

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

**April 13, 2025**



**Palm Sunday**

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

April 13, 2025

*Palm Sunday*

10:00 am

<b>Gathering</b>
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“Remember finally, that the ashes on your forehead are created from the burnt palms of last Palm Sunday. New beginnings invariably come from old false things that are allowed to die.” – Richard Rohr

<p>Welcome to our guests who are visiting with us today!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Activity bags are available for children.</li><li>- Large print bulletins are available from the ushers.</li><li>- Please stand when noted by the *</li><li>- Congregation responses are in bold.</li></ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><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"><li>- Please stop at the welcome station for a gift.</li><li>- Please note our worship service is livestreamed.</li></ul>
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**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**L:** Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

**P:** **Hosanna in the highest!**

**L:** Blessed is God's only Son who takes away the sin of the world.

**P:** **Hosanna in the highest!**

**L:** Blessed is the Prince of Peace who reconciles all humanity to God.

**P:** **Hosanna in the highest!**

**L:** Blessed is Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, Lord and King.

**P:** **Hosanna in the highest!**

**L:** Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

**P:** **Hosanna in the highest!**

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

**PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL READING**

**Luke 19:28-40**

**\*HYMN**

*All Glory, Laud and Honor  
Verses 1, 3, 4, and 5*

**Blue #265**

## \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

L: Lord, it is the beginning of a Holy Week of great adventure and sacrifice.

P: **We sense our need for you.**

L: You ask us to read your Word.

P: **We start by reading the Bible, but then get busy and put it aside.**

L: You ask us to pray.

P: **We begin to pray to you and then we are interrupted again.**

L: Lord, speak to us through your Word.

P: **Let it penetrate our hearts and minds.**

L: Speak to us and let us hear your call.

P: **Guide us during this Holy Week so we may not just understand Jesus' life, death and resurrection but see ourselves involved in it. Amen.**

## \*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: We already know the ending to this story.

P: **Though we participate in Christ's betrayal, our salvation is sure because God raised Jesus from the dead.**

L: Hear and believe this incredible good news:

P: **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

*Prepare the Way of the Lord*

The musical score is written on a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of four measures, each with a Roman numeral above it. Measure I: 'Pre - pare the way of the Lord.' Measure II: 'Pre - pare the way of the Lord,' Measure III: 'and all peo-ple will see the sal - va - tion of our God.' Measure IV: 'Pre -' followed by a double bar line. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a mix of eighth and quarter notes.

I  
Pre - pare the way of the Lord.

II  
Pre - pare the way of the Lord,

III  
and all peo-ple will see the sal - va - tion of our God.

IV  
Pre -

## Hearing the Word

**PSALM 31:9-16** (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

**R**            ***Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.  
Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.***

- L:** Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also.
- P:** **For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.**
- L:** I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.
- P:** **I have passed out of mind like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.**
- L:** For I hear the whispering of many—terror all around!—as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.
- P:** **But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, 'You are my God.'**
- L:** My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.
- P:** **Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love. 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:** Jesus said: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." So come, sisters and brothers, just as you are. Let him feed you, so that you can go to feed others. Let him love you, so we can go to love others. Let him bind us together into his body, so that together we may become Christ's body at work in the world today.
- P:** **Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!**

### ***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:*

### *A Place at the Table*



1 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble, for  
2 For wo - man and man, a place at the ta - ble, re -  
3 For young and for old, a place at the ta - ble, a  
4 For just and un - just, a place at the ta - ble, a -  
5 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble, to



ev - ery - one born, clean wa - ter and bread, a  
vis - ing the roles, de - cid - ing the share, with  
voice to be heard, a part in the song, the  
bus - er, a - bused, with need to for - give, in  
live with - out fear, and sim - ply to be, to



shel - ter, a space, a safe place for grow - ing, for  
wis - dom and grace, di - vid - ing the pow - er, for  
hands of a child in hands that are wrink - led, for  
an - ger, in hurt, a mind - set of mer - cy, for  
work, to speak out. to wit - ness and wor - ship, for



ev - ery-one born, a star o - ver-head,  
wo - man and man, a sys-tem that's fair,  
young and for old, the right to be - long, and God will de - light when  
just and un - just, a new way to live,  
ev - ery-one born, the right to be free,



we are cre - a - tors of jus-tice and joy, com - pas-sion and peace: yes,



God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus-tice, jus-tice and joy!



