

EPIPHANY OF
THE LORD
JANUARY 4, 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 God's family. Join our Fellowship Hour after worship where everyone is invited to enjoy refreshments in the Community Room. A restroom for families and all bodies is in the narthex.

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; all kids workers have undergone a background check. Today, the children (4-years old & up) will remain with their families after the Word for Children so that our teachers can have a sabbath after the holidays.

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 at the church's discretion. If you prefer not to appear, we invite you to sit in the sanctuary's last six rows, which are not shown on camera.



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 & Faith Formation.....	Mary Runyon
Organist and Pianist	Trevor DuPej
Reading Scripture.....	Beth Moore
Head Usher	Randy Breeser
Ushers	Diane Breeser, Julie Shelby
Greeter	Tom Stolpa
Communion Assistants.....	Diane Breeser, Tom Stolpa
Nursery.....	Zali Stanton
Fellowship.....	Finance

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

Gathering

in the presence of God

Gathering Music

"O Morning Star"

Trevor DuPej
Arr. by F. Ritter

Welcome and Announcements

Thank you for joining us today. Please pass the Friendship Folder, fill out the information you wish to share, & note those worshipping in your pew so you can greet them by name.

Prelude Music

"Judean Pastorate, Kings of Orient"

Trevor DuPej
F. Ashdown

*Call to Worship

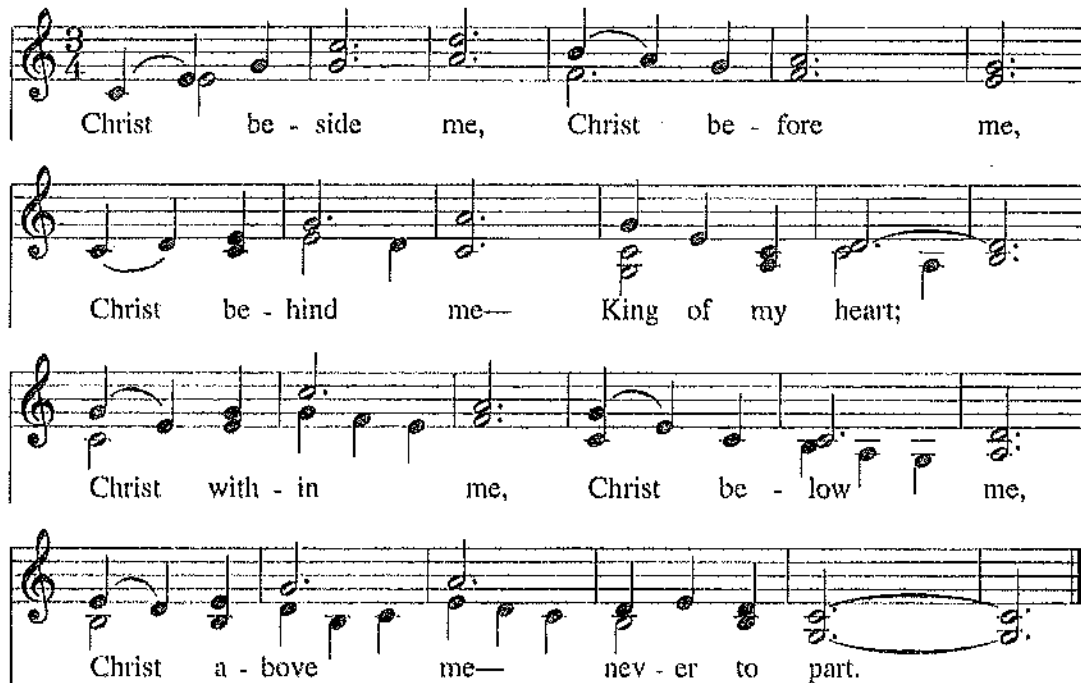
One: Arise! Lift up your eyes — a star has appeared in the sky!

All: **We come, drawn by God's light.**

One: Like the Magi from the East, we come seeking the Christ-child.

All: **We come bringing our gifts, our questions,
our hopes, and our hearts.**

One: Let us worship God who is alive,
shown to the world in Jesus Christ!



Christ be - side me, Christ be - fore me,
Christ be - hind me— King of my heart;
Christ with - in me, Christ be - low me,
Christ a - bove me— nev - er to part.

Moment of Silence

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

***Hymn 233** *(All join in singing the hymns.)*

"We Three Kings of Orient Are"

Kings of Orient

***Sharing the Peace**

One: The peace of the Christ child 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 after the Word for Children to give our teachers a week of sabbath rest after the holidays.

Acclamation *(Sung by all.)*

Halleluja

All:

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

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

The First Lesson

Beth Moore

Isaiah 60:1-6

The Psalter

Psalm 72:1-7 *(Reading is based on The Message.)*

One: Give the gift of wise rule to the king, O God,
the gift of just rule to the crown prince.

Many: May he judge your people rightly,
be honorable to your meek and lowly.

One: Let the mountains give exuberant witness;
shape the hills with the contours of right living.

Many: Please stand up for the poor, help the children of the needy,
come down hard on the cruel tyrants.

One: Outlast the sun, outlive the moon —
age after age after age.

Many: Be rainfall on cut grass, earth-refreshing rain showers.

One: Let the righteousness burst into blossom,
Many: and let peace abound until the moon fades to nothing.

The Gospel

Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon

"Seeking the Light, Finding the Child"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

Responding

with the voice of hope

*Hymn 231 (*All join in singing the hymns.*)

"Arise, Your Light Is Come!"

Festal Song

The Community Invited into Prayer

Prayers of the People

Leader: God, in your love,

All: hear our prayer.

