

Welcome! The mission of First Congregational United Church of Christ is to: **Live by faith, embody love, proclaim hope, and seek justice**. If you are worshipping with us for the first time, we hope that you will find God's presence among us. When the Friendship Folder is passed during the announcements, please sign it, and then pass it back across the pew to the inside aisle.

All are welcome. Jesus called us to welcome all into the family of God. We welcome you to our Fellowship Hour after worship in the Community Room where everyone is invited to enjoy conversation and refreshments. A bathroom for all genders is located off the kitchen connected to the Community Room.

Children are welcome in worship! Activity bags are available in the narthex. There is an area for parents and children at the front of the nave which allows children to be close to the action in worship. Our staffed nursery (downstairs) is an option as well. Our kids are invited to go to their classrooms after the kids' message.



Please ask an usher if you would like a large print bulletin, or if you need directions or any other assistance. A Hearing Loop system is available. Turn your hearing device to the "T" setting.

Serving in Worship Today

	Laura Wright
Leading Worship	Mary Runyon
Choir Director and Organist	Nancy Allen
Reading Scripture	Sue Corbisier
Head Usher	Shelby Webb
Ushers	. Jean Feeney, Cam Roberts, Carlene Roberts
Greeter	Mande Corbett
Nursery	Zali Stanton
Fellowship Hour	Missions and Social Justice

^{*} In the order of service indicates all who are able, please stand.

Gathering Music

"Amazing Grace"

"Morning Has Broken"

Arr. by Hopson

Arr. by Hopson

Welcome and Announcements

Thank you for joining us this Sunday where all are welcome. You are invited to pass the Friendship Folder through your row and share your name. Pass the folder back down the row and take note of those worshipping with you.

Prelude Music

"Alleluia"

Mozart

*Call to Worship

Inspired by Acts 11

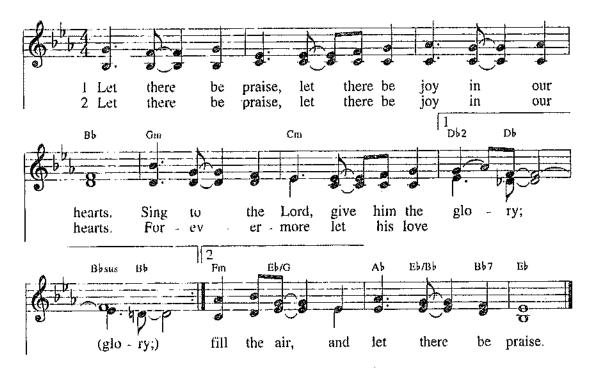
One: Come, people of God, into this sacred space -

where the doors are open wide and all are truly welcome.

Many: God's Spirit moves among every nation, every story, every heart.

One: Who are we to stand in God's way?

All: Let us sing to the One who makes strangers into family, and calls us to love without limit.



Moment of Silence

Take this moment of silence to be still and listen for God.

*Hymn 257 (All join in singing the hymns.)
"What Wondrous Love Is This"

Wondrous Love

*Sharing the Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Please greet those near you with a wave or bow and with words such as:

"Peace be with you. / And also with you."

20 Listening

for the Still-speaking God

The Word for Children

Children will join the pastor in the center aisle as we walk forward for the Word for Children. Kids will go to their JAM classrooms after the kids' message concludes and the congregation sings.

Journey through Baptism

JAM Teacher Recognition

High School Recognition

Avery Bosshard

Bree Scholl

Clayton Kay

Welcoming New Members

Mandy Corbett

Veronica Fosu

Thomas Stolpa

Acclamation (Sung by all.)

Halleluja

All:





Hal-le-Hal-le-Hal - le - lu - ja. Hal-le-lu-ja. Hal-le-lu - ja.

Acts 11:1-18

The Psalter

Psalm 148:1-10; 13 (Read Responsively)

One: Praise the LORD!

Many: Praise the LORD from the heavens;

One: praise God in the heights!

Many: Praise God, all his angels;

One: Praise God, all his host!

Many: Praise God, sun and moon;

One: praise God, all you shining stars!

Many: Praise God, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

One: Let them praise the name of the LORD, for God commanded and they were created.

Many: God established them forever and ever; God fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

One: Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

Many: fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command,

One: mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,

Many: wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

One: Let them praise the name of the LORD, for God's name alone is exalted;

Many: God's glory is above earth and heaven.

The Gospel

John 13:31-35

Sermon through Conversation

"When God Breaks the Rules"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

80 Responding

with the voice of hope

*Anthem

"We Can Be Kind"

The Sanctuary Choir Arr. by Kirby Shaw

The Community Invited into Prayer

Prayers of the Church

The petitions end with: God, in our stillness, The people respond: hear our prayers.

The Prayer of Jesus (Said by all. Use language that reflects your view of God.)

Our (Father / Mother / Creator) 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 trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

80 Thanksgiving

for the gifts of God

Stories of Generosity

Caring for Creation

Music at the Offertory

*As the Gifts Are Presented: Sing to the tune of Old 100th (Hymn 34).

(All who are able are invited to stand and sing.)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures high and low. Praise God, for all that love has done, Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One!



