

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

**February 15, 2026**



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

February 15, 2026

*Transfiguration*

10:00 am

<b>Gathering</b>
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God places us in the world as his fellow workers - agents of transfiguration. We work with God so that injustice is transfigured into justice, so there will be more compassion and caring, that there will be more laughter and joy, that there will be more togetherness in God's world. - Desmond Tutu

<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:** God said, "This is my Son, the Beloved."

**P:** **Let us worship you, O beloved God.**

**L:** God said, "Listen!"

**P:** **We want to hear your word anew this day.**

**L:** God said, "Do not be afraid."

**P:** **We lay our worries at your feet.**

**L:** And after all this was spoken, God was quiet.

**P:** **Still our souls, quiet our minds, and prepare us to be transformed, holy God.**

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

**\*HYMN**

*Shine, Jesus, Shine*

**Blue #319**

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**L:** Holy God, in Jesus Christ you reveal your glory and our hope for new life.

**P:** **Help us not to look away, merciful God.**

**L:** In Him we see ourselves as we can be.

**P:** **Help us not to look away, merciful God.**

**L:** In Him we see ourselves as you see us, loved and valued despite our failures.

**P:** **Help us not to look away, merciful God. Amen.**

## **\*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

**L:** God sent Jesus into the world.

**P:** **He came to heal our broken lives.**

**L:** He came to re-order our priorities.

**P:** **He came to set us free from the sins of the past.**

**L:** He came to teach us a new way of living.

**P:** **Let us embrace the new life Christ promises to each of us.**

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

**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 (Sung twice)**

*Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah, Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah*

*Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah, Hallelujah, Hal-le-lu-jah*

<b>Hearing the Word</b>
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## **SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**Exodus 24:12-18**

**PSALM 8 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)**

**R**

*Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.*

*Open the eyes of my heart.*

*I want to see You, I want to see You.*

**L:** O LORD, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**P:** **You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.**

**L:** When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

**P:** **Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.**

**L:** You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

**P:** **O LORD, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth! 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: Friends in Christ, God prepares a feast for all of God's people. In this holy meal, all of life is transformed by the grace of God. Come and eat and be filled. Come and drink deep and never thirst again.

### ***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:*

### **Here Is Bread**

*Congregation join on refrain:*

*Refrain*

The musical notation is written on two staves. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the refrain, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

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.

### **I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light**

**Blue #248**

## **Let Us Be Bread**

*Congregation join on refrain:*

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** (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**

**Matthew 17:1-9**

**SERMON**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**\*HYMN**

***We Have Come at Christ's Own Bidding***

**Blue #245**

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH - South Africa**

**L:** It is not true that this world and its inhabitants are doomed to die and be lost;

**P:** **This is true: "for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him shall not die but have everlasting life."**

**L:** It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction;

**P:** **This is true: "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly."**

- L: It is not true that violence and hatred shall have the last word, and that war and destruction have come to stay forever;
- P: **This is true: “for to us a child is born, to us a son is given in whom authority will rest and whose name will be Prince of Peace.”**
- L: It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil that seek to rule the world;
- P: **This is true: “to me is given all authority in heaven and on earth, and lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.”**
- L: It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the church, before we can do anything;
- P: **This is true: “I will pour out my spirit on all people, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young people shall see visions, and your old folk shall dream dreams.”**
- L: It is not true that our dreams for the liberations of humankind, our dreams of justice, of human dignity, of peace, are not meant for this earth and this history;
- P: **This is true: “The hour comes, and it is now, that true worshippers shall worship God in spirit and in truth.”**
- All: This is the faith we confess. This is the faith we believe. This is the faith that will set us free to follow in the steps of Jesus. 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.**

### **MISSION MOMENT**

**Carol Merriman**

### **GATHERING OUR GIFTS**

***Lord, I Know I Been Changed***

*Arr. by Shackley*

### **\*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, sometimes it takes a mountaintop experience before we can see how tightly clenched our hands have been, or how hardened our hearts have become. Open us to be generous instruments of your love throughout the world. In a world full of fear, hopelessness and pain, may we follow your Son and be agents of hope, grace and peace. Amen.**

## Sending

**\*HYMN**

***Guide My Feet***

**Black #497**

**\*BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

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### **SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS**

