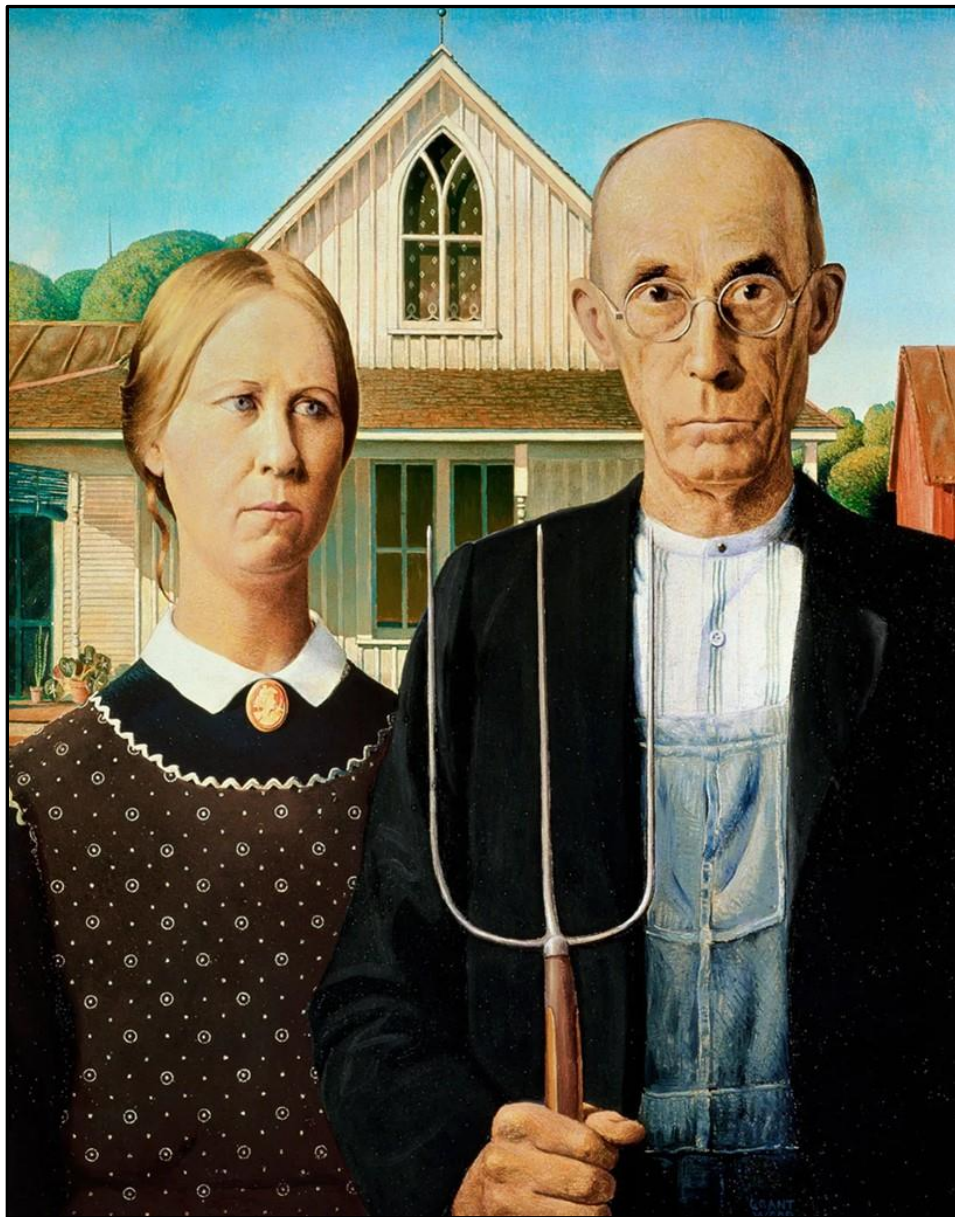


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

June 29, 2025



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

June 29, 2025

Third Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am

| |
|------------------|
| Gathering |
|------------------|

Jesus is not simply a victim of evil and violence; he is marching to engage the enemy. He is thus portrayed – not as a victim – but as a potential victor. Jesus is going to take charge.

