

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

July 7, 2024

He called
the twelve
and began
to send
them out
*two
by two.*

MARK 6:7



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

July 7, 2024

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am

Gathering

...he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two...

- Mark 6: 6-7

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: We have needed the light of Christ, this week, this day, all our days.

P: And it shines through our most challenging moments...

L: We have seen the light of God.

P: The light that brightens the abundant joys and blessings of our lives.

L: And we have felt the light of the Spirit...

P: As it move us, as it moves before us, as it guides our path...

L: Thanks be to God!

All: Let us worship God in gratitude and with great joy!

*HYMN

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Black #1

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, we come to worship you, but part of us drifts to other places. We come to you for guidance and support when we are willing to settle for small plans and small dreams. We long for the peace of your presence even when we are afraid of the urgency of your call. Spirit of God, enter into our lives and enliven us. Forgive us when we wander astray. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: God is with us! God forgives us!

P: **And God gives us strength for our life-journey.**

L: God stands by us. God is with us. God beside us, God before us.

P: **And God ever and forever with the human family and with all creation.**

L: We give God deepest thanks and praise.

All: **Indeed we give God thanks! Amen.**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

*GLORIA

We are singing, for the Lord is our light, we are singing for the Lord is our light.

We are singing, for the Lord is our light, we are singing for the Lord is our light.

We are singing, oh, we are singing for the Lord is our light.

We are singing, oh, we are singing for the Lord is our light.

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Colossians 3:12-17

PSALM 136 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

Response
Unison

Antiphon: Emma Lou Diemer, 1994

Stead - fast love sur - rounds those who trust in God.

L: Sing praises to God, for God is good; God's steadfast love endures forever.

P: **Give thanks to the God of gods, for God's steadfast love endures forever.**

L: God made the heavens and spread out the earth in the waters; God's steadfast love endures forever.

P: **God made the great lights, the sun to rule over the day. R**

L: God made the moon and stars to rule over the night

P: **God remembered us in our low estate and rescued us from our foes.**

L: God gives food to all flesh. God's steadfast love endures forever.

P: **Give thanks to the God of heaven, for God's steadfast love endures forever. R**

Proclaiming the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 6:1-13

SERMON

On the Road, an Astounding Journey...

Rev. Dave Ostendorf

***HYMN**

You Are Salt for the Earth, O People

Black #181

***STATEMENT OF FAITH (taken from the New Zealand Church)**

**You, O God, are supreme and holy. You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do. You have always been with us.
You are God.**

You, O God, are infinitely generous, good beyond all measure.

You came to us before we came to you.

**You have revealed and proved your love for us in Jesus Christ, who lived and died
and rose again. You are with us now.**

You are God.

You, O God, are Holy Spirit. You empower us to be your gospel in the world.

You reconcile and hear; you overcome death. You are our God. We worship 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

Steal Away

**Missy Linaberry and
Deb Hoffman**

***DOXOLOGY**

We Praise You, O God

*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, accept these gifts as an expression of our love for you and for your people. We give you thanks for this opportunity to share the work of our lives. May we, and may these gifts, take your Good News to those in need, strengthen our ministries, and help build a world of justice and peace. Amen.

<p>Celebrating the Meal</p>

(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 Journey



1,5 Give us bread for the jour - ney give us bread. Give us
2 Guide our way as we trav - el guide our way. Guide our
3 Make us one with each oth - er make us one. Make us
4 Lead us home to the gar - den, lead us home. Lead us



bread for the jour - ney give us bread. When our legs are get - ting
way as we trav - el guide our way. With so ma - ny roads be -
one with each oth - er make us one. All the walls we've built a -
home to the gar - den, lead us home; where we'll live with all cre -




12 heav - y, and we're hang - ing down our heads, give us bread for the
fore us where to go is hard to say. Guide our way as we
round us: may we learn to tear them down. Make us one with each
a - tion find our place and nev - er roam. Lead us home to the

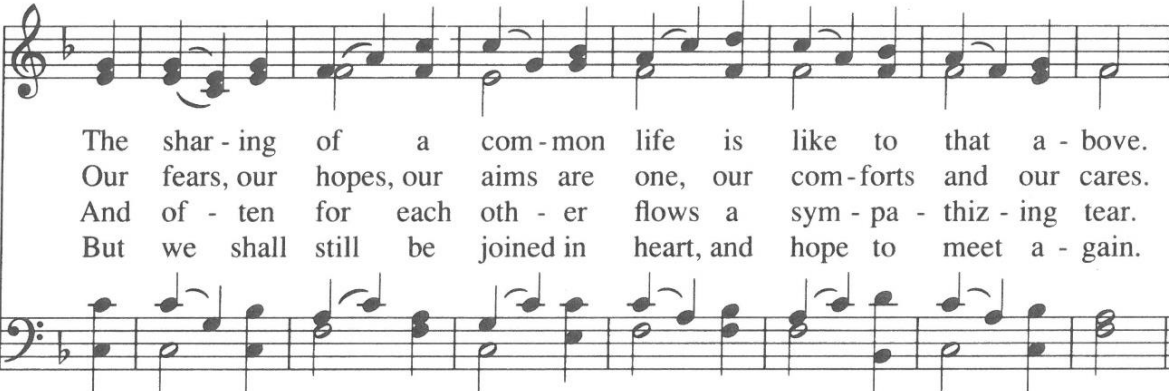


16 jour - ney, give us bread
trav - el guide our way.
oth - er, make us one.
gar - den, lead us home.

Blest Be the Tie That Binds



1 Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris - tian love;
2 Be - fore our God we come and pour our ar - dent prayers;
3 We share each oth - er's woes, each oth - er's bur - dens bear,
4 When we are called to part it gives us in - ward pain,



The shar - ing of a com - mon life is like to that a - bove.
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
And of - ten for each oth - er flows a sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet a - gain.

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**

I Am the Light of the World

Black #584

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Dave Ostendorf
Celebrant: Dave Ostendorf
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Marie Roe
Deacons: Laura Anderson, Lance Lueck,
Jena Most, Traci Hagberg,
Marshall Skule
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Scott Nelson
Coffee
Fellowship:
Welcomers: Art Rice and Elaine Dixen
Counters: Janice Healy, Roz Ostendorf
*Altar table flowers are given by Fred and
Yvonne Benson in celebration of Ruth Anne
White's 94th birthday.*

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 30, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 4,867	\$ 282,712
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 272,038

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, Carole Mottaz

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 Ruth Anne White as she celebrates her 94th birthday!

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!

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

Loving Self

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!

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 games are July 8 at 7:45 pm vs. The River and July 15 at 7:45 pm vs. Servant of the Shepherd at Hoffman Park. 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.

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.

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, July 17 at 4:00 pm at St. Croix Lanes in River Falls**. 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 **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.

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.

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: Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 6:1-13

He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honor, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.' So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.