

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

October 26, 2025

*"For all those who
exalt themselves
will be humbled,
and those who
humble themselves
will be exalted."*



LUKE 18:14, NIV

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

October 26, 2025

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

“Preservation of one's own culture does not require
contempt or disrespect for other cultures.”

- Cesar Chavez

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 the midst of storms and chaos of life,

P: **God is with us, so let us rejoice!**

L: In a world too often filled with violence and fear,

P: **God shatters spears and brings peace, so let us rejoice!**

L: The God of our ancestors will never abandon us,

P: **So let us be still, and know that God is here, strengthening us.**

All: **Let us rejoice together as we worship the Living God who leads us into life!**

***HYMN**

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Blue #59

Verses 1, 2 & 4

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

L: Holy God, you have set forth the way of life for us in Jesus of Nazareth.

P: **Yet we have been slow to learn from his example.**

L: You have spoken to us and called us,

P: **Yet we have not followed.**

L: Your beauty has been expressed in the world around us,

P: **Yet we have been blind.**

L: You have stretched out your hands to us through our brothers and sisters,
P: Yet we have passed by.
All: Forgive us, O God, and grant that we may be more faithful and constant in our love and service. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: In a world of doubt and confusion, this much we can trust:
P: In Christ, God loves us and sets us free from our sin.
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

Glory, glory hallelujah, since I laid my burdens down.
Glory, glory hallelujah, since I laid my burdens down.
I feel better, so much better, since I laid my burdens down.
I feel better, so much better, since I laid my burdens down.

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

PSALM 65 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)



L: Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion; and to you shall vows be performed, O you who answer prayer! To you all flesh shall come.
P: When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us, you forgive our transgressions.
L: Happy are those whom you choose and bring near to live in your courts.
P: We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple.
L: By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.
P: By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might. R

- L: You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples.
- P: **Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.**
- L: You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it.
- P: **You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.**
- L: You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness.
- P: **The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy. 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 said: "Follow me." Here at this table we are reminded of our call to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ.
- P: **We follow him when we do the things he calls us to do: love and serve, bless and welcome.**
- L: We follow him when we trust he is present here at this table and will equip us with the Holy Spirit to do the things he calls us to do.
- P: **Come let us gather around his table to share the bread of life and cup of blessing.**

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

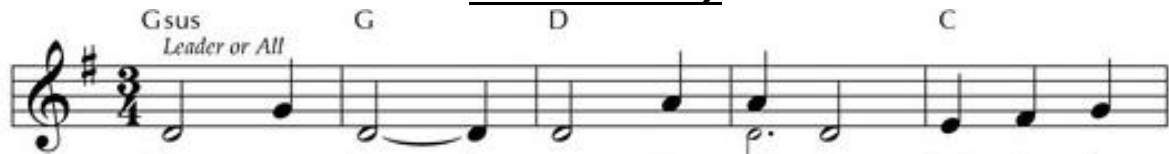
- L: We praise your name as we proclaim the mystery of faith...
- All: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Prayer of Consecration

Distribution of the Elements

Hymns during the distribution of the elements:

Blest Are They



1 Blest are they, the poor in spir - it; theirs is the
2 Blest are they, the low - ly ones; they shall in -
3 Blest are they who show mer - cy; mer - cy
4 Blest are they who seek peace; they are the
5 Blest are you who suf - fer hate, all be -



king - dom of God. Blest are they,
her - it the earth. Blest are they who
shall be theirs. Blest are they, the
chil - dren of God. Blest are they who
cause of me. Re - joice, be glad;



full of sor - row; they shall be con - soled.
hun - ger and thirst; they shall have their fill.
pure of heart; they shall see God.
suf - fer in faith; the glo - ry of God is theirs.
yours is the king - dom; shine for all to see.



Re - joice and be glad! Bless - ed are you;



ho - ly are you! Re - joice and be glad!

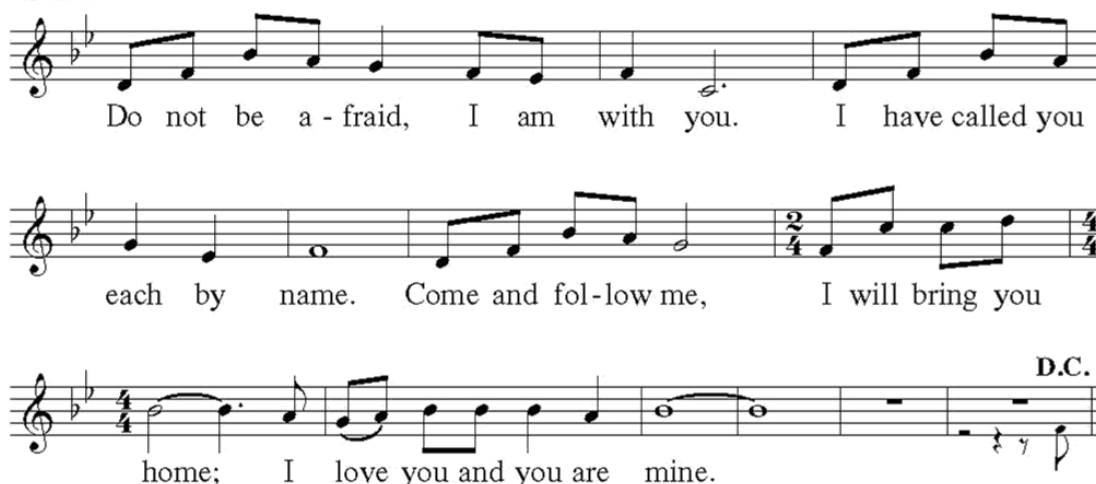


Yours is the king - dom of God!

