

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST  
SEPTEMBER 7, 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 a meal after worship in the Community Room where everyone is invited to enjoy conversation, light sandwiches, and dessert. A bounce house will be available on the playground. A bathroom for all genders is located off Narthex, 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 to 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 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.....	Carole McQueen
Head Usher.....	Shelby Webb
Ushers.....	Jon & Wendy Hawes
Greeter.....	Leo Servais
Communion Assistants .....	Carole McQueen, Emmie Runyon
Nursery .....	Greta Runyon, Zali Stanton

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

# Gathering

*in the presence of God*

## Gathering Music

"Come Together"

"Sanctus"

*Balfany Quartet*

Lennon and McCartney

Jon Alabouni

## 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

"Travels"

*Balfany Quartet*

Pat Metheny

## \*Call to Worship

*Inspired by Luke 14*

*One:* Come all who are willing to walk the road with Jesus.

*Many:* **We bring our full selves—**

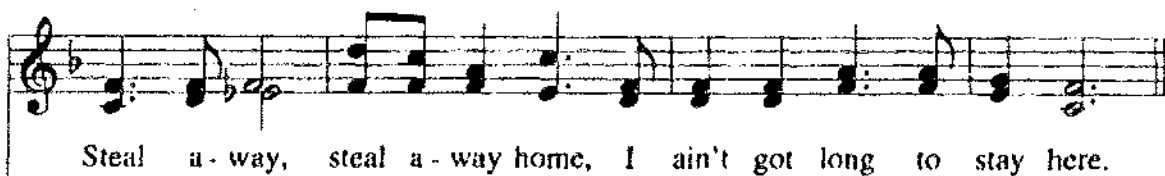
**ready to risk, ready to change, ready to act.**

*One:* Jesus calls us to let go of all we hold—

our possessions, our security, and our safety nets.

*Many:* **We come not to hoard but to trust.**

*One:* We come to worship the One who calls us to follow:



## Moment of Silence

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

## \*Hymn 500 *(All join in singing the hymns.)*

**"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"**

*Precious Lord*

## \*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*

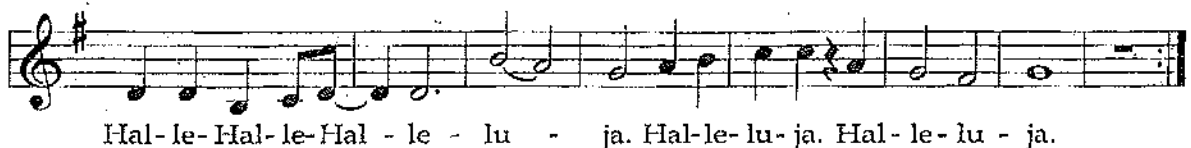
## The Word for Children

*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

Jeremiah 18:1-11

Carole McQueen

## The Psalter

Psalm 139:1-6 *(Read responsively from The Message.)*

*One:* God, investigate my life;  
get all the facts firsthand.

*Many:* I'm an open book to you;  
even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.  
*One:* You know when I leave and when I get back;  
I'm never out of sight.  
*Many:* You know everything I'm going to say  
before I start the sentence.  
*One:* I look behind me and you're there,  
then up ahead and you're there, too —  
your reassuring presence, coming and going.  
*Many:* This is too much, too wonderful —  
I can't take it all in!

## The Gospel

Luke 14:25-33

## Sermon

"Downsizing for Discipleship"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

## Responding

*with the voice of hope*

## Anthem

"Celebrate"

*The Sanctuary Choir*

Keith Hampton

## 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

Beth Moore

Music at the Offertory

"Water From Ancient Well"

*Balfany Quartet*

Abdullah Ibrahim

**\*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

**\*The Great Thanksgiving**

*One:* God be with you.

*Many:* **And also with you.**

*One:* Open up your minds.

*Many:* **We open them to God.**

*One:* Let us say thank you to God.

*Many:* **It is wise and healthy to give God thanks and praise.**

*One:* It is truly wise and our greatest joy ... Therefore, we join our voices with  
all the ancestors in the faith to sing forever:

All:

cc. 2,3

1 Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al-might - y!

