

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

September 29, 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 29, 2024

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

"Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right."

- Psalm 106:3

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

- Martin Luther King

"Without justice, courage is weak."

- Benjamin Franklin

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: With what shall we come before the Lord our God?

P: **God has shown us what is good.**

L: What does God require of us?

P: **Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.**

All: **Come let us follow Jesus as he leads us to an abundant life here and now.**

Send Down the Fire

Refrain



Send down the fire of your jus - tice,



Send down the rains of your love; Come,



send down the Spir - it, breathe life in your peo - ple, and



we shall be peo - ple of God.

Verses



1. Call us to be your com - pas - sion,
2. Call us to learn of your mer - cy,
3. Call us to an - swer op - pres - sion,
4. Call us to wit - ness your King - dom,



Teach us the song of your love;	Give us
Teach us the way of your peace;	Give us
Teach us the fire of your truth;	Give us
Give us the pres - ence of Christ;	May your



hearts that sing,	Give us deeds that ring,	Make us
hearts that feel,	Give us hands that heal,	Make us
right - eous souls,	'Til your jus - tice rolls,	Make us
ho - ly light	Keep us shin - ing bright,	Ev - er



ring	with the song of your love.
walk	in the way of your peace.
burn	with the fire of your truth.
shine	with the pres - ence of Christ.

D.C.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of Compassion, **weave your will into the fabric of our lives. Weave your joy into our songs, your peace into our prayers and your justice into our deeds. Weave your love into our worship, that what we do here today may bring healing to our souls and our world. Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we have all fallen short of God’s call. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

P: **So let us ask God for grace to be reconciled in faith to God, to neighbor and to ourselves.**

L: In Christ and in his grace, 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)**

Hal - le - lu - ya! We sing your prais-es, all our

hearts are filled with glad - ness. Hal - le - lu - ya! We sing your

prais-es, all our hearts are filled with glad - ness.

Hearing the Word

PSALM 37:1-7 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R



- L: Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers, for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb.
- P: Trust in the LORD, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.**
- L: Take delight in the LORD, and God will give you the desires of your heart.
- P: Commit your way to the LORD; trust in God, and he will act.**
- L: God will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday.
- P: Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for God; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices. 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: Jesus came to seek out the lost and lonely.
- P: Come Lord Jesus, come to us we pray.**
- L: He came with healing in hands, love in his heart and peace in his wake.
- P: Come Holy Spirit, come to us we pray.**
- L: He came proclaiming God's kingdom is coming and yet is also here among us.
- P: Come, God, come to us we pray.**
- All: Come let us be a part of God's Way here and now as we eat and drink at your table.**

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:

We Are Called

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain

We are called to act with jus-tice, we are called to
love ten-der - ly, we are called to serve one an - oth-er;
to walk hum-bly with God!

The image shows three staves of musical notation in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes.

Servant Song

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain

Be fair and just. Be mer-ci-ful and true.
These are the things I am ask-ing of you. Walk
hum-bly with your God, in ev - 'ry-thing you do.
This is the way that will lead you to the truth.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes.

A Place at the Table
Congregation join on refrain

Blue #617

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.)

My God is so big so strong and so might - y! There's
noth - ing my God can - not do! (clap clap)
God made the trees God made the seas
God made the el - e - phants too

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 18:1-8

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

When the Poor Ones

Blue #624

***STATEMENT OF FAITH - Indonesia**

I believe in God, who is love and who has given the earth to all people.

I believe in Jesus Christ, who came to heal us, and to free us from all forms of oppression.

I believe in the Spirit of God, who works in and through all who are turned toward the truth.

I believe in the community of faith, which is called to be at the service of all people.

I believe in God's promise to finally destroy the power of sin in us all, and to establish the kingdom of justice and peace for all humankind.

I do not believe that suffering need be in vain, that death is the end, that the disfigurement of our world is what God intended.

But I dare to believe, always and in spite of everything, in God's power to transform and transfigure, fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where justice and peace will flourish. 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

Ain'-a That Good News

Chancel Choir

Arr. William Dawson

***OFFERTORY**

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**

O God, let us praise Thee, not just with our voices, but with our actions. Not just with our hearts, but with our hands. Even by our giving, may we praise You, O God. Accept these gifts and use them for Your glory. Amen.

