



TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

AUGUST 16, 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 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 will remain in worship and can pick up a worship bag in the back of the Sanctuary. 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 three 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	Nancy Allen
Reading Scripture.....	Tom Stolpa
Head Usher	Randy Breeser
Ushers	Diane Breeser, Kurt Schuldes, Diane Schumacher
Greeter	Tom Stolpa
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

"Blessed Assurance"

Nancy Allen, Piano
arr. Sanborn

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

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

Nancy Allen, Piano
arr. Shackley

*Call to Worship

One: We come knowing there are moments in life that leave us wondering where God has been.

Many: Yet we come trusting that God has never left our side.

One: Even when people choose to hurt and not love, God continues the quiet work of redemption.

Many: We trust the God who refuses to let evil have the final word.

One: Come, let us sing to the God who is always at work bringing life out of loss and hope out of despair.

The musical score is written for piano on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). It begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The melody is primarily in the right hand, with the left hand providing harmonic support through chords and single notes. 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 concludes with a final chord in the left hand.

A Moment for Silence

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

*Hymn 397 (All join in singing the hymn.)

"The Gift of Love"

GIFT OF LOVE

*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 back of the Sanctuary. Following the Word for Children, children are invited to remain in worship with their families.

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 45:1-15

Tom Stolpa

Page 42, First Half of the Pew Bible

The Psalter

Psalm 133 (*Reading is based on The Common English Bible.*)

One: How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!

Many: **It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,**

One: oil running down the beard of Aaron,
running down over the collar of his robes.

Many: **It is like dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.**

One: For there, the LORD ordained God's blessing, life forevermore.

The Gospel

Matthew 15:21-28

Page 17, Second Half of the Pew Bible

Sermon

"When Even the Dogs Get Crumbs"

Rev. Mary Runyon

∞ Responding

with the voice of hope

***Hymn 596** (*All join in singing the hymn.*)

"Help Us Accept Each Other"

BECK

The Community Invited into Prayer

Prayers of the People

Leader: God, in your love,

All: hear our prayer.

The Prayer of Jesus (*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.

∞ Thanksgiving

for the gifts of God

Stories of Generosity

Music at the Offertory

"I've Got Peace Like a River"

Nancy Allen, 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 595** *(All join in singing the hymn.)*

"They'll Know We Are Christians"

WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT

*The Blessing

Postlude Music

"This Little Light of Mine"

Nancy Allen, Piano
arr. Hayes

Acknowledgments: Hymns and music reprinted and streamed with permission under OneLicense.net #A-728014. The cover image, "The Canaanite Woman Asks for Healing for Her Daughter" was created by Ilyas Basim Khuri Bazzi Rahib. It can be found here: <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57555>

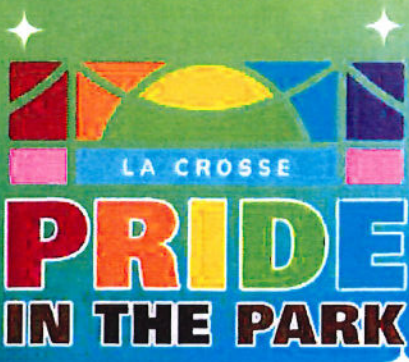
*Flowers today are given by Mary Hosler
in loving memory of Chuck and their beautiful wedding day.*

SPONSOR



*First Congregational
United Church of Christ*

VENDOR HIGHLIGHT



**9/5/2026 12-6PM
RIVERSIDE PARK
LA CROSSE, WI**

CAR WASH OR CAR BAPTISM?

Pull up for a wash and cast your vote.



SATURDAY
AUGUST 22
11 AM – 3 PM



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH**
2503 Main St., La Crosse, WI



**YOUR SUPPORT HELPS
OUR CONFIRMANDS
LEARN IN SOUTH AFRICA!**

FREE WILL OFFERING

FRIENDLY DEBATE

FRESHLY CLEANED CARS



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.

Each week, we are looking for one Inside Greeter, two Ushers and one Scripture Reader/Liturgist. If you feel called to serve, we invite you to share your gifts in one of these important roles.

Signing up is easy! Simply add your name to the 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.