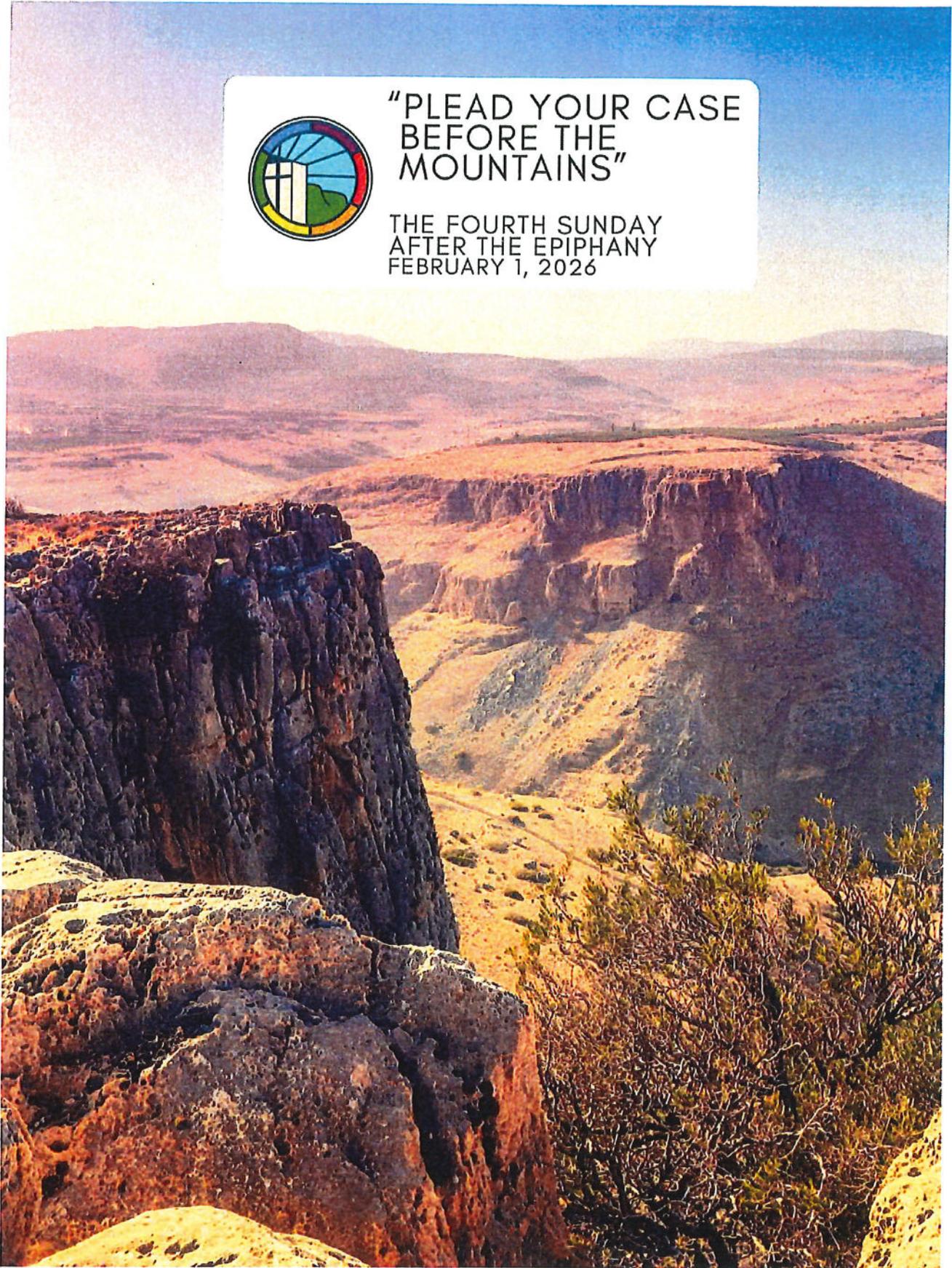




"PLEAD YOUR CASE
BEFORE THE
MOUNTAINS"

THE FOURTH SUNDAY
AFTER THE EPIPHANY
FEBRUARY 1, 2026



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 will join their age-specific classes downstairs after the Word for Children.

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
Organist, Pianist, and Choir Director.....	Nancy Allen
Reading Scripture.....	Shauna Sallmen
Head Usher	Allan Beatty
Ushers	Diane Schumacher, Tom Stolpa
Greeter	Sue Heuer
Communion Assistants.....	Sue Heuer, Tom Stolpa
Nursery.....	Zali Stanton
Fellowship	Christian Education

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

Gathering

in the presence of God

Gathering Music

"Be Thou My Vision"

Nancy Allen
Arr. Wagner

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

"Jesus Loves Me"

Nancy Allen
Arr. Lau

*Call to Worship

One: Listen up – God is calling the whole world to pay attention.

All: **We come, ready to listen.**

One: God isn't asking for extravagant offerings or perfect words.

