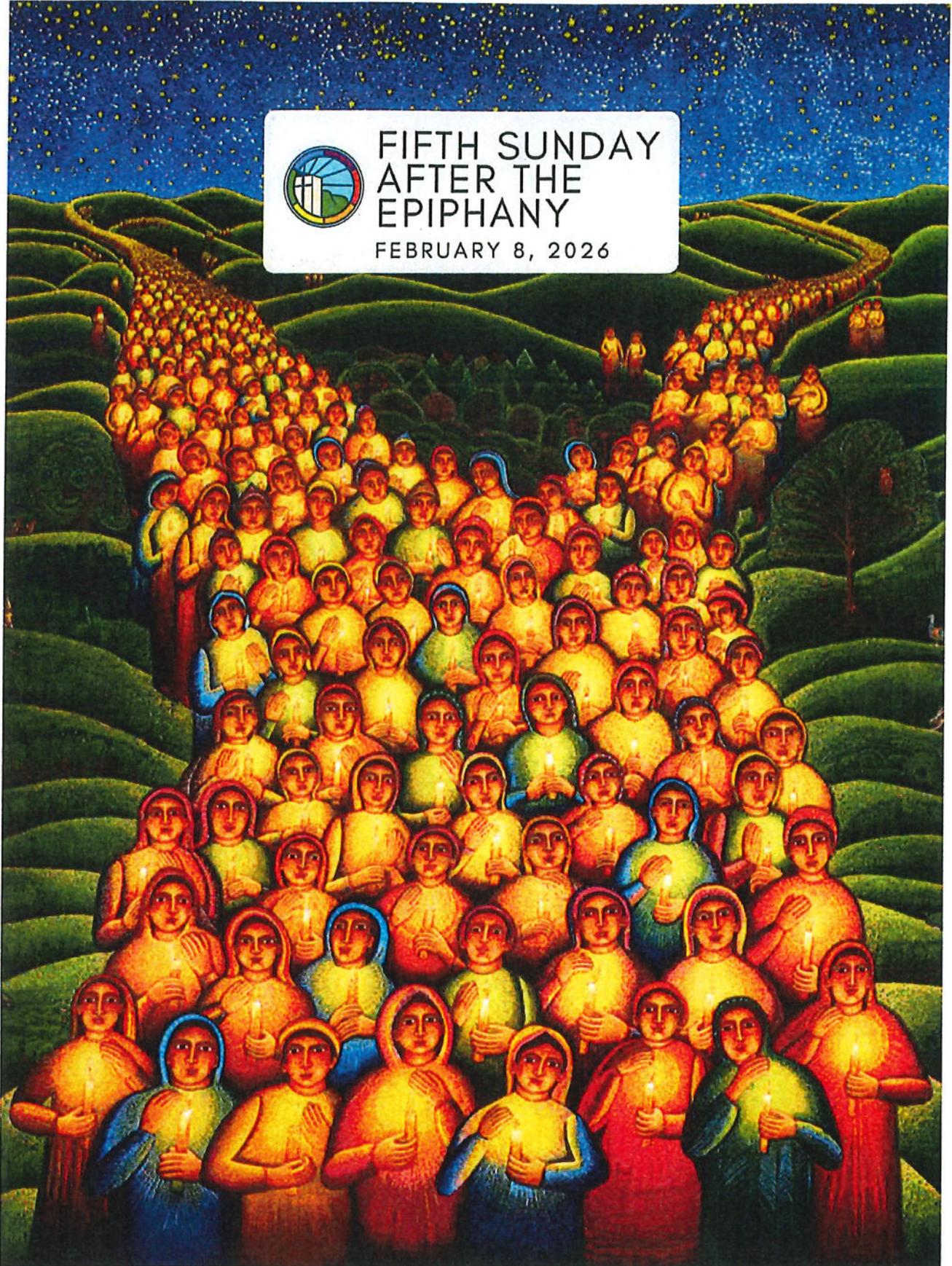




FIFTH SUNDAY
AFTER THE
EPIPHANY

FEBRUARY 8, 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 go to their classes after the message for kids.

