

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

January 19, 2025



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

January 19, 2025

Second Sunday after the Epiphany

10:00 am

Gathering

“Jesus first visits people not in their sorrow, but in their joy...What does this say to gloomy Christians? Mind you, I’m not suggesting that all, or even most, of the sourpusses in the world are to be found in the churches. But there are an awful lot who seem to forget that if only one tenth of what we Christians believe were true, we still ought to be ten times as excited as we are.

- William Sloane Coffin, *On Changing Water to Wine: Collected Sermons*

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: Jesus has invited us to a wedding. Who will come?

P: We will come!

L: Jesus has invited us to sing and celebrate. Who will come!

P: We will come!

L: Jesus has invited us to a great feast with good food and drink. Who will come?

P: We will come!

L: Jesus has invited us to receive life, abundant life! Who will come?

P: We will come!

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

***HYMN**

All Creatures of Our God and King
Verses 1, 2, 3 and 4

Blue #23

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of Love, plant us in the soil of your grace. Use the implements of your mercy and compassion to churn up and cast out what is hurtful. Nurture us with the strength of Christ, the vine of everlasting life. Enlighten us with the wisdom of your Spirit, which flows through us today and all days. Abide in us, that we may abide in you and live in your love, so that you may find us to be just the kind of vineyard you envisioned us to be. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: By God's grace, the sins of the past 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

Alleluia! Give the Glory

Musical score for "Alleluia! Give the Glory" in 12/8 time, key of B-flat major. The score consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Give the glo - ry and the hon - or to the Lord! and the hon - or to the Lord!"

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

PSALM 36:5-10 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R

Musical score for the refrain of Psalm 36, in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody is: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

L: Your lovingkindness, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

P: Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.

- L: How precious is your lovingkindness, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
- P: They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.**
- L: For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.
- P: O continue your lovingkindness to those who know you, and your salvation to the upright of heart! R**

Celebrating the Meal

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: With joy let us come before our Lord and Savior.
- P: Let the Light of Jesus Christ shine on us and on all people.**
- L: Christ comes to gladden our hearts, restore our souls.
- P: Christ comes to give hope to the despairing, joy to the joyless.**
- L: In him we see God and God's hope for the whole wide world.
- P: In him we see ourselves as we can be.**

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:

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Blue #461

***Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew
That I may love the way you love and do what you would do.***

***Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,
Until with you I will one will, to do and to endure.***

***Breathe on me, Breath of God, stir in me one desire:
That every earthly part of me may glow with holy fire.***

***Breath on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die,
But live with you the perfect life of your eternity.***

I Will Change Your Name – Solo

They'll Know We Are Christians

Blue #595

***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***

My Soul Is At Rest

A Dm A^{SUS} A Dm C F C Dm A Dm *fine*

My soul is at rest in God a-lone, my sal-va-tion comes from God. My

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'My Soul Is At Rest'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and the time signature is common time (C). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. Above the treble staff, the following chords are indicated: A, Dm, A^{SUS}, A, Dm, C, F, C, Dm, A, Dm. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The piece concludes with a 'fine' marking and a fermata over the final note.

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.)

*He's got the whole world in his hands,
He's got the whole wide world in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands.*

GOSPEL LESSON

John 2:1-11

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

The Gift of Love

Blue #397

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – African Creed**

We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. God created the human person for happiness in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on the earth. We have known this High God in the darkness, and now we know God in the light.

God promised in the Scriptures to save the world and all the nations and tribes. We believe that God kept all promises by sending Jesus Christ, a person in the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari

doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and humankind, showing that the meaning of religion is love. Jesus was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He lay buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day, he rose from the grave.

We believe that all our sins are forgiven by God. We accept the gift of baptism and in the community of faith we live in ways of love and share the bread of life. We announce the good news to all people so long as God gives us breath. We believe that the Spirit is in the world and that God cares for us in life and in death. This we believe. 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.

