

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

**July 20, 2025**



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

July 20, 2025

*Sixth Sunday after Pentecost*

9:30 am

**Gathering**

Dennis Alfveby is celebrating his 50th year as a church musician; he is presently director of music at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lindstrom, Minnesota, and is in his 24th year as accompanist for the River Falls High School Choir.

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.

**PRELUDE**

***Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing  
Celtic Doxology of Praise  
Festive Gloria***

*arr. Buda  
arr. Sigmon  
by Miller*

**WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**L:** Jesus is here. Come and sit with him.

**P:** **We want to sit with you, Jesus.**

**L:** Jesus is here. Come and rest beside him.

**P:** **We want to rest in you, Jesus.**

**L:** Jesus is here. Come and listen to his voice.

**P:** **We want to hear from you, Jesus.**

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

**\*HYMN**

***Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart***

**Blue #113**

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Patient God, **you are here but we are often distracted. To-do lists, worries and weariness – all of it keeps us from focusing on you. We don't want to miss you, but confess we are often more like Martha than Mary. We want to run and do and accomplish rather than be still and listen and hear. Slow us down, O God. Draw us near. Help us to be fully present so we may listen to your voice speaking to us today. Amen.**

## \*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Remember that God is always faithful and full of mercy.

P: **In Jesus Christ, we are shown the forgiving power of God's love.**

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

*Alleluia! Give the Glory*

*Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Give the glory and the honor to the Lord!*

*Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Give the glory and the honor to the Lord!*

## Hearing the Word

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

Colossians 1:15-20

PSALM 15 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

**R**



L: O LORD, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy hill?

P: **Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart;**

L: Who do not slander with their tongue, and do no evil to their friends, nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;

P: **In whose eyes the wicked are despised, but who honor those who fear the LORD;**

L: Who stand by their oath even to their hurt; who do not lend money at interest, and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

P: **Those who do these things shall never be moved. R**

## Proclaiming the Word

### GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 10:38-42

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH – African Creed**

**We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. God created the human person for happiness in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on the earth. We have known this High God in the darkness, and now we know God in the light.**

**God promised in the Scriptures to save the world and all the nations and tribes. We believe that God kept all promises by sending Jesus Christ, a person in the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and humankind, showing that the meaning of religion is love. Jesus was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He lay buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day, he rose from the grave.**

**We believe that all our sins are forgiven by God. We accept the gift of baptism and in the community of faith we live in ways of love and share the bread of life. We announce the good news to all people so long as God gives us breath. We believe that the Spirit is in the world and that God cares for us in life and in death. This we believe. 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.**

**MISSION MOMENT – River Falls Food Pantry****Larry Peterson****GATHERING OUR GIFTS    *Gabriel’s Oboe from ‘The Mission’*****Dennis Alfveby***by Morricone*

## \*OFFERTORY

### *O God Beyond All Praising*



O - God be-yond all prais-ing, we wor-ship you to - day and - sing the love a - maz - ing that  
songs can - not re - pay; for we can on - ly won - der at - ev - 'vry gift you send, at —  
bless - ings with - out num - ber and mer - cies with - out end: we lift our hearts be - fore - you and  
wait up - on your word, we hon - or and a - dore you, our great and might - y Lord.

## \*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

L: In the name of Jesus,

**P: We are reminded of how much we have been loved.**

L: In the name of Jesus,

**P: We find the grace to love one another.**

L: In the name of Jesus,

**P: We offer up our worship on this day.**

L: In the name of Jesus,

**P: We give this offering of gifts that all peoples might hear this name, might know this Lord, might experience his love. 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 came to seek out the lost and lonely.

**P: Come Lord Jesus, come to us we pray.**

L: He came with healing in his hands, love in his heart and peace in his wake.