5 ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to

8 thee; ho-ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and

12 might-y! God in three per-sons, bless-èd Trin - i - ty!

*The Congregation may be seated.*

One: On the night before Jesus was betrayed... Then Jesus said after supper, "This cup that is poured out for you — this is my new promise to you — my new covenant. So now we can proclaim,

All: **Christ has died;**  
**Christ is risen;**  
**Christ will come again.**

One: Jesus promised his disciples that though he was about to leave them in death — he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them ... Let us eat of this meal together — remembering that God has provided for all of us and God's Spirit is now with us.

### Sharing Communion

*This is the table of Christ, not of this church. All are welcome and encouraged to join in the sharing of communion at Christ's Table, regardless of age or tradition, for it is this meal which binds all of us, different as we are, together.*

*We will receive communion by intinction (dipping the bread into the cup). All bread is gluten-free to welcome all at the table of Christ. Please come to the front of the church by way of the center aisle and return by the side aisles. If you need to receive communion where you are seated, please let an usher know.*

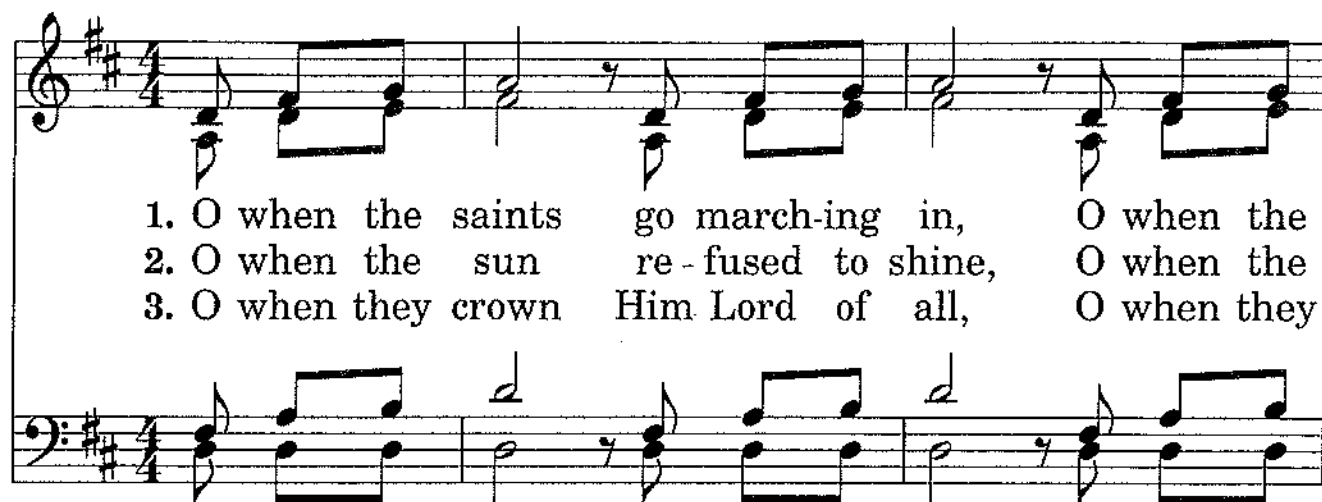
## Thanksgiving after Communion

### Going

*to be messengers of good news*

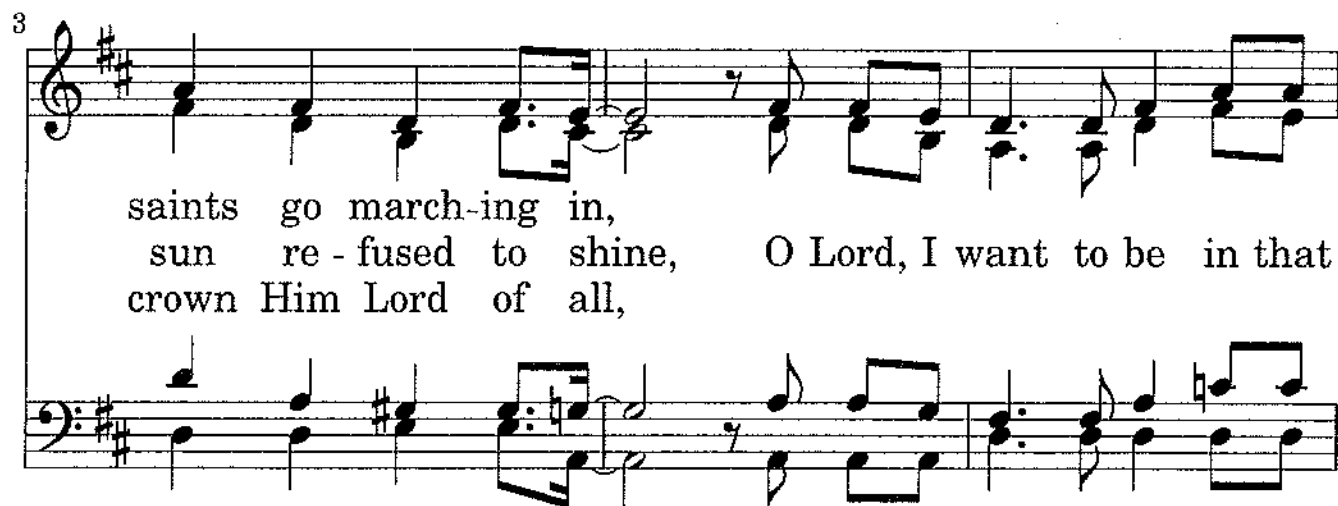
\*Hymn (All join in singing the hymns.)

#### "When the Saints Go Marching In"



1. O when the saints go march-ing in, O when the  
2. O when the sun re-fused to shine, O when the  
3. O when they crown Him Lord of all, O when they

3



saints go march-ing in,  
sun re-fused to shine, O Lord, I want to be in that  
crown Him Lord of all,



6

num-ber when the saints go march-ing in.  
when the sun re-fused to shine.  
when they crown Him Lord of all.

## \*The Blessing

Postlude Music  
"Sunday Blues"

Balfany Quartet  
Traditional

