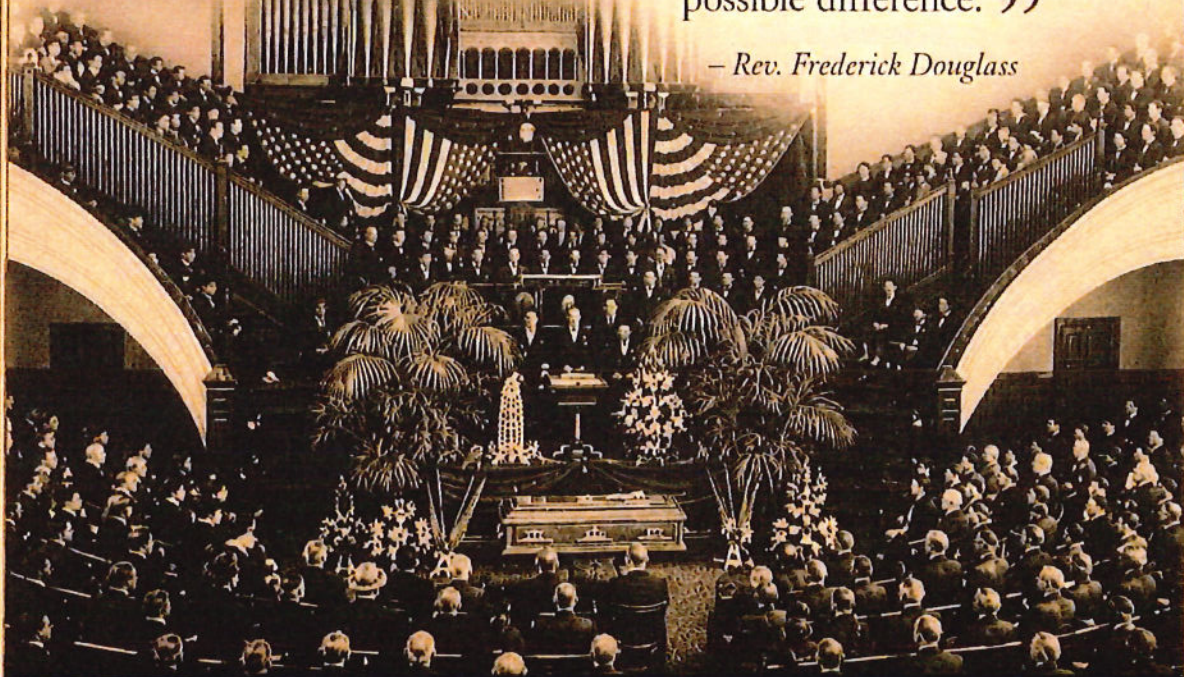




The DIFFERENCE CHRIST *Makes*

“ Between the Christianity
of this land, and the
Christianity of Christ,
I recognize the widest
possible difference. ”

— Rev. Frederick Douglass



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

JULY 5, 2026 • SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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 may remain in worship to allow for teachers to be with family on this holiday weekend. 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	Tom Uphaus
Reading Scripture.....	Sue Heuer
Head Usher	Allan Beatty
Ushers	Tom Stolpa, Diane Schumacher
Greeter	Brad Seebach
Communion Assistants	Sue Heuer, Brad Seebach
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

"Great is Thy Faithfulness"

"Shall We Gather at the River?"

Tom Uphaus, Piano

arr. Livvy Huisman

arr. Jason Tonioli

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 worshiping near you so you can greet them by name.

Prelude Music

"Come Thou Fount of Ever Blessing"

Tom Uphaus, Piano

arr. Jason Tonioli

*Call to Worship

One: Yesterday our nation celebrated freedom.

Today, we gather to ask whether love has become justice for all.

Many: Our God longs for all to flourish – neighbor and stranger,
citizen and immigrant. For every life bears the divine image.

One: Jesus says, "Come to me... and I will give you rest."

Many: We come to rest in God's love, to be renewed for God's work,
and to join in the healing of the world.

One: Come, let us worship the God whose justice brings true freedom,
whose love transforms us, and whose peace renews the world.

Many: Come, let us worship the God whose welcome knows no borders
and whose grace sets all people free.

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a piano (p) 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 music is in a simple, hymn-like style with a clear melody and accompaniment.

A Moment for Silence

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

*Hymn 621 (All join in singing the hymn.)

"For the Healing of the Nations"

REGENT SQUARE

*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. Children will remain in worship on this holiday weekend.

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

Zechariah 9:9-12

Sue Heuer

The Psalter

Psalm 145:8-14 (*Reading is based on The Common English Bible.*)

One: The LORD is merciful and compassionate;

Many: **God is very patient and full of love.**

One: The LORD is good to everyone and everything;

Many: **God's compassion extends to all God's handiwork!**

One: All that you have made gives thanks to you, LORD;

Many: **all your faithful ones bless you!**

One: They speak of the glory of your kingdom;

Many: **they talk about God's power.**

One: They do this to inform all human beings about God's power
and the majestic glory of God's kingdom.

