

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

June 1, 2022

*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
- Welcome openly
- Grow spiritually
- Care passionately
- Serve generously



Pastor's Page

Dear Friends

It is with a deep and profound sense of gratitude that I convey to all of you my thanks and appreciation for a most gracious and generous "last Sunday" as I wrapped up my ministry with you May 15... and for a most memorable journey together these recent years.

The lovely reception, the amazing gifts from the

congregation, and the many notes, cards, and comments you shared are wonderful. Thank you very much.

You have also gifted me with experiences, shared commitments, leadership, and friendships that have been an unexpected capstone to my ministry. You have welcomed me into your lives and families, shown me what a community of faith might truly be and become, and given me new appreciation for the depth of relationships that mark genuine community life, especially in these uncertain and often turbulent times.

More than a single, simple word, gratitude conveys an enduring, embracing, heartfelt sense of thankfulness and appreciation which this community of faith kindles in its welcome, its worship, its life together, and its engagement in the world. Gratitude is a way of life, of daily living, of true thanksgiving.

My call to ministry has taken me to countless places across the country and beyond, has landed me in communities and situations that I could not have imagined, and provided me opportunities to work with incredible, diverse, faithful, and resilient peoples facing often overwhelming challenges. The stories of hope they created are profound, and gave shape to my life.

As I said in my "first last sermon," I sense that the years ahead may be most difficult and challenging for the human family, and that this community of faith, in particular, will have to be amazingly creative, bold, and daring in its witness and work, both "inside our doors" and in the world.

Having seen and experienced what can be done by faith-filled peoples in such times, and having experienced a vision of beloved community that persists in this place, let it be said that, indeed, the prophet Micah's call rings true here and endures—to do justice, love mercy and lovingkindness, and walk humbly with God.

With gratitude,
Pastor Dave



Graduation Sunday

Sunday, June 5 will

be Graduation Sunday at the one 9:30 am worship service. Join us as we recognize our graduating seniors. On this day our Scholarship Committee will award both High School Senior Scholarships and Continuing Education Scholarships.

A reception honoring all our students will follow worship in the Fellowship Hall. Join us!

Church Directory



Photograph Sign-Up

Online scheduling is available for photo sessions which will be held from **Tuesday, May 31 to Saturday, June 4**. To schedule your photography appointment online, either use the QR Code or go to www.ucdir.com, click on photography appointment scheduling login on the right, enter **wi192** in the Church Code field and enter **photos** in the Church Password field. Follow the prompts to schedule your family's appointment time. If you have 5 or more in your family, please use 2 consecutive time slots.



The online scheduling option is not available Saturday or Sunday because we will have paper sign-ups at the church.

Appointments fill up quickly, so schedule as soon as possible to secure your preferred date and time. Please call the church office with any questions or for help scheduling.

Pastoral Acts

- A Memorial Service for Kim Jorae was held at church on Monday, May 9. Kim was buried at the Kinnic Cemetery outside of town.
- A Memorial Service for Jim Kuhn was held Friday, May 20 at the Glen Park Pavilion. Jim was interred in the church Memorial Garden.
- A Memorial Service for Joan Alexander was held Tuesday, May 24 at church. Joan will be interred in Menomonie at a later date.

Please keep all these families in your thoughts and prayers.

We Are Hiring!

With the retirement of Pastor Dave, the church will be hiring a new part-time Minister for Community and Outreach. Please see the job description on the sign-up table or the website. If you know someone, reach out to them, or let the church office know.

Mortgage Summary—As of June 1

Original cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining amount on Bank Loan	\$488,693.67
Cash on hand in the Building Fund	\$115,994.87
Interest Rate (Locked in through January 2027)	3.39%
Monthly Payment	\$2,622.76

Summer Sunday Schedule

- 8:30 am—Coffee Ready!
- 9:15-10:45 am—Nursery Available
- 9:30-10:30 am—Worship in Sanctuary
- 10:30-11:00 am—Coffee Fellowship in Fellowship Hall

We are worshipping in the sanctuary and no longer require masks. Please continue to pray for our church leadership as they seek to find ways for us to gather both safely and faithfully.



