

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

April 6, 2025



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

April 6, 2025

Fifth Sunday in Lent

10:00 am

Gathering

Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding
at things in life that don't matter.

- Francis Chan

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: God's Spirit is moving among us.

P: Let us give thanks!

L: Christ's wisdom is changing our thinking.

P: Let us give thanks!

L: The mysterious power of God is at work here today.

P: Let us give thanks!

**All: Come let us join our hearts and hands, minds and voices in praise to the Living
God!**

All Are Welcome



Let us build a house where proph - ets speak, and
Let us build a house where love is found in
Let us build a house where all are named, their



words are strong and true. Where all God's chil - dren
wa - ter, wine and wheat; A ban - quet hall on
songs and vi - sions heard And loved and treas - ured,



dare to seek to dream God's reign a -
ho - ly ground, where peace and jus - tice
taught and claimed as words with - in the



new. Here the cross shall stand as wit - ness and as
meet. Here the love of God, through Je - sus, is re -
Word. Built of tears and cries and laugh - ter, prayers of



sym - bol of God's grace; Here as one we claim the
vealed in time and space, As we share in Christ the
faith and songs of grace. Let this house pro - claim from



faith of Je - sus; } All are wel - come, all are wel - come,
feast that frees us; }
floor to raft - er: }



all are wel - come in this place.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Loving God, sometimes life gets us down so far we can't see up. We lose sight of you and wonder if you're with us in our journey. As we walk these last weeks of Lent toward Good Friday, open our spirits to the promise of Easter morning. Give us strength for difficult days and forgive us when we feel that you've left us all alone. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: God does not give up on us. God breaks through our hardened ways and leads us to new life.

P: **Even in the most challenging days and times of our lives, God is with us!**

L: Even in darkness God is the light of the world!

P: **God renews us! God renews all creation! 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

Glory, glory hallelujah, since I laid my burdens down.

Glory, glory hallelujah, since I laid my burdens down.

I feel better, so much better, since I laid my burdens down.

I feel better, so much better, since I laid my burdens down.

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 43:15-21

PSALM 126 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R



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

L: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

P: **Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, 'The LORD has done great things for them.'**

L: The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

P: **Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb.**

L: May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

P: **Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves. 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, this is the joyful feast of the people of God!
P: **Come let us gather to celebrate a feast for all time.**
L: Come let us join with Jesus and his disciples in an upper room.
P: **Come let us join the saints of all ages who have come in faith all along the way.**
L: Come let us let God feed us with the bread of life and be sent with the power of the Holy Spirit to be the body of Christ for the world.

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

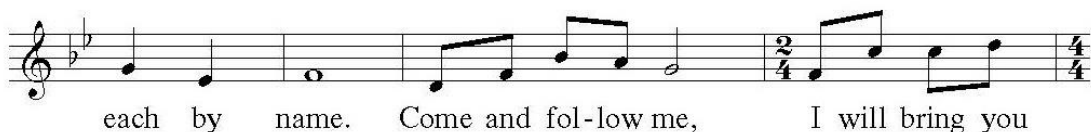
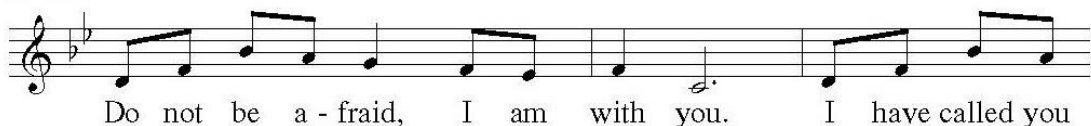
Distribution of the Elements

Hymns during the distribution of the elements:

You Are Mine

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



Lord's Prayer

Unison

1. Our Fa-ther, which art in heav-en,
2. Done on earth as it is in heav-en,
3. And for-give all our debts, hal-low-ed - a be thy
4. Lead us not in - to temp-tation,
5. Thine is the king-dom, pow-er, and glo-ry,
6. A - men, a - men, a - men,

Thy king - dom come, thy will be done,
Give us this day our dai - ly bread,
name. As we for - give our debt - ors,
But de - liv - er us from e - vil,
For - ev - er and ev - er,
A - men, a - men, a - men, a - men,

hal - low - ed - a be thy name. *Fine*

Blest Be The Tie That Binds

Blue #393

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.)