Many: **Your kingdom is a kingship that lasts forever;**

One: your rule endures for all generations.

Many: **The LORD is trustworthy in all that God says;**

One: and faithful in all that God does. The LORD supports all who fall;

Many: **God straightens up all who are bent low.**

The Gospel

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Sermon

"The Wise Miss It. The Children See It."

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

∞ Responding

with the voice of hope

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

"This Is My Song"

FINLANDIA



1. This is my song, O God of all the na - tions,
2. My coun - try's skies are blue - er than the o - cean,
3. This is my prayer, O Lord of all earth's king - doms:



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. 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

"America the Beautiful"

Tom Uphaus, Piano
arr. Jason Tonioli

***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

*The Great Thanksgiving

One: May the Lord be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift your hearts.

Many: We lift them to God.

One: Let us give thanks to the Holy One, our God.

Many: **It is right to give God our thanks and praise.**

One: It is indeed right and our joy and delight
to give you thanks and praise, Creator of heaven and earth.
You formed us in your image, breathed into us the breath of life,
and called us your beloved. Again and again, when we wandered,
you remained faithful, speaking through prophets,
guiding your people with love, and
calling us back to lives of justice, compassion, and peace.

And so, with all your people on earth and
all the company of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending song:

All:

rev. 2,3

1 Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al-might - y!

5 ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to

8 thee; ho-ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and

12 might-y! God in three per-sons, bless-ed Trin - i - ty!

The Congregation may be seated.

One: On the night before Jesus was betrayed, Jesus knew the powers of this world would come for him. Still, he gathered with his friends—those who followed with deep faith and those who struggled to understand—and he shared a meal. ... And so, with all who have

walked this journey of faith before us, with those who are certain and those who are still learning, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: **Christ has died;**

Christ is risen;

Christ will come again.

One: O God of Resurrection, pour out your Spirit on us and upon these gifts of bread and wine. Meet us here, O God, in our questions and in our faith. Transform us, O God, as you transformed the cross into life, as you transformed ordinary people into disciples. Make us a community that nurtures faith, that walks alongside one another, and that lives your love in the world – both now and forever. Amen.

Sharing Communion

This is the table of Jesus Christ, not of this church alone. All are welcome and encouraged to join in the sharing of communion at Christ's Table, regardless of age or tradition, for it is this meal which binds all of us together, different as we are.

All bread is gluten-free to welcome all at the table of Christ. Please come to the front of the church by way of the center aisle and return by the side aisles. Take the bread and then dip it in the cup. If you need to receive communion where you are seated, please let an usher know.

Thanksgiving after Communion

Going

to be messengers of good news

***Hymn 729** *(All join in singing the hymn.)*

"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

LIFT EVERY VOICE

***The Blessing**

Postlude Music

"How Majestic is Your Name"

Tom Uphaus, Piano
arr. Mark Hayes

Acknowledgements: Hymns and music reprinted and streamed with permission under OneLicense.net #A-728014. The bulletin cover combines two historic images of Frederick Douglass that are in the public domain: a photograph of his funeral at Central Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York, and a portrait from a *Carte de Visite* produced during his visit to Hillsdale College on January 21, 1863. Both images are old enough to be in the public domain and are no longer protected by copyright.

*Flowers today are given by Fred and Sue Heuer
in celebration of their 35th wedding anniversary.*

Announcements:

This Week in Our Church:

Sunday, July 5

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

WAFER Sunday

10:00 am Worship w/Communion

10:00 am Nursery

12:00 pm New Member Class (JavaVino)

Wednesday, July 8

6:30 pm Building & Grounds Meeting (CR)

Friday, July 10

Office Closed

Sunday, July 12

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am Worship

10:00 am Nursery

10:20 am Summer JAM (J)

11:00 pm Hot Dog Days Fundraiser (Parking Lot)

CALENDAR KEY

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

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

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, today 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 Pastor Laura know so JavaVino can reserve enough space for everyone.





**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.
A COLLECTION BIN IS AVAILABLE
IN THE NARTHEX.**





First
Congregational
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

*Open hearts.
Loving hands.
Stronger together.*

MONDAY MEALS

♥
**JULY
13th**

HELP NEEDED!

⇒ We Still Need: ⇒



3
VOLUNTEERS
for Food Prep

 **MONDAY**
2:00 – 4:30 PM



6
VOLUNTEERS
*for Serving &
Clean-up*

 **MONDAY**
4:30 – 6:30 PM



6
COOKIE BAKERS
*to each bring
25 baggies
with 3 cookies each*

Can You Help Us in This Vital Ministry?

Your time and generosity make a real difference
to our neighbors in the community.

Sign Up Today!



Sign up on the
Stone Ledge in
the Narthex

OR



Contact Michelle
in the office
☎ (608) 784-8137
✉ office@firstcongolax.org

*"Whatever you did for one of the least of these
brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

MATTHEW 25:40