Worship Schedule for the Summer

Starting Memorial Day Weekend and going through Labor Day Weekend, we move to our **one Summer Worship Service at 9:30 am** with Coffee Fellowship following.



Join us for Pizza and a Party!

Both are free, but you need to sign up for the personal size pizza. Four different kinds of wood-fired pizza will be served from **6:00-7:30 pm** hopefully outside on the church lawn (rain plan is Fellowship Hall) on **Thursday, July 7.**

The pizza is limited to the first 150 people who sign up by June 26th on the sign-up table on online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-pizza>

The concert is open to all from **6:00-8:00 pm.** Bring a lawn chair!

Vacation Bible School

Please mark your calendars for the 2022 VBS. The theme is *Great Joy!* VBS dates are **August 1-4, 2022, 9:00-11:30 am.** This year's wooded "Marshall Project" will alone make the week worthwhile, let alone a large variety of other projects and activities that are planned for students. Registrations are available on the church website <https://firstchurchrf.org/pages/sign-ups-forms>. Please register your child and spread the word. All are welcome!



VBS Volunteers

We plan to return to a pre-pandemic VBS format for the summer of 2022. We need many adult and teen volunteers. Please volunteer at this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-vbsvolunteers1> or by signing the list on the sign-up table. For more information, please contact Pastor Stacy.

Summer Nursery Help Needed

During the summer months our church nursery is staffed by volunteers. Please sign up to help in the church nursery. Summer worship time moves to 9:30 am and the nursery is open from 9:15 to 10:45 am. Use the sign-up sheets at church or online. Please contact the church office for more information.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-summer>

Canoe Trip

Alex is leading a Boundary Waters Canoe Trip open to youth and adults on **July 17-22.** See flyer on the sign-up table and contact Alex for more details.

Veterans Gathering

On **Sunday, June 26, at 11:15 am,** Mission Education will host a Veterans Gathering after a long pause due to the pandemic. For more information, contact Rose Rude at 715-781-7032 or rose.rude@uwrf.edu More details will be coming soon. If you're a veteran, please complete the UCC Veteran's contact form <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084BA8AA2AAAFD0-uccveterans>

Sustainability Tip: What's 10 mph Worth?

We know that gas prices are rising so rapidly that we are beginning to limit our driving to save money. Did you know that the speed with which you drive can also save you—or cost you? On the interstate, does 75 mph seem a bit slow? How about 80 mph? Consider this:

The faster you drive over the speed limit, the worse your fuel economy!

Experts estimate that dropping your highway speed by just 10 mph can save you as much as 10% of your fuel usage. That means the average driver can save *several hundred dollars* in the course of a year. Bonus tip:

Using cruise control helps you maintain a steady speed, which also improves your fuel economy.

In short, slower and steadier speeds save you money, because they save you fuel costs. Let's all give "slow and steady" a try this month, for our wallets and our environment.

Thank You, Thank You Sunday School Teachers

Another Sunday School year has ended. The entire congregation owes a significant debt of gratitude to all those who teach in the Sunday School program. Without teachers to spend time with children, Sunday School would not be possible. Many, many thanks to: Kaye Anderson, George Beatty, Susan Beatty, Murphy Beatty, Jennie Friese, Kathryn Hector, Christina Krueger, Larissa Lueck, Evan Luedtke, Sarah Meyer, Stacy Myers, Lisa Plackner, Ella Shepherd, Mara Shepherd, Christina Treu, Erik Withers.

Funding for New Initiatives

Got a new idea? Have a ministry that could use some funding? Consider submitting an Endowment Grant Request. Each year, our church Endowment spends a portion of its proceeds (about 2%) funding new ministries that will expand and enhance the ministry of the church. Proposals must be submitted through a church committee and then are evaluated by the Endowment Grant Committee at their bi-monthly meeting. The next Endowment Grant deadlines are May 31 and July 25. The committee has about \$14,000 left to grant this year. Forms and more information are available on the church website.