MISSION MOMENT – Life After ARC

Carol Merriman

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

Jubilant Fanfare
Arr. by Kevin McChesney

Jubilee Ringers

*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

Merciful God, your call to us is so very clear. You have invited us to bring our gifts, our resources and our love to you to serve on Christ's behalf. We give you thanks for all your gifts to us, and may our lives with you be a journey of hope and promise into the future. In Christ's name. Amen.

Sending

*HYMN

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Blue #358

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Traci Hagberg
Deacons: Laura Anderson, Becky Pajac,
Brian Miller, Kathy Tomlinson,
Loral Keil
Organist: Terry Mithun
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Louie Filkins
Welcomers: Susan Walden, Norma Revels
Coffee
Fellowship: Beatty Family
Counters: Diane Welsh, Scott Nelson

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

	<u>Dec 31, 2024</u>
General Fund Income	\$ 555,541.86
General Fund Expenses	<u>\$ 546,729.57</u>
2024 Net Income	<u>\$ 8,812.29</u>
	<u>Jan 12, 2025</u>
General Fund Income*	<u>\$ 45,515.54</u>

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, Larry Bauer, Crissy (daughter of Brad Williams), 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
- For ending the 2024 budget year with staff, missions and bills paid, plus a modest surplus, thanks be to God!
- For the new Men's Group meeting for three Thursdays in February at The Garage and then to FMSC to pack meals, may we better connect and support one another in our Christian faith
- For the nearly \$150,000 given 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 February 2)
- For our moderator Kathy Rausch as she ends her two-year term at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 2nd and for Marie Roe, currently our Moderator-Elect, as she begins, may God bless and strengthen you both!
- For the return of Connecting Through Cooking classes with chef Peter Kwong in our church kitchen on the first two Tuesdays in February, may they feed us in body and soul

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 our nation as we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr day on Monday, January 20th, that we may continue to learn from him and be inspired by him
- For the hope of peace in Gaza and Israel, 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 Evelyn Adele Sitz born to Heather and Danny and grandparent Maxine and Tom on Friday, January 10th, who is home and safe and wonderful, thanks be to God!
- For Josh Sippel who graduates from Basic Training at Ft Jackson, SC on February 6 and will then do training at Fort Gregg-Adams located in VA, congratulations and thank you for your service
- 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 & proud uncle Dennis, who arrived at 7 pounds 9 ounces & 20 inches, may he grow in grace & love

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Rollie Hall who died this past week, may you be comforted
- For the family of Bud Merriman (father-in-law of Carol Merriman), who died this past week at 103, thanks be to God!
- For the family of Tanya Larsen as she mourns her mother Gloria, the Paulson family as they mourn Richard, & 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.

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: The Adult Bible Study group meets on **Wednesday afternoons, 1:00–2:30 pm**. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Loving Neighbor

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. It is held at church **Tuesdays & Thursdays 9am to 3pm**.

Loving Self

Game Day Sunday is TODAY following Coffee Fellowship. Join us!

Cribbage Night: The group meets the second Monday. Players are asked to donate \$2 & the group decides which charity. Playing time is **7:00 pm**. All abilities welcome. The next game is **Feb 10**.

New Evening Men's Group: An Evening Men's Group will meet for 3 Thursdays in February. We will meet **Thurs, Feb 13 and 20 from 6:30-7:30 pm** at The Garage Bikes and Brews then head to Feed My Starving Children to pack meals on **Thurs, Feb 27 from 7:00-8:30 pm**. Our purpose is to connect with each other and our Christian faith. Please sign up online or at church and see Pastor Chris for more details. All guys welcome!

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 & lively conversation. Our next gatherings are **Jan 21 & Feb 4**

Women's Group: Interested in fellowship & community with other women? You are invited to join the group at noon every 2nd & 4th Tuesday. Please bring a sack lunch. The next meetings will be **Jan 28 & Feb 11 & 25**.

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.

