

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

**June 16, 2024**



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

June 16, 2024

*Father's Day*  
*Fourth Sunday after Pentecost*

9:30 am

**Gathering**

People judge by the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the Heart.

Remember: What dad really wants is a nap. Really.  
- Dave Berry

Welcome to our guests who are visiting with us today!

- 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: Abundant grace flowing to us,

**P: A listening ear turned toward us,**

L: A generous heart giving us gifts of beauty and friends,

**P: A strong arm that helps us up when we fall,**

L: These are the gifts of our eternal God and our parents here on earth.

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

**\*HYMN**

*As Your Family, Lord, Meet Us Here*

**Blue #606**

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

L: God of all truth, who can stand before you! We judge by outward appearances,

**P: But you examine our hearts.**

L: We see what is on the surface,

**P: But you discern beauty deep within.**

L: We measure importance by paychecks,

**P: But you find value among those we deem lowly and insignificant.**

L: You offer us the deep and profound joy of living in your realm.

**P: We forget your promises and turn to pursuits that separate us from you and destroy community.**

**All: We seek forgiveness and a new direction for our lives. Amen.**

**\*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: When we come in penitence,

**P: Christ forgives.**

L: In Christ, we no longer regard others from a human point of view.

**P: We are a new creation.**

L: The old has passed away,

**P: The new has come.**

**All: Let us live then as Christ's new creation.**

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**

***Alleluia! Give the Glory***

***Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!***

***Give the glory and the honor to the Lord!***

***Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!***

***Give the glory and the honor to the Lord!***

**Hearing the Word**

**GOSPEL LESSON**

**Mark 4:26-34**

**PSALM 100 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)**

**R**



- L: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing.
- P: Know that the LORD is God. It is God that made us, and we are his; we are God's people, and the sheep of his pasture.**
- L: Enter God's gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to God, bless God's name.
- P: For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. R**

**Proclaiming the Word**

**SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**1 Samuel 16:1-13**

**SERMON**

**Rev. Deb Meyer**

**\*HYMN**

*Called as Partners in Christ's Service*

**Blue #581**

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH – United Church of Canada**

L: We are not alone, we live in God's world.

**P: We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God. We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.**

**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 – River Falls Food Pantry**

**Larry Peterson**

**\*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.*

**\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Holy and Gracious God, **you are the One who creates us, the Christ who redeems us, the Holy Spirit who fills us with hope. May we and our gifts be instruments of your purpose here on earth. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

<b>Celebrating the Meal</b>
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(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.**

**L:** This table is for all people who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

***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 remember 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 We Gather at Your Table***

**Blue #695**

***Blest Are They***

**Blue #666**

***Eat This Bread***

***Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and never be hungry.  
Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.***

***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.**

**Sending**

**\*HYMN**

***Sent Forth by God's Blessing***

**Blue #712**

**\*BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

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## **SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS**

Preacher: Deb Meyer  
Celebrant: Deb Meyer  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Jean Smith  
Deacons: Karen Lloyd, Traci Hagberg,  
Brian Miller  
Organist: Marsha Pearson  
Live Stream: Ryan Luedtke  
Trustee: Trish Graves  
Coffee

Fellowship: Mission Ed Committee  
Welcomers: Yvonne and Fred Benson  
Counters: Jane Truesdill, Jean Smith  
*Altar flowers are given by Janice Healy in  
celebration of Marge Faulks' 101st birthday.*  
*Altar flowers are given by the Mission Ed  
Committee in thanks for the Diaper Drive  
donations.*

## **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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## **Treasurer's Report**

	<u>June 9, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,458	\$ 247,872
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 240,649

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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Thanks to Pastors Dave Ostendorf and Deb Meyer who are leading worship while Pastor Chris travels with his wife Stacy on her sabbatical trip. He will be leading worship on Sunday, July 14, which is also River Falls Days weekend and will be back just in time for the Thursday concert on the church lawn. Pray for a safe and restful trip.

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

**Those who are ill or recovering:**

Carsten (grandson of Duane Church), Sue Taylor, Melissa Oscanyan (friend of Ann Nelson), Glenn Kees, Linda (daughter of Chuck White), Jeff (brother-in-law of Janice Healy), Joe (Christina Krueger's brother), Doris (sister-in-law of Bonnie Jones Witthuhn), Rose Rude, Stuart Henning