Church Yoga

Jan Hansen's church yoga group meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the church Fellowship Hall from 9:00-10:00 am and via Zoom. Please contact the church office to receive the Zoom link.



Offering QR Code

1. On your device, open your Camera app or QR Code app
2. Point your camera at the QR Code
3. Click tab 'Give Online'



Care Givers Needed

The Church Care Team identifies shut-ins and senior friends and then matches other church members to visit them in their homes. It is a tangible way of making the love of Christ visible. Many wonderful friendships have emerged from these caring relationships. The Care Team is in need of a few more members who would be willing to be matched with a senior or shut-in. Please contact the church office to volunteer or the current Care Team Members (Jan Hansen, Jill and Merle Paulson, Vicki Hoffman, Kathy Wochomurka, Callie Trautmiller, Diane Welsh, Pastors Chris and Dave).

Treasurer's Report

	Week of	Year to Date
	May 22, 2022	
General Fund Income*	\$ 4,285	\$ 222,480
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,909	\$ 208,089

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

Church Staff Contact Info

Pastor: Chris Myers—chris@firstchurchrf.org
Office: Missy Luedtke—missy@firstchurchrf.org
Education: Stacy Myers—stacy@firstchurchrf.org
Youth: Alex and Sarah Plum—rfyouthgroup@gmail.com
Music: Jamie Mills—degolierjamie@gmail.com
Choir: Sarah Plum—sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com
Building: Farnum Fuller—farnumfuller@gmail.com
Maintenance: Tim Bylander—timthefixitguy@gmail.com

Engaging the Word, Engaging the World

Updating

Freddy's Pantry at UWRF: Rose Rude carried two large bins of food to the campus to help out impoverished students through the end of the semester. Thank you for your generosity!

Care for Creation Crew (CCC) is active—and welcoming new members. If you care about our environment and want to be engaged in making changes that help us all, please consider joining us. We meet by Zoom on **June 13 at 7:00 pm**. For more info on the Crew, speak to Matt Meyer, Natasha Rayne, Rebecca Ferguson or Barb Peterson.

Earthfest 2022: It happened—in spite of dreadful cold weather, over 1,000 of our neighbors gathered at Glen Park to feast on plant-based foods, listen to local musicians, create temporary works of art, receive herbs and trees to plant, and otherwise learn, learn, and learn some more about how we can have **Hope 4 Creation**. If you would like to be part of the huge team of people working to make it happen again next year, talk to anyone on the CCC or Mission Ed Committee. Let's keep Pastor Dave's energy for Hope 4 Creation going strong!

Mission Education Committee: Although the committee itself will not meet in full in June, our subcommittees will. While we already miss Pastor Dave, our fearless guide, we are also eager to invite others to join us in a great journey of giving. Contact Rene Bylander, Rose Rude, Rebecca Ferguson, Sarah Noreen, Lori Otto, Larry Peterson, Sally Steneman, Sue Simonet, or Eric Withers for more information.

Upcoming

Our Neighbors' Place: Did you know that the day center at ONP offers shower facilities for their guests? Look for deals on towels and washcloths—and **bring what you can to our ONP bin by June 26**. Mission Ed will make sure all these bath linens get to ONP to assist our neighbors in need.

Care for Creation Crew: Look for our table of helpful hints on reducing kitchen paper and plastic usage during the Fellowship Hour on **June 12**.

Simpson Shelter Meal Returns! The long tradition of serving a meal to the guests at the Simpson Shelter in the cities is returning. Look for the sign up sheet to cook at the church and/or serve at the shelter on **Thursday, June 30**. Connect with Carole Mottaz if you have any questions now.

Care for Veterans: The Veterans lunches have returned. Join us after church on **Sunday, June 26 at 11:15 am** to connect with other veterans. Please sign up so we know how much food to prepare. Contact Rose Rude at 715-781-7032 or rose.rude@uwrf.edu if you have any questions.



