

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

May 22, 2022



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

May 22, 2022

Sixth Sunday of Easter

10:00 am

Gathering

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
- St. Francis of Assisi*

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 are available from the ushers.
- Please stand when noted by the *
- Congregation responses are in bold.
- Please stop at the welcome station for a gift.

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 AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Holy God, forever seeking and always teaching:

P: **Open our minds to the truth of your care;**

L: Open our hearts to the depth of your love;

P: **Open our lips to share stories of faith;**

L: Open our hands to create beauty, do justice and show kindness;

P: **Open our souls to the breath of your Spirit;**

L: Open our mouths to sing boldly your praises.

P: **Open our very lives that we may be disciples of Jesus.**

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

***HYMN**

For the Beauty of the Earth

#28

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

L: Holy and Life Giving God, when we have been fearful and afraid,

P: **Bring new life!**

L: When we have failed to be agents of your peace and love,

P: Bring new life!

L: When we have been stubborn and hard-hearted,

P: Bring new life!

L: When we have been petty and short-sighted,

P: Bring new life!

L: When we have not been generous with the gifts given to us,

P: Bring new life!

L: Come among us, God of Resurrection,

P: And bring new life! Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: No matter the situation or problem or trouble, God is always with us. God is always ready to,

P: Receive and redeem us.

L: God is always willing to,

P: Renew and restore us.

L: God is always able to,

P: Refresh and re-birth us.

L: Let us live then as God's graceful people. In Christ we are forgiven.

P: Thanks be to God!

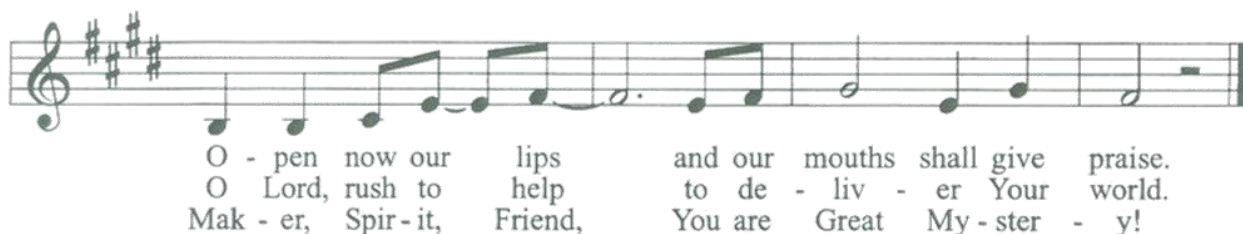
L: May the peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: And also with you.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

***GLORIA**



Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Acts 16:9-15

PSALM 131

R *Be still and know that I am God; be still and know that I am God;
be still and know that I am God.*

L: O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high;

P: **I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.**

L: But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.

P: **O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time on and forevermore. 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.*

Celebrating the Meal

(All Christians are welcome at the table of our Lord. The bread is gluten free and wine and grape juice are offered. Those choosing not to commune may receive a blessing from the servers.)

The Invitation to the Meal

L: We are here because Jesus has called us – strangers and friends, locals and visitors, believers and doubters, the certain and the curious. It is always a mixed company that Jesus gathers and invites to his table where, in bread and wine, he meets us and through him we, who are different, are joined to each other. So come, not because you understand, but because you are understood. Come, not because of how you feel, but because God has food for you. Come, not because you deserve a place, but because Jesus invites you, just as you are.

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

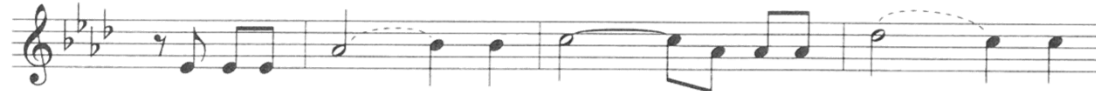
Distribution of the Elements

Hymns during the distribution of the elements:


I Am the Bread of Life

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



And I will raise you up, and I will raise you
Yo le re - su - ci - ta - ré, Yo le re - su - ci - ta -




up, and I will raise you up on the last day.
ré, Yo le re - su - ci - ta - ré el di - a de El.

As The Grains of Wheat

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were




gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from



all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.



