

YOUTH EVENTS

Sunday, April 22nd—Wooddale Fun Zone Roller Skating and Arcade for Jr. High Kids! Come throw on your in-lines or go for vintage when we take to the Roller rink. We will leave church at 11:30 am and be back by 3:00 pm. Cost is \$10 and includes skating, rental & lunch.

Wednesday, May 2nd—St. Croix Lanes—ALL YOUTH Come celebrate the end of the Confirmation year with bowling and pizza. Meet at the lanes at 6:30 pm. Parents pick up at 8:00 pm. Cost is \$5.

WELLNESS

Yoga Class—Come & join a delightful group of people that enjoy the flexibility & exercise that yoga offers. The yoga group (men & women) meets **Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9:00-10:00 am** in the youth room. Jan Hansen is the certified instructor. A donation is requested & is shared with local charities during the holiday season. We all look forward to seeing new faces.

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

ASYLUM FAMILIES UPDATE

Our new friend, Ruth, turned 21! The day before her party, our very independent friend, Heidy, took her shopping & bought her an outfit. She did look stunning! She was overwhelmed by the wonderful party Barb hosted, but she was also very distraught about never seeing any of her family again. She seemed to bounce back when Bobbie gave her a favorite... Mexican Coca Cola. She opened a bottle right there & chugged it down. The highlight was the gift of a bicycle. When Barb showed it to her, she took off into the night in her new outfit & high heels. Just a trip down the street, of course, but it was hilarious! We are waiting for Heidy's green card. She is working hard at Mariachi Loco, Charlie is registered for 4K, & the older 3 are signed up for flag football. Barb has taken them for their dental exams & inoculations, & Alison & Josue have new glasses. Alison wants to be in the middle school band next year & has been assigned a clarinet. If anyone has a clarinet sitting around, collecting dust, let Bobbie know.

FINANCIAL

Treasurer's Report

	Week of Apr 8, 2018	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 7,969	\$ 156,401
General Fund		
Operational Needs	\$ 8,920	\$ 124,880

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) 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 March 31, 2018

• Original cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970
• Remaining amount on Bank Loan	\$705,390.57
• Cash on hand in the Building Fund	\$96,713.31
• Interest Rate	4.25%
• Monthly Payment	\$8,320.41
• Interest paid each month	\$2,628.31

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!

APRIL 15, 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: April 29-10:30; May 20-10:30

Welcomers for: April 22; May 13, 20, 27

Coffee Fellowship for: May 13, 20, 27

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 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**.

April 18—Breakfast for dinner: breakfast burrito, biscuits & gravy, stuffed French toast, eggs benedict, fresh fruit
April 25—Build a burger, beans, potato salad

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

Music at First Church Concert—The Music Committee is proud to present a concert with Natalia Moiseeva, Violin and Ivan Konev, Piano on **Sunday, April 15, at 3:00 pm**. They will delight us with selections from Debussy, Paganini, Brahms and more!. Please plan to join us. Admission is free with a reception to follow.

TODAY

Earth Day—Sun, April 22—In observance of Earth Day on Sun, April 22, native tree seedlings will be made available to our congregation and to the Sunday School. A "Care Of The Earth" theme will be used in Sunday School that day and each child will receive a seedling. Also, after each service, a seedling will be available to members who would like one. This project has been launched by the mission education committee as a reminder that we are all called to be stewards and caretakers of God's creation. Trees beautify the environment in which we live, & provide shade and shelter. They clean the air and provide oxygen. They help prevent soil erosion and can conserve energy. And besides all that, it is simply fun to watch them grow year by year. Be thinking about where you might plant a tree seedling, and take one with you on April 22nd.

Church Intern Fair—High School Students who will be in 10th, 11th or 12th grade next year are invited to the 2018 Church Intern Draft to be held **Wed, May 9 in the Fellowship Hall**. This event is for current church interns as well as those who would like to join. The Church Intern program is designed to continue a small group experience for post confirmation youth. Students meet monthly, engage in service and ministry opportunities that they choose, and grow their faith skills. Working with Pastor Chris, Stacy and JaNae, church interns find ways to grow their faith by using their God given gifts in service to others. At the Church Intern Draft representatives from church ministry teams will be available to help interns decide where and why they want to serve. Interns who contribute their gifts and talents can earn from \$500 per year for 50 hours up to a maximum of \$2000 per year for 200 hours to be used for higher education at college, university or technical/trade schools. Any post-confirmation church student is eligible. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall from 6:30 to 7:30pm for the Church Intern Draft. Parents should attend as well.