Softball News

Hello fans and players, here is the schedule for the first few games of the season:

June 6 - 6:30 pm - Hoffman Park field 1 vs. Abundant Life

June 13 - 6:30 pm - Hoffman Park field 2 vs. First Covenant Church

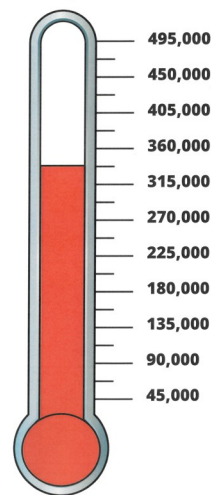
June 20 - 7:45 pm - Hoffman Park field 2 vs. Luther Memorial

June 27 - 7:45 pm - Hoffman Park field 1 vs. St. Bridgets

All games are held on Monday nights at Hoffman Park at either 6:30 or 7:45 pm. Come join in the fun and cheer us on!!

If you have questions, contact Matthew Thurston at (715)781-3626 or Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945.

Capital Campaign \$495,000 Goal!



Families: Hold the Date!

Even though summer is just getting underway, people at church are planning for fall and the beginning of a new school year. One emphasis for the next academic year is a focus on mental health and wellbeing for children, families, and adults. On the evenings of October 5, 12, and 19, we will host conversations about mental health and wellbeing. Presenters are: Dr. Janette Concepcion (a PhD Psychologist), Lauren Knapp (Psychiatric Physician Assistant), and Dr. Kelly Delahunty (a pediatrician with expertise in psychiatry and behavior modification).

The three presentations will focus on: an overview of mental health and wellbeing; how to prevent mental illness and promote emotional wellbeing; and options to treat mental health challenges. The goal is to have as many of our parents and grandparents of school-aged children, teens, and young adults attend as possible.

More information will come, but for now—please save the dates! For more information, talk with Pastor Stacy.

Simpson Shelter Meal

A meal will be served by our congregation on **Thursday, June 30**. We will need many hands and bodies to cook and serve. See sign-up sheet or talk to Carole Mottaz for more details. This is an awesome service event for families and young people.



Red Cross Blood Drive

There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive here at the church on **July 21**.

Here is the link to the online appointment schedule to make an appointment: [First Congregational Church Blood Drive - July 21st 2022](https://www.redcross.org/donate/blood-drive/first-congregational-church-blood-drive-july-21st-2022)



Church App

The church has a mobile phone app. You can download it from the church website or by scanning the QR Code to the left. Call the church office if you need help.



Altar Flowers

Please sign up to provide flowers for the altar for Sunday worship. Sign up at church or on the church website:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-altar>

Welcomers Needed

Please sign up to be a welcomer on Sunday morning before the worship service. One person is needed for at the bottom of the stairs at the 3rd Street Entrance. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to the worship service. Sign up at church or here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-welcomers>

Coffee Fellowship Hosts and Liturgists Needed

Coffee Fellowship Hosts will be asked to serve Best Maid cookies which are in the church freezer, make lemonade and/or serve coffee. All the materials are provided, you will simply need to serve and clean up. Sign up at church or on the website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-coffee>

Liturgists will lead us in the Call to Worship and one of the Scripture Lessons. The material will be emailed out on Thursday to practice. Sign up at church or on the website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-liturgist>

Please note church interns can receive credit for either of these activities. Thank you for volunteering in these important ministries as we continue our journey.

Simpson Shelter Needs

- Twin, full, and queen size blankets and sheet sets—new
- Pillows—new
- White t-shirts—new, sizes small & medium
- Large tubs of Country Time Lemonade and Kool Aid mixes (we use these in Igloo containers for meals)
- Hot sauce
- Coffee—ground, caffeinated
- Products for textured and natural hair
- New shower curtains and shower rings

There is a box at the church for donations. Thank you!

Save 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.

Save Your Batteries to Recycle!

We have a container available for recycling all those old, depleted batteries. Start saving them now and bring them to church. We'll pass them on to the recyclers and keep them out of landfills and the environment in our ongoing commitment to sustainability.

