

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

September 12, 2021



***Come and Be Fed
Fed by Love***

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

Rally Day

September 12, 2021

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Sisters and Brothers, what does God want from us? What is God calling us to do?

P: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

L: Sisters and Brothers, what else does God want from us?

P: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There are no other commandments greater than these.

L: Thanks be to God, for you have answered well!

P: And thanks be to God for Jesus who shows us how to live a life of loving faithfulness!

L: So let us learn to love deeply and live more faithfully today.

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

***HYMN**

I Was Glad

Congregation join on refrain:

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

***OPENING PRAYER**

Holy and Life Giving God, **teach us today what it means to love – not a love that we have conjured up in our minds, or a love that we have seen on movie screens, but your agape love. Challenge us in the ways we have chosen not to love. Move us toward genuine patience, kindness and humility. Let us be moved to love, even if it is inconvenient and difficult. Teach us today what it means to love one another as you love us. Amen.**

L: Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us follow the example of our Savior Jesus Christ who loves. May the peace of Christ be with you all.

P: And also with you.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

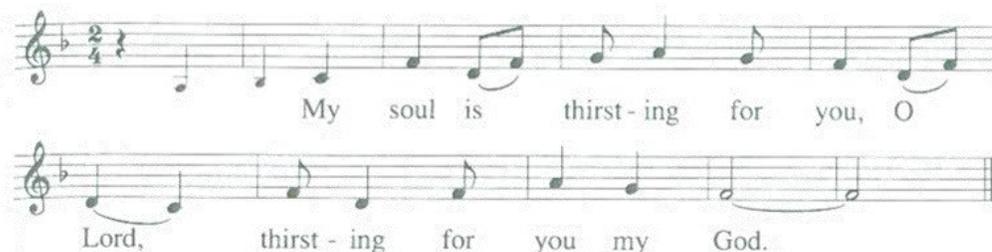
*GLORIA (Sung twice)

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

Hearing the Word

PSALM 86:1-10

R



L: Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

P: Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you.

L: You are my God; be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all day long.

P: Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

L: For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

P: Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication. R

L: In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me.

P: There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.

L: All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.

P: For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. R

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Corinthians 13:1-8a, 13

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG OF BLESSING

*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.*

Celebrating the Meal

(All Christians, regardless of denomination, tradition or age are welcome at the table of our Lord.)

The Invitation to the Meal

L: Jesus said: Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

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 a good and joyful thing, ...

The Words of Institution

L: 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 sung during the distribution of the elements:

Bread for the Journey

Here I am Lord

Congregation join on refrain:

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

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.**

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

Love is flowing: love is flowing, love is flowing from the fountain of life;

Love is flowing: love is flowing, love is flowing from the fountain of life.

Grace is flooding: grace is flooding, grace is flooding from the fountain of life.

Grace is flooding: grace is flooding, grace is flooding from the fountain of life.

Proclaiming the Word

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 12:28-34

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

Rain Down

Congregation join on refrain:

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people.

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life.

***STATEMENT OF FAITH (from a morning prayer liturgy at Eastern Mennonite Seminary)**

We believe in God:

Whose love is the source of all life and the desire of our lives,

Whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth,

Whose love was crucified by the evil that waits to enslave us all,

And whose love, defeating even death, is our glorious promise of freedom.

Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful and full of doubt, in God we trust; And in the name of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves in the service of others,

To seek justice and to live in peace,

To care for the earth and to share the commonwealth of God's goodness,

To live in the freedom of forgiveness and the power of the spirit of love, and in the company of the faithful, so to be the church for the glory of God. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Yonder Come Day/Walk Together, Children

Chancel Choir

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.

Sending

HYMN

Go My Children With My Blessing

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

Note about offering: During the pandemic we are not passing the offering plate. We thankfully receive your gifts, tithes and offerings in the offering plate on the back table. Your generosity is the engine that powers our church community. Thank you.

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Assisting in today's worship service are:

Liturgist:	<i>Alex Plum</i>
Coffee Fellowship:	<i>Susan Walden</i>
Deacons:	<i>Karen Lloyd, Cindy Gandrud, Natasha Rayne</i>
Welcomers:	<i>Elaine Dixen, Art Rice</i>
Nursery:	<i>Kahla Fuller</i>
Organist:	<i>Marsha Pearson</i>
Trustee:	<i>Deb Hoffman</i>
Counters:	<i>Roz Ostendorf, Kris Roen</i>
Music Coordinator & Bell Director:	<i>Jamie Mills</i>
Choir Director:	<i>Sarah Plum</i>
Church Moderator:	<i>Joel Larsen</i>
Office Administrator:	<i>Missy Luedtke</i>
Youth Pastors:	<i>Alex and Sarah Plum</i>
Minister for Community:	<i>Rev. Dave Ostendorf</i>
CE Minister:	<i>Rev. Stacy Johnson Myers</i>
Senior Pastor:	<i>Rev. Chris Myers</i>

Altar table flowers given by Laura Miller in memory of Mike Kelly.

