

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

March 17, 2024

Psalm 51:12, NIV



*“Restore to
me the joy of your
salvation and grant
me a willing spirit,
to sustain me.”*

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

March 17, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Lent

10:00 am

Gathering

- The Old Covenant was based on law; the New Covenant is based on grace.
- The Old was based on works; the New on faith.
- The Old was set in tablets of stone; the New in the chambers of the heart.
- In the Old, God writes the law and we obey it or else; in the New, God writes the law, and then helps us to obey it.

- Homiletics, April 6, 2003

<p>Welcome to our guests who are visiting with us today! Join us for coffee in the Fellowship Hall following the worship service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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.	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>No matter who you are. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here!</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>As Jesus' courageous disciples, living God's grace, we strive to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Worship faithfully</i>- <i>Welcome openly</i>- <i>Grow spiritually</i>- <i>Care passionately</i>- <i>Serve generously</i>
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GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: The road to the cross may be steep -

P: **Journey on.**

L: We may lose our way -

P: **Listen for inner direction.**

L: The path may be rocky -

P: **Walk lightly.**

L: There are twists and turns –

P: **Follow closely.**

L: There is danger and risk –

P: **Be alert, stay focused.**

L: There will be an ending –
P: **It isn't far.**
L: Walk on –
P: **Trusting as you go.**
L: Come, let us follow in the steps of Jesus,
P: **For He will lead us.**
All: **Come let us worship!**

***HYMN**

I Sing the Almighty Power of God

Blue #31

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Holy God, **hold us close for a moment that we may look deep inside and not be afraid to offer ourselves to you. Only in your tender grasp can we face our struggles:**

L: Our reluctance to do something extravagant for another;
P: **The quick rise to anger when our pride is offended;**
L: The ease with which we let someone else play our part, fulfill our task;
P: **Our clamoring for center stage, to be noticed, approved;**
L: Our silence in the face of great joy or blatant wrong.
P: **Hold us close, that in the telling of our story, we might find shelter under your wings and feel our burdens roll away. Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Hear the good news: The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.
P: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, freed and empowered to live as joyful servants of God and one another.**
L: This is good news!
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**

Love is Flowing

*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.*

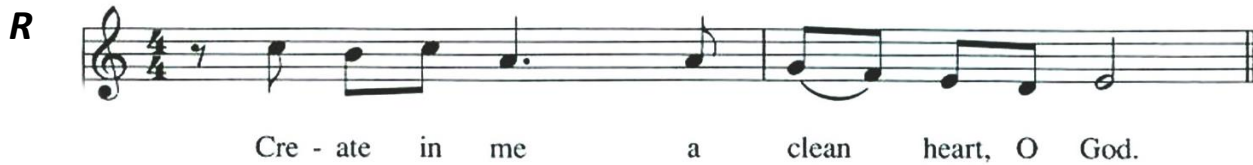
*Grace is flooding: grace is flooding, grace is flooding from the fountain of life.
Grace is flooding: grace is flooding, grace is flooding from the fountain of life.*

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Jeremiah 31:31-34

PSALM 51:1-12 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)



- L: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
- P: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**
- L: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
- P: Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgement.**
- L: Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- P: You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. *R***
- L: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- P: Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.**
- L: Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
- P: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.**
- L: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- P: Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. *R***

Celebrating the Meal

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

The Invitation to the Meal

- L: Beloved in Christ, the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week, Jesus Christ was raised from death, appeared to Mary Magdalene, on the same day sat at table with two disciples, and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.
- P: This is the joyful feast of the people of God. Men and women, young and old, come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and gather about Christ's table.**

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:

As the Grains of Wheat

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

Refrain

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

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Blue #461

Eat This Bread

The musical score for 'Eat This Bread' is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major (one sharp). The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are: 'Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and nev-er be hun - gry.' and 'Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.' The score consists of two systems of staves, each with four parts.

Post-Communion Prayer

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

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Deb Meyer

SONG (Younger children can go to the nursery, older children sit with parents. Sunday School resumes next week after Spring Break.)

*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.*

GOSPEL LESSON

Johns 12:20-26

SERMON

Rev. Deb Meyer

***HYMN**

Borning Cry

Blue #680

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – South Africa**

**We believe in one God who created all the world,
who will unite all things in Christ
and who wants all people to live together in one family.**

**We believe in God the Son who became human:
died and rose in triumph to reconcile all the world to God,
to break down every separating barrier of race, culture or class
and to unite all people into one body.**

**We believe in God the Spirit, the pledge of God’s coming reign
who gives the Church power to proclaim the good news to all the world,
to love and serve all people, to strive for justice and peace:
to warn that God judges both the individual and the nations;
and to summon all the world to accept God’s reign, here and now. 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.**

MISSION MOMENT - One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)

Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

***Seek Ye First
Arr. Wagner***

Jubilee Ringers

***DOXOLOGY**

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

**O God, help us to give and count not the cost, and love without boundaries and
stipulations. As we are transformed by your love, Lord, so may our gifts and our lives
transform our world. Amen.**

Sending

***HYMN**

Standing on the Promises



1. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es of Christ my King, through e - ter - nal
 2. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es that can - not fail, when the howl - ing
 3. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es of Christ the Lord, bound to him e
 4. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es I can - not fall, lis - tening ev - ery



a - ges let his prais - es ring; glo - ry in the high - est, I will
 storms of doubt and fear as - sail, by the liv - ing Word of God I
 - ter - nal - ly by love's strong cord, o - ver - com - ing dai - ly with the
 mo - ment to the Spir - it's call, rest - ing in my Sav - ior as my



shout and sing, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.
 shall pre - vail, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.
 Spir - it's sword, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.
 all in all, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.