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

- For local families who will receive diapers as we end our Diaper Drive on Father's Day, June 16, may they be signs of God's many blessings
- For our Wisconsin Conference UCC who gathered for their annual meeting June 7-9 in Green Lake, that along with our delegates Pastor Deb and Carol Merriman, they may grow in love, justice and grace
- For our Music Committee gearing up for the Bluegrass concert on the church lawn as part of River Falls Days on Thursday, July 11 from 6-8pm, let the good times roll!
- For Habitat for Humanity as it breaks ground on a house in River Falls on West Maple, may God bless the new family owners
- For our Among Friends ministry to families with dementia as they expand to welcome guests on Tuesdays and now also Thursdays which started June 6, may they be an oasis of grace
- For Pastor Stacy as she continues her sabbatical, may it feed her in body, mind and soul

**Prayers for our World:**

- For those called to be fathers as we celebrate Father's Day on Sunday, June 16, may they be given strength, courage and wisdom
- For the FMSC mobile packing event coming to River Falls on September 11-12, that our community may be bound together and demonstrate the love of Jesus in word and action
- For ANYONE who has to cross the I-94 bridge in Hudson, especially commuters, may they be given patience beyond their own ability
- 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

**Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

- For those graduating from high school and college, may you look for God's guidance as new opportunities arise
- For those celebrating graduation parties, may you be graced with many friends, lots of food and good weather!
- For Joyce and Roger Kampstra who celebrate their 60th anniversary on July 11, may your love continue to grow!

**For those grieving the loss of loved ones:**

- For the Knutson family mourning Debbie, 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.



## Announcements

*No matter who you are. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here!*

### Loving God

**New to Church:** Are you a first-time visitor? Please stop at the welcome table in the gathering area to receive a special welcome gift from us!

**The Lord's Prayer Bible Study:** You know it. Maybe memorized it. But have you ever really thought about what it means? Or how it can impact your prayer life? On **Tuesdays, June 18 and 25, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm**, Pastor Deb will lead an interactive study on The Lord's Prayer, based on the book "Praying the Lord's Prayer" by Elmer L. Towns. Deepen your personal experience of The Lord's Prayer by joining us!

### Loving Neighbor

**Diaper Drive:** Each Sunday between Mother's Day & Father's Day, we are collecting diapers and wipes for local families in need. Last year folks in our church donated over 5,100 diapers and as of today we have 6,798. What a wonderful way to honor our parents, support those in need locally, and be vehicles of God's grace and compassion.

**Simpson Shelter Meal Volunteers Needed:** It's time for our summer picnic meal at the Simpson Shelter. The date is **Wednesday, July 17**. A sign-up sheet is on the gathering table. Please sign up to help prepare food in our kitchen or serve at the shelter. Thank you!

**Save The Date!** Feed My Starving Children is coming to River Falls! Thanks to a wonderful partnership of churches, individuals and businesses, including First Congregational Church, please mark your calendars for **Wednesday and Thursday, September 11 and 12**, when our community will pack 100,000 meals at Tattersall. Sign-ups will begin the end of July. Thank you to our Endowment Grant Team who granted \$3,000 to help pay for the \$30,000 cost of packing these meals. Exciting!

**Scarves, Mittens, & Hats:** Join our knitting group by making scarves, mittens and/or hats for school age children. We are supporting Basics for Local Kids in Pierce & St. Croix counties. You can make items at home from yarn, fleece or wool or join us on Thursdays at 10 am. If you have questions, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103.

**First Church Companions:** The "**Companions**" meet quarterly to support each other, help new companions, and discuss questions. If you are willing to visit with someone in our church community and connect at least once a month with a call or visit, please sign-up. If you are interested in receiving regular visits, there is also a line on the same sign-up sheet for "**Buddies.**" Contact Pastor Deb or Lu Lueck with questions.

**Among Friends** is a community-based social respite program serving adults who have memory loss who reside in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. For more information, contact them at (715) 293-2561. Check out the website: [amongfriendsrf.com](http://amongfriendsrf.com) and Facebook page. It is held at the church on **Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am to 3pm**.

### Loving Self

**Birthday Celebration:** Marge Faulks turned 101 on June 14th. Her family is hosting a party for her **TODAY, June 16th from 1-4 pm at St Croix Lanes** in River Falls. Please come and help her celebrate! (No gifts, please.)

**Game Day Sunday** will be **June 23** following Coffee Fellowship. Please sign up.

**Young Families Gathering:** Attention young families who are interested in getting connected with each other! The church is hosting a young families and kids dinner on **Wednesday, June 26 at 5:30 pm!** A child-friendly menu will be catered and families can eat and connect with each other! Cost is \$10/family. Kids will have opportunities to play with each other with church supervision so our young parents can connect as a group! Please sign up at church or online.

**Summer Choir:** The UCC Chancel Choir will be performing 2 more Sundays this summer: **July 21 and August 25!** If you're interested in a low-stakes singing opportunity, please join us! This is your chance to sing without committing to the year's schedule. We rehearse one hour before the service! All are welcome!