NEW

WELCOME OPENLY

Book Group Meeting (and Film Viewing)—Next meeting will be **Tues, May 1 at 3:00 pm (notice date change)** to discuss & view the film version of **The Queen of Katwe**. Tim Crothers (nonfiction). A missionary in the slum of Katwe, Uganda teaches children the game of chess. We will meet at Suzanne Hagen's home (2464 Golf View Dr., RF) to view the 2016 film, with a potluck supper to follow. Books are available for check out in the church office.

Men's Group Gathering!—Calling all men! Our newly formed men's group will be meeting **Tues, April 17 at 8:00 am** in the Fellowship Hall. Pastor Chris will lead us in an informal time of coffee and conversation. Treats and nibbles will be served! We hope to meet every other Tuesday (**May 1 & 15**). Thanks to our leadership team of Mike Gardner, Roger Kampstra and Brad Williams who helped organize this group. Join us!

Cribbage Night—The group meets the second Tuesday at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 & the group decides which charity to donate to. Playing time starts at **7:00 pm**. All players & abilities welcome. The winner of the April games was Lee Christianson. The game will be **May 8**.

The Big Read in the St. Croix Valley—Join in on the month-long programming & conversations devoted to the comic novel by Luis Alberto Urrea (pronounced oo-ray-uh) —*Into the Beautiful North*. A young woman in a small town in Mexico sees the movie, *The Magnificent Seven*, and decides to travel north to the US to find seven men to come back and fend off the banditos who are threatening her town. And, yes, there will be a showing of the old movie, as well as a public discussion between Urrea and Krista Tippett, an opportunity to join in the Civil Conversation Project, art shows—and so many other interesting activities. For more information, see www.valleyreads.org or find a brochure at your library.

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

GROW SPIRITUALLY

Adult Forum—*The forum meets Sundays 9:00–10:00 am*
April 15: A Nation of Immigrants, Alan Tuchtenhagen
John Kennedy famously said that "We are a nation of immigrants." If we are all the product of immigrants, when and from where did our ancestors come? The forum discussion will begin with our Pilgrim Congregational ancestors in the 17th century and then look at how the waves of immigrants to America that followed (primarily in the 19th and early 20th centuries) have shaped our national character. Come prepared to talk about "your people" and to share stories about your family's immigrant past.
April 22: Homelessness, Carol Merriman—Carol Merriman recently returned from an extended time working in the Micah Day Center and the community surrounding Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS. Homelessness is a significant issue facing our nation. The book of James asks us "What good is faith without action?" In order to address this issue, we all need to understand it. Come to learn and to brainstorm how WE help end homelessness.

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!

Review of Picture the Bible—First Congregational's project, *Picture the Bible*, was recently reviewed in the Journal of Lutheran Ethics. You may be interested in the review. Find it at: <http://www.elca.org/JLE/Articles/1225>.

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.

Relay for Life Fundraiser—**A new fundraiser is a plant sale held on Mother's Day at the church.** Our Relay team has partnered up with Barnyard Botanical who will donate \$1000 toward our fundraising total. The plants will be outside if we have nice weather or in the gathering area if it continues to be winter on **May 13 between & after both services**. We will have a variety of flowers available to purchase like hanging baskets, geraniums, pansies, petunias, lobelia, some herbs, accent plants, and many, many more. Prior to the May 13 sale a member of the team will be in the gathering area between services to answer questions, help with presales & gift certificates. Presales are an opportunity to order & prepay for plants & baskets prior to May 13. It's a chance for you who know what you want to order for your gardens & eliminate the time of searching at the plant sale. Order & pay for your plants in advance, we pick them up & have them available to you at the church on May 13.

A third option is a gift certificate. Purchase a gift certificate for yourself or someone else & you are able to go out to Barnyard Botanical Greenhouse (about 6 miles out on County Trunk M past the River Falls Hospital) to purchase plants using your gift certificate. It's a great gift to share with someone. Any questions, contact Deb Hoffman at (612) 308-4945. Thank you for support.

Virtual Dementia Tour—Tues, April 24, 3:00-7:00 pm

Held at First Congregational & hosted by ADRC of Pierce & St. Croix counties, Our House & Among Friends
Clarification—This is a **45 minute experience** of what it feels like to be an individual with dementia. It is NOT a 4-hour long experience. Participants must reserve a spot by calling the ADRC at 715-273-6780. As we move toward becoming a dementia friendly community, we hope this opportunity helps us gain more insight into the world of dementia & encourages our growth as compassionate people of faith. Any questions, contact Norma Revels 715-293-2561 or Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn 715-307-1182.

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

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.