



FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SEPTEMBER 14, 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. Join our Fellowship Hour after worship where everyone is invited to enjoy conversation and refreshments. We will be celebrating our new offices and bathroom. You can walk through those spaces to pick up cake (Main Office), vegetables (Faith Formation Office), and drinks (Pastor's Office). A bathroom for all genders is located next to the Chapel.

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.

Livestreaming Notice for Worship. We strive for worship to be accessible for all, so we livestream our worship services on our YouTube channel, First Congregational UCC, La Crosse. Your voice and/or image may be visible in the broadcast. These recordings are publicly available 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 in the livestream. Thank you.



Please ask an usher if you need assistance or would like a large-print or sensory-friendly bulletin. A Hearing Loop system is available.

Serving in Worship Today

Leading Worship & Preaching.....	Laura Wright
Leading Worship.....	Mary Runyon
Organist.....	Kristi Koch
Reading Scripture.....	Diane Breeser
Head Usher	Randy Breeser
Ushers	Julie Mannion, Tom Stolpa
Greeters.....	Diane Breeser
Nursery.....	Zali Stanton
Fellowship.....	Building & Grounds

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

Gathering

in the presence of God

Gathering Music

"Sing a New Song"

Kristi Koch

arr. Mary McDonald

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

"I Surrender All"

Kristi Koch

arr. Lani Smith

*Call to Worship

Inspired by Exodus 32

One: God's people once tried to make God from gold —
small enough to hold, predictable enough to control.

Many: **Our God cannot be contained.**
Our God will not be managed.

One: The Holy One burns with justice, yet bends toward mercy.

Many: **The Eternal One calls us beyond the gods that we fashion.**

One: Let us worship the Living God, wild in love,
steadfast in mercy, always greater than we imagine:



In my life, Lord, be glo-ri-fied, be glo-ri-fied,
In my song, Lord, be glo-ri-fied, be glo-ri-fied,
In Your church, Lord, be glo-ri-fied, be glo-ri-fied,
In my heart, Lord, be glo-ri-fied, be glo-ri-fied,
In my home, Lord, be glo-ri-fied, be glo-ri-fied.



In my life, Lord, be glo-ri-fied to - day.
In my song, Lord, be glo-ri-fied to - day.
In Your church, Lord, be glo-ri-fied to - day.
In my heart, Lord, be glo-ri-fied to - day.
In my home, Lord, be glo-ri-fied to - day.

Moment of Silence

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

***Hymn 72** (*All join in singing the hymns.*)
"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Faithfulness

***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

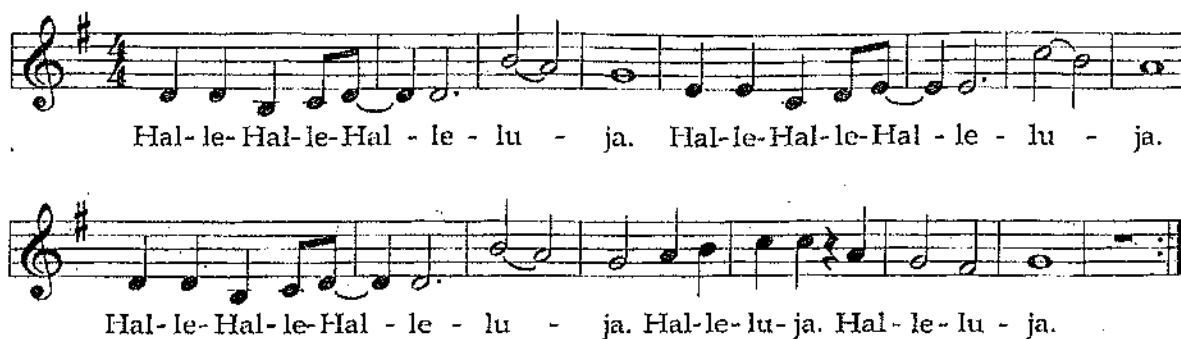
The Word for Children

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

Acclamation (*Sung by all.*)

Halleluja

All:



The First Lesson

Diane Breeser

Exodus 32:7-14

The Psalter

Psalm 51:1-10 (*Read responsively from The Message.*)

One: Generous in love — God, give grace!

Huge in mercy — wipe out my bad record.

Many: **Scrub away my guilt,**

soak out my sins in your laundry.

One: I know how bad I've been;

my sins are staring me down.

