

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

March 2, 2025



Transfiguration

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

March 2, 2025

Transfiguration Sunday

10:00 am

Gathering

I have come to enjoy those moments when I sit down and somewhat clumsily repair a torn shirt, hem a skirt, or patch a pair of jeans, because I realize that I believe in mending. The comfort I receive when I pick up my needle and thread clearly exceeds the mere rescuing of a piece of clothing. It's a time to stop, a time to quit running around trying to make figurative ends meet. It is a chance to sew actual rips and tears back together. I can't stop a war overseas, I can't reverse global warming. But what I can do is mend the things right in front of me. - Susan Norris, UCC Pastor from Vermont

<p>Welcome to our guests who are visiting with us today!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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.	<p><i>No matter who you are. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Please stop at the welcome station for a gift.- Please note our worship service is livestreamed.
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GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: God said on a mountain long ago, "This is my Son, the Beloved."

P: **Let us worship you, O beloved God.**

L: God said, "Listen!"

P: **We want to hear your word anew this day.**

L: God said, "Do not be afraid."

P: **We lay our worries at your feet.**

L: And after all this was spoken, God was quiet.

P: **Still our souls, quiet our minds, and send your Holy Spirit among us O God.**

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

***HYMN**

Shine, Jesus, Shine

Blue #319

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Loving God, we've forgotten that we can bring joy to another. We are too often content to live with things as they are. We see the results around us of people who never knew love, who failed to find a welcome or a smile of acceptance.

O God, place us in your presence that we may be instruments of your love, that we might carry on your transforming ways. Open our eyes that we might see the world in the light of the grace of Jesus, our Guide and Savior. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

- L: Our Lord said to those who would listen, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."
- P: **Let us receive the life-giving truth of God's forgiveness, and prepare ourselves for life according to God's kingdom.**
- 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**

*We are singing, for the Lord is our light, we are singing for the Lord is our light.
We are singing, for the Lord is our light, we are singing for the Lord is our light.
We are singing, oh, we are singing for the Lord is our light.
We are singing, oh, we are singing for the Lord is our light.*

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

2 Corinthians 3:12–4:2

PSALM 99 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R *A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.*

- L: God reigns! Nations tremble!
- P: **From the cherubim throne, God shakes the earth.**
- L: The Lord is majestic in Zion and exalted over all nations.
- P: **Let them praise your name, your name so great, awesome and holy.**
- L: Mighty ruler, lover of justice, you have ordained integrity.
- P: **True and faithful justice you have performed in Jacob.**
- L: Moses and Aaron are among your priests;
- P: **Samuel among those who call on your name;**
- L: Calling to the Lord, who answers them;
- P: **Speaking to them from the pillar of cloud.**
- L: They honored all your decrees and every statute.
- P: **O Lord, our God, you answered them, though chastising their misdeeds.**
- L: Exalt the Lord, our God! Worship at God's holy mountain.
- P: **Holy indeed is our God! 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: Friends in Christ, God prepares a feast for all of God's people. In this holy meal, all of life is transformed by the grace of God. Come and taste. Come and eat and be filled. Come and drink deeply and never thirst again.

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:

You Are My All In All

Congregation join on refrain:



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

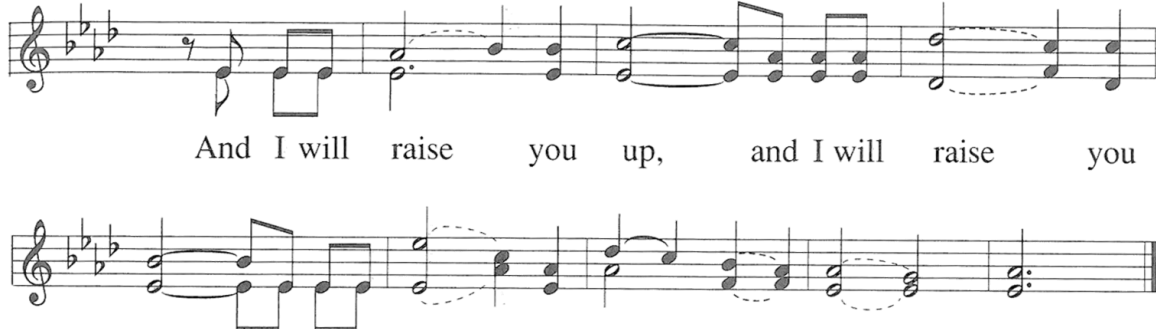


Je - sus, Lamb of God, wor - thy is your name!

