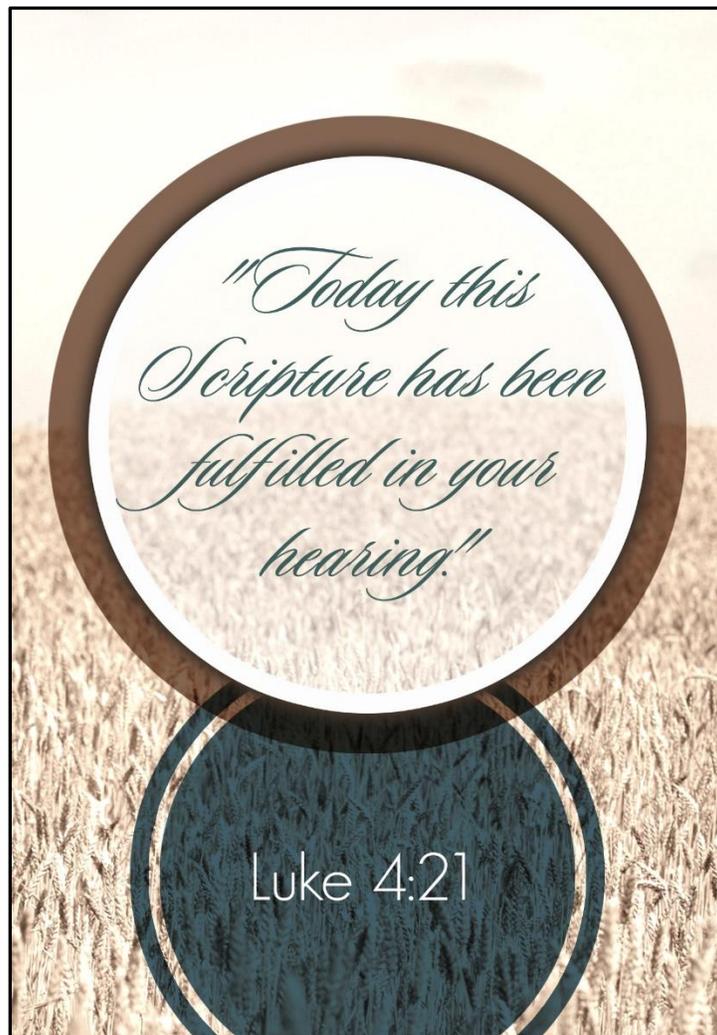


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

January 23, 2022



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

January 23, 2022

Third Sunday after Epiphany

10:00 am

Gathering

“Dumbledore says people find it far easier to forgive others
for being wrong than being right.”

- J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince

Welcome to our guests who are visiting with
us today! Join us for coffee in the Fellowship
Hall following the worship service.

- The nursery is available for young children.
- Activity bags are available for children.
- Large print bulletins and hearing-impaired
devices are available from the ushers.
- Please stand when noted by the *
- Congregation responses are in bold.

*No matter who you are. No matter where
you are on your spiritual journey, you are
welcome here!*

*As Jesus' courageous disciples,
living God's grace, we strive to:*

- *Worship faithfully*
- *Welcome openly*
- *Grow spiritually*
- *Care passionately*
- *Serve generously*

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We are gathered for worship.

P: There is much to do in this world, for the hungry cry to be fed, the homeless to be housed. We live in the midst of a world in need of peace and a people in need of hope.

L: We are gathered for worship.

P: There is much to do in our lives. There are commitments to fulfill, jobs to do. We must care for our children, our parents, our homes.

L: We are gathered for worship.

P: The problems of this world call for energy and vision.

L: In worship we seek God's vision of hope and wholeness and meet the Spirit who gives strength to the weary.

P: The demands of our lives call for patience and compassion.

L: In worship our spirits are renewed by God's grace and our hearts are made wide by God's love.

P: We have gathered for worship.

L: Come, let us worship God in this hour that we may live as God's people in days to come.

All: Come let us worship the Lord our God!