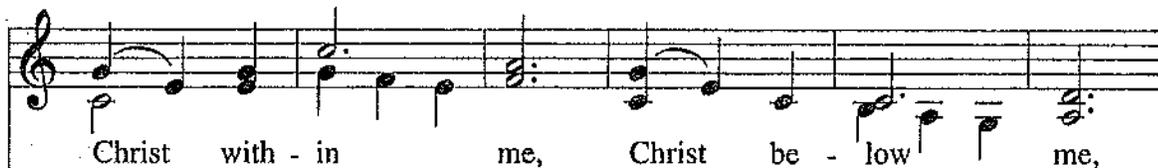
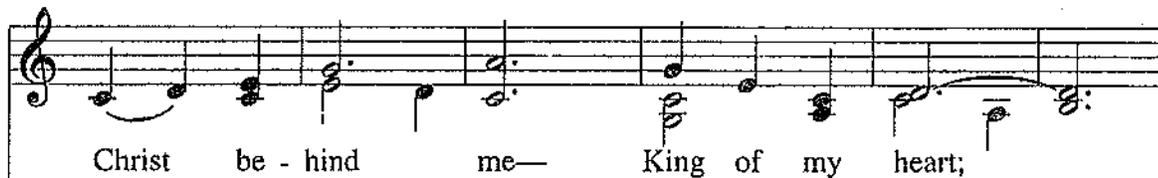
All: **God is asking for our lives.**

One: Do justice.

All: **Love kindness.**

One: Walk humbly with God.

All: **This is the path we choose together.**



Moment of Silence

Take this moment of silence to grow still and attentive to God. If it helps, try breathing in and silently praying, "God of love" and breathing out while praying "I am here."

*Hymn 686 (All join in singing the hymns.)

"What Does the Lord Require"

Sharpthorne

*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 a 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 go downstairs to their age-specific classes after the Word for Children.

Renewing Baptismal Vows through Membership

Ryan & Kayla Bader
Mary Ehle

Ryan & Morgan Healy
Robin & Matt Grote

Judy & Rodney Rommel
Matred Taylor

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

Micah 6:1-8

Shauna Sallmen

The Psalter

Psalm 15 (*Reading is based on The Message.*)

One: O LORD, who may abide in your tent?

Many: **Who may dwell on your holy hill?**

One: Those who walk blamelessly and do what is right
and speak the truth from their heart;

Many: **those who do not slander with their tongue
and do no evil to their friends
nor heap shame upon their neighbors;**

One: in whose eyes the wicked are despised
but who honor those who fear the LORD;

Many: **those who stand by their oath even to their hurt;
who do not lend money at interest,**

One: and those who do not take a bribe against the innocent.

Many: **Those who do these things shall never be moved.**

The Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12

Sermon

"When God Files a Lawsuit"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

Responding

with the voice of hope

*Anthem

"You are the Lord"

The Sanctuary Choir;
Kristi Koch, piano
Mona Gardner, Flute
Smith/ Arr. Pethel

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.*)
(rewrite this prayer)

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

"I want Jesus to Walk with Me"

Arr. Keveren

*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.

Communion
SUNDAY

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.

Thanksgiving after Communion

Going

to be messengers of good news

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

"A Place at the Table"

Tablesong

***The Blessing**

Postlude Music

"Praise Him with the Sound of the Trumpet"

Arr. Lau

*Flowers today are given by the Stiers Family
in memory of Bette Stier's mother, Sara Bean.*

Acknowledgements: "Christ Beside Me," words © 1969 James Quinn, S.J. (Selah Publishing Co., Inc., North American administrator) and music arr. © 1989 Hope Publishing Company. "What Does the Lord Require," words © 1949 Oxford University Press and music © 1969 Hope Publishing Company. "A Place at the Table," words © 1998 Hope Publishing Company and music © 1999 Hope Publishing Company. Hymns and music reprinted and streamed with permission under Onelicense.net #A-728014.

Cover Image: The image on the cover is of the mountains in the area referred to as wilderness in scripture. It is used with permission through our subscription to canva.com.

First Congregational UCC Ministry Team

All the Members.....Ministers
Rev. Dr. Laura Wright.....Senior Pastor
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, February 1

Fourth Sunday After The Epiphany

New Member Sunday

WAFER Sunday

10:00 am Worship w/Holy Communion

10:00 am Nursery

10:20 am JAM

11:00 am Annual Meeting (S)

11:00 am Confirmation

Thursday, February 5

7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir (S)

Friday, February 6

Office Closed

10:30 am Bell Choir Rehearsal (CR)

Sunday, February 8

Fifth Sunday After The Epiphany

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

10:00 am Worship

10:00 am Nursery

10:20 am JAM

11:00 am Organizational Meeting (CR)

4:30 pm Congo Crew (I)

CALENDAR KEY

C = Chapel, J = JAM Rooms, L = Lounge, N = Narthex, CR = Community Room, P = Pastor's Office, S = Sanctuary

ANNUAL MEETING

When: TODAY, February 1, 2026

Time: 11:00 am (Right After Worship)

