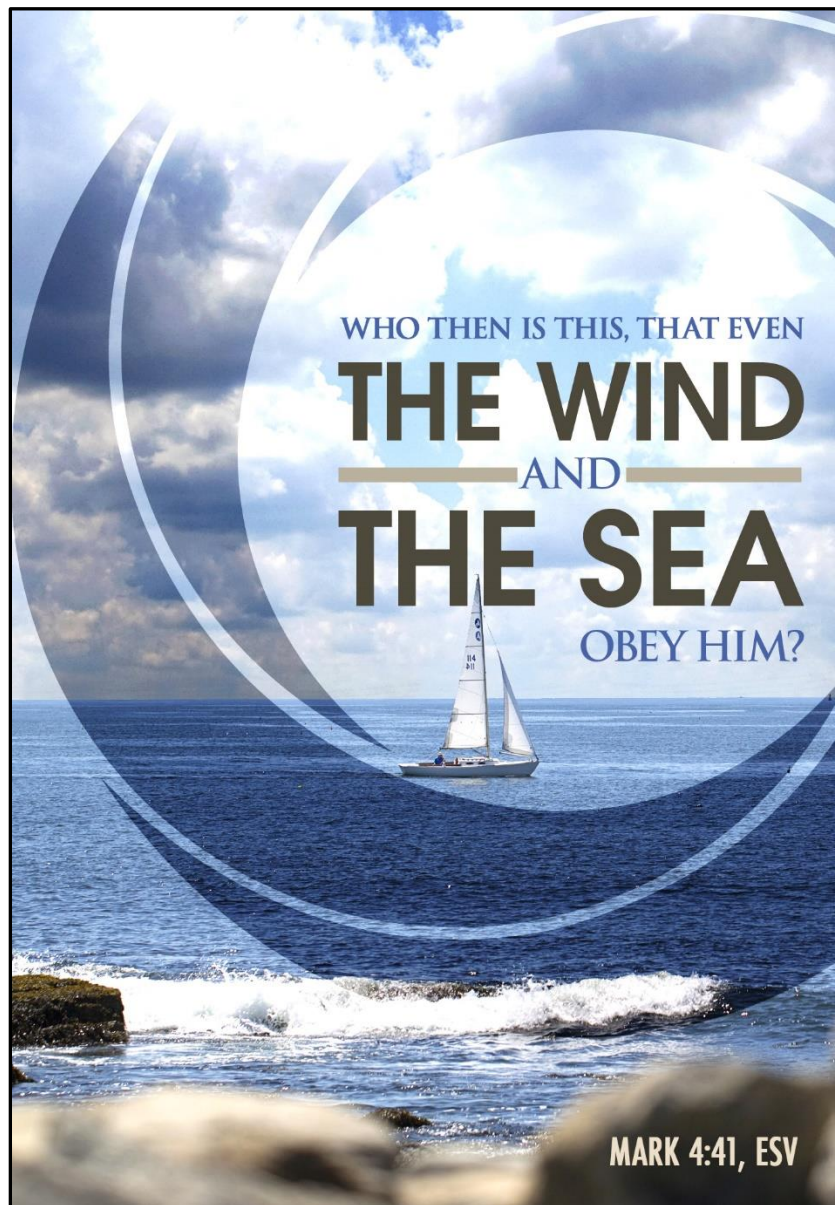


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

June 23, 2024



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

June 23, 2024

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am

Gathering

Repeatedly in Mark, Jesus engineers endings that people weren't expecting. Over and over, he thwarts the outcomes that had appeared to be inescapable.

- Matt Skinner

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: On this new morning and in every moment of our lives, gracious and loving God...

P: ...from generation to generation and in all times we praise your name.

L: Like all who have come before us, we proclaim your greatness to our children...

P: ...for we have seen your deeds of power and witnessed your goodness in our lives.

L: As you have showered your love on all creation...

P: ...open our hearts so we may share the gifts of life we have received from you.

All: Let us worship God in gratitude and joy!

***HYMN**

God Reigns o'er All the Earth

Black #21

Verses 1, 2, and 3

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Merciful God, we open our hearts to you, trusting that your love and goodness is stronger than all our shortcomings. We have been reluctant to trust you. We have forgotten the assurance of your unending presence. We have quieted our voices when we should have spoken up. We have wondered where you are in our world. Forgive us and help us to be guided by your Spirit and filled with the love of the living Christ. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: God forgives us. Our wandering ways. Our shortcomings.