Preacher: Chris Myers  
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Jill Paulson  
Deacons: Lance Lueck, Paul Shepherd,  
Melissa Oscanyan, Ann Nelson  
Organist: Terry Mithun  
Nursery: Kahla Fuller  
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman  
Trustee: Louie Filkins  
Coffee  
Fellowship: Luedtke Family – St. B's Donuts  
Counters: Diane Welsh, Dennis Linder  
*Altar table flowers are given by Lori Otto in  
loving memory of Marc.*

### **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>Feb 8, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 2,983	\$ 105,477
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 67,848

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), Glen Corliss (brother of Raelle Jorae), Eric (friend of Liz Swank), Emily Rognholt (sister of Missy Linaberry), Blake Friese, Barb Mahoney, Joyce Kampstra, Jim Larson, Loral Keil

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

- For our pastors, deacons and musicians gearing up for Ash Wednesday, Lent and the Prayer Around the Cross worship services in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesdays at 6:30pm, may we come together to worship and pray
- For our choir and other local choirs gearing up for It Takes A Village concert on Sunday, February 22nd at 4pm at Ezekiel, may your voices bring hope and healing to the folks in Haiti (proceeds from the concert go to the village in Haiti sponsored by the churches of River Falls)
- For housing insecure folks in our community and those who are planning for Wellspring, a community of Tiny Homes to meet housing insecurity needs in our community, may God grace them with vision and courage
- For our Back Bay Mission Team headed to Biloxi, MS over Spring Break, may you be the light of Jesus as you work there
- For Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she continues dialysis

**Prayers for our World:**

- As we celebrate Valentine's Day this week let us remember the gift of love and those we love
- As we gather for the Winter Olympics may we remember the common bonds that bind us together
- For those in our church and community living in fear with recent immigration raids
- For those in treatment and rehab, may you be given strength for the journey
- For stability and peace in Venezuela, Gaza and Ukraine
- 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
- For those living with dementia and families trying to care for them, may they all be given strength, grace and help along the way

**Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

- For the return of our full Family Meals each Wednesday during Lent, starting Ash Wednesday night (sign up!)
- For those who enjoyed our Wednesday Night Pizza Parties these past 4 weeks, it was a blast!
- For our master Plinko builder Marshall Skule who created a hit for the Among Friends group, thank you!
- For 10 years of generating clean solar energy with our church solar panels, thanks be to God!

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

- For the family of Terry Smith, sister of Tom Smith, who died unexpectedly and peacefully recently, may their family be comforted
- For the family of Viola Joosten, grandmother of Sarah Plum, who died recently and whose funeral was Saturday, February 14th in Rudolph, Wisconsin may God strengthen you
- For the family of Dick Taylor, brother of Yvonne Benson, who died recently, may you mourn with gratitude
- For the family of Jane Webb (Greenwood Teacher) Cody Peterson (RF Fire Department), Wanell Hansen (mother of Jill Paulson), JoAnn Lentz and Jim Filkins, may their families be comforted

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!

**Ash Wednesday & Evening Lenten Worship:** Ash Wednesday worship will be on Wed, Feb 18, 6:30-7:30 pm. Throughout Lent, we will gather together on Wednesday evenings for simple Prayer Around the Cross services. Wednesday Evening Worship will be on Wednesdays Feb 25, Mar 4, 11, 18 and 25. Please plan to attend!

**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 discussing Matthew Skinner's *Acts: Catching Up with the Spirit*. Copies of the book are available in the church office for \$16.00 each. The group meets in the library on **Wednesdays, 1:00–2:30 pm**. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

### ***Loving Neighbor***

**First Church Companions:** Are you interested in being a companion to someone in our church connecting with them at least once a month with a call or visit? Or would you like to have someone for a companion. Please use the sign-up sheet to be a companion or request someone to visit you.

**Basics for Local Kids:** Volunteers are needed. You can help families shop or you can help sort, restock or organize winter wear. Shifts are usually 2 hours. To sign up, 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.

**Grace Place** is a homeless shelter run by the Salvation Army in New Richmond. It is housed in the old St. Croix County Nursing Home. They operate on a short shoe-string budget and are delighted that we will support them with donations and meals. The shelter has three family rooms, a men's wing and a women's wing. They can house up to 50 people, two or three people to a room. If you have any questions, please see Carole Mottaz.

