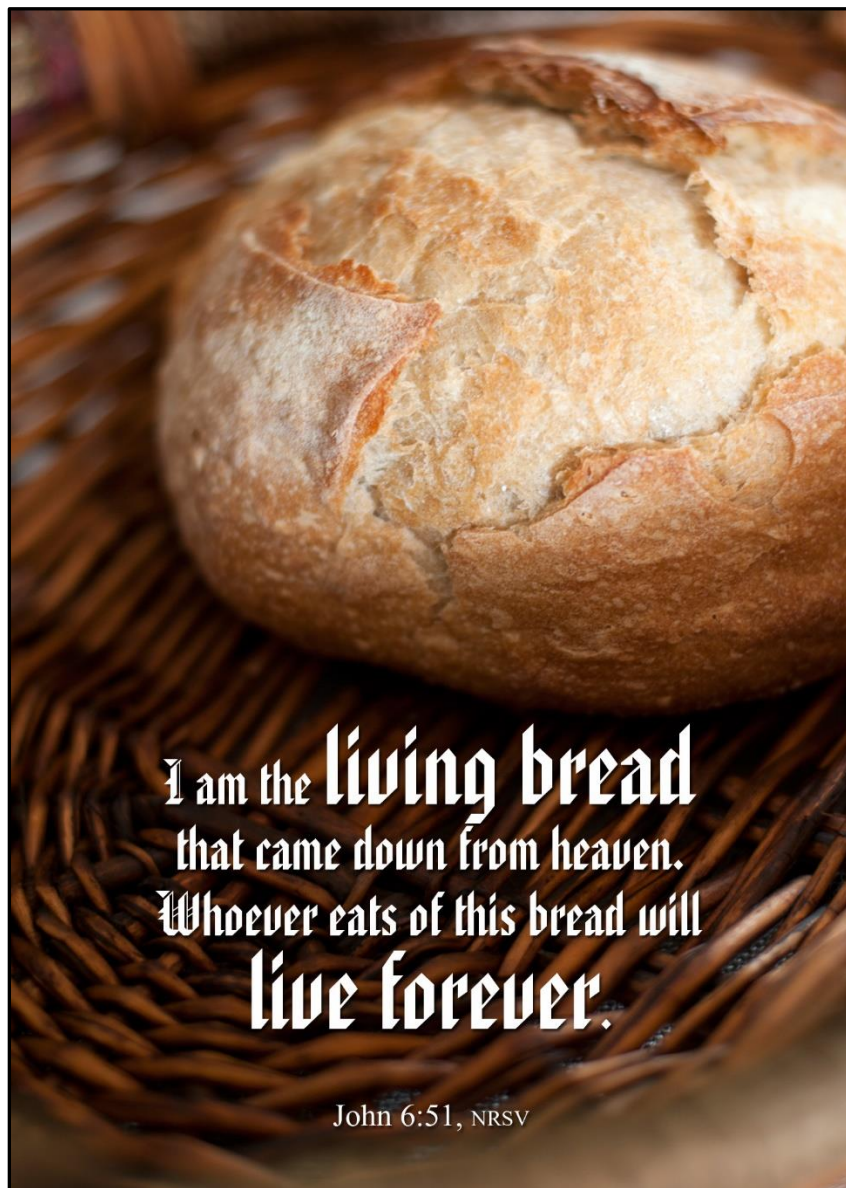


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

August 11, 2024



**I am the living bread
that came down from heaven.
Whoever eats of this bread will
live forever.**

John 6:51, NRSV

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

August 11, 2024

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am

Gathering

When angry count to ten before you speak. If very angry, count to one hundred.
- Thomas Jefferson

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored
than to anything on which it is poured.
- Mark Twain

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 gather together for worship, singing our praises.

P: **Some sing gladly, joyfully, for there is much to celebrate.**

L: Some sing quietly, nourished by a deep and inner peace.

P: **Some sing haltingly, their notes tripping over their fears.**

L: Some sing longingly, remembering good days past, not yet daring to hope for the days to come.

