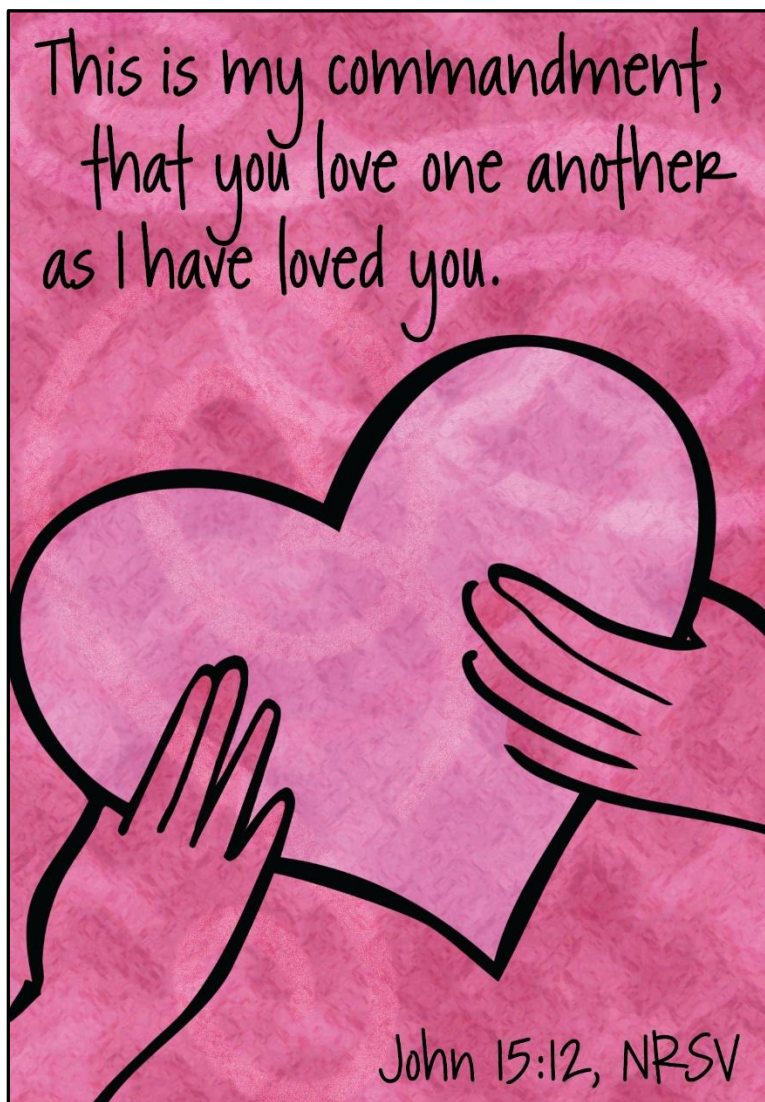


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

May 5, 2024



Confirmation Sunday

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

May 5, 2024

Sixth Sunday of Easter

10:00 am

Gathering

*“Keep feeling the need for being first. But I want you to be the first in love. I want you to be the first in moral excellence. I want you to be first in generosity.”
- The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.*

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.
- Please note our worship service is livestreamed.

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: For just this hour...

P: Follow me.

L: Listen to my word...

P: Follow me.

L: Pray...

P: Follow me.

L: Sing...

P: Follow me.

L: Love...

P: Follow me.

All: Come, let us follow in the steps of Jesus who leads us into life!

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

With a backbeat G C G Am7 G

1. I'm gon-na live so God can use me
(I'm gon-na live so) (God can

G7 C G7 C Am G C

use me,) an - y time and an - y - where
(yes an - y time) (yes an - y -

G G C G B7

where) I'm gon-na live so God can use me
(I'm gon-na live so)

Em C G A7 D7 G C G

an - y time and an - y - where.
(an - y time,) (yes an - y - where).

2. I'm gonna work...

3. I'm gonna pray...

4. I'm gonna sing...

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Based on Psalm 121)**

L: I lift my eyes unto the hills – from where does my help come?

P: **Forgive me, O God, when I believe my only help is in my own strength.**

L: My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

P: **Forgive me, O God, when I believe that my only hope is in the quickness of my own mind.**

L: The Lord watches over you. The Lord is at your right hand.

P: **Forgive me, O God, when I believe that my future is in my hands alone.**

L: The Lord will keep you from all harm; God will watch over your life.

