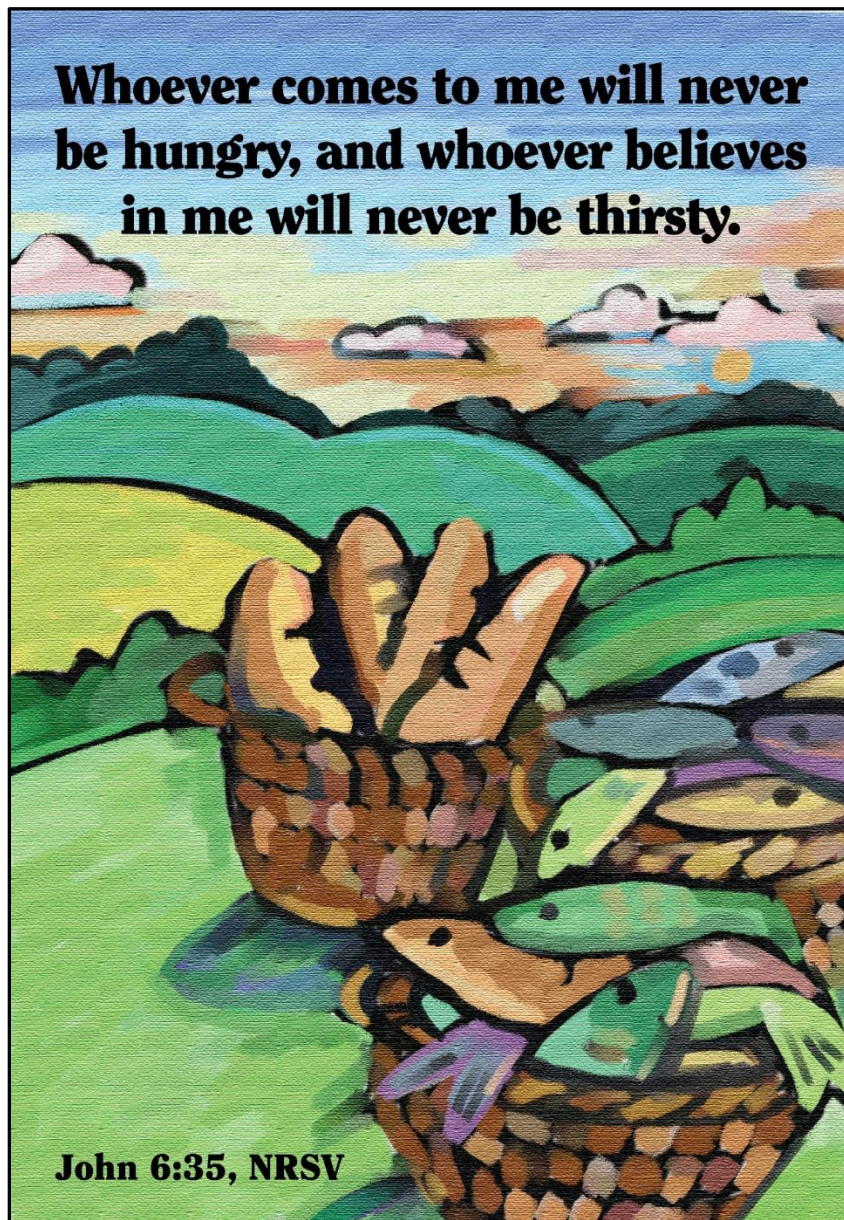


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

August 4, 2024

**Whoever comes to me will never
be hungry, and whoever believes
in me will never be thirsty.**



John 6:35, NRSV

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

August 4, 2024

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am

Gathering

A Nobel Prize winner was asked how he became a scientist. He said that every day after school, his mother would ask him not what he learned but whether he asked a good question that day. That, he said, was what led him to become a scientist.

Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*

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

How Great Thou Art

Jeff Pajac

WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We come from different places, different experiences, different lives.