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

***HYMN**

Sing a New Song

Blue #10

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Forgive us, O Lord, **if we have spoken when it was a time for silence; if we have acted when it was a time to wait. When you have called us to speak and to act and we have remained silent and still, forgive us, O Lord. Renew us, O God, and set us in right paths. Amen.**

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Our God does not want us to linger in the sins of the past.

P: **In Christ, God offers a new way forward full of grace and peace.**

L: In Christ we are forgiven.

P: **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.

Hearing the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

John 6:35, 41-51

PSALM 51:1-12 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R 

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God.

L: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

P: **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.**

L: Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgement.

P: **Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. R**

L: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

P: **Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.**

L: Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

P: **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.**

L: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

P: **Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. R**

Proclaiming the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

The Gift of Love

Blue #397

***STATEMENT OF FAITH** – from the Iona Ecumenical Community in Scotland

L: Let us affirm our faith.

P: We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of the One God, maker and sustainer of earth, sea and sky. Born of Mary, faithful to the God of Abraham and Sarah, Jesus healed the sick, served the poor, and proclaimed heaven on earth. Condemned by the religious, crucified by the state, He died but transformed even death and rose to life everlasting. He blessed the disciples with his Holy Spirit and sent them forth, east and west, north and south. We commit ourselves to Jesus, to one another as brothers and sisters and to the grace of the Holy Spirit. 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

***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**

Holy God, faith walks hand in hand with serving, and love expresses itself in giving. May we be faithful, O Lord, in our serving and loving in our giving. For we do these things in your name and asking your blessing. 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: 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 remember the mystery of faith...

All: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

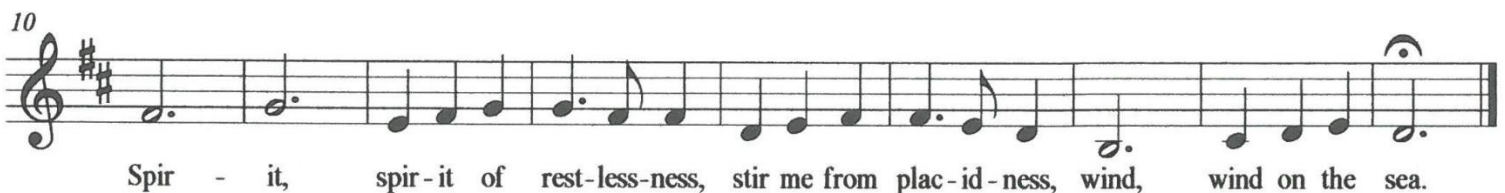
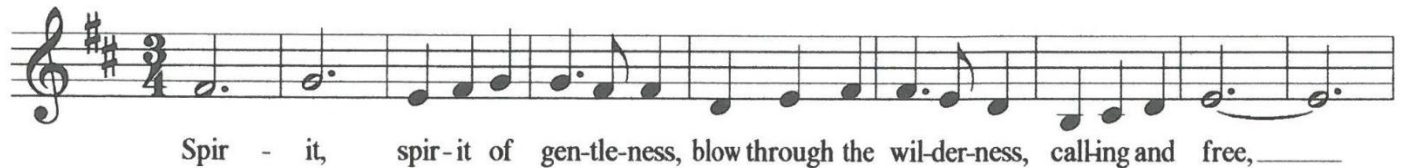
Prayer of Consecration

Distribution of the Elements

Hymns during the distribution of the elements:

Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness

Congregation join on refrain:



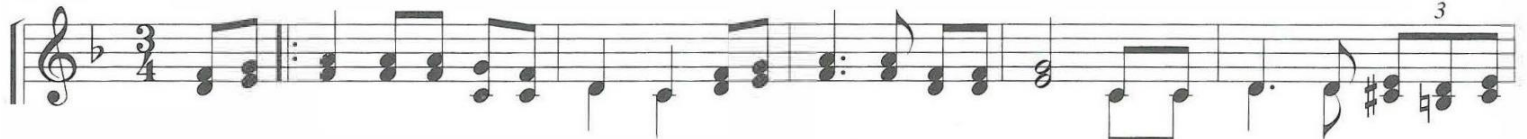
Here I Am, Lord

Congregation join on refrain:

