

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

February 9, 2025



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

February 9, 2025

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

10:00 am

Gathering

Do not ask what the world needs. Ask instead what makes you come alive because what the world needs more than you know is that which makes you come alive. - Anonymous

Until you name your ghosts, baptize your hopes, you remain forever unborn. You are still living out the agenda that someone else has given your life. - Maria Cardinal

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 called us to go fishing.

P: Not for bass or perch, not even for walleye.

L: But for people, every kind of people.

P: Rich people, poor people, old people, young people and every color of people under the sun.

L: Jesus called us to go fishing for people and show them a new way.

P: A way of living and loving, hoping and healing.

L: Come let us live and love, hope and heal.

All: Let us follow Jesus. Come let us worship!

***HYMN**

God of Grace and God of Glory

Blue #569

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Creator God, even as winter lingers we sense a new spring. And even in the darkness we sense new sunlight. But sometimes we find it easier to live in the shadows, to complain about our days and all that is wrong in our lives, to forget the blessings you have granted us. Forgive us, God. Help us move into your light. Help us to know fully the joy of our journey with you, through life with Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: God welcomes us home, to an embrace of love.

P: **The Light of the World, Jesus Christ, shines in the darkness and beckons us always.**

L: In Jesus Christ God forgives our wandering ways and strengthens us for all our days.

P: **Thanks be to God for the gift of life and light we receive through the living Christ!**

L: May God bless us, lead us in life's journey, and keep us always!

P: **Thanks be to God!**

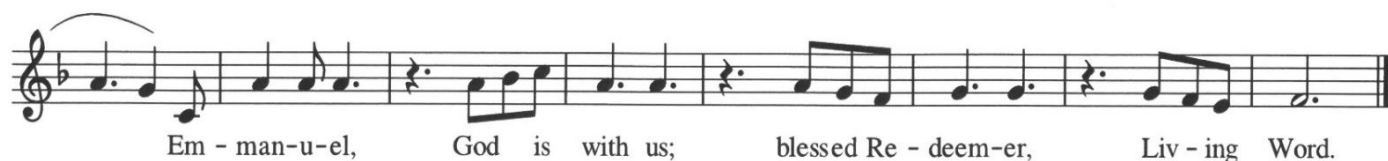
L: May the peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: **And also with you.**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

*GLORIA (Sung twice)



Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

PSALM 138 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

Unison

R

Great is the glo - ry of God.

L: I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

P: **On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.**

L: All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth.

P: They shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD.

L: For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly; but the haughty he perceives from far away.

P: Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

L: The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.

P: Do not forsake the work of your hands. 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: Beloved in Christ, the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week, Jesus Christ was raised from death, appeared to Mary Magdalene, on the same day sat at table with two disciples, and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

P: This is the joyful feast of the people of God. Men and women, young and old, come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and gather about Christ's table.

L: This table is for all people who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

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

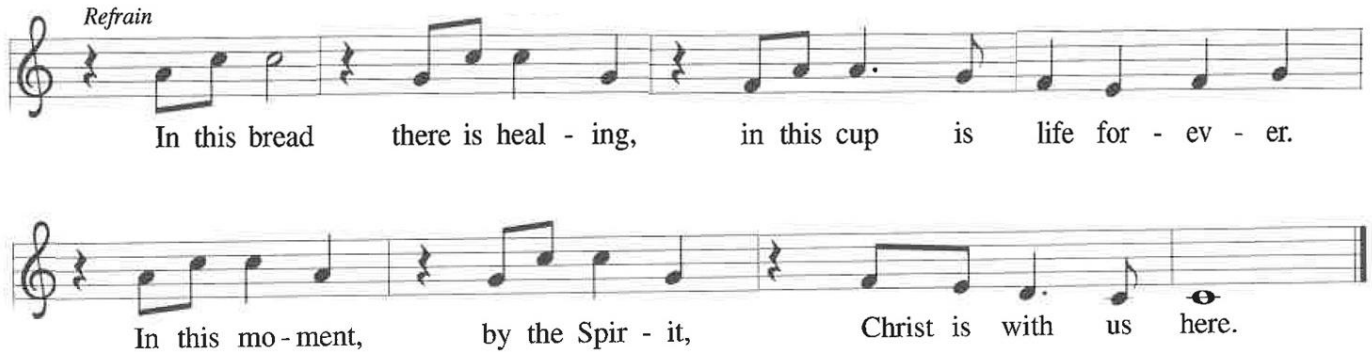
Distribution of the Elements

Hymns during the distribution of the elements:

Here Is Bread

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



In this bread there is heal - ing, in this cup is life for - ev - er.
In this mo - ment, by the Spir - it, Christ is with us here.