Stand - ing, stand - ing, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of
 Stand - ing on the prom - is - es, stand - ing on the prom - is - es,



God my Sav - ior; stand - ing, stand - ing,
 stand - ing on the prom - is - es, stand - ing on the prom - is - es,



I'm stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Deb Meyer
Celebrant: Deb Meyer
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Larissa Lueck
Deacons: Lance Lueck, Cindy Gandrud,
Karen Lloyd, Traci Hagberg,
Laura Anderson
Organist: Terry Mithun
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Laura Miller
Trustee: Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers: Larissa Lueck
Coffee
Fellowship: Eunice Filkins
Counters: Roz Ostendorf, Dennis Linder

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Christopher Myers
Education Pastor: Stacy Johnson Myers
Community &
Outreach Pastor: Deb Meyer
Youth Minister: Alex Plum
Music Coordinator &
Bell Director: Jamie Mills
Choir Director: Sarah Plum
Organists: Terry Mithun,
Marsha Pearson
Building Manager: Timothy Bylander
Church Moderator: Kathy Rausch
Office Administrator: Missy Luedtke
Nursery Attendant: Kahla Fuller
Custodian: Farnum Fuller

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Mar 10, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 4,493	\$ 142,029
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 104,630

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'. You will have to create an account.
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Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Those who are ill or recovering:

Dorothy Shavers, Carsten (grandson of Duane Church), Art Rice, Sue Taylor, Jeff Jorae (son of Raelle), Judy (mother of Lara Koecher), Woods (grandson of Bobbi)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our Spring Break Mission Team who is at work in Biloxi, Mississippi this week working on damaged housing through UCC related Back Bay Mission, may they be blessed and be a blessing
- For our choir gearing up for their annual Good Friday Cantata, may they be given strength and clear voices!
- For our Relay for Life Team gearing up for Relay for Life at RFHS on Friday, April 12 from 6-11pm
- For our deacons, pastors and musicians gearing up for Holy Week, may they kindle renewal, grace and hope in us all

Prayers for our World:

- For those on Spring Break, may it be a fun and safe break from our regular routines
- For the people of Haiti and especially the people of Ganthier, which the River Falls community supports through the It Takes a Village concert, may peace prevail
- For civilians caught in bloody conflict in Israel and Gaza who are always the ones who suffer in times of war, may a new way forward be found to bring lasting peace
- For those leading and helping plan Earth Fest on April 20 at UWRF, may it drive home our need to be better stewards of God's gift of this good creation

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For our Spring Break Mission Team at Back Bay this week may they do good work and come home tired, but filled in body, mind and spirit
- For our Shrimp Boil served this past Wednesday by our Spring Break Mission Team, it was delicious!
- For our baptism boom including Hope Withers (Erik and Vanessa) baptized February 25, Laney Sitz (Heather and Dan) baptized on March 3 and Nora Koecher (Dan and Mari) baptized on March 10, may they all grow in love and faith!
- For our amazing choir who participated in the It Takes a Village Choir Concert on February 25 which raised over \$19,000 for the village in Haiti supported by River Falls area churches

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Bill Rausch, father of our moderator Kathy Rausch whose funeral was March 9 in Waseca, may his family be comforted
- For the family of Harold Fosmo whose funeral was at Bakken and Young on March 14, may his wife Connie and daughters Cori and Vicki be comforted
- For the Prochnow family mourning Neal, the Sorensen family mourning Dorothy, the Krueger family mourning Bill, the Alexander family mourning Dick, the Carrison family mourning Dahn (whose service will be this spring), may you be strengthened through the care of others

If you have people you wish to include on our prayer list, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.

Making Magic with Ken Burns Jacqueline Schwab in concert

*"Jacqueline Schwab brings more feeling and intensity
to music than anyone I know," - Ken Burns*

FREE CONCERT

Sunday, April 14th
4:00 PM



Facebook Event

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
110 N 3rd St. River Falls, WI
firstchurchrf.org | 715-425-2052

Known for her work in over a dozen Ken Burns' documentaries, pianist Jacqueline Schwab will perform pieces from *Civil War*, *Baseball*, and *Mark Twain* as well as traditional Scottish tunes and her own works inspired by Ken's piercing window into American history.

This poster has been designed using assets from Freepik.com

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the LORD', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 12:20-26

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.'

Join us
for **Holy Week Worship**

<i>Palm Sunday</i>	March 24th	10:00 AM
<i>Maundy Thursday</i>	March 28th	6:30 PM
<i>Good Friday Cantata</i>	March 29th	6:30 PM
<i>Easter Sunday</i>	March 31st	9:00 & 10:30 AM

**ALL ARE
WELCOME!**

**First Congregational
Church, UCC**

110 N 3rd St. River Falls, WI | 715-425-2052 | www.firstchurchrf.org