P: God forgives us indeed! Through boundless love God forgives us.

L: God welcomes us back and sustains us to live in the ways of Jesus Christ.

P: God calls us this very moment, this very day, every day, and gives us strength for holy and righteous living.

L: We are forgiven indeed!

All: Let us give God thanks! Let us give God our praise! Let us give God our lives!

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

***GLORIA (Sung twice)**

Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

PSALM 107:25-26, 28-32 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

***R Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.***

L: God spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.

P: They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away.

L: Then they cried out to God in their trouble and God brought them out of their distress.

P: God stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. *R*

L: They were glad when it grew calm and God guided them to their desired haven.

P: Let them give thanks to God for God's unfailing love and wonderful deeds.

All: Let them exalt God in the assembly of the people and praise God in the council of the elders. Amen. *R*

Proclaiming the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 4:35-41

SERMON

Strong in the Storm...

Rev. Dave Ostendorf

***HYMN**

Jesus Calls Us, o'er the Tumult

Black #172

***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

Just a Closer Walk with Thee

Deb Hoffman

***DOXOLOGY**

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer Creator. In grateful devotion our tribute we bring. We lay it before you, we kneel and adore you; we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Gracious God, we offer these gifts to be used in celebration of your steadfast love. We give joyfully so others may join our common voice of praise and thanksgiving. Bless these gifts to the work of your church, and open our hearts to the indwelling of your Spirit. Amen.

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. You who come to me shall not hunger; you who believe in me shall never thirst.

P: **In the company of all who are hungry and thirsty, we come to this table to know the risen Christ and to share in the bread of life and cup of blessing.**

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:

Bread for the World

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



Bread for the world:

a world of hun - ger.



Wine for all peo - ples:

peo-ple who thirst.

May we who eat



be bread for oth - ers.

May we who drink

pour out our love.

O Christ, Surround Me

C Dm7 G C C Dm7

God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to
 Bind to my - self the Name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - nes -
 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light - ning,
 Walk - ing be - hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to
 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that

G Am F G Am

move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me.
 ses en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness.
 strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:
 light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove and all ways,
 hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:

F C G Am F C G C

O Christ, sur - round me, O Christ sur - round me.
 O Christ, sur - round me, O Christ sur - round me.
 O Christ, sur - round me, O Christ sur - round me.
 O Christ, sur - round me, O Christ sur - round me.
 O Christ, sur - round me, O Christ sur - round me.

Let Us Break Bread Together

Let us break bread together on our knees;

Let us break bread together on our knees;

**Refrain: *When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.***

Let us drink wine together on our knees;

Let us drink wine together on our knees; Refrain

Let us praise God together on our knees;

Let us praise God together on our knees; Refrain

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**

My Faith, It Is an Oaken Staff

Black #418

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Dave Ostendorf
Celebrant: Dave Ostendorf
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Traci Hagberg
Deacons: Cindy Gandrud, Traci Hagberg,
Karen Lloyd, Laura Anderson
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Scott Nelson
Coffee
Fellowship: Deb Meyer
Welcomers: BJ Pearson, Duane Church
Counters: Allen Barnes, Jean Smith

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>June 16, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,798	\$ 267,087
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 251,112

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, 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, Ruth Anne White

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- 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 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 local families benefiting from the diaper drive sponsored by our Mission Team as a way to honor our parents, together we contributed over 7000 diapers!
- For those who graduated 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.

Sunday, June 23, 2024

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 **Tuesday, June 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

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 10:00 am. If you have questions, contact Marie Roe.

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 and Facebook page. It is held at the church on **Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am to 3pm**.

Loving Self

Game Day Sunday is **TODAY** following Coffee Fellowship. Join us!

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 by noon on Monday.

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 24 at 6:30 pm vs. Servant of the Shepherd and July 8 at 7:45 pm vs. The River. 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.

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 and July 9 and 23**.

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

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 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 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**.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says,

‘At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.’

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 4:35-41

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, ‘Let us go across to the other side.’ And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’ He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?’ And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’