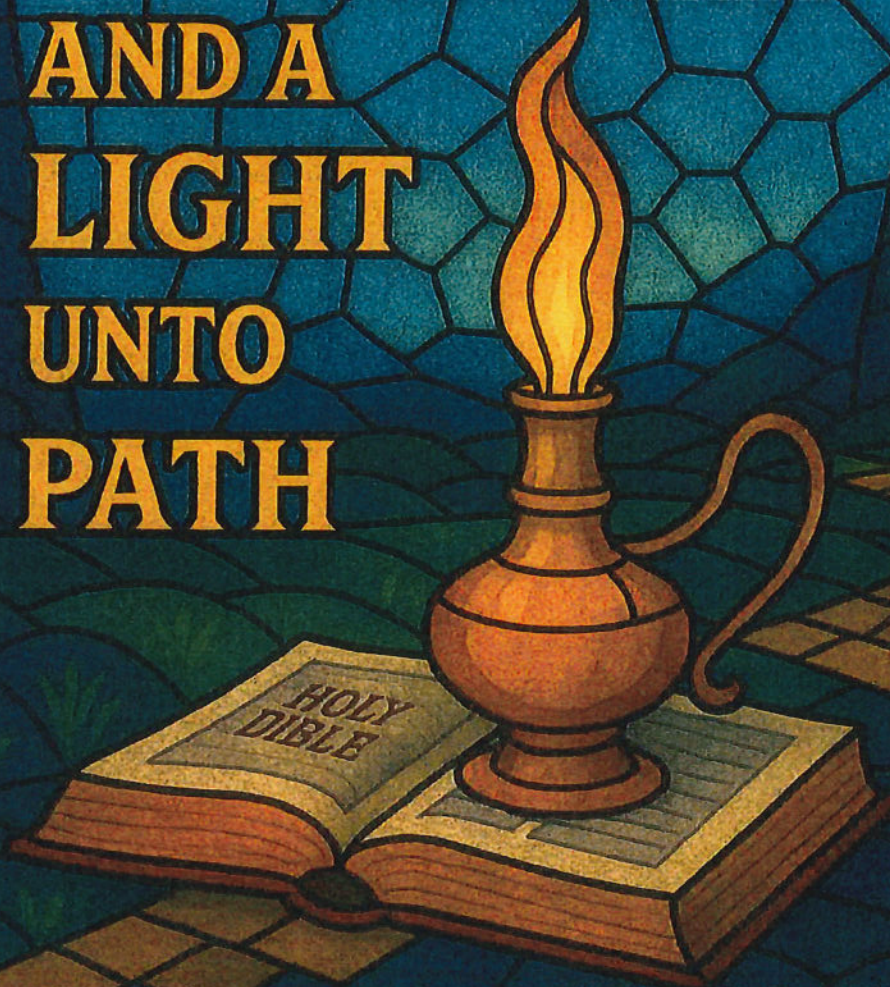


**THY WORD
IS A LAMP UNTO
MY FEET
AND A
LIGHT
UNTO
PATH**



PSALM 119:105

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! 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. Kids are invited to pick up a book and an activity bag as they enter the sanctuary and remain with their families throughout worship.

Worship Service Live Stream Notice. Please be advised that all worship services held in the sanctuary of First Congregational UCC are live streamed on YouTube. Your voice and/or image may be visible in the broadcast. These recordings are publicly available on the First Congregational United Church of Christ YouTube page and will remain accessible at the church's sole discretion. If you prefer not to appear on camera, we invite you to sit in the last six rows of the sanctuary, which are not shown during the live stream. Thank you for your understanding.



Please ask an usher if you would like a large print or sensory friendly 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

Leading Worship & Preaching	Mary Runyon
Pianist.....	Nancy Allen
Reading Scripture	Sue Heuer
Head Usher.....	Michael Feuerhelm
Ushers.....	Tom Nyre, Tom Stolpa
Greeters.....	Marilyn Nyre
Nursery	Zali Stanton

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

Gathering

in the presence of God

Gathering Music

"Jesus the Very Thought of Thee"
"Come"

arr. Keveren
arr. Summers

Welcome and Announcements

Thank you for joining us this Sunday where all are welcome. Please pass the Friendship Folder, share your name, and take note of those worshipping with you.

Prelude Music

"This Is My Father's World"

arr. Shackley

*Call to Worship

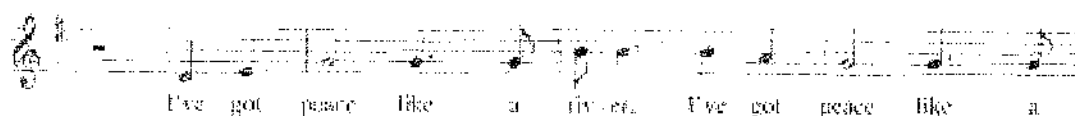
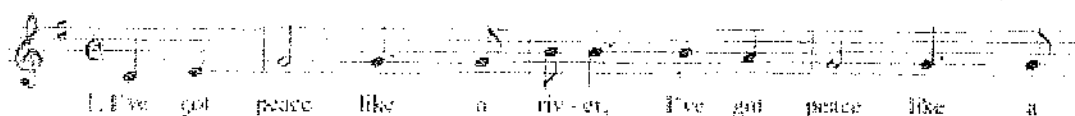
inspired by

One: As one season presses into the next, the lives we lead are ever changing.

