

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

July 5, 2026

Rest
for the
Weary

Come to me, all you who
are weary and burdened, and
I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:28, NIV



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

July 5, 2026

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am

Gathering

Our guest preacher today is the Rev. Bill Robertson a retired pastor who lives in Hastings and also serves as the part time pastor at Zwingli UCC in Berne, Minnesota. Bill is still an avid cyclist who also enjoys reading (especially William Kent Kruger) and spending time with family and friends.

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: God of the school and God of vacation;

P: God of the hospital and God of the factory;

L: God of the home and God of businesses;

P: God of the mountains and God of the beach;

L: God of the mall and God of friendship;

P: God of reconciliation and God of peace;

L: God of everything and God of everyone,

P: We gather together to worship you and to sing our praise

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

***HYMN**

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Blue #68

***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: Do not worry about the past which you cannot change.

P: In Christ, we are forgiven.

L: Instead, let us live into the future God is creating all around us.

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

Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia!

Al-le - lu - ia! Give the glo - ry

1 and the hon - or to the Lord!

2 and the hon - or to the Lord!

Hearing the Word

PSALM 145:8-14 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

Refrain

I will praise your name, my King and my God.

I will praise your name, my King and my God.

L: The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

P: **The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.**

L: All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your faithful shall bless you.

P: **They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, to make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.**

L: Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

P: **The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds. The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down. R**

Proclaiming the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 26:26-30

SERMON

Rev. Bill Robertson

***HYMN**

There's a Quiet Understanding

Blue #701

***STATEMENT OF FAITH – United Church of Christ**

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. 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 – Jamie Mills

Come Unto Me

By James P. Dunn



*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, it is sometimes easy to speak of giving our lives to you. It is harder to trust you with the particulars of those lives, the concrete stuff of our days. But may we do so, for you are present in mundane matters as well as holy moments.

May our trust lead to faith, and our faith to giving. And may our gifts become hope and light for this world. We ask your blessing on these gifts as we pray – and give – in the name of our Lord. 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: We are here because Jesus has called us – strangers and friends, locals and visitors, believers and doubters, the certain and the curious. It is always a mixed company that Jesus gathers and invites to his table where, in bread and wine, he meets us and through him we, who are different, are joined to each other. So come, not because you understand, but because you are understood. Come, not because of how you feel, but because God has food for you. Come, not because you deserve a place, but because Jesus invites you, just as you are.

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:

Let Us Break Bread Together

Let us break bread together on our knees;

Let us break bread together on our knees;

**Refrain: *When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.***

Let us drink wine together on our knees;

Let us drink wine together on our knees; Refrain

Let us praise God together on our knees;

Let us praise God together on our knees; Refrain

They'll Know We Are Christians

***We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:***

**Refrain: *And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.***

***We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land: Refrain***

***We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride: Refrain***

***All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
And all praise to Christ Jesus, God's only Son,
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one: Refrain***

In The Lord

***In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid; lift up your voices, the Lord is near;
lift up your voices, the Lord is near.***

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**

God of Grace and God of Glory

Blue #569

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Rev. Bill Robertson
Celebrant: Rev. Bill Robertson
Worship
Leader: Jean Smith
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Traci Hagberg
Deacons: Ann Nelson, Becky Pajac,
Laura Anderson
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Louie Filkins
Coffee
Fellowship:
Counters: Diane Welsh, Dennis Linder
*Altar table flowers are given by Jean and Tom
Smith in celebration of their 50th wedding
anniversary.*

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>June 28, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 13,800	\$ 283,770
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 294,008

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:

Eric (friend of Liz Swank), Steve and Janice Withers (father and mother of Erik Withers), Sam Morrisette, Nathaniel (friend of the Kruegers), Bruce (father of Melissa Oscanyan), Marlene (friend of Lu Lueck), Ron Freimark (friend of Roger Kampstra), Kathy Deiss (aunt of Ann Nelson)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For the 10,936 (yes, we counted them!) diapers given to local families by our church community to the River Falls Food Pantry, Our Neighbors' Place and Turningpoint, may they be signs of God's love
- For those who will be singing on summer choir dates (July 26 and August 16), thank you for sharing your gifts!
- For our previous pastor the Rev. Del Permann and his family who are in worship with us today, may he be warmly welcomed
- For Lyle Woods who turned 100 on June 17th, congratulations on this amazing accomplishment!
- For our Music Team gearing up for the River Falls Days Bluegrass concert on Thursday, July 9th from 6-8pm, may music bring us together
- For our church softball team as they gather each Monday at Hoffman Park, have a fun and fan filled year!