P: **Bind us together, Lord.**

L: We bring our own hurts and joys with us today.

P: **Bind us together, Lord.**

L: We live much of our lives on our own, trying to go it alone.

P: **Bind us together, Lord.**

L: Yet we desire to be one, as Jesus and you are one.

P: **Bind us together, Lord.**

L: We come together to worship you.

P: **Bind us together, Lord. That we may be your joyful people!**

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

***HYMN**

God of the Ages, Who with Sure Command
(Verses 1, 2 and 3)

Black #592

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

O God, we confess that we would like the road map of our life laid out before us. We want to know where we are going. Any unexpected twists and turns disconcert us. When we hear you calling us to a task we do not want to do or a road we do not want to take, we argue and construct reasons why we cannot.

Forgive the rationalizations we present to you as reasons, the resistance that is most often grounded in fear and unbelief. Forgive our reliance on ourselves and our lack of trust in you. Forgive us all that is past, and free us to a new and living faith in you, through Christ our risen Lord.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Our God is a God of love and mercy, who allows us always to begin again.

P: **By God's grace, we are forgiven to walk in newness of life.**

All: **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**

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.

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

L: Friends in Christ, we are all received into the church through the sacrament of baptism. These friends have found nurture and support in the midst of this 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.

L: Friends, do you desire to affirm your baptism into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?

Candidates: **I do.**

L: Do you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

Candidates: **I do.**

L: Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ's disciple, to follow in the way of our Savior, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

Candidates: **I promise, with the help of God.**

L: Do you promise, according to the grace given to you, to grow in the Christian faith and to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ, celebrating Christ's presence and furthering Christ's mission to all the world?

Candidates: I promise, with the help of God.

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 give thanks for every community of faith that has been your spiritual home, and we celebrate your presence in this household of faith. Do you promise to participate in the life and mission of the family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves this community and the world?

Candidates: I promise, with the help of God.

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

All: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our 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, that we may be witnesses of our risen Savior.

Moderator: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of First Congregational United Church of Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming you into the company of this local church.

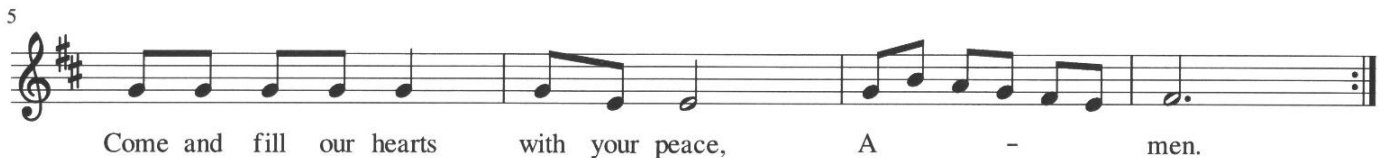
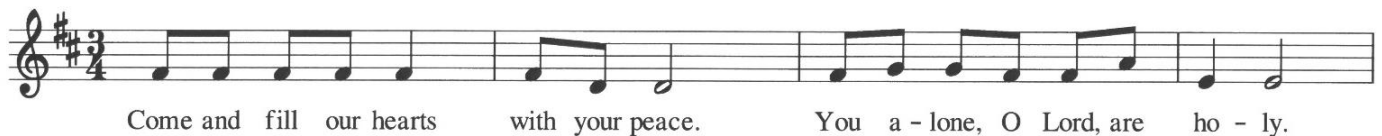
Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Ephesians 4:1-6

PSALM 78:23-29 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R



L: Yet God commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven; God rained down on them manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven.

P: Mortals ate of the bread of angels; God sent them food in abundance.

L: God caused the east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he led out the south wind; God rained flesh upon them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas; God let them fall within their camp, all around their dwellings.