**Softball News:** Our next few games are June 17 at 6:30 pm vs. Luther Memorial and June 24 at 6:30 pm vs. Servant of the Shepherd. Come join in the fun, laughs, and family togetherness whether you are playing or cheering for the team. If you have questions, contact Sarah Plum at (715) 418-9393 or Deb Hoffman at (612) 308-4945.

**WISE Corner:** NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group will be held **Thursdays at 6:30 pm at the River Falls Public Library**. For more information, call Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

**River Falls Days Kick-Off Concert:** On **Thurs, July 11, from 6:00-8:00 pm**, join us out on the lawn for a concert with the Slapdash Bluegrass Band! There will also be the Rollin' River Food Truck with food to purchase. In case of bad weather, it will move inside the Fellowship Hall. Join us as we kick off River Falls Days weekend!

**VBS Backdrop Painting:** Please volunteer to help paint the backdrops for VBS. The big painting day with the artist will be **Tuesday, July 16, starting at 6:00 pm**. Excellent artistic skills are *not* required. Rather, the ability to paint inside the lines is the name of the game. Please sign up.

**VBS Volunteers:** Thanks to everyone who has volunteered to help with VBS 2024. We do still need a large number of additional adult and teen workers. VBS will be July 29–August 1, 9:00–11:30 am. To volunteer, please sign up.

**VBS Cookie Bakers Needed:** Homemade cookies are a special part of the VBS snack, so we need volunteers to make some. Each volunteer is asked to bring four dozen cookies. A sign-up list is available on the table.

**Merry Widows:** They will meet on **Wed, June 19 at 1:00 pm at Azul Tequila in Hudson**. All widows are welcome to join us for lunch and conversation! See JoAnn Lentz for more information.

**Women's Group:** Interested in fellowship and community with other women? Pastor Deb invites you to join her at noon every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month. Please bring a sack lunch. The next meetings will be **June 25 & July 9**.

**Let's Knit Together:** Calling all who knit, crochet, or have a craft that can be brought to church. Join us on **Thursdays at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall**. We have a great time sharing our current projects and enjoying each other's company. Any questions, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or [firstroe@gmail.com](mailto:firstroe@gmail.com)

**Church Yoga:** The church yoga group meets on **Tuesdays and Thursdays** in the church Fellowship Hall from **9:00-10:00 am** and via Zoom. Please contact the church office to receive the Zoom link.

### ***Youth Events***

**Day Trip to the Cities for Grades 6-12:** Alex is planning a fun-filled day in the Twin Cities visiting various locations based on group interest! You are welcome to invite a friend or two as we will travel in style in our church van. Dates will be determined based on group availability. Please fill out the Day Trip to the City Interest form online or email/text Alex at [rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com) or 612-224-5894.

**Late Summer Youth Retreat for Grades 6-12:** Alex is planning a Retreat to the Metropolis Resort and Action City! Our goal is to find two days between July 26-Aug 10. Once we have a strong group signed up, we will make reservations and plan around the group's interests! You are welcome to invite a friend! Male & female parents/chaperones are requested. Pricing will be determined soon but will be reduced for church members with the youth fund. Please fill out the Interest form online or email/text Alex at [rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com) or 612-224-5894.

**Vacation Bible School:** Children age 3 through completed grade 5 are invited to Vacation Bible School. The theme is *Christian Art: Stop, Look, Listen* and will feature Bible study, children's literature, Christian art and architecture, music, and an engaging variety of art projects from painting to felting. VBS is free and open to all community children. Registration forms are online or at church. Dates are **July 29–August 1, 9:00–11:30 am**.

**Summer Children's Musical:** Children who have completed grades 1-6 are invited to produce the musical *Rescue in the Night: The Story of Daniel in the Lions' Den*. Rehearsals include singing, learning lines, and working on the set and props. The show will be Thursday evening. All are welcome & there is no charge. Registration forms are online or at church. Dates: **Aug 19-22, 9:00 am–Noon for Rehearsals & Aug 22, 6:30 pm for Dinner & the Show**.

*Join us*  
**FOR A FREE CONCERT**  
*on the lawn*

*July 11th*  
*6-8 PM*

**110 N 3RD ST. RIVER FALLS**

**WITH**  
*Slapdash*  
**BLUEGRASS**  
*Band*

*food for purchase by*  
**AND ROLLIN' RIVER FOOD TRUCK**

*First Congregational UCC*  
**FIRSTCHURCHRF.ORG | 715-425-2052**



**GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 4:26-34**

He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

**SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

The LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.' Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.' And the LORD said, 'Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the LORD." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.' Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, 'Do you come peaceably?' He said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.' And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.' Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, 'Neither has the LORD chosen this one.' Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, 'Neither has the LORD chosen this one.' Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The LORD has not chosen any of these.' Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.' He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.