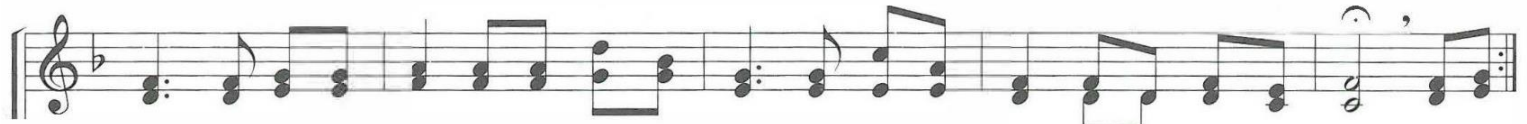
***Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.***

In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

Congregation join on refrain:



In the Lord I'll be ev-er thank-ful, in the Lord I will re-joice! Look to God, do not be a-
fine



fraid; lift up your voic-es, the Lord is near; lift up your voic - es, the Lord is near. In the

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**

Let All Things Now Living

Blue #22

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Alan Tuchtenhagen
Deacons: Cindy Gandrud, Traci Hagberg,
Jena Most, Lois Martin,
Lance Lueck
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Dan Rude
Coffee
Fellowship: Ann Nelson and Choir
Welcomers: Dennis & Lynn Linder,
JoAnn Lentz
Counters: Roz Ostendorf, Allen Barnes

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>Aug 4, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 8,671	\$ 322,850
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 324,353

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'

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 Laura Miller, our longtime choir member and Giving Thanks Meal coordinator, who moves to Alabama to be closer to family, may your move go well, you make wonderful memories with family and find a new church home
- For all those who participated in our 2024 VBS program: Stop! Look! Listen!, it was a blast!
- For Adam Lovelace and Alexis Handeland who were married on August 10th, may they be given wise role models and may their love continue to grow
- For those volunteering for Tools for Schools next week, may it be a blessing to all
- For our Among Friends ministry to families with dementia as they now expand to welcome guests on Tuesdays and also Thursdays, may they be an oasis of grace and more volunteer helpers

Prayers for our World:

- For those cleaning up after hurricane and flood damage in the southeast after Hurricane Debby
- For our nation as we gear up for elections, that we may refrain from violence, remain peaceful and respectful
- 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 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 celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Saturday, August 10th, may God continue to grace with you gratitude and grace

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

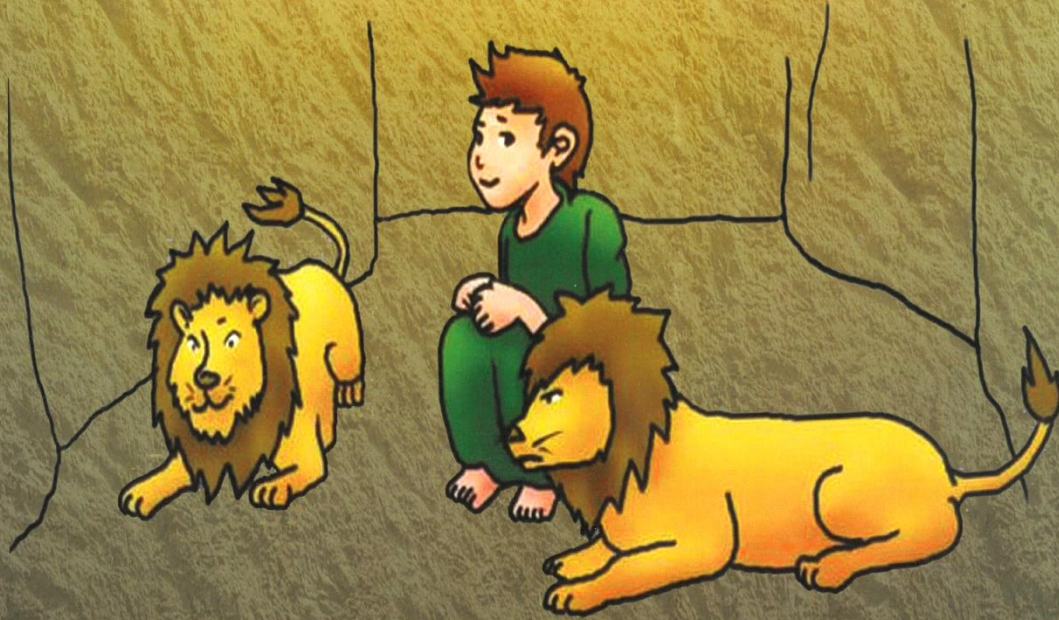
- For the Dopkins family mourning Wesley, Knutson family mourning Debbie, the Carrison family mourning Dahn, the Rausch family mourning Bill, the Fosmo family mourning Harold, the Prochnow family mourning Neal, may you be strengthened through the care of others

