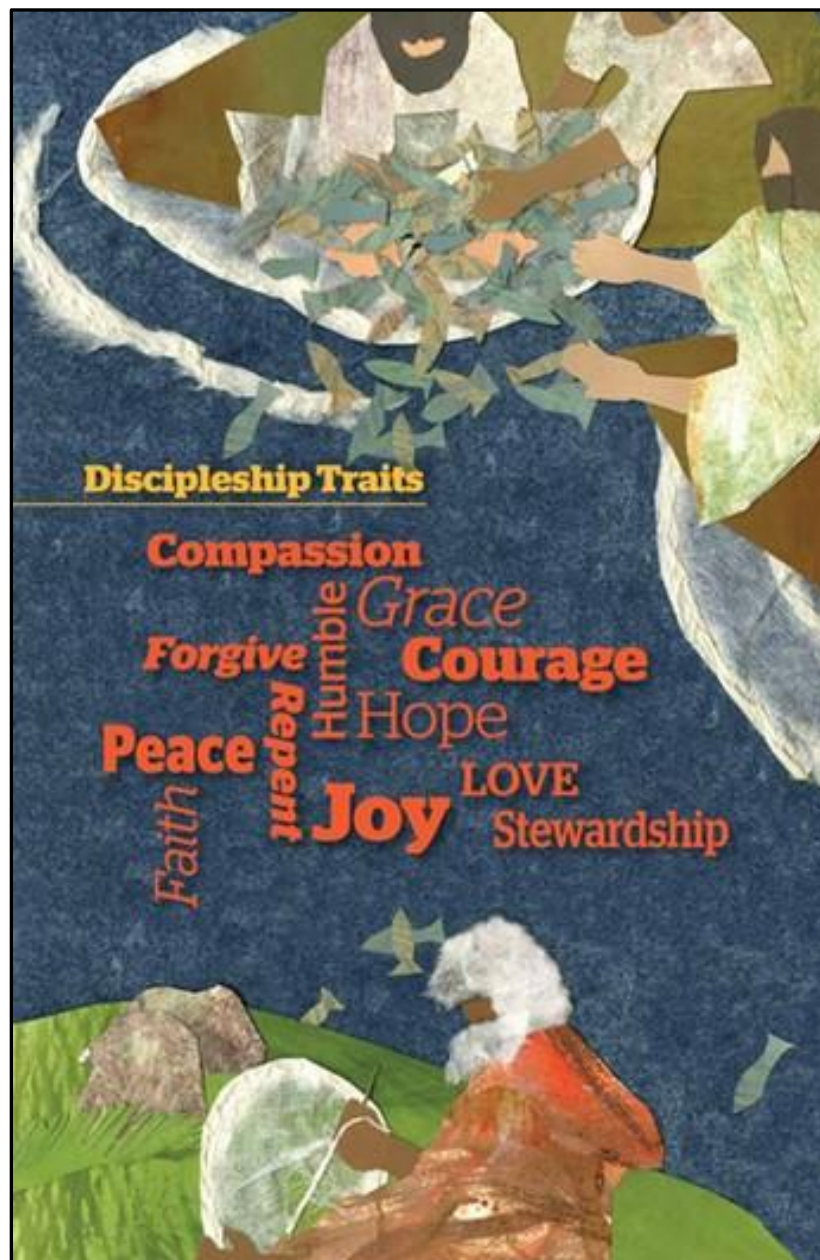


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

November 14, 2021



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

November 14, 2021

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

| |
|------------------|
| Gathering |
|------------------|

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: From the depths of our being, a song of thanks arises, and we pour out our praise for all of God's gifts:

P: **Bread to empower our bodies,**

L: Beauty to quicken our pulse,

P: **Hope to enlarge our vision,**

L: Love to link our lives,

P: **Laughter to soften our wounds,**

L: Passion to shape our maybes,

P: **Community to face our fears,**

L: Come, you thankful people, come.

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

***HYMN**

Come, O Thankful People, Come

#422

***OPENING PRAYER**

Loving God, **you who hold us so gently, teach us the art of letting go of anything that keeps us from your embrace. We grab and clutch things that are often only a passing fad. We go after success and recognition as if they will fill our deepest longings. We saddle relationships with unrealistic and unfair expectations. Holy God, lead us to a deeper sense of gratitude, a growing sense of trust in your ability to provide. Teach us true thanksgiving. Show us the blessings of giving with joy, loving without conditions, sharing from our abundance. Amen.**

L: In Jesus Christ, the sins of the past are gone.

P: **Let us live then as new people, forgiven, freed and sent forth to love and serve.**

L: In 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**

Alleluia! Give the Glory

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give the glory and the honor to the Lord!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give the glory and the honor to the Lord!

