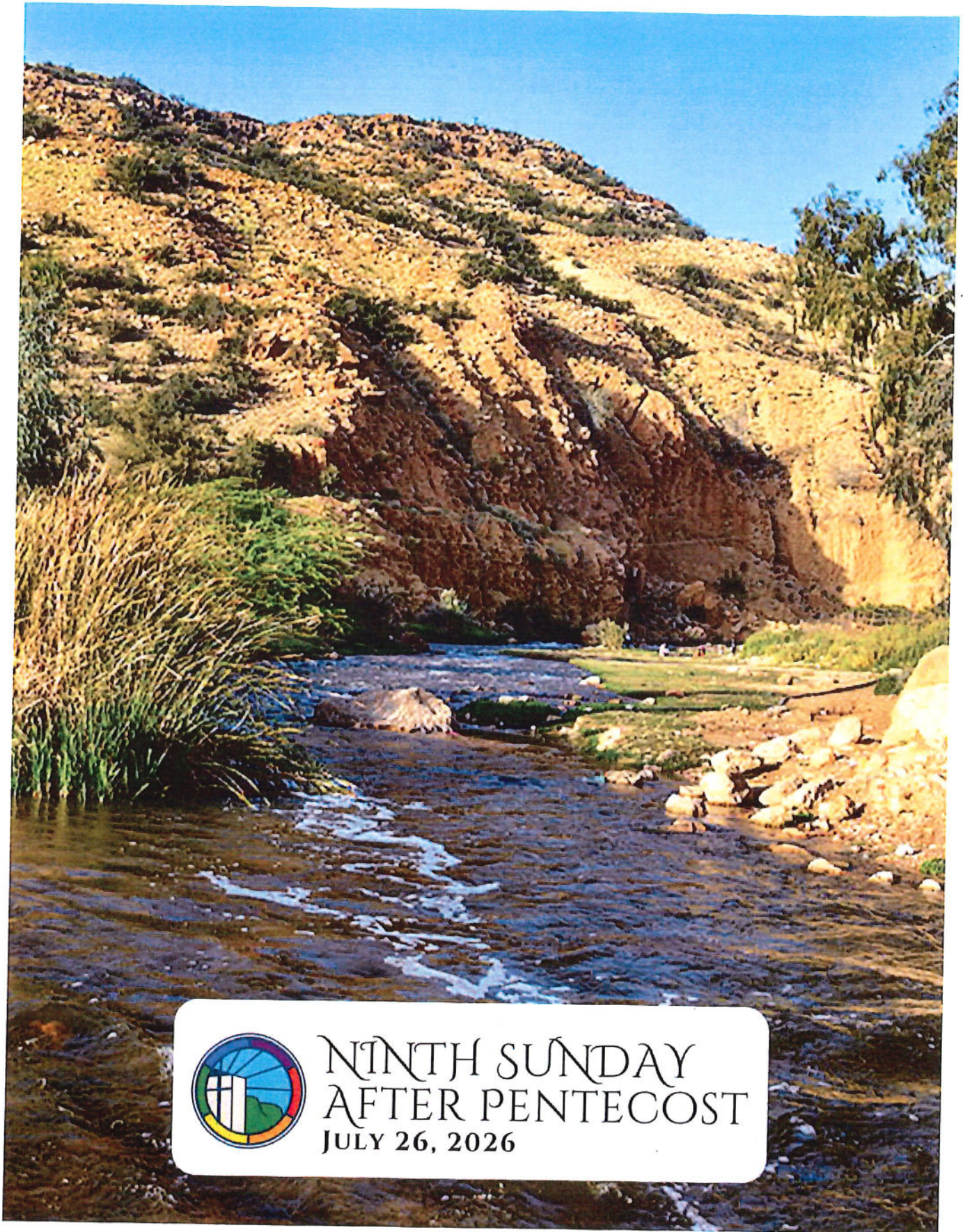




NINTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST
JULY 26, 2026

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. Children are not only welcome – they belong here. Activity bags are available next to the Community Room’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 will remain in worship in the Community Room. They are welcome to go to the library or sit at the tables to color. 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). However, as we worship in the Community Room due to the installation of the audiovisual system in the Sanctuary, we do not have our standard equipment. We will upload the worship service later. So your voice and/or image may still be visible in the recording, which will be publicly available online.

