

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

January 12, 2025



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

January 12, 2025

Baptism of Jesus

10:00 am

Gathering

“But by virtue of our baptism, we are brothers and sisters in Christ. One day we are going to be in heaven together, so we might as well learn to get along here because we will have to get along there. God won't have it any other way.”

- Rev. Gene Robinson, Episcopal Bishop

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.

No matter who you are. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here!

- Please stop at the welcome station for a gift.
- Please note our worship service is livestreamed.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Come, all you who are thirsty. Come to the source of living water.

P: **Some of us feel flooded – too much to do too soon. We feel in danger of going under.**

L: Come, rest beside the still waters and feel the ease of the cool stream.

P: **Some of us feel empty – always giving and pouring ourselves out with no time to tap into the Source.**

L: Come, taste the eternal springs of living water, drink deep and long.

P: **Some of us feel blocked and stagnant – judgments, denials, wounds and frustrations limiting the flow of grace.**

L: Come, be plunged deep into the healing waters and fresh rivers of God's love.

P: **We come to touch the living water and remember our baptism. Let the joyful water flow!**

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

*HYMN

Arise, Your Light Is Come!

Blue #231

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Loving God, your love for us reaches from the cradle to the grave. There is no place or time or situation in which we are cut off from your care. Remind us of that love whenever we doubt our own worth, forget our blessing in baptism or act out of fear or anger. Forgive us for finding life boring or predictable, filled with routine and sameness when you have placed us in a garden. Turn our world upside down occasionally and surprise us with grace and joy. Keep us forever amazed at your love. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Holy God, you restore our souls and lead us to the house of love.

P: In the waters of baptism, you call and claim us.

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



Glo - ri - a! Glo - ri - a! High - est glor - y to You!_____



Glo - ri - a! Glo - ri - a! High - est glor - y to You!



O - pen now our lips and our mouths shall give praise.
O Lord, rush to help to de - liv - er Your world.
Mak - er, Spir - it, Friend, You are Great My - ster - y!

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 43:1-7

PSALM 29 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R

Refrain

The Lord will bless his peo-ple with peace.

- L: Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- P: Ascribe to the LORD the glory of God's name; worship the LORD in holy splendor.**
- L: The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over mighty waters.
- P: The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.**
- L: The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
- P: God makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. R**
- L: The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.
- P: The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**
- L: The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, 'Glory!'
- P: The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.**
- L: May the LORD give strength to God's people!
- P: May the LORD bless God's people with peace! R**

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| <p>Celebrating the Meal</p> |
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All Christians are welcome at the Lord's table. The bread is gluten-free. The cup is alcohol-free.
Those choosing not to commune may receive a blessing from the servers.

The Invitation to the Meal

- L: Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! Here at this table we remember God's gift poured out for us:
- P: Water to renew us, refresh us, and welcome us into God's family.**
- L: Bread to feed our bodies and souls.
- P: The cup to quench our thirst and bring us joy.**
- All: Come let us gather at the table of our Lord!**

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:

Shall We Gather at the River

Blue #522

Congregation join on refrain:

***Yes, we'll gather at the river,
the beautiful, the beautiful river,
gather with the saints at the river
that flows by the throne of God.***

Lead Me, Guide Me

Blue #498

Congregation join on refrain:

***Lead me, guide me, along the way,
For if you lead me, I cannot stray.
Lord, let me walk each day with thee.
Lead me, oh Lord, lead me.***

You Are My All In All

Blue #427

Congregation join on refrain:



Je - sus, Lamb of God, wor - thy is your name!



Je - sus, Lamb of God, wor - thy is your name!

All Are Welcome

Congregation join on refrain:

***All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.***

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.)

***Rise and shine and give God the glory, glory.
Rise and shine and give God the glory, glory.
Rise and shine and give God the glory, glory;
Children of the Lord.***

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 3:15-17; 21-22

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

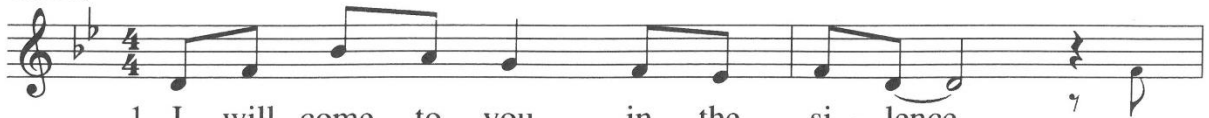
人作り Hitozuri The Art of Making People

知徳体 Chi Toku Tai (Academics, Character, Health)

*HYMN

You Are Mine

Verses



1. I will come to you in the si - lence,
 2. I am hope for all who are hope - less,
 3. I am strength for all the de - spair - ing,
 4. am the Word that leads all to free - dom, I



I will lift you from all your fear.
 I am eyes for all who long to see. In the
 heal - ing for the ones who dwell in shame.
 am the peace the world can - not give.