I Am The Bread of Life

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



And I will raise you up, and I will raise you
up, and I will raise you up on the last day.


The musical notation is for a two-part setting in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are placed below the notes. The first line of music corresponds to the lyrics 'And I will raise you up, and I will raise you'. The second line of music corresponds to the lyrics 'up, and I will raise you up on the last day.'.

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.***

This is the Body of Christ



This is the Bod-y of Christ, bro-ken that we may be
whole; this cup, as prom-ised by God, true to his word,
cra-dles our Lord: food for the good of the soul.

The musical notation is for a two-part setting in G major (one sharp) and 3/8 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are placed below the notes. The first line of music corresponds to the lyrics 'This is the Bod-y of Christ, bro-ken that we may be'. The second line of music corresponds to the lyrics 'whole; this cup, as prom-ised by God, true to his word,'. The third line of music corresponds to the lyrics 'cra-dles our Lord: food for the good of the soul.'.

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.)

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 9:28-36

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

We Have Come at Christ's Own Bidding

Blue #245

***STATEMENT OF FAITH** – from the Iona Ecumenical Community in Scotland

L: Let us affirm our faith.

P: We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of the One God, maker and sustainer of earth, sea and sky. Born of Mary, faithful to the God of Abraham and Sarah, Jesus healed the sick, served the poor, and proclaimed heaven on earth. Condemned by the religious, crucified by the state, He died but transformed even death and rose to life everlasting. He blessed the disciples with his Holy Spirit and sent them forth, east and west, north and south. We commit ourselves to Jesus, to one another as brothers and sisters and to the grace of the Holy Spirit. 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.

OFFERTORY**Now Thank We All Our God*****Blue #14**

*Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done, in whom his world rejoices;
Who, from our mother's arms, has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Generous God, thank you for your 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 us and what we bring before you this day. Amen.

Sending

HYMN**How Can I Keep from Singing?*****Blue #424*****BLESSING****POSTLUDE**

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This Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday.
Our schedule for that day will be:

3:45-5:15 pm	Wednesday School
5:15-6:00 pm	Wednesday Night Family Meal (sign up!)
5:45-6:30 pm	Bells Practice
6:30-7:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Worship Service
	MS & HS Groups Attend Ash Wednesday Worship
7:30-8:15 pm	Choir Practice

SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Jean Smith
Deacons: Laura Andeson, Cindy Gandrud,
Lance Lueck, Kathy Tomlinson,
Paul Shepherd
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Rick Price
Welcomers: Norma Revels
Coffee
Fellowship: Jerry & Pat Anderson,
Marlys Peterson
Counters: Jane Truesdill, Scott Nelson
*Altar table flowers are given in memory of
Bill Rausch.*

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 23, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,893	\$ 125,111
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 84,984

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'
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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), Arlyn (Steve Koecher's father), Lu Lueck, Jeff Auchampach (nephew of Yvonne Benson), Melissa Oscanyan, Pope Francis

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our own Alex Plum who competed in his third Birkie cross country ski race last Saturday and set a new personal best record!
- For those who enjoyed the Back Bay Mission Shrimp Boil dinner this past Tuesday, it was wonderful!
- For the new evening Men's Group who packed meals at FMSC this past Thursday, thank you for your service!
- For those who will participate in the next Men's Group session that begins the end of March, may we better connect and support one another on our Christian journey
- For our deacons and musicians gearing up for Ash Wednesday worship on Wednesday, March 5th at 6:30 pm, may it help on our Lenten journey toward Holy Week and Easter
- For the return of our Wednesday Night Family meals which will run through Holy Week, may we all be fed!