P: **Forgive me when I believe that I can live without your grace.**

All: **The Lord will watch over my coming and going both now and forevermore.
Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Hear these words:

P: **God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and swift to bless.**

L: Believe these words:

P: **In Christ we are forgiven and set free for new life here and now.**

L: Live these words:

P: **Let us leave our burdens behind and embrace God's abundant life today. Amen.**

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.

BAPTISM OF TALIA KAY, ORION DUANE, OLIVER JACK, AND TOVA NANCY THOMPSON

Welcome and Presentation

L: They were bringing children to Jesus that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant, and said to them.

P: **“Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”**

L: Members and friends in Christ, we gather to celebrate God's gift of grace in the baptism of Talia Kay, Orion Duane, Oliver Jack, and Tova Nancy. To us children are given!

P: Thanks be to God!

Address

L: Baptism is the sacrament through which we are united to Jesus Christ and given a part in Christ's ministry of reconciliation. Baptism is the visible sign of an invisible event, the reconciliation of people to God. It shows the death of self and the rising to a life of obedience and praise. It shows also the pouring out of the Spirit on those whom God has chosen. In baptism, God works in us the power of forgiveness, the renewal of the Spirit, and the knowledge of the call to be a part of God's people.

P: This is the water of baptism. Out of this water, we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ's body.

Questions

L: As parents and sponsors of these children, will you encourage them to renounce the powers of evil and to receive the freedom of new life in Christ?

Parents and Sponsors: We will, with the help of God.

L: Will you teach them that they may be led to profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by sharing with them the church's life, worship, and fellowship?

Parents and Sponsors: We will, with the help of God.

L: Christ will first be known to Talia, Orion, Oliver, and Tova by the Christ seen in your home. By the grace of God, will you model the Christian life for them, provide instruction in the Christian faith, and live with them in the covenant of baptism so that they may lead a godly life until the day of Jesus Christ?

Parents and Sponsors: We will, with the help of God.

L: Will you, the children of First Congregational United Church of Christ, welcome Talia, Orion, Oliver, and Tova into the life of the church? Will you learn, play, and explore God's world with them?

Children: We will, with the help of God.

L: Jesus calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Will you who witness and celebrate this sacrament, nurture one another in the Christian faith and include Talia, Orion, Oliver, and Tova in your love and prayer?

P: We promise our love and prayer.

Act of Baptism

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Let us pray. Gracious God, bless this water. By your Holy Spirit save those who confess the name of Jesus Christ that sin may have no power over them. Create new life in your servants Talia, Orion, Oliver, and Tova who will be baptized this day, that they too may rise with Christ. Glory to you, Eternal God, the one who was, and is, and shall always be, world without end. Amen.

I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit be upon you, Talia, Orion, Oliver, and Tova, children of God, disciples of Christ, members of the church.

Baptismal Song

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

***Child of blessing, child of promise, baptized with the Spirit's sign;
with this water God has sealed you unto love and grace divine.***

***Child of God your loving Parent, learn to know whose child you are.
Grow to laugh and sing and worship, trust and love God more than all.***

Prayer

L: Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God, for these children and the grace acknowledged here in water and the Spirit. Embrace us all as sons and daughters in the one household of your love. Grant us grace to receive and nurture these new members of the body of Christ.

P: Give to the newly baptized: strength for life's journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Talia Kay Thompson

Born: July 5, 2018

Orion Duane Thompson

Born: February 1, 2020

Oliver Jack Thompson

Born: May 18, 2022

Tova Nancy Thompson

Born: February 27, 2024

Baptized: May 5, 2024


Parents are Kristopher Thompson and MiKayla Sanocki

**Sponsors are Dan Thompson, Kate Cooney, Spencer Cooney,
Mark Sanocki, Courtney Sanocki**

Hearing the Word

PSALM 98 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R *Unison*



Make a joy-ful noise, a joy-ful noise, un-to God, all the earth.

- L:** O sing to the LORD a new song, for God has done marvelous things. God's right hand and holy arm have gained victory.
- P:** **The LORD has made known his victory and revealed God's vindication in the sight of the nations.**
- L:** God has remembered steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
- P:** **All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. R**
- L:** Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
- P:** **Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.**
- L:** With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.
- P:** **Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.**
- L:** Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth.
- P:** **God will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity. 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:** Sisters and Brothers in Christ, this is the table where our Savior Jesus Christ wants to feed us on the bread of life. Let us feast on his grace that forgives us. Let us feast on his peace that calms us. Let us feast on his love that frees us. Come just as you are and be fed by him.

