

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

**August 31, 2025**



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

August 31, 2025

*Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost*

9:30 am

<b>Gathering</b>
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“Simple, genuine goodness is the best capital to found the business of this life upon. It lasts when fame and money fail, and is the only riches we can take out of this world with us.” — Louisa May Alcott

“I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have.” — Abraham Lincoln

<p>Welcome to our guests who are visiting with us today!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Activity bags are available for children.</li><li>- Large print bulletins are available from the ushers.</li><li>- Please stand when noted by the *</li><li>- Congregation responses are in bold.</li></ul>	<p><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"><li>- Please stop at the welcome station for a gift.</li><li>- Please note our worship service is livestreamed.</li></ul>
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**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**L:** Lord, when did we see you?

**P:** **In the face of the child scared on the first day of school.**

**L:** Lord, when did we see you?

**P:** **In the hug given to the spouse filled with grief.**

**L:** Lord, when did we see you?

**P:** **In the flowers anonymously left on the doorstep of a neighbor.**

**L:** Lord, when did we see you?

**P:** **In the welcome offered to the stranger.**

**L:** Lord, when did we see you?

**P:** **In the joy found in a community gathered to worship.**

**L:** Let us not neglect to show hospitality to strangers.

**P:** **For by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it.**

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

**\*HYMN**

*For the Beauty of the Earth*

**Blue #40**

## **\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Holy God, our lives seem to be so full. We feel like we have far too much to do. Settle us down; help us to center upon you and your will. Calm our spirits and refresh our energies.

L: When we are sorrowful and troubled,

P: **Send your comforting Spirit.**

L: When we are lonely and isolated,

P: **Send your encouraging Spirit.**

L: When we are lost and perplexed,

P: **Send your guiding Spirit.**

L: When we are sick and ill,

P: **Send your healing Spirit.**

L: When we are confused and filled with doubt,

P: **Send your faithful Spirit.**

L: When we are worn out and hassled,

P: **Send your calming Spirit.**

L: When we are at war or in anger,

P: **Send your loving Spirit.**

In all the seasons of our lives, your Spirit is always available to us and for us. Teach us that all we need to do is simply ask you, great God, for your Spirit to come upon and over us. Amen.

## **\*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: The sins of the past are gone.

P: **In Christ we are forgiven and set free for service in his name.**

L: This is good news!

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**

*Gloria!*

*Refrain: Gloria! Gloria! Highest glory to you!*

*Gloria! Gloria! Highest glory to you!*

*Open now our lips, and our mouths shall give praise. Refrain*

*O Lord, rush to help, to deliver your world. Refrain*

*Maker, spirit, friend, you are great mystery! Refrain*

## Hearing the Word

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

PSALM 81:1, 10-16 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

*Response*

*Antiphon: Jean Slates Hawk, 1994*

Shout for joy . . . to the God of Ja - cob.

- L: Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob.
- P: **I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.**
- L: "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me.
- P: **So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.**
- L: O that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways!
- P: **Then I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes.**
- L: Those who hate the LORD would cringe before God, and their doom would last forever.
- P: **I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you." R**

## Proclaiming the Word

### GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 14:1, 7-14

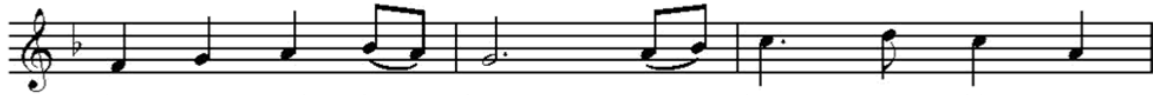
### SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

# All Are Welcome



1. Let us build a house where love can dwell And  
 2. Let us build a house where proph - ets speak, And  
 3. Let us build a house where love is found In  
 4. Let us build a house where hands will reach Be -  
 5. Let us build a house where all are named, Their



all can safe - ly live, A place where saints and  
 words are strong and true, Where all God's chil - dren  
 wa - ter, wine and wheat: A ban - quet hall on  
 yond the wood and stone To heal and strength - en,  
 songs and vi - sions heard And loved and treas - ured,



chil - dren tell How hearts learn to for -  
 dare to seek To dream God's reign a -  
 ho - ly ground, Where peace and jus - tice  
 serve and teach, And live the Word they've  
 taught and claimed As words with - in the



give. Built of hopes and dreams and vi - sions,  
 new. Here the cross shall stand as wit - ness  
 meet. Here the love of God, through Je - sus,  
 known. Here the out - cast and the stran - ger  
 Word. Built of tears and cries and laugh - ter,



Rock of faith and vault of grace; Here the  
 And as sym - bol of God's grace; Here as  
 Is re - vealed in time and space; As we  
 Bear the im - age of God's face; Let us  
 Prayers of faith and songs of grace, Let this



love of Christ shall end di - vi - sions:  
 one we claim the faith of Je - sus:  
 share in Christ the feast that frees us: All are wel - come,  
 bring an end to fear and dan - ger:  
 house pro - claim from floor to raft - er:



all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH (attributed to St. Francis of Assisi)**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. 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.