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..... | Rev. Tom Uphaus |
| Organist, Pianist, and Choir Director..... | Kristi Koch |
| Reading Scripture..... | Barbara Strohm |
| Head Usher | Randy Breeser |
| Ushers | Diane Breeser, Jean Feeney |
| Greeter | Gladys Mc Lenahan |
| 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

"Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts"

Kristi Koch
Arr. Henry Baker

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

"Lord, I Want to Be a Christian"

Arr. A.C. Whitworth

*Call to Worship

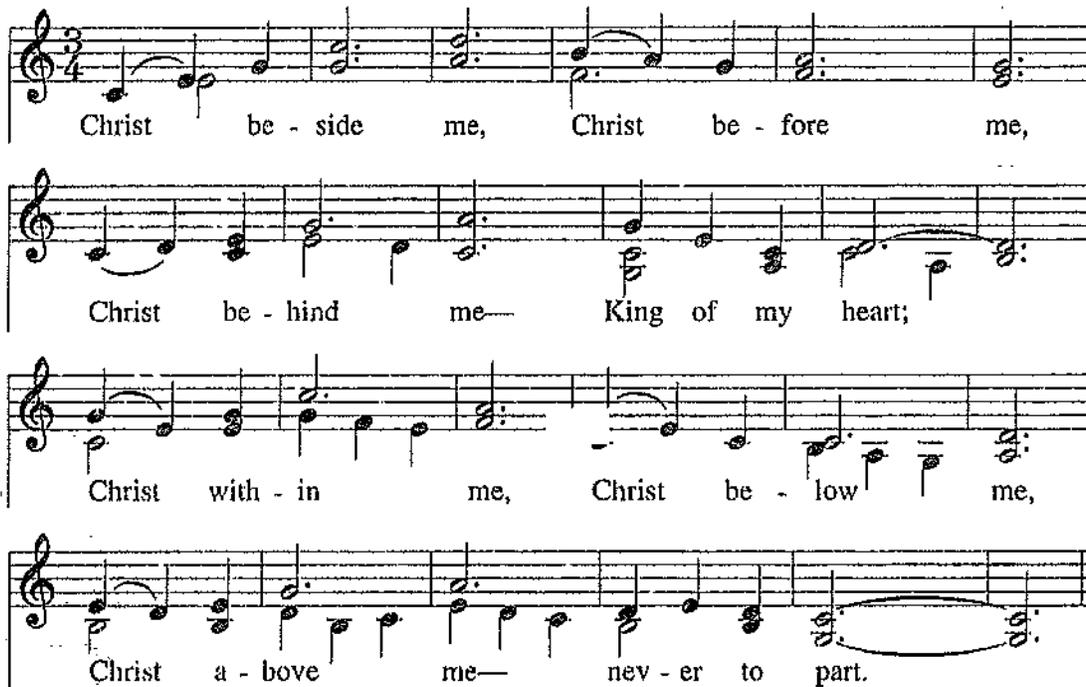
One: Shout out! You are the light of the world!

All: **We lift up our voices and sing praises to God!**

One: Live your praise with justice and love.

All: **We lift up our lives with compassion and mercy.**

One: Let us enter God's house as bearers of light.



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 462** (*All join in singing the hymns.*)
"Renew Your Church"

All Is Well

***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 say the words such as:

"Peace be with you. / And also with you."

Listening

for the Still-speaking God

The Word for Children

Sami Wayne

Children will join Sami in the center aisle as we walk forward for the Word for Children. Kids will go downstairs to their classes after the Word for Children.

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

Barbara Strohm

Isaiah 58:1-9a

The Psalter

Psalm 112:1-9 (Read responsively.)

One: Praise the LORD! Happy are those who fear the LORD,
who greatly delight in his commandments.

