

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

**April 7, 2024**



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

April 7, 2024

*Second Sunday of Easter*

10:00 am

**Gathering**

“When the power of love overcomes the love of power,  
the world will know peace.”

- Jimi Hendrix

Welcome to our guests who are visiting with  
us today!

- 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: Sing praise to our Easter God:

**P: Who changed sadness into joy;**

L: Who took the tears of night,

**P: And dried them in the morning light;**

L: Who rolled away the stone of despair,

**P: And placed hope forever in the air;**

L: Who visits us yet today,

**P: Teaching us always to love and adore.**

L: Christ is risen.

**P: Christ is risen indeed!**

**All: Come let us worship the risen Christ who lives among us!**

\*HYMN

*Now All the Vault of Heaven*



1 Now all the vault of heav'n re-sounds In praise of love that  
2 E - ter - nal is the gift he brings, There - fore our heart with  
3 Oh, fill us, Lord, with daunt-less love; Set heart and will on  
4 A - dor - ing prais - es now we bring And with the heav'n - ly



still a - bounds: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"  
rap - ture sings: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"  
things a - bove That we con - quer through your tri - umph;  
bless - ed sing: "Christ has tri - umphed! Al - le - lu - ia!"



Sing, choirs of an - gels, loud and clear! Re - peat their song  
Now still he comes to give us life And by his pres -  
Grant grace suf - fi - cient for life's day That by our lives  
Be to the Fa - ther, and our Lord, To Spir - it blest,



of glo - ry here: "Christ has tri - umphed! Christ has tri - umphed!"  
ence stills all strife. Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!  
we tru - ly say: Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!  
most ho - ly God, All the glo - ry, nev - er end - ing!



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Great God and Lord of life, sometimes it is hard to believe.

P: **We believe, O God. Help our unbelief.**

L: We find ourselves like Thomas, needing to see clearly and fully.

P: **We believe, O God. Help our unbelief.**

L: Sometimes it is hard to believe that the resurrection of Jesus Christ really happened.

P: **We believe, O God. Help our unbelief.**

L: Forgive our slowness of heart and resurrect our faith.

P: **We believe, O God. Help our unbelief.**

All: **Help us to live life anew in the great power of Easter life! Amen.**

**\*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Come and join the song, women, children, men; Jesus makes us free to live again!

P: **In Christ we are forgiven.**

L: Let us live then as God's forgiven people and be at peace.

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 (Sung twice)**

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,  
Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia!

**Hearing the Word**

**SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**Acts 4:32-35**

**PSALM 133 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)**

**R**

U - nite us, God, u - nite us in your ev - er - last - ing love.

L: How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

P: **It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.**

L: It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.

P: **For there the LORD ordained his blessing, life for evermore. 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 that after that first Easter when the disciples were gathered together in fear, the risen Christ came and stood among them and he said to them:

**P:** **'Peace be with you.'**

**L:** Here at this table the Risen Christ comes again offering us his gift of peace.

**P:** **May the peace of Christ be with us. Alleluia!**

### ***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:*

#### ***Breathe on Me, Breath of God***

**Blue #461**

#### ***Here I Am Lord***

*Congregation joins 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.***

#### ***I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light***

**Blue #248**

*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.

<b>Proclaiming the Word</b>
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**TIME WITH CHILDREN**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**SONG OF BLESSING**

*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.*

**GOSPEL LESSON**

**John 20:19-31**

**SERMON**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**\*HYMN**

*Alleluia, Sing to Jesus!*

**Blue #320**

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR EASTER**

**We believe in the God of Resurrection,  
Who lights the dawn to chase away the darkness;  
Who rolls away each stone of doubt;  
Who surprises us with incredible gifts of family and friends, silence and laughter;  
Who raises us from sadness and despair to the possibilities of blessing and joy.  
We believe in Jesus the Christ,  
Friend of the poor and searcher for the lost,  
Who comes to us in our grief and longing, calls us by name and sends us on the  
paths of peace to speak of an awesome love that is not overcome by death.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit our Guide,  
The hidden partner, the gentle messenger of God,  
Who fills our every breath with blessing;  
Who guides us in the dark, beckons us to do good, speaks to us in dream and image,  
and watches over us with tender compassion.  
We believe in the church,  
An instrument of God in this present moment, striving for justice, celebrating in joy,  
clawing at despair, living in hope, praying for healing and forever proclaiming the  
Good News of God's persistent and redeeming love. 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 – Earth Fest

Mike Noreen

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

*In the Bulb*

David Reilly

### \*DOXOLOGY

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

### \*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Praise God, Christ our Lord is risen. Breathe new life into each of us and your church. May the giving of our gifts be a sign of our love and devotion; in the name of our risen Lord. Amen.