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:

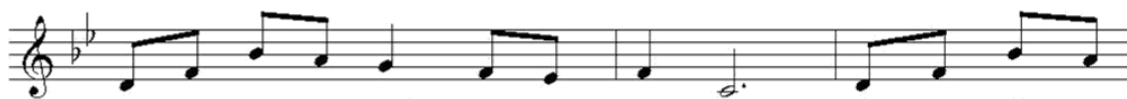
Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

O taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

You Are Mine

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



Do not be a - fraid, I am with you. I have called you



each by name. Come and fol-low me, I will bring you



home; I love you and you are mine.

Let Us Be Bread

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



Let us be bread, blessed by the Lord, bro-ken and shared,



life for the world. Let us be wine, love free-ly poured.



Let us be one in the Lord.

In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice! Look to God, do not be afraid; lift up your voices, the Lord is near; lift up your voices, the Lord is near.

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

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG OF BLESSING

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

L: Friends in Christ, we all are received into the church through the sacrament of baptism. These young people have found nurture and support in the midst of the family of Christ. Through prayer and study, they have been led by the Holy Spirit to affirm their baptism and to claim in our presence their covenantal relationship with Christ and the members of the church. They are here for service to Jesus Christ, using the gifts which the Holy Spirit bestows.

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

PRAYER

ACT OF CONFIRMATION

L: Strengthen, O God, these your servants, with your heavenly grace that they may continue in your way forever; and daily increase in them your Holy Spirit, until you receive them at last in your eternal home.

A: Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFIRMATION

A: O Merciful God, we rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in the Spirit's power to awaken us to new truth and to inspire us to venture into the fullness of life. We give you thanks that these young people have been moved to affirm their baptism. Help them to live not for themselves but for Christ and those whom Christ loves. Keep them steady and abounding in hope, never giving up, pressing toward the goal of life with you in Jesus Christ. Amen.

ADDRESS

L: By your baptism, you were made one with us in the body of Christ, the church. Today we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith which has brought you to this time and place. We celebrate your presence in this household of faith.

WELCOME

L: Let us, the members of First Congregational United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

P: **We promise you our continuing friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

M: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of your church, First Congregational United Church of Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love.

**Marshall Joseph Friese, Maranda Lucille Herum,
Alexander John Korent**

*The crosses presented to our Confirmands were hand-made
by Bob Johnson, a church member.*

GOSPEL LESSON

John 15:9-17

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

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!

***STATEMENT OF FAITH (World Council of Churches)**

I believe in the living God, the Maker of all humankind who creates and sustains the universe in power and in love.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God incarnate on earth, who showed us by his words and work, suffering with others, conquest of death, what human life ought to be and what God is like.

I believe that the Spirit of God is present with us now and always, and can be experienced in prayer, in forgiveness, in the Word, the Sacraments, the community of the Church and all that we do. 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

Amazing Grace
By Mark Hayes

Chancel Choir

***DOXOLOGY**



Let us bring ev - 'ry gift, let us trea - sure ev - 'ry grace: As you've

3



giv - en to us, let us share. In our neigh - bor to - day we will

6



meet you face to face, Let your love be the rule ev - 'ry - where.

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Gracious God, in response to your great love for us, we gratefully offer the fruits of our labor and our lives in these gifts. Bless and multiply them, we pray, that the transformative power of your love will be a reality in our neighborhood and community. Amen.

Sending

***HYMN**

Shall We Gather at the River

Blue #522

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Confirmands
Deacons: Karen Lloyd, Traci Hagberg,
Brian Miller, Lance Lueck,
Cindy Gandrud
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Ryan Luedtke, Murphy Beatty
Trustee: Trish Graves
Welcomers: JoAnn Lentz, Barb Mahoney
Coffee
Fellowship: Deacons
Counters: Allen Barnes, Jane Truesdill
*Altar table flowers are given by Marie and
Roland Roe in memory of Louelle DeLuca.*

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>Apr 28, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 10,883	\$ 212,715
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 177,871

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:

Carsten (grandson of Duane Church), Sue Taylor, Judy (mother of Lara Koecher), Melissa Oscanyan (friend of Ann Nelson), Glenn Kees, Linda (daughter of Chuck White), Jeff (brother-in-law of Janice Healy)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For those being confirmed today, Marshall Friese, Maranda Herum and Alex Korent, that they may grow in love, faith and joy
- For those being baptized this day, Talia, Orion, Oliver and Tova Thompson, that they may grow in faith and their parents Kris and MiKayla and sponsors be given strength and wisdom
- For High School Seniors and their families getting ready for Graduation Sunday on June 2nd, may it be a time of celebration, prayer and new beginnings
- For those coming to and being aided by our blood drive on Wed, May 15th, may it bring life to all!
- For our Scholarship Team meeting on May 16, may you have the mind of Christ (and our young folks get their documents in by the deadline of this Sunday, May 5)
- For those who participated in last Tuesday's Mental Health Learning Community, that it may kindle understanding, healing and connection
- For the end of our church programming season with the end of Wednesday School (last week), Confirmation/ Youth Group (this past Wednesday with bowling) and Sunday School on May 19th, that we may celebrate a great year and look forward to the next