Many: **Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.**

One: Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

Many: **They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright;
they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.**

One: It is well with those who deal generously and lend,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

Many: **For the righteous will never be moved;
they will be remembered forever.**

One: They are not afraid of evil tidings;
their hearts are firm, secure in the LORD.

Many: **Their hearts are steady; they will not be afraid;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.**

One: They have distributed freely; they have given to the poor;

Many: **their righteousness endures forever;
their horn is exalted in honor.**

The Gospel

Matthew 5:13-20

Sermon

"The Salt & Light Co."

Rev. Tom Uphaus

Responding

with the voice of hope

Anthem

"Be Thou My Vision"

The Sanctuary Choir

Dan Forrest

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

Patty Leach

Music at the Offertory

"Of the Father's Love Begotten"

Arr. Mark Haye

*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 541 *(All join in singing the hymns.)*

"Church of God, Elect and Glorious"

Nettleton

*The Blessing

Postlude Music

Kristi Koch

"Light of the World"

Arr. Franklin Ritter

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*Flowers today are given by Sherry Sawle
on the one year anniversary of her mother's death.
Sherry wants to honor God for giving her a wonderful mother.*

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 8

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

- 10:00 am Worship
- 10:00 am Nursery
- 10:20 am JAM
- 11:00 am Organizational Meeting (CR)

Monday, February 9

Office Closed

Tuesday, February 10

- 2:00 pm Construction Management Team (L)

Wednesday, February 11

- 10:00 am Sip & Scripture
(McDonald's, Losey Blvd & Ward Ave.)
- 2:00 pm Construction Management Team (L)

Thursday, February 12

- 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir (S)

Friday, February 13

Office Closed

- 10:30 am Bell Choir Rehearsal (CR)

Sunday, February 15

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

- 9:00 am Faith Forum: Ali Abidi, SEHAT Inc. (C)
- 10:00 am Worship
- 10:00 am Nursery
- 10:20 am JAM
- 11:00 am Fellowship (S)

Welcome

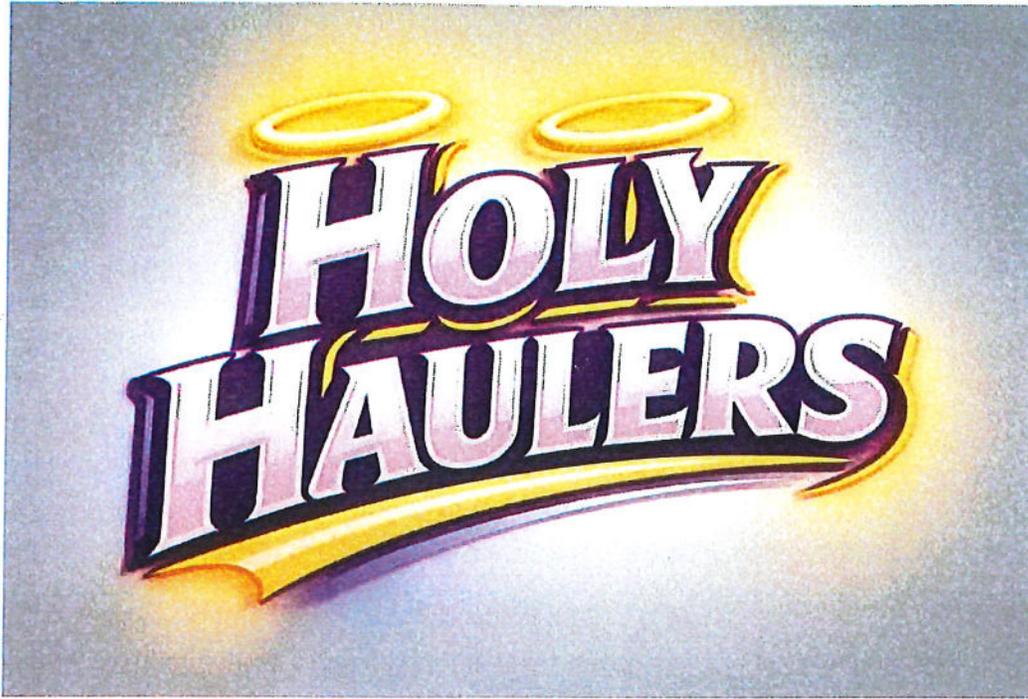
CALENDAR KEY

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



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!



