



WHOEVER WELCOMES YOU
WELCOMES ME

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
JUNE 28, 2026



John Stapp

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. 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 background checks. Children in Pre-K through Grade 3 will go to Summer JAM, and older children may remain in worship. A restroom for families and all bodies is next to the Chapel.

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
Pianist	Kristi Koch
Reading Scripture.....	Beth Moore
Head Usher	Michael Feuerhelm
Ushers	Tom Stolpa
Greeter	Bob Armstrong
Nursery.....	Zali Stanton

An asterisk (*) in the order of service indicates all who are able may stand.

Gathering

in the presence of God

Gathering Music

"Eagle's Whistle"

"Old Town Band"

Erin Hussey and Betsy Knowles

Traditional Irish arr. Ken Kolodner

Traditional U.S. arr. Ken Kolodner

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 near you so you can greet them by name.

Prelude Music

"Somewhere Over the Rainbow"

Erin Hussey and Betsy Knowles

Harold Arlen, arr. Ken Kolodner

*Call to Worship

One: Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me."

Many: **Christ welcomes all of us and calls us to welcome one another.**

One: A cup of cold water, a word of kindness, a gesture of care —
small acts reveal God's love and welcome.

Many: **No act of love is too small in the reign of God.**

One: So let us welcome Christ in friend and stranger, neighbor and guest —
for where our neighbor is — there, the ground is holy.

Many: **Here, we gather on ground made holy by God and our neighbor.**



The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic marking. The lyrics are: "We are stand - ing on ho - ly ground, And I know that there are an - gels all a - round. Let us praise Je - sus now; We are stand - ing in God's pres - ence on ho - ly ground." The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, with some measures containing rests. The piece concludes with a final chord.

A Moment for Silence

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

*Hymn 477 (All join in singing the hymn.)

"Come and Find the Quiet Center"

BEACH SPRING

*Sharing the Peace

One: The peace of 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 from Pre-K through Grade 3 will go to Summer JAM. Older kids will remain in worship.

Acclamation (Sung by all.)

SPIRITUAL

All:



1. This lit - tle light of mine I'm gon-na let it shine,
This lit - tle light of mine
I'm gon-na let it shine; This lit - tle light of mine
I'm gon-na let it shine. Let it shine.
let it shine, let it shine.

The First Lesson

Jeremiah 28:5-9

Beth Moore

The Psalter

Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 (*Reading is based on The Common English Bible.*)

One: I will sing of the LORD's loyal love forever.

Many: **I will proclaim your faithfulness with my own mouth
from one generation to the next.**

One: That's why I say, "Your loyal love is rightly built—forever!

Many: **You establish your faithfulness in heaven."**

One: You said, "I made a covenant with my chosen one;
I promised my servant David:

Many: **"I will establish your offspring forever;
I will build up your throne from one generation to the next."**

One: The people who know the celebratory shout are truly happy!

Many: **They walk in the light of your presence, LORD!**

One: They rejoice in your name all day long
and are uplifted by your righteousness,

Many: **because you are the splendor of their strength.**

One: By your favor you make us strong
because our shield is the LORD's own;

Many: **our ruler belongs to the holy one of Israel!**

The Gospel

Matthew 10:40-42

Sermon

"What If God Looks Like Them?"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

Responding

with the voice of hope

***Hymn 273** (*All join in singing the hymn.*)

"Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love"

CHEREPONI

The Community Invited into Prayer

Prayers of the People

One: God, in your love,

All: hear our prayer.

The Prayer of Jesus (*Said by all. Pray using the language for God that is most meaningful to you.*).

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

"Love Lifted Me"

Kristi Koch, Piano
arr. Schram

***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 231** (*All join in singing the hymn.*)

"Arise, Your Light Is Come!"

FESTAL SONG

***The Blessing**

Postlude Music

"Great is the Lord"

Kristi Koch, Piano
arr. Rouse

Acknowledgements: Hymns and music reprinted and streamed with permission under OneLicense.net #A-728014. The image on the cover of the bulletin, "Come As You Are," was purchased from Brooklyn Swenson.

Flowers today are given in celebration of Audrey Kader's birthday on June 26 by a friend.

Announcements:

This Week in Our Church:

Sunday, June 28

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Loud Offering

10:00 am Worship

10:00 am Nursery

10:20 am Summer JAM (J)

11:00 am Fellowship (CR)

11:00 am Missions & Social Justice Meeting (L)

Friday, July 3

Office Closed

Saturday, July 4

Independence Day

Sunday, July 5

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

WAFER Sunday

10:00 am Worship w/Communion

10:00 am Nursery

10:20 am Summer JAM (J)

12:00 pm New Member Class (JavaVino)

CALENDAR KEY

C = Chapel, CR = Community Room, J = JAM Rooms, K = Kitchen,

L = Lounge, N = Narthex, P = Pastor's Office, S = Sanctuary





Thank You

The Christian Education Committee extends its heartfelt thanks to the congregation for your generous support of the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program. Your financial contributions and willingness to serve as leaders made this meaningful ministry possible.