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 working to care for the gift of God's good creation
- For those fighting cancer and those working to find a cure, may your efforts be fruitful

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For those who helped clean the church yard (Trustees and others) and garden (Garden Geeks), your work brings joy to us all
- For all our Youth Group and Confirmation leaders Diana, Alex, Stacy and Chris, God bless you for all your efforts
- For all who helped with Wednesday School this past year including our drivers, snack folks and helpers (Stacy, Christina, Connor, Erin, Jen, Dave, Larissa), may you be given the gift of rest and wonderful memories
- 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 as they seek to expand to two or three days, may they be blessed with more participants, volunteers and funding
- For our baptism boom which is now at 8 children of God in 4 months including Hope Withers (Erik and Vanessa) baptized Feb 25, Laney Sitz (Heather and Dan) baptized on March 3, Nora Koecher (Dan and Mari) baptized on March 10, and four Thompson children (Talia, Orion, Oliver, Tova) baptized on May 5, and Dean Wilhelmy (Heidi and Mason) to be baptized on May 19, may they all grow in love and faith!

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Carole Hoopman who died April 29th as they gather to celebrate her life at Anoka Methodist Church on May 10 at 12:30 pm with visitation an hour before and a lunch to follow, may they be comforted
- For the Carrison family mourning Dahn, the Rausch family mourning Bill, the Fosmo family mourning Harold, the Prochnow family mourning Neal 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.

DIAPER DRIVE

MAY 12- JUNE 16

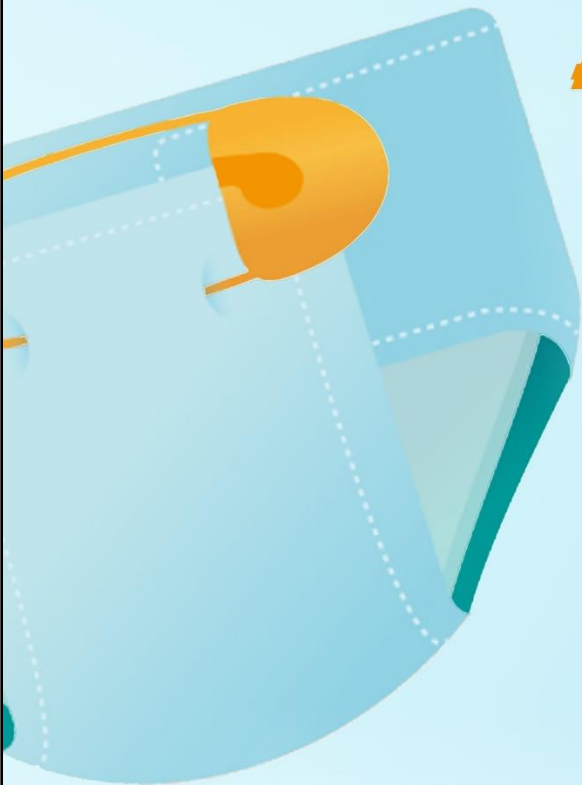
First Congregational UCC

Receiving the following donations:

All Diaper Sizes

Newborn - 6

Baby Wipes



Help us honor God and our parents
between Mother's Day and Father's Day

GOSPEL LESSON: John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant^[b] does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.



Give blood.
Every 2 seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood.
American Red Cross

Blood Drive
First Congregational Church
110 N 3rd Street

Wednesday, May 15, 2024
11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: [firstcongregationalrf](https://firstcongregationalrf.org) to schedule an appointment.

Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | redcrossblood.org | Download the Blood Donor App



RIVER FALLS
BACCALAUREATE
SPONSORED BY SOULED OUT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22ND
7 - 8 PM

RIVER FALLS HIGH SCHOOL
AUDITORIUM

All graduating seniors, their friends, and families are welcome to attend the Baccalaureate service to celebrate and honor the graduating class of 2024.

Cake and refreshments following the service will be sponsored by The Sycamore of River Falls.



THE SYCAMORE
OF RIVER FALLS