



**SINGING OUR  
WAY HOME**  
GOSPEL MUSIC SUNDAY  
APRIL 26, 2026

**Welcome!** At First Congregational United Church of Christ, our mission 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 toward the center aisle.

**All are welcome.** Jesus calls us to welcome all into God's family. After worship, you are invited to join us for Fellowship Hour in the Community Room—there is a place for you there. A restroom for families and all bodies is next to the Chapel.

**Children in Worship.** Children are not only welcome—they belong here. Activity bags are available in the Narthex, and a space near the front of the Sanctuary allows children to engage more closely in worship. Our staffed nursery (downstairs) is also available; all childcare workers have undergone a background check. Children in Pre-K through Grade 5 will go to their age-specific classrooms after the Word for Children.

**Livestreaming Notice for Worship.** To make worship accessible for all, we livestream our worship services on our YouTube channel (@firstcongo1ax). Your voice and/or image may be visible in the broadcast, which is publicly available. If you prefer not to appear on camera, we invite you to sit in the Sanctuary's last six rows.

**Please ask an usher** if you need assistance, a large print or sensory-friendly bulletin, or directions—we are glad to help.

### Serving in Worship Today

Leading Worship.....	Laura Wright
Choir Director.....	Nancy Allen
Pianist .....	Kristi Koch
Jazz Combo .....	Greg Balfany, Kristi Koch, Jeff Krauklis, Doug Mahlum
.....	Karyn Quinn, Josh Shively, Bix Swenson, George Van Arx
Head Usher .....	Randy Breeser
Reading Scripture.....	Sue Heuer
Ushers .....	Scott Brouwer, Diane Schumacher
Greeter .....	Patty Leach
Nursery.....	Zali Stanton
Fellowship .....	Visitation Team

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

# Gathering

*in the presence of God*

## Gathering Music

"Amazing Grace"

"This Little Light of Mine"

Nancy Allen, Piano

Arr. Jack Schrader

Arr. Mark Hayes

## Welcome and Announcements

*Thank you for being here today. Please pass the Friendship Folder, share the information you wish, and note those sitting near you so you can greet one another by name.*

## Prelude Music

"South Street Shuffle"

Jazz Combo

Bob Turner

## \*Call to Worship

*One:* Beloved, we come this day carrying hope and weariness,  
songs half-sung and prayers still waiting for words.

*Many:* **And still, God calls us to sing.**

*One:* When the road feels long and our hands grow tired,


*Many:* **precious Lord, take our hand and lead us on.**

*One:* When the Spirit stirs deep within us and joy cannot be contained,

*Many:* **we will sing, and we will clap.**

*One:* Lift your voices, lift your spirits, lift your whole selves.

*Many:* **Come--let us sing to God with every breath we have!**



Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:  
take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

## Silence at Resurrection's Dawn

*Take a moment of stillness, becoming attentive to the Holy One.*

### \*Hymn 481 *(All join in singing the hymn.)*

**"Every Time I Feel the Spirit"**

*Spiritual*

### \*Sharing the Peace

*One:* The peace of the Risen Christ be with you.

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

*Share Christ's peace with one another with a wave or a bow and with words such as: "Peace be with you. / And also with you."*

## Listening

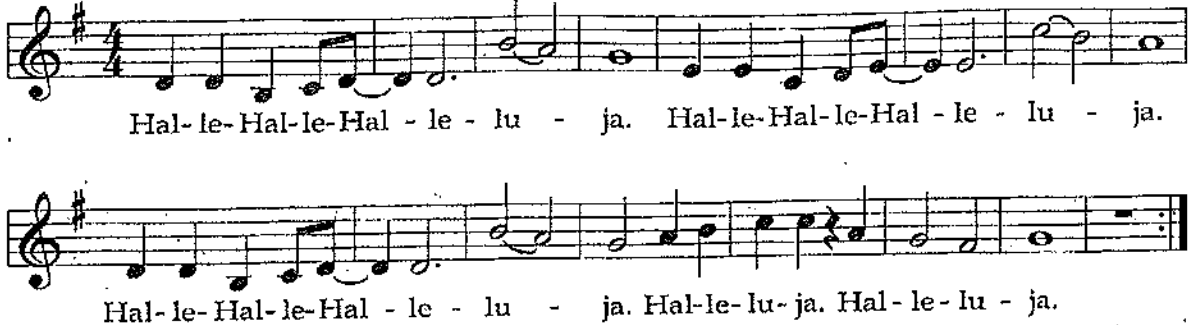
*for the Risen Christ*

### The Word for Children

*Children will join the minister in the center aisle as we walk forward. Kids will then go to their age-specific classes.*

