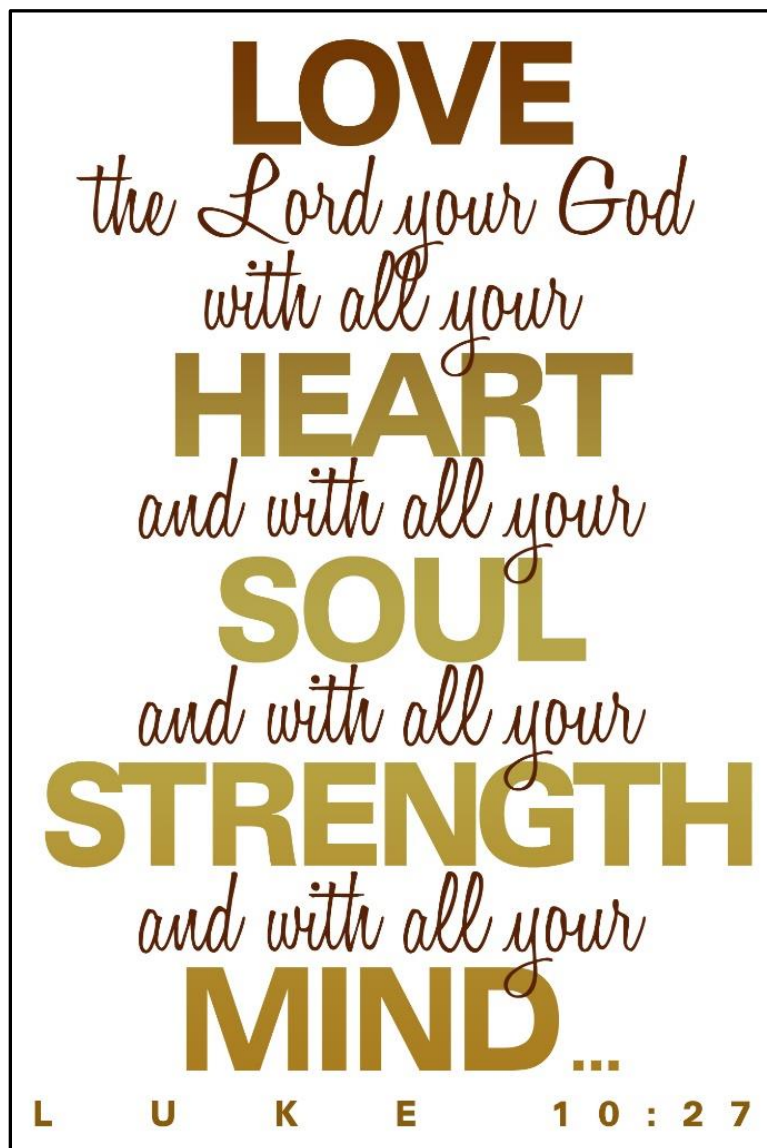


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

July 13, 2025



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

July 13, 2025

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am

Gathering

“The world will give you that once in a while, a brief timeout; the boxing bell rings and you go to your corner, where somebody dabs mercy on your beat-up life.”

- Sue Monk Kidd

<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.
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GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

P: **Like Miriam, let us sing with gladness, for our God triumphs over evil and oppression.**

L: Like Hannah, let us pray with grateful hearts, for the Lord our God hears our prayer.

P: **Like Jacob, let us wrestle with God, for out of such struggles new faith is born.**

L: Like Abraham, let us respond to God's calling, for in faith's journey we find our lives.

P: **This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

***HYMN**

Sing a New Song

Blue #10

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Holy God, we live in the joy and wonder of your love. However, we find it so easy to be in disagreement. We take each other for granted. Too often we are tempted to cut the ropes of love that bind us together. Other times we take life and each other for granted. Help us, Lord, to renew our faith in you and restore our love of each other with the powerful cords of compassion. May we be reminded of the joys and beauties of being alive in Christ. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: No matter the situation, no matter the problem, no matter the trouble, God is always with us. God is always ready and willing to...

P: **Receive us,**

L: Redeem us,

P: **Renew us,**

L: Restore us,

P: **Refresh us,**

L: Rebirth us,

P: **Now and always**

All: **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.

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG OF BLESSING

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.

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Colossians 1:3-14

PSALM 25:1-10 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*

L: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

P: **O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.**

L: Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

P: **Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.**

- L:** Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.
- P:** **Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. R**
- L:** Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!
- P:** **Good and upright is the LORD; therefore God instructs sinners in the way.**
- L:** God leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble God's way.
- P:** **All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep God's covenant and decrees. R**

Proclaiming the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 10:25-37

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

When the Poor Ones

Blue #624

***STATEMENT OF FAITH (taken from the New Zealand Church)**

**You, O God, are supreme and holy. You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do. You have always been with us.
You are God.**

You, O God, are infinitely generous, good beyond all measure.

You came to us before we came to you.

**You have revealed and proved your love for us in Jesus Christ, who lived and died
and rose again. You are with us now.**

You are God.

You, O God, are Holy Spirit. You empower us to be your gospel in the world.

**You reconcile and hear; you overcome death. You are our God. We worship you.
Amen.**

THE PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER

Lord in your mercy... Hear our prayer.

