First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin

November 22, 2026



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

Christ the King Sunday
November 22, 2026 *Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost* 10:00 am

Gathering

'No, honey. There is only one king – Jesus Christ. I'm just a singer.'
- Elvis

'One of the scariest questions in the Palm Sunday story… How will I respond when Jesus comes riding humbly into my life? Will I recognize the time of God's coming to me? Will I recognize and welcome God's personal visit?'
- Marty Boller

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: Let the earth shout and the heavens declare:
P: Christ the King reigns over all.
L: Let the mountains and rivers and seas proclaim:
P: Christ the King reigns over all.
L: Let the angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim announce the news:
P: Christ the King reigns over all.
L: Let the people of God join the everlasting refrain:
P: Christ the King reigns over all!
All: Come let us worship the God who leads us into abundant life!

HYMN** ***Crown Him with Many Crowns **Blue #317**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Beckoning God, **you invite us to walk your path and to live lives worthy of the gospel. Yet how often we hold a grudge, sustain a pout, harbor a complaint. We are preoccupied with our hurts and absorbed in the little injustices done to us. We neglect our high calling to visit the sick, care for the poor, feed the hungry, confront the oppressors and work for the new reign of God. Empowering God, open our eyes and strengthen our wills to care for the ill, to shelter the homeless and provide security for the abused, to feed the hungry and to pester those in power to care for the well-being of all their citizens. Let our lives be worthy of Christ the King, the Prince of Peace, the Redeemer of us all. Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Friends, let us believe and live the good news:

P: God has rescued us from the power of darkness.

L: And in Jesus Christ, God has come and shown us the way to abundant life here and now.

P: Let us live our lives in this light.

L: In Christ we are forgiven.

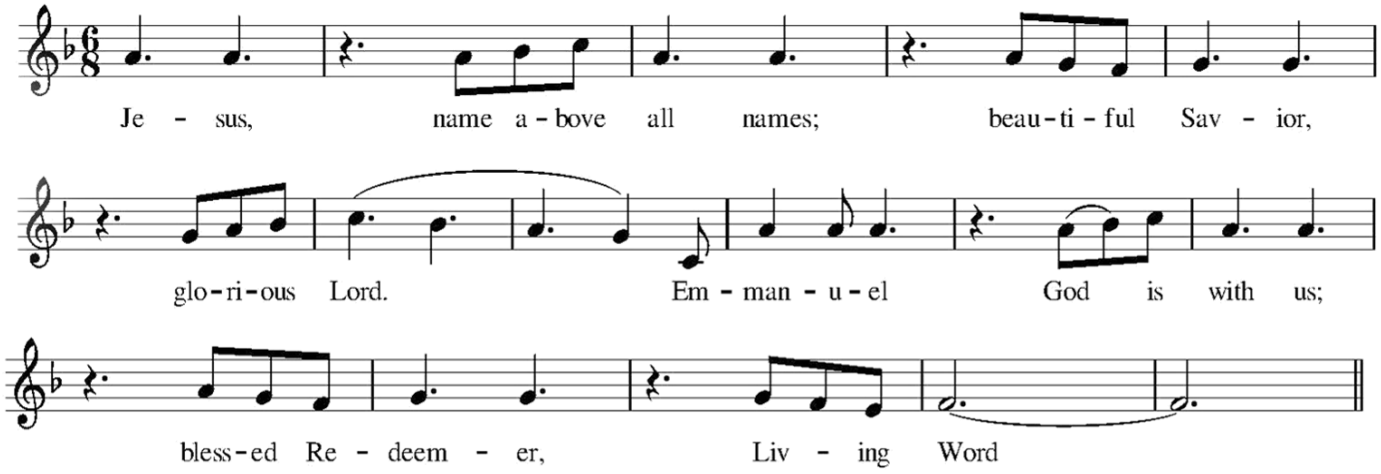
P: Thanks be to God. Amen.

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 (Sung Twice)**



Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON **Ephesians 1:15-23**

PSALM 100 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R



L: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come into God's presence with singing.