Sending

***HYMN**

I Am the Light of the World

Black #584

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Jean Smith
Deacons: Karen Lloyd, Loral Keil,
Brian Miller, Becky Pajac,
Ann Nelson
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Louie Filkins
Welcomers: Dennis and Lynn Linder,
Carole Mottaz
Coffee
Fellowship: Beatty Family
Counters: Roz Ostendorf, Trish Graves

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 22, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,481	\$ 390,199
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 397,594

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), Jeff (brother-in-law of Janice Healy), Rev. Kurt Katzmar, Barbara de Souza, Darlene Sumption, Ronald (father of Cindy Gandrud)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For those headed to Moon Beach for their work week October 7-13, may you travel safely there and back
- For the Music Committee preparing for the Silent Movie on Sunday, October 20, may it be a fun filled evening!
- For the next Learning Community on October 8 featuring the art of Japanese artist Sadao Watanabe, that it may be a time of seeing our Christian faith through new eyes
- For Pastor Stacy who presented her sabbatical insights Tuesday at the first Learning Community of this year
- For ALL who enabled us to recently burn our church mortgage, thank you!
- For our Young Families Group who met last Sunday, may you be supported at this wonderfully difficult time of life
- For Josh Sippel who leaves for basic training on November 4th, and Ryan Luedtke who enters the Air National Guard, may they be given strength and courage for the journey ahead

Prayers for our World:

- For a lasting peace in the Middle East that brings justice to all people
- For those cleaning up after Hurricane Helene, may you be given strength and help from neighbors and others
- 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 and joy of apple season!
- 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 Kahla and Farnum Fuller who celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary, may your love continue to grow

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Ron Truesdill (husband of Jane) as they mourn his sudden death, may they receive strength and courage
- For the family of Linda (daughter of Chuck White) who died peacefully at the age of 71, the same age as her mother, may God give the White family strength and faith
- For the family of Liz Gandrud (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.

MUSIC AT FIRST CHURCH
PRESENTS:

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

FREE
EVENT!

DRAMA - HORROR - ROMANCE

Sunday, October 20th

3:30 PM

First Congregational UCC
110 N THIRD ST. RIVER FALLS, WI
715-425-2052

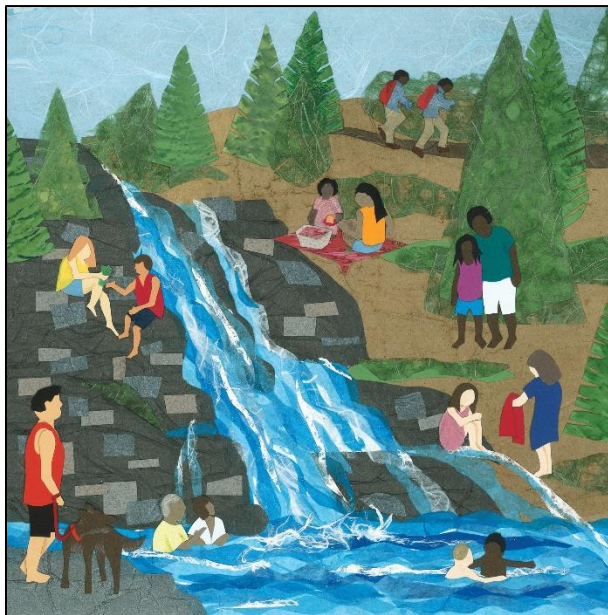
The 1923 Lon Chaney silent film
WITH LIVE ORGAN ACCOMPANIMENT BY
DENNIS JAMES

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Amos 5:21-24

I hate, I despise your festivals,
 and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
 Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings,
 I will not accept them;
 and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
 I will not look upon.
 Take away from me the noise of your songs;
 I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
 But let justice roll down like waters,
 and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, “Grant me justice against my opponent.” For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.”’ And the Lord said, ‘Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?’



The Four R's of Justice

Recognition → Repentance → Restitution → Reconciliation