### Acclamation *(Sung by all.)*

*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

Isaiah 40:28-31

Sue Heuer

### Psalm 150:1, 3b-6 *(Read responsively.)*

*One:* Praise the LORD!

*Many:* **Praise God in the sanctuary!**

*One:* Praise God in the sky!

*Many:* **Praise God with drum and dance!**

*One:* Praise God with strings and pipe!

*Many:* **Praise God with loud cymbals!**

*One:* Praise God with clashing cymbals!

*Many:* Let every living thing praise the LORD!

*One:* Praise God!

## The Gospel

Luke 4:16-21

## The Word through Music

“Joyful, Joyful”

Victoria Ratsch, Solo

“Let Everything That Has Breath”

“Steal Away”

Greg Balfany, Saxophone

“God Bless the Child”

“Oh Happy Day”

Doug Mahlum, Solo

## The Sanctuary Choir

Arr. Emerson

Jeffrey L. Ames

Arr. Howard Helvey

Arr. Steve Zegree

Arr. Mark Hayes

## Responding

*with the voice of hope*

Stories of Generosity: Honoring Steve & Katie Webster

Bill Sacia

## The Community Invited into Prayer

Prayers of the People

*Leader:* God, in your love,

*All:* hear our prayer.

The Prayer of Jesus (*You are invited to use language for God that reflects your faith.*)

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*

### Music at the Offertory

"Soon and Very Soon"

Arr. Jack Schrader

\*As the Gifts Are Presented: Sing to the tune of Old Hundredth (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 *(All join in singing the hymn.)*

"I'll Fly Away"

\*The

Some glad morn - ing when this life is o'er, I'll fly a - way  
Just a few more wea - ry days, and then I'll fly a - way  
to a home on God's ce - les - tial shore, I'll fly a - way.  
to a land where joy shall nev - er end, I'll fly a - way.  
I'll fly a - way, O glo - ry. I'll fly a - way.  
way. When I die, hal - le - lu - jah, by and by,  
I'll fly a - way, way.

### Blessing

Postlude Music

“Seven Steps to Heaven”

Jazz Combo

Miles Davis and Victor Feldman

Arr. Philip Mossman

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*Today’s flowers are given by Terry Witzke  
in memory of Kathryn Schnur Witzke  
and her parents, Gertrude and Leo Schnur.*

First Congregational UCC Ministry Team

- All the Members.....Ministers
- Rev. Dr. Laura Wright.....Senior Pastor
- Nancy Allen.....Organist and 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

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### This Week in Our Church:

#### Sunday, April 26

##### Loud Offering Sunday

- 9:00 am JAM Breakfast (CR)
- 10:00 am Worship
- 10:00 am Nursery
- 10:20 am JAM
- 11:00 am Fellowship (CR)
- 11:00 am Confirmation (L)
- 2:00 pm Love Out Loud (State St. & Losey)
- 2:30 pm OWL (J & L)
- 4:30 pm Congo Crew (L)

#### Monday, April 27

- 1:30 pm Woman's Book Club  
(Mary Hosler's Home)

#### Tuesday, April 28

- 11:00 am Koffee Klatch @ Havenwood

#### Wednesday, April 29

- 10:00 am Sip & Scripture  
(McDonald's, Losey & Ward)

#### Thursday, April 30

- 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir (S)

#### Friday, May 1

Office Closed

#### Saturday, May 2

- 4:00 pm Community Concert (The Nature Place)
- 5:00 pm Multi-Faith Earth Day Service  
(The Nature Place)