P: Know that the LORD is God. It is God who made us, and we are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.

L: Enter God's gates with thanksgiving, and God's courts with praise. Give thanks to God, bless God's name.

P: For the LORD is good; God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations. *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: Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! People come from the east and the west, from the north and the south to sit at the table in the kingdom of God. When our Risen Lord was at table with his disciples, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them; then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. This is the Lord's table, not ours, and our Savior Jesus Christ invites those who trust him to share the feast that he has prepared.

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.

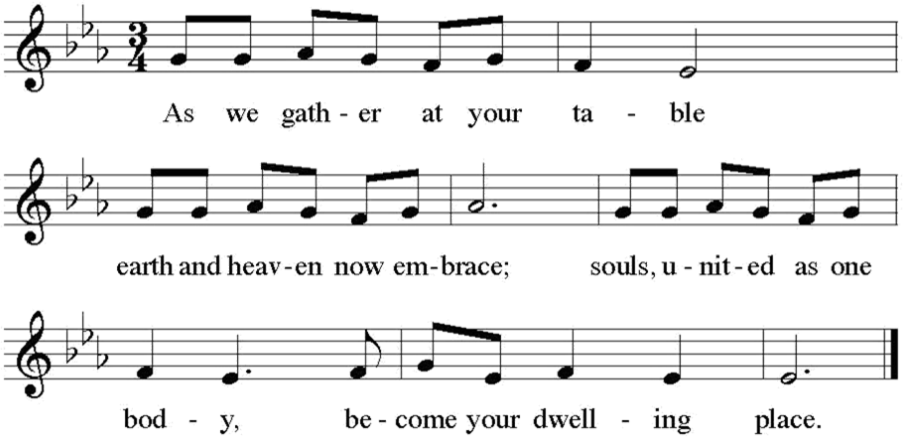
Prayer of Consecration

Distribution of the Elements

Hymns during the distribution of the elements:

As We Gather at Your Table

Congregation join on refrain:



One Bread, One Body

Blue #689

Let Us Be Bread

Congregation join on refrain:



Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: We give you thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Proclaiming the Word

TIME WITH CHILDREN **Rev. Chris Myers**

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

Jesus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long ago,
Taking children on his knee, saying, "Let them come to me."
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

GOSPEL LESSON **Matthew 25:31-46**

SERMON **Rev. Chris Myers**

HYMN** ***Rejoice, the Lord Is King! **Blue #342**

(Verses 1, 2 and 4)

***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.

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

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

L: Friends, do you desire to affirm your baptism into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?

Candidates: I do.

L: Do you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

Candidates: I do.

L: Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ's disciple, to follow in the way of our Savior, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

Candidates: I promise, with the help of God.

L: Do you promise, according to the grace given to you, to grow in the Christian faith and to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ, celebrating Christ's presence and furthering Christ's mission to all the world?

Candidates: I promise, with the help of God.

L: By your baptism you were made one with us in the body of Christ, the church. Today we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith which has brought you to this time and place. We give thanks for every community of faith that has been your spiritual home, and we celebrate your presence in this household of faith. Do you promise to participate in the life and mission of the family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves this community and the world?

Candidates: I promise, with the help of God.

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

All: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love, that we may be witnesses of our risen Savior.

Moderator: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of First Congregational United Church of Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming you into the company of this local church.

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.