OFFERTORY (During the offertory, members of the church are invited to bring their tithes and pledges for the coming year as well as their weekly offering and place them on the communion table.)

"Where Your Treasure Is"

Text: Luke 12: 22-34
Adapt. M.H.

Music: Marty Haugen

Where your treas - ure is, there your
heart shall be. All that you pos-sess will nev-er set you
free. Seek the things that last; come and
learn from me. Where your
treas-ure is, your heart shall be.

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The score includes a key signature change to two flats (B-flat and E-flat) for the final line.

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Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Joel 2:21-27

PSALM 126

R The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

- L: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.
P: **Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”**
L: The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.
P: **Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb.**
L: May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.
P: **Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves. R**

PRESENTATION OF APRONS TO 7TH AND 8TH GRADERS

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG OF BLESSING

***Jesus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long ago,
Taking children on his knee, saying, “Let them come to me.”
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.***

***Jesus loves me! Still today, walking with me on my way,
Wanting as a friend to give light and love to all who live.
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.***

| |
|-----------------------------|
| 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 ye thankful come. Come and eat the bread of life! Come and drink the cup of blessing! Come and gather around Christ’s table as friends and family. Together let us thank the God of abundance and let us take our place as God’s thankful 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: 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:

Seed, Scattered and Sown

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain

Seed, scat-tered and sown, wheat, gath-ered and
grown, bread, bro-ken and shared as one, the
Liv-ing Bread of God. Vine, fruit of the land,
wine, work of our hands, one cup that is shared by all; the
Liv-ing Cup, the Liv-ing Bread of God.

The musical notation is written on five staves in 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests. The lyrics are: 'Seed, scat-tered and sown, wheat, gath-ered and'. The second staff continues with 'grown, bread, bro-ken and shared as one, the'. The third staff continues with 'Liv-ing Bread of God. Vine, fruit of the land,'. The fourth staff continues with 'wine, work of our hands, one cup that is shared by all; the'. The fifth staff concludes with 'Liv-ing Cup, the Liv-ing Bread of God.' and ends with a double bar line.

As We Gather At Your Table

Congregation join on refrain:



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

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 6:25-34

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

Now Thank We All Our God

#419

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – United Church of Canada**

L: We are not alone, we live in God's world.

P: We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God. We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Ain't That a Good News

Chancel Choir

TELL ME A STORY

George Beatty

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**

For the Fruit of All Creation

#425

Verses 1 and 3

***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>Rebecca Ferguson</i> |
| Coffee Fellowship: | <i>Kathy and Beth Rausch</i> |
| Deacons: | <i>Cindy Gandrud, Karen Lloyd, Lois Martin, Linn Lawrence, Jena Most</i> |
| Welcomers: | <i>Sheila Peterson, Jean Smith</i> |
| Nursery: | <i>Kahla Fuller</i> |
| Pianist: | <i>Marsha Pearson</i> |
| Video Team: | <i>Jeff Hoffman, Mike Stifter</i> |
| Trustee: | <i>Deb Hoffman</i> |
| Counters: | <i>Roz Ostendorf, Allen Barnes</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 Sheila, Jennifer "Jasper" and Jaime Peterson
in memory of Jeff Peterson.*

*Altar table flowers are given by Kathy and Beth Rausch in celebration of our return to the sanctuary
and thanksgiving for our meal today!*

Upcoming Events

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|---|
| Sun., Nov 14 | 8:45-9:45 am | Adult Forum in the Youth Room |
| | 9:00-9:45 am | Choir Rehearsal in the Sanctuary |
| | 9:45-11:15 am | Nursery Open |
| | 10:00-11:00 am | Worship Service in the Sanctuary 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 |
| | 11:00-11:30 am | WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM |
| | 11:30 am-1:00 pm | Giving Thanks Meal To Go |
| Mon., Nov 15 | 5:00-6:00 pm | Building Finance Committee Meeting |
| Tues., Nov 16 | 9:00-10:00 am | Yoga in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom |
| | 9:00 am-2:00 pm | Among Friends |
| | 6:30-7:30 pm | Boards and Committees Meetings |
| | 7:30-8:30 pm | Church Council Meeting |
| Wed., Nov 17 | 1:00-2:30 pm | Adult Bible Study |
| | 3:15-5:15 pm | Wednesday School |
| | 5:15-6:00 pm | Wednesday Meal |
| | 6:00-7:00 pm | Jubilee Ringers |
| | 6:30-7:30 pm | Confirmation Year 3 (Grade 9) |
| | 6:30-7:30 pm | Middle School Youth Group |
| | 7:00-8:00 pm | Chancel Choir |
| | 9:00-10:00 am | Yoga in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom |
| | | |
| Thurs., Nov 18 | | |
| Sun., Nov 21 | 8:45-9:45 am | Adult Forum in the Youth Room |
| | 9:00-9:45 am | Music Rehearsal in the Sanctuary |
| | 9:45-11:15 am | Nursery Open |
| | 10:00-11:00 am | Worship Service in the Sanctuary 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 |
| | 11:00-11:30 am | WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM |

Treasurer's Report

| | <u>Nov 7, 2021</u> | <u>Year to Date</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund Income* | \$ 8,050 | \$ 400,534 |
| General Fund Operational Needs | \$ 9,262 | \$ 416,790 |

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), Jean, Peter Kwong, Dirk Ficca, Neal Prochnow, Debbie Bauer, Marjorie Faulks, Debbie Bauer, Judy Henning

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 including George Beatty this Sunday
- For Andy Krueger, Laura Miller, Dave Reilly and the crew gearing up for the annual Giving Thanks Meal this Sunday, November 14, that it may kind joy in our bodies
- For our congregation as we dedicate our 2022 Financial Pledges this Sunday, that together our generosity may empower the mission and ministry of our church in new and exciting ways
- 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 a safe and fruitful hunting season
- For veterans as we celebrated 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 those meeting in Glasgow to help address our troubled creation as climate change rears its ugly head, that we may collectively change our behavior

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For the gift of our Giving Thanks Meal, that it may kindle generosity and gratefulness in each of us
- For Mason Meyer who celebrates his first communion today, that he may grow in faith
- For the gift of the Giving Tree and the families it will bless
- 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 Diane Crist's mother, Bonnie Mertens, who died at the age of 93, may she rest in faith
- For those mourning Judith Permann, Dorothy Friedl, Barb Wall and Jeff Peterson, may you not mourn alone
- For those in mourning for Jim MacDaniel (father of Jane Wakefield), Paul Anderson (husband of Synneva) and Nancy Hines (sister of Diane Welch), 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.

Christmas Shoebox Project: The yoga group and members of First Congregational have supported a “Christmas Shoebox” for the men at the Kinnic Drug and Alcohol Rehab Center in River Falls. We are again collecting items to fill the boxes and bags and then deliver them to the Kinnic Rehab to show that we all care! These shoeboxes contain socks, playing cards, puzzles, soap, toothpaste and many other items. The thick warm gloves have been a welcome addition as well as the nice warm hats!! The new cribbage boards are also a great item the guys really enjoy. We will work with the Wednesday School group in decorating some Christmas bags as well as the older youth helping with wrapping the boxes. A list of items is available. Please leave items in the bin. Cash donations will be used to purchase any needed items. Thank you for your help. If you have any questions, please contact Jean Smith at jsmithler@yahoo.com or at 715-781-6880 or the church office.

Angels on Earth Giving Tree: If you would like to help some children have a better Christmas this year, please select an ornament from the tree and purchase a gift from their wish list. The unwrapped gift with the ornament needs to be at the church **no later than Thursday, December 9th**. Please give the Gift Cards to someone in the church office. If you would like to make a cash donation instead, please send the check (made out to First Congregational Church with “AOE” in the memo line) or cash to the church office. Thank you for your generosity. If you have questions, please contact Diane Welsh (651-334-3128 or 715-386-6620) or the church office.

The Advent Workshop: The annual Advent Workshop for families will be held following Sunday School on **December 5**. The event will include a chance to make a variety of Christmas ornaments and simple snacks. This is a great family event. Please come and invite friends to join you! Please sign up on the table or online.

Inquirer’s Class: Interested in learning more about our life and ministry at First Congregational? Wondering what membership of the church is all about? Come to the Inquirer’s Class on **Tuesday, December 7, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm**. At this gathering you will meet church staff and leaders, meet other newcomers, and learn more about our life and ministry opportunities. Dessert and coffee are served and childcare is available. Please sign up on the table or online.

Advent Evening Prayer: Once again this Advent we will gather for Evening Prayer in the Sanctuary on Wednesday nights using our beloved Holden Evening Prayer. Join us on Wednesday, December 1, 8 and 15 at 6:30 pm for this half hour worship service. Confirmation, church intern and youth groups will join us for worship then go to class or youth group. Wednesday meals will be served in both ‘in person’ and ‘to go’ formats. There will be no Wednesday service on Wednesday, December 22. Our Wednesday Schedule in Advent will be:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 3:45-5:15 pm | Wednesday School |
| 5:15-6:00 pm | Family Meals |
| 5:45-6:30 pm | Bell Practice |
| 6:30-7:00 pm | Evening Prayer and beginning of Conf/Interns. Youth Group |
| 7:00-7:30 pm | Second half of Confirmation/Interns/Youth Group |
| 7:00-8:00 pm | Choir Practice |

Wednesday Meals: Wednesday Meals will return December 1st.

NOTES

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Joel 2:21-27

Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the LORD your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you.

You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 6:25-34

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”