Knitting Group Update: Kim Johnson from Basics for Kids will pick up hats, scarves and mittens on **Thurs, Jan 23**. Bring your finished items and place them in the marked bin. *We have an Endowment grant to buy more yarn.* Please reach out to Marie Roe (715) 781-2103 or fristroe@gmail.com if you need any yarn. We can help you start or finish a project. Join us on Thursdays or work on your own.

Let's Knit/Craft Together: Join us on **Thursdays at 10:00 am. We meet at The Sycamore on the first Thursday of each month & the Fellowship Hall the other Thursdays.** We have a great time sharing our projects and enjoying each other's company. Any questions, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or fristroe@gmail.com

WISE Corner: NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group is held the **2nd and 4th Thursdays at 6:30 pm at the River Falls Public Library**. For more information, call Marg Downing at 715-307-5905.

Community Life

Annual Meeting: The Annual Meeting of the congregation will be **Sunday, February 2** in the Fellowship Hall starting at about 11:15 am. In addition to receiving reports, passing budgets and electing officers, we will also hear ministry updates from many of our teams and committees. Please sign up so we have enough food!

Learning Community: Conflict in the Middle East: Please mark your calendars for a Learning Community focused on the Israel/Hamas conflict. Dr. Andrew Latham, Professor of Political Science at Macalester College, will provide a balanced presentation that captures the complexity of the situation in Israel and Palestine. Dr. Latham will include a perspective on the role of the US in the conflict as well as imagine components in a lasting peace for the region. The event will be **Tues, Jan 28, 6:30–8:30 pm**. Please register online or at church.

Church Clean Up Inside: The Trustees need your help cleaning up inside the church on **Sat, Feb 1 at 9:00 am**. Cleaning supplies will be provided. Church Interns will receive double hours for helping out. Please sign up and join us!

Connecting Through Cooking: It is cold and dark so why not learn a new skill! Join Chef Peter Kwong in our church kitchen as we learn how to cook Thai and Italian food. Cost is \$30, space is limited to 15 people, and you must pay for your spot once you register at church or online. Classes take place from **5:30 to 7:30 pm** and we will eat what we cook! Here are the details:

Tues, Feb 4: Thai Spring Roll, Pad Thai (Chicken or Beef), Tofu Pad Prig Khing (String Beans), Thai Fried Rice

Tues, Feb 11: Bruschetta, Ensalada Italiana, Fettuccine Alfredo, Chicken Piccata.

SAVE THE DATE! Shrimp Boil to Benefit Back Bay Mission - Tuesday, February 25 at 5:30 pm:

Menu: Peel and eat shrimp, coleslaw, breadsticks and cake. Chicken fingers for those that don't like shrimp.

Tickets: Adults – \$15; Child – \$8.

Tickets will go on sale Sunday, January 26 after worship. More to come later.

Creative Catharsis Workshop - Thurs, Feb 27, from 6:30-8:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall: We often put aside and neglect our creative desires and reflection of ourselves in our fast-paced, grind culture-influenced lives. This workshop aims to provide participants with an invitation to connect to their creativity and meaning-making through the process and application of collage. Using simple materials and tools, we'll explore how the simple act of sifting, sorting, cutting, and arranging paper ephemera offers a sanctuary of rest, reflection and a catalyst for self-discovery. All supplies provided. Sponsored by the WISE Team. Please sign up at church or online.

Youth Events

Youth Mission Trip Survey: We are reaching out to gauge interest and availability for mission opportunities for the Summer of 2025 and Spring of 2026. We hope to find areas of mission work that youth and families would be interested in and provide spiritual and personal growth. Please take time to take the survey that was emailed to all families of those in grades 6-12. This survey is not a commitment to any trip or date, but rather to gauge group interest for further discussion and planning. Ask Alex for the link if you did not receive it. Either students or parents may fill out this form.

Youth Events for Wednesday, January 22:

3:45-5:15 pm Wednesday School

6:30-7:30 pm Middle School Class with Pastor Stacy in the Youth Room

6:30-7:30 pm High School Youth Group with Alex in Fellowship Hall

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.