MISSION MOMENT **Rene Bylander**

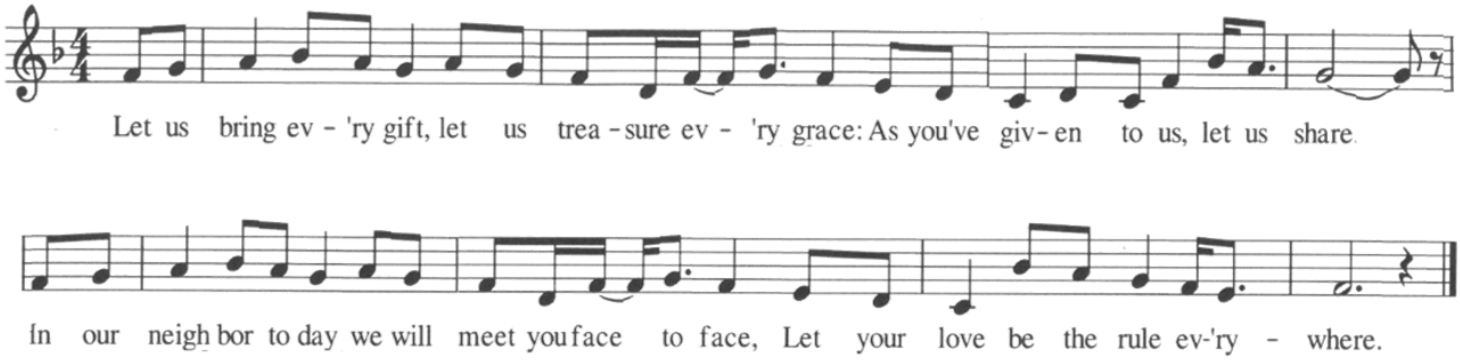
GATHERING OUR GIFTS – Chancel Choir

(Directions at end of bulletin)

Good News!

Arr. by Lloyd Larson

***OFFERTORY**



***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Creator God, **you have gifted us with a beautiful and abundant world in which to live. You have also gifted us with the responsibility of being stewards of your creation. We acknowledge that all that we have is yours, and we return now a portion of it to you. Accept our tithes and offerings, we pray, as our grateful response to your generosity with us. Amen.**

Sending

HYMN** ***You Servants of God **Black #305**

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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Giving Thanks Meal







SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher:	Chris Myers
Celebrant:	Chris Myers
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Steven Koecher
Deacons:	Laura Anderson, Kathy Rausch, Liz Swank, Ann Nelson, Anna Morrison
Organist:	Marsha Pearson
Live Stream:	Jeff Hoffman
Nursery:	Kahla Fuller
Trustee:	Vicki Sippel
Welcomers:	Janet Johnson, Susan Walden
Coffee Fellowship:	Alice and Evie Myklebust
Counters:	Vicki Sippel, Scott Nelson

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

	Nov 15, 2026	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	$ 22,287	$ 513,928
General Fund Operational Needs	$ 11,308	$ 520,168

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 Morrissette, Nathaniel (friend of the Kruegers), Bruce (father of Melissa Oscanyan), Diana (friend of Janice Healy), Kelly (sister-in-law of Cindy Gandrud), Dave Woeste, Samantha Church (granddaughter of Duane Church), Kevin (son-in-law of Pat Anderson), Helen Stoltz-Wood, Diane Olsen and Faye (friends of Helen Stoltz-Wood), Mary Yaeger, Sharon Monroe, Logan Kiel, Luca, Cindy and Chris Marek (friends of Sue Simonet), Pat Anderson, Raelle Jorae, Aamon Johnson (nephew of Tanya Larsen), Christina Krueger, Becca Hoblin (daughter or Rae and Dick), Donna Skule (sister-in-law of Marshall Skule)

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

-For our church committees and council who met Tuesday, may they help us live into our mission statement of loving God and serving people, everyone is welcome because everyone matters
-For those who will be received as members on Sunday, November 22, may we make room for their gifts
-For those who received College Packs this fall, may they bring God's love close to them
-On All Saints Sunday, Nov 1st, we remembered all those who have died this past year and those who have been welcomed home to the church Memorial Garden as we dedicated a plaque with their names, may we remember them with gratitude

Prayers for our World:

-For those traveling over the Thanksgiving holiday, may you travel safely there and home
-For a safe and fruitful hunting season
-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 veterans, especially those who are homeless or suffering from PTSD, may their be helped
-For stability and peace in Iran, Israel, Gaza and Ukraine

