

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

May 18, 2025



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

May 18, 2025

*Music Sunday
Fifth Sunday of Easter*

10:00 am

Gathering

"Music is part of God's universe." Cat Stevens

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 of the past, who has created and nurtured us,

P: **We are here to thank you.**

L: God of the future, who is always ahead of us,

P: **We are here to thank you.**

L: God of the present, who is here in the midst of us,

P: **We are here to thank you.**

L: God of life, who is beyond us and within us,

P: **We rejoice in your glorious love.**

L: Come let us worship the God of the past, present and future.

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

***HYMN**

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Blue #68

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of Joy, the music of the spheres is in us, but sometimes it's muted by all our concerns and distractions. Our souls can feel heavy, our voices strained, our wonder quieted. Open us, God, to your presence, to your soul-stirring music, to the sheer joy of worship, and to the sheer joy of life itself. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Friends, God is with us always! God welcomes and embraces us. God tends to us and cares for us.

P: **God calls us each day to sing songs of our soul in thanksgiving!**

L: God is with us this day and every day. God is with us all our lives.

P: **God leads us even when we don't want to be led. Let us sing our hearts out to God! Thanks be to God this day and all our days!**

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

Over My Head

(Congregation join on refrain)



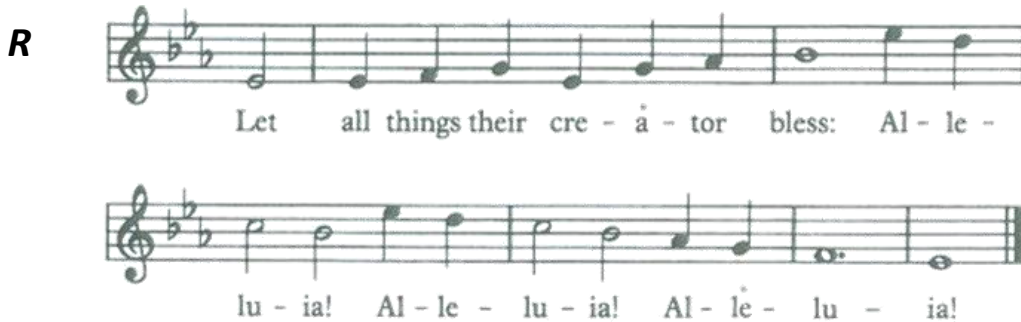
O-ver my head, I hear mu - sic in the air; o-ver my head, I hear mu - sic in the air; o-ver my head, I hear mu - sic in the air; there must be a God some - where.

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 12:1-6

PSALM 148 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)



Let all things their cre - a - tor bless: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

L: Praise God from the heavens! Sing praises in the heights above!

P: **Sing praises, all holy angels; all the heavenly host, praise God's holy name.**

L: Sun and moon, sing praises; sing praises all bright stars.

P: **Sing praises, you heaven of heavens and you waters above the heavens.**

L: Praise God's name, the one who command created them all and fixed their orbits forever and ever by a law which shall never be broken.

- P:** Praise God from the earth, sea monsters and ocean depths, fire and hail, snow and smoke, mountains and all hills, fruit trees and cedars, wild beasts and cattle, reptiles and winged birds.
- L:** Praise God, world rulers and all peoples, leaders and judges, young men, young women, old and young together.
- P:** Let them praise your name, O God, for your name alone is exalted. Your majesty covers heaven and earth.
- L:** You have lifted up your people's horn with praise from all your faithful ones, from Israel, those close to your heart.
- All:** Hallelujah! *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:** Come people of God, let us sing!
- P:** Let us sing for we are God's people and God has done wonderful things.
- L:** Let us come into God's presence with joy and thanksgiving.
- P:** Let us come into God's presence and let God feed us on the Bread of Life and the Cup of Blessing. Come Holy Spirit, come!

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:

How Can I Keep from Ringing

Arr. Cathy Mokolbust

Jubilee Ringers

O, Sing to the Lord - Blue #15

Let's Sing unto the Lord - Blue #33

Congregation join on refrain

Sing a New Song - Blue #10

Congregation join on refrain

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 AND PRESENTATION OF SCRAPBOOKS

