

April 21, 2024  
**The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

**Greeting and Announcements**

**Welcome Statement** (Printed on the bulletin insert)

**Silence...Prelude and Bringing in the Light**

• **Call to Worship** Joanna Harader spaciousfaith.com

L: As we gather for worship today,  
We rest in the shelter of the Most High;

**P: We abide in the shadow of the Almighty;  
We find refuge under the wings of our Holy Parent.**

L: We trust that the angels of God  
the words of God  
the people of God  
the hands of God

**P: Will somehow bear us up.**

L: And so we come to call on God  
who has promised to answer.

• **Hymn** *We Gather Together* (NCH #421)

• **Morning Prayer**

Holy One, you call us to turn our lives around, and work patiently with you, preparing the way for your reign. But we get discouraged and give up too soon. You call us to work in community, but we neither trust nor honor the gifts of others. You call us to be full of joyful confidence to prepare the way for your reign, but we burden ourselves with anxiety and fear. Lord, have mercy. Forgive us, O God, and lead us in the ways of patience, community and joy—in the way of Jesus. Amen.

\* **Assurance**

Hear the good news: The One who saves, is present with us in the painstaking work of the Reign of God—forgiving our weakness, rebuilding our relationships, restoring our joy. So we rise up together to say:

***Thanks be to God!***

• **Sung Response**

*In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice!  
Look to God, do not be afraid.  
Lift up your voices the Lord is near.  
Lift up your voices the Lord is near.*

**Invitation to Offering** from Psalm 103

**Offertory**

• **Sung Response** *Praise God from whom all blessings flow...*

• **Gratitude Prayer (Unison)**

We see your hand at work in the world around us, Loving God, and we offer our hands to help. Make use of these gifts, make use of our lives, so that your kingdom will continue to grow on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

**Communion Invitation** Jan Richardson

*And the Table Will Be Wide*

**Kids Time**

**1<sup>st</sup> Scripture Reading** Psalm 23

**2<sup>nd</sup> Scripture Reading** I John 3:11-18

**Sermon**

**Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer**

• **Closing Hymn** *Great Is Your Faithfulness* (NCH 423)

• **Benediction**

Be grateful in everything—for the grace of God that covers you, the breath of God that fills you, the gifts of God that surround you, the promises of God that give you hope; and then go in peace to serve the Lord. Amen

**Postlude**

• *Please stand if you are able*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Liturgist:** Jamie Witwer

**Radio Sponsor:** Steve & Kristy Statz in honor of First UCC's rich musical history and traditions, especially the First Church Choir.

**If you would like to sponsor** a radio broadcast call the church office at 608-643-8387 to check on available dates. Cost is now at \$90.00/week. Your support of this important ministry is much appreciated. Our next available dates are June 23, 30 and July 7.

**The Sunday School is asking for your help.** They are collecting donations for Mabel's Building Mission. The 12' x 16' homes cost approximately \$2,000 to build, so that is our goal. As of April 14, we have collected \$300. Donations should be turned in by May 12. Checks should be made out to Mabel's Building Mission. There are envelopes available on the table in the church entryway.

**On Sunday, May 5, First United Church of Christ will be honoring our graduating youth:**

Kassie Gavol  
Harrison Haas  
Elena Homar  
Morgan Larsen  
Sam Logterman  
Mia Sondag  
Sam Sprecher

If you know of someone else we need to include, please contact Margaret McFarlane. We would also like to add any college grads who are interested in joining us.

**Address Changes**—If your phone number, mailing or email address changes please send the new address to the church office so we can keep our records up to date.

**From our Stock the Schools campaign—suggested donations for April:** Food items: Individual packages of pretzels and Cheese-its; \$25 gift certificates to Piggly Wiggly, Sentry, Kwok Trip or Walmart. Your generous donations are greatly appreciated. Please drop your donations off in the red tote outside the educational doors during office hours (Monday-Friday 8am–Noon) or inside during Sunday worship. Thanks for your help.

### **First UCC Welcome Statement:**

*“...This is my commandment—that you love one another as I have loved you...”*  
*John 15:12*

First United Church of Christ in Sauk City is an Open and Affirming Congregation. Whoever you are, whatever brought you here, however you identify, whoever you love, whatever your circumstances, you are welcome here. We believe in second chances. We believe we all need each other. And we believe, with all our hearts, that God is Love and Love always wins. You are precious in God's eyes and so we welcome *you*.

## 1st Scripture Reading

## Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

my whole life long.

## Second Scripture Reading

## I John 3:11-18

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.