You will hear my voice, I claim you as my choice, be
 shad - ows of the night, I will be your light,
 All the blind will see, the lame will all run free, and
 I will call your name, em - brac - ing all your pain, stand



still and know I am here. (To verse 2)
 come and rest in me. (To refrain)
 all will know my name. (To refrain)
 up, now walk, and live! (To refrain)

Refrain



Do not be a - fraid, I am with you. I have called you



each by name. Come and fol - low me, I will bring you



home; I love you and you are mine.

*STATEMENT OF FAITH for Epiphany (from UMC)

We believe in God, the creator of all things, the giver of life and breath.

We believe in Jesus Christ, born Emmanuel, God with us, baptized and revealed the most beloved Son of God; he sought to heal humanity by taking our brokenness upon himself, suffering for us, dying for us and being raised from the dead for our sake and for the sake of all the world. We believe that he will come again.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, continually poured out refreshing our lives, leading us into a new day, ever-birthing the church, the body of Christ in the world. This Spirit is our soul companion and counselor of truth reminding us of the gift of faith, the ever presence of God and the promise of eternal life. Thanks be to God! 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 *Can You See the Light in Bethlehem*

Chancel Choir

Arr. by David Angerman and Joseph Graham

*OFFERTORY

We Give Thee But Thine Own



*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

O God, for bringing us safely to this hour, we give you thanks. May our offerings honor you. May our lives reflect your mercy. May our hands bestow on others the blessings we have received. May our prayers unite us with one another and with Christ, in whose name we celebrate the privilege of giving. Amen.

Sending

***HYMN**

Some Glad Morning

Black #595

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Sue Danielson
Deacons: Karen Lloyd, Jena Most,
Ann Nelson, Kathy Tomlinson,
Cindy Gandrud
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Tim Bylander
Welcomers: Susan Walden, Dennis and
Lynn Linder

Coffee

Fellowship: Merry Widows – St. B's Donuts
Counters: Trish Graves, Dennis Linder
*Altar table flowers are given by Lillian Tan in
memory of her brother and sister.*

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Christopher Myers
Education Pastor: Stacy Johnson Myers
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

Dec 31, 2024

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|-----------------------|----------------------|
| General Fund Income | \$ 555,541.86 |
| General Fund Expenses | <u>\$ 546,729.57</u> |
| 2024 Net Income | <u>\$ 8,812.29</u> |

Jan 5, 2025

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|----------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund Income* | <u>\$ 42,905.49</u> |
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A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

A new budget will be approved at the Feb 2 Annual Meeting.



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, Jeff (brother-in-law of Janice Healy), Barbara de Souza, Mike (friend of Mark Hudnall), Larry Bauer, Crissy (daughter of Brad Williams), Tara (friend of Dave Reilly), Wayne Revels, Jim French (father of Missy Linaberry), Kelly Luckey (friend of Barb Peterson)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our committees and teams gearing up for the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 2, that we may celebrate our accomplishments in 2024 (and get your annual reports to Missy by Monday, January 13th please!).
- For ending the 2024 budget year with missions and bills paid, plus a modest surplus, thanks be to God!
- For the nearly \$150,000 you as a church gave last year to missions outside the church walls, thank you for being hands of Christ at work in the world (more details will be given at the Annual Meeting on Feb 2)
- For the return of Wednesday School, choir and bell practice after a Christmas break, welcome back!
- For our moderator Kathy Rausch as she ends her two-year term at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 2nd and Marie Roe, currently our Moderator-Elect takes up her reign, may God bless and strengthen you both!
- For those receiving food as part of the Reverse Advent Calendar, blessing our community with nearly 1500 pounds of food and nearly \$2000 for the Food Pantry, may it bless givers and receivers

Prayers for our World:

- For firefighters battling wildfires in California and the tens of thousands evacuated and rebuilding, may you all be given God's strength and our gratitude
- For all of us as we return to normal mode after our Christmas and New Year's break, may we enjoy the return of the sun!
- For lasting peace in the Middle East that brings justice and security to all people and for those working for a lasting peace in the Middle East, may God's Spirit be present
- For all of us as we work to better care for the gift of God's good creation and reduce the effects of climate change

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For Tim Bylander and Farnum Fuller who cleaned up after our Christmas Trees and Diane Crist and Judy and Gary Grimm who put away our Christmas decorations, thank you all for these doing these thankless jobs for us!
- For Marlys Peterson who keeps our church kitchen organized, you are an angel!
- For Salem Elaine who arrived on Thursday, December 19th to Marlee and Joe Querna and grandparents Wendy and John Querna, may she be welcomed in love and grace
- For Maverick Martin Bos born on December 18th to Alison and Tony Bos and grandparents Dean and Sue Grisar and proud uncle Dennis, who arrived at 7 pounds 9 ounces and 20 inches, may he grow in grace and love

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Tanya Larsen as she mourns her mother Gloria, the Paulson family as they mourn Richard, and the Hector family as they mourn Jean, may their families be strengthened at this difficult time

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

2024 Mission Highlights



SCRIPTURE LESSON: Isaiah 43:1-7

But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
Because you are precious in my sight,
and honored, and I love you,
I give people in return for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
I will say to the north, 'Give them up',
and to the south, 'Do not withhold;
bring my sons from far away
and my daughters from the end of the earth—
everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.'

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'