P: And they ate and were well filled, for God gave them what they craved. R

Proclaiming the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

John 6:24-35

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

Eat This Bread and Never Hunger
(Verse 1 – Cantor; Verses 2 and 3 – All)

Blue #692

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – South Africa**

**We believe in one God who created all the world,
who will unite all things in Christ
and who wants all people to live together in one family.**

**We believe in God the Son who became human:
died and rose in triumph to reconcile all the world to God,
to break down every separating barrier of race, culture or class
and to unite all people into one body.**

**We believe in God the Spirit, the pledge of God's coming reign
who gives the Church power to proclaim the good news to all the world,
to love and serve all people, to strive for justice and peace:
to warn that God judges both the individual and the nations;
and to summon all the world to accept God's reign, here and now. 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

The Old Rugged Cross

Jeff Pajac

*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

God of All Peoples, we come together from many different places and backgrounds. You feed us at your table – a table that is open to all who love you. We thank you for being such a giving host, strengthening us both in body and spirit. Thankful for your gifts may we follow you into the places you send us. Help us be strong until we can gather as a family around your table again. 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: Come you thankful people come.

P: **Come and eat the bread of life!**

L: Come and drink the cup of blessing!

P: **Come and gather around Christ's table as friends and family.**

All: **Together let us thank the God of abundance and let us take our place as God's thankful 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:

Bind Us Together

Congregation join on refrain:

***Bind us together, Lord, bind us together
with cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord, bind us together,
bind us together in love.***

One Bread, One Body

Congregation join on refrain:

***One bread, one body, one Lord of all,
one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth,
we are one body in this one Lord.***

There is a Balm in Gilead

Congregation join on refrain:

***There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole,
there is a balm in Gilead, to heal the sin-sick soul.***

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

Standing on the Promises

(Verses 1, 2 and 4)



1. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es of Christ my King, through e - ter - nal
2. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es that can - not fail, when the howl - ing
3. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es of Christ the Lord, bound to him e
4. Stand - ing on the prom - is - es I can - not fall, lis - tening ev - ery



a - ges let his prais - es ring; glo - ry in the high - est, I will
storms of doubt and fear as - sail, by the liv - ing Word of God I
- ter - nal - ly by love's strong cord, o - ver - com - ing dai - ly with the
mo - ment to the Spir - it's call, rest - ing in my Sav - ior as my



shout and sing, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.
shall pre - vail, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.
Spir - it's sword, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.
all in all, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.



Stand - ing, stand - ing, stand - ing on the prom - is - es of
Stand - ing on the prom - is - es, stand - ing on the prom - is - es,



God my Sav - ior; stand - ing, stand - ing,
stand - ing on the prom - is - es, stand - ing on the prom - is - es,



I'm stand - ing on the prom - is - es of God.

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Alan Tuchtenhagen
Deacons: Karen Lloyd, Traci Hagberg,
Lance Lueck, Cindy Gandrud,
Brian Miller
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Jon Paul Okal
Coffee
Fellowship: Carole Mottaz, Jean Smith
Welcomers: Yvonne and Fred Benson
Counters: Jane Truesdill, Dennis Linder
*Altar tables flowers are given by Lillian Tan in
thanksgiving.*

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



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'

Vacation Bible School 2024 - Stop! Look! Listen!



Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Those who are ill or recovering:

Sue Taylor, Melissa Oscanyan (friend of Ann Nelson), Linda (daughter of Chuck White), Jeff (brother-in-law of Janice Healy), Doris (sister-in-law of Bonnie Jones Witthuhn), Becca Greub (daughter of Lou Greub), Dennis Kiel, Lynn Most and Tom Simonet (relatives of Sue Simonet), Josh and Tim (church softball team players), Kate Kirkwood (friend of Traci Hagberg), Sarah, Rev. Kurt Katzmar

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For all those who participated in our 2024 VBS program: Stop! Look! Listen!, it was a blast!
- For Adam Lovelace and Alexis Handeland who will be married on August 10th, may they be given wise role models and may their love continue to grow
- For those who cooked and served a picnic dinner at the Simpson Homeless Shelter in Minneapolis recently, may we all be blessed and fed
- For our Among Friends ministry to families with dementia as they have expanded to welcome guests on Tuesdays and also Thursdays, may they be an oasis of grace and more volunteer helpers