So must we. When Christians preach nonviolence as a way of life, when we practice peacemaking, we do so not as helpless doormats for the jackboots of the world but in order to subvert the world, to participate in the victory of Jesus.

- William H. Willimon

| | |
|--|---|
| <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 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">- 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: From the side of the roads we travel daily, Jesus calls:

P: **“Follow me.”**

L: In the midst of our duties and distractions, Jesus says again:

P: **“Follow me.”**

L: In our work and in our play, Jesus says again:

P: **“Follow me.”**

L: Even when the task seems urgent, or the person important, Jesus persists:

P: **“Follow me.”**

All: **With focused faithfulness, let us join in worship, striving to follow him. Come let us worship the Lord our God!**

***HYMN**

I Am the Light of the World

Black #584

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

O God, forgive us if we take ourselves too seriously. Wrapped up in our ourselves we forget to laugh and celebrate, rejoice and give thanks. In trying to be grown up, we sometimes forget how to play. Remind us of the words of your Son— unless we become like children we will not experience your kingdom. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Let us embrace the words of Jesus and humble ourselves.

P: **Let us embrace the grace of Jesus and be changed.**

L: Let us embrace the love of Jesus and forgive.

P: **Let us embrace the peace of Jesus and be made whole.**

L: In Christ we are forgiven.

P: **Thanks be to God.**

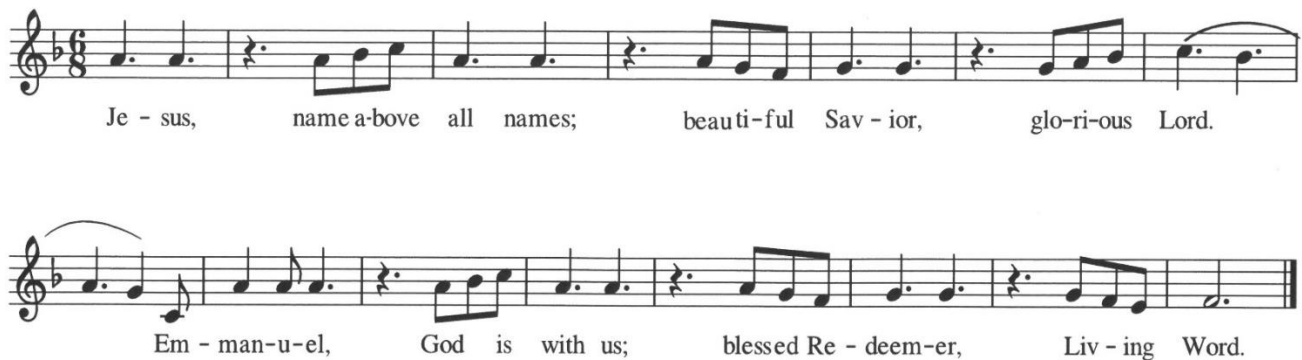
L: May the peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: **And also with you.**

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

***GLORIA (Sung twice)**



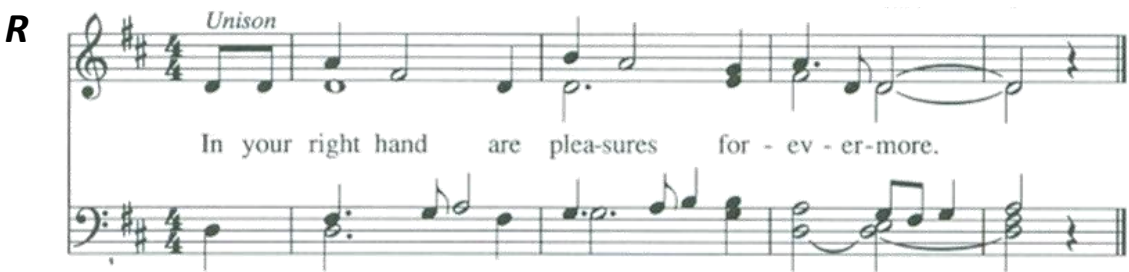
Je - sus, name a-bove all names; beau-ti-ful Sav - ior, glo-ri-ous Lord.
Em - man-u-el, God is with us; blessed Re - deem-er, Liv - ing Word.