## **Taste and See**

*Congregation join on refrain:*

***Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.  
O taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.***

## **Nothing Can Trouble**

***Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.  
Those who seek God shall never go wanting.  
God alone fills us.***

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

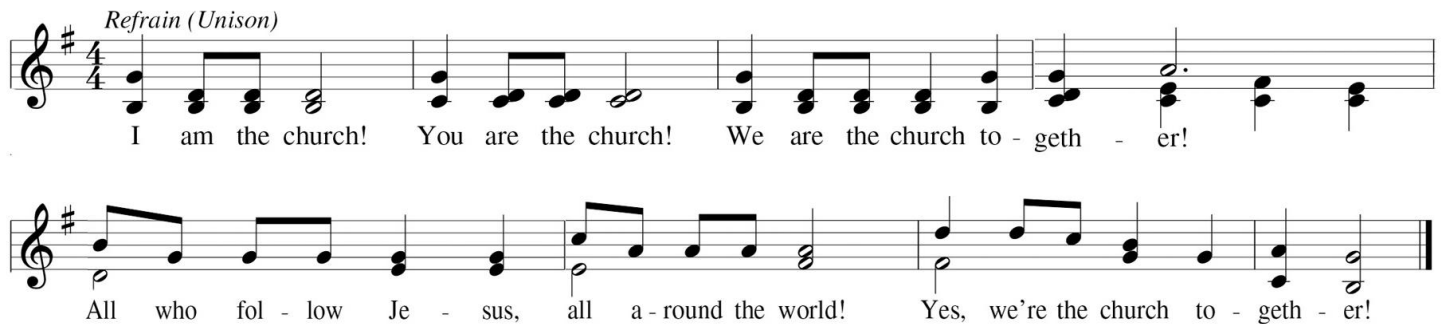
**All: We give you thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **Proclaiming the Word**

### **TIME WITH CHILDREN**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**SONG (Children preschool through grade 8 leave for Sunday School.)**



### **SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**Philippians 2:5-11**

### **SERMON**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

### **\*HYMN**

***Hosanna, Loud Hosanna***

**Blue #267**

### **\*STATEMENT OF FAITH (World Council of Churches)**

**I believe in the living God, the Maker of all humankind who creates and sustains the universe in power and in love.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God incarnate on earth, who showed us by his words and work, suffering with others, conquest of death, what human life ought to be and what God is like.**

**I believe that the Spirit of God is present with us now and always, and can be experienced in prayer, in forgiveness, in the Word, the Sacraments, the community of the Church and all that we do. Amen.**

## THE PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER

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.**

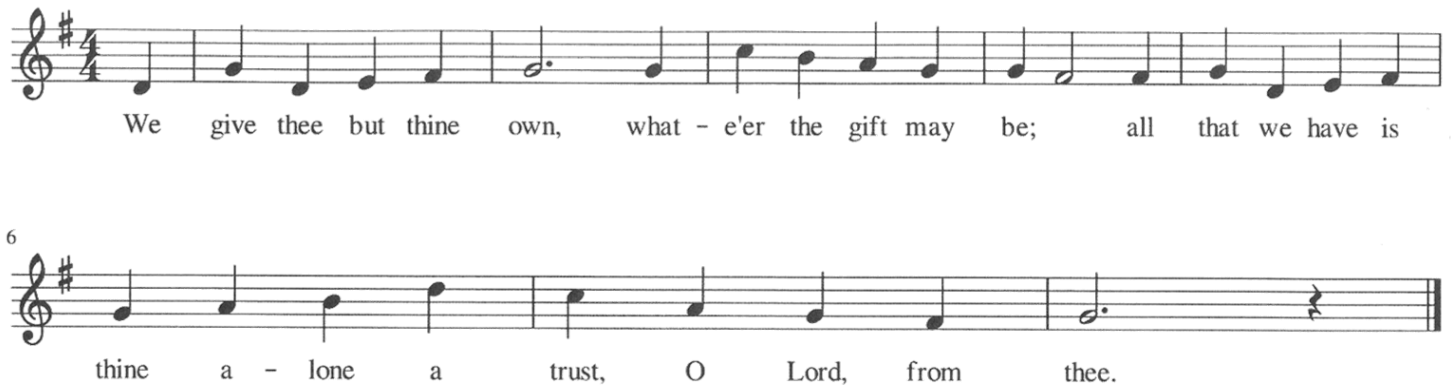
### GATHERING OUR GIFTS

#### *Hosanna to the Son of David*

Chancel Choir

*Arr. by Allen Pote*

### \*OFFERTORY



We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be; all that we have is

6

thine a - lone a trust, O Lord, from thee.