***HYMN**

We Are Called

Verses



1. Come! Live in the light!
2. Come! O - pen your heart!
3. Sing! Sing a new song!



Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord! We are
Show your mer - cy to all those in fear! We are
Sing of that great day when all will be one! God will



called to be light for the king - dom, to
called to be hope for the hope - less so all
reign, and we'll walk with each oth - er as



live in the free - dom of the cit - y of God!
ha - tred and blind - ness will be no more!
sis - ters and broth - ers u - ni - ted in love!

Refrain



We are called to act with jus - tice, we are called to



love ten - der - ly, we are called to serve one an - oth - er;



to walk hum - bly with God!

*OPENING PRAYER

Holy God, we are living in difficult times. Our lives seem to be confused and we are full of fear. Help us in this time of worship to see clearly the life of Jesus and to know his ways. May we learn step by step how to follow his teaching. As did Jesus, may we live lives filled with love. Remind us of the power of your love and set before us compassion, gentleness, forgiveness and peacemaking. May we, too, feel a sense of calling as we live and serve in a world of need and injustice. In the name of our Lord, who lived as a servant. Amen.

L: The peace of Christ be with you all.

P: And also with you.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

*GLORIA

Glory, Glory, Hallelujah

Glory, glory hallelujah, since I laid my burdens down.

Glory, glory hallelujah, since I laid my burdens down.

I feel better, so much better, since I laid my burdens down.

I feel better, so much better, since I laid my burdens down.

Hearing the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 4:14-21

PSALM 19

R *Many and great, O God, are your works, maker of earth and sky.*

L: The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

P: **Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.**

L: There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

P: **In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.**

L: Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.

P: The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple;

L: The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;

P: The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

L: More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

P: Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

L: But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.

P: Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me.

L: Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

P: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. R

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG OF BLESSING

*He's got the whole world in his hands,
He's got the whole wide world in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands.*

*He's got you and me, sister, in his hands,
He's got you and me, brother, in his hands,
He's got everybody in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands.*

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 good always to give thanks, ...

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

Hymn during the distribution of the elements:

Here I Am Lord

Congregation join on refrain:

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me.

I will hold your people in my heart.

You Satisfy the Hungry Heart

Refrain



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.

Verses



1. As when the shep - herd calls his sheep, They
2. With joy - ful lips we sing to you Our
3. Is not the cup we bless and share The
4. The mys - t'ry of your pres - ence, Lord, No
5. You give your - self to us, O Lord; Then



know and heed his voice; So when you call your
praise and grat - i - tude, That you should count us
blood of Christ out-poured? Do not one cup, one
mor - tal tongue can tell: Whom all the world can -
self - less let us be, To serve each oth - er



D.C.

fam - 'ly, Lord, We fol - low and re - joice.
wor - thy, Lord, To share this heav'n - ly food.
loaf, de - clare Our one - ness in the Lord?
not con - tain Comes in our hearts to dwell.
in your name In truth and char - i - ty.

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.

Proclaiming the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 4:21-30

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

I Am the Light of the World

#584

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. 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.

Sending

***HYMN**

Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

#18

***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>Traci Hagberg</i>
Coffee Fellowship:	<i>Carole Mottaz</i>
Welcomers:	<i>Carole Mottaz</i>
Deacons:	<i>Peter and Natasha Rayne, Laura Anderson, Karen Lloyd, Suzanne Hagen</i>
Nursery:	<i>Kahla Fuller</i>
Organist:	<i>Terry Mithun</i>
Video Team:	<i>Jeff Hoffman, Mike Stifter</i>
Trustee:	<i>Deb Hoffman</i>
Counters:	<i>Trish Graves, 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>

Treasurer's Report

	Dec 31, 2021
General Fund Income*	\$ 470,870.06
General Fund Expenses	<u>470,204.25</u>
2021 Net Income	<u>\$ 665.81</u>

	Jan 16, 2022
General Fund Income*	<u>\$ 68,187.80</u>

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

A new budget will be approved at the February 6th Annual Meeting.



Offering QR Code

1. On your mobile device, open your Camera app or QR Code app
2. Point your camera at the QR Code
3. Click the tab 'Give Online'

13 CLIMATE ACTION

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY: PATHWAYS AHEAD



Featuring Dr. Mark Seeley, former Extension Climatologist and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate at the University of Minnesota and fan-favorite weather and climate commentator on Minnesota Public Radio.

JANUARY 31, 2022 | 6:30-8:00 P.M.