| |
|-------------------------|
| Hearing the Word |
|-------------------------|

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Galatians 5:16-25

PSALM 16:5-11 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)



R *Unison*
In your right hand are plea-sures for - ev - er-more.

L: The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

P: **The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.**

L: I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.
P: **I keep the LORD always before me; because God is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.**
L: Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.
P: **For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.**
L: You show me the path of life.
P: **In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures for evermore. R**

| |
|-----------------------------|
| Proclaiming the Word |
|-----------------------------|

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 9:51-62

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

As We Gather at Your Table

Blue #695

***STATEMENT OF FAITH (from a morning prayer liturgy at Eastern Mennonite Seminary)**

We believe in God:

**Whose love is the source of all life and the desire of our lives,
Whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth,
Whose love was crucified by the evil that waits to enslave us all,
And whose love, defeating even death, is our glorious promise of
freedom.**

**Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful and full of doubt, in God we trust; And
in the name of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves in the service of others,**

**To seek justice and to live in peace,
To care for the earth and to share the commonwealth of God's goodness,
To live in the freedom of forgiveness and the power of the spirit of love,
and in the company of the faithful, so to be the church for the glory of
God. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER

Lord in your mercy... Hear our prayer.

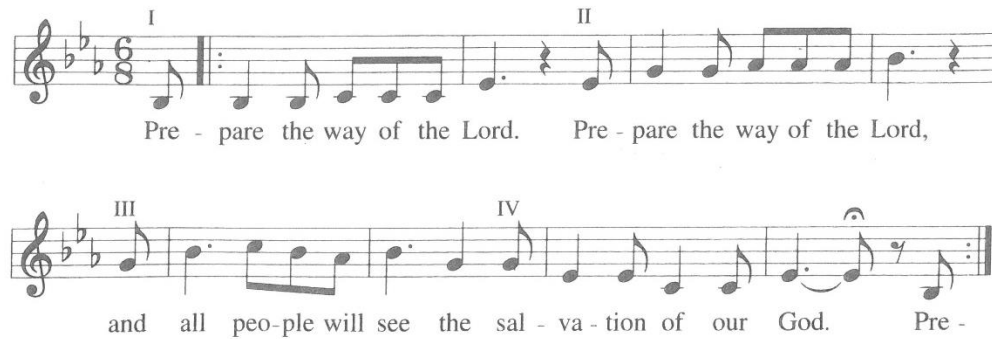
**...Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will
be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our
debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For
thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Jeff Pajac

OFFERTORY (Sung twice) *Prepare the Way of the Lord



***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Gracious God, thank you for the gifts you bestow upon us each and every day. Help us to be more aware of your many gifts and guide our lives in such ways that we and our gifts may be gifts to others. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

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: "Follow me." Here at this table we are reminded of our call to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ.
- P: **We follow him when we do the things he calls us to do: love and serve, bless and welcome.**
- L: We follow him when we trust he is present here at this table and will equip us with the Holy Spirit to do the things he calls us to do.
- P: **Come let us gather around his table to share the bread of life and cup of blessing.**

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:

Be Not Afraid – Blue #430

Congregation joins on refrain

Refrain

Be not a - fraid. I go be - fore you al - ways. Come, fol - low
me, and I will give you rest.

Let Us Be Bread

Congregation joins on refrain

Refrain

Let us be bread, blessed by the Lord, bro - ken and shared,
life for the world. Let us be wine, love free - ly poured.
Let us be one in the Lord.