#### Sunday, May 3

##### Confirmation

##### New Member Sunday

##### WAFER Sunday

- 10:00 am Worship w/Holy Communion
- 10:00 am Nursery
- 10:20 am JAM
- 11:00 am Fellowship (CR)
- 2:30 pm OWL (J & L)
- 3:00 pm The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace  
(Holmen High School Fine Arts Center)

### CALENDAR KEY

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

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## Today We Honor Katie & Steve Webster



Fifty years ago, Katie and Steve, along with Ann Barney, started Mobile Meals—an act of compassion that has touched countless lives in our community. Katie faithfully led this ministry for many years before passing it on to Bill Sacia, ensuring its continued impact for generations to come.

The La Crosse area will never be able to fully express its gratitude for the vision, dedication, and love that shaped this remarkable ministry.

Katie and Steve have been a true blessing to our church and to the wider community. Their generosity, faithfulness, and servant hearts have made a lasting difference in ways both seen and unseen.

With deep gratitude, we say—thank you for all you have given.

# Join Us, Sunday April 26th



## A Rally of Faithful Welcome

Join the **LGBTQ Affirming Christians of the La Crosse Region** as we gather with our partners at the Seven Rivers LGBTQ Connection Center to “Love Out Loud”—a visible, joyful witness that God’s love is for all. Together, as people of Open & Affirming churches, we show up in solidarity with our LGBTQ siblings, acknowledging the harm the church has caused and choosing a different path: one of healing, celebration, and justice.

The day begins with sign-making at The Center (230 6th Street South) from **12:00–2:00 PM**—a time for creativity, community, and preparing messages of love. Then we head to the corner of **Losey Blvd. and State Road from 2:00–4:00 PM**, standing together in public witness with signs that proclaim dignity, belonging, and hope.

Come be part of a movement where faith is lived out loud—where love is not quiet, but courageous.

# Join us in the celebration of Confirmation 2026



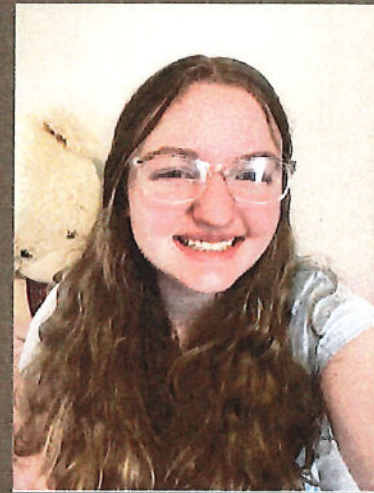
Kaverick Stanton



Greta Runyon



Matea Bersagel-Braley



Emmie Runyon

May 3, 2026 | 10 AM  
First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
2503 Main Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin

Cake and Fellowship to follow





# ***MONDAY MEALS***



## **Our Next Meal is May 18<sup>th</sup>**

Trinity Lutheran Church faithfully offers a free community meal each Monday evening from 5:00–6:00 pm, welcoming all with care and compassion. On May 18, First Congregational has the privilege of preparing and serving this meal.

This is a beautiful opportunity to share God's love in a simple, meaningful way. Whether you can help with food preparation, serving, clean-up, or by providing cookies, your time and gifts truly make a difference.

A sign-up sheet is available on the stone ledge. Thank you for considering how you might be part of this ministry of hospitality and care.

Meals are provided as to-go packages as we serve our neighbors in the community.

**I was hungry and you  
gave me food,  
I was thirsty and you  
gave me something to drink.**

Matthew 25:35, NRSV

**Hope to see you there!**





**Strengthen  
the Church**

SENT FORTH IN  
**LOVE**

## Supporting next generation leaders

Your gifts to Strengthen the Church help support ministries like the Service Learning Community Fellowship Program all across the United States. Thank you for your generosity!



*The Strengthen the Church Offering furthers the work of our Conference and National Ministries as we work together to strengthen and renew existing congregations, fund leadership development, and provide exciting new programs for youth and young adults. The offering is divided between your Conference and the National Ministries.*

Learn more at [www.ucc.org/stc](http://www.ucc.org/stc)

***The 2026 Strengthen the Church Offering is May 24<sup>th</sup>.***



**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**