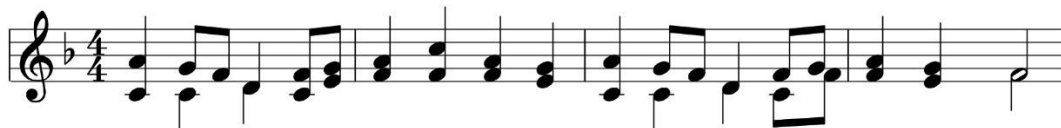
...Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and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

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

Love the Lord Your God

Jamie Mills

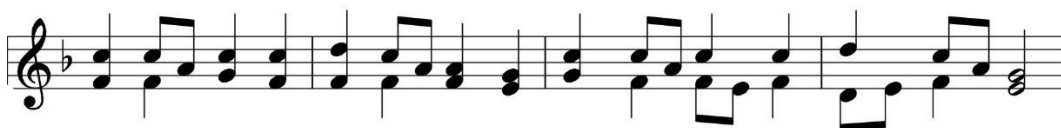
*OFFERTORY



For the life that you have giv - en, for the love in Christ made known,



with these fruits of time and la - bor, with these gifts that are your own:



here we of - fer, Lord, our prais-es; heart and mind and strength we bring;



give us grace to love and serve you, liv - ing what we pray and sing.

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Welcoming God, there are many who need your hospitality, many who yearn for a taste of your love and a drink of your life-giving water. Help us give of our resources and of ourselves with a most generous spirit. May we be love to others as we give our gifts and share in your loving presence. In the name of Jesus. 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: Let us come to this table as all saints do, with love in our hearts, grace on our lips, memories buried deep in our souls, and a faith that holds it all together.
- P: Come let us join the long procession of men and women, young and old, who have gathered around this table longing to be fed with food that truly satisfies.
- All: Come, let us take our place in the feast of life.

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

Congregation joins on refrain

Refrain
 B \flat E \flat Cm7 Fm7 $\frac{A\mathbb{b}}{B\mathbb{b}}$ B \flat E \flat Cm D \flat $\frac{D\mathbb{b}}{F}$ G \flat 2 G \flat

and God will de - light when we are cre - a - tors of jus-tice and joy, com - pas-sion and peace: yes,

B \flat m D \flat 6 C2 C7 Fm $\frac{Fm}{A\mathbb{b}}$ B \flat 7 $\frac{Fm}{A\mathbb{b}}$ $\frac{E\mathbb{b}}{G}$ Am7(b5) $\frac{E\mathbb{b}}{B\mathbb{b}}$ B \flat 7 E \flat

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

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

Blue #248

I Am The Bread of Life

Congregation joins 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.

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**

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Blue #100

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Suzanne Hagen
Deacons: Brian Miller, Loral Keil,
Ann Nelson, Cindy Gandrud,
Laura Anderson
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Nursery: Diane Olson, Marg Downing
Welcomers: Dennis and Lynn Linder
Trustee: Rick Price
Coffee
Fellowship: Carole Mottaz
Counters: Diane Welsh, Mark Anderson
*Altar table flowers are given by Stu Henning and
Beverlee DeCoux in celebration of joy in our lives.*

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>July 6, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 4,997	\$ 282,892
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 286,821

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), Tom Hall (brother of Rollie Hall), Jim Sullivan, Julie (mother of Kit Luedtke)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For those who helped and attended our River Falls Days Bluegrass Concert on the church front lawn on Thursday, July 10th, it was awesome!
- For General Synod of the United Church of Christ which meets in Kansas City July 11-15, may Christ be present
- For those participating in the Tuesday/Wednesday morning Summer Youth Bible Study with Alex, may it be a time of connection
- 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 Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she awaits a B+ kidney donor

Prayers for our World:

- For those killed in flooding Texas, especially the young campers at Camp Mystic, our hearts ache with their families
- For those cleaning up the flooding in Texas and North Carolina, may neighbors help bare the load
- For Father Jerry who retired 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 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 gift of River Falls Days, rain or shine, it is a blessing to our community
- For Jonah and Mya Jensen (son of Michelle and Neal Jensen) who were married on June 14th, may they grow in love
- For Natasha and Peter Rayne as they traveled 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 our Garden Geeks who weed and water at church each week, you are a blessing

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 Dorothy Hage, mother of Debbie Parsons, who died recently, may her family be comforted
- For Crissy Savitt, daughter of Brad Williams, who died recently and whose memorial service was July 9 in New Jersey, may her family be comforted
- Those who mourn, especially the families of Marc Otto, 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.

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 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.

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!

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.

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!

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 15 & 29.**

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 22 & Aug 12.**

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: The game started off great weather wise, and then the clouds and storm came in and ended the game after only 5 innings. However safety is first and when we see lightning off the field, we go. We were behind by 3 runs so therefore lost the game 6:3. Our present record is 2 wins, 2 losses and two rain outs. Looking ahead here are our next 3 games:

July 14 at 6:00 pm vs Luther Memorial at Hoffman Park field #2

July 21 at 7:15 pm vs Spirit of Grace at Hoffman Park Field #2

July 28 at 6:00 pm vs SOS at Hoffman Park field # 1

Thanks to our faithful fans who cheer us on. 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.

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.

JULY 28-31ST, 2025
9:00 – 11:30 AM
First Congregational UCC
Age 3 - Completed Grade 5

To register visit
www.firstchurchrf.org
All Are Welcome!
No Charge!

Malice in the Palace
CHILDREN'S MUSICAL

First Congregational United Church of Christ
110 N 3RD ST. RIVER FALLS, WI
715-425-2052

Rehearsals: August 18-21, 2025, 9:00 am-Noon
Show: Thursday, August 21st, 6:30 pm
Age: Completed Kindergarten-Completed Grade 6

All are welcome! NO CHARGE!
To register, visit www.firstchurchrf.org

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Colossians 1:3-14

In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'