This year, ten youth successfully completed the program. Beyond the curriculum itself, one of the greatest gifts was the relationships that were formed among the participants. The group included children from both our church family and the wider community, creating opportunities for connection, learning, and mutual support.

We celebrate the growth, friendships, and sense of belonging that emerged through this experience. This is outreach at its best—building relationships, strengthening young people, and sharing God's love beyond our church walls.

Thank you for helping make this ministry a success.



Would you like to join our flock?

If you've ever thought about becoming a member of First Congregational UCC, now is the perfect time! Those interested are invited to gather for lunch and conversation at JavaVino, Sunday, July 5th, at noon. This will be a relaxed opportunity to ask questions, learn more about First Congo, and explore what membership means in our faith community.

If you plan to join us for lunch, please let the church office know so JavaVino can ensure adequate space. Michelle would love to hear from you at (608) 784-8137 or office@firstcongolax.org!



**PROJECT
HOMELESS
CONNECT**



COLLECTION BIN

Twice each year La Crosse conducts a count of individuals experiencing housing insecurity. In conjunction with this effort, our community is coming together to support our unhoused neighbors through Project Homeless Connect.

Items Needed

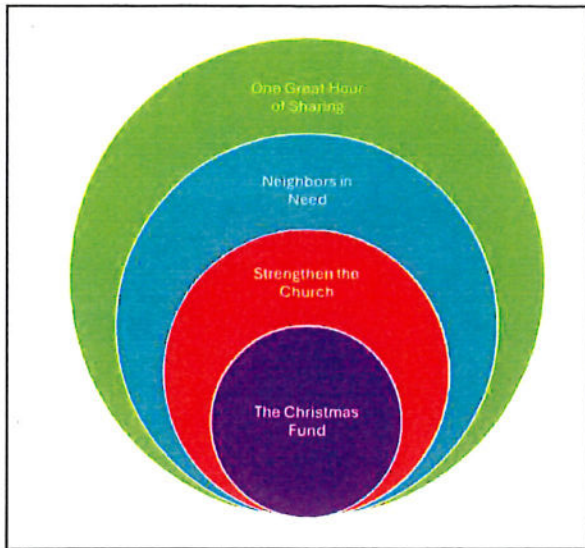
- Toothbrush Holders/Caps
- Body Wash
- 2-in-1 Shampoo/Conditioner
- Personal Wipes
- Chapstick
- Sunscreen
- Aloe
- Bug Spray

**THURSDAY
JULY 23RD**

**10:30 AM
TO
2:30 PM**

**YOU CAN ALSO SUPPORT THIS EVENT BY
DONATING HYGIENE SUPPLIES IN THE
NARTHEX. THE COLLECTION BIN WILL BE
AVAILABLE BEGINNING JUNE 28TH.**





A Year of Love: The Special Mission Offerings

The Special Mission Offerings are all about relationships. For 25 years the United Church of Christ has invited participation in four special offerings each year as a witness to our Christian relationships. The circle of love expands with each offering.

The **Christmas Fund** provides direct financial support to active and retired UCC clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses who are facing financial difficulties.

Broadening the circle of love, the **Strengthen the Church Offering** supports youth and young adult ministries, new and renewing congregations, and leadership development within UCC churches.

The next larger circle of love is the **Neighbors in Need Offering**. It supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States, including the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM), justice and advocacy, and direct service projects with grants to local churches for projects they develop. The broadest circle of love is found with the **One Great Hour of Sharing** which channels resources for international programs in health, education, and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response. This offering often assists Church World Service and other partner agencies to fulfill this wider mission.

All of these Special Mission Offerings stretch us to remember our connections with people near and wide and provide opportunities to transform the world. OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) contributions provide the basic support for the ongoing work of the wider church, with 20% going to national ministries and 80% to conferences. Whether providing emergency assistance to retired clergy through the Christmas Fund, disaster relief after a hurricane through One Great Hour of Sharing or supporting regional camps through OCWM Basic Support-your gifts change lives.

Churches that contribute to OCWM and the four special offerings are called "5 for 5" churches. We have been a "5 for 5" church for many years and our participation has allowed our gifts to multiply the outreach of love throughout the world. Our love for each other, for our neighbors, for our God, continues to guide our churches to respond with great generosity.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July

2026

NEW MEMBER CLASS

Noon @ JavaVino

JULY 5

HOT DOG DAY

11:00 am @ First Congo

JULY 11

MONDAY MEALS

4:30 pm @ Trinity Lutheran

JULY 13

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT

10:30 AM – 2:30 AM

JULY 23

WOMAN'S BOOK CLUB

1:30 PM @ Eagle Crest South

JULY 27