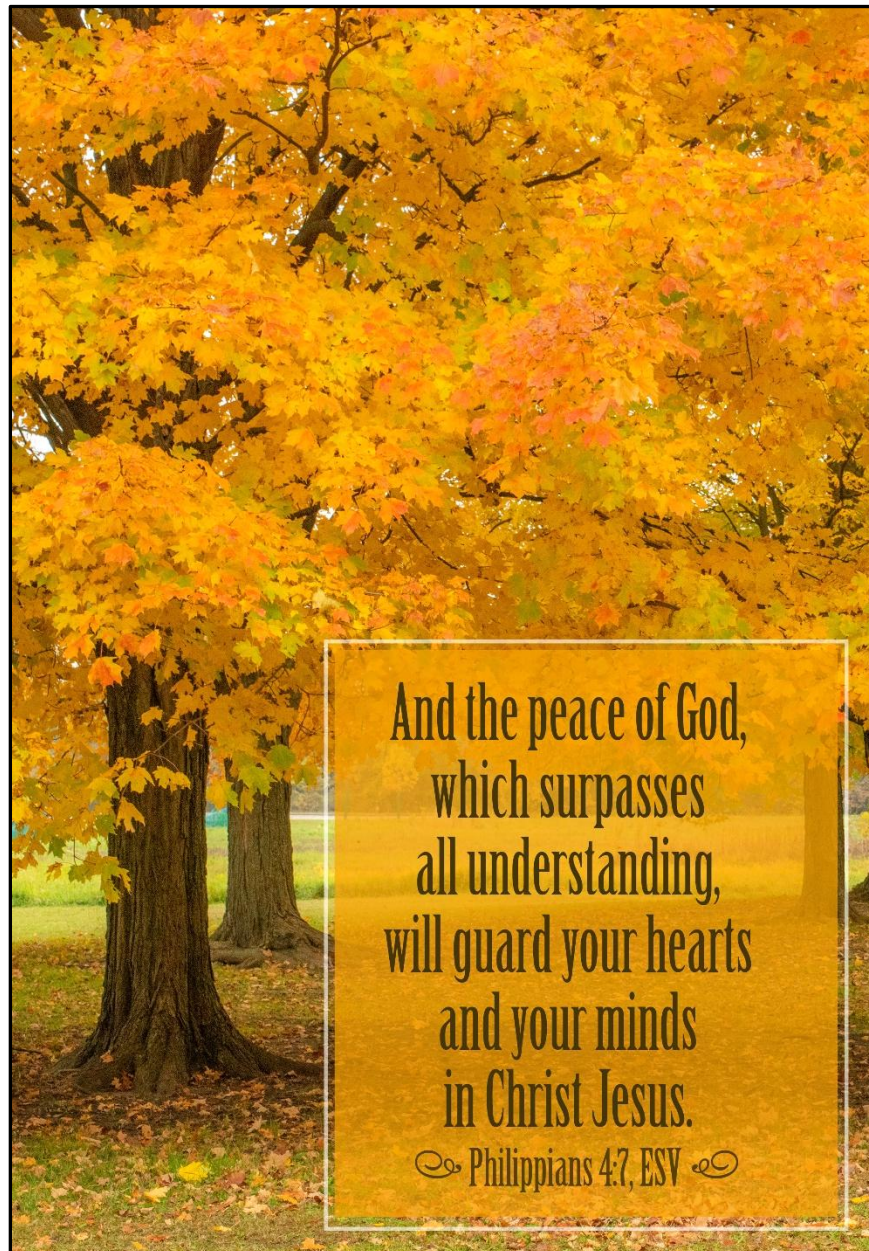


**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin
October 11, 2026**



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

October 11, 2026

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing?
Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real
questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits,
here in this world and the life to come.
- Henri Nouwen

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.
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GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We come to worship seeking God's presence.

P: **We come with our hopes and our needs.**

L: Here God meets us in unexpected places.

P: **Here God speaks through unexpected people.**

L: So let us come before God with open hearts and open minds ready to listen.

P: **May the Holy Spirit move among us and make us the body of Christ at work in
the world today.**

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

***HYMN**

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

Blue #574

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Gracious God, we confess that sometimes we make it hard to receive your
grace. We want help, but on our own terms. We dismiss people who have something
to teach us. We let pride keep us from asking for help and accepting it. Forgive us.
Give us humble hearts, willing ears, and the courage to take the next faithful step.
Help us recognize your love in ordinary people and everyday acts of care. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: God's grace is a gift we do not have to earn.