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.*

SPECIAL MUSIC

We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace

Chancel Choir

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Colossians 3:12-17

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

All Creatures of Our God and King

Blue #23

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – United Church of Christ**

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

THE PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER

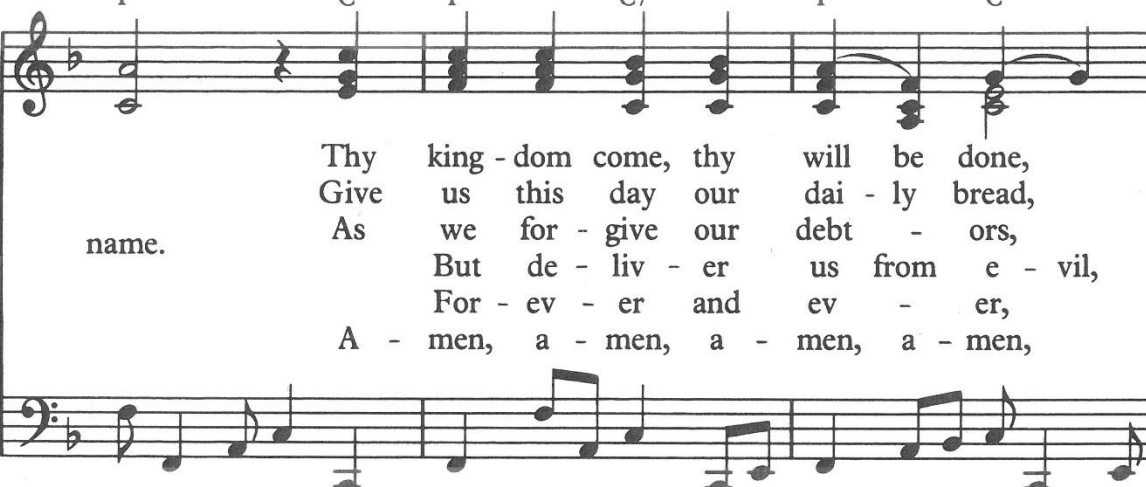
Unison

F C F C F Dm Bb C



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-ta-tion,
 5. Thine is the king-dom, pow-er, and glo-ry,
 6. A - men, a - men, a - men,

F C F C7 F C



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,

F Bb C F *Fine*



hal - low - ed - a be thy name.

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Holy God, faith walks hand in hand with serving, and love expresses itself in giving. May we be faithful, O Lord, in our serving and loving in our giving. For we do these things in your name and ask your blessing. Amen.

Sending

***HYMN**

I Sing the Almighty Power of God

Blue #31

***BLESSING**

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

Jamie Mills, David Reilly
Sarah Plum, Tanner Pietz

POSTLUDE

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Diaper Drive
May 11 - June 15

We are collecting your donations from
Mother's Day to Father's Day.

We are in need of:

All Diaper Sizes
(especially sizes 4 and 5)

Baby Wipes

Donations will go to Our Neighbors' Place,
Turning Point and River Falls Food Pantry

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

SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Jean Smith
Deacons: Paul Shepherd, Becky Pajac,
Loral Keil, Brian Miller,
Cindy Gandrud
Organist: Terry Mithun
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers: Norma Revels
Trustee: Tim Bylander
Coffee
Fellowship: Mission Ed Committee
Counters: Jean Smith, Vicki Sippel
*Altar table flowers are in celebration of
Maxine Sitz's birthday given by her family
and in recognition of Mental Health Month
given by Sally Steneman.*

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>May 11, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,604	\$ 227,341
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 201,837

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:

Barbara de Souza, Crissy (daughter of Brad Williams), Jeff Auchampach (nephew of Yvonne Benson), Janice Anderson (grandmother of Sarah Plum), Marc Otto, Judy Schierts (sister of JoAnn Lentz), Glen Corliss (brother of Raelle Jorae), Nigel (brother-in-law of Marshall Skule), Dave Mountain, Duane Church, Heather Williams, Jan Hansen

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our choir and bell groups for all their hard work this year as we enjoy Music Sunday this Sunday
- For all our Sunday School teachers who taught this past year - we appreciate you!
- For those confirmed recently, Casey Beatty, Evie Myklebust and Calpernia Bastien, may they grow in faith, service and love
- For Lori Nitz as she moves to Oregon, WI to be closer to family after over 50 years of living in River Falls, may you move safely and make new connections - we will miss you!
- For Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she awaits a B+ kidney donor
- For our church mowing team - Joel Larsen, Ryan Luedtke, Laura and Mark Anderson and Larry Peterson, we appreciate you!

Prayers for our World:

- For the gift of summer (remember it earlier this week?), may it return and last
- For all those whose small daily acts of compassion and grace slowly help change the world (& themselves)
- For our nation as economic, political and social uncertainty takes its toll, may we do better
- 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 Katie Krueger and Hunter Pesik who will be married on June 14th, may you keep growing in love
- For Duane Church who celebrated his 92nd birthday on May 10th and shared his birthday cake with us during Coffee Fellowship, but who is also recovering from a broken hip, may you heal quickly
- For those at our church camps getting things ready for the program year – Carol Merriman, Tim Bylander, Norma Revels, Lu Lueck and Dan Rude – God bless your work
- For our Garden Geeks keeping our church gardens looking great and for Louie Filkins who made the new archway in our Memorial Garden, God bless you all!
- For the new River Falls Fire Chief, our own Justin Wilson, congratulations and thank you for pursuing this calling!
- For Josh Sippel who will be graduating from Advanced Individual Training on May 19, from Fort Gregg-Adams in VA, and who will be using that training with the Wisconsin Army National Guard
- For Marjorie Faulks who will celebrate her 102nd birthday on Saturday, June 14th with a party at St Croix Lanes from 1-4pm, you are an inspiration!