You Are Mine

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



Do not be a - fraid, I am with you. I have called you
each by name. Come and fol-low me, I will bring you
home; I love you and you are mine. D.C.

Come and Fill Our Hearts

Come and fill our hearts with your peace.

You alone, O Lord, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your peace, alleluia!

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

BIBLES PRESENTED TO 6th GRADERS

Revs. Chris and Stacy

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

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

*Stay awake (clap, clap). Be ready (stomp, stomp).
You do not know the hour when the Lord is coming.
Stay awake (clap, clap). Be ready (stomp, stomp).
The Lord is coming soon.*

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 18:9-14

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

Blue #132

Verses 1, 2 & 5

***STATEMENT OF FAITH (from a morning prayer liturgy at Eastern Mennonite Seminary)**

We believe in God:

Whose love is the source of all life and the desire of our lives,
Whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth,
Whose love was crucified by the evil that waits to enslave us all,
And whose love, defeating even death, is our glorious promise of
freedom.

Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful and full of doubt, in God we trust; And
in the name of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves in the service of others,
To seek justice and to live in peace,
To care for the earth and to share the commonwealth of God's goodness,
To live in the freedom of forgiveness and the power of the spirit of love,
and in the company of the faithful, so to be the church for the glory of
God. 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.

DISCIPLESHIP MOMENT

Lara Koecher

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

April: Snowdrop
by Tchaikovsky

Calpernia Bastien

***OFFERTORY**

Jesus Shall Reign



Let ev - 'ry crea - ture rise and bring Bless - ing and
hon - or to our King, An - gels de - scend with
songs a - gain, And earth re - peat the loud A men.

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Great and Eternal God, we have been striving to run the race of faith. We bring our love to you and our loyalty to your Son. We pray that your blessing upon these gifts may enable us and our church and your great Spirit to be a beacon of light and love to all the world; in our Lord Jesus’ name. Amen.

Sending

*HYMN *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* Blue #48
Verses 1, 2 and 3

*BLESSING
POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Carol Merriman
Deacons: Becky Pajac, Ann Nelson,
Liz Swank, Paul Shepherd,
Laura Anderson
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers: Norma Revels, JoAnne Friedell,
Lu Lueck
Trustee: Mike Danielson
Coffee
Fellowship: St. B’s Donuts
Counters: Jean Smith, Vicki Sippel

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

	Oct 19, 2025	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,976	\$ 430,739
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 446,166

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), Amy (friend of Barb and Larry Peterson), Chuck Kamorowski, Gayle (friend of Barb Stephens), Eric (friend of Liz Swank)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our 6th graders receiving their Bible's this Sunday, may they use them to gain knowledge of themselves, their world and the God who loves them
- For the gift of College Packs, 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 are joining the church as members on Sunday, November 9th, may they find their place
- For Ryan Luedtke who completed basic training 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 families and individuals dealing with dementia, may they be given strength, courage and support
- 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 those battling cancer, may they be given strength and support
- For the dementia event held in our Fellowship Hall this past Tuesday,
- 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 the gift of this beautiful fall with all its pleasures, may we bask in it (because we know what follows!)
- For those who took part in the work weekend at Moon Each Camp including Lu Lueck, Carol Merriman and Jane Wakefield, may 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 Steve Hove who died recently and whose funeral was here Friday, may they be comforted
- For those who mourn, especially the families of Tom Hall, 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

Basics for Local Kids: A big thank you to everyone who has donated items. Your support keeps us going. The next few months will be busy times at BLK and volunteers are needed. You can help families shop or you can help sort, restock or organize winter wear. Shifts are usually 2 hours and new days and times are available. To sign up for a day and time that works for you, go to <https://www.basicsforlocalkids.org/> or call Kim at 715-821-1623. Contact Renee Whipple at 715-307-5074 if you have any questions.

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

Art Exhibit: The art exhibit *Cardboard Chronicles* is displayed in the Fellowship Hall until Nov 10. 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.

Next Learning Community: Exploring Polarization: Tues, Nov 25, 6:30 pm: 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? In the upcoming Learning Community event, Andy Myers (congregation member and 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 explore an important challenge of the day. Please come! Please sign up at church or online.

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, Nov 19 at 1:00 pm at Perkins in River Falls.** 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 meetings are **Nov 4 & 18.**

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 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

Name Tags: We encourage you to wear your name tags so that new people and some not so new, can call you by name. It would also help the deacons when you take communion. If you do not have one, please let Missy in the church office know at miss@firstchurchrf.org. In appreciation, the Welcoming Committee.

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 29 is chicken marsala, rice, asparagus, and salad.

Giving Thanks Meal: The Annual Giving Thanks Meal will be **Sun, Nov 16**, after the worship service in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$10 per meal. Join us for a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal as we kick off the season of giving thanks. Please include your pie choice of pumpkin or apple and let us know if you will bring a side dish. Sign up by Nov 12.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 18:9-14

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income." But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.'