Live in Charity

U - bi ca - ri - tas et a mor,
Live in char - i - ty and stead - fast love,
u - bi ca - ri - tas De - us i - bi est.
live in char - i - ty; God will dwell with you.

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.

Sending

***HYMN**

God Be with You

Black #81

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Tanya Larsen
Deacons: Loral Keil, Brian Miller,
Tanya Larsen, Becky Pajac,
Ann Nelson
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers: Art Rice and Elaine Dixen,
Dennis and Lynn Linder
Trustee: JP Okal
Coffee
Fellowship: Tim and Rene Bylander
Counters: Jean Smith, Allen Barnes
*Altar table flowers are given by Alex and Sarah
Plum in celebration of their wedding anniversary
(and Alex single parenting for 3 weeks).*

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>June 22, 2025</u> | <u>Year to Date</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| General Fund Income* | \$ 10,897 | \$ 279,838 |
| General Fund Operational Needs | \$ 10,623 | \$ 265,575 |

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, Jeff Auchampach (nephew of Yvonne Benson), Janice Anderson (grandmother of Sarah Plum), Judy Schierts (sister of JoAnn Lentz), Glen Corliss (brother of Raelle Jorae), Nigel (brother-in-law of Marshall Skule), Heather Williams, Tom Hall (brother of Rollie Hall), Kevin Rash (son-in-law of Pat Anderson)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For those gearing up for our River Falls Days Bluegrass Concert on the church front lawn on Thursday, July 10th from 6-8pm, may we all be rest, relax and enjoy music together
- For those cooking and serving the meal at the Simpson Homeless Shelter in Minneapolis on Wednesday, July 16th, may all be blessed by these efforts
- For those gearing up for the Kids Youth Musical on August 18-21 and VBS on July 28-31, may it be a time of faith filled fun for all
- For those who gave blood at our recent drive in the Fellowship Hall and who will give blood at the next one on July 23, God bless you for giving this precious gift
- For those who will receive the 9562 diapers given as part of our Mother's to Father's Day diaper drive, may God bless both those who receive them and those who gave them
- For Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she awaits a B+ kidney donor

Prayers for our World:

- For Father Jerry who retires from active ministry on June 30th after 45 years of ministry, may he be given the gift of rest
- For vulnerable people across the country and around the world affected by cuts in government programs
- For the ways the Spirit of God is at work in our world today moving us to be people of grace, compassion and joy
- For all those whose small daily acts of courage slowly help change the world (and themselves)
- For the hope of peace in Iran, Gaza, Palestine, Israel and Ukraine, may God's Spirit be present and may the innocent be protected
- 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 cooler temperatures after a sweltering weekend
- For Natasha and Peter Rayne as they travel July 3rd to adopt their orphaned nephew Jemuel from Suriname after 3 years of paperwork and prayer, may your newly adopted son grow in grace and love in his new home
- For the gift of summer and all that accompanies this special time of year
- For all who have been baking for and serving at our many recent funerals, God bless you all!
- For our Garden Geeks who weed and water at church each week and for Melissa Wilson who weeded and cleaned the church van, God bless you all!

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Chuck White who died recently at the age of 96 and whose Memorial Service will be July 22nd at 11am here at church, may his family including wife Ruth Anne, be comforted
- For the family of Marc Otto whose Memorial Service will be here at church on Thursday, June 26th at 2pm with visitation and hour before and a reception to follow, may his wife Lori and his family be comforted
- For Crissy Savitt, daughter of Brad Williams, who died this past week and whose memorial service will be July 9 in New Jersey, may her family be comforted
- For those who mourn, especially the families of Glenn Kees, Jan Hansen, Brian Healy, 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.

Sunday, June 29, 2025

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 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.

Loving Neighbor

Simpson Picnic Meal: Each year our church serves a picnic style meal at the Simpson Shelter in Minneapolis. This year the date is **Wed, July 16**. We cook the meal in our church kitchen then serve it in Minneapolis. Please use the sign-up sheet to help with this needed mission opportunity. Church interns receive intern credit for this mission.

