

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

September 22, 2024



September 8 – Love Your Neighbors

September 15 – Forgive Others (and Yourself)

September 22 – Heal Division

September 29 – Bring Justice

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

September 22, 2024

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

“When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you.”

- Winston S. Churchill

“All for one and one for all, united we stand divided we fall.”

- Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers*

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!

People of the Way

September 8 – Love Your Neighbors

September 15 – Forgive Others (and Yourself)

September 22 – Heal Division

September 29 – Bring Justice

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: This is the day that the Lord has made.

P: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

L: This is the day that Christ has given us to rest.

P: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

L: This is the day we remember who we are and whose we are.

P: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

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

*HYMN

Morning Has Broken

Blue #35

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

L: From our endless schedules and lists,

P: Deliver us, O Lord.

L: From our need to control and oversee,

P: Deliver us, O Lord.

L: From not having enough to do or feeling rudderless in life.

P: Deliver us, O Lord.

L: From feeling that the weight of the world is on our shoulders,

P: Deliver us, O Lord. Help us to juggle our many responsibilities and commitments with faith and hope, courage and commitment. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Jesus came to free us from worry and fear.

P: Let us embrace the call of Jesus.

L: He came to show us a new way of living full of joy, hope and purpose.

P: Let us embrace the call of Jesus.

L: He came to forgive our sins, share our burdens, and lead us into abundant life.

P: Let us embrace the call of Jesus.

L: In Jesus 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 (Sung twice)**

*Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah, Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah
Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah, Hallelujah, Hal-le-lu-jah*

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

PSALM 1 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R



Like a tree that's plant - ed by the wa - ter, — we shall not be moved.

- L: Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;
- P: But their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on God's law they meditate day and night.**
- L: They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.
- P: The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.**
- L: Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
- P: For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. *R***

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: Today we gather at the table of the Lord where ordinary gifts of bread and wine are shared, where a vision for a new heaven and a new earth shine forth for all to see.
- P: We come to be filled where once we were hungry.**
- L: We come to have our thirst quenched where once we were parched.
- P: We come to find peace in a broken world.**
- All: We come and gather around the table so that together we may become God's faithful followers.**

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.***

They'll Know We Are Christians

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,

And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

**Refrain: *And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.***

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,

And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land: Refrain

We will work with each other, we will work side by side,

We will work with each other, we will work side by side,

And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride: Refrain

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,

And all praise to Christ Jesus, God's only Son,

And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one: Refrain

A Place at the Table

Congregation join on refrain

Blue #617

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.

Proclaiming the Word

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG (Children preschool through grade 8 leave for Sunday School.)

*I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul. I've got river in my soul.*

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 9:30-37

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

Lord, Speak to Me

Blue #593

***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.

***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**

Generous God, thank you for the gifts you bestow upon us daily. Make us aware of each blessing that comes our way – and create in us the constant desire to be blessings for others. Bless what we bring before you, we pray. Amen.

Sending

***HYMN**

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Blue #440

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Alan Tuchtenhagen
Deacons: Cindy Gandrud, Lance Lueck,
Jena Most, Laura Anderson,
Tanya Larsen
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Scott Nelson
Welcomers: Carole Mottaz, Arlene Johnson
Coffee
Fellowship: Welcome Team
Counters: Dennis Linder, Diane Welsh

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>Sept 15, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,379	\$ 388,306
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 387,131

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:

Sue Taylor, Melissa Oscanyan (friend of Ann Nelson), Linda (daughter of Chuck White), Jeff (brother-in-law of Janice Healy), Rev. Kurt Katzmar, Barbara de Souza, Michael, Darlene Sumption, Ronald (father of Cindy Gandrud)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our confirmands and church interns as they begin their program year, that they may grow in their God given gifts
- For ALL who enabled us to recently burn our church mortgage, thank you!
- For those joining our Committees and Teams as they met for the first time on Tuesday, September 17th, may you bring your God given gifts to help our church community grow in faith, love and service
- For our Young Families Group meeting this Sunday, may you be supported at this wonderful and difficult time of life
- For Pastor Stacy as she shares her sabbatical insights Tuesday at the upcoming Learning Community at 6:30pm
- For the Music Committee preparing for the Silent Movie on Sunday, October 20th
- For Josh Sippel who leaves for basic training on November 4th, may he be given strength and courage for the journey ahead