Many: **You're the One I've violated, and you've seen it all —
seen the full extent of my evil.**

One: You have all the facts before you;
whatever you decide about me is fair.

Many: **I've been out of step with you for a long time,
in the wrong since before I was born.**

One: What you're after is truth from the inside out.
Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life.

Many: **Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,
scrub me and I'll have a clean life.**

One: Tune me in to foot-tapping songs,
set the once-broken bones to dancing.

Many: **Don't look too close for blemishes,
give me a clean bill of health.**

One: God, make a fresh start in me,
shape a new week from the chaos of my life.

The Gospel

Luke 15:1-10

Sermon

"God Refuses New Management"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

Responding

with the voice of hope

Anthem

"Grace"

The Sanctuary Choir

Mark Hayes

The Community Invited into Prayer

Prayers of the Church

The petitions end with: God, in your love,
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

Allan Beatty

Music at the Offertory

Kristi Koch

"I Need Thee Every Hour"

arr. Mary McDonald

*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

☥ Going

to be messengers of good news

*Hymn 84 *(All join in singing the hymns.)*

"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

St. Anne

*The Blessing

Postlude Music

Kristi Koch

"Festive Voluntary"

Robert Lau

Acknowledgements: “In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified,” words and music © 1978 Bob Kilpatrick Ministries. Assigned to The Lorenz Corporation 1998. “Great Is Thy Faithfulness,” words and music in the public domain. “O God, Our Help in Ages Past,” words and music in the public domain. Hymns and service music reprinted and streamed with permission under Onelicense.net #A-728014.

Cover Image: Image is crafted uniquely for our worship service using an image of the bronze bull found in excavations of the Iron IA site at Dhahrat-et Tawileh in the West Bank and incorporating that image into the artwork depicting Exodus 32.

*Flowers today are given by Nancy Burgett
in memory of her son, Brent Miller.*

*We are also grateful for Kurt Schuldes who remembered his mother,
Maddeline, with flowers last week, yet we failed to honor her.*

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, September 14

- 10:00 am Worship w/JAM & Nursery
11:00 am Fellowship & Open House (CR)
11:00 am Mission & Social Justice Meeting (L)
1:00 pm Conversation w/Rev Kim
(Centennial Hall, UWL)
5:00pm Middle School Parents Dinner
(La Crosse Distilling Co.)

Tuesday, September 16

- 6:00 pm Finance Meeting (L)

Wednesday, September 10

- 10:00 am Sip & Scripture (Pastor's Office)
5:00 pm Kid's Choir Practice (S)

Thursday, September 18

- 2:00 pm Membership Meeting (CR)
7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal (S)

Friday, September 19

Office Closed

- 10:30 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (CR)

Sunday, September 21

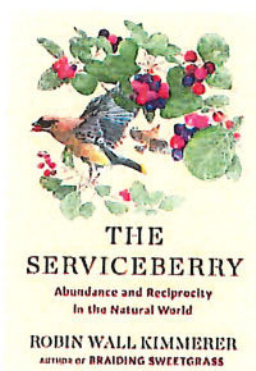
- 9:00 am Faith Forum: Mary Ehle (C)
RE: *The Serviceberry*
10:00 am Worship w/JAM & Nursery
11:00 am Fellowship (CR)
11:00 am WISE Justice Meeting (L)
11:00 pm Back-to-School Picnic (Weigent Park)

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

CALENDAR KEY

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

Join Us as We Discuss: *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer!
Next Sunday, September 21st at 9:00 am in the Chapel



Your Creation Care Team, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Missions and Social Justice are collaborating to bring you a series of opportunities to dive deeper into Robin Wall Kimmerer's book, *The Serviceberry*. This quick book explores what it means to live in gratitude and reciprocity with the Earth. How, she asks, can we learn from Indigenous wisdom and the plant world to reimagine what we value most? Today's "The Serviceberry" Book Discussion is facilitated by Mary Ehle.

Below are other opportunities to learn about this book:

September 25th, 6:30-7:30 pm *The Serviceberry* Book Community Discussion at Pearl Street Books, 323 Pearl St. La Crosse, facilitated by Mary Ehle

September 30th, 5:45 – 8:00 pm Robin Wall Kimmerer Watch Party with hors d'oeuvres at FCC. Register for the FREE Annual Environmental and Spirituality (AES) Summit and choose UCC La Crosse watch party.