Prayers for our World:

- For our nation as we gear up for elections, that we may refrain from violence, remain peaceful and respectful
- For parents everywhere in shock and grief after sudden violence at a dance school in England, may God dry our tears, give us strength and help us mourn
- 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 those who are part of Nami's Family Support Group and the burdens they carry
- 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 all our VBS volunteers, helpers, cooks, servers and teachers, you are God's blessing
- For those who helped unload and sort 400 pairs of sneakers for Tools For School, God bless you!
- For the 111 patients who will receive blood thanks to the recent blood drive at our church, bless you!
- 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 Bonnie and Dick Jones Witthuhn who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Saturday, August 10, may God continue to grace with you gratitude and grace

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Donna Brunbage (sister of JoAnn Mathews) who died suddenly this past week, may God's healing wings surround you and your family
- For the Dopkins family mourning Wesley, 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.

NEW MEMBERS



Tony and Judy Hinden – We have currently lived in Hudson for three years coming from Appleton, WI, where we attended First Congregational Church there. Before that we lived in Tomah, WI, for many years and also attended First Congregational Church. We have three grown children and six grandchildren (ages ranging from 6 to 26 years old). We will celebrate our 55th wedding anniversary this August and on the same day, our first granddaughter is being married. We've been retired for a long time. Tony in School Administration and Judy as a part-time Title 1 Reading Teacher. Tony now enjoys reading, walking outdoors, and doing outside projects at our daughter's house in Lake Elmo, MN. Judy enjoys crosswords, reading, dabbling in crafts, and playing Mah Jongg. We have felt very welcomed here and look forward to getting more acquainted.



Dan and Mari Koecher – We are the Koecher family party of 4 - Dan, Mari, Lydia and Nora. Dan moved here in 8th grade migrating from New Brighton, MN and Mari is a River Falls native. Dan and I are high school sweethearts and married in 2019. We welcomed our 2 beautiful daughters, Lydia in September of 2021 and Nora in December of 2023. We enjoy spending time together whether that is with our family, friends, spending time at the park, or at our new home located on the outskirts of River Falls. We are thankful to have found this amazing church/community and are excited to become members.



Tom Magraw and Kristin Andes – Seasonal residents Tom Magraw and Kristin Andes join as associate members. They hail from Charlotte, NC, where they are deeply involved in Holy Covenant UCC and where both have served on the church council. Tom grew up in the Minneapolis Friends Meeting (Quakers) and as an adult joined the UCC. His work as a hospital administrator resulted in living in multiple cities. Tom has spent some of each summer in the River Falls area. He enjoys working in the out of doors, hiking, and camping. Kristin grew up in the UCC as a "preacher's kid" and served with the UCC national staff in NYC. A

certified therapeutic musician, she rejoices to bring the soothing effects of harp music to situations of pain, anxiety, and stress. To date, no one has chucked a spear at her, as King Saul did once when David harped for him! Kristin has also worked as a regional marketing director for an international student exchange program and as a fundraiser for United Way. The Andes, Magraws have two children in their 20s, both of whom got married within the past two years.



Kris Thompson & MiKayla Sanocki – MiKayla and Kris live in River Falls with their 4 beautiful and fun kiddos; Talia (6), Orion (4), Oliver (2) and Tova (5 months)! You have probably heard them in the back pew on occasion! As a family they enjoy being outside and active by biking, hiking, swimming, sports and catching bugs and frogs (Mom and Dad just try to keep up). They have a little hobby farm with chickens, ducks, goats and a bunny. They have enjoyed becoming members at First Congregational Church of River Falls and appreciate all the wonderful and supportive people they have had the chance to meet so far!

AUGUST 4, 2024

(B)

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Ephesians 4:1-6

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 6:24-35

So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."' Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

Vacation Bible School 2024 - Stop! Look! Listen!

