

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

March 24, 2024



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

March 24, 2024

Palm Sunday

10:00 am

Gathering

Palm Sunday invites us to reflect on the paradox of Jesus' kingship, which is revealed not in power and splendor, but in humility and sacrifice.
- Timothy Keller.

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: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

P: **Hosanna in the highest!**

L: Blessed is God's Son who comes to take away the sin of the world.

P: **Hosanna in the highest!**

L: Blessed is the Prince of Peace who reconciles all humanity to God.

P: **Hosanna in the highest!**

L: Blessed is Jesus Christ, Redeemer, Lord and King.

P: **Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!**

All: Come let us worship!

PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL READING

Mark 11:1-11

***HYMN**

*All Glory, Laud and Honor
Verses 1, 3, 4 and 5*

Blue #265

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

- L: God of all times and places, we confess that we would rather join the crowds than stand alone.
- P: **Forgive us, Gracious God.**
- L: Too often we prefer the popular point of view to a solitary witness for justice and truth.
- P: **Forgive us, Gracious God.**
- L: We'll sing "hosanna" when everyone else is doing so – but not when the hostile "Good Friday" forces may hear us.
- P: **Forgive us, Gracious God.**
- L: Holy God, be patient with us and help us understand our own sin. But do not leave us there. Pour out your forgiveness in such a way that we are forever transformed.
- P: **Forgive us, Gracious God. Amen.**

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

- L: We already know the ending to this story.
- P: **Though we participate in Christ's betrayal, our salvation is sure because God raised Jesus from the dead.**
- L: Hear, believe and live this incredible good news:
- P: **In Jesus 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

Hosanna

(Choir introduces, then all sing two times)

1 Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san-na in the high - est! Ho-

san - na, ho - san - na, Ho - san-na in the high - est!

Hearing the Word

PSALM 31:9-16 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)



- L: Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also.
- P: For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.**
- L: I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.
- P: I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.**
- L: For I hear the whispering of many—terror all around!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.
- P: But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, ‘You are my God.’**
- L: My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.
- P: Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love. 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: Jesus said: “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” So come, sisters and brothers, just as you are. Let him feed you, so that you can go to feed others. Let him love you, so we can go to love others. Let him bind us together into his body, so that together we may become Christ’s body at work in the world today.
- P: Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!**

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:

Taste and See

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain

Taste and see, taste and see the good - ness of the
Lord. O taste and see, taste and see the
good - ness of the Lord, of the Lord.

Nothing Can Trouble

p Na - da te tur - be, na - da te es - pan - te. *mf* Quien a Dios tie - ne
Noth - ing can trou - ble, noth - ing can fright - en. Those who seek God shall

1. *mf*
2. *f*
na - da le fal - ta. So - lo Dios bas - ta.
nev - er go want - ing. God a - lone fills us.

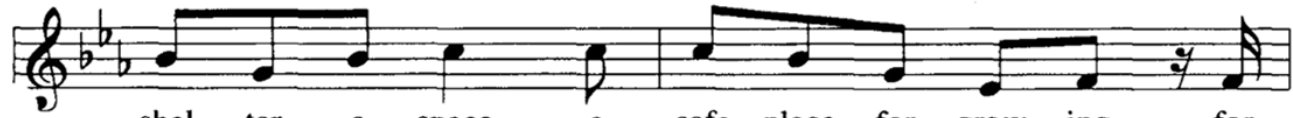
A Place At The Table



1 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble, for
2 For wo - man and man, a place at the ta - ble, re -
3 For young and for old, a place at the ta - ble, a
4 For just and un - just, a place at the ta - ble, a -
5 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble, to



ev - ery - one born, clean wa - ter and bread, a
vis - ing the roles, de - cid - ing the share, with
voice to be heard, a part in the song, the
bus - er, a - bused, with need to for - give, in
live with - out fear, and sim - ply to be, to



shel - ter, a space, a safe place for grow - ing, for
wis - dom and grace, di - vid - ing the pow - er, for
hands of a child in hands that are wrink - led, for
an - ger, in hurt, a mind - set of mer - cy, for
work, to speak out, to wit - ness and wor - ship, for



ev - ery - one born, a star o - ver - head,
wo - man and man, a sys - tem that's fair,
young and for old, the right to be - long, and God will de - light when
just and un - just, a new way to live,
ev - ery - one born, the right to be free,



we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice and joy, com - pas - sion and peace: yes,



God will de - light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice, jus - tice and joy!

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. Chris Myers

SONG (Children preschool through grade 8 leave for Sunday School.)

