

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

June 7, 2026



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

June 7, 2026

Second Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am

Gathering

“What you are afraid of is never as bad as what you imagine. The fear you let build up in your mind is worse than the situation that actually exists.”

“The quicker you let go of old cheese, the sooner you find new cheese.”
Who Moved My Cheese? by Spencer Johnson

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: As Jesus called disciples so long ago...

P: Let us listen for our own names, for we too have been called by God.

L: They were fishermen, tax collectors, keepers of homes, brothers and sisters.

P: God transformed them into the beloved community.

L: We are teachers and nurses, engineers and retired folks, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters.

P: May God transform us into the beloved community.

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

***HYMN**

Morning Has Broken

Blue #35

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Amazing God, there is more to life than we can see or fathom, yet how often we try to shrink the mystery, tame the dream, limit what is possible. Remind us that the Spirit is always blowing new life into our days, surprising us with wonder and blessing. Forgive us for dull awareness and hesitant witness. Let us be made new again and again no matter what age we are. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: In Christ, God is making all things new

P: And by the power of Holy Spirit, we are freed from the sins of the past.

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

Genesis 12:1-9

PSALM 33:1-12 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R *Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing.*

L: Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous. Praise befits the upright.

P: Praise the LORD with the lyre; make melody to God with the harp of ten strings.

L: Sing a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

P: For the word of the LORD is upright, and all God's work is done in faithfulness.

L: God loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

P: By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of God's mouth.

L: God gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle and put the deeps in storehouses.

P: Let all the earth trust the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of God.

L: For God spoke, and it came to be; God commanded, and it stood firm.

P: The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing and frustrates the plans of the peoples.

L: The counsel of the LORD stands for ever, the thoughts of God's heart to all generations.

P: Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people chosen as God's heritage. R

Proclaiming the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

The Summons

Blue #350

***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)

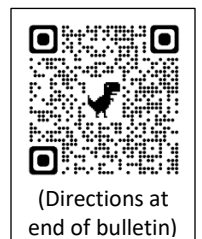
Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**

...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 – David Reilly

***OFFERTORY**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.*



***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Gracious God, accept these gifts as signs of our desire to serve you. Make our offerings to be instruments of peace and grace in the world. Let all that we do be a foretaste of your reign on earth. Amen.

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 I am the bread of life. You who come to me shall not hunger; you who believe in me shall never thirst.

P: **In the company of all who are hungry and thirsty, we come to this table to know the risen Christ and to share in 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 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, Give Thanks to the Risen Lord

Blue #291

I Come with Joy

Blue #706

Bind Us Together

Congregation join on refrain:

***Bind us together, Lord, bind us together
with cords that cannot be broken.***

***Bind us together, Lord, bind us together,
bind us together in love.***

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.

Sending

***HYMN**

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Blue #496

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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Please take time to admire the congregation's new fused glass piece depicting Genesis 1:1—
“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Be sure to notice:

- Left panel: Darkness and chaos swirling in the upper left corner that turns to ordered aspects of creation, including the moon and stars, desert and desert flowers.
- Middle panel: Skies, mountain ranges, a meadow with flowers and butterflies, a sparkling stream, and a flowing river with fish.
- Right panel: The sun and a rainbow anchoring the top right corner giving way to a forest, river and deer.



The decorative borders on the right and left sides were created by pre-school and kindergarteners while the interior sections were made by elementary students, teens, and the Knitting Group women.

SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Rebecca Ferguson
Deacons: Heidi Cavaness, Becky Pajac,
Kathy Tomlinson
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Diane Olson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers: Lu Lueck, Marg Downing
Trustee: Vicki Sippel
Coffee
Fellowship:
Counters: Jane Truesdill, Dennis Linder

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>May 31, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 2,226	\$ 242,488
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 248,776

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:

Jeff Auchampach (nephew of Yvonne Benson), Eric (friend of Liz Swank), Lynn Merriman, Steve and Janice Withers (father and mother of Erik Withers), Sam Morrissette, Jeff Johnson (brother of Jenny Luedtke), Nathaniel (friend of the Kruegers), Larry Bauer, Sharon (sister of JoAnne Friedell), Bruce (father of Melissa Oscanyan)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our 2026 High School graduates, may your faith help you navigate the next adventure of your lives
- For those who received church scholarships, may they help you on your journey
- For Leo Anthony Plum who was baptized on Sunday, May 17, may he grow in faith and love and may his parents Sarah and Alex, and big brother Anderson be given wisdom, courage and sleep 😊
- For those who worked at Moon Beach our UCC Church Camp (Rose and Dan Rude, Tim Bylander, Carol Merriman, Lu Lueck, Jane Wakefield, Chuck and Judy Sambs) getting it ready for the season
- For Maddie Giordana and Eric Sayre who were married in Minneapolis on May 16, may they grow into the promises they make to each other

Prayers for our World:

- For those struggling to afford basic necessities—food, rent, childcare, healthcare—that God would provide for them through caring communities, compassionate assistance, meaningful work, & generous hearts
- For those in our armed forces and their families, may we support them and may God watch over them
- As we approach the 250th anniversary of our nation’s founding, may we be given courage on the quest to become a more perfect union
- For farmers, especially small family farms, struggling to stay viable with so many economic challenges
- For stability and peace in 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 our Garden Geeks who tend our church garden and our Lawn Team who keep everything looking great, God bless you all!
- For teachers after a long school year, may you enjoy a break from your labors and be restored in the fall
- For the gift of summer, may we savor every bit of it
- For those who have contributed to our church Scholarship Fund over the years, may it be a blessing
- For those who donated and received blood at our last blood drive, may it bring life
- For Hope Lutheran Church who celebrates their 20th anniversary on Sunday, June 7th, may they grow in love, faith and service to their community

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Joyce Kampstra who died peacefully at home, may her husband Roger, three adult children and three grandchildren be comforted as they prepare for her Memorial Service on Monday, June 8th at 11am
- For the family of Ally Fox (friend of the Ronnanders) who died at just 39, may her memory be cherished
- For the family of Seth Piphon friend of Natalie Nelson who died tragically at Tettegouche State Park last week, may his family and friends be comforted
- For the family of Karsten Greenchurch, grandson of Duane Church who was killed in Ukraine this past week, may his memory give people strength and hope

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

Sunday, June 7, 2026

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!

Loving Neighbor

Mother's Day – Father's Day Diaper Drive: The Mission Ed Committee will once again sponsor a Diaper Drive between Mother's Day and Father's Day. Starting May 10th and running through June 21st, we will collect diapers and wipes in the gathering area. After Father's Day the diapers will be donated to Our Neighbors' Place, Turning Point and the River Falls Food Pantry. **Please note:** Larger sized diapers are most needed.

Summer Nursery Volunteers Needed: During the summer months our church nursery is staffed by volunteers while our weekly, faithful nursery worker Kahla Fuller enjoys some time off. Please sign up for a Sunday to staff the nursery. Thank you! Use the sign-up sheet at church or online.

Let's Feed Some Kids! Join us on **Wed, Sept 9, from 6-8pm at Tattersall** as we feed 100,000 starving kids right here in River Falls. Our church is one of the sponsors of this Feed My Starving Children event and will have early access to packing times. All our Middle and High School kids will have their first night of Confirmation/Youth Group this night, but EVERYONE is welcome to come and help. Sign up before July 15th to get your spot! Questions to Pastor Chris or Alex.

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.

Grace Place is a homeless shelter run by the Salvation Army in New Richmond. They operate on a short shoe-string budget and are delighted that we will support them. The shelter has three family rooms, a men's wing and a women's wing. They can house up to 50 people. If you have questions, see Carole Mottaz.

Grace Place Donations: Needed items: 55-gallon garbage bags, 13-gallon garbage bags, paper towels, Kleenex, napkins, Ziploc bags, aluminum foil and plastic wrap, light bulbs, batteries: AA, AAA, and 9 volt, cleaning supplies: Fabuloso, window cleaner, disinfectant wipes, toilet bowl cleaner, toilet bowl brushes, cleaning scrubbers, 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 & Facebook. It is held at church **Tuesdays & Thursdays 9am to 3pm.**

Loving Self

Summer Choir is low stress and low commitment. We simply meet an hour before the service and sing a familiar song. The dates will be **June 21, July 26 and August 16.** Please consider joining us!

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 and lively conversation. Our next meetings are **June 9 & 23.**

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 **June 9 & 23.**

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wednesday, June 17 at 1:00 pm at Juniors in River Falls.** All widows are welcome to join us for dinner and conversation! See Linda Morrow for more information.

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

Game Day Sunday: Game Day is held on the third Sunday of the month. Our next Game Day is **July 19 at 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

Softball News: Our softball season has begun, and the game had some awesome hits, catches, and we went into the 7th inning tied. We had a chance, but the St. Bridget's team had three good hits and we were not able to stop the last one that brought in a player and scored. It was a fun game and was great to see everybody again - players and fans.

Our next two games are June 8 at 7:30 pm and June 15 at 6:15 pm, both games at Hoffman Park. Come cheer us on! We play every Monday at Hoffman Park throughout the summer. We are the team in the red shirts. Any questions, contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945, debhoffman234b@gmail.com.

VBS Volunteers Needed: VBS requires many adult and teen volunteers. Please join the excitement by volunteering to help. VBS will be July 27-30, 9:00–11:30 am. Please sign up at church or online.

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. In appreciation, the Welcoming Committee.

Youth Events

Summer High School and College Youth Bible Study: Our first meeting will be: **Wed, June 17 at 10am at Selah Vie Bistro and Coffee Cottage**, 208 N Main Street, RF. Alex will buy coffee for the group!

VBS and Summer Children's Musical: Dates for the 2026 children's summer programs are:

VBS: July 27-30, 9:00 to 11:30 am. Theme is: My Peace I Give to You

Children's Musical: August 10-13, 9:00 am to Noon. The show will be *Rock Slinger and His Greatest Hits*.

VBS is for children age 3 to completed grade 5. The musical is for children who have completed kindergarten through completed grade 6. Emma Cruciani will be the director. We will need adult and teen volunteers for VBS. Please save the dates! Registration forms are online and at church. Please invite friends and neighbors.



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

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Genesis 12:1-9

Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and invoked the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed on by stages towards the Negeb.

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?' But when he heard this, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.'

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, 'My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.' And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.' Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute-players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, 'Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.