

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

**March 22, 2026**



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

March 22, 2026

*Fifth Sunday in Lent*

10:00 am

**Gathering**

"It is not easy to convey a sense of wonder, let alone resurrection wonder, to another. It's the very nature of wonder to catch us off guard, to circumvent expectations and assumptions. Wonder can't be packaged, and it can't be worked up. It requires some sense of being there and some sense of engagement."

*- Eugene H. Peterson, 21st century*

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.**

**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: On these days of Lenten journey,

**P: Christ goes with us side by side.**

L: As we gather here for worship,

**P: May our lives be focused with praise and care.**

L: As we sing, pray and listen,

**P: May God's Spirit deep within us come alive.**

L: Now let us sing with joy and vigor,

**P: As we learn how to serve Christ more fully.**

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

# 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!

## \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

- L: Merciful God, forgive us when we stray from your path and succumb to the temptation of the moment.
- P: Come among us, O Lord; and teach us your path.**
- L: Forgive us for failing to see every person as one of your beloved children.
- P: Come among us, O Lord; and teach us your path.**
- L: Forgive us when we hold onto our anger and hurts, failing to forgive as you have forgiven us.
- P: Come among us, O Lord; and teach us your path. Amen.**

## \*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

- L: When we are joined to Christ, the past is finished; everything has become new.
- P: Every day our life is given back to us with hope.**
- L: Accept the forgiving, renewing action of God in your life today.
- P: In Christ we are forgiven.**
- All: Thanks be to God.**
- L: May the peace of the Lord be with you all.
- P: And also with you.**

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

## \*GLORIA (Sung twice)

*Jesus is a rock in a weary land, a weary land, a weary land;  
My Jesus is a rock in a weary land, a shelter in the time of storm.*

## Hearing the Word

### PSALM 130 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

**R**



Wait-ing, wait -ing, wait-ing for the Lord;

Wait-ing, wait -ing, wait-ing for the Lord.

- L: Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice!
- P: Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!**
- L: If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?
- P: But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.**

- L: I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
- P: My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.**
- L: O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.
- P: It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities. 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 people of God, let us sing!
- P: Let us sing for we are God's people and God has done wonderful things.**
- L: Let us come into God's presence with joy and thanksgiving.
- P: Let us come into God's presence and let God feed us on the Bread of Life and the Cup of Blessing. Come Holy Spirit, come!**

### *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:*

### *Taste and See*

*Congregation join on refrain:*

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

**One Bread, One Body**

**Blue #689**

**Here Is Bread**

*Congregation join on refrain:*

*Refrain*

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.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff is labeled 'Refrain' and contains the lyrics 'In this bread there is heal - ing, in this cup is life for - ev - er.' The second staff contains the lyrics 'In this mo - ment, by the Spir - it, Christ is with us here.' The music consists of quarter and eighth notes with rests.

***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.)**

***Jesus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long ago,  
Taking children on his knee, saying, "Let them come to me."  
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.***

**GOSPEL LESSON**

**John 11:1-45**

**SERMON**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**\*HYMN**

***Lead Me, Guide Me***

**Blue #498**

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH – The Apostles’ Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

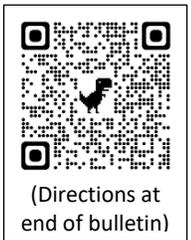
**THE PRAYERS & LORD’S PRAYER (debts/debtors)**

Lord in your mercy... Hear our prayer.

**...Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

**GATHERING OUR GIFTS – Jubilee Ringers**

*I Want Jesus to Walk with Me*



**\*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**

**O God, as Jesus released Lazarus from the hands of death, may our ministry give to others the promise of new life. Accept the gifts that we offer to proclaim your love. Use our talents in ways that will set others free. May the liberating truth of Christ’s gospel be heard now in our land. Amen.**

# Sending

**\*HYMN**

*Be Thou My Vision*

**Blue #502**

**\*BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

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## **SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS**

Preacher: Chris Myers  
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Steve Koecher  
Deacons: Becky Pajac, Paul Shepherd,  
Liz Swank, Heidi Cavaness  
Organist: Terry Mithun  
Nursery: Kahla Fuller  
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman  
Trustee: Matt Bastien  
Coffee  
Fellowship: Beatty Family  
Counters: Diane Welsh, Scott Nelson  
*Altar table flowers are given by the Pfeiffer  
family in loving memory of their grandparents  
and Steve's parents.*

## **CHURCH STAFF**

Pastor: Christopher Myers  
Education Pastor: Stacy Johnson Myers  
Youth Minister: Alex Plum  
Music Coordinator &  
Bell Director: Jamie Mills  
Choir Director: Sarah Plum  
Organists: Terry Mithun,  
Marsha Pearson  
Building Manager: Timothy Bylander  
Church Moderator: Marie Roe  
Office Administrator: Missy Luedtke  
Nursery Attendant: Kahla Fuller  
Custodians: Farnum Fuller,  
Troy Zakrzewski

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## **Treasurer's Report**

	<u>Mar 15, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 7,200	\$ 118,160
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 124,388

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), Jim Larson, Joyce Kampstra, KayLee (friend of Barb Stephens), Lynn Merriman, Steve (friend of Traci Hagberg)

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

- For our Back Bay Mission Team returning from Biloxi, MS after their Spring Break trip
- For our pastors and musicians gearing up for the last Prayer Around the Cross worship services in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesdays at 6:30pm and Holy Week, may we come together to worship and pray
- For our choir and other local choirs whose It Takes a Village concert on Sunday, February 22nd raised over \$22,000 to support the school, orphanage, homes and clinic in Ganthier, Haiti, wow!
- 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 Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she continues dialysis

**Prayers for our World:**

- For the people across the Middle East coping with war, may a lasting peace soon come
- For those traveling over Spring Break, may you safely travel away and home again
- For those in our armed forces and their families, may we support them and may God watch over them
- 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 gift of the season of Lent, a time to return to God and remember our priorities
- For the \$25,000 given by church folks to help refugees in Ukraine, you are angels
- For the recent Relay for Life Soup Supper and for their Hot Dish Night April 8th, may we be fed and cancer end
- For those who received blood from the March 16th blood drive in our Fellowship Hall, may it bring life
- For the return of our Family Meals each Wednesday during Lent (sign up!)

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

- For the family of Kate Wolfe-Jenson (adult daughter of Marian and Wayne Wolfe) who died recently and who will be welcomed home to the church Memorial Garden this spring
- For the family of Loral Keil (wife of Brian Miller), and one of our deacons, whose Memorial Service will be at Bakken and Young on Easter Saturday, April 4th at 11am with visitation an hour before and a lunch afterward, may her family be comforted
- For the families of Terry Smith (sister of Tom Smith), and Ronald Gandrud (father of Cindy), may they be comforted

If you have people you wish to include on our prayer list, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.

**GOSPEL LESSON: John 11:1-45**

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him,

'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

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***Join us for  
Holy Week Worship***

<b>Palm Sunday</b>	<b>Mar 29 10:00 am</b>
<b>Maundy Thursday</b>	<b>April 2 6:30 pm</b>
<b>Good Friday Cantata</b>	<b>April 3 6:30 pm</b>
<b>Easter Sunday</b>	<b>April 5 9:00 &amp; 10:30 am</b>
<b>Easter Breakfast</b>	<b>April 5 8:00-10:15 am</b>

***All Are Welcome!***

**First Congregational Church  
110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI**