Many: Yet our God is steadfast, faithful in every season, every generation.

One: When our confidence is shaken or hope is interrupted, where will we find help?

Many: Our help is in God, whose love is from everlasting to everlasting.
Praise the Lord!



Moment of Silence

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

*Hymn 664 (All join in singing the hymns.)

"Thy Word"

arr. Smith

*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."

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.

Blessing of the Backpacks

"Students, bring your backpacks forward during this special time! You will receive a colorful tag to place on your bag as a reminder of God's love and our community's support throughout the school year."

Bless the Teachers

Leader: God of Creation, you have gifted people with teaching skills and creativity. We pray you would fill them with the power and compassion of your Spirit, Fill them with energy and insight into your Word

Teachers: You have not called us to perfect
You have called us to be faithful
We dedicate ourselves to the call and task of teaching
Grant us wisdom, patience and joy in our preparation and teaching

Congregation: God of Hope, Guide each teacher as they study, strengthen the gifts you have given them and energize their compassion. Remind us to find ways to support and

encourage them throughout the year and may we share in their joy and times of difficulty

All: We commit ourselves each to our part in this joyful task.
May your steadfast and faithful love guide all we do. Amen

Presentation of Bibles

Pastor: Receive this Bible
Learn its stories and study its words
Its stories belong to us all and these words speak to us all
They tell us we belong to one another and we are the people of God

Children: We receive these Bibles with our hands, our hearts and our minds. Thank you Church. We will read and study the Bible together

Congregation to the Children:
We rejoice in this step in your journey with God. We pray God will guide you, your family and us as you use this Bible in your home, in your church classes and in our worship together. We will learn together and grow in our love for God's Word

All: The Word of God is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path.
Thanks be to God

Acclamation *(Sung by all.)*

Halleluja

All:



The First Lesson

Jeremiah 1:4-10

The Psalter

Psalm 103:1-8 (*Read responsively*)

One: Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.

Many: **Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits —
who forgives all your iniquity**

One: who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit

Many: **who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
who satisfies you with good as long as you live**

One: so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
The Lord works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.

Many: **He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.
The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

The Second Reading

Hebrews 12:18-29

Sermon

"Gratitude"

Rev. Mary Runyon

Responding

with the voice of hope

*Hymn 580 (*All join in singing the hymns.*)

"We Are Called to Be God's People"

AUSTRIAN HYMN

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.

∞ Thanksgiving

for the gifts of God

Stories of Generosity

Music at the Offertory

"Just a Closer Walk With Thee"

arr. Keveren.

*As the Gifts Are Presented: Sing to the tune of Old 100th (Hymn 147).

(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

***Hymn 4** *(All join in singing the hymns.)*
"Bless His Holy Name"

Para. Psalm 103:1

***The Blessing**

Postlude Music

"I've Got Peace Like a River"

arr. Hayes

Acknowledgements: Hymns and service music reprinted and streamed with permission under Onelicense.net #A-728014.

The flowers are in appreciation of the faith and love within our church family. Given by Steve Mieden and Carole McQueen

First Congregational UCC Ministry Team

All the Members.....Ministers
Rev. Dr. Laura Wright.....Senior Pastor
Rev. Mary Runyon.....Associate Minister of Faith Formation
Nancy Allen.....Organist & Choir Director
Sue Retzlaff.....Bell Choir Director
Michelle Logan.....Office Manager

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?

Can we share your gift to God with the congregation?

Yes_____ No_____

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Week in our Church:

Sunday, August 24

10:00 am Worship w/JAM & Nursery
11:00 am Ice Cream Social (CR)
5:00 pm Teacher Training (L)

Monday, August 25

1:30 pm Construction Management Meeting (CR)
2:00 pm Monday Meals (Trinity Lutheran Church)

Wednesday, August 27

7:00 pm Church Council Meeting (CR)

Thursday, August 28

11:00 am Capital Campaign Meeting (CR)
7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir (S)

Friday, August 29

Office Closed

Sunday, August 31

9:00 am JAM Breakfast (CR)
10:00 am Worship w/Nursery (No JAM)
11:00 am Fellowship (CR)

CALENDAR KEY

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

Can You Help With Youth Faith Formation?



FAITH Formation

At First Congo, Back to School means the start of Youth Faith Formation. We offer programs for children from birth through 12th grade, and we would love for you to be part of this ministry.

In the Gospels, Jesus tells us to "*love your neighbor as yourself.*" One way we can live that out is by helping these beautiful children discover their place in God's creation.

Please prayerfully consider how you might serve in our Faith Formation programs. It might feel challenging or even a little intimidating at first, but we make it simple—and you'll never be on this journey alone.

Each week, it takes at least six adults to make our programs happen. Even if you can help just once a month or once a quarter, it makes a difference. As the saying goes, "*It takes a village to raise a child*"—and together we can help these kids grow into amazing adults. If you're interested, please let Pastor Mary know. **Our next is training tonight at 5:00 pm in the Lounge**—feel free to come and see if this is a ministry you might want to join!