First Congregational Church, 110 N. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

Tel: 425-2052 Email: office@firstchurchrf.org Fax: 425-9800

Tues., Sept 14	9:00-10:00 am	- Yoga in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom
Wed., Sept 15	1:00-2:30 pm	- Adult Bible Study
	6:00-7:00 pm	- Jubilee Ringers
	6:30-7:30 pm	- All Confirmation Classes—College Packs at Mark & Laura Anderson's House (W10382 – 880 th Avenue, River Falls)
	7:00-8:00 pm	- Chancel Choir
Thurs., Sept 16	9:00-10:00 am	- Yoga in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom
	1:00-2:00 pm	- Among Friends Board Meeting
Fri., Sept 17	11:00 am-5:00 pm	- Red Cross Blood Drive in the Fellowship Hall
Sun., Sept 19	8:45-9:45 am	- Music Rehearsal in the Fellowship Hall
	8:45-9:45 am	- Adult Forum in the Youth Room
	9:45-11:15 am	- Nursery Open
	10:00-11:00 am	- Worship Service in the Fellowship Hall and Livestream
	10:00-10:30 am	- Children in Worship
	10:30-11:15 am	- Sunday School (Pre-School – Grade 8)
	11:00-11:30 am	- Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:00-11:30 am	- WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Sept 5, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 4,450	\$ 329,965
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 333,432

A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Those who are ill or recovering:

Augie (friend of Rose Rude), Peg Thompson, Roger Hirstein, Jim, Wendy MacDougall (wife of our Association Minister Rob), Troy Veith, Edna (friend of the Danielsons and Petersons), Rosalie Harper (cousin on JoAnn Lentz), Carolyn Larrabee, Donna Moseman, Kelly (friend of Barb Stephens), Don Larson, Pat (friend of Jean Smith), Neil (son of Yvonne Benson), Joyce Kampstra, Duane Church

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For the return of our chancel choir and arrival of our new choir director, Sarah Plum, may they glorify God together
- For those gathering for the Confirmation and Intern Bonfire this coming Wednesday at 6:30 pm at the Anderson's house
- For those who will receive college packs, that they may bring the love of God close to our college students
- For the Among Friends program as they plan their October 5 re-opening, come Holy Spirit
- For Coffee Fellowship Hosts, welcomers and liturgists who help enhance our Sunday morning
- For Gus de Souza and Wayne and Marian Wolfe who returned home and were recently interred in the Church Memorial Garden, may they rest for their labors
- For those who continue to support our church's ministry with their tithes, offerings and gifts--you are all a blessing

Prayers for our World:

- For teachers and kids starting school, may they have a much better year
- For our nation as it observes the 20th anniversary of the 9-11 attacks
- For the people of Afghanistan, especially its women
- For our troubled creation as climate change rears its ugly head, that we may collectively change our behavior
- For those fighting forest fires, may God speed their work
- For healthcare workers who are exhausted after the pandemic, may you be given God's strength

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

- For a return of choir and bells, may they make beautiful music together
- For the birth of Thomas Jay Crosby first grandson to Allen and Dianne Barnes (11pounds!), may he bring great joy
- For the weekly Mini Farmers Market in our Fellowship Hall when people (Roland Roe and others) bring in their fresh veggies for us to enjoy, bless you
- For the birth of Ella Suzanne Middlestaedt, new and first grandchild to Ann and Scott Jameson
- For Bailey Plackner who is recently engaged to Alex Boyer and planning a July 2022 wedding, may you grow in love
- For the nearly 205 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the families of the 13 Marines killed in Kabul, may they be comforted
- For those in mourning including the families of Mark Mahoney, John Hyland and Barb Greub, that they may receive the peace of Christ
- For the 650,000 Americans and over 4.5 million worldwide who have died of Covid, may they not have died in vain

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

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a, 13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends.

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 12:28-34

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Reminders for this week:

- Washcloths for Back Bay Mission
- Items for college packs (due Wednesday in groups of 10)
- Wednesday night bonfire from 6:30 to 7:30 pm for 6th through 12th graders at Mark & Laura Anderson's House (W10382 – 880th Avenue, River Falls)
- How will you show agape love in your life this week?