1 As this cup of bless-ing is shared with-in our midst,
2 Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when



may we share the pres - ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

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.)

*O when the saints go marching in, O when the saints go march in,
O Lord, I want to be in that number when the saints go marching in.*

Proclaiming the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

John 14:23-29

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

When Peace, Like a River
Verses 1, 2 & 4

#438

***STATEMENT OF FAITH** (attributed to St. Francis of Assisi)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Sarah Plum

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**

How Can I Keep from Singing

Verses



1. My life flows on in end - less song A -
2. Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I
3. What though the tem - pest 'round me roar, I
4. When ty - rants trem - ble, sick with fear, And
5. The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, A



bove earth's lam - en - ta - tion. I hear the real though
 hear that mu - sic ring - ing; It sounds and ech - oes
 hear the truth it liv - eth. What though the dark - ness
 hear their death knells ring - ing; When friends re - joice both
 foun - tain ev - er spring - ing. All things are mine since



far - off hymn That hails a new cre - a - tion.
 in my soul; How can I keep from sing - ing?
 'round me close, Songs in the night it giv - eth.
 far and near, How can I keep from sing - ing?
 I am his; How can I keep from sing - ing?

Refrain



No storm can shake my in - most calm, While to that rock I'm



cling - ing. Since love is Lord of heav - en and earth,



How can I keep from sing - ing?

*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. You can use the QR Code to give electronically. 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>Tanya Larsen</i>
Cantor:	<i>David Reilly</i>
Coffee Fellowship:	<i>Christian Ed – Root Beer Floats!</i>
Deacons:	<i>Laura Anderson, Marshall Skule, Jena Most, Peter Rayne, Anna Anderson</i>
Organist:	<i>Marsha Pearson</i>
Welcomers:	<i>Susan Walden</i>
Nursery:	<i>Kahla Fuller</i>
Video Team:	<i>Jeff Hoffman, Mike Stifter, Ryan Luedtke</i>
Trustee:	<i>Deb Hoffman</i>
Counters:	<i>Allen Barnes, 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>
CE Minister:	<i>Rev. Stacy Johnson Myers</i>
Senior Pastor:	<i>Rev. Chris Myers</i>

Altar table flowers are given in celebration of Among Friends.

Treasurer's Report

	<u>May 15, 2022</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,110	\$ 221,695
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,909	\$ 198,180

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.



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'

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Those who are ill or recovering:

Roger Hirstein, Rosalie Harper (cousin on JoAnn Lentz), David Lewis (friend of Jan Hansen), Deb Larson (Jen Meyer's mother), Zeke Wells, Margaret (friend of Dave Reilly), Dan Turner (father of Mike Danielson), Neil (son of Yvonne Benson), Suzie May and Nick Simpson, Sydney and Gloria Johnson (Tanya Larsen's folks), Alex (grandson of Barb Stephens), Carolyn Larrabee

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our committees and council who met last week and who will be off for a summer break for the next two months, may God bless your work and your rest!
- For Pastor Dave and all who gathered to celebrate his ministry last week, may he retire well!
- For Diane Welsh who is coordinating our new church photo directory, God bless you (and sign up!)
- For those volunteering to staff the church nursery over the summer, may you be blessed by hanging out with our youngest folks
- For Tim Bylander who is at Moon Beach Camp getting our church camp ready for the program year
- For the Garden Geeks who each week keep our garden looking great, thank you
- For those who support our church's ministry with their tithes, offerings and gifts--you are all a blessing

Prayers for our World:

- For the people of Buffalo as they mourn yet another tragic shooting and yet more hate, may God grant them strength and help us as a nation to change our ways
- For students and teachers anxiously awaiting the end of the school year
- For the greening of our earth and return to our planting season
- For those recovering from the latest Covid wave, may they heal quickly
- For peace in Ukraine, may a better way forward be found
- For those helping refugees, especially for churches helping those fleeing in Ukraine
- For our divided nation, that we may work together to solve our real problems

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For our new church van that is FINALLY in production and should be delivered in the next 4 weeks, hallelujah!
- For Kahla Fuller, our church nursery worker, who each week welcomes our youngest folk with a smile, thank you!
- For our Garden Geeks, Lu Lueck and Linn Lawrence, who keep our garden looking so beautiful
- For those graduating from high school and college, may the future be bright as you use your God given gifts to solve problems
- For the over \$14,000 given by church members to help refugees fleeing the Ukraine, may it quickly make a difference
- For Alex and Sarah Plum who completed their first program year as our new Youth Ministers, we are thankful for you!

