



**SEVENTH SUNDAY  
OF EASTER**

MAY 17, 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 are welcome in worship.** Children are not only welcome – they belong here. Activity bags are available next to the Sanctuary’s doors, 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 (@firstcongolax). 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 & Preaching.....	Laura Wright
Organist, Pianist, and Choir Director.....	Nancy Allen
Reading Scripture.....	Scott Brouwer
Head Usher .....	Michael Feuerhelm
Ushers .....	Cam Roberts, Diane Schumacher
Greeter .....	Carlene Roberts
Nursery.....	Zali Stanton
Fellowship.....	Missions and Social Justice

An asterisk (\*) in the order of service indicates all who are able may 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, and note those worshipping in your pew so you can greet them by name.*

## Prelude Music

"Misty"

Adam Carty, Director

Fermata Nowhere

## \*Call to Worship

*One:* We come into this holy space like Jesus' disciples.

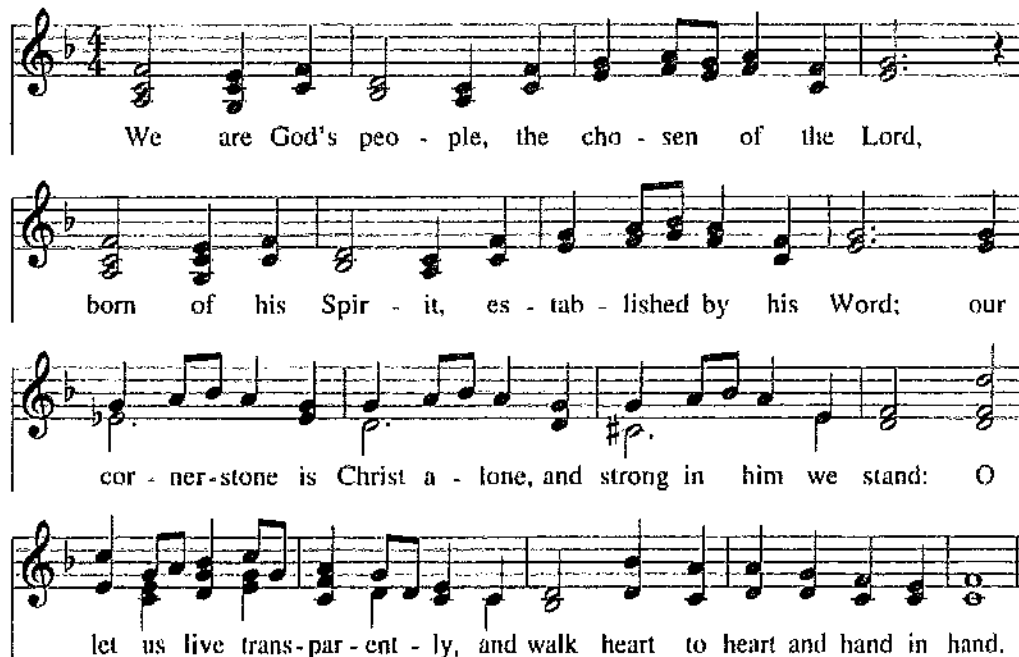
We need a moment to walk away from the noise of Jerusalem.

*Many:* **We, too, come seeking a little distance from the noise of the world.**

*One:* We arrive here carrying headlines and heartache, worries about tomorrow and the exhaustion of trying to hold too much.

*Many:* **Yet God meets weary souls on quiet hillsides and in silent places.**

*One:* Come away for a moment. Breathe in deeply God's love for you and sing:



We are God's peo - ple, the cho - sen of the Lord,  
born of his Spir - it, es - tab - lished by his Word; our  
cor - ner-stone is Christ a - lone, and strong in him we stand: O  
let us live trans-par - ent - ly, and walk heart to heart and hand in hand.

## A Moment for Silence

*Take this moment of silence to become still and attentive to God.*

## \*Hymn 450 (All join in singing the hymn.)

**"Be Still and Know"**

*Be Still and Know*

## \*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 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 minister in the center aisle as they walk forward for the Word for Children. Kids will go downstairs to their classes afterwards.*

## 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 image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff is for the first line of lyrics, and the second staff is for the second line. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a final cadence at the end of the second line.

## The First Lesson

Scott Brouwer

Acts 1:6-14

## The Psalter

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 (Reading is based on The Common English Bible.)

*One:* Let God rise up; let God's enemies scatter;  
let those who hate God flee before God!

*Many:* **Like smoke is driven away, drive them away!**

*One:* Like wax melting before fire,  
let the wicked become lost before God!