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Glenn Kees who died peacefully surrounded by his family in Oconomowoc and whose Memorial Gathering is 1pm on Thursday, June 12th, may his wife Midge and family be comforted
- For the family of Dave Mountain, our former custodian, whose son Steve died in a car accident, may his family be given strength and faith as they gather Saturday, June 21 to remember his life
- For all those who mourn, especially the families of Leah Gavin, Peg Steinmetz, Brian Healy, Eunice (sister of Barb Stephens), 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!

Summer Worship: During the summer months, our worship moves to 9:30 am starting Memorial Day Weekend and going through Labor Day Weekend. Coffee Fellowship continues, but Sunday School is off. See you this summer!

Summer Nursery Help Needed: During the summer months, our church nursery is staffed by volunteers. Please sign up to help in the church nursery. Summer worship time moves to 9:30 am and the nursery is open from 9:15 to 10:45 am. Please contact the church office for more information. Sign up at church or online.

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.

Loving Neighbor

Strengthen The Church Offering: This offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ. Thank you for your support, Mission Education Committee.

Diaper Drive: In honor of the parents in our lives, the Mission Education Committee is again offering you the opportunity to contribute diapers to the RF Food Pantry, Our Neighbors' Place, and Turning Point. These three local organizations serve folks who need diapers for their babies and infants. If you can add a package to your own grocery shopping, or find good sales at other stores, you'll see how expensive they can be. Please help them if you can - and encourage your friends to help, too! The Food Pantry and Turning Point especially need sizes 4 and 5 diapers (and wipes). (Mission Ed has also found a few other local groups to help out for some other months; would your work place, social or community groups, or extended family also be able to help?)

Red Cross Blood Drive: The next scheduled Red Cross Blood Drive held at the church will be on **Wednesday, May 21, from 10:00 am–4:00 pm**. Please call 1-800-733-2767 or visit www.redcrossblood.org and enter: firstcongregationalrf to schedule an appointment.

Simpson Shelter Supply Needs: Men's T-Shirts Sizes M, XL, XXL, XXXL, Bras - all sizes, Personal Size Body Lotion, Personal Size Baby Oil, Nail Care Kits, Men's and Women's Shower Shoes, Textured/Natural Hair Products, Personal Size Hair Conditioner, Personal Size Toothpaste, Umbrellas, Good buys on out-of-season clothing. All items MUST BE NEW. There is a box at the church for donations.

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

VBS Volunteers: We need adult and teen workers. VBS will be July 28–31, 9:00–11:30 am. To volunteer, please sign up at church or online.

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, May 21 at 1:00 pm at Green Mill in Hudson, WI.** 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 and lively conversation. Our next gatherings are **May 20 & June 3 & 17.**

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 lunch. The next meetings will be **May 27 & June 10 & 24.**

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

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

Softball News: Let the season begin! **June 2nd is our first game at 7:45 pm at Hoffman Park.** Practices will be at the Greenwood Elementary practice fields. We will practice on May 19 and one more time during Memorial Day week. The roster is still open for more players, and we would encourage you to join the team. Our players' ages range from high school to kids in their early 60's wishing they didn't ache so much the next morning. You don't have to be a professional, but rather someone who likes to play softball, enjoys a little exercise and have a few laughs. The softball team is part of the River Falls Church Family League that is a co-ed division which allows players to play at the age of 14 and requires teams to have three women on the field. The games are played on Monday nights at Hoffman Park. Come join in the fun! If you are interested in playing on our team, please sign up on the sheet in the gathering area or online. If you have questions, contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945, debhoffman2234b@gmail.com

Youth Events

Summer Dates for Kids: Dates for the 2025 children's summer programs are:

VBS: July 28-31, 2025

Children's Musical: August 18-21, 2025

VBS is for children age 3 to completed grade 5. We will need adult and teen volunteers for VBS.

The musical, *Malice in the Palace: The Story of Esther* is for children in kindergarten through completed grade 6. Emma Cruciani will be the director.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Isaiah 12:1-6

You will say on that day:

I will give thanks to you, O LORD,
for though you were angry with me,
your anger turned away,
and you comforted me.

Surely God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might;
he has become my salvation.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say on that day:

Give thanks to the LORD,
call on his name;
make known his deeds among the nations;
proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.

Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.