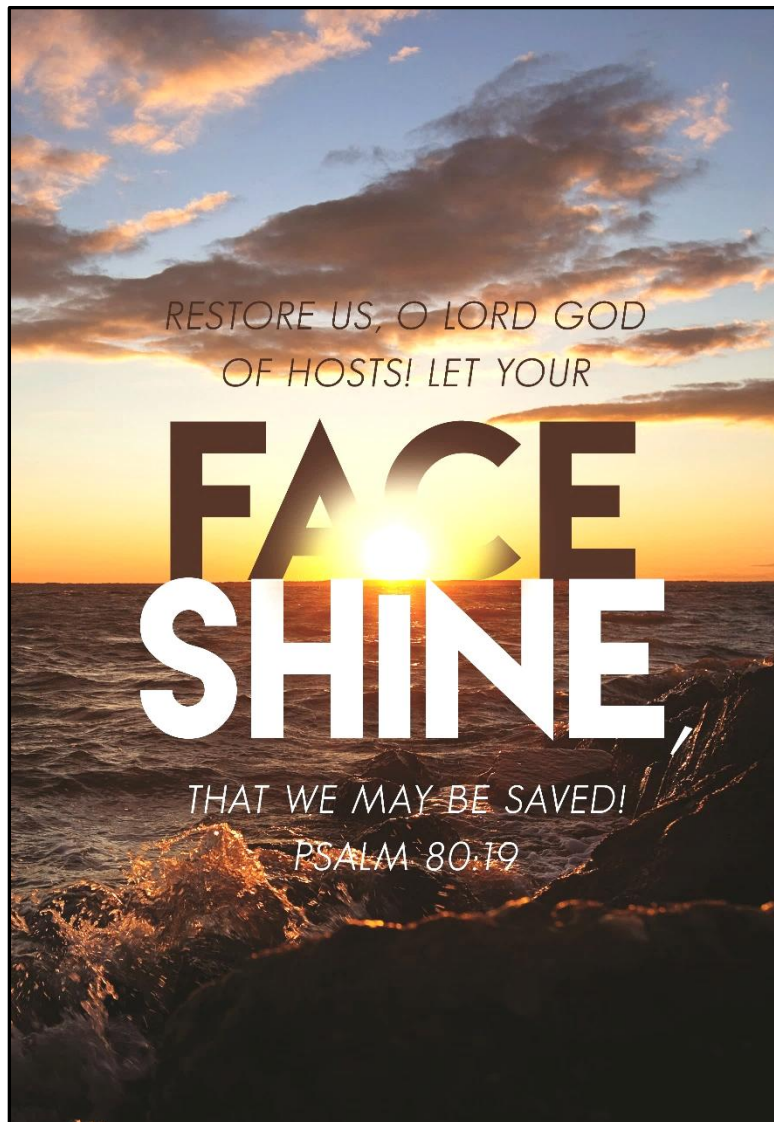


**First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
River Falls, Wisconsin**

**August 17, 2025**



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

August 17, 2025

*Tenth Sunday after Pentecost*

9:30 am

**Gathering**

Faith is not the belief that God will do what you can't.  
It is the belief that God will do what is right.  
- Max Lucado

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:** We have been called.

**P:** **Called to be the church.**

**L:** We have been given gifts.

**P:** **Many gifts, all for the same purpose.**

**L:** To model the new way of being that God has planned for us all.

**P:** **Then let us worship God with this same spirit.**

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

**\*HYMN**

*Morning Has Broken*

**Blue #35**

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Merciful God, **forgive us for failing to understand and accept the great demands placed upon us by your love. We enlist in your causes, but find ourselves losing interest. We promise to be courageous, but find ourselves afraid. We want to be sensitive, but find ourselves hard and callous. Forgive us; take our limitations and turn them into possibilities for service. Have mercy on us and grant us your peace. Amen.**

## \*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: Listen! Hear the good news:

P: **Christ Jesus came into the world and its people**

L: To forgive our follies and foibles

P: **And set us back on God's path of grace and peace, hope and new life.**

L: This is good news!