Ukraine Relief

Many of you are asking what you can do for the people of Ukraine. Please pray and please consider making a financial contribution to help them. Pray for changed hearts. Pray for world leaders to find a way to peace. Pray for people fleeing violence that they may find safe places to stay. Pray for those opening their homes and schools and churches.

Please also consider making a financial contribution. Working through our partner church in Hungary, the Reformed Church, which borders Ukraine and has been housing refugees in houses and churches, we will regularly send financial support. We have sent over \$14,000. Our next deadline will be **June 15**. Thank you for your prayerful support.

amazon smile Free Money for Church Ministries

The church has created an Amazon Smile account through which the church can receive a portion of the price of each purchase you make through Amazon. You need to do two things for the church to receive this money. First, go to Amazon Smile by typing in smile.amazon.com and then add First Congregational Church River Falls to your Amazon Smile. Second, every time you order you must order through your Smile account by going to smile.amazon.com. Once you do this, the church will receive 0.5% of each eligible order. Please contact the church office if you have questions. Last quarter the church received over \$100 for this account, but that amount could grow greatly if you add the church to your Amazon account. Do it today!

Empty Pill Bottles

The River Falls Lions Club is collecting empty pill bottles, both prescription and over the counter, to send to Africa where there is an urgent need. The bottles will be washed, and the labels soaked off before they are shipped. A blue collection tub is in the gathering area. Please see Carole Mottaz with questions.

Among Friends

Among Friends has re-opened and is accepting new referrals. Among Friends is a community-based social respite program serving adults with memory loss who reside in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. In May, we enjoyed music and chair yoga, as always, as well as a Kentucky Derby party, a visit from service dogs in training, and making fresh flower bouquets. We continue to tend to our spring herb garden. For more information, contact them at (715) 293-2651. Also, check out the website: amongfriendsrf.com and Facebook page. Among Friends is located at the church. **Guests are invited to join them for coffee from 9:30–10:00 am on Tuesday, June 28.**





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RIVER FALLS

Office Phone: 715-425-2052
E-mail: office@firstchurchrf.org
Website: www.firstchurchrf.org

STAFF

Chris Myers, Pastor
Stacy Johnson, CE Minister
Missy Luedtke, Office Administrator
Joel Larsen, Moderator
Alex and Sarah Plum, Youth Ministers
Jamie Mills, Music Coordinator and Bell Choir Director
Sarah Plum, Choir Director
Marsha Pearson, Organist
Terry Mithun, Organist
Tim Bylander, Building Supervisor
Farnum Fuller, Custodian

Pastor's home phone number:
Chris Myers 715-426-2075
chris@firstchurchrf.org

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

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JUNE 1, 2022



First Communion Information for Parents

When do children at First Congregational Church begin taking Communion?

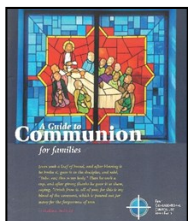
There is no uniform age at First Congregational Church when children begin participating in the Lord's Supper. Some children are pre-school age, others are in elementary school, and some wait until confirmation to begin taking Communion. The Bible and church history do not give decisive guidelines about the age to begin celebrating the Lord's Supper. The decision about when people are welcome at the Lord's Table has largely been made by local worshipping communities. Our practice is to include children when they and their parents think they are ready to participate.

How will I know when my child is ready?

Some parents choose infant communion for their children. Many parents wait until their children express an interest. Typically, children are ready to participate in Communion when they start asking questions about this sacrament. One important theme of Communion is inclusion: All are welcome at the table of the Lord. If a child feels excluded, it is a good time for that child to begin participating.

My child does not yet receive Communion. Should she/he still come forward?

Yes, all people are invited to come forward to the servers at the Communion distribution time. Children who will not be communing should keep their hands folded (as opposed to reaching out). This is a signal to the pastor and deacons that the child desires a blessing.



Communion Resource for Families

First Congregational Church has a new *Guide to Communion*. The resource was specifically designed for families, but it could be helpful for adults as well. Copies of the guide are available on the table in the gathering space.