### \*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Gracious God, **our gifts can never match your goodness toward us. Your saving grace and healing touch are far beyond our imaginations. So we offer ourselves in response to the coming of your Son Jesus Christ. Hosanna in the highest. Receive, O God, our humble service. Amen.**

Sending

### \*HYMN

#### *Ride On, Ride On in Majesty!*

Blue #268

### \*BLESSING

### POSTLUDE

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## **SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS**

Preacher: Chris Myers  
Celebrant: Chris Myers  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Jill Paulson  
Deacons: Loral Keil, Brian Miller,  
Ann Nelson, Karen Lloyd,  
Paul Shepherd  
Organist: Terry Mithun  
Nursery: Kahla Fuller  
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman  
Trustee: Matt Bastien  
Welcomers: Susan Walden, Carole Mottaz  
Coffee  
Fellowship: JoAnne Friedell, Kathy Rausch  
Counters: Jean Smith, Vicki Sippel

## **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

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### **Treasurer's Report**

	<u>Apr 6, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,529	\$ 167,139
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 148,722

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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*Join us for*  
***Holy Week Worship***

*Palm Sunday* April 13 10:00 am  
*Maundy Thursday* April 17 6:30 pm  
*Good Friday Cantata* April 18 6:30 pm  
*Easter Sunday* April 20 9:00 & 10:30 am  
*Easter Breakfast* April 20 8:00 to 10:30 am

***All Are Welcome!***

First Congregational Church  
110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI



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), Peg Steinmetz, Janice Anderson (grandmother of Sarah Plum), Marc Otto, Margaret (wife of Don Baumann), Judy Schierts (sister of JoAnn Lentz)

**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 this 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 26<sup>th</sup> at UWRF, may it kindle in each of us a deeper commitment to care for God's good creation
- For those participating in the new Evening Men's Group whose final session will be Thursday, April 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 choir getting ready for their Good Friday Cantata on April 18th at 6:30 pm, may they be given strong, voices as they lead us through the journey of Holy Week

**Prayers for our World:**

- For those facing floods in the Midwest and South, may you be given strength and help from neighbors
- For all those whose small daily acts of compassion and grace slowly help change the world (and themselves)
- 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 the return of the sun and warmer weather
- For the return of the Bouncy House this Sunday on Palm Sunday!
- 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 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 those grieving the loss of loved ones:**

- For all those who mourn, especially the families of Wayne Revels, Arlyn Koecher (father of Steve), Rollie Hall (husband of Joan), 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:** Currently the Adult Bible Study group is discussing “Entering the Passion of Jesus” by Amy-Jill Levine. The next unit will give a five-week session from April 23 to May 21, and the focus will be *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Copies are available in the church office for \$14.00 each. The group meets **Wednesday afternoons, 1:00–2:30**. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

**Prayer Around the Cross:** Our Lenten Prayer Around the Cross worship services are 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.

**Holy Week and Easter:** Holy Week is the most important week for Christian people. It shows the depth and breadth of God’s love. Challenge yourself to join us for all of the Holy Week services this year.

Maundy Thursday, April 17      Worship at 6:30 pm

Good Friday, April 18          Choir presents their Good Friday Cantata at 6:30 pm

Holy Saturday, April 19      Youth set tables and prepare for the Easter Breakfast at 10:00 am

Easter Sunday, April 20      Worship at 9:00 and 10:30 am with Breakfast served from 8:00 to 10:30 am

## 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:** 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](http://amongfriendsrf.com) & Facebook. It is held at church **Tuesdays & Thursdays 9am to 3pm**.

## Loving Self

**Easter Lilies** are offered for you to honor or remember someone and grace our worship space with beauty. The lilies will be displayed on Easter morning and may be taken home following the 10:30 service. To order an Easter Lily for \$15, please fill out the form. **Orders must be placed by TODAY.** Proceeds go to our youth fund.