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

"Morning Star"

Trevor DuPej

D. Wells

***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

***The Great Thanksgiving**

One: May God be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: Lift your hearts.

Many: **We lift them up to God.**

One: Let us give thanks to the God we love.

Many: **We freely give God thanks and praise.**

One: It is truly right and our greatest joy ... Therefore, we join our voices with the church that is, was, and shall be forever. We glorify you, joining this unending song:

All:

ev. 2,3

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

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

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

might-y! God in three per-sons, bless-ed 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 the new covenant poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, remember me." And so, with the saints before us and the saints beside us, we proclaim:

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

One: Dear God, you transform. You transform all that is before you so that at the touch of your grace we are never the same...both now and forever.

Sharing Communion

This is the table of Jesus 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.

Communion Song

"Pastorale"

Trevor DuPej

A De Bonis

Thanksgiving after Communion

Going

to be messengers of good news

***Hymn 236** (*All join in singing the hymns.*)

"As with Gladness"

Dix

*The Blessing

Postlude Music

"March of the Kings"

Trevor DuPej

G. Martin

Acknowledgements: "Christ Beside Me," words © 1969 James Quinn, S.J. (Selah Publishing Co., Inc., North American administrator) and music arr. © 1989 Hope Publishing Company. "We Three Kings of Orient Are," words and music in the public domain. "Arise, Your Light Is Come!" words © 1992 GIA Publications and music in the public domain. "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," words and music in the public domain. "As with Gladness," words and music in the public domain. Hymns and music reprinted and streamed with permission under Onelicense.net #A-728014.

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*Flowers today are given by Emma Ledbetter
in honor of our wonderful new members.*

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_____



KEEP SEEKING HIM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Week in our Church:

Epiphany

WAFER Sunday

Sunday, January 4

10:00 am Worship w/Communion

10:00 am Nursery

11:00 am Fellowship (CR)

11:00 am Communion (L)

Wednesday, January 7

10:00 am Sip & Scripture (P)

7:00 pm Church Council Meeting (CR)

Thursday, January 8

7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir (S)

Friday, January 9

Office Closed

10:30 am Bell Choir Rehearsal (CR)

Sunday, January 11

Baptism of Christ Sunday

9:00 am Faith Forum: Prayer, Meditation & Mindfulness (C)

10:00 am Worship

10:00 am Nursery

10:20 am JAM

11:00 am Fellowship (CR)

11:00 am Missions & Social Justice Meeting (L)

4:30 pm Congo Crew (L)

CALENDAR KEY

C = Chapel, J = JAM Rooms, L = Lounge, N = Narthex,

CR = Community Room, P = Pastor's Office, S = Sanctuary

Stewardship Update



Friendly reminder: If you haven't had a chance yet, please send in your pledge response soon! Your support helps us plan faithfully and with joy as we prepare the budget for the year ahead. To pledge scan this QR Code:

Dream with God about our church's future!

Together with joy and gratitude,

The Stewardship Committee



Let's Get To Know Each Other!

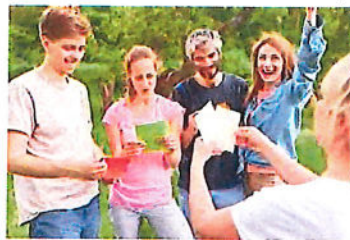
INTERGENERATIONAL SPEED GREETING & CHILI COOK-OFF

Friday, January 23 | 5:30-7:30 PM

Kick off the new year with a fun (and delicious!) evening designed to connect generations across our church family. Join us for a chili dinner and a lively speed-greeting experience where kids and adults get to know one another through play, conversation, and laughter.



- Think you make the best chili? Enter as a chili-maker!
- Love tasting chili? Come enjoy great food, fellowship, and friendly competition.



Intergenerational Speed Greeting

Adults will host activity tables — think Legos, tea parties, drawing, and more — while kids rotate through each station. Kids will use bingo cards to ask questions, make connections, and win prizes along the way!

If you're interested in hosting an activity table or submitting a chili, please sign up in the narthex or contact Michelle in the church office at office@firstcongolax.org.

Come hungry, come curious, and come ready to connect! 🌶️ ✨

CONGO CREW

Grades 4th & 5th

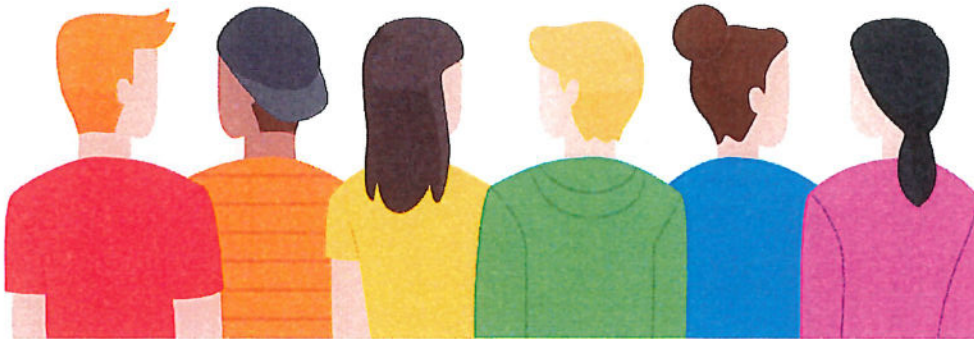
When: The 2nd & 4th Sundays of the Month

Beginning January 11, 2026

Where: First Congo

*We will have fun while we make friends and
explore our faith.*

COME JOIN US!



Please let us know if you are planning on joining us. We want to make sure we have enough food for everyone! Contact Michelle in the office (608-784-8137 or office@firstcongolax.org) to RSVP.