

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

October 19, 2025



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

October 19, 2025

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

‘When you pray, move your feet.’

- African proverb

God does not change things. God changes people, who change things.

- David Willis

Welcome to our guests who are visiting with us today! - Activity bags are available for children. - Large print bulletins are available. - Visitors please stop at the welcome booth. - Please stand when noted by the * - Congregation responses are in bold. - Please note our worship service is livestreamed.	Our Mission is to Love God and Serve People. Everyone is welcome because everyone matters.
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GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: In our worship, may our eyes be opened this day,

P: **That we might see the beauty and bounty of God’s gifts.**

L: May our eyes be opened this day,

P: **That we might see our need for God’s grace.**

L: May our eyes be opened this day,

P: **That we might see those who are in need.**

L: May our eyes be opened this day,

P: **That we might worship God in spirit and in truth, and having worshiped, that
we might serve God with faith and compassion.**

All: **Come, let us worship the Lord our God.**

***HYMN**

Sing a New Song

Blue #10

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

L: Holy God, for the times we have been cold hearted and inattentive,

P: **Lord, come and save us!**

L: For the times we have forgotten your great commandment to love you and others,

P: **Lord, come and save us!**

L: For the times we have been overwhelmed by our many commitments,

P: **Lord, come and save us!**

L: And for the times, in our hurry, we have forgotten to give you thanks,

P: **Lord, come and save us! Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: God does not leave us to wallow in the sins of the past.

P: **In Jesus Christ, God has come among us.**

L: He comes proclaiming and living the good news.

P: **The good news that we are forgiven and set free from our sins.**

L: Let us live then, as forgiven people and be at peace.

P: **Thanks be to God!**

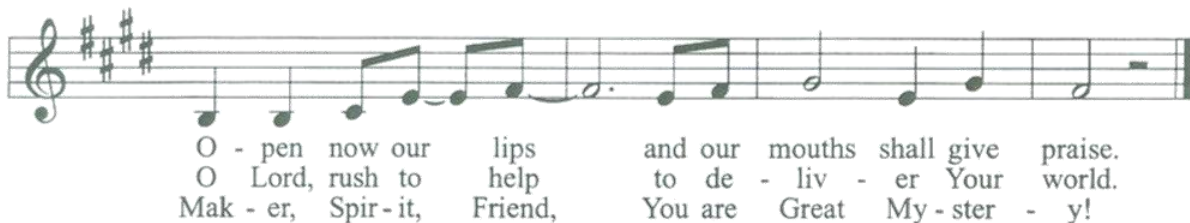
L: May the peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: **And also with you.**

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

***GLORIA**



Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

PSALM 119:97-104 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R



- L: Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all day long.
- P: Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is always with me.**
- L: I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your decrees are my meditation.
- P: I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.**
- L: I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.
- P: I do not turn away from your ordinances, for you have taught me.**
- L: How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
- P: Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. 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: Jesus prayed. Over and over and over.
- P: He prayed before meals, thanking God for the abundance given to him.**
- L: He prayed for the little children as he welcomed them into his presence.
- P: He prayed as he healed the sick and injured.**
- L: He prayed before raising Lazarus from the dead.
- P: He prayed for strength in the Garden of Gethsemane.**
- L: And he prayed at this table as he fed those who would deny and betray him.
- All: Let us come to Christ's table as people of prayer.**

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:

The Lord's Prayer

Unison

F C F C F Dm Bb C

1. Our Fa-ther, which art in heav-en,
 2. Done on earth as it is in heav-en,
 3. And for-give all our debts, hal-low-ed - a be thy
 4. Lead us not in - to temp-ta-tion,
 5. Thine is the king-dom, pow-er, and glo-ry,
 6. A - men, a - men, a - men,

F C F C7 F C

name. Thy king - dom come, thy will be done,
 Give us this day our dai - ly bread,
 As we for - give our debt - ors,
 But de - liv - er us from e - vil,
 For - ev - er and ev - er,
 A - men, a - men, a - men, a - men,

F Bb C F *Fine*

hal - low - ed - a be thy name.

Here I Am, Lord

Blue #559

One Bread, One Body

Blue #689

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 (Children preschool through grade 8 leave for Sunday School.)

I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river.

I've got peace like a river in my soul.

I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river.

I've got peace like a river in my soul.

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 18:1-8

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

If My People's Hearts Are Humbled

Blue #383

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – Presbyterian Church USA**

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,

everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,

sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,

and binds us together with all believers

in the one body of Christ, the Church.

