

TWELFTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST  
AUGUST 31, 2025

**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.

**Livestreaming Notice for Worship Service.** Please be advised that all worship services held in the sanctuary of First Congregational UCC are livestreamed 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 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 livestream. 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 .....	Laura Wright
Leading Worship .....	Mary Runyon
Pianist.....	Nancy Allen
Reading Scripture .....	Emma Ledbetter
Head Usher.....	Shelby Webb
Nursery .....	Zali Stanton
Fellowship Hour .....	Cam and Carlene Roberts

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

# Gathering

*in the presence of God*

## Gathering Music

"Breathe on Me"

Arr. by Keveren

"We Gather Together"

Arr. by John Carter

## 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

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

Arr. by Shackley

## \*Call to Worship

*Inspired by Luke 14*

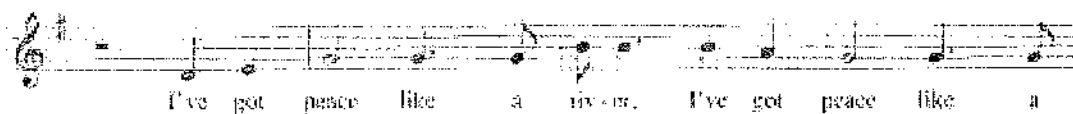
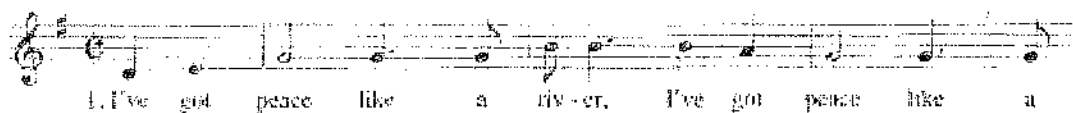
*One:* Come in and take your seat—not at the head of the table,  
but among the neighbors, the seekers, and the forgotten.

*Many:* **We come not to be served, but to serve.**

*One:* God has prepared a feast—where the poor are invited first  
and given places of honor.

*Many:* **We come to make room for one another,  
to share the table Christ has set.**

*One:* Let us worship the One who turns the tables and makes room for all:



## Moment of Silence

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

## \*Hymn 617 *(All join in singing the hymns.)*

**"A Place at the Table"**

*Tablesong*

## \*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. Kids will return to their families this Sunday and remain with them throughout the service. If they get wiggly, they are welcome to pick up a book on the cart outside the sanctuary.*

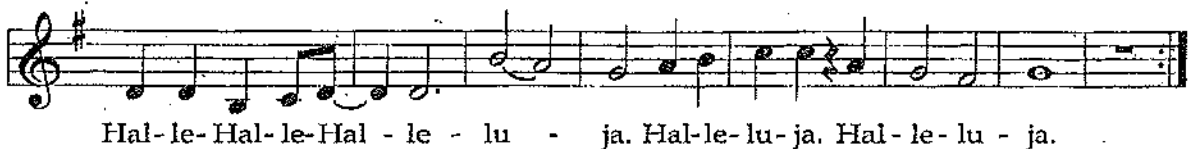
## Loud Offering

*Jonah's Fund at the Parenting Place*

## Acclamation *(Sung by all.)*

*Halleluja*

*All:*



## The First Lesson

*Emma Ledbetter*

*Proverbs 25:6-7*

## The Psalter

*Psalm 112 (Read responsively from The Message.)*

*One:* Blessed man, blessed woman, who fear God,



who cherish and relish God's commandments.

*Many:* **Their children are robust on the earth,  
and the homes of the upright – how blessed are they!**

*One:* Their houses brim with wealth  
and a generosity that never runs dry.

*Many:* **Sunrise breaks through the darkness for good people –  
God's grace and mercy and justice comes!**

*One:* The good person is generous and lends lavishly;  
no shuffling or stumbling around for this one,  
but a sterling and solid lasting reputation.

*Many:* **They are unfazed by rumor and gossip,  
heart ready, trusting in God,**

*One:* spirit firm, unperturbed,  
ever blessed, relaxed among enemies.

*Many:* **They lavish gifts on the poor –  
a generosity that goes on, and on, and on.**

*One:* An honored life! A beautiful life!