*Many:* **But let the righteous be glad and celebrate before God.**

*One:* Let them rejoice with gladness!  
*Many:* **Sing to God! Sing praises to God's name!  
Exalt the one who rides the clouds!**  
*One:* The LORD is God's name. Celebrate before God!  
*Many:* **Parent of orphans and defender of widows  
is God in God's holy habitation.**  
*One:* God settles the lonely in their homes;  
*Many:* **God sets prisoners free with happiness,**  
*One:* but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.  
*Many:* **When you went forth before your people, God,  
when you marched through the desert, the earth shook!**  
*One:* Yes, heaven poured down before God, the one from Sinai –  
before God, the God of Israel!  
*Many:* **You showered down abundant rain, God;**  
*One:* when your inheritance grew weary,  
you restored it yourself and your animals settled in it.  
*Many:* **In your goodness, God, you provided for the poor.**  
*One:* Sing to God, all kingdoms of the earth!  
*Many:* **Sing praises to my Lord.**  
*One:* Sing to the one who rides through heaven, the most ancient heaven.  
*Many:* **Look! God sends forth God's voice,  
God's mighty voice.**  
*One:* Recognize how strong God is!  
God's majesty extends over Israel;  
*Many:* **God's strength is in the clouds.**  
*One:* You are awesome, God, in your sanctuaries –  
the God of Israel who gives strength and power to God's people!  
*Many:* **Bless God!**

## **The Gospel**

John 17:1-11

## **Sermon**

"A Sabbath's Day Journey Away"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

## **∞ Responding**

*with the voice of hope*

### **Anthem**

"Light of Grace"

The Sanctuary Choir  
Andy Beck

### **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**

WISE Team

### **Music at the Offertory**

"Mary Did You Know"

Adam Carty, Director  
Fermata Nowhere

**\*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**

**\*Hymn 569** *(All join in singing the hymn.)*

*"God of Grace and God of Glory"*

*CWM Rhondda*

**\*The Blessing**

**Postlude Music**

*Nancy Allen*

**Acknowledgements:** Hymns and music reprinted and streamed with permission under OneLicense.net #A-728014. The image on the cover is entitled "Ascension" from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imageLink.pl?RC=54351> [retrieved May 10, 2026]. Original source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/skip/111045024/>.

*Flowers today are given by Ruby Biering and family  
in memory of Dick Biering.*

## **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).

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, May 17**

**Graduation Celebration**

**JAM Teacher Recognition**

10:00 am Worship

10:00 am Nursery

10:20 am JAM

11:00 am Fellowship (CR)

11:00 am Church Clean-up

11:15 am Finance Meeting (L)

11:15 am WISE Committee Meeting (L)

11:30 am End-of-Year Picnic (Weigent Park)

2:30 pm OWL (J & L)

**Monday, May 18**

4:30 pm Monday Meals (Trinity Lutheran Church, 1010 Sill Street, La Crosse)

**Wednesday, May 20**

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

**Thursday, May 21**

4:30 pm Membership Meeting (CR)

**Friday, May 22**

**Office Closed**

**Sunday, May 24**

**Pentecost**

**Strengthen the Church Offering**

10:00 am Worship

10:00 am Nursery

11:00 am Fellowship (CR)

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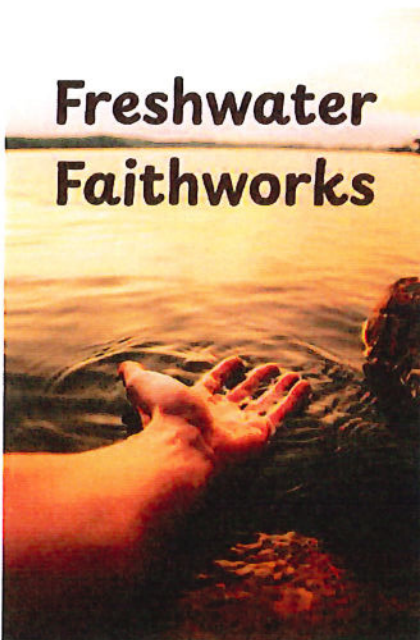
### CALENDAR KEY

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

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## Daychola, UCC Camp

Join Pastor Laura and Elizabeth Janvrin for this three-night, intergenerational camp.



**Freshwater Faithworks** is a new Wisconsin and Minnesota United Church of Christ program focusing on the intersection of freshwater ecology and faith. With a combination of hands-on service-learning, education, exploration, and reflection, participants will be given the opportunity to experience freshwater sources in a holistic way, inviting them to fall in love with water and empowering them to fight back against climate anxiety with tangible action.

\$400 for adults, \$250 for ages 12 – 17 and \$125 for ages 3 – 11. Cost should not deter anyone. Talk to Pastor Laura ([laura@firstcongolax.org](mailto:laura@firstcongolax.org)) or Elizabeth ([eandjfamily@gmail.com](mailto:eandjfamily@gmail.com)) to register, for more info or

financial assistance.

**Let's fill a van with FCC campers!**

Together we will talk,  
laugh, and enjoy the  
fellowship of being the  
church together!