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	Kourtney Austin
Vocal Ensemble	Denise Christy-Moss, Bridget Hill, Amy Jarecki, Brad & Jessica Seebach, Vernon Shaw
Reading Scripture.....	Jill Pein
Head Usher	Michael Feuerhelm
Ushers	Rich Pein, Brad Seebach
Greeter	Gladys McLenahan
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

"I Need Thee Every Hour"

Kourtney Austin, Piano

"Great is Thy Faithfulness"

arr. Bock

arr. Bock

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude Music

"God's Eye is on the Sparrow"

Kourtney Austin, Piano

arr. Ham

*Call to Worship

One: We gather as people who have wrestled —
with questions, with change, and with ourselves.

Many: **We come seeking the God who meets us in the struggle.**

One: Sometimes our challenges are more than disagreements. Through our neighbor, God is inviting us to listen, to grow, and to be transformed.

Many: **We gather on ground made holy by our neighbors,
trusting that the Spirit reveals God to us through them.**

One: Come, let us sing to God who meets us here today, on this holy ground, and blesses us:



mf 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.

A Moment for Silence

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

*Hymn 469 (All join in singing the hymn.)

"Lord of All Hopefulness"

SLANE

*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 front. Afterwards children are welcome to read in the library or color at the tables as worship continues.

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

Genesis 32:22-31

Jill Pein

The Psalter

Psalm 17:1-7, 15 (*Reading is based on The Common English Bible.*)

One: Hear a just cause, O LORD, attend to my cry;

Many: **give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.**

One: From you let my vindication come;

Many: **let your eyes see the right.**

One: If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me,
you will find no wickedness in me.

Many: **My mouth does not transgress.**

One: As for what others do, by the words of your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.

Many: **My steps have held fast to your paths;
my feet have not slipped.**

One: I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;

Many: **incline your ear to me; hear my words.**

One: Wondrously show your steadfast love, O savior of those
who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand.

Many: **As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;**

One: when I awake, I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.

Gospel Acclamation

"If Ye Love Me"

Vocal Ensemble
arr. K. Jaworski

The Gospel

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Sermon

"Learning to Limp"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

Responding

with the voice of hope

*Hymn 350 (*All join in singing the hymn.*)

"The Summons"

KELVINGROVE

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. Please 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.

Anthem

"Drop, Drop, Slow Tears"

Vocal Ensemble
arr. Adriano Secco

☥ Thanksgiving

for the gifts of God

Stories of Generosity

Music at the Offertory

"Children's Medley"

Kourtney Austin, Piano
arr. Hayes

***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 hymn.*)

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

NETTLETON

*The Blessing

Postlude Music

"Praise Him! Praise Him!"

Kourtney Austin, Piano
arr. Milholland

Acknowledgements: Hymns and music reprinted and streamed with permission under OneLicense.net #A-728014. The cover image is adapted from Marc Chagall, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, 1931–1956. Wikimedia Commons.

*Flowers today are given by Michael Feuerhelm
in celebration of his parents' 66th anniversary on July 30.*

Announcements:

This Week in Our Church:

Sunday, July 26

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Loud Offering

10:00 am Worship

10:00 am Nursery

Monday, July 27

1:30 pm Women's Book Club (Eagle Crest
South)

Tuesday, July 28

11:00 am Koffee Klatch @ Havenwood

2:00 pm Staff Organizational Meeting (CR)

Friday, July 31

Office Closed

Sunday, August 2

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

WAFER Sunday

10:00 am Worship w/Holy Communion

10:00 am Nursery

CALENDAR KEY

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



**The White Rose on the Altar Today is in loving
memory of Doris Witmer.**

Doris passed away peacefully on Thursday,
July 16.