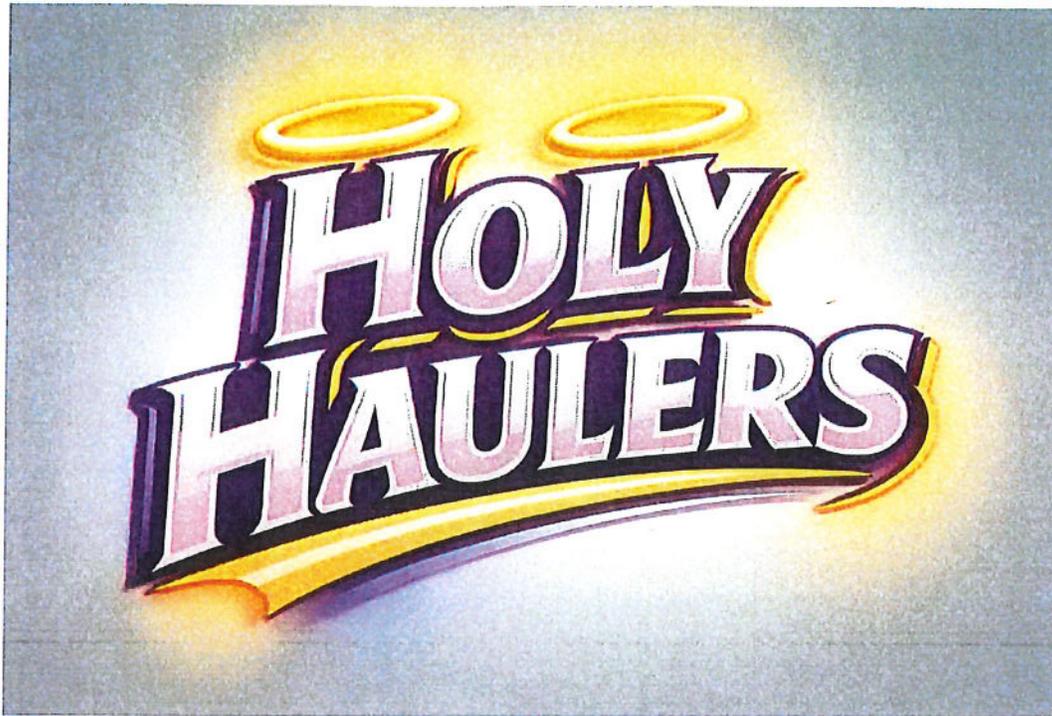
Where: Sanctuary

You won't want to miss this! Our Annual Meeting is today, February 1ST, immediately following worship. Together we will do the work of the church by electing our next slate of officers and ministry members, approving the annual budget, voting on a new sound system, and discussing what our Faith Formation program will look like going forward. This is an important opportunity to make your voice heard—your participation matters!



A picture of *you* is needed!

We are gathering current photos for our updated church picture directory, and we would love you to be included. If you'd like to participate, please send us a 3x5 or 4x6 photo taken within the last year. This spring, we will compile a new directory using all submitted photos, helping us better recognize and stay connected with one another. Thank you for helping us put faces to names and strengthen our church community



Calling all Holy Haulers! 🚗 ✨

The Holy Haulers are our behind-the-scenes saints who help the church by picking up items when a delivery is needed. Here's how it works: we'll send out an email letting folks know what needs to be picked up, where it's going, and the time window. If you're able to grab it and deliver it to the church—hallelujah! You've just saved the church some money. Would you like to be part of this team?

Email office@firstcongolax.org.

If no one is able to haul it, no worries—we'll have it delivered (with a tip). But when a Holy Hauler steps in, it's a small act of service that saves the church on expenses.

Short trips. Real impact. Sacred errands. ❤️

Thanks for being willing to carry the load—literally!

FIRST CONGO NEEDS YOUR HELP!

We are in need of volunteers to help support several important ministries of our church, including Worship Assistants; kitchen help for Congo Crew; assistance with Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday meals; Teachers and Teaching Assistants for JAM; and an Assistant for Confirmation.

With Pastor Mary's departure, our faith formation program is feeling a real gap, and we are leaning on the gifts of our congregation more than ever. Whether you can offer a little time or step into a more regular role, your presence and support truly make a difference. Together, we can continue nurturing faith, building community, and caring for one another.



KITCHEN HELP, VERY LITTLE
COOKING, MOSTLY WARMING
UP FOOD. THE KIDS WILL DO
THE CLEAN-UP

Worship

USHERS
GREETERS
SCRIPTURE READERS
COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

JAM

TEACHERS
TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Confirmation

CONFIRMATION ASSISTANT

**IF YOU FEEL A NUDGE TO HELP WITH ANY OF THESE TASKS
—WHETHER JUST ONCE OR ON AN ONGOING BASIS—WE
WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU. EVERY GIFT OF TIME
MATTERS AND TRULY HELPS OUR MINISTRIES THRIVE.
PLEASE CONTACT MICHELLE IN THE OFFICE AT
OFFICE@FIRSTCONGOLAX.ORG OR (608) 784-8137.**

*Ash Wednesday
& Maundy Thursday*

HELP WITH AN EASY MEAL.
SOME CLEAN-UP AFTER
WORSHIP