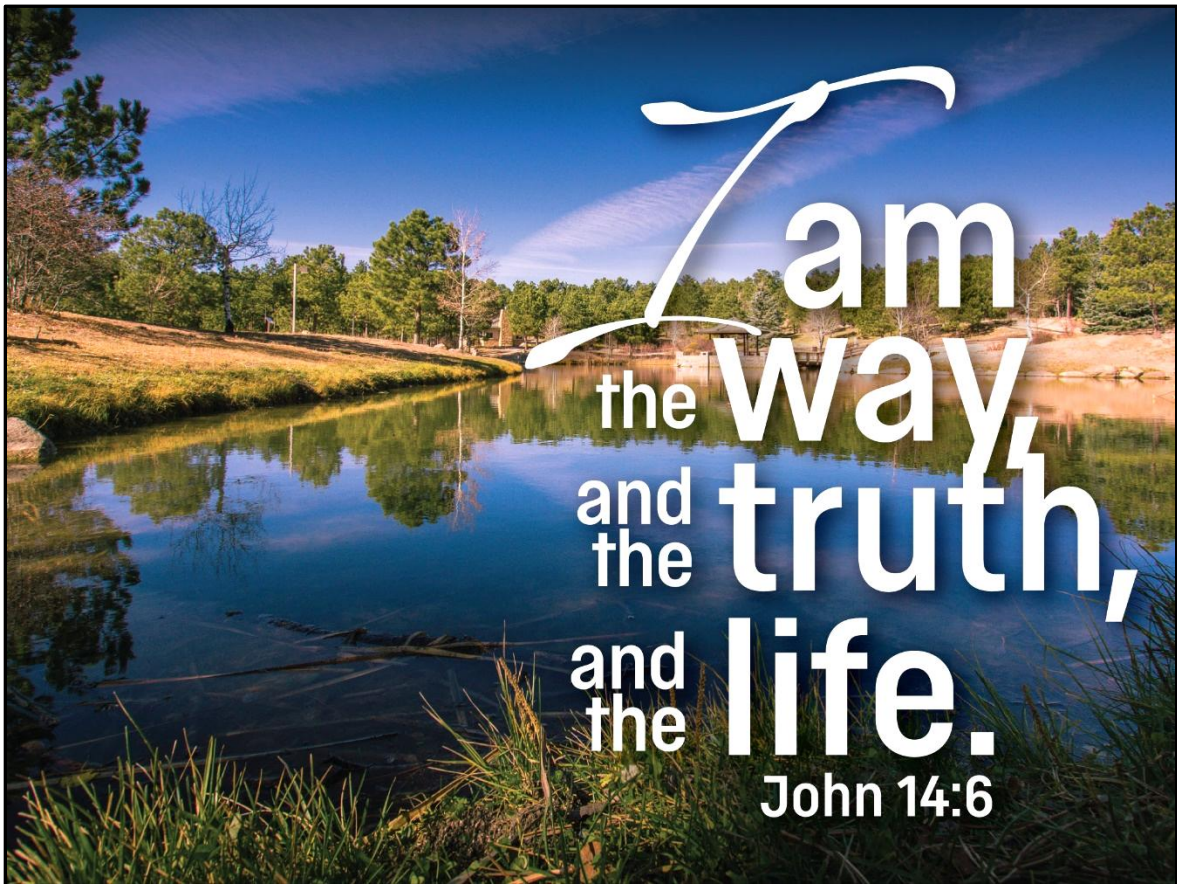


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin**

May 3, 2026



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

Confirmation Sunday
Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2026

10:00 am

Gathering

Do not be afraid, I am with you
I have called you each by name
Come and follow Me
I will bring you home
I love you and you are mine.

You Are Mine by David Haas

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: In a world that changes so quickly,

P: Let us build upon the rock of Jesus Christ.

L: In a community that is growing, yet too many remain lonely,

P: Let us build upon the rock of Jesus Christ.

L: Among people who are tempted only to look inward,

P: Let us build upon the rock of Jesus Christ.

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

***HYMN**

Rain Down

Refrain

Musical notation for the hymn 'Rain Down'. It consists of five staves of music in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff is labeled 'Refrain'. The second staff is numbered '11'. The third staff is numbered '18'. The fourth staff is numbered '23'. The fifth staff is numbered '28' and ends with 'to Refrain'.

