

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

October 25, 2026



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

October 25, 2026

Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

Some people, as soon as they hear of a law, immediately start looking for a loophole. But where can you find a loophole in the greatest commandment? This law, of all laws, is absolutely airtight. It covers every aspect of our being: the soul within, and the human relationships without...No, you'll never find a loophole in this law. It's the unrepentant sinner's terror and the redeemed disciple's joy.

- Timothy Merrill & Carl Wilton

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: We gather for worship as children of God.

P: We come to remember who we are and to whom we belong.

L: We gather for worship to be renewed in our faith.

P: We come to receive God's love and learn of God's way.

L: We gather for worship to see a vision of what can be in our lives and in the world.

P: We come to love our neighbors, forgive past hurts, and offer our hands and energy to God.

L: We gather for worship in gratitude for all we have been given.

P: We come to lift our voices in songs of praise.

***HYMN**

God is Here

Blue #1

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

L: Most merciful God,

P: We confess that we are held captive by sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: In Jesus Christ, our sins of the past are forgiven.

P: **Thanks be to God! Let us live as new people: forgiven, freed, and faithful to the ways of God.**

L: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: **And also with you.**

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

***GLORIA (Sung twice)**

*Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah, Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah
Halle, Halle, Halle – lu – jah, Hallelujah, Hal-le-lu-jah*

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Romans 3:19-28

PSALM 90:1-6, 13-17 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)



L: Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations.

P: **Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

L: You turn us back to dust, and say, 'Turn back, you mortals.'

P: **For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.**

L: You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning; in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

P: **Turn, O LORD! How long? Have compassion on your servants! R**

- L: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
- P: **Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil.**
- L: Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.
- P: **Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands - O prosper the work of our hands! 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: The table is prepared as Jesus requested and we are invited to the meal.
- P: **Come to the table...**
- L: Like Peter, with more enthusiasm than resolve; like James and John, dismayed by the priorities of God's reign.
- P: **Come to the table...**
- L: Like Martha, hosting and leading with confidence; like Mary, full of love and attention.
- P: **Come to the table...**
- L: Like Judas, disillusioned and rebellious; like Mary Magdalene, faithful to the end.
- P: **Come to the table...**
- L: Where Jesus offers himself in the bread and the cup.
- P: **Come to the table of Christ!**

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:

As the Grains of Wheat

Refrain

As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread;
so may all your peo - ple from all the ends of earth be
gath - ered in - to one in you.

The musical notation for the Refrain is written on a single staff in treble clef, key of D major (two sharps), and 4/4 time. It consists of four lines of music, each corresponding to a line of lyrics. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a final cadence on the fourth line.

Verses

1. As this cup of bless - ing is shared with-in our midst,
2. Let this be a fore - taste of all that is to come when
may we share the pres - ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

The musical notation for the Verses is written on a single staff in treble clef, key of D major, and 4/4 time. It consists of two lines of music. The first line has two verses of lyrics. The second line has one verse of lyrics. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a final cadence on the second line.

Let Us Break Bread Together

Blue #699

Eat This Bread

Blue #697

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Proclaiming the Word

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Bob Wang

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

I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river.

I've got peace like a river in my soul.

I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river.

I've got peace like a river in my soul.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Matthew 22:34-46

SERMON

Rev. Stacy Johnson Myers

*HYMN

The Church of Christ in Every Age

Blue #623

(Verses 1, 2, 3, 5)

*STATEMENT OF FAITH – The Apostles' Creed

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

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

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

THE PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors)

Prayer Response



In the Lord I'll be ev-er thank-ful, in the Lord I will re-joice! Look to God, do not be a-



fraid. Lift up your voic-es, the Lord is near. Lift up your voic-es, the Lord is near.

...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.