**GATHERING OUR GIFTS**

*Ave Maria*  
*by Schubert*

Tim Mills

**\*DOXOLOGY**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;*  
*Praise God, all creatures here below;*  
*Praise God above, ye heavenly host:*  
*Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

**\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

O God, for all that we have received, may we be thankful. For all that we hold dear, may we be grateful. For all that we are called to give, may we answer with glad and generous hearts. Giving in love, seeking only your blessing, we offer you these gifts. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

<b>Celebrating the Meal</b>
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(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:** Today we gather at the table of the Lord where ordinary gifts of bread and wine are shared, where a vision for a new heaven and a new earth shines forth for all to see.

**P:** We come to be filled where once we were hungry.

**L:** We come to have our thirst quenched where once we were parched.  
**P:** We come to find peace in a broken world.  
**All:** We come and gather around the table so that together we may become God's faithful followers.

### ***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:*

#### ***They'll Know We Are Christians***

***We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,  
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:***

***Refrain: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.***

***We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,  
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,  
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land: Refrain***

***We will work with each other, we will work side by side,  
We will work with each other, we will work side by side,  
And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride: Refrain***

***All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,  
And all praise to Christ Jesus, God's only Son,  
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one: Refrain***

## **Here Is Bread**

*Congregation join on refrain:*

*Refrain*

In this bread there is heal - ing, in this cup is life for - ev - er.

In this mo - ment, by the Spir - it, Christ is with us here.

## **The Summons**

**Blue #350**

### ***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**

***How Firm a Foundation***

**Blue #411**

**\*BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

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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)



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## **SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS**

Preacher: Chris Myers  
Celebrant: Chris Myers  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Traci Hagberg  
Deacons: Karen Lloyd, Cindy Gandrud,  
Marshall Skule, Loral Keil,  
Brian Miller  
Organist: Marsha Pearson  
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman  
Welcomers: Diane Crist  
Trustee: JP Okal  
Coffee  
Fellowship: Kathy Rausch, JoAnne Friedell  
Counters: Marie Roe, Mark Anderson  
*Altar table flowers are given by Barb and  
Larry Peterson in celebration of their 58<sup>th</sup>  
wedding anniversary on September 2.*

## **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 24, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,747	\$ 356,971
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 361,182

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), 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), Chuck Kamorowski, Dan Rude

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

- For our choir getting ready for Rally Day and all those who will teach Sunday School this coming year, God bless you all for sharing your talents with the community
- For our Tools for School Drive which served 434 River Falls students with school supplies, thank you for your generosity
- For those going into the military, especially Ryan Luedtke who left recently for boot camp, may he be given strength and courage in these next few weeks
- For those who enjoyed the Youth Musical Malice in the Palace which tells the story of Esther, with a dinner and performance, your talent is inspiring!
- For those who participated in the Tuesday/Wednesday morning Summer Youth Bible Study with Alex, what a great idea and new way to connect over the summer
- 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 the two children killed and many injured in the latest school shooting, this time in Minneapolis, may they be comforted and may this madness end
- For teachers, families and students getting ready for the back to school season
- 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 Barb and Larry Peterson who celebrate their 58th wedding anniversary on September 2, may your love continue to grow
- For all the volunteers who made the Tools for School Drive and the Youth Musical, along with all our regular programming, possible—whew it was busy week! See the prayer request below.
- 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 the gift of peaches and the youth ministries they will enable
- For the gift of Labor Day, may we appreciate those who labor on our behalf

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

- For the family of Kent Tomlinson, brother of Kathy Tomlinson, who died recently, may his family be comforted
- 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.



## Tools for Schools

Thanks for your generosity. Together we served over 434 students, gave away hundreds of sneakers, school supplies, backpacks and books. Our community Rocks!!!!!!



## 2025 Youth Musical: Malice in the Palace



**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16**

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' So we can say with confidence,

'The Lord is my helper;

I will not be afraid.

What can anyone do to me?'

Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

**GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 14:1, 7-14**

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place", and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'