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your peo - ple. Rain down,
rain down, rain down your love, God of life. 1 Faith - ful and
2 We who re -
3 God of crea -
true is the word of our God. All of God's works are so
vere and find hope in our God live in the kind - ness and
a - tion, we long for your truth; you are the wa - ter of
wor - thy of trust. God's mer - cy falls on the just and the
joy of God's wing. God will pro - tect us from dark - ness and
life for our thirst. Grant that your love and your peace touch our
right; full of God's love is the earth.
death; God will not leave us to starve.
hearts, all of our hope lies in you.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

L: For the times we have lied to one another and the times we have been lied to,

P: **Heal us, Jesus, Savior of the world.**

L: For the times we have laughed at another's pain and the times we have been laughed at,

P: **Heal us, Jesus, Savior of the world.**

L: For the times we have spoken when we should have remained silent and the times we have remained silent when we should have spoken,

P: **Heal us, Jesus, Savior of the world.**

L: For the times we have not respected another's freedom to be different from us,

P: Heal us, Jesus, Savior of the world.

L: For the times we have betrayed a friend and the times we have been betrayed,

P: Heal us, Jesus, Savior of the world.

All: Teach us to empty ourselves of the things that destroy us and keep us alone. Empty us of our jealousy, of our meanness, of our fear of others. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: God is not interested in the sins of the past.

P: In Christ we are forgiven.

L: In him, God is at work in our lives redeeming our past mistakes.

P: In Christ we are forgiven.

L: In him, God is at work in our present creating new opportunities for us to be his faithful disciples.

P: In Christ we are forgiven.

L: And in him, God is creating a new future where we will all finally be one family in his body.

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)

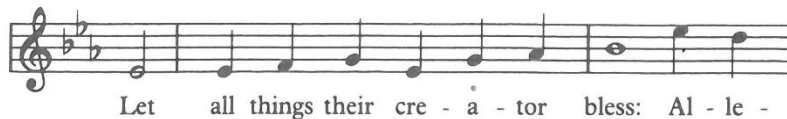
***GLORIA**

Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen

Hearing the Word

PSALM 31:1-5, 15-16 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R



L: In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me.

- P: Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.**
- L: You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.
- P: Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.**
- L: My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.
- P: Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love. 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 came to seek out the lost and lonely.
- P: Come, Lord Jesus, come to us we pray.**
- L: He came with healing in his hands, love in his heart and peace in his wake.
- P: Come, Holy Spirit, come to us we pray.**
- L: He came proclaiming God's kingdom is coming and yet is also here among us.
- P: Come, God, come to us we pray.**
- All: Come let us be a part of God's Way here and now as we eat and drink at your table.**

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:

Alleluia, Alleluia, Give Thanks

Blue #291

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, give thanks to the ris - en Lord.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, give praise to his Name.

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.

Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness

Blue #326

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.)

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

L: Friends in Christ, we all are received into the church through the sacrament of baptism. These young people have found nurture and support in the midst of the family of Christ. Through prayer and study, they have been led by the Holy Spirit to affirm their baptism and to claim in our presence their covenantal relationship with Christ and the members of the church. They are here for service to Jesus Christ, using the gifts which the Holy Spirit bestows.

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

PRAYER

ACT OF CONFIRMATION

L: Strengthen, O God, these your servants, with your heavenly grace that they may continue in your way forever; and daily increase in them your Holy Spirit, until you receive them at last in your eternal home.

A: Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFIRMATION

A: **O Merciful God, we rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in the Spirit's power to awaken us to new truth and to inspire us to venture into the fullness of life. We give you thanks that these young people have been moved to affirm their baptism. Help them to live not for themselves but for Christ and those whom Christ loves. Keep them steady and abounding in hope, never giving up, pressing toward the goal of life with you in Jesus Christ. Amen.**

ADDRESS

L: By your baptism, you were made one with us in the body of Christ, the church. Today we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith which has brought you to this time and place. We celebrate your presence in this household of faith.

WELCOME

L: Let us, the members of First Congregational United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

P: **We promise you our continuing friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

M: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of your church, First Congregational United Church of Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love.

**Blake Christian Friese, Cody James Ronnander, Tyler Lee Sterba,
Atlas Christine Villeneuve, Harper Lou Withers**

*The crosses presented to our Confirmands were hand-made
by Bob Johnson, a church member.*

*HYMN

Here I Am, Lord

Verses



1. I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my
 2. I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my
 3. I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the



peo - ple cry. All who dwell in dark and sin
 peo - ple's pain. I have wept for love of them.
 poor and lame. I will set a feast for them.