# CHURCH CLEAN-UP

PITCH IN AND KEEP OUR GROUNDS BEAUTIFUL .  
You are needed - young and old - to help with  
the spring clean-up of the church campus.  
Help prepare the yard, garden and parking lot  
for the growing season.

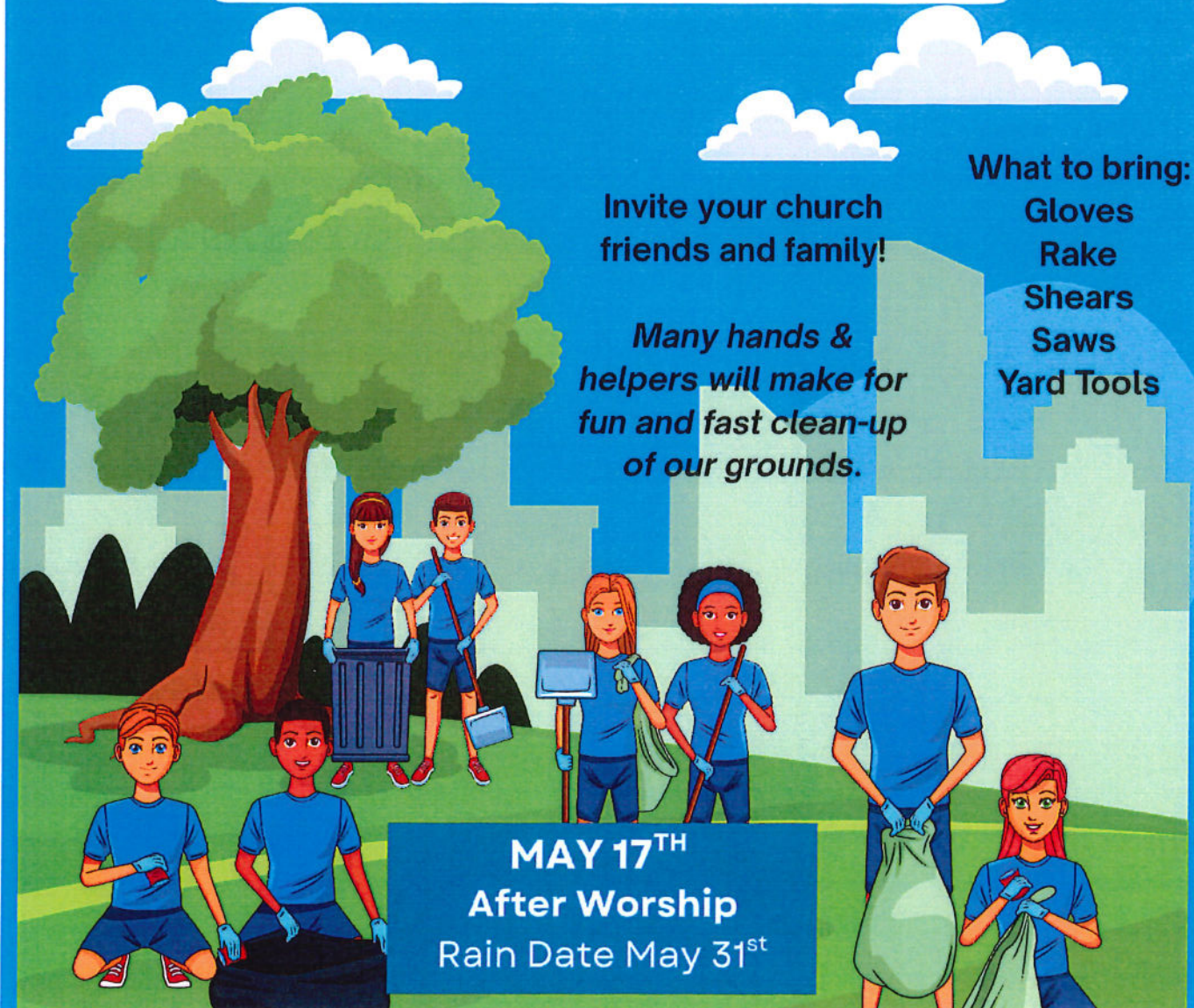
Invite your church  
friends and family!

*Many hands &  
helpers will make for  
fun and fast clean-up  
of our grounds.*

What to bring:

Gloves  
Rake  
Shears  
Saws  
Yard Tools

**MAY 17<sup>TH</sup>**  
**After Worship**  
Rain Date May 31<sup>st</sup>



HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE

# GRADUATION



- Abigail Koch is graduating from Belmont University with a Bachelor of Business Administration
- Zali Stanton is graduating from Logan High School
- Miya Servais is graduating from Central High School

Join us in recognizing this academic milestone and sharing this moment with our church family!

# *Great River Ringers and Friends*

*present*

## *Let's Dance*



Sunday, May 17, 2026

2:00 PM

Free admission

Black River Beach  
Neighborhood Center

1433 Rose Street  
La Crosse, WI

Refreshments following the concert



**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**