

## YOUTH EVENTS

**Pre-Confirmation Retreat Metropolis Water Park in Eau Claire**—6th Graders will depart Fri, March 9 at 6:00 pm & head to Eau Claire and will return home on Saturday March 10 at 3:00. Please let Diana or JaNae know if you are planning on attending. Questions: 715-897-5358

**Sunday March 11th, Noon-3:00 Can-Can Wonderland!** Come along for this fun filled indoor adventure! Possibilities include mini-golf, arcade games, pin-ball, air hockey and ping-pong! We will eat here at church and travel to St. Paul and arrive back here at church around 3:00. Cost is \$15.

**Sunday March 18th, 12:00-2:30 Indoor Mini Golf Event!** Bring your mad putter skills as we turn the church into an indoor mini golf course! We will have lunch and break into teams and have fun! \$5 per person and \$20 family max.

## WELLNESS

**Yoga Class & Meditation-Mindfulness**—Yoga will be held each **Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00-10:00 am.** DVDs with Jan's yoga lessons will be used during the winter months. Come and join this wonderful group!

## HOLY WEEK

### Holy Week Worship Schedule

#### Palm Sunday, March 25

9:00 & 10:30 am with Palms and Choir

#### Maundy Thursday, March 29

6:30 pm in Fellowship Hall

#### Good Friday, March 30

6:30 pm Choir Cantata in Sanctuary

#### Easter Sunday, April 1

7:00 am Sunrise Service

8:00-10:30 am Breakfast

9:00 & 10:30 am Worship with Choir & Communion

## FINANCIAL

### Treasurer's Report

	Week of Feb 25, 2018	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 3,953	\$ 105,527
General Fund		
Operational Needs	\$ 8,920	\$ 71,360

A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

**E-Giving**—It is quick, easy & safe. It is designed to help both you with your home budgeting & financing of church ministries which continue even when you are away. Contact Missy ([missy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org)) with questions. If you give electronically, please use the e-giving bookmark in the pew as the offering plate goes by.

## BUILDING FUND UPDATE

During 2017, the committee began implementing our third capital campaign & monitored industry interest rate increases to maintain the lowest possible costs. The committee carries over the policy of keeping 18 months' worth of payments in reserve.

### Mortgage Summary – As of December 31, 2017

• Original cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970
• Remaining amount on Bank Loan	\$722,799.90
• Cash on hand in the Building Fund	\$99,912.29
• Interest Rate	4.5%
• Monthly Payment	\$8,425
• Interest paid each month	\$2,694.56
• Interest paid this year	\$39,580.57
• Interest paid over past 3 years (approx.)	\$124,153.57

We received \$314,704 in pledges for the period of 2017 to Easter 2020. Although we did not raise enough to pay off the mortgage by 2020, we did receive commitments to continue making our mortgage payments. The committee has been monitoring the interest rates & were made aware of rate increases. We have chosen to re-mortgage the building loan January 2018 locking in our current rate of 4.5% for the next 5 years. Based on the anticipated rate increase, we will save \$4,124 in interest over the next 5 years & possibly more as we expect rates to continue to rise. This will give us interest rate protection for the next 5 years when the loan balance will be about \$350,000. We thank the congregation for their generous support!

## MARCH 4, 2018

*No matter who you are. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here!*

**As Jesus' courageous disciples, living God's grace, we strive to...**

## WORSHIP FAITHFULLY

### Sunday Volunteers Needed

Liturgists for: March 11, 18, 25

Welcomers for: March 11, 18, 25

Coffee Fellowship for: March 11, 18, 25

The sign-up sheets are on the back table. Thank you!

**SIGN UP**

**Worship Service on Channel 16**—The Sunday worship service can be viewed on River Falls public access channel 16 on **Wed at 9 pm & Thurs at 12 pm.** Thanks to Jeff Hoffman who is leading the team to record the weekly worship service. He is in need of a few more volunteers. Contact him [jeffhoffman312@gmail.com](mailto:jeffhoffman312@gmail.com) or 715-425-5633.

**Church Office Hours**—The church office hours between Labor Day and Memorial Day are: Mon-Thurs: 8:30 am-4:00 pm; Friday: 8:30 am-Noon

## WELCOME OPENLY

**Wednesday Meals**—Join us each Wednesday night for a healthy, home cooked family meal in the fellowship hall. Cost is \$7 per person with a max of \$30 per family.

**Please sign up by Tuesday at noon** so we have enough food. Please also sign up to help set, serve or clean up. Join us as a church family each **Wednesday, 5:15 to 6:15 pm.**

**March 7**-Lasagna & Chicken Alfredo, Salad, Garlic Toast  
**March 14**-Boneless BBQ Ribs, Mac n Cheese, Potatoes, Veggies, Rolls & Butter

**March 21**-Parmesan Crusted Chicken, Rice, Spinach Salad, Croissants

**March 28**-Holy Week/Spring Break—No meal—Join us for Easter Breakfast!

**New to Church?**—Are you a first time visitor? Please stop at the welcome table in the gathering area to receive a special welcome gift from us!