## Sending

\*HYMN

*Go, My Children, With My Blessing*

Blue #719

\*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

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### Treasurer's Report

	<u>Mar 31, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 13,915	\$ 178,165
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 136,019

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'
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## SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers  
Celebrant: Chris Myers  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn  
Deacons: Karen Lloyd, Traci Hagberg,  
Brian Miller, Lance Lueck,  
Cindy Gandrud  
Organist: Marsha Pearson  
Nursery: Kahla Fuller  
Live Stream: Laura Miller  
Trustee: Tim Bylander  
Coffee  
Fellowship: Among Friends  
Counters: Janice Healy, Trish Graves  
*Altar table flowers are given by Marsha  
Pearson in memory of Maynard Pearson.*

## 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

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Thanks to all who made Holy Week & Easter so wonderful!





Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

**Those who are ill or recovering:**

Dorothy Shavers (mother of Rene Bylander), Carsten (grandson of Duane Church), Art Rice, Sue Taylor, Jeff Jorae (son of Raelle), Judy (mother of Lara Koecher), Woods (grandson of Bobbie Kuhn), Melissa Oscanyan (friend of Ann Nelson), Dennis Kiel, Michael O'Brien, Glenn Kees

**Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:**

- For our musicians, choir, pastors, deacons, breakfast team, greeters and all who made Easter and Holy Week memorable, God bless you all!
- For our Relay for Life Team who served a wonderful dinner with 9 different kinds of soup, and 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 20 from 11am (talk with Paul Douglas) to 4pm, may it inspire us to better care for God's gift of the good creation
- For Pastor Stacy as she begins her sabbatical next week, that it may be a time of rest, renewal, and growth
- For our Music Team planning a concert celebrating the music from Ken Burns documentaries here at church on Sunday, April 14 at 4pm in the sanctuary, may it kindle joy in our world
- For the Northwest Association Meeting on Saturday, April 16 in Eau Claire, a gathering of the 60 some UCC churches in Northwest Wisconsin, that it may be a time of fellowship, connection, and renewal

**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 20 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 200 who enjoyed a delicious Easter Breakfast and the over 400 people who were welcomed to worship on Easter Sunday, together may we be Christ's resurrected body at work in the world today
- For the Among Friends Program, which meets here at church on Tuesdays to help those with dementia and their families by providing a fun and safe place for them, may they be blessed with more participants and volunteers!
- For our baptism boom including Hope Withers (Erik and Vanessa) baptized February 25, Laney Sitz (Heather and Dan) baptized March 3, Nora Koecher (Dan and Mari) baptized March 10, and 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 which raised over \$19,000 for the village in Haiti supported by River Falls area churches and for their work and extra effort on the Good Friday Cantata and Easter Sunday worship

**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.

# EARTH FEST 2024



**SATURDAY, APRIL 20**

**UW-RIVER FALLS UNIVERSITY CENTER**

RIVER FALLS, WI

**FREE EVENT! ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**PRE-EVENT FEATURE:  
PAUL DOUGLAS  
11AM-12PM**



**12-4  
PM**

## PLAN AHEAD!

### CLOTHING SWAP

BRING 1-2 GENTLY USED ITEMS TO TRADE

### WELL WATER TESTING

BRING FOR RECYCLING/DISPOSAL:  
**MEDICATIONS,  
HEARING AIDS,  
EYEGASSES,  
BATTERIES**

### PARKING/ SHUTTLE INFO

- Parking available in UWRF lots
- Free shuttle transportation from several RF locations in collaboration with Bluegrass Festival. Visit website or scan QR code for more details & map

## FOOD!

FREE SAMPLES ^ - LOCAL & SUSTAINABLE  
JAMES BEARD AWARD-WINNER ALAN BERGO

## ENTERTAINMENT!

**LOU SHIELDS\***  
RFHS UNSTRUMENTAL - BARBERSHOP QUARTET  
\*OFFICIAL BLUEGRASS FEST VENUE\*



## ACTIVITIES!

HUMBLE HORSE OJIBWE PONIES - DIY ECO CLEANERS - STORYTIME  
KIDS ACTIVITIES & OUTDOOR PLAY - COCO'S HEART DOG RESCUE  
MINDFUL MOVEMENT - COMMUNITY ART PROJECT - BOOK GIVEAWAY

## SUSTAINABILITY FAIR!

70+ EXHIBITS FOR INFO & ADVOCACY

## IT'S ELECTRIC!

ELECTRIC VEHICLES - BIKES - TOOLS - REBATES

## GIVEAWAYS!

LEDS! ^ TREES! ^  
SUSTAINABLE/ WELLNESS PRIZES!  
^ while supplies last



[hope4creationRF.org/earthfest](http://hope4creationRF.org/earthfest)  
[facebook.com/earthfestRF](https://facebook.com/earthfestRF)  
[@earthfestRF](https://instagram.com/earthfestRF)





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](http://Freepik.com)

**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Acts 4:32-35**

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

**GOSPEL LESSON: John 20:19-31**

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.