**Acknowledgements:** "Steal Away," words and music in the public domain. "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," words and music in the public domain. "When the Saints Go Marching In," words in the public domain and music © 2000 GIA Publications, Inc. Hymns and service music reprinted and streamed with permission under Onelicense.net #A-728014.

**Cover Image:** Octávio Araújo (Brazilian, 1926–2015), Cristo favelado, 1950. Collection of the Instituto de Pesquisas e Estudos Afro-Brasileiros (IPEAFRO), Rio de Janeiro. Photo: Victoria Emily Jones, at Afro-Atlantic Histories at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, June 2022.

*Flowers today are given in memory of  
Rudi and Mike Schuldes by their 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).

-----

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 7**

**Let the Spirit Swing Sunday**

**WAFER Sunday**

- 10:00 am Worship w/Holy Communion
- 10:00 am Nursery & JAM
- 11:00 am Lunch Fellowship (CR)
- 11:00 am WISE Committee Meeting (L)

**Monday, September 8**

- 7:15 pm Christian Education (Zoom)

**Tuesday, September 9**

- 8:00 am Alternative Energy Task Force Meeting (L)
- 5:00 pm Creation Care Meeting (Zoom)
- 5:45 pm Service & Worship Meeting (L)

**Wednesday, September 10**

- 10:00 am Sip & Scripture (Pastor's Office)
- 6:30 pm Buildings & Grounds Meeting (CR)

**Thursday, July 31**

- 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

**Friday, August 1**

**Office Closed**

- 10:30 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal (CR)
- 5:30pm All-Church Trivia (CR)

**Sunday, August 3**

- 10:00 am Worship w/Nursery & JAM
- 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.)

### CALENDAR KEY

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

---



## A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Amazing Musicians

Greg Balfany ~ Saxophone

Dave Marck ~ Piano

Rich McDonald ~ Drums

Karyn Quinn ~ Bass

Your incredible gift of music brought depth and beauty to our worship today.  
Thank you for sharing your talents with us and making the service so meaningful.

*Thank you!*





# **Join us For TRIVIA Night**

**Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm**

**At the Church**

**Kid who aren't into Trivia will have a movie  
night downstairs.**

**There will be snacks, prizes and plenty of  
laughs!**

**See You There!**