*Many:* **Someone wicked takes one look and rages,  
blusters away but ends up speechless.**

*One:* There's nothing to the dreams of the wicked. Nothing.

## The Gospel

Luke 14:1, 7-14

## Sermon

"Downward Mobility: A Gospel Strategy"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

## Responding

*with the voice of hope*

\*Hymn 595 (*All join in singing the hymns.*)

"They'll Know We Are Christians"

*We are one in the Spirit*

## 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

"Day by Day"

Arr. by Hayes

\*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

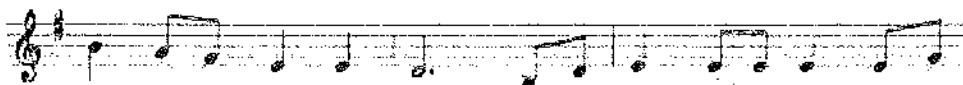
\*Hymn (All join in singing the hymns.)

## "Canticle of the Turning"

Star of the County Down



1. My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the  
2. Though I am small, my God, my all, you  
3. From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a  
4. Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re -



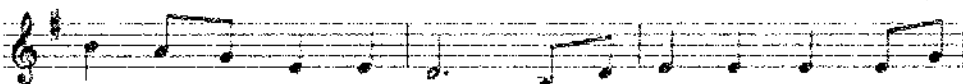
God of my heart is great. And my spir - it sings of the  
work great things in me. And your mer - cy will last from the  
stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your  
mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



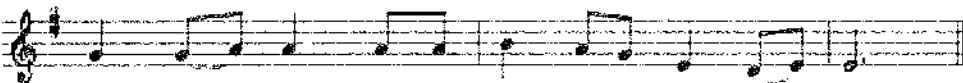
won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.  
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.  
jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant from his throne.  
liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my  
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to  
The hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the  
This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, So from east to west shall my  
those who would for you yearn. You will show your might, put the  
food they can nev - er earn; There are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry  
prom - ise which holds us bound, 'Til the spear and rod can be



name be blest, Could the world be a - bout to turn?  
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the  
 fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the  
 fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the  
 dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn!  
 dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn!

The image shows a musical score for a three-part setting of the Refrain of the hymn 'A Place at the Table'. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the staves, with some words split across lines. The first system ends with a double bar line. The second system also ends with a double bar line. The third system ends with a double bar line.

## \*The Blessing

### Postlude Music

"Let All Things Now Living"

Arr. by Shirley Brending

**Acknowledgements:** "A Place at the Table," words © 1998 Hope Publishing Company and music © 1999 Hope Publishing Company. "They'll Know We Are Christians," words and music © 1966 F.E.L. Publications (Admin. Universal-MCA Music Publishing). "Canticle of the Turning," words © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc. and music in the public domain. Hymns and service music reprinted and streamed with permission under Onelicense.net #A-728014.

**Cover Image:** This image was created uniquely for this Sunday's worship.

*Flowers today are given in loving memory of  
 Mark Mattison in honor of his August 31<sup>st</sup> Birthday  
 by Wendy and Family.*



## 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](mailto:office@firstcongolax.org), or visit us on the web at [www.firstcongolax.org](http://www.firstcongolax.org).

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What gifts did you give God this week?

Can we share your gift to God with the congregation?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### **This Week in our Church:**

#### **Sunday, August 31**

##### **Noisy Offering**

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

#### **Monday, September 1**

##### **Office Closed for Labor Day**

#### **Wednesday, September 3**

5:00 pm Kid's Choir Practice (S)

#### **Thursday, September 4**

5:45 pm Service & Worship Meeting (CR)

#### **Friday, September 5**

##### **Office Closed**

10:30 am Bell Choir Rehearsal (CR)  
5:30 pm Trees and Talk (Myrick Park)

#### **Saturday, September 6**

11:00 am Pride in the Park (Riverside Park)

#### **Sunday, September 7**

##### **Let The Spirit Swing (Jazz) Sunday**

##### **WAFER Sunday**

10:00 am Worship W/Communion  
10:00 am Nursery/JAM  
11:00 am Lunch (CR)  
11:00 am Confirmation  
11:00 am Wise Committee Meeting (C)

### **CALENDAR KEY**

CR = Community Room, C = Chapel, L = Lounge,

N = Narthex, S = Sanctuary, J = JAM Rooms

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# **JAZZ** *Sunday!*

## **LET THE SPIRIT SWING**

Join us on **Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am** as we kick off the program year with a joyful, spirit-filled **Jazz Worship**. After worship, stay for lunch, fellowship, and fun—including a bounce house for the kids!