Coffee & Friends



You're warmly invited to a cozy morning of coffee and conversation—because good relationships grow best with a warm cup in hand.

Where: Diane Stoffregen's home @ 3522 East Avenue South, Apartment A

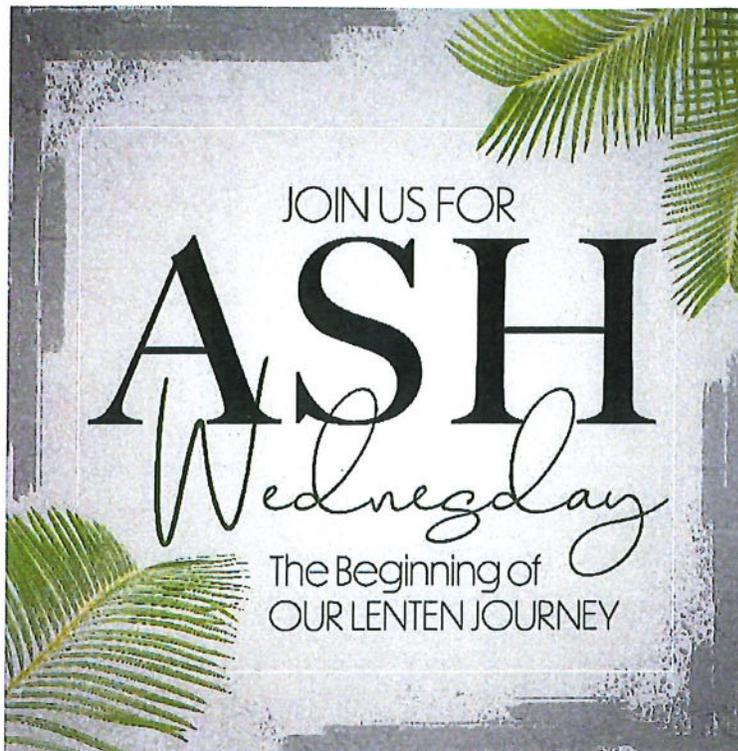
When: Tuesday, February 17

Time: 10:00 am

Come sip, chat, listen, laugh, and simply enjoy being together. No agenda—just a chance to build relationships and share a little life.

All are welcome. We'd love to see you there!





Save the Date: Ash Wednesday Services

Join us for Ash Wednesday as we begin our Lenten journey together.

- **12:00 PM** – A traditional Ash Wednesday service in the Chapel.
- **6:00 PM** – An all-ages, experiential service beginning outside the church with the symbolic burning of last year's palms. We will then move to the Narthex to let go of things that hold us back at the baptismal font, followed by a simple soup meal in the Community Room.

After the meal and the imposition of ashes, we will break into our **Lenten Connection Groups** and begin our journey into the *Good News* together. A children's group will be led by Zali, giving parents the opportunity to fully engage in their own Lenten faith journey.

We hope you'll join us as we enter this meaningful season together.





The good news calls us back to our roots. Emulating Jesus and embodying his teachings grounds us in who God created us to be. Can we be “good news” people in a world so often burdened by bad news?

This Lent, let us remember that the good news really *is* good news. It is joyful—like fine wine saved for celebration. It grows like a mustard seed and smells like perfume poured from an alabaster jar. It tastes like bread passed endlessly through a hungry crowd. It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy. The good news is alive in the world.

Would you like to take this five-week journey with us? We will be using a devotional as our guide as we dig deep into the good news together. The journey begins at our Ash Wednesday service on **February 18 at 6:00 pm.**

To sign up, follow the QR Code, or contact Michelle in the office at **(608) 784-8137** or **office@firstcongolax.org**.