## WELCOME OPENLY

### Choices: Power of Attorney & Living Will Information

Deciding & conveying your choices regarding end of life decisions are important—for everyone. Wisconsin does not have a next-of-kin law, so in order to ensure that your wishes are implemented in the event you are unable to do so, you need to have a completed power of attorney & living will directives. By Wisconsin law, parents will not automatically be able to make decisions for children age 18 or older. Resource packets are available in the church office to assist you. A resource person will be available on **Wed, March 7, 5:00–6:15 pm** to answer questions. Linn Lawrence of our congregation is also available as a resource person on an ongoing basis. Facing the reality of our eventual deaths is daunting. Make it easier for your loved ones by making your decisions known. You can print form at: <https://gwaar.org/guardianship-resources>

**Veterans Gathering**—A Veterans Gathering with lunch will be held **Sun, March 18, at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall.** Convened by the Mission Education Committee, all veterans and active duty members are warmly invited to attend. A County Service Officer has been invited to join us to answer questions about veterans' service benefits, and the Gathering will be a great opportunity for all veterans in the congregation to meet one another.

**Memorial Service for Audrey Alton Black**—Long-time church member Audrey Alton Black died recently. Her memorial service will be at church on **Mon, March 19 at 11:00 am** with a lunch to follow & visitation an hour before. There will also be a visitation here on Sun, March 18 from 4-7 pm. Please remember Audrey's family in your prayers.

**Luther College Concert Band**—We have several of our church college kids who attend Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. **Their Concert Band will be performing at New Richmond High School on Tues, March 27 at 7:00 pm.** Contact Emily Stifter at [stifem01@luther.edu](mailto:stifem01@luther.edu) with questions

**Easter Lilies**—We offer Easter Lilies to allow you to honor or remember someone & grace our worship space with beauty on Easter. The lilies will be displayed on Easter morning & may be taken home following the 10:30 service. To order an Easter Lily for \$12, please fill out the form (on the sign-up table) & place in the offering plate. Orders must be placed by **March 25.** Proceeds go to our youth fund.

## WELCOME OPENLY

**Spirit & Health**—The group will focus on our spiritual growth together around body issues (weight, exercise, health, image). We will meet on **Wednesdays at 6:00 pm**. Join us when you can. Questions, contact Rebecca Ferguson (262)227-1542; [rebeccaferguson@hotmail.com](mailto:rebeccaferguson@hotmail.com)

**Men's Group Forming**—A group of men are forming one, possibly two new men's groups. One group would be primarily for retired men & meet at 8 am at church for an hour. Another group would be for working men & meet either earlier in the morning or after dinner for an hour. Please sign-up to register your interest. One of the leaders will contact you when an initial meeting is scheduled. Questions to Brad Williams, Mike Gardner or Pastor Chris.

**Cribbage Night**—The group meets on the second Tuesday at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 and the group decides which charity to donate it to. Playing time starts at **7:00 pm**. All players & abilities welcome. The next gathering will be **March 13**.

**Book Group**—Our next meeting will be **Tuesday, March 27 at 3:30 pm** to discuss **News of the World**, by Paulette Jiles. In 1870's Texas, an aging Civil War veteran and a young girl travel to find her kin. A reader described it as a story about the joys of freedom & the spiritual bonding that love and trust can bring. We will meet at the church. Books are available for check out in the church office.

**Celebrating 50 Years of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.** This April will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. A rally is to be held on the Mall of the Capital in Washington DC **April 3-5**. The Wisconsin Council of Churches is organizing a series of buses from around the state to enable people to participate in this rally. A bus will leave Eau Claire on April 3 at 11 am, attend the rally & then return to Eau Claire at 1 pm on April 5. Details & a registration info are on the sign-up table as well as online at [www.wichurches.org](http://www.wichurches.org) under events.

**Holy Land Tour in 2019**—Pastor Chris is leading a pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine in the spring of 2019. Emphasis will be two fold. One is the traditional Holy Land tour to visit and learn more about the Bible (Jerusalem, Bethlehem, River Jordan, etc). Second is to better understand how the Christian, Jewish and Muslim stories all intersect in this region and how this history unfolds

## GROW SPIRITUALLY

**Adult Forum**—*The forum meets Sundays 9:00–10:00 am*  
**Mar 4: The Kingdom of God, Stacy Myers**—The Kingdom of God is frequently mentioned in the New Testament. While we know it is not a kingdom with castles and royalty, what is the Kingdom of God? Come to the forum not expecting to discover all the answers, but to consider what on earth this kingdom is all about.

**Mar 11 & 18: The 12 Caesars and the Beginnings of Christianity: Evelyn Purdy**—Christianity grew out of a specific context in the world's life. A critical component of this context is the interplay between first century political events in Rome and early Christian thought and experiences. Particular attention will be given to the time period between Pompey's conquest of Judea in 63 BCE and Hadrian's destruction of Jerusalem in 135 CE.