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Jim Kuhn as they gathered at Glenn Park on Friday, May 20 to celebrate his life
- For the family of Joan Alexander who died peacefully at home with her husband Dick by her side. A Memorial Service for Joan will be on Tuesday, May 24 at 1:00 pm with a reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall.
- For the family of Judy Permann planning a Celebration of Life for Judy on June 18, may the Holy Spirit fill you with strength and gratitude
- For the now one million Americans and over 6.2 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Loving God...

We Are Hiring! With the retirement of Pastor Dave last week, the church will be hiring a new part time Minister for Community and Outreach. Please see job description on the sign-up table and website. If you know someone, reach out to them or let the church office know.

Graduation Sunday is Sunday, June 5 during which we will bless our graduating high school seniors and award church scholarships. A reception in their honor will follow during Coffee Fellowship. Seniors, please make sure the office has your post-graduation plans and a senior photo!

Vacation Bible School: Please mark your calendars for the 2022 VBS! The dates are **August 1–4, 2022**. Our plan is to return to a pre-pandemic VBS format. This means we need lots of people: kids to participate, teens to help, and adults to guide students. Please register your willingness to help by signing up on the volunteer list on the sign-up table.

Ukraine Relief: Many of you are asking what you can do for the people of Ukraine. Please pray and please consider making a financial contribution to help them. Working through our partner church in Hungary, we will regularly send financial support. We have sent over \$14,000. **Our next deadline is Monday, June 6.** Thank you for your prayerful support.

Loving Neighbor...

Simpson Shelter Meal will be served by our congregation on **Thursday, June 30**. We will need many hands and bodies to cook and serve. See sign-up sheet or talk to Carole Mottaz for more details. This is an awesome service event for families and young people.

New Church Photo Directory: Photo sessions held **May 31 to June 4**. To schedule your appointment online go to www.ucdir.com, click on photography appointment scheduling login on the right side, enter **wi192** in the Church Code field and enter **photos** in the Church Password field. Follow the prompts to schedule your appointment. If you have 5 or more, please use 2 consecutive time slots. The online scheduling is not available on Saturday or Sunday because we will be doing paper sign-ups at church. Please call the church office with any questions or for help scheduling.

Loving Self...

Pizza Party! Kick off River Falls Days with pizza and a bluegrass band out on the church lawn. Join us **6-8 pm on Thursday, July 7**. Concert and pizza are free, but you do need to register for the pizza ahead of time. Sign up online or at the sign-up table today!

Canoe Trip: Alex is leading a Boundary Waters Canoe Trip open to youth and adults on **July 17-22**. See flyer on the sign-up table and contact Alex for more details.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN KICK OFF



All church families will be receiving an invitation this week to participate in the 2022 Capital Campaign. This campaign will do three important things:

- Pay off our bank debt of \$495,000 from the building project
- Update our antiquated church sound and video systems
- Install a new church sign

All of these projects are long overdue. Our church sound and video systems are cobbled together from the 1980's and 90's. Our church sign is from the 1970's and does not have the ability to be changed or updated in any way. And our building debt costs the church \$2,622 each month.

Our church building is more than a structure, it is the place where we celebrate so many of the important moments of our lives: baptisms and weddings, confirmations and marriages, funerals and celebrations of life. Our new Fellowship Hall is used for yoga and family meals, coffee fellowship and big celebrations like our annual Giving Thanks Dinner. Our classrooms, youth and music rooms are used each week for programming and outreach like our Among Friends program for families with dementia. Our church building enables our church ministries.

We kindly ask you to review the materials provided and return your pledge sheet to the church office by the end of May. Look to the newsletter and weekly word for updates on our progress. Together we move our church forward with the tools we need to expand our ministry and outreach.

Thank you for your generous support!

The Building Finance Team

Fred Benson, Scott Jameson, Joel Larsen, Carole Mottaz, Pastor Chris, Brad Williams

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Acts 16:9-15

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We therefore set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 14:23-29

Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words, and the word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me.

"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur you may believe.