**P: Come Holy Spirit, come to us we pray.**

L: He came proclaiming God's kingdom is coming and yet is also here among us.  
P: **Come, God, come to us we pray.**  
All: **Come let us be a part of God's Way here and now as we eat and drink at your table.**

***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:*

**Fairest Lord Jesus**

**Blue #123**

**The Road Home**

*by Martin*

***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.**

<b>Sending</b>
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**\*HYMN**

***God of Grace and God of Glory***

**Blue #569**

**\*BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

***Declamation***

*by Martin*

**Dennis Alfveby**

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## **SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS**

Preacher: Chris Myers  
Celebrant: Chris Myers  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Jean Smith  
Deacons: Cindy Gandrud, Becky Pajac,  
Karen Lloyd, Marshall Skule,  
Jena Most  
Organist: Dennis Alfveby  
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman  
Nursery: Sarah Meyer  
Welcomers: Carole Mottaz, Marg Downing  
Trustee: Louie Filkins  
Coffee Fellowship: Jenny Luedtke  
Counters: Marie Roe, Scott Nelson

## **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>July 13, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 4,656	\$ 298,693
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 297,444

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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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



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), Julie (mother of Kit Luedtke), Amy (friend of Barb and Larry Peterson), Anna (granddaughter of Barb Stephens)

**Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:**

- For General Synod of the United Church of Christ which met 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 the Tools for School Drive that begins this week as we seek to provide school supplies to local kids, may generosity flow
- For those who cooked and served 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 in 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 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 rain that renews our gardens and lawns
- For another successful meal served at the Simpson Shelter in Minneapolis
- For those who will serve the funeral lunch on Tuesday for the White family, you are a blessing
- For Tools for School, a local ministry that helps local families with school supplies, what a gift to our community
- 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
- 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***

**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 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](http://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 – Order Deadline is July 28:** 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](mailto: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 29 & Aug 12**.

**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 and Aug 12 & 26.**

**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)

**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:** Looking ahead here are our next 3 games:

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

August 4 at 6:00 pm vs First Covenant at Hoffman Park

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](mailto:debhoffman234b@gmail.com)

### ***Youth Events***

**Youth Day Trip to the Cities:** Alex is working on dates for the Day Trip to the Cities! 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. The musical is for children in kindergarten through completed grade 6. Emma Cruciani will be the director.

### **Summer Youth Bible Study**

Our Youth Minister Alex Plum is leading a summer Bible study each week. The time, date and location change. They talk about and study everything from how to manage stress to overthinking, to how to bear one another's burdens. Join him! And pray for our young people.



# HOW TO SPEAK YOUR SPOUSE'S LOVE LANGUAGE { }

WHICH LOVE LANGUAGE?	HOW TO COMMUNICATE	ACTIONS TO TAKE	THINGS TO AVOID
 <b>WORDS OF AFFIRMATION</b>	Encourage, affirm, appreciate, empathize. Listen actively.	Send an unexpected note, text, or card. Encourage genuinely and often.	Non-constructive criticism, not recognizing or appreciating effort.
 <b>PHYSICAL TOUCH</b>	Non-verbal - use body language and touch to emphasize love.	Hug, kiss, hold hands, show physical affection regularly. Make intimacy a thoughtful priority.	Physical neglect, long stints without intimacy, receiving affection coldly.
 <b>RECEIVING GIFTS</b>	Thoughtfulness, make your spouse a priority, speak purposefully.	Give thoughtful gifts and gestures. Small things matter in a big way. Express gratitude when receiving a gift.	Forgetting special occasions, unenthusiastic gift receiving.
 <b>QUALITY TIME</b>	Uninterrupted and focused conversations. One-on-one time is critical.	Create special moments together, take walks and do small things with your spouse. Weekend getaways are huge.	Distractions when spending time together. Long stints without one-on-one time.
 <b>ACTS OF SERVICE</b>	Use action phrases like "I'll help...". They want to know you're with them, partnered with them.	Do chores together or make them breakfast in bed. Go out of your way to help alleviate their daily workload.	Making the requests of others a higher priority, lacking follow-through on tasks big and small.

GRAPHIC BY **FIERCEMARRIAGE.COM**

BASED ON "THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES", A BOOK BY DR. GARY CHAPMAN



**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Colossians 1:15-20**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

**GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 10:38-42**

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

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**Simpson Shelter Meal**

Thanks to those who cooked, served and cleaned up after the meal served at the Simpson Homeless Shelter in Minneapolis last Wednesday night. We served a picnic meal of burgers, hot dogs, an assortment of homemade salads, watermelon and chips. We had a great crew of cooks and servers.