Prayers for our World:

- As teams are gathering for the World Cup, may the 'beautiful game' unite us on this one earth
- For those affected by recent devastating earthquakes in Venezuela, may help come quickly
- For those struggling to afford basic necessities - food, rent, childcare, healthcare - that God would provide for them through caring communities, compassionate assistance, meaningful work, and 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 who keep everything looking great, God bless you all!
- For our church mowing team who this year includes Laura and Mark Anderson, Randy Welsh, Roger Kapping and Lee Lueck, thanks for keeping our church lawn looking so great!
- For all those who have been given the gift of fatherhood, may you continue to grow into this wonderful gift
- For the gift of summer, may we savor every bit of it
- For those giving blood at our next blood drive on Wednesday, July 22, may it bring life

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the families of Ann Gustafson, Gary Pieffer (cousin of Rose Rude), Joyce Kampstra, Ally Fox, Seth Piphon and Karsten Greenchurch, may they grieve in hope

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!

Loving Neighbor

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.

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 Donations: Needed items: New adult undergarments (underwear up to size XXL), new bras, new or like-new sweatpants up to size 4X, new or like-new T-shirts up to size 4X, new shoes (adult men and female), belts, adult socks, 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 next dates will be **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 **July 7 & 21.**

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 **July 14 & 28.**

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, July 15 at 1:00 pm at The Sycamore for a potluck lunch.** 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 on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays at 6:30 pm at 113 East Elm St. & Peer Support Group meets the same evenings at the church at 6:30 pm. For mental health issues, please call 988. For info, call Marg Downing at 715-307-5905.

Community Life

River Falls Days Kick-Off Concert: On **Thurs, July 9, from 6:00-8:00 pm**, join us out on the lawn for a concert with the Slapdash Bluegrass Band! There will also be the Rollin' River Food Truck with food to purchase. Bring a chair and join us as we kick off River Falls Days weekend!

Softball News: Despite the heat, the clouds and the wind kept the night comfortable to play this past Monday, at least for the second set of games. We played well against St. Bridget's team who we lost to the first time we played them. This time we won by many runs, yeah. Our record is back to more wins than losses 3:2. Our next two games are **July 6th at 6:15 pm and July 13 at 7:30 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.

Wellspring Village: They are having some workdays to get the exterior completed and ready to put the first house in the River Falls Day's Parade. Here is the schedule: July 3 - 1:00-3:00 pm; July 7, 8, 9, 10 - 10:00 am-5:00 pm. Please sign-up by contacting Pastor Chad via email wellspringrf@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.

Peaches: It's time to place your order for the delicious Washington State Peaches! One single-layer box is \$27.00; 2 or more single-layer boxes are \$26.00 each. **Orders must be placed by July 27 for pick up around August 7.** There are 3 ways to order: 1. Email: office@firstchurchrf.org; 2. Sign up at church or online; 3. Call: 715-425-2052 – Mon-Thurs from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm or leave a message with name, phone, and number of boxes. This is an annual fundraiser for our youth. Thank you for your support!

Red Cross Blood Drive: The next Red Cross Blood Drive held at the church is on **Wed, July 22, from 11:00 am–5:00 pm**. See the flyer for more info. Call 1-800-733-2767 or go to www.redcrossblood.org and enter: firstcongregationalrf to schedule an appointment.

Tools for School: Once again, we are collecting school supplies for local families. As you are out shopping, please start collecting everything students might need this fall. The School Supply Event will be on **August 17 & 18** here at church. Typically, we serve about 300 students. Thank you for your generous support of this needed local ministry. Please also sign up to help sort and distribute items.

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. 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.

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

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.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 26:26-30

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

JOIN US FOR A
FREE CONCERT
on the lawn

THURSDAY, JULY 9TH
 FROM 6-8 PM

featuring
**SLAPDASH
 BLUEGRASS BAND**

and food for purchase
 FROM 5:30-7:30 PM

by
**ROLLIN' RIVER
 FOOD TRUCK**

at
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
110 N 3rd St.
 RIVER FALLS, WI

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