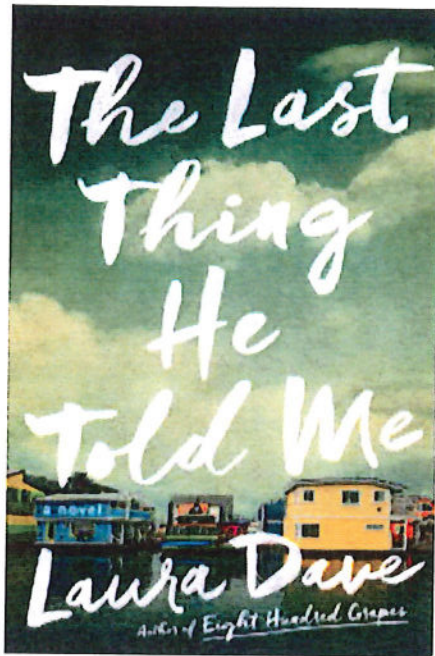
Wonderfully made in God's image, Doris will be
deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

Join Us For Woman's Book Club

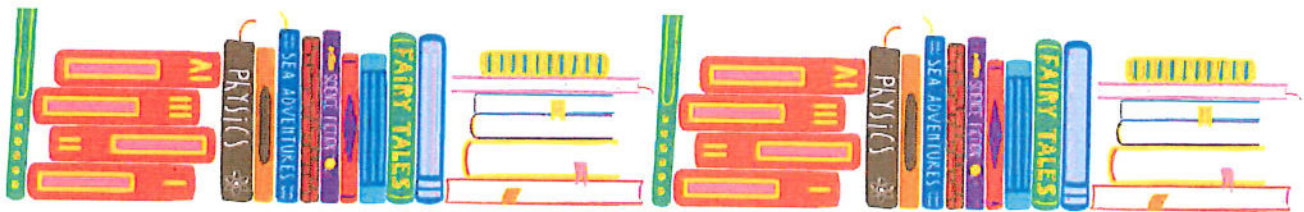
Where: The Blarney Bar located at Eagle Crest South

When: July 27th

Time: 1:30 pm



We will discuss
The Last Thing He Told Me
by Laura Dave



"A book is a gift you can open again and again."

Garrison Keillor

Koffee Klatch @ Havenwood



Join us for conversation, community, and yummy coffee at
Havenwood, 3700 Emerald Drive East, Onalaska.

When: Tuesday, July 28th

Time: 11:00 am



Our Next Monday Meals is August 24th



Monday Meals

Sign-Up Today!

Monday Meals is an amazing ministry! Every Monday, Trinity Lutheran Church, in partnership with other area churches, hands out up to 200 meals to community members who need a little (or a lot) of help making ends meet. August 24 is our chance to serve.

If you feel called to this ministry, please sign up on the stone ledge in the Narthex. We need volunteers to:

- Prep food on Sunday and Monday
- Serve meals on Monday
- Help with cleanup on Monday
- Bake and package cookies

If you would like more information, please contact Michelle in the church office at (608) 784-8137 or office@firstcongolax.org.