River Falls Public Library (in-person attendance limited to 50 people. RSVP on the [library's website](#))

Or stream live through the River Falls Public Library's Facebook and Youtube channel



Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Those who are ill or recovering:

Roger Hirstein, Jim, Wendy MacDougall (wife of our Association Minister Rob), Edna (friend of the Danielsons and Petersons), Rosalie Harper (cousin of JoAnn Lentz), Donna Moseman, Tom (friend of Traci), Peter Kwong, Neal Prochnow, Tom (friend of Barb Stephens), David Lewis (friend of Jan Hansen), Deb Larson (Jen Meyer's mother), Zeke Wells, Larry (brother of Carol Merriman), Tim (brother of Diane Welsh), Margaret (friend of Dave Reilly), Brittney (wife of Josh Krueger)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For teams, committees and Church Council getting ready for the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 6, may it be a true celebration of the ministry of this church
- For those joining our church as members on Sunday, February 6, may we welcome them and make room for their gifts
- For our valiant music, deacons, trustees, Sunday School teachers as they seek to pivot, pivot again and continue to do all they can safely and faithfully
- 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 all students trying to keep up with schoolwork in a very challenging environment, may they be supported
- For those with COVID and those trying to avoid spreading it
- For those who must work and live outdoors when it is so cold out
- For parents struggling to work and raise kids amidst the latest Covid surge, may they hang on
- For flight crews and medical staff, teachers and school staff, grocery workers and all who are trying to keep things going and open
- For our divided nation, that we may work together to solve our real problems
- For the Afghani refugees at Fort McCoy, WI and those supporting them, that they may be strengthened in their journey

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For the gift of bright sun on cold days
- For our Moderator, Joel Larsen and Moderator Elect, Kathy Rausch as they get ready to lead the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 6
- For substitute teachers, you are a blessing
- For our Youth Group headed to the Climbing Wall at UWRF, that it may be a time of fun and learning new skills together
- For cars that start and houses that are warm on cold days, may we be thankful for the little things in life
- For all who show up and do what they can despite all the current limitations and precautions, especially medical and educational staff, you are a blessing
- For the hope of an easing of the pandemic, may it be soon
- For those who will be fed from our generosity as we again support the ministry of Feed My Starving Children through our M&M Christmas offering

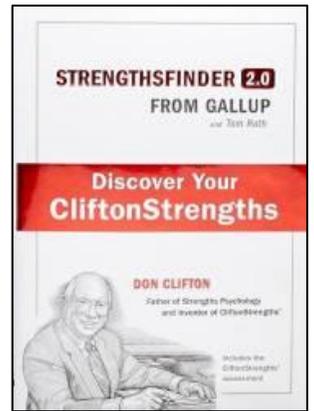
For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For Judie Henning who died peacefully at home and whose memorial service was Saturday, January 22 at 11am at the church, may her family be comforted
- For those mourning Peg Thompson, Judie Henning, Dale Viney, may you not mourn alone
- For the 855,000 Americans and over 5.55 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.

Strengths Finder

What are the strengths of our church teens? This is the question our church interns (Grades 10-12) wrestled with last Wednesday as they worked through the Strengths Finder inventory with Dr. Paul Shepherd. Most of us are aware of the things we are not good at, but we lack a sense and appreciation for the things we *are* good at. Using this inventory, we helped our interns identify 5 of their gifts out of a total of 34 different varieties of leadership gifts. So what are their gifts? Below are the top gifts reported by our interns:



1. Empathy
2. Adaptability
3. Communication
4. Includer
5. Restorative
6. Discipline
7. Futuristic



Thanks Paul for helping to lead this exercise. Church interns then went on to accept Pastor Chris'

challenge to dive deeper into three of their gifts, writing a brief essay reflecting on how those gifts get played out in their lives and finding a corresponding scripture verse for each gift. Thank you church for investing in our youth people!



Frozen Pants Challenge

Last Wednesday night, First and Second Year Confirmands (grades 7 and 8) talked about The Parable of the Good Samaritan and the story of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman at the Well. They also took on the "frozen pants" challenge. Look at the results! Time will tell which the kids will remember longer: the stories about Samaritans or a parade of frozen pants...

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 4:14-21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 4:21-30

Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.