It's the perfect day to come together, celebrate, and look forward to the exciting church year ahead.

We can't wait to see you there!



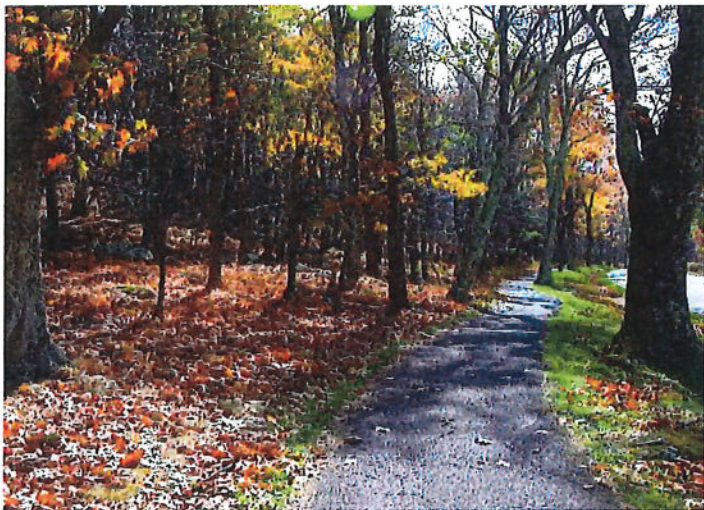


**The Church Office will be  
closed Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>,  
in honor of Labor Day.**

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**Seven at 5:30 pm!**

**Trees and Talk on Friday, Sept. 5**



Meet at the parking lot across from the main shelter of Myrick Park at 5:30 pm. We will walk about 2/5 of a mile through part of the Myrick Park Arboretum on our way to the Tree Trail on the UW-La Crosse campus. After some time on the Tree Trail, we will reverse course, go back to our cars, and go to Barbara Strohm's home (less than a mile from Myrick Park) for heavy hors d'oeuvres, dessert and tree talk! Sign up on the sheet posted in the narthex. If you have a question, please email [barbara.strohm@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.strohm@gmail.com).

**Y'all come!**



As we begin a new church year and welcome both new and familiar faces, we would love for you to consider serving as an **Usher or Greeter**. These ministries play such an important role in helping everyone feel at home—offering a smile, a kind word, and a helping hand to those who may need it.

Whether it's welcoming someone through

our doors for the very first time or assisting longtime members who need a little extra support, your presence makes a difference.

If you feel called to share your warmth and hospitality in this way, please reach out to Michelle in the office at [office@firstcongolax.org](mailto:office@firstcongolax.org) or (608) 784-8137.



# PRIDE IN THE PARK, SEPTEMBER 6TH

11:00 am - 6:00 pm

## Riverside Park



The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connections will host **PRIDE in the Park** at Riverside Park in downtown La Crosse. The event is **FREE** and open to all! This Pride season, we encourage everyone—LGBTQ+ community members and allies alike—to be visible and stand by this community in these very uncertain times. As part of FCC's **Open and Affirming** public covenant of welcome, we will host an information table at PRIDE in the Park. If you would like to help staff our table, please sign-up **on the stone ledge in the Narthex**.

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## Our Next WAFER Donation is Sunday, September 7th.



Our WAFER Liaison, Julie Shelby, has let us know that WAFER is especially in need of **regular-sized boxes of breakfast cereal**. If you are able, please consider picking up a box or two while you're out shopping this week.

Thank you for your generosity!

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## White Roses



The white roses on the altar are placed in memory of Jill Parker's mother and Cheryl Hanson, who both entered eternal rest this past week.

We extend our sympathy to their families and loved ones, and ask that you remember them in your prayers.