Prayer of Thanksgiving

80 Going

to be messengers of good news

*Hymn 677 (All join in singing the hymns.)
"Child of Blessing, Child of Promise"

Stuttgart

*The Blessing

Postlude Music

"Let All Things Now Living"

Lloyd Larson

Acknowledgements: "What Wondrous Love Is This," words and music in the public domain. "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise" words © 1981 Ronald S. Cole-Turner and music in the public domain. Hymns and service music reprinted and streamed with permission under Onelicense.net #A-728014.

Cover Image: The cover of today's order of worship was uniquely created to show the unclean animals that likely descended in a sheet in Peter's vision (Acts 11). God shared with Peter that these unclean animals were acceptable to God even as the gentiles were also welcomed into the family of God.

Flowers today are given by Ruby Biering and family in memory of Dick Biering.

First Congregational UCC Ministry Team
All the Members
Rev. Dr. Laura WrightSenior Pastor
Rev. Mary Runyon
Nancy Allen
Michelle Logan
Contact Information: First Congregational UCC, 2503 Main Street, La Crosse, WI 54601, 608-784-8137 or office@firstcongolax.org, or visit us on the web at www.firstcongolax.org .
What gifts did you give God this week?
Do you mind if we share your gift to God with the congregation? Yes No

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Week in our Church:

Sunday, May 18

Faith Forum: Good Energy (C) 9:00 am

Worship w/JAM & Nursery 10:00 am Fellowship (CR) 11:00 am

WISE Committee (C) 11:00 am

Sunday Funday at Riverside Amusements

5:00 pm

Monday, May 19

Christian Education Meeting (Zoom) 7:15 pm

Tuesday, May 20

Moderator Team Meeting (L) 1:30 pm

Finance Committee Meeting (L) 6:00 pm Wednesday, May 21

Sip & Scripture (Ardie's Flipside) 10:00 am

Friday, May 23 Office Closed

Sunday, May 25

Worship w/JAM & Nursery 10:00 am 11:00 am

Fellowship (CR)

CALENDAR KEY

CR = Community Room, C = Chapel, L = Lounge, N = Narthex, S = Sanctuary, J = JAM Rooms

Thank You to Our Wonderful Bell Choir!



We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented Bell Choir enriching our worship experience. Every time the bells ring, their beautiful sound lifts our hearts and deepens our connection to the Spirit.

The choir is directed by Sue Retzlaff, whose passion and commitment to this unique ministry are evident in every performance. We are grateful for her leadership and for the joy the bells bring to our services.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the amazing ringers:

Mary Ann Gschwind

Julie Larson

Julie Shelby

Jeanne Swanson

Charmaine Uphaus

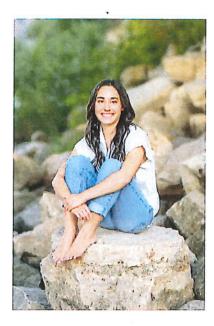
Tom Uphaus

Thank you all for sharing your gifts with our congregation!

Our 2025 High School Graduates!











We are proud to celebrate these three amazing individuals as they graduate from La Crosse Central High School and prepare for the next chapter of their journeys:

- Avery Bosshard will attend St. Olaf College in the fall, where she plans to study Biology and Environmental Science.
- C.J. Kay will begin his studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato, this fall. His confirmation verse is: "Be just and fair to all," the Lord God says. "Do what's right and good, for I am coming soon to rescue you." — Isaiah 56:1
- Bree Scholl will attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison, continuing her academic journey at this renowned institution.

We celebrate your accomplishments and pray for blessings on your future endeavors! 💥



WAFER Donation

May WAFER Donation



Our WAFER donation for May was \$120.00 Thank you for your generous support!



Thank You to All Our JAM Volunteers

We are so grateful for each of you who gave your time, energy, and love to our children this year through the JAM program.

Throughout the year, you have nurtured and guided our precious children in faith. We've seen them grow and flourish thanks to your incredible dedication. In our baptismal promises, we commit to walking alongside parents in raising children in the faith—and you have lived that promise week after week.

Please know how deeply we appreciate your hard work and faithful service.

Our 2024-2025 JAM Teachers:

- Amanda Brouwer
- Samantha White
- Melissa Seep
- Diane Stoffregen
- Zach Shilling
- Laura Mitchell
- Nancy Burgett
- Stephanie Edeler
- Rob Parker
- Maury Weiland
- Beth Moore

- Sherry Sawle
- Victoria Ratsch
- Carlene Roberts
- Emma Ledbetter
- Dave Ronsman
- Katie Clements
- Matt Bersagel Braley
- Shelby Webb
- Megan Ronsman
- Natalia Canas Parra
- Jill Parker

As a small token of our appreciation, please accept this gift of a plant. The plants are provided by **GROW La Crosse**—thank you to Kari Bersagel Braley for coordinating this wonderful gesture. With gratitude,

The First Congregational Church Family



New Member Sunday!

It's that joyful time again—we get to welcome new members into our church family!

Today we joyfully welcome:
Veronica Fosu
Mande Corbett
Thomas Stolpa

We are so glad you are here.

Welcome to First Congregational Church—we look forward to growing in faith and fellowship together!