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

-For the gift of this church and its ministry as we dedicate our financial pledges for 2027
-For our Trustees who recently painted classroom 101 downstairs (they are trying to repaint one classroom a year), it looks brand new!
-For Tanner and Madeline Pietz who celebrated their 3rd wedding anniversary on November 10, may your love continue to grow
-For the safe arrival of Lainey daughter of Katie Krueger and Hunter Pesik born October 20th, may they all rest and grow in love
-For Alyssa Larsen (daughter of Joel and Tanya) and Jaron Duitsman who were married on October 31 in Maiden Rock, WI with pastor Chris officiating (yes, they got married on Halloween!), may their love continue to grow
-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 Wed, Nov 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:

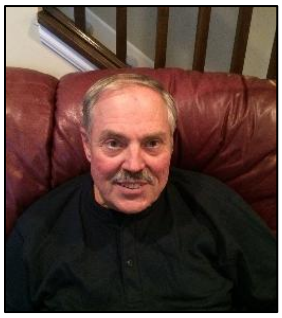
-For Jeff Johnson (brother of Jenny Luedtke) who died recently, may his family be comforted
-For Mary Sterba (mother of Scott Sterba) who died recently, may her family be comforted
-For the families of Matthew Drinkwine (son of Katy Kapaun our Wednesday Meal Church Cook), Bernie Schmahl (brother of Marylee and Becky Pajac), Lynn Merriman, Neil Williams, and Connie Pajac (sister of Jeff Pajac), 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.

NEW MEMBERS – November 22, 2026



Shelley Hallen – I grew up in MN and WI as a Methodist. I joined my husband's family's ELCA Lutheran church in Hudson, WI just before we married in 1985. We have two adult children that live nearby, and we are both retired. I do watch my 1-year-old granddaughter 4 days a week.



Steve Healy – I am married to Janice Healy. We have two daughters, Stephanie Hagen and family of Hudson and Megan Wolsey and family of Red Wing and one son, Brian who is deceased and his family lives in Rochester, New York. I am a retired President and CEO of Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services and a former Executive Director of Polk County Economic Development Corporation following retirement. I am on the school board Service of the School District of River Falls. I am an active life member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Pheasants Forever. I have served on a number of boards of directors. I enjoy travel, hunting and fishing.



Deb Hulbert – My family moved to River Falls in 1958. My Dad taught Physical Education and was the wrestling coach at the RF State College. My Mom was a nurse at the City Hospital. I was in fifth grade. I went to the Campus School and graduated from RF Senior High in 1967. I graduated from UW-RF in 1970 with a degree in Physical Education. I earned a Master's Degree in Education at Hamlin University in 1995.

In 1969 Rich Timmerman and I were married in Hawaii while he was on leave from his station in Vietnam. We had three children who were educated in River Falls. Wesley is an electrician, Alec is a math teacher. Abby was diagnosed with a rare auto immune disorder when she was 14. During the journey with her illness, we had a lot of ups and downs. It was during that time that Rich and I divorced. On the upside, the RF community was always at our side. Abby always said we could live and prepare for her death because we were never alone.

I taught PE in Red Wing and River Falls at the Junior High, Greenwood, Westside and the University. I coached at Red Wing, Stillwater and River Falls. Back in the day, at the beginning of girl's sports, I coached everything. My coaching legacy; I started the gymnastics team at River Falls.

In 2004 I married Norb Hulbert. He had a construction company in Forest Lake, so I retired and moved to Forest Lake. We were there for 20 years. Three years ago, we moved home.



Jeff Pajac – Even though I have been attending the UCC for over 23 years, and have served on committees and played my guitar and sung alone and with the choir, I have never committed to official membership. I have decided that it is time to join the flock. I was born in Ashland, WI, and grew up on a small rural farm outside of the city limits. My family belonged to the Catholic Church. It took me years to say the "Our Father" without using the Catholic wording – I guess I am a little stubborn. I am currently retired and live with my wife Becky in the little town of Martell, WI. I look forward to finally becoming a member of this church and the people I have come to enjoy as my church family.

NOVEMBER 22, 2026 (A) GREEN TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 25:31-46

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'