**Tuesday Bible Study: All Are Welcome!** - The Adult Bible Study group meets on **Tuesdays, 1:00–2:30 pm**. The Bible study group is using a new book, *A Survey of the Old Testament* by Andrew Hill and John Walton. This book has one chapter dedicated to each book in the Old Testament. Books are available in the church office for \$9.00. Newcomers are always welcome. Talk with Stacy Myers for more information.

### Announcing Summer Dates

**The Musical (completed grades 1–8)**  
**June 18–21, 9:00 am–12:00 noon**  
**(performance on June 21 at 6:30 pm)**  
**VBS (pre-school–completed grade 5)**  
**July 30–August 2, 9:00 am–11:30 am**

Please remember that we will need many adult & teen volunteers to help with VBS. Mark your calendars now!

**Picture the Bible**, First Congregational's art depicted Bible stories, is featured on the UCC news site. Here is the link to read the story: [http://www.ucc.org/news\\_wisconsin\\_church\\_increases\\_interest\\_sacred\\_stories\\_picture\\_the\\_bible\\_01252018](http://www.ucc.org/news_wisconsin_church_increases_interest_sacred_stories_picture_the_bible_01252018)

## SERVE GENEROUSLY

**Save Your Family Fresh Receipts!**-ARC gets \$1,000 for every \$150,000 in receipts, so every dollar counts. ARC is the agency funded by local churches to help address the immediate needs of people in our community (rent, utility, gas, repair help). A box for receipts is on the back table.

**Simpson Shelter Supplies Needed**—New winter gloves; new winter thermals for men and women—all sizes; new men's boxers—all sizes; new women's bras—all sizes; new women's underwear—all sizes; disposable shaving razors; new men's t-shirts—size XL and XXL; breakfast cereal, coffee, tea, hot cocoa; bath towels—gently used or new. There is a box for donations.

**Relay for Life Fundraiser**—**Thank you very much for your generous support to our Soup Night Fundraiser! The Relay Team raised \$737**, which will go toward the team's donations to American Cancer Society on Relay for Life night, **Friday, April 6**. The event begins at 6 PM and goes until 1 AM at the River Falls High School.

**A new fundraiser for our team is a pre-sale plant sale.** Sales will begin mid-March & plants arrive mid-May. We are partnering up with Barnyard Botanicals Greenhouse to provide you some cool deals & support our church's team. More details to come in future newsletter and bulletins.

During the plant pre-sale, Luminarias will be available for \$10/bag. Luminarias are another fundraising opportunity for our team. Luminarias are bags purchased "in memory of" or "in honor of" someone special that has been touched by cancer. The luminarias will be on display at the event around the walking track & are lit during the special recognition service at 9:30 PM.

This year's theme is "A Journey through Time with Hope." This event will focus on walkers on the track & team's having campsites, going back to some of the original focuses of the event. We will have a walker sign-up on the gathering table soon. The spaghetti meal begins at 5 PM & the opening ceremony begins with the survivor walk. Come join in the fun & help our team with fundraising & walking on the track throughout the night. Any questions, contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945.

## CARE PASSIONATELY

**Prayer List**—If you have people you wish to add to the church prayer list, please use the blue "I Wish" pew cards & put in the church office or the offering plate. If you wish to receive the weekly prayer list via email, contact the office.

**Care Givers Program**—An opportunity to serve members through an outreach program that pairs members providing visitors to those unable to be with us regularly in worship or activities. If you are interested in volunteering, have questions or are aware of anyone that would benefit from this, contact Jan Hansen at 715-425-5211

**Meal Ministry**—Ever had a death in the family? How about something joyous & life changing like the birth of a baby? As a congregation we are called to 'care passionately' for one another & one of the ways we would like to do that is through a "Meal Ministry." A small stipend to help pay for food may be available. If you are interested, please contact the church office.

**Thinking of You Cards**—Please use them to send a note to someone who is ill, grieving or you just haven't seen in a while. Place them in the offering plate & we will deliver them. This is one of the ways we care for one another.

**2018 Community Dementia Friendly Series**  
**River Falls Public Library from 6:30–8:00 pm**  
**March 27—Care Giving—Nancy Abrahamson**

Information, support, and resources for caregivers.  
**April 24—Virtual Dementia Tour by Second Wind Dreams**  
A virtual experience of what it feels like to have Dementia.

Provided by Azura Memory Care of Eau Claire  
**At First Congregational Church from 3:00-7:00 pm**  
To register, call Pierce County ADRC at (715)273-6780

**May 22—Round Table Discussion**  
Networking and collaboration opportunities for caregivers and the community.

**June 26—Dementia Capable Community**  
A conversation about the process for our community to become Dementia friendly.

**Among Friends**, located here at church, provides a social respite for individuals with dementia & their caregivers. We are open 9 am-3 pm every Tuesday. Please contact Norma Revels 715-293-2561 or Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn 715-307-1182 if you are interested in knowing more.