

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

November 9, 2025

Now he is God not of the dead,
but of the living ...

Luke 20:38, NRSV



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

November 9, 2025

Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have
is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy.
- Henri Nouwen

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: From the depths of our being, a song of thanks arises, and we pour out our praise
for all God's gifts:
- P: Bread to empower our bodies,**
- L: Beauty to quicken our pulse,
- P: Hope to enlarge our vision,**
- L: Love to link our lives,
- P: Laughter to soften our wounds,**
- L: Passion to shape our future,
- P: Community to face our fears.**
- L: Let us come before God with thanks in our hearts and praise on our lips.
- P: Come let us worship one God who leads us into life!**

***HYMN**

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Blue #68

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Wondrous God, you have blessed us with gentle rains, glorious sunsets and sun-warmed days. You bless us with loving families, kind friends and a caring church. Let us receive these gifts with thankfulness and humility. We cannot earn nor do we deserve such generosity, but we graciously open our hearts and hands to receive. Forgive us when we are hardhearted and tight-handed, when we don't let your goodness flow through us, when we hide our talents and turn away from the needs of the world. Release us, Holy One, from fear, and create in us a spirit of giving that touches the world with hope. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: In Jesus Christ, the sins of the past are gone.

P: **Thanks be to God! Let us live as new people, forgiven, freed and faithful to the way of 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

Ephesians 4:1-6

PSALM 17:1-9 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

*R O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer.
 When I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer,
 O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.*

L: Hear a just cause, O LORD; give heed to my cry; listen to my prayer, which does not come from lying lips.

P: **Let my vindication come forth from your presence; let your eyes be fixed on justice.**

L: Examine my heart, visit me by night, melt me down; you will find no impurity in me.

P: **I have not regarded what others do; at the word of your lips, I have avoided the ways of the violent.**

- L: My footsteps hold fast to your well-worn path; and my feet do not slip.
- P: **I call upon you, O God, for you will answer me; incline your ear to me and hear my words.**
- L: Show me your marvelous loving kindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at your right hand from those who rise against them.
- P: **Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me under the shadow of your wings, from the wicked who assault me, from my deadly enemies who surround me. 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: Come you thankful people, come.
- P: **Come and eat the bread of life!**
- L: Come and drink the cup of blessing!
- P: **Come and gather around Christ's table as friends and family.**
- All: **Together let us thank the God of abundance and let us take our place as God's thankful people.**

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 and everywhere 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:

Be Not Afraid

Blue #430

Give us Bread for the Journey

7

1,5 Give us bread for the jour-ney give us bread. Give us
2 Guide our way as we trav-el guide our way. Guide our
3 Make us one with each oth-er make us one. Make us
4 Lead us home to the gar-den, lead us home. Lead us

7

bread for the jour-ney give us bread. When our legs are get-ting
way as we trav-el guide our way. With so ma-ny roads be-
one with each oth-er make us one. All the walls we've built a-
home to the gar-den, lead us home; where we'll live with all cre-

12

heav-y, and we're hang-ing down our heads, give us bread for the
fore us where to go is hard to say. Guide our way as we
round us: may we learn to tear them down. Make us one with each
a-tion find our place and nev-er roam. Lead us home to the

16

jour-ney, give us bread.
trav-el guide our way.
oth-er, make us one.
gar-den, lead us home.

Lord of all Hopefulness

Blue #469

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

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

*I am the church. You are the church.
We are the church together.
All who follow Jesus all around the world,
Yes! We're the church together.*

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 20:27-38

SERMON

Rev. Franz Rigert, Wisconsin Conference Minister

***HYMN**

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant

Blue #391

***STATEMENT OF FAITH** (World Council of Churches)

I believe in the living God, the Maker of all humankind who creates and sustains the universe in power and in love.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God incarnate on earth, who showed us by his words and work, suffering with others, conquest of death, what human life ought to be and what God is like.

I believe that the Spirit of God is present with us now and always, and can be experienced in prayer, in forgiveness, in the Word, the Sacraments, the community of the Church and all that we do. 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

Lee Lueck

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

Steal Away

Chancel Choir

Arr. by Patrick Quigley

***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, because we have been given much, help us give more. Because we are loved much, give us strength to love more. Because we are accepted as we are, give us grace to accept others without judgement. We give ourselves and our gifts with grateful hearts. 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: Rev. Franz Rigert
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Rebecca Ferguson
Deacons: Lance Lueck, Ann Nelson,
Loral Keil, Brian Miller, Liz Swank
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers: Deb Hoffman
Trustee: Vicki Sippel
Coffee

Fellowship: Mission Ed Committee
Counters: Marie Roe, Dennis Linder
*Altar table flowers are given by Lillian Tan
in memory of her parents' anniversary,
John and Ruth Tandias.*