DISCIPLESHIP MOMENT

Melissa Wilson

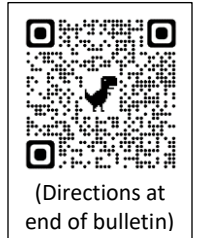
GATHERING OUR GIFTS – Rev. Bob Wang

I Will Sing of Your Love, Love, Love

Words/Music by Christopher Grundy

Refrain:

*I will sing of your love, love, love
of your steadfast love for as long as I live
and I will sing of your love, love, love
for as long as I live.*



*OFFERTORY

O God Beyond All Praising



O - God be-yond all prais-ing, we wor-ship you to - day and - sing the love a - maz - ing that
songs can - not re - pay; for we can on - ly won - der at - ev - 'vry gift you send, at —
bless - ings with - out num - ber and mer - cies with - out end: we lift our hearts be - fore - you and
wait up - on your word, we hon - or and a - dore you, our great and might - y Lord.

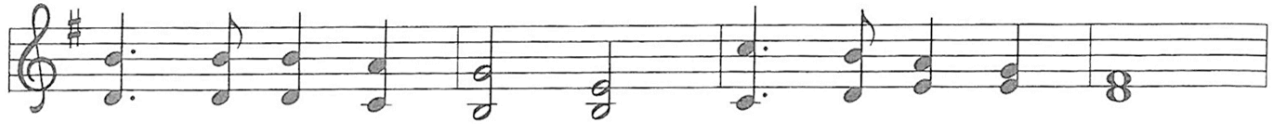
*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

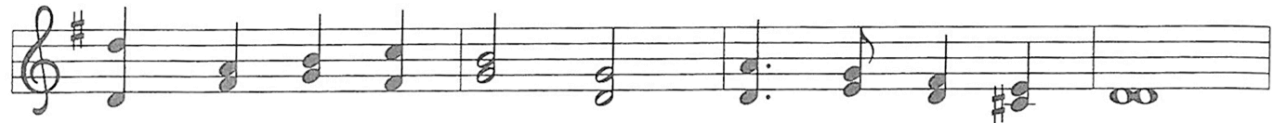
Sending

*HYMN

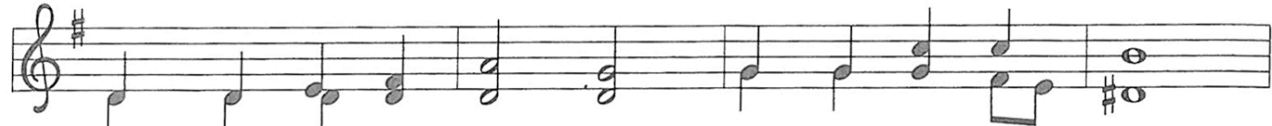
On Our Way Rejoicing



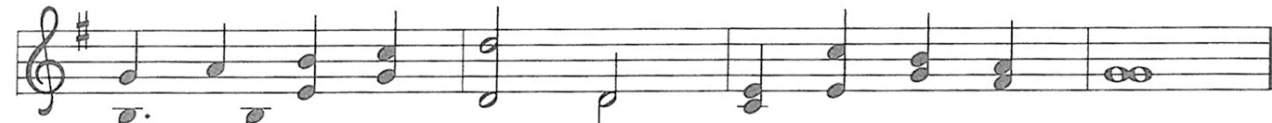
1 On our way re - joic - ing glad - ly let us go.
2 Un - to God the Fa - ther joy - ful songs we sing;



Christ our Lord has con - quered; van - quished is the foe.
un - to God the Sav - ior thank - ful hearts we bring;



Christ with - out, our safe - ty; Christ with - in, our joy;
un - to God the Spir - it bow we and a - dore,

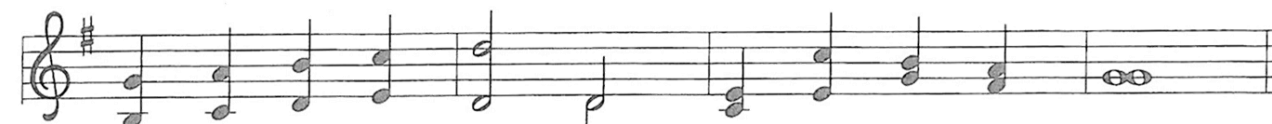


who, if we be faith - ful, can our hope de - stroy?
on our way re - joic - ing now and ev - er - more.