My hand will save. I, who made the
 They turn a - way. I will break their
 My hand will save. Fin-est bread I



stars of night, I will make their dark - ness bright.
 hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love a - lone.
 will pro - vide Till their hearts be sat - is - fied.



Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?
 I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?
 I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?

Refrain



Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you



call-ing in the night. I will go, Lord, if you



lead me. I will hold your peo - ple in my heart.

*STATEMENT OF FAITH – African Creed

We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. God created the human person for happiness in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on the earth. We have known this High God in the darkness, and now we know God in the light.

God promised in the Scriptures to save the world and all the nations and tribes. We believe that God kept all promises by sending Jesus Christ, a person in the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and humankind, showing that the meaning of religion is love. Jesus was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He lay buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day, he rose from the grave.

We believe that all our sins are forgiven by God. We accept the gift of baptism and in the community of faith we live in ways of love and share the bread of life. We announce the good news to all people so long as God gives us breath. We believe that the Spirit is in the world and that God cares for us in life and in death. This we believe. 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 – Chancel Choir

Fairest Lord Jesus

Arr. by Craig Courtney



*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

Generous God, we dedicate these gifts and ourselves to you, for we want to accomplish the greater works to which Christ calls us. Increase our generosity that we may learn to give in proportion to the mercy we have received. May the ministry supported by our offerings turn us and many others into your faithful disciples. Amen.

Sending

*HYMN

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

Blue #719

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Confirmands
Deacons: Laura Anderson, Ann Nelson,
Liz Swank, Heidi Cavaness,
Melissa Oscanyan
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Scott Nelson
Coffee
Fellowship: Deacons
Counters: Jane Truesdill, Allen Barnes
*Altar table flowers are given in loving memory
of JoAnn Lentz from her Nebraska family.*

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>Apr 26, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 2,180	\$ 172,398
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 192,236

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), Lynn Merriman, Galen (brother of Sue Danielson), Steve and Janice Withers (father and mother of Erik Withers), Joyce Kampstra, Sam Morrissette

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our confirmands (Blake, Cody, Tyler, Atlas and Harper) as they are confirmed today, may they grow in faith
- For our Wednesday School kids as we gathered for our last time this week and our famous 'dirt and worms' snack!
- For Maddie Giordana and Eric Sayre who will be married in Minneapolis on May 16, may they grow in love
- For our fabulous Among Friends dementia program as it welcomes its new director: Marshall Skule - may you bring your many gifts to this wonderful program
- For housing insecure folks in our community and those who are organizing Wellspring Village, 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 people affected by recent tornados and flooding, may helpful neighbors ease the burden
- For the people across the Middle East living through war, may a lasting peace soon come
- For victims of domestic abuse, may we do a better job protecting them
- For those in our armed forces and their families, may we support them and may God watch over them
- For those in treatment and rehab, may you be given strength for the journey
- For farmers, especially small family farms, struggling to stay viable with so many economic challenges
- For stability and peace in Venezuela, Sudan, Iran, Gaza and Ukraine
- 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 those who helped set, serve and clean up after the JoAnn Lentz Memorial gathering on Saturday, you are angels
- For our Wednesday School volunteers (Christina, Dave, Emma, Erin, Hazel, Jen, Mason, Rhett, Sagan) who enable this program to take place, we could not do all this without you!
- For those who received blood from the recent blood drive in our Fellowship Hall and for those who will donate on Wednesday, May 20th, may it bring life
- For those who helped make EarthFest a success - what a great community event!

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Cheryl Bemis (mother of Rhonda Klink), who died this past week, may her family be strengthened with warm memories and strong faith
- For the family of Miles, grandson of Bobbi Kuhn, who died unexpectedly recently, may his family be comforted
- For the family of JoAnn Lentz whose Memorial Gathering was Saturday, may they be comforted
- For the family of Keith Traynor (brother of Diane Welsh), Carol Cameron (sister of Joyce Kampstra), Terry Smith (sister of Tom Smith), Ronald Gandrud (father of Cindy), Loral Keil (wife of Brian)

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 14:1-14

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.



Diaper Drive
May 10 - June 21

We are collecting your donations from Mother’s Day to Father’s Day. We are in need of:

All Diaper Sizes
(especially sizes 4 and 5)

Baby Wipes

Donations will go to Our Neighbors’ Place, Turning Point
and River Falls Food Pantry

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