VBS Cookie Bakers Needed: Homemade cookies are a special part of the VBS snack, so we need volunteers to make some. Each volunteer is asked to bring four dozen cookies. A sign-up list is available on the table.

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.

VBS Painting Work Night: Please come to help paint the VBS backdrops on **Tuesday, July 15, starting at 6:00**. The only talent necessary is the ability to paint within the lines. Please help!

VBS Volunteer Meeting: The VBS volunteer meeting will be **Thursday, July 24, 6:30–7:30 pm**. This is the most important chance to prepare for the week. Please plan to attend.

Save The Date! Feed My Starving Children is coming to River Falls! Thanks to a wonderful partnership of churches, individuals and businesses, including First Congregational Church, please mark your calendars for **Tuesday and Wednesday, September 9 and 10**, when our community will pack 100,000 meals at Tattersall. Sign-ups will begin the end of July. Thank you to our Endowment Grant Team who granted \$4,000 to help pay for the \$30,000 cost of packing these meals. Exciting!

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 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

Therapeutic Music Concert: Experience the calming, soothing effect of live therapeutic music! You are invited to a free concert by Certified Therapeutic Musician Kristin Andes and her harp on **Mon, July 21, 6:30-7:30 pm**.

Summer Choir is low stress and low commitment. We simply meet an hour before the service and sing a familiar song. The next dates will be **July 27 and August 10**. Please consider joining us!

Peaches: It's time to place your order for the delicious Washington State Peaches! 1 single-layer box is \$26.00; 2 or more single-layer boxes are \$25.00 each. **Orders must be placed by July 28 for pick up the first week of August.** There are 3 ways to order: 1. Email: office@firstchurchrf.org; 2. Sign up at church or online; 3. Call: 715-425-2052 – Mon-Thurs from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm or leave a message with name, phone, and number of boxes. This is an annual fundraiser for our youth. Thank you for your support!

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, July 16 at 1:00 pm at The Sycamore.** 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 **July 1 & 15.**

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 **July 8 & 22.**

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 113 East Elm Street (Mei Mei's) & 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: Monday was a good night, we got to play softball. The final result was not as we hoped, but it was a good game and fun to get out there and hit a few balls. So far, for those who keep track of our record, we have won one, lost one and have two rainout games. Looking ahead here are our next 3 games:

June 30 at 7:15 pm vs St. Bridget at Hoffman Park field #2

July 7 will most likely be a makeup game at 7:15 pm - so stay tuned

July 14 at 6:30 pm vs Luther Memorial at Hoffman Park field #2

Note the times of the games have changed due to lack of lights on one of the fields. All further games are 6:00 pm and 7:15 pm. They are 30 minutes earlier so we can complete games before it gets dark. Come join in the fun whether playing or cheering the team on. If you have questions contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945, debhoffman234b@gmail.com.

Youth Events

Youth Day Trip to the Cities: Alex is working on dates for the Day Trip to the Cities! The days and times will determine where we might visit. Please fill out this short questionnaire on the website to help Alex plan around the group's availability.

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

VBS: *Be The Light*: July 28-31, 2025

Children's Musical: *Malice in the Palace*: 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 is for children in kindergarten through completed grade 6. Emma Cruciani will be the director.

Join us for a **FREE** concert
on the lawn
at 110 N. 3rd St. River Falls

Thur. July 10th
from 6-8 pm

featuring
Slapdash
Bluegrass Band
& Rollin' River
Mobile Hospitality
Food Truck

First Congregational UCC
firstchurchrf.org | 715-425-2052



Presented by
the UCC WISE
Team



Experience the calming, soothing effect of
live therapeutic music!

First Congregational United Church of Christ
invites you to a free concert by
Certified Therapeutic Musician Kristin Andes and her harp.

Join us Monday evening, July 21, 2025
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
110 N Third Street, River Falls, Wisconsin

www.firstchurchrf.org

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Galatians 5:16-25

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 9:51-62

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'