Here I Am, Lord

Blue #559

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.***

Come and Fill Our Hearts

Come and fill our hearts with your peace.

You alone, O Lord, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your peace, alleluia!

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.***

***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.

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

Carried By Love

Chancel Choir

Arr. by David Lantz III

***OFFERTORY**

The image shows two staves of musical notation for an offertory. The first staff is labeled with a Roman numeral 'I' and contains the lyrics 'Pre - pare the way of the Lord. Pre - pare the way of the Lord,'. The second staff is labeled with Roman numerals 'III' and 'IV' and contains the lyrics 'and all peo-ple will see the sal - va - tion of our God. Pre -'. The music is written in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 6/8 time signature.

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Take these gifts, God, and use them to build your community of faithfulness throughout the world. We are so grateful for this opportunity to share the blessings you alone have granted us. We give you thanks. We give you our lives, our hearts, our songs, our work. Amen.

Sending

***HYMN**

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

Blue #719

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

Reprinted music used by permission under the following licenses:
OneLicense.net A-703731; CCLI License 2892021

SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Rebecca Ferguson
Deacons: Brian Miller, Loral Keil,
Lance Lueck, Kathy Tomlinson,
Paul Shepherd
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Tim Bylander
Welcomers: Dennis and Lynn Linder
Coffee Fellowship: Merry Widows – St. B's Donuts
Counters: Jean Smith, Allen Barnes

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: Marie Roe
Office Administrator: Missy Luedtke
Nursery Attendant: Kahla Fuller
Custodian: Farnum Fuller

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Feb 2, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,888	\$ 69,973
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 53,115

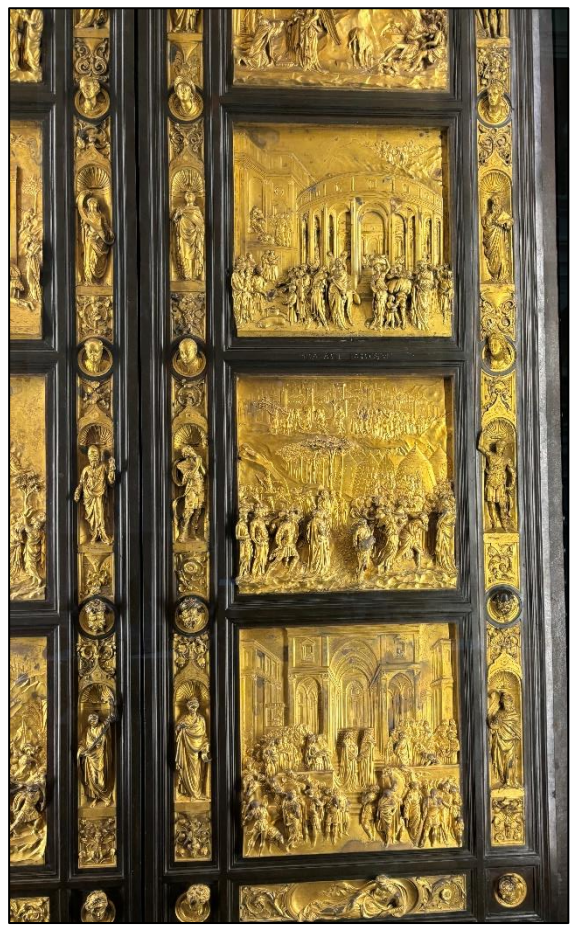
A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

*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, Jeff (brother-in-law of Janice Healy), Barbara de Souza, Crissy (daughter of Brad Williams), Jim French (father of Missy Linaberry), Kelly Luckey (friend of Barb Peterson), Christopher (brother of Paul Anderson), Arlyn, (Steve Koecher's father), Lu Lueck, Lee and Alex (friends of Barb Stephens), Jeff Auchampach (nephew of Yvonne Benson), Troy Johnson (nephew of Carol Merriman)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- 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 on our Christian journey
- 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
- For our moderator Kathy Rausch as she ended her two-year term at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 2nd, for Marie Roe, who was our Moderator-Elect and who began her two-year term as moderator, and for Louie Filkins, who began his two year-term as Moderator-Elect, may God bless and strengthen you three of you!
- For our committees and Church Council who meet on Tuesday, February 18th, may they be good stewards of God's grace
- For the return of our Wednesday Night Family meals on Wednesday, February 26 and running through Holy Week, may we all be fed!

