



FIRST SUNDAY  
OF LENT  
FEBRUARY 22, 2026

T.D. Anderson

**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.

### Serving in Worship Today

Leading Worship & Preaching.....	Laura Wright
Organist, Pianist, and Choir Director.....	Nancy Allen
Reading Scripture.....	Charlene Deters
Head Usher .....	Shelby Webb
Ushers .....	Tom Stolpa
Greeter .....	Kirby Lentz
Nursery.....	Zali Stanton & Madison Rummel
Fellowship.....	Christian Education

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

# Gathering

*in the presence of God*

## Gathering Music

Nancy Allen

## 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

Nancy Allen

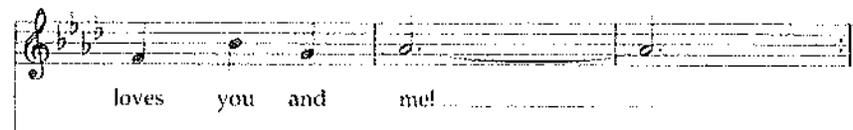
## \*Call to Worship

*One:* We come into this Lenten season,  
journeying with Jesus in the wilderness.

*All:* **We come seeking God's presence along the way,  
when life feels empty and hope runs dry.**

*One:* Yet even in the desert, abundance blossoms,  
and transformation comes through repentance.

*All:* **Let us walk this desert path of Lent together,  
knowing that God loves us when the world is harsh:**



## 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 252 (All join in singing the hymns.)

"Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days"

Land of Rest

## \*Sharing the Peace

*One:* The peace of Christ be with you on your Lenten journey.

*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

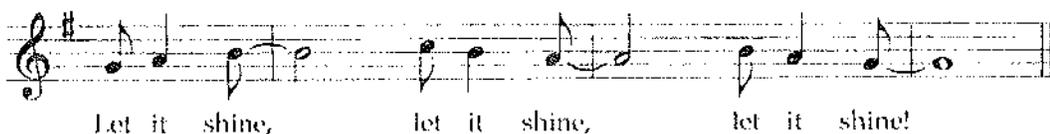
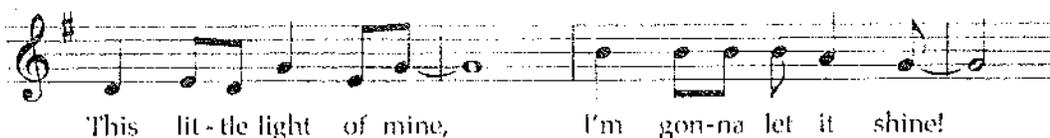
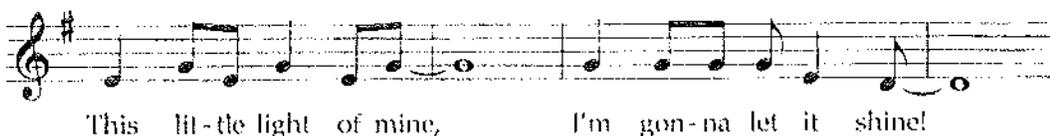
*for the Still-speaking God*

## 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.*

## Acclamation (Sung by all.)

*All:*



## The First Lesson

Matthew 13:31-32

Charlene Deters

## The Psalter

Psalm 104:14-15, 24, 27-28, 33-34 (*Reading is based on the CEB.*)

*One:* You make grass grow for cattle;

you make plants for human farming  
in order to get food from the ground,

*Many:* **and wine, which cheers people's hearts,  
along with oil, which makes the face shine,  
and bread, which sustains the human heart.**

*One:* LORD, you have done so many things!  
You made them all so wisely!

*Many:* **The earth is full of your creations!**

*One:* All your creations wait for you  
to give them their food on time.

*Many:* **When you give it to them, they gather it up;  
when you open your hand, they are filled completely full!**

*One:* I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praises to my God while I'm still alive.

*Many:* **Let my praise be pleasing to God;  
I'm rejoicing in the LORD!**

## The Gospel

John 2:1-11

## Sermon

"When the Party Almost Died"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

## Responding

*with the voice of hope*

\*Voluntary

"The Cup"

The Sanctuary Choir

Arr. Larson

## 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

\*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

## ☥ Going

*to be messengers of good news*

\*Hymn 68 (*All join in singing the hymns.*)

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Nettleton

# \*The Blessing

## Postlude Music

Nancy Allen

*Flowers today are given by Natalia Canas Para  
in loving memory of her grandmother, Maria,  
and her father-in-law, John.*

**Acknowledgements:** "Oh How He Loves You and Me," words and music by Kurt Kaiser © 1975 Word Music, LLC (Word Music, Inc.). "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days," words and music in the public domain. "The Little Light of Mine," words and music in the public domain. "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," words and music in the public domain. Hymns and music reprinted and streamed with permission under Onelicense.net #A-728014.

**Cover Image:** Anderson, T. Denise. "Messianic Secret." Acrylic on canvas, 14" x 18." This image is part of the Lenten devotional, "Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News This Lent," produced by Sanctified Arts. This is the same devotional that the church is using in our Connection Groups. The Lenten services will mirror the topics covered in these small groups.

### 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](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, February 22**

**The First Sunday of Lent**

**Noisy Offering**

- 9:00 am JAM Breakfast (CR)
- 10:00 am Worship
- 10:00 am Nursery
- 10:20 am JAM
- 11:00 am Fellowship (S)
- 4:30 pm Congo Crew (L)

**Monday, February 23**

1:30 pm Woman's Book Club (Glady's Home)

**Tuesday, February 24**

11:00 am Koffee Klatch @ Havenwood

**Wednesday, February 25**

10:00 am Sip & Scripture  
(McDonald's, Losey Blvd & Ward Ave.)

**Thursday, February 26**

7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir (S)

**Friday, February 27**

**Office Closed**

10:30 am Bell Choir Rehearsal (CR)  
5:30 pm Trivia Night (CR)

**Sunday, March 1**

**The Second Sunday of Lent**

**WAFER Sunday**

10:00 am Worship w/Holy Communion  
10:00 am Nursery  
10:20 am JAM  
11:00 am Fellowship (S)

### CALENDAR KEY

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

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# WANTED: YOUR SMILE

## Keep the Pictures Coming!

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.