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

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;*

*As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,*

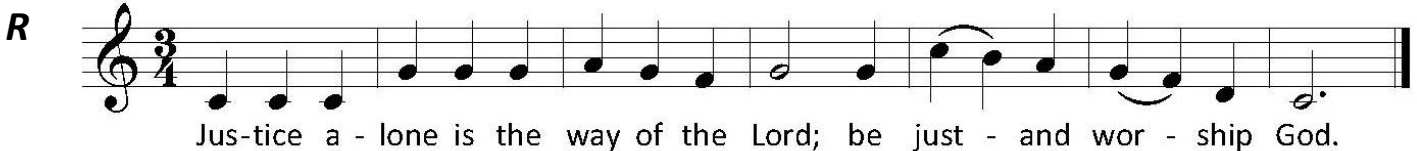
*world without end. Amen. Amen.*

## Hearing the Word

## SCRIPTURE LESSON

Jeremiah 23:23-29

PSALM 82 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)



L: God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement: 'How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?

P: **Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.**

L: Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.'

P: **They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk around in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.**

L: I say, 'You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, and fall like any prince.'

P: **Rise up, O God, judge the earth; for all the nations belong to you! *R***

## Proclaiming the Word

**GOSPEL LESSON**

**Luke 12:49-56**

**SERMON**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**\*HYMN**

*You Are Salt for the Earth, O People*

**Black #181**

**\*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 (debts/debtors)**

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 – Basics for Local Kids**

**Renee Whipple**

**GATHERING OUR GIFTS**

**Calpurnia Bastien**

## \*OFFERTORY



Let us bring ev - 'ry gift, let us trea - sure ev - 'ry grace: As you've giv - en to us, let us share.



In our neigh bor to day we will meet you face to face, Let your love be the rule ev-'ry - where.

## \*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 asking your blessing. Amen.

### Celebrating the Meal

(All Christians are welcome at the table of our Lord. The bread is gluten free and red wine and white grape juice are offered. Those choosing not to commune may receive a blessing from the servers.)

#### *The Invitation to the Meal*

L: This table is for all of us, near and far, rich and poor, young and old. This table is for all of us, as we gather from the east and the west, the north and the south. It is not our table. It's God's table, set that we might again remember Jesus' call to be people of love and grace, hope and peace. So come and take your place at the table. Come and be fed at the table of our Lord as together we share this holy meal.

#### *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 proclaim 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*

and God will de - light when 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!

The musical notation is in G-flat major (three flats). The first line of music corresponds to the lyrics 'and God will de - light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice and joy, com - pas - sion and peace: yes,'. The second line corresponds to 'God will de - light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice, jus - tice and joy!'. Chords are written above the notes: Bb, Eb, Cm7, Fm7, Ab/Bb, Bb, Eb, Cm, Db, Db/F, Gb2, Gb for the first line, and Bbm, Db6, C2, C7, Fm, Fm/Ab, Bb7, Fm/Ab, Eb/G, Am7(b5), Eb/Bb, Bb7, Eb for the second line.

### **You Are Mine**

*Congregation joins on refrain*

***Do not be afraid, I am with you. I have called you each by name.  
Come and follow me, I will bring you home; I love you and you are mine.***

### **In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful**

***In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice!  
Look to God, do not be afraid; lift up your voices, the Lord is near;  
lift up your voices, the Lord is near.***

### ***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**

***Shall We Gather at the River***

**Black #597**

**\*BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

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## SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers  
Celebrant: Chris Myers  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Tanya Larsen  
Deacons: Cindy Gandrud, Becky Pajac,  
Laura Anderson, Tanya Larsen  
Organist: Terry Mithun  
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman  
Trustee: Scott Nelson  
Welcomers: Dennis and Lynn Linder  
Coffee  
Fellowship:  
Counters: Diane Welsh, Scott Nelson  
*Altar table flowers are given in celebration  
of Troy and Cheryl Zakrzewski's wedding  
anniversary.*

## 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  
Custodians: Farnum Fuller  
Troy Zakrzewski

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## Treasurer's Report

	<u>Aug 10, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 9,543	\$ 319,236
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 339,936

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'



### Dinner and A Show

Come for dinner and a show on

**Thursday, August 21.**

Dinner at 6:00 pm.