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>Nov 2, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 13,055	\$ 461,477
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 467,412

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'



Franz Rigert grew up in Delavan, Wisconsin, where his father served the Congregational UCC church for more than 30 years. He attended UW Eau Claire and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice with a minor in religious studies. In 1989 Franz enrolled in graduate school at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. In 1991 he married his spouse Trinn, and in 1992 earned a Masters of Divinity Degree. Franz then served as Associate Minister at Kingswood United Methodist Church in Buffalo Grove, IL from 1992 to 1995. Following that, Franz was called to Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Grafton, Wisconsin, where he served for nearly 20 years. During that tenure the congregation grew significantly in membership and mission, eventually taking on a major building project that would provide a beautiful new sanctuary, several classrooms and much needed gathering space. In fall of 2014, Franz was called by the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, to serve as Conference Minister. Franz and Trinn make their home in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, where Trinn has taught Early Childhood Special Education for 27 years. They share three twenty-something children – Mitchell, Jordan and Marianna. Franz enjoys mountain hiking, travel, music and nature.

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), Deb Larson, Lyle Woods

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For the Rev. Franz Rigert our Wisconsin Conference Minister who preaches this Sunday, may he be given wisdom and courage as he helps lead the 200+ churches of the Wisconsin Conference UCC and may we welcome him warmly
- For the new Among Friends director Brittany Myer who starts in mid-November, may she lead with grace and be welcomed with joy
- For our 6th graders who recently received their Bibles, may they use them to gain knowledge of themselves, their world and the God who loves them
- For 7th graders receiving their Servant of Christ aprons next week, may they learn how to serve faithfully
- For our congregation as we dedicate our 2026 financial pledges next week, may our generosity power ministry
- For the Rudolph Bostic art exhibit in our Fellowship Hall which ends this Sunday, may it kindle faith and curiosity
- For those who are joining the church as members on Sunday, November 16th, may they use their gifts in their new church home
- For Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she continues dialysis

Prayers for our World:

- For food pantries and hungry families affected by the loss of SNAP benefits, may they be funded and people fed
- For a safe and fruitful deer hunting season
- For government workers working without pay, may this end
- For the tentative peace in Gaza, 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 the return of the Giving Thanks meal new Sunday and those who will help set up, serve and clean up after it, may we gather together and enjoy---sign up
- For 10 years of generating clean solar energy with our church solar panels, thanks be to God!
- For the 40 some people who turned out to clean up our church grounds recently, you rock!
- For those battling cancer, may they be given strength and support
- For those living with dementia and families trying to care for them, may they all be given strength, grace and help along the way

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Steve Hove who died recently , 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. 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: 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.

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."

New Members Received: New members will be received on **Sun, Nov 16** at the 10:00 am worship service. If you wish to join, please make sure the church office has your information by Sunday, November 9. 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 sign up.

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, Nov 19 at 1:00 pm at Perkins 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 meetings are **Nov 18 & Dec 2.**

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 **Nov 11 & 25.**

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 & 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 Nov 12 is parmesan crusted chicken over rice pilaf, salad, and croissant.

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.

Cookie Exchange: The WISE team has a Cookie Exchange planned for **Sun, Dec 7** in the Fellowship Hall after worship. For all bakers who want to increase the variety of their Christmas Cookies. Bring 4 dozen cookies of your best bake & exchange them for the tasty and exciting Christmas Cookies made by your baking friends at UCC.

Annual Christmas Luncheon: You are invited to attend a Christmas Luncheon on **Tues, Dec 9, at 12:00 noon.** The menu features Norwegian meatballs and a large collection of Christmas cookies. Please come! The cost is \$10.00 per person. Please make a reservation by calling the church office, at church or online.

Volunteers Needed for the Christmas Luncheon: Please volunteer to help with the Christmas luncheon. We need cooks, kitchen workers, and cookie bakers. Please indicate your willingness to help by signing the lists on the sign-up table in the gathering space.

The Advent Workshop: The Advent Workshop for families will be in the Fellowship Hall following Sunday School on **December 7**, the Second Sunday in Advent. The event includes making a variety of Christmas ornaments. If you have friends or neighbors considering participation in a church family, invite them to join you! Please sign up.

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 missy@firstchurchrf.org. In appreciation, the Welcoming Committee.

Youth Events

Children's Advent Musical: Sunday School children in pre-school through grade 5 will begin rehearsing the 2025 Advent Musical on November 9 during Sunday School. The dress rehearsal will be on Saturday, December 20, 10:00 – 12:00 noon. The musical will be presented during worship on Sunday, December 21. It is important for all children to regularly attend Sunday School and be present for these rehearsals.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Ephesians 4:1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 20:27-38

Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; then the second and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. Finally the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her.' Jesus said to them, 'Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed they cannot die any more, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.'