land.

P: **Come, let us bow down, and bend our knee, and kneel before our Creator.**

L: You God, are the Creator, and we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand.

P: **Sing to God a new song, sing to God all the earth. Sing to God and bless God's name. Tell of God's salvation every day. R**

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Stacy Johnson 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 them, 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: We praise your name 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:

Taste and See

Congregation join on refrain:

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

O taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

You Satisfy the Hungry Heart

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain (Unison)

You sat-is-fy the hun-gry heart with gift of fin-est wheat;
come give to us, O sav-ing Lord, the bread of life to eat.

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.)

*What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit; oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.*

Proclaiming the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Hebrews 11:1-3; 13-16

SERMON

Choosing Hope. Really??

Rev. Dave Ostendorf

***SONG**

Choose to Hope

Congregation join on refrain:

*In the times of darkness, in times of fear, choose to hope,
Choose to love, and know that God is near.*

***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.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

Come My Savior, Come My King

Chancel Choir

TELL ME A STORY

Jill Paulson

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

*SONG

Be Thou My Vision

*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art
thou my best thought by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.*

*Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my redeemer, my love thou hast won, thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.*

*Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise, thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart, Great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.*

*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>Jan Hansen</i>
Coffee Fellowship:	<i>Discipleship Committee</i>
Deacons:	<i>Marshall Skule, Karen Lloyd, Suzanne Hagen, Sheila Peterson, Laura Anderson</i>
Welcomers:	<i>Mary and Sonny Miner</i>
Nursery:	<i>Kahla Fuller</i>
Pianist:	<i>Marsha Pearson</i>
Video Team:	<i>Jeff Hoffman, Mike Stifter</i>
Trustee:	<i>Trish Graves</i>
Counters:	<i>Dennis Linder, Jean Smith</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>

Altar table flowers are given by Roland and Marie Roe in memory of James DeLuca.

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Oct 31, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,555	\$ 395,984
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 407,528

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:

Peg Thompson, Roger Hirstein, Jim, Wendy MacDougall (wife of our Association Minister Rob), Edna (friend of the Danielsons and Petersons), Rosalie Harper (cousin on JoAnn Lentz), Donna Moseman, Joan Hyland, Charles Hoffman (father of Jeff Hoffman), Jean Hagberg, Tom (friend of Traci), Peter Kwong, Jeff Peterson, Dirk Ficca, Jim Filkins, Barb Wall, Judith Permann, John Sullivan, Ella Johnson, Neal Prochnow

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For those who share their faith story as part of the Tell Me A Story segment in worship
- For Andy Kruger, Laura Miller and the crew gearing up for the annual Giving Thanks Meal next Sunday, November 14 (sign up for your meal!)
- For our faithful Wednesday night kitchen crew of Katy Kapaun, Evelyn Purdy, Susan Walden and Anna Anderson—thanks for feeding us!
- For our faithful Wednesday School workers, Jen and Alaina Syverson, Connor Rude and Christina Krueger—thank you!
- 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 those dealing with mental health issues, may they not struggle alone
- For missionaries abducted in Haiti (men, women and children) and for those abducting them
- For veterans as we approach Veterans Day on Thursday, November 11, that they may be honored and be at peace
- For our stressed out world, may we find the peace of Christ and the joy of faith
- For the 13,000 Afghani refugees at Fort McCoy, WI, that they may be strengthened in their journey
- For leaders and youth who keep strong in efforts to address our troubled creation as climate change rears its ugly head, that we may collectively change our behavior

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For the River Falls Varsity Soccer team advancing to the state tournament including our church interns Evan Luedtke and Justin Elsesser -- Go Wildcats!
- For our Sunday School and Wednesday School teachers and volunteers—you rock!
- For our choir helping to lead worship today—may your notes kindle joy in our hearts
- For the nearly 212 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Noah Dwyer, a sophomore at RFHS who died recently of a rare blood infection, may he rest in God's care
- For those in mourning for Jim MacDaniel (father of Jane Wakefield), Paul Anderson (husband of Synneva) and Nancy Hines (sister of Diane Welsh), may they be comforted
- For the 747,000 Americans and over 5 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: 1 Kings 17:8-16

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you." So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink." As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the LORD sends rain on the earth." She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Hebrews 11:1-3+; 13-16

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

By faith Abel offered a sacrifice...

By faith Enoch was carried away to another life...

By faith Noah... built an ark...

By faith Abraham obeyed the call...

By faith even Sarah herself received strength to conceive...

All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, God has prepared a city for them.