Show at 6:30 pm.

It's a cheap date night plus  
you can support our kids.

Sign up!

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

**Those who are ill or recovering:**

Barbara de Souza, Jeff Auchampach (nephew of Yvonne Benson), Judy Schierts (sister of JoAnn Lentz), Glen Corliss (brother of Raelle Jorae), Tom Hall (brother of Rollie Hall), Julie (mother of Kit Luedtke), Amy (friend of Barb and Larry Peterson), Tom Mercer (son in law of JoAnn Lentz), Jodi Chumas (friend of Ann Nelson)

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

- For our Tools for School Drive as we seek to provide school supplies to local kids, may generosity flow
- For those who bought, unloaded, sorted, sold and enjoyed our peaches!
- For those gearing up for the Youth Musical Malice in the Palace which tells the story of Esther on August 18-21, with a dinner and performance on Thursday, August 21, may it be a time of faith filled fun for all
- For those participating in the Tuesday/Wednesday morning Summer Youth Bible Study with Alex, may it be a time of connection
- For those who gave blood at our recent drive in the Fellowship Hall, God bless you for giving this precious gift
- For those called to be Sunday School teachers and Wednesday School helpers—is God calling you to help this year?
- For Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she continues dialysis

**Prayers for our World:**

- For those cleaning up after storms, especially around where over a dozen UCC churches report damage and where over a thousand Church World Service clean up buckets have been donated, may we support one another
- For teachers, families and students getting ready for the back to school season
- For those going into the military, may they be given strength, courage and our gratitude
- For people in Gaza, may they be fed and peace finally emerge
- For those cleaning up after storms and floods, may we be good neighbors
- For vulnerable people across the country and around the world affected by cuts in government programs
- For the hope of peace in 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 peaches and the youth ministries they will enable
- For Tools for School, a local ministry that helps local families with school supplies, what a gift to our community
- For our Trustees who recently repainted the Fireplace Room, bless you!
- For our church building team of Tim, Farnum and Troy who have been working overtime fixing the bell tower, moving tables and keeping everything clean, we appreciate you!
- For those who served the funeral receptions for the White and Faulks families, you are a blessing
- For these last few weeks of summer, may we squeeze in all the joy we can

**For those grieving the loss of loved ones:**

- For those who mourn, especially the families of Marjorie Faulks, Chuck White, 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.

**Sunday School Teachers Needed:** Sunday School begins again on **Rally Day, September 7**. Please volunteer to teach. All classes have teaching partners so no one teaches every week. This is an important ministry and we need volunteers. Please sign up. There will be a meeting for Sunday School teachers on **Thurs, Sept 4, 6:30–7:30 pm**.

**Wednesday School Workers Needed:** Wednesday School begins on **October 1**. We also need volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis. Please sign up at church or online.

**Rally Day:** Rally Day, when Sunday School, Sunday Morning Bible Study, choir and bells resume, is **Sept 7**. All children who are three (or nearly three) years old (and toilet trained) are welcome in Sunday School.

**Sunday Morning Bible Study:** Sunday morning Bible study groups resumes on **September 7**. The group discuss the Bible passages used in worship. The groups meets at **9:00–9:50 Sunday mornings** in the Youth Room. Please join us! For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

**Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study:** The Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study resumes on September 10. The group will study the Gospel of John. This will be an in-depth yet accessible study of John. Copies of the discussion book are available for \$20.00 in the church office. Prior to the first meeting, please read the book's introduction. You could also read the whole of John's gospel from beginning to end over the summer. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

## Loving Neighbor

**Tools for School:** We are collecting school supplies for local families. The School Supply Event will be on **August 18 and 19** here at church. Typically, we serve about 300 students. Thank you for your generous support of this needed local ministry. Please bring donations to the church and place them in the containers in the gathering area.