Prayers for our World:

- As we approach Valentine's Day, let us remember those we love as we also remember Jesus' challenge to love even our enemies
- For our nation as our newly elected government officials take their offices, that they may govern justly, work for the common good and solve our real problems
- 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 Lou Greub who celebrates his 92nd birthday on February 18th with cake for Coffee Fellowship on Sunday, February 16th, thanks for celebrating with us!
- For our Trustees and their helpers who cleaned the inside of the church last Saturday
- For Evelyn Adele Sitz born to Heather and Danny and grandparent Maxine and Tom on January 10th, who is home and safe and wonderful, thanks be to God!
- For Josh Sippel who graduated 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 those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Rollie Hall as they mourn, may they 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 group meets on **Wednesday afternoons, 1:00–2:30 pm**. On Feb 26, the group will begin a new discussion book, “Entering the Passion of Jesus” by Amy-Jill Levine. This is a six-week study focused on the events of Holy Week. This study would be a particularly good time to join. The group will focus on this book on Feb 26, Mar 5, 12, 26, & Apr 2 & 9. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Loving Neighbor

Simpson Shelter Supply Needs: Great buys of thermal underwear - men’s & women’s, women’s thermal socks, men’s T-shirts - all sizes, men’s ankle socks, men’s boxer shorts - sizes M, L, personal size body wash, personal size baby oil, lip balm, women’s bras. All items MUST BE NEW. There is a bin for donations.

Basics for Local Kids: Basics for Local Kids is a non-profit program located in Ellsworth that serves Pierce and St. Croix County families who are in need of winter clothing. There is a bin for donations of new and gently used winter wear for children ages newborn through 18 years. They are also in need of volunteers who can help families shop for free clothing. To volunteer, sign up at <https://www.basicsforlocalkids.org/>. For more info, contact Renee Whipple at 715-307-5074.

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

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, Feb 19 at 1:00 pm at West Wind**. All widows are welcome to join us for lunch and conversation! See JoAnn Lentz for more information.

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 **Feb 18 & Mar 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 **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.

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 firstroe@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 info, call Marg Downing at 715-307-5905.

Community Life

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 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. Class takes place from **5:30 to 7:30 pm** and we will eat what we cook! Here are the details:

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

Shrimp Boil: The Shrimp Boil Fundraiser for the Back Bay Mission Trip will be held **Tues, Feb 25 at 5:30 pm.** The menu will be peel and eat shrimp, coleslaw, breadsticks and cake and chicken fingers for those that don't like shrimp. Please get your tickets in advance on Sundays or call/stop by the church office. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$8 for kids. Also, please sign up to help with ticket sales & meal set up & clean up at church or online.

Wednesday Meals: On Wednesday nights, we will offer a home-cooked meal in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$9 per person with a family max of \$30. **Meals are served from 5:15 to 6:00 pm.** You can get your meal to go if you go through the line (indicate when you sign up). **Reservations must be placed by noon on Tuesdays.** You can make a reservation online, the sign-up table or by calling the church office. The menu for Feb 26 is Swedish meatballs, butter and parsley potatoes, vegetable and rolls.

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.

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 the survey that was emailed to all families of those in grades 6-12. This survey is not a commitment, but rather to gauge group interest for further discussion and planning. Ask Alex for the link if you did not receive it.

Youth Events for Wednesday, February 12:

3:45-5:15 pm Wednesday School

6:30-7:30 pm HS Class

6:30-8:00 pm MS Youth Group

Summer Dates for Kids: Please mark your calendars for the children's summer program for 2025. We need adults to help, teens to volunteer and kids to participate. Here are the dates:

VBS: July 28-31, 2025

Children's Musical: August 18-21, 2025

VBS is for children age 3 to grade 5. The musical is for children in kindergarten through grade 6.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now I should remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to someone untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 5:1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.