

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

**September 7, 2025**



**September 7    Priorities: Putting First Things First**

**September 14    Stillness: Finding Peace Amidst Busyness**

**September 21    Love and Truth: Avoiding the Extremes of Life and Faith**

**September 28    Growth: Growing Without Burnout**

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

September 7, 2025

*Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

10:00 am

<b>Gathering</b>
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What do I need to do to become more of the person I want to be?  
- Dallas Willard

<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.</li><li>- Visitors please stop at the welcome booth.</li><li>- Please stand when noted by the *</li><li>- Congregation responses are in bold.</li><li>- Please note our worship service is livestreamed.</li></ul>	<p><b>Our Mission is to Love God and Serve People.</b></p> <p><b>Everyone is welcome because everyone matters.</b></p>
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**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:** **To be signs of God's kingdom all around us.**

**All:** **Let us worship God with this same spirit. Come let us worship!**

**\*HYMN**

*Here I Am, Lord*

**Blue #559**

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**L:** Almighty God, we confess we have fallen short of your law of love:

**P:** **Forgive us, gracious God...**

**L:** For being overly critical of other people and overly anxious to see their faults.

**P:** **Forgive us, gracious God...**

**L:** For being insensitive to the life circumstances of others and unappreciative of their struggle to cope with them.

**P: Forgive us, gracious God...**

**L: For being more than willing to condemn others and less willing to forgive.**

**P: Forgive us, gracious God...**

**L: Because we have been more concerned to throw stones than to spread good will,**

**P: Forgive us, gracious God.**

**All: Help us. Heal us. Hold us. And may we be renewed in Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### **\*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

**L: Beloved of God, the Lord's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.**

**P: Let us believe and live the good news.**

**L: In Christ we are forgiven.**

**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 (Sung twice)**

**Amen**

**(Led by the Choir)**

**Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen**

## **Hearing the Word**

### **SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**Romans 7:15-25a**

### **PSALM 145:8-14 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)**

**R**

I will ex - alt my God, my King; I will praise your  
name for - ev - er.

**L: The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

**P: The LORD is good to all, and God's compassion is over all that God has made.**

**L: All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your faithful shall bless you.**

**P: They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, to make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.**

- L: Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
- P: **The LORD is faithful in all God's words, and gracious in all God's deeds.  
The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down. R**

### **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: Hear the words of our Savior Jesus Christ:  
Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden for I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest of your souls.  
I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.

#### ***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:*

#### **Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness**

**Blue #326**

### **Taste and See**

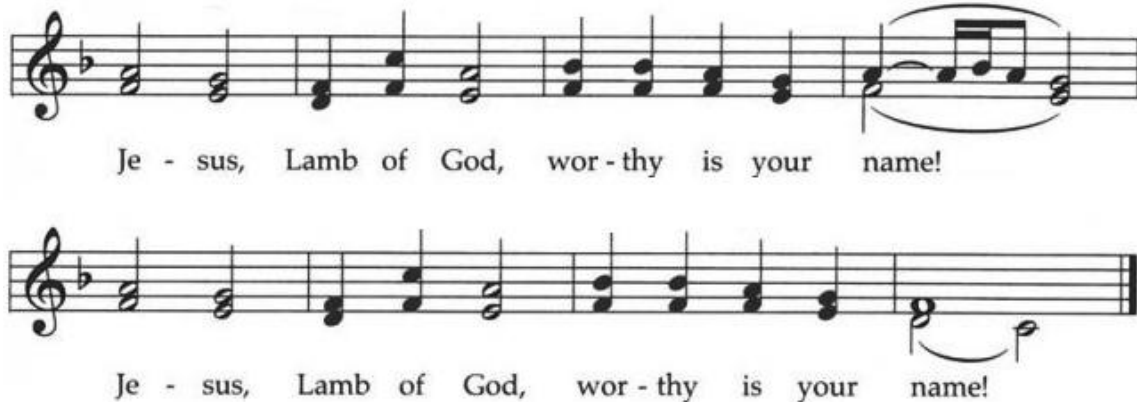
*Congregation join on refrain:*

***Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.  
O taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.***

### **You Are My All in All**

**Blue #427**

*Congregation join on refrain:*



### ***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.

### **Proclaiming the Word**

**TIME WITH CHILDREN**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**SONG** (Cantor will introduce then all sing together.) (Children preschool through grade 8 leave for Sunday School.)