**New Evening Men’s Group:** We have begun a second three-session gathering of our church guys. During these gatherings, we will be looking at three parts of our Christian faith—grace, vocation and prayer. Please see Pastor Chris for details. Last date is **Thursday, April 24** starting at 6:30 pm at The Garage Bikes and Brews.

**Merry Widows:** They will meet on **Wed, April 16 at 4:00 pm at St. Croix Lanes**. All widows are welcome to join us for dinner and conversation! See JoAnn Lentz for more information.

**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 **April 22 & May 6 & 20**.

**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 **April 22 & May 13 & 27**.

**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](mailto: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 **April 14**.

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

### ***Community Life***

**Join us for Easter Breakfast – Sunday, April 20:** Easter Breakfast will be served from **8:00 am to 10:15 am**. Cost is \$10 per person with a family max of \$40, all of which goes to our Youth Fund for mission trips and opportunities. Please sign up by Wednesday, April 16. Sign up at church or online.

**Earth Fest** is a **free** community celebration that includes live music, fun family activities, food sampling, a sustainability and wellness fair, free giveaways, and more. Earth Fest will be held on **Saturday, April 26, from 12:00-4:00 pm at UW-River Falls University Center**. Please see the flyer for more information.

**Special Worship Guests Fendrick & Peck - Sunday, April 27th:** Madeline & Brian are a Minnesota based acoustic duo. Their exquisitely crafted music is new folk...rich in its love and connection, tender in its grief, and solid in its originality. Along with the music come two quirky and charming individuals...a loving couple, tired parents, and growing people. Come and experience the variety of offerings. Music, treats and fellowship to follow worship.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer Conversation: April 29, 2025:** Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a pastor & 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 that resisted efforts by the government to use churches as a pro-Nazi force to gain support and legitimacy for its goals. Eighty years after his death, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's wisdom and witness continue to inspire Christians (and non-Christians) around the world, especially in times of political upheaval. Join Dr. Lori Brandt Hale to discuss the lessons from Bonhoeffer that offer guidance and hope, and challenge us to take responsibility for the coming generation. And, if you are wondering if this is a Bonhoeffer moment, Dr. Brandt Hale will explain why "is this a Bonhoeffer moment?" is the wrong question. The event will be **Tuesday, April 29, at 6:30 pm**. Dessert is included. Please sign up.

**Holding on to Hope – Thurs, May 15, 6:30-8:00 pm:** Presented by NAMI St. Croix Family Support Team in the Fellowship Hall. Join the group of family members who will share what family support can be as they discuss dealing with trauma, coping strategies, empathy and hope. Any questions, contact Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

**Communion Bread Volunteer Needed:** The Deacon team is looking for a volunteer to help prepare our weekly communion bread. The bread is gluten-free, nut-free, and made in the comfort of your home. We'll provide the recipe, instructions, supplies, and any guidance you may need. The time commitment is approximately 3 hours every 2-3 months – perfect for someone who enjoys baking and wants to support our worship services in a special way. If you're interested or would like to learn more, please contact Karen Lloyd.

**Family Resource Center Workers:** The Christian Education Committee is looking for one or two more people who are willing to work with the Family Resource Center. Tasks include: managing the book collection, shelving books, arranging display books according to season, helping children and families to be connected to the Resource Center and put it to good use. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Pastor Stacy.

### ***Youth Events***

**Youth Events for Wednesday, April 16:**

3:45-5:15 pm Wednesday School

No Class/Youth Group – Youth attend Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Worship

**Bouncy House** for young children returns **TODAY**.

**Summer Dates for Kids:** Please mark your calendars. VBS - July 28-31; Children's Musical - Aug 18-21. VBS is for children age 3 to completed grade 5. The musical is for children in kindergarten through completed grade 6.

**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Philippians 2:5-11**

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 19:28-40**

After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, “Why are you untying it?” just say this: “The Lord needs it.”’ So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, ‘Why are you untying the colt?’ They said, ‘The Lord needs it.’ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying,

‘Blessed is the king  
who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven,  
and glory in the highest heaven!’

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, order your disciples to stop.’ He answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.’