If you have people you wish to include on our prayer list, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.

RESCUE IN THE NIGHT

The Story of DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

Emma Cruciani, Director; Marsha Pearson, Accompanist



CHILDREN'S MUSICAL

REHEARSALS: Aug 19-22, 9:00 AM-Noon

DINNER & SHOW: Aug 22, 6:30 pm

AGE: Completed Kindergarten - Grade 6

TO REGISTER VISIT WWW.FIRSTCHURCHRF.ORG
First Congregational United Church of Christ
110 N 3rd St. River Falls, WI 715-425-2052
ALL ARE WELCOME! NO CHARGE



© WWW.21CARTOONDRAWINGS.COM

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

Tools for School: We are collecting school supplies for local families. As you are out shopping, please start collecting everything students might need this fall (crayons, pens, pencils, notebooks, backpacks, etc). The School Supply Event will be **August 19 and 20** here at church. Typically we serve about 300 students. Thank you for your generous support of this needed local ministry. Please bring donations and place them in the containers in the gathering area. Please also sign up to help sort and distribute items.

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!

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 with questions.

Among Friends is a community-based social respite program serving adults who have memory loss who reside in Pierce & St. Croix Counties. For more information, call (715) 293-2561. Check out the website: amongfriendsrf.com & Facebook page. It is held here at the church on **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.**

Loving Self

Peaches: It's time to place your order for the delicious Washington State Peaches! 1 single-layer box is \$24.00; 2 or more single-layer boxes are \$23.00 each. **Orders must be placed by August 12 for pick up the 3rd week of August.** There are 3 ways to order: 1. Email: office@firstchurchrf.org; 2. Sign up at church or online; 3. Call: 715-425-2052 – Mon-Thurs from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm or leave a message with name, phone, and number of boxes. This is an annual fundraiser for our youth. Thank you for your support!

Summer Choir: The UCC Chancel Choir will be performing 1 more Sunday this summer: **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!

Game Day Sunday will be **August 18** following Coffee Fellowship. Bring a dish to share. Main dish provided. Please sign up.

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, August 21 at 1:00 pm at Green Mill in Hudson, WI.** All widows are welcome to join us for lunch and conversation! See JoAnn Lentz for more information.

Softball News: Come cheer us on! Our next games are August 12 at 7:45 pm vs. Luther Memorial and August 19 at 7:45 pm vs. The River at Hoffman Park. If you have questions, contact Sarah Plum at (715) 418-9393 or Deb Hoffman at (612) 308-4945.

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 **August 13 and 27.**

Sunday School Teachers Needed: Sunday School begins again on **September 8.** Please volunteer to teach. All classes are team-taught and no one teaches every week. Please sign up at church or online.

Mortgage Burning: You read that right. We are burning the church bank mortgage! Join us on **Sunday, September 15** when, after worship, we will gather out on the church lawn to creatively burn our church mortgage leaving us bank debt free! More details to follow.

You are invited for "An Evening of Art" on Tuesday, September 24, at 6:30 pm. The primary focus of Stacy's sabbatical trip was to experience and learn about Christian art. She has narrowed down the list of her most favorite pieces to a dozen. She will share a few stories about her adventures, give you a list of things she learned (including how to navigate a train strike), and explore her most favorite pieces of art. Dessert will be included. Please sign up at church or online.

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 fristroe@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! 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.

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.**

GOSPEL LESSON: John 6:35, 41-51

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.

Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?' Jesus answered them, 'Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Ephesians 4:25-5:2

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.