***I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul. I've got river in my soul.***

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Philippians 2:5-11

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

Blue #267

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

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. 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.

GATHERING OUR GIFTS *Ride On, King Jesus* Chancel Choir
Arr. Joseph Martin

*DOXOLOGY

We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be; all that we have is

6
thine a - lone a trust, O Lord, from thee.

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

O God, we thank you for your saving action in Jesus Christ, and for the opportunity to join in the tasks of ministry you set before us. May our offerings fulfill your purposes and never betray your trust. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Sending

*HYMN *Ride On, Ride On in Majesty!* Blue #268

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgists: Norma Revels, Carol Merriman,
Jamie Follstad
Deacons: Karen Lloyd, Laura Anderson,
Brian Miller, Cindy Gandrud,
Traci Hagberg
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Rick Price
Welcomers: Barb Mahoney, JoAnn Lentz
Coffee
Fellowship: Beatty Family
Counters: Dennis Linder, Marie Roe
*Altar table flowers are given by Steve and
Lara Koecher in celebration of their 35th
wedding anniversary.*

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 17, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 7,188	\$ 161,055
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 115,093

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.
-

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Those who are ill or recovering:

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

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our Spring Break Mission Team returning from a week at Back Bay Mission and who will be helping to lead worship this Sunday, God bless you all!
- 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 who are looking forward to the Relay event at RFHS on Friday, April 12
- For those from our Mission Team and others planning Earth Fest at UWRF on April 20th from 11am (talk with Paul Douglas) to 4pm, may it inspire us to better care for God's gift of the good creation
- For our Music Team planning to concert here at church on Sunday, April 14 at 4pm in the sanctuary, may it kindle joy and hope in our world

Prayers for our World:

- 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 20th at UWRF, may it drive home our need to be better stewards of God's gift of this good creation
- For those fighting cancer and those working to find a cure, may your efforts be fruitful

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For the gift of Spring Break and its opportunities to get into a different groove for a while
- For our Spring Break Mission team safely home from their week at Back Bay Mission and helping to lead worship this Sunday, we look forward to hearing about your work and adventures!
- For our baptism boom including Hope Withers (Erik and Vanessa) baptized February 25, Laney Sitz (Heather and Dan) baptized on March 3, Nora Koecher (Dan and Mari) baptized on March 10, and all four Thompson children to be baptized on May 5, 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

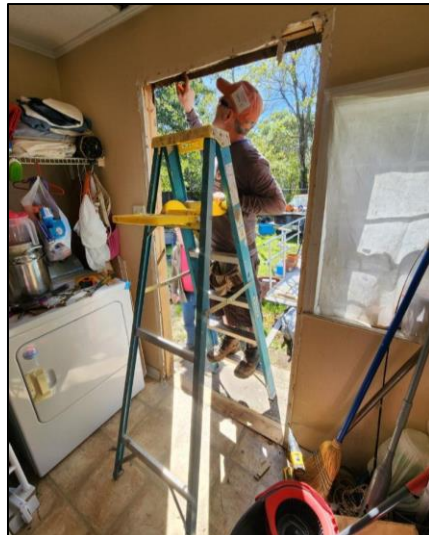
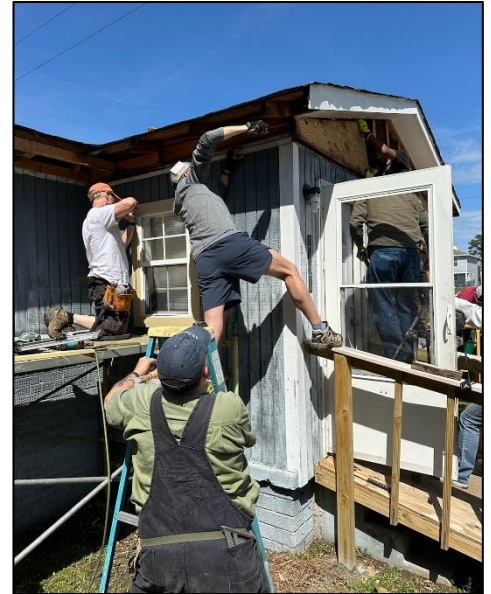
For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the Rausch family mourning Bill, the Fosmo family mourning Harold, the Prochnow family mourning Neal, the Sorensen family mourning Dorothy, 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.

Spring Break at Back Bay Mission

For over 100 years, UCC congregations have been working with BBM in Biloxi, MS. This past week 13 folks from our church have been at work at the mission siding and painting houses, and working in the homeless shelter, soup kitchen and food pantry. Here are some pictures of their week.



PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: Mark 11:1-11

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately."' They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

'Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.