**Red Cross Blood Drive:** The Red Cross Blood Drive held at the church is scheduled for **Tues, Sept 30, 11:00 am–5:00 pm**. Call 1-800-733-2767 or go to [www.redcrossblood.org](http://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 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

**Night of Dinner/Theater:** You are invited to a night of dinner and a show on **Thursday, August 21**. Dinner will be served starting at **6:00 pm**, followed by the main feature: the musical *Malice in the Palace: The Story of Esther*. The show has wonderful music and clever lines. Please come to support the young people in the congregation. You may sign the reservation list at church or online.

**Merry Widows:** They will meet on **Wed, August 20 at 1:00 pm at Culvers**. 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 **Aug 26 & Sept 9**.

**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 **Aug 26 & Sept 9**.

**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 St (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:** Another shorthanded game, yes, it's the end of the season. Despite the loss, the team played well with the shuffling of some players and positions. This team is the best with their flexibility and let's just make it work and have fun attitude. Our present record is 5 wins, 4 losses and one rain out. Next week we will make up our rain out game against Spirit of Grace. The August 25th game will depend on if we need to break a tie. If not, it might be our end of the year picnic. Monday night's game will determine what happens on August 25.

August 18 at 6:00 pm at Hoffman Park Field #2

August 25 - Time and Field TBD

Thanks to our faithful fans who cheer us on. Come join in the fun whether you are playing or cheering the team on. If you have questions, please contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945, [debhoffman234b@gmail.com](mailto:debhoffman234b@gmail.com).

**Journey House Summer Send-Off - Aug 22, 6:00-8:45 pm:** All young adults (18-40ish) are invited to join Journey House (143 E. Cascade Ave) for a campfire and outdoor game night - an evening of fun, fellowship, and connection with fellow young adults from River Falls and neighboring communities! S'mores, food, and snacks will be provided. You will also have an opportunity to learn more about Journey House and the exciting new Young Adult Ministry they are starting. Register before August 20th and receive a fun surprise at the event.

### ***Youth Events***

**High School and College Bible Study:** Join Alex and others for the summer weekly Bible Study. We meet at local coffee shops on either Tuesday or Wednesdays. Text Alex to get on the list.

**Children's Musical: *Malice in the Palace*: August 18-21, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.** The musical is for children in kindergarten through completed grade 6. Emma Cruciani will be the director. Please spread the word and invite children to participate. All are welcome and there is no cost.

**Fall Confirmation Orientation: Required Meetings:** The 2025 Confirmation Orientation Meeting for Middle School students will be after worship on **Rally Day, September 7**. This meeting is **required** for all confirmands in grades 6-8 and their parents. The 2025 Confirmation and Church Intern Orientation Meeting for High School students will be after worship on **Sunday, September 14**. This meeting is **required** for 9th graders and High School students who will participate in the Church Intern program and their parents.

**Wednesday School:** All children who will be in kindergarten through Grade 5 in the fall of 2025, are invited to participate in Wednesday School. Elementary students in River Falls are picked up at the four elementary schools in town at the end of the school day. Wednesday School concludes at 5:15. Registration and permission forms are available on the church website and in the church office. It is important to have advance registration in order to be adequately prepared for students, particularly due to transportation needs. Wednesday School begins **October 1**. Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

## Peach Thanks!

Thanks to all who unloaded, sorted, purchased and enjoyed our peaches.  
All proceeds go to the Youth Fund. Enjoy!



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## Rally Day

Rally Day, when Sunday School, Sunday Morning Bible Study, choir and bells resume, is **September 7**. All children who are three (or nearly three) years old (and toilet trained) are welcome in Sunday School. Our schedule that day will be:

- 9:00 am     Sunday Morning Bible Study
- 10:00 am    Worship with Choir
- 10:15 am    Children (PreK—8th Grade) Leave for Sunday School
- 11:00 am    Coffee Fellowship
- 11:00 am    Confirmation Kick Off Event for Middle Schoolers  
(The Event for High School Students is Sunday, Sept 14th)

**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Exodus 3:1-12**

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness and came to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up." When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. Now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He said, "I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

**GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 12:49-56**

"I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided:

father against son

and son against father,

mother against daughter

and daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain,' and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"