***Hear Christ calling come unto me, come unto me, come unto me  
Hear Christ calling come unto me and I will give you rest.  
I will give you rest, I will give you rest.  
Hear Christ calling come unto me and I will give you rest.***

**GOSPEL LESSON**

**Matthew 11:28-30**

**SERMON**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**\*HYMN**

***The Summons***

**Blue #350**

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH - Indonesia**

**I believe in God, who is love and who has given the earth to all people.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, who came to heal us, and to free us from all forms of oppression.**

**I believe in the Spirit of God, who works in and through all who are turned toward the truth.**

**I believe in the community of faith, which is called to be at the service of all people.**

**I believe in God's promise to finally destroy the power of sin in us all, and to establish the kingdom of justice and peace for all humankind.**

**I do not believe that suffering need be in vain, that death is the end, that the disfigurement of our world is what God intended.**

**But I dare to believe, always and in spite of everything, in God's power to transform and transfigure, fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where justice and peace will flourish. 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**

***Precious Lord, Take My Hand***  
*arr. by Jack Schrader*

**Chancel Choir**

**\*OFFERTORY**

***We Praise You, O God***

**Blue #726**

***We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;  
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.  
We lay it before you, we kneel and adore you;  
We bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.***

**\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**Merciful Savior, we count it a privilege to share in the fruits of your kingdom and also to participate in its harvest. We pray that you would use the gifts of our tithes and offerings, our talents and time and the passions of our hearts to work for the coming of your kingdom to this earth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## Sending

### \*HYMN

### *We Are Called*

Verses



1. Come! Live in the light!  
2. Come! O - pen your heart!  
3. Sing! Sing a new song!



Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord! We are  
Show your mer - cy to all those in fear! We are  
Sing of that great day when all will be one! God will



called to be light for the king - dom, to  
called to be hope for the hope - less so all  
reign, and we'll walk with each oth - er as



live in the free - dom of the cit - y of God!  
ha - tred and blind - ness will be no more!  
sis - ters and broth - ers u - ni - ted in love!

Refrain



We are called to act with jus - tice, we are called to



love ten - der - ly, we are called to serve one an - oth - er;



to walk hum - bly with God!

### \*BLESSING

### POSTLUDE

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## **SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS**

Preacher: Chris Myers  
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Jill Paulson  
Deacons: Jena Most, Brian Miller,  
Loral Keil, Kathy Tomlinson  
Organist: Marsha Pearson  
Nursery: Kahla Fuller  
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman  
Trustee: Rick Price  
Welcomers: Norma Revels  
Coffee  
Fellowship: Jean Smith  
Counters: Jean Smith, 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  
Custodians: Farnum Fuller,  
Troy Zakrzewski

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## **Treasurer's Report**

	<u>Aug 31, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,217	\$ 358,860
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 371,805

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, Hing Man (brother of Kam)

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

- For the return of the choir and bell choir, God bless you and your musical gifts!
- For the 50 people from our church and the hundreds of community folks headed to pack 100,000 meals at Feed My Starving Children this week at Tattersall in River Falls, may all be blessed
- For the return of the fall schedules, may we breathe and find our groove
- For our Tools for School Drive who provided 434 River Falls students with school supplies, thank you for your generosity
- For Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she continues dialysis