Prayers for our World:

- For all those whose small daily acts of compassion and grace slowly help change the world (and themselves)
- For those dealing with Parkinson disease, may they be given strength, courage and medical wisdom
- For all those who are called to foster parenting, your mission of mercy and grace is noticed and valued
- 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, Palestine, Israel and Ukraine, 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 the return of Wednesday night family meals!
- For the return of our Prayer Around the Cross Worship Services in the Fellowship Hall during the Wednesdays in Lent, may they be a time of renewal
- For Lily Hodges, daughter of Rachel and Quinn, and granddaughter of Maxine and Tom Sitz, who will be baptized on Sunday, March 23, may she grow in wisdom and faith
- For Evelyn Adele Sitz born to Heather and Danny and grandparents Maxine and Tom on Friday, 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 now 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 Lenten Study: The Adult Bible Study group is discussing “Entering the Passion of Jesus” by Amy-Jill Levine. The group will meet **Wednesday afternoons, 1:00–2:30**. Books are available in the church office for \$10.00. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Ash Wednesday: Ash Wednesday will be **Wednesday, March 5th**. Lent is a time of reflection, repentance and preparation. In Lent, we reflect on our lives, not as we want them to be, but as they really are. In Lent, we repent, which does not mean thinking less of ourselves, but means changing the parts of our lives that need to be changed. In Lent, we also prepare for the good news of the resurrection at Easter and the events of Holy Week which not only changed the world long ago, but continue to change us today. Join us for the **6:30 pm worship service** which will include both communion and the imposition of ashes.

Prayer Around the Cross: Our Lenten Prayer Around the Cross worship services will resume after Ash Wednesday, March 5, each Wednesday until Holy Week. Join us in the Fellowship Hall at **6:30 pm** for this brief, meaningful, candle-lit service focused on prayer, simple songs and a brief, focused message.

Loving Neighbor

One Great Hour of Sharing is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within the Wider Church Ministries. We need to support this ministry, maybe now more than ever. Envelopes are in the pews and on the sign-up table. Thank you for your generous support. - Mission Education Committee

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: BFLK takes donations of new and gently used winter clothing year round. It's a great time to shop sales of winter clothing and boots for children ages newborn to 18 years. For more information go to <https://www.basicsforlocalkids.org/>. Thank you!

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

New Evening Men's Group: We had a great start to our first evening Men's Group with two gatherings plus a service trip to Feed My Starving Children. Thanks to all who participated! We will start a second three-session gathering of our church guys in late March and April as detailed below. During these second gatherings, we will be looking at three parts of our Christian faith—grace, vocation and prayer. Please see Pastor Chris for details.
- Thursdays, March 27, April 10, and April 24 starting at 6:30 pm at The Garage Bikes and Brews

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 **Mar 4 & 18**.

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 **Mar 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 Sycamore on the first Thursday of each month & the Fellowship Hall the other Thursdays**. We have a great time sharing our projects & enjoying each other's company. For more info, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or firstroe@gmail.com

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 **March 10**.

WISE Corner: NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 6:30 pm at the River Falls Public Library and the Peer Support Group meets the same evenings at Luther Memorial Church at 6:30 pm. Our church WISE Team meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm. For more info, call Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

Community Life

Wednesday Meals: We 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 March 5 is lasagna and chicken alfredo, salad, garlic toast.

Learning Community Event: Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Bonhoeffer was a pastor and theologian in Germany during World War II. He was also an anti-Nazi dissident who was a founding member of the Confessing Church movement, a group dedicated to resisting efforts by the government to use churches as a pro-Nazi force to gain support and legitimacy for its goals. Bonhoeffer was arrested, imprisoned, and ultimately executed for his association with the resistance movement. Bonhoeffer authored important theological works included *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Letters and Papers From Prison*, published posthumously. Bonhoeffer famously argued that Christians should not withdraw from the world and its challenges, but rather act within the world guided by a commitment to justice and an understanding of the necessity of divine suffering. Our presenter will be Dr. Lori Brandt Hale, Professor of Religion in the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Augsburg University in Minneapolis. The evening will be **Tuesday, April 29 and will begin at 6:30 pm**. Dessert will be part of the event, so please tell us you are coming by registering either on the list on the sign-up table or online.

Youth Events

Youth Events for Wednesday, March 5:

3:45-5:15 pm Wednesday School

6:30-7:30 pm MS & HS Attend Ash Wednesday Worship Service

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 completed grade 5. The musical is for children in kindergarten through completed grade 6. Emma Cruciani will be the director.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Corinthians 3:12–4:2

Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 9:28-36

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.