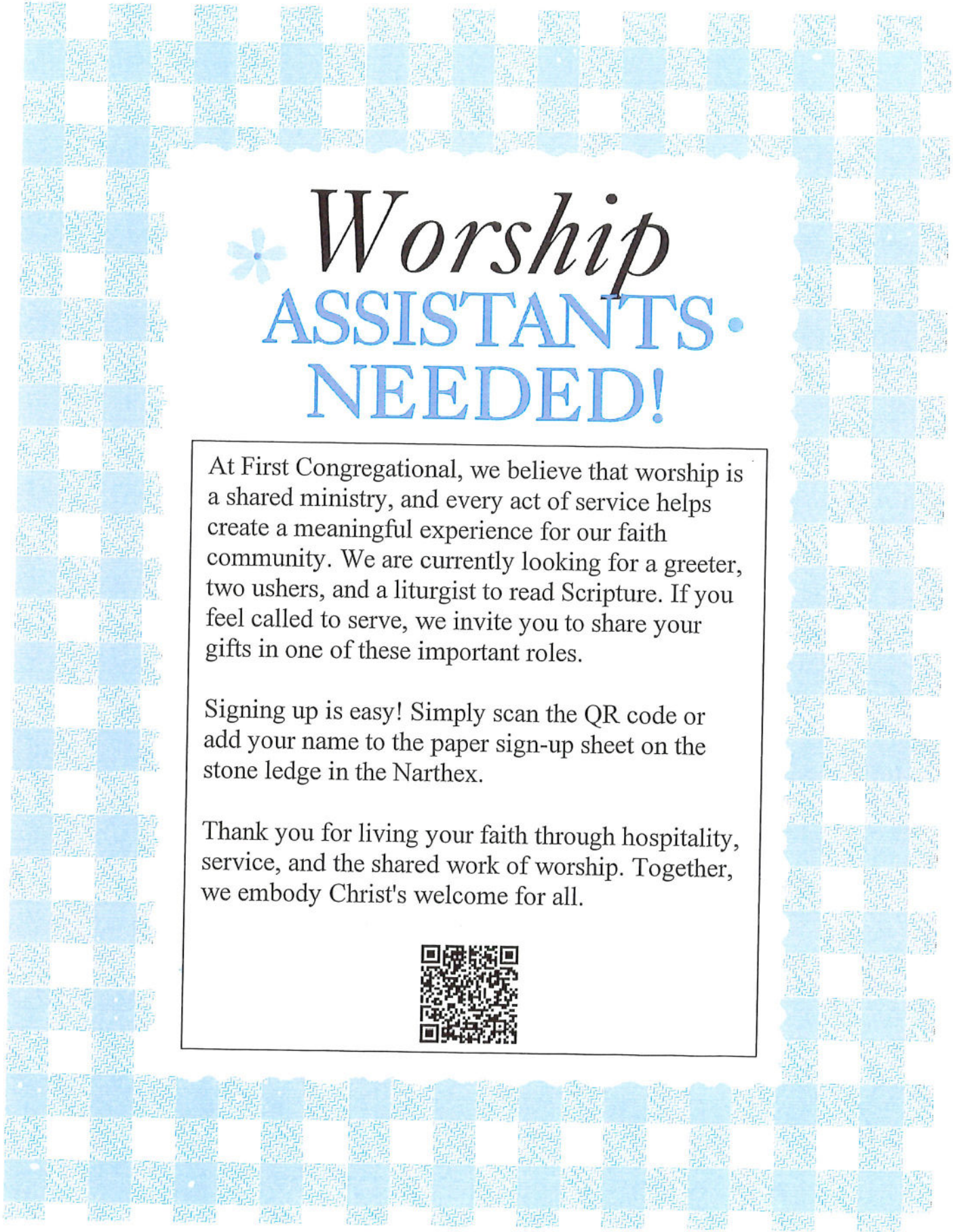




AUGUST DATES TO REMEMBER!

- August 22nd – Car Wash Fundraiser, 2503 Main St, La Crosse
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
- August 24th – Women's Book Club, Eagle Crest South
Discussion: *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans
1:30 pm
- August 24th – Monday Meals, Trinity Lutheran Church
4:30 pm
- August 26th – Church Council Meeting (CR)
7:00 pm
- August 30th – JAM Kick-Off
Join us as we kick off the 2026–2027 JAM year! We look forward to welcoming children and families back for another exciting season of learning, friendship, and faith.





Worship ASSISTANTS • NEEDED!

At First Congregational, we believe that worship is a shared ministry, and every act of service helps create a meaningful experience for our faith community. We are currently looking for a greeter, two ushers, and a liturgist to read Scripture. If you feel called to serve, we invite you to share your gifts in one of these important roles.

Signing up is easy! Simply scan the QR code or add your name to the paper sign-up sheet on the stone ledge in the Narthex.

Thank you for living your faith through hospitality, service, and the shared work of worship. Together, we embody Christ's welcome for all.