Prayers for our World:

- For the FMSC mobile packing event that came to River Falls on September 11-12 packing 100,000 meals, that our community may be bound together and demonstrate the love of Jesus in word and action, and that those receiving food may be blessed with nourishing food
- For civilians caught in bloody conflict in Israel and Gaza, Ukraine and Russia 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
- For our nation as we gear up for the next election, that we may talk respectfully about issues and solve our real problems without violence

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For the gift of our new church sign, the ability to fully pay off our church mortgage and a new lawn tractor, we are thankful for your generous support!
- For Barb de Souza, our semi-retired healthcare missionary in Rio de Janeiro, who celebrates her 94th birthday on October 18th, may she recover from a recent fall and continue her feisty battle for her community
- For Marshall and Gina Skule who recently celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary, may your love continue to grow
- For the gift of Jackson Thomas Jensen, first grandchild of Neal and Michelle Jensen, that they and parents Jonah and Mya may grow in love and faith
- For Kahla and Farnum Fuller who celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary recently, may your love continue to grow
- For Barb and Larry Peterson who celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary on September 2nd with family and a car show in which Larry won first place, may God continue to bless you

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Liz (Cindy Gandrud's mother) who died this past week, that they may mourn with hope and faith
- For the families of Zeke Wells and Donna Ray (mother of Norma Revels), may you be given God's strength, faith and gratitude

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!

Sunday Morning Text Study: Please join us on Sunday mornings to discuss the Bible passages used in worship. The group meets from **9:00–9:50** Sunday mornings in the Youth Room. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Adult Bible Study: Wednesday afternoon Adult Bible Study meets from **1:00–2:30 pm**. The group is discussing *Matthew: The Gospel of Promised Blessings*, by Matthew L. Skinner. Copies of the book are available in the office for \$14.00. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Loving Neighbor

Birthday Greetings for Barb de Souza: Barb de Souza is our (semi) retired healthcare missionary living in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She fell recently and is slowly recovering at her home there. She will celebrate her 94th birthday on October 18th so please wish her well by signing the card in the Fellowship Hall for the next two weeks.

College Pack Items Needed: We will send college packs to our church kids away at college as well as local UWRF and CVTC students. Please consider bringing items for the packs. Think fun toys, useful items for college kids & food items that are light & easy to pack. We will have about 30 packages this year. **Bring in items by Sept 29 please!**

Journey House Volunteers Needed from member churches to support servers & guests with friendly faces & conversation. Please see the sign-up sheet for more information. **Donations also needed:** Teas, paper towels & liquid soap for bathroom, church-branded mugs & info, items for personal hygiene (specifically: deodorant, toothbrushes, feminine hygiene & basic 1st aid.) Donations should be bagged & labeled JH & left in the gathering area. Thank you!

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 at the church **Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am to 3pm.**

Simpson Shelter Donations: Please note that all donations to the Simpson Shelter need to be **new** items. They will not take anything that is used. Thank you.

Loving Self

Young Families Gathering - TODAY, 11am-1pm: Families and kids are invited to join us after worship for a fall fair! There is a bouncy house, face painting & other activities for children, & time for families to connect & talk. Join us!

Attention Parents of College Students! We are collecting addresses of our church kids who are in college so we can send college packs. **Please have them to the church by Sept 29!** Please email to office@firstchurchrf.org. Thank you!

Wednesday Night Family Meals Resume! Starting **Wed, Oct 2**, our Family Meals will resume in the Fellowship Hall serving from **5:15 to 6:00 pm**. We begin with Taco Night! We will open the line early for those youth going with Alex to Whirlyball. Cost is \$9 per person with a family max of \$30. Sign up by 4pm the day before.

New Men’s Group: Pastor Chris will be leading a 3-week evening Men’s Group for those men who cannot attend a morning group. Our purpose is to gather & connect with each other & our faith, & to serve. We will meet at the Garage Bikes & Brews for two consecutive Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm. Then on our third Thursday, we will head to FMSC in Eagan to pack meals. Please contact Pastor Chris for info or to sign up. The schedule: **Thurs, Oct 10 & 17** at Garage Bikes & Brews from 6:30 to 7:30 pm and Thurs, **Oct 24** a service trip to FMSC in Eagan packing from 7:00 to 8:30 pm.