P: **God meets us in our weakness, forgives our sins, and opens the way to new life.**

L: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and loved. Let us receive this good news:

P: **In Christ we are forgiven and set free for service in his name. 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

Gloria!

Refrain: *Gloria! Gloria! Highest glory to you!*

Gloria! Gloria! Highest glory to you!

Open now our lips, and our mouths shall give praise. Refrain

O Lord, rush to help, to deliver your world. Refrain

Maker, spirit, friend, you are great mystery! Refrain

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Philippians 4:1-9

PSALM 106:1-5 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R

Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love nev-er fails. O, give

thanks to the Lord for He is good His Love, His love it nev-er fails.

L: Praise the LORD! O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good; for God's steadfast love endures forever.

P: **Who can utter the mighty doings of the LORD, or declare all God's praise?**

L: Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.

P: **Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your people; help me when you deliver them; that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory in your heritage. 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 healed people. They came to him looking for wholeness and healing. And he healed them in body, mind and spirit. We too need healing. We too need to be healed in body, mind and spirit. So come to the table of the Great Healer, the one who promises the bread of life, the cup of blessing and to those who allow him to lead them, abundant life.

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:

There is a Balm in Gilead

Blue #631

Come to the Table of Grace

1 Come to the ta-ble of grace. Come to the ta-ble of
grace. This is God's ta-ble; it's not yours or
mine. Come to the ta-ble of grace.

The musical notation is written on three staves in 3/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics. The second staff contains the melody for the second line of lyrics. The third staff contains the melody for the third line of lyrics. The lyrics are written below the staves, with the first line of lyrics starting with a '1'.

ADDITIONAL VERSES: 2. PEACE, 3. LOVE, 4. JOY, 5. HOPE

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.

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

BIBLES PRESENTED TO NEW CONFIRMANDS

Revs. Chris and Stacy

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG (Children preschool through grade 8 leave for Sunday School.)

***He's got the whole world in his hands, He's got the whole wide world in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands, He's got the whole world in his hands.***

SCRIPTURE LESSON

2 Kings 5:1-19

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

Healer of Our Every Ill

Blue #630

***STATEMENT OF FAITH - Indonesia**

I believe in God, who is love and who has given the earth to all people.

I believe in Jesus Christ, who came to heal us, and to free us from all forms of oppression.

I believe in the Spirit of God, who works in and through all who are turned toward the truth.

I believe in the community of faith, which is called to be at the service of all people.

I believe in God's promise to finally destroy the power of sin in us all, and to establish the kingdom of justice and peace for all humankind.

I do not believe that suffering need be in vain, that death is the end, that the disfigurement of our world is what God intended.

But I dare to believe, always and in spite of everything, in God's power to transform and transfigure, fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where justice and peace will flourish. 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

God is Still Speaking

arr. Marty Haugen



*OFFERTORY

Now Thank We All Our God

Blue #14

***Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
Who, from our mother's arms, has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.***

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Generous God, **you** bless us in ways we expect and ways that surprise us. With grateful hearts, we offer these gifts and our lives. Use them to bring help, healing, and hope to our neighbors. Remind us that even a simple gift can make a difference in your hands. Amen.

Sending

*HYMN

O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come

Blue #638

*BLESSING

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Sarah Plum
Deacons: Liz Swank
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Trustee:
Welcomers: Rene Bylander, Lu Lueck,
Brodie Lueck
Coffee
Fellowship: WISE Team
Counters: Trish Graves, Allen Barnes

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Christopher Myers
Education Pastor: Stacy Johnson Myers
Community &
Outreach Pastor: Bob Wang
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>Oct 4, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 1,536	\$ 421,798
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 452,320

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), Ryan Cottrell (friend of the Koechers), Diana (friend of Janice Healy), Nolan, Kelly (sister-in-law of Cindy Gandrud), Jill (daughter of JoAnn Mathews), Dave Woeste, Joan Hyland, Samantha Church (granddaughter of Duane Church), Bernie (brother of Becky Pajac)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For those who will receive College Packs this fall, may they bring God's love close to them
- For the return of Wednesday Night Family Meals (yay!), may we all be fed
- For the return of Wednesday School this past week, may our kiddos have a fun and faith filled year!
- For the Side by Side choir which began practicing in our Fellowship Hall recently connecting community members and those with dementia through the gift of music and song, may their joy grow
- As we approach All Saints Sunday on Sunday, November 1st, we remember all those who have died this past year and those who have returned to the church Memorial Garden as we dedicate a plaque with their names, may we remember them with gratitude