The same Spirit

who inspired the prophets and apostles

rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,

engages us through the Word proclaimed,

claims us in the waters of baptism,

feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,

and calls women and men to all ministries of the church.

In a broken and fearful world

the Spirit gives us courage

to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

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.

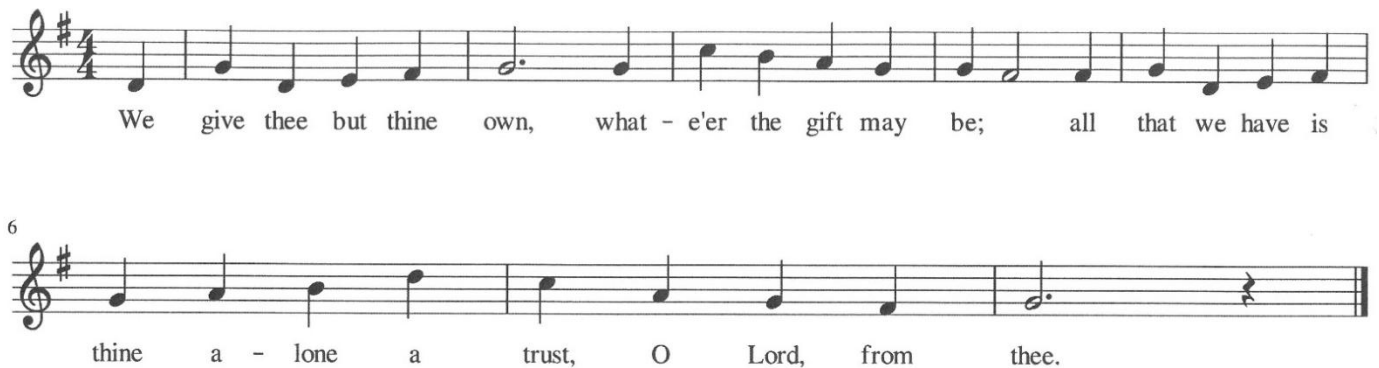
GATHERING OUR GIFTS

Sweet Hour of Prayer

Jubilee Ringers

Arr. by Alan Lohr

*OFFERTORY



We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be; all that we have is
6
thine a - lone a trust, O Lord, from thee.

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Accept our thanks, God, for the opportunity to share these gifts. Speed them on their way to build up your world of love and righteousness and justice and peace. May they strengthen the work of the church and of this community of faith, given in the fullness of love for you and for your peoples. Amen.

Sending

*HYMN

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Blue #712

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Jean Smith
Deacons: Lance Lueck, Paul Shepherd,
Laura Anderson, Liz Swank,
Kathy Tomlinson
Organist: Terry Mithun
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Casey Beatty
Welcomers: Cindy Gandrud
Trustee: Steve Koecher
Coffee Fellowship: Deb Hoffman
Counters: Trish Graves, Allen Barnes
Altar table flowers are given by Randy and Diane Welsh.

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

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Oct 12, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,075	\$ 409,654
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 435,543

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'



Thanks to Alex for leading our Middle School Youth Group bonfire and our High School Class for packing college packs!



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), Amy (friend of Barb and Larry Peterson), Chuck Kamorowski, Jack and Donna (brother and sister-in-law of Barb Stephens), Gina (friend of Barb Stephens), Catherine (sister-in-law of Barb Stephens), Eric (friend of Liz Swank)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For the gift of College Packs and those who will receive them, may they be a blessing to all who receive them
- For the Rudolph Bostic art exhibit in our Fellowship Hall this month, may it kindle faith and curiosity
- For Roman Klink and Julianna Hanson who were married Oct 18, may they grow in love
- For those who came to the Inquirer's Class this past week to learn more about our life and ministry as a church, may they find their place
- For our Among Friends program as they seek to find a new director, may God's Spirit move be present
- For the Endowment Grant Team who met recently to evaluate proposals to strengthen the ministry of our church, may they be given wisdom
- For Ryan Luedtke who completed basic training this week as part of his Air Force reserve program training, we are so proud of you!
- For the saints of the church as we approach All Saints Sunday on November 2, may they rest in peace and their lives continue to inspire us
- For Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she continues dialysis

Prayers for our World:

- For Barb de Souza our retired UCC healthcare missionary living in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil who celebrated her 95th birthday on October 18, you are amazing
- For vulnerable people across the country and around the world affected by cuts in government programs
- For the tentative peace in Gaza and release of hostages, may it lead to a just and lasting peace
- For the people of Ukraine as they battle for their freedom, may they be given strength and courage
- 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 10 years of generating clean solar energy with our church solar panels, thanks be to God!
- For the safe arrival of Oona Arizona, child of Sam Anderson and Olivia, grandson of Mark and Laura Anderson who arrived on Monday, October 13th at 7 pounds, 12 ounces and who is just adorable, may she grow in love and wisdom
- For all those who benefit from blood given at our latest blood drive, you are angels
- For those who took part in the work weekend at Moon Each Camp including Lu Lueck, Carol Merriman and Jane Wakefield, thank you for your generosity
- For our amazing Wednesday School drivers, helpers and snack providers, thank you for your generosity

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Tom Hall (brother of Rollie Hall) who died recently, may they be comforted
- For those who mourn, especially the families of Hing Man, Kent Tomlinson, Marjorie Faulks, Chuck White, 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

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: Please join us on Sunday mornings to discuss the Bible passages used in worship. The group meets from **9:00–9:50** in the Youth Room. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study: The group is studying 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. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

Loving Neighbor

Neighbors in Need Offering: Neighbors in Need offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one third of the offering going to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two thirds supporting UCC Justice Ministries. Envelopes are in the pews, and we will be taking the offering through October. Thank you for your generous support.

Simpson Shelter Supply Needs: Women's white crew socks, men's white crew socks, men's t-shirts sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL, personal size shampoo, personal size conditioner, personal size body lotion, rain ponchos, eye masks, umbrellas, washcloths, padlocks, good buys on out-of-season clothing. All items **MUST BE NEW**. There is a box at the church 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 & Facebook. It is held at church **Tuesdays & Thursdays 9am to 3pm**.

Loving Self

Music at First Church Concert - TODAY at 3:00 pm: Come and hear music by Rachmaninov, Massenet and Dvorak. Our guest musicians include Helen Chang on violin, Natalia Moiseeve on viola, Lukas Goodman on cello and Ivan Konev on piano. This is an opportunity to hear world-class music right here in River Falls. Admission is free, the concert will last an hour and a reception in the Fellowship Hall will follow. Join us!

Art Exhibit: The art exhibit *Cardboard Chronicles* is displayed in the Fellowship Hall until Nov 13. The exhibit features 25 original paintings by Rudolph Bostic that depict biblical stories painted on cardboard with enamel & house paint. Artist Rudolph Bostic is a longtime member of the Second African Baptist Church in Savannah, Georgia. Bostic found inspiration in the works of masters such as Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo. His art has appeared in folk art museums and galleries, particularly in the southern United States. Bostic paints as a reflection of his own spirituality. He wrote, "I try to express my love for God and the world."

Fall Clean-Up, Sat, Nov 1, 9:00 am: Please bring your gloves, rakes, blowers, pruning shears, etc. to help clean up the grounds at the church. Back-up date is Sat, Nov 8. Please sign up and join us!

New Members Received: New members will be received on **Sun, Nov 9** at the 10:00 am worship service. If you wish to join, please make sure the church office has your information by Sunday, November 2. Please see Missy in the office or Pastor Chris for more information.

Learning Community: Exploring Polarization - Tues, Nov 25, at 6:30 pm: The conversation will explore polarization. American legislatures are more polarized today than at any moment in the past half-century, and there is little end in sight. Two important questions are: Why are American legislatures so polarized? And what policies might help bridge this growing ideological gulf? Andy Myers (congregation member and Stanford PhD candidate in Political Economics) will present his ongoing research that helps address these questions, focusing on campaign finance, local press coverage, election administration, and candidate supply. It is possible to allow fear and impressions to dominate one's understanding of issues. This presentation will be a nonpartisan conversation focused on data-driven evidence to help people understand important issues of the day. Dessert will be served at 6:30 pm followed by the presentation and discussion. Please sign up at church or online.

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 meetings are **Oct 21 & Nov 4**.

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 **Oct 28 & Nov 11**.

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

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

Wednesday Meals: On Wednesday nights, we offer a home-cooked meal in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$9 per person with a family max of \$30. **Meals are served from 5:15 to 6:00 pm.** You can get your meal to go if you go through the line (indicate when you sign up). **Reservations must be placed by noon on Tuesdays.** Please sign up at church or online. Menu for Oct 22 is beef stroganoff, noodles, salad, bread.

Youth Events

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. Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

Join us for a concert featuring musicians of the MN Orchestra and music of

Rachmaninov, Massenet, and Dvorak
Sunday, October 19th
3:00 pm



FREE ADMISSION

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
110 N 3RD. ST.
RIVER FALLS, WI 54022