Cribbage Night: The cribbage group meets the second Monday. Players are asked to donate \$2 & the group decides which charity. Playing time is **7:00 pm**. All players & abilities welcome. The next game is **Oct 14**.

A Conversation For Women About Women's Health: We've invited Dr. Morgan Barnum, a practicing OB/GYN at Hudson Physicians to discuss this question: What women need to know to be strong partners in managing their own health care, particularly amid new & dynamic medical research. The conversation will be **Thurs, Oct 24, 6:30–8:15 pm**. The evening will include a healthy (but tasty!) dessert. For more info, contact Pastor Stacy. Register at church or online.

Men's Group: Our church men's group meets **every other Tuesday from 9:00-10:00 am** in the Youth Room. All men are welcome to join us for coffee, donuts and lively conversation. We gather for an hour and Pastor Chris leads us into a brief discussion. Our next gatherings are **Tues, Oct 1** (Heal Division) & **Oct 15** (Bring Justice). Join us!

Women's Group: Interested in fellowship & community with other women? Pastor Deb invites you to join her at Noon every 2nd & 4th Tuesday. Please bring a sack lunch. The next meetings will be **Sept 24 & Oct 8**.

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 projects & enjoying each other's company. On Sept 5th, we donated more items to Basics for Local Kids. **The group is meeting at the Sycamore on Thurs, Oct 3 at 10:00 am.** Join us for fun and fellowship! 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 is held the **2nd & 4th Thursdays at 6:30 pm at the River Falls Public Library**. For more info, call Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

Community Life

An Evening of Art: Sabbatical Trip Update: You are invited to "An Evening of Art" on **Tues, Sept 24, at 6:30 pm**. Pastor Stacy will share a few stories about the Myers family's sabbatical trip and explore favorite pieces of art. Dessert will be included. Please sign up at church or online.

The Art of Sadao Watanabe: Pastor Stacy's Clergy Renewal Grant from the Lily Foundation included funds to rent traveling exhibits of fine Christian art. The first exhibit, *Witness to Faith: The Biblical Art of Sadao Watanabe*, features more than two dozen works by Japan's foremost Christian artist of the 20th century. Please come to view & discuss the art at a combined Exhibit Opening Night & Learning Community on **Oct 8 at 6:30 pm**. Please help spread the word.

Palestine-Israel Conflict: There will be a meeting on **Sunday, October 13th** following worship to start a group study of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This is a complex, long-standing struggle. The goal will be to prayerfully approach the issue by looking at biblical texts, historical context and current political realities. Please use the sign-up sheet to register.

Anxious Generation Learning Community on Tues, Nov 12: It is clear families & kids are struggling today, often because of changes & challenges of technology. Pastor Chris will be presenting his insights from a wonderful book: *Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. Other presenters will include Middle School Teacher Jenny Luedtke & our Youth Minister & High School Teacher Alex Plum. If you want to read the book, please sign up for a copy by Sept 29. Copies are \$20 each and are available from the church office.

Wednesday School Snack Makers Needed: Wednesday School begins **Oct 2**. We need volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis. Please sign up at church or online.

Endowment Grant Update: The Endowment Grant Committee will meet on October 13. If you know of a need, please submit an application through your committee to request funds. The deadline for applications is October 6.

Youth Events

Wed, Oct 2, 5:00-8:30pm, ALL MS/HS Youth and Friends Welcome! WhirlyBall is an exciting game of basketball combined with lacrosse, all while on BUMPER CARS! Join us, invite friends. Alex needs to make reservations so please sign up. Wednesday meal will be served early for kids to eat before leaving. Please check out the sign-up for all details.

Wednesday School: All children in kindergarten through Grade 5 are invited to participate in Wednesday School. Elementary students in River Falls are picked up at the four elementary schools in town at the end of the school day. Wednesday School concludes at 5:15. Registration & permission forms are available at church & online. Wednesday School begins **October 2**. Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 9:30-37

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, 'The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.' But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.' Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