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, and generous hearts
- For those in our armed forces and their families, may we support them and may God watch over them
- For farmers, especially small family farms, struggling to stay viable with so many economic challenges
- For stability and peace in Sudan, Iran, Israel, Gaza and Ukraine

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For those who were at Moon Beach this past week getting our church camp ready for fall and winter – Jane W, Lu L, Norma R, Tim B, Carol M and Dan R - thank you for your work!
- For Alyssa Larsen (daughter of Joel and Tanya) and Jaron Duitsman to be married on October 31 in Maiden Rock, WI with pastor Chris officiating (yes, they are getting married on Halloween!)
- For Darlene Sumption and Lyle Wood who both celebrated their 100th birthdays recently, you are inspirations!
- For those who gave blood at our last Red Cross Blood Drive, may it bring life

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For Charlotte Fiedler Eaton (sister of Barb Mahoney) who died at 98 last week, may we give thanks for her life
- For Neil Williams (father of Shelly Killian) who died this past week and whose Celebration of Life will be Tuesday, October 13th from 3-6pm in the church Fellowship Hall, with a Prayer Service at 5pm, may they mourn in hope
- For Connie Pajac (sister of Jeff Pajac) who died this past week, may she join the saints in light
- For those who are welcomed home to the church Memorial Garden, Kate Wolfe on September 16 and Glenn Hansen on October 17, may their memory continue to inspire us
- For the families of Jeff Healy (brother of Steve Healy), Terry Mills (father of Tim Mills), Galen Matzek (brother of Sue Danielson), Kathy Deiss (aunt of Ann Nelson), Robert (Bob) Peterson (brother of Larry Peterson), may they be remembered with thanksgiving

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!

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 Revelation. Copies of the book are available in the church office for \$20. The group meets in the library on **Wednesdays, 1:00–2:30 pm**. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

Wednesday School Volunteers Needed: Wednesday School begins on **October 7**. We need volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis. Please sign the list on the sign-up table or volunteer on the website.

Loving Neighbor

Christmas Shoebox: We wanted to remind you of this project for the gentlemen at Kinnic Falls Alcohol & Drug Abuse Center so when you see the items we have listed, you can grab a couple & before we know it, our list will be complete. If you would rather donate cash, put Christmas Shoebox in the memo line and we will make sure all items are purchased. Thanks to all of you, we are making a difference. The list is on the gathering table.

Basics for Local Kids (BLK): BLK is a non-profit organization that provides winterwear to local kids in need from infant to 18 years old. Please consider making a donation of gently used or new coats, snow pants, boots, hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, or socks. Donations can be placed in the bin. Volunteers are needed to help families shop or to sort & restock items. To volunteer go to www.BasicsforLocalKids.org or call Kim Johnson at 715-821-1623. Thank you for your generous, continuing support. Other questions contact Renee Whipple 715-307-5074.

Journey House is Hosting a Discover Night – Thurs, Oct 22, 6:00 pm: This is a great opportunity for anyone to get to know Journey House a little more. Also, remember, if you have any donations you'd like to give young adults that are transitioning into their own journey, there is always a Journey House bin in the gathering area.

Back Bay Mission Trip Planned for April 2027: Ever wanted to go on a mission trip? Heard about the awesome experiences so many of our church folks have had at UCC related Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi? Join us! Our church is sponsoring yet another trip to Back Bay Mission, **April 18-24, 2027**. Please contact Carol Merriman or Pastor Chris for details. Use the sign-up sheet to register your interest.

Journey House: (Ecumenical young adult outreach) If you're interested in contributing, here are some ideas: **A Welcome to School Care Kit & Goody Bag.** We are asking for a donation of \$25; **A suggested donation of \$30 to help sponsor our weekly gathering, Journey Nights; Amazon Wish List.** We created and plan on keeping up with an [Amazon Wish List](#).

Grace Place Donations: 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 & female), belts, adult socks, good buys.