Refrain



On our way re - joic - ing; as we for - ward move,



hear - ken to our prais - es, O blest God of love!

*BLESSING

L: What is the greatest commandment?

P: **Love the Lord our God with heart, soul and mind.**

L: And the second?

P: **Love our neighbor as ourselves.**

L: Let us go out from this place and serve the world — set free by the grace of Jesus Christ, committed to live in the love of God, and sustained by the Holy Spirit.

P: **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

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SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Stacy Johnson Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantors: David Reilly, Sarah Plum
Liturgist: Sue Danielson
Deacons: Melissa Oscanyan,
Paul Shepherd, Kathy Rausch,
Heidi Cavaness, Anna Morrison
Organist: Terry Mithun
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Trustee: Andy Krueger
Welcomer: Jill Hatfield
Coffee
Fellowship: Marlys Peterson, Pat Anderson
Counters: Diane Welsh, Wendy Querna
*Altar table flowers are given by Alan
Tuchtenhagen in honor of his late mother,
Lorraine, who would have been 102 on Monday.*

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 11, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 4,854	\$ 426,652
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 463,628

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), Kevin (son-in-law of Pat Anderson), Helen Wood, Diane Olsen and Faye (friends of Helen Wood), Mary Yaeger, Sharon Monroe, Logan Kiel, Luca, Cindy and Chris Marek (friends of Sue Simonet)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For those who will join us for the next Inquirer's Class on Tuesday, October 27th, may it help folks learn more about our life and ministry as a congregation
- For our trustees and their helpers getting our church grounds ready for winter on Saturday, October 24th, God bless you and your work!
- For young people striving to figure out who they are in a fast-changing world
- For those who will receive College Packs this fall, may they bring God's love close to them
- For those preparing for the November 15th Giving Thanks Meal, may it help us feed on gratitude
- For those who participated in the last Learning Community on National Parks and those who will join us for the next one on November 10 on the Churches of River Falls lead by Mark Anderson, may these help us 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 the safe arrival of Lainey Christina, daughter of Katie Krueger and Hunter Pesik, may they all rest and grow in love
- For those who were at Moon Beach Camp recently 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 will give blood at our next blood drive on Wednesday, November 25 (the day before Thanksgiving), may it be a time of true thanksgiving and may it bring life to others

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For Charlotte Fiedler Eaton (sister of Barb Mahoney) who died at 98 recently, may we give thanks for her life
- For those who were 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 Neil Williams, Connie Pajac (sister of Jeff Pajac), Jeff Healy (brother of Steve Healy), Terry Mills (father of Tim Mills), Galen Matzek (brother of Sue Danielson), 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.

The background of the entire poster is a light cream color, framed by a decorative border of autumn-themed illustrations. This border includes various types of leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and brown, as well as small, stylized flowers and berries. The main title is centered in a large, bold, brown serif font.

GIVING THANKS MEAL

Hosted by First Congregational Church

Join us for a warm meal and grateful hearts!

**Celebrate God's goodness and the blessings of community
as we share food, fellowship and thanksgiving together.**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

10:00 AM WORSHIP

11:00 AM MEAL

**All are welcome – bring family,
friends and neighbors!**

Sign up by Sunday, November 11



SCRIPTURE LESSON: Romans 3:19-28

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For ‘no human being will be justified in his sight’ by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

But now, irrespective of law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and the LORD showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, and the Plain—that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. The LORD said to him, ‘This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, “I will give it to your descendants”; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.’ Then Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, at the LORD’s command. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day. Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated. The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days; then the period of mourning for Moses was ended.

Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face. He was unequalled for all the signs and wonders that the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Matthew 22:34-46

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’ He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ‘What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?’ They said to him, ‘The son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

‘Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet’”?

If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?’ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.