**Prayers for our World:**

- For the two children and many injured in the latest school shooting, this time in Minneapolis, may they be comforted and may this madness end
- For those going into the military, especially Ryan Luedtke who left recently for boot camp, may he be given strength and courage in these new few weeks
- 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 our Sunday School teachers who start this Sunday—thank you for being a blessing to our young people!
- For our choir members singing today and for their director Sarah Plum, you are appreciated
- For those serving this coming program year on our committees and church council who begin work on Tuesday, September 16th at 6:30pm on All Committee Night, may your leadership help us to be a more loving, more courageous and more welcoming congregation
- For the return of Sunday morning and Wednesday afternoon Bible Study and Pastor Stacy who leads this, may we grow in faith and love
- For Barb and Larry Peterson who celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary on September 2, may your love continue to grow

**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, and Marc Otto, 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!

**Sunday Morning Bible Study:** 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. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

## **Loving Neighbor**

**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.

**Empty Pill Bottles (Prescription Only):** The River Falls Lions Club is collecting empty pill bottles, only the clear prescription bottles that are filled by our pharmacists, to send to Africa where there is an urgent need. The bottles will be washed, and the labels soaked off before they are shipped. A tub is in the gathering area. If you have questions, contact Carole Mottaz.

**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**

**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.

**Knitting Group Update:** Please bring any hats, scarves or mittens to the green bin in the gathering area by **Thurs, Sept 18**. We will organize the items and arrange for them to be picked up by the Basics for Local Kids.

**Learning Community: Cardboard Chronicles:** Please join us for the next Learning Community event on **Tuesday, October 7, at 6:30 pm**. The focus will be a conversation about the art exhibit *Cardboard Chronicles: The Art of Rudolph Bostic* that will be displayed in the Fellowship Hall starting October 1. This is the second (and final) art exhibit made possible through the grant First Congregational received from the Lilly Foundation.

**Merry Widows:** They will meet on **Wed, Sept 17 at 1:00 pm at Applebees in Hudson**. 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 **Sept 9 & 23**.

**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 **Sept 9 & 23**.

**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 [fristroe@gmail.com](mailto:fristroe@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***

**Partnering for Our Sustainable Future: A Community Conversation Hosted by Hope for Earth - Thurs, Sept 18, 6:30-8:30 pm at River Falls High School:** Hope for Earth is launching the Climate Action and Resiliency Initiative, and we want your voice at the table! Together, we'll explore practical ways to improve everyday life, like making energy more affordable, reducing waste, strengthening local food systems, and creating inviting green spaces. You'll learn about different focus areas of the initiative, share your thoughts, and (if you're interested) sign up to be part of an action team helping to shape the future of our community. No experience needed, just your ideas and energy. Light refreshments provided. Free and open to all. RSVP at <https://www.hopeforearth.org/>

**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.

### ***Youth Events***

**Confirmation Orientation: Required Meetings:** The Confirmation Orientation Meeting for Middle School students is **after worship TODAY**. This meeting is **required** for all confirmands in grades 6–8 and their parents.

The 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 in kindergarten through Grade 5 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 & permission forms are available at church and online. 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.

**Spring Break 2026:** Spread the word! Save the date! We have 20 spots for a Spring Break Mission Trip to UCC-related Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi for **Spring Break of 2026: March 14-21**. Any youth age 14 and older and any adult who wants to spend a week working on rehabbing houses in sunny Biloxi is welcome to join. Note Hudson Spring Break is the week before but UWRF and many UW Schools are off when we are — we would love to have college students participate!

There will be a meeting on **Sunday, September 14 after worship in the Youth Room** to talk about the trip and begin sign-ups. We expect this trip to fill quickly so make sure you are at the meeting! Alex Plum can provide details.

**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Romans 7:15-25a**

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

**GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 11:28-30**

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

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**Spring Break Mission Trip March 14-21, 2026**

Join us next Sunday at 11:00 am in the Youth Room to learn more about a life-changing, soul-filling trip to UCC-related Back Bay Mission! It is open to all age 14 and older.