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 Volunteers Needed: The program meets two days a week and has 12 active guests. Training is provided & the rewards are phenomenal! Contact them at amongfriendsrf@gmail.com

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.

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

Inquirer's Class: New to church? Want to know more about our life and ministry? Join us on **Tues, Oct 27 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. At this 90-minute gathering, you will meet church leaders, other new folks and learn more about First Congregational Church. Dessert and childcare are provided. Please sign up at church.

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 **Oct 13 & 27**.

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 **Oct 13 & 27**.

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, Oct 21 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 date is **Oct 18 at 11:45 am**.

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

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. We also need people to sign up to help clean up. The menu for Oct 14 is Swedish meatballs, butter & parsley potatoes, vegetable, roll.

Learning Community: **Tues, Oct 13 at 6:30 pm: A Night in the National Parks!** - Ever wanted to visit 3 of our most famous national parks: Tetons, Yellowstone & Glacier? Join Pastor Chris as he leads us on a tour of three of our nation's most outstanding national parks. He will talk about both the beauty & grandeur of the parks as well as practical logistical things - where to stay, what to do & most important, how far out to plan & book! Sign up & join us, dessert will be served.

Preschool Screening: The School District of River Falls is hosting a free preschool screening on **Fri, Oct 23**. This is designed for families who live within district boundaries & have concerns about some aspect of their 2-1/2 to 5 year old child's development. For more info, contact Ann Nelson at 715-425-1819 ext. 3101 or ann.nelson@rfsd.k12.wi.us.

Fall Clean-Up, Sat, Oct 24, 9:00 am: Please bring your gloves, rakes, blowers, pruning shears, etc. to help clean up the grounds at the church. Back-up date is Sat, Oct 31 Please sign up and join us!

Relax with Rose - Breathwork Techniques: **Thurs, Oct 29, 6:30-7:45 pm** - Learn and practice several different breathwork techniques. These quick techniques will help you step back and relax in a stressful moment or reduce your racing thoughts so you can fall asleep faster. For more info, contact Rose Rude at 715-781-7032 or rar651@gmail.com. Please sign up.

Giving Thanks Meal: The Annual Giving Thanks Meal will be **Sun, Nov 15**, after the worship service in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$10 per meal. Join us for a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal as we kick off the season of giving thanks. Please include your pie choice of pumpkin or apple and let us know if you will bring a side dish. Sign up by Nov 11.

Side by Side Choir: For those living with memory or thinking changes, their care partners, family, friends & community volunteers who enjoy helping others. It is a welcoming choir where people gather at the church to connect & thrive by sharing music, joy & laughter! Join us **Mondays at 10:00 am** for our fall season. Rehearsals will conclude with a **concert on Sat, Dec 5 at 10:30 am**. To learn more or sign-up contact: Norma Revels at 651-416-9530 or sidebysidechoir@gmail.com

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

College Pack Items Needed! One of the mission activities of the church youth program is to send College Packs to those off at school or the military. We ask each of our 6-12th grade families to bring items for the 30 college packs. Think necessary items, fun items & lightweight items! Food is always good. So are dorms decs. **Please bring them by Sun, Oct 11.**



A LEARNING COMMUNITY

NATIONAL PARKS

Glacier • Yellowstone • Grand Teton

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13

6:30-8:00 PM

Learn how to plan your trip and discover
what to see and do. Already visited?
Come share your tips and favorite experiences!

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

110 North Third Street
River Falls, WI 54022
www.firstchurchrf.org

All are welcome!

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Philippians 4:1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Kings 5:1-19

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favor with his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, 'If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.' So Naaman went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. And the king of Aram said, 'Go then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel.'

He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, 'When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his leprosy.' When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, 'Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me.'

But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, 'Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel.' So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha's house. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, 'Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean.' But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, 'I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?' He turned and went away in a rage. But his servants approached and said to him, 'Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, "Wash, and be clean"?' So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company; he came and stood before him and said, 'Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel; please accept a present from your servant.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will accept nothing!' He urged him to accept, but he refused. Then Naaman said, 'If not, please let two mule-loads of earth be given to your servant; for your servant will no longer offer burnt-offering or sacrifice to any god except the LORD. But may the LORD pardon your servant on one count: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow down in the house of Rimmon, when I do bow down in the house of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon your servant on this one count.' He said to him, 'Go in peace.'