*Stay awake (clap, clap). Be ready (stomp, stomp).
You do not know the hour when the Lord is coming.
Stay awake (clap, clap). Be ready (stomp, stomp).
The Lord is coming soon.*

GOSPEL LESSON

John 12:1-8

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

Said Judas to Mary

Blue #210

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER

Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**

L: God, remember us in your love, and teach us to pray:

P: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your Kingdom come: your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

Change My Heart, O God

Jubilee Ringers

Arr. by Peggy Bettcher

*OFFERTORY



Let us bring ev - 'ry gift, let us trea - sure ev - 'ry grace: As you've



giv - en to us, let us share. In our neigh - bor to - day we will



meet you face to face, Let your love be the rule ev-'ry - where.

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Giving God, we have received much that we did not earn...the coming colors of spring and the early morning music of birds, the laughter of friends and the love of family, our very lives and your grace that gives our lives meaning and hope. These things we have received as a gift. As abundantly as we have received, let us give. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Sending

*HYMN

You Servants of God

Blue #112

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Steve Koecher
Deacons: Cindy Gandrud, Tanya Larsen,
Kathy Tomlinson, Beck Pajac,
Lance Lueck
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Jane Truesdill
Coffee
Fellowship: Traci Hagberg,
Rebecca Ferguson
Counters: Jane Truesdill, Scott Nelson
*Altar table flowers are given by Marsha
Pearson in memory of Maynard Pearson.*

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>Mar 30, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 4,997	\$ 163,064
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 138,099

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:

Jeff (brother-in-law of Janice Healy), Barbara de Souza, Crissy (daughter of Brad Williams), Jim French (father of Missy Linaberry), Jeff Auchampach (nephew of Yvonne Benson), Melissa Oscanyan, Peg Steinmetz, Janice Anderson (grandmother of Sarah Plum), Marc Otto, Margaret (wife of Don Baumann)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our choir, musicians, deacons and pastors gearing up for Holy Week, the most important week for Christians, which begins next Sunday with Palm Sunday and ends on Easter Sunday, may we journey with Christ this week
- For the return of Earth Fest on Saturday, April 26th UWRF, may it kindle in each of us a deeper commitment to care for God's good creation
- For those participating in the next Evening Men's Group sessions that meet April 10 and 24 at The Garage Bikes and Brews, may we better connect and support one another on our Christian journey
- For Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she awaits a B+ kidney donor
- For our pastors and musicians leading the Lenten Prayer Around the Cross Worship services on Wednesdays during Lent, may they help us all on our Lenten journey toward Holy Week and Easter
- For our choir getting ready for their Good Friday Cantata on April 18th at 6:30pm, may they be given strong, voices as they lead us through the journey of Holy Week
- For the return of our Wednesday Night Family Meals which run for one more week, may we all be fed!

Prayers for our World:

- For all those whose small daily acts of compassion & grace slowly help change the world (and themselves)
- For the return of the sun and warmer weather
- For those struggling to find and afford housing, may we work toward helping them, and may God's Spirit be present in those working to support them through efforts like the Simpson Shelter, Our Neighbors' Place and Habitat for Humanity
- For our nation as our 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, Sudan 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 Lily Hodges, daughter of Rachel and Quinn and granddaughter of Maxine and Tom Sitz, who was baptized on Sunday March 30, may she grow in wisdom and faith and her parents in wisdom and courage
- For the return of the Bouncy House next week on Palm Sunday!
- For Matthew Bylander (son of Rene and Tim) and Sierra Smith who were married on March 22 in Annapolis, Maryland, may they grow together in love and years
- For the on again off again gift of spring in Wisconsin
- For the Prayer Around The Cross Worship services in the Fellowship Hall during the Wednesdays in Lent, may they be a time of renewal

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Wayne Revels, who died suddenly recently, may his family be comforted
- For the family of Arlyn Koecher, father of Steve, may he rest in peace and his family be comforted
- For all those who mourn, especially the family of Rollie Hall, 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.

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP

APRIL 13 AT 10:00 AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP

APRIL 17 AT 6:30 PM

GOOD FRIDAY CANTATA

APRIL 18 AT 6:30 PM

EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

APRIL 20 AT 9:00 AND 10:30 AM

EASTER BREAKFAST

APRIL 20 FROM 8:00 TO 10:30 AM

ALL ARE WELCOME!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

110 NORTH THIRD STREET, RIVER FALLS, WI

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Isaiah 43:15-21

I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

GOSPEL LESSON: John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'



Join us each Wednesday at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall for our 30-minute Prayer Around the Cross Worship Service preceded by the Family Meal. Reserve dinner by Tuesday night please.