**Grace Place Donations:** Needed items: **Sidewalk salt**, shampoo – large or travel size, conditioner – large or travel size, body wash – large or travel size, body lotion – large or travel size, new or like-new wash cloths, new or like-new bath towels, new or like-new hand towels, new or like-new twin and full sheets, new or like-new twin and full size blankets, new pillows, good buys. There is a bin at 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.

**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***

**Creative Prayer Flow—Thurs, Feb 19, 6:30-8:00 pm:** The workshop will be led by Carrie Windett MA, ATR-BC, LPCC, Be Still Art + Healing, LLC. In this workshop, you'll explore Sensorimotor Art Therapy's guided drawing's three resourcing movements before moving into a time of watercolor play; an invitation for joy and connection. The experience will conclude with reflections on Christ-centered truths and witnessing others. No artistic experience is required - just open hands and a willing heart to try. Please sign up & join us.

**Merry Widows:** They will meet on **Friday, February 20, at 1:00 pm at The Sycamore in River Falls.** They will have pizza and dessert for lunch. All widows are welcome to join us for dinner and conversation! See Linda Morrow 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 **Feb 17 & Mar 3.**

**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 **Feb 24 & Mar 10.**

**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](mailto:firstroe@gmail.com)

**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.

**Game Day Sunday:** Game Day Sunday is held on the third Sunday of the month. Our next Game Day is **February 15 with a new time of 11:45 am.** Join us!

**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 First Congregational at 6:30pm. The WISE Team meets the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm. For info, call Marg Downing at 715-307-5905.

### ***Community Life***

**Fused Glass Project:** The Christian Education Committee is organizing a project to create a large fused glass piece of art that will hang by the main stairwell. The theme of the piece will be Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Artists will learn to cut and arrange glass pieces to create the design. Once the art is complete, it will be fused in a glass kiln and then hung on the wall.

**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.** You can make a reservation online, the sign-up table or by calling the church office. The menu for Feb 18 is: Taco bar, Spanish rice, chips.

**Relay for Life Soup Night:** Once again the Relay for Life team will have its annual Soup Night to raise money for Relay for Life. Our **Soup Night is March 18 from 5:15-6:00 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. The cost of the meal is a donation of \$9/person or \$30/family as with other Wednesday night meals. There will be a variety of soups, some fruit, & dessert. You can sample/eat as many of the soups as you like.

The **Relay for Life Event is Fri, April 10** beginning at 5:00 pm at the River Falls High School gym. The theme this year is "We are the World, United for a Cure." It will have many opportunities to participate in the event with teams selling items, selling luminaries, and the silent auction. Please plan to participate or help our church's team raise money for the fundraiser. If you have questions or would like to join our team, contact Deb Hoffman at [debhoffman234b@gmail.com](mailto:debhoffman234b@gmail.com) or (612)308-4945.

**Name Tags:** We encourage you to wear your name tags so that everyone 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](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org). In appreciation, the Welcoming Committee.



Join our 20th Anniversary Ecumenical Fundraising Concert for a memorable night of music supporting vital projects in Ganthier, Haiti.

# It Takes a Village

Sunday, February 22 at 4:00 pm

Ezekiel Lutheran Church

202 South 2nd St. | River Falls, WI

A free-will offering will be collected to support the school, orphanage, and health center—bringing hope and lasting impact.

A dessert reception will follow the concert.



Featuring: Croix Chordsmen Chorus, Cross Lutheran Choir (Roberts), Ezekiel's Chancel Choir, First Congregational Church Choir, Pierce County Ecumenical, UWRF-University Community Chorus, and a mass choir number

Learn more about this nonprofit at [HaitianRelief.org](http://HaitianRelief.org)



**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Exodus 24:12-18**

The LORD said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.' So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. To the elders he had said, 'Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.'

Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

**GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 17:1-9**

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!' When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.' And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, 'Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.'

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This Wednesday, Feb 18, marks the beginning of the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday.

Our schedule for that day will be:

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 3:45-5:15 pm        | Wednesday School                            |
| 5:15-6:00 pm        | Wednesday Night Family Meal (sign up!)      |
| <b>6:30-7:30 pm</b> | <b>Ash Wednesday Worship Service</b>        |
|                     | MS & HS Groups Attend Ash Wednesday Worship |
| 7:30-8:15 pm        | Choir Practice                              |