

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

June 15, 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

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise.

Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! Because of your great power, your enemies cringe before you.

All the earth worships you; they sing praises to you, sing praises to your name." —Psalm 66:1-4



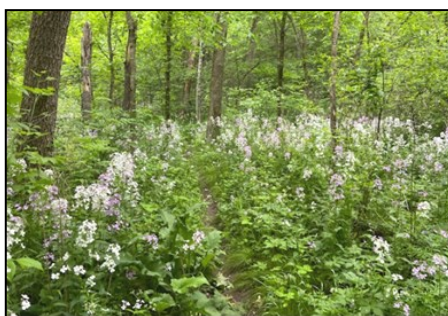
When I was hiking a few years ago in the Alps during my sabbatical, I came across this sign. For those who don't speak

German, it is from Psalm 66:4 (see above). The strange thing is, the sign was attached to a rather boring rock. Why would someone put a sign like that here? Then I walked on a little farther and just around the corner was one of the

most magnificent views I have ever seen (see below). Life is like that isn't it?



Summer in Wisconsin is a gift. And after the past two years, it is a gift we all need right now. Speaking of right now, if you have time and the ability, take a walk down by the shores of the Kinnic River, especially the part where the Kinnic and the Rocky Branch Creeks comes together. If you go up the creek a bit you will see acres of wild phlox that are blooming.



As Psalm 8 puts it:

O LORD, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon

and the stars that you have established; what are humans that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

God gives us this gift freely with the expectation that we will be good stewards of this gift. One thing we have all learned is that we have to be better at taking care of this gift. I am thankful to people in our church and other local River Falls churches, who through the work of Hope for Creation regularly remind us of our call to be better stewards of the gift of the creation.

As we begin the summer, and with rising gas prices, challenge yourself to one meaningful change toward sustainability. One of the things I am going to do is try to get on my bike more, to both work and the store. It gives me exercise, helps me be a better steward and saves me money as well.

Regardless of whether you accept this summer challenge, may we all enjoy the gift of God's good creation this summer season.

See you in worship.

In Gratitude, Pastor Chris



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 or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-pizza>

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

Peach Fundraiser

It's time to place your order for the delicious Washington State Peaches! Single layer box is \$23.00 or two or more single layer boxes for \$21.00 each box. **Orders must be placed by August 1 for pick up in late August.** There are 3 ways to order:



1. Email: office@firstchurchrf.org
2. Sign-up online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-washington2>
3. Call: 715-425-2052 - Monday-Thursday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm or leave a message with name and phone and number of boxes.

This is an annual fundraiser for our youth. Thank you for your support!

We Are Hiring!

With the retirement of Pastor Dave, the church will be hiring a 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 15

Original cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining amount on Bank Loan	\$340,081.63
Cash on hand in the Building Fund	\$182,831.34
Interest Rate (Locked in through January 2027)	3.39%
Monthly Payment	\$2,622.76

Thanks to your generosity and faithful, upfront giving for the recent Capital Campaign, we were able to make a \$150,000 payment on the principal this month. Thank you!

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.

Pastoral Acts

- A Memory Sharing Service was lead by Pastor Chris at Bakken and Young Funeral home for the family of Carolyn Larrabee on Saturday, June 4. Please keep her family in your prayers.
- A Memorial Service for Judith Permann will be Saturday, June 18 at 11:00 am with a visitation an hour before and a reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall. The service will also be on the church livestream. Please keep her husband Pastor Del, daughters Jen and Rachel and grand daughter Elena in your prayers.

Let's Build a Planetarium

As a congregation, sometimes we have to take a chance and try something new. So, let's try to build a planetarium for VBS! Our proposed planetarium will be a geodesic dome made out of cardboard that is 16' in diameter. To accomplish this goal, we will need adults and workers who are in grades 8-12 to volunteer to help during the month of July. To get our imaginations going, please come for a brief video (6 minutes long) and discussion after worship in the Fellowship Hall by the screen on **Sunday, June 19.**



Vacation Bible School

VBS for 2022 is called "That's Awesome!" The week's focus will be experiences and ideas that are worth our awe and wonder. Dates are **August 1-4, 9:00-11:30 am.**



Activities include: learning about space, expressing ideas through art, exploring music, working with wood, listening to Bible texts, and spending time with friends. Registration forms are available at church and on the website <https://firstchurchrf.org/pages/sign-ups-forms>. Please register your child and spread the word. All are welcome!

VBS Volunteers and Meeting

Calling adults and teens to help with VBS! Please volunteer online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-ybsvolunteers1> or by signing the list on the sign-up table. For more information, please contact Pastor Stacy. There will be an orientation meeting for volunteers on **Thursday, July 28, 6:00 pm.**

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. Just two spots left!

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>



Gertrude was here!

Our Among Friends program had a goat guest recently. Gertrude! She is 30 pound goat and the Among Friends folk learned all about goat care and milking.

Special thanks to Karen Rodewald for bringing in her goat!

Graduation Sunday

Thanks to our Christian Education Team and church staff who welcomed our 2022 High School graduates for this year's Graduation Sunday. Thanks also to Jenny Luedtke, head of the Scholarship Team, who awarded church scholarships.

We pray for all of our graduates as they take the next steps. May the faith and lessons you have learned here continue to guide you.

Our graduates were: Josh Sippel, Evan Luedtke, Monty Wilson, Justin Elsesser, Virgil Jensen, Aeva Noreen, Anna Anderson, and Wyatt Bjork (not pictured)



Photo Directory Thanks

Thanks to all who came to have their pictures taken for the new church photo directory. We hope to have the new directories in the fall by Rally Day. A huge thanks to Diane Welsh and her team who coordinated it all. It was a big job and we are thankful!

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 Trauttmiller, Diane Welsh, Pastors Chris and Dave).

Treasurer's Report

	Week of June 5, 2022	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,837	\$ 246,099
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,909	\$ 227,907

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



Dear First Congregational, Thank you for the continuing education scholarship. This scholarship will allow me to continue my education at Michigan Technological University. I am continually grateful for the support of this congregation and I always look forward to attending church when I am home. Thank you, Mya Davis

Dear First Congregational, I would greatly like to thank the scholarship committee and the entire congregation for their continued generosity in providing me and the rest of the church's college students with scholarships. It is very appreciated so that I can continue to pursue my education and follow my dreams. From the bottom of my heart, thank you! Colin Richter

Dear First Congregational, First of all, thank you. My college career has been crazy, hectic, and more but this church has never failed to help support me. I appreciate that stability to much. Secondly, for those who don't know, I am writing this thank you from Malta! I was lucky enough to participate in a study-abroad trip this semester and it has truly been the experience of a lifetime. This is just one of the many amazing things our church has enabled me to participate in thanks to the scholarship program. This is truly an amazing program and I could not be more thankful. I am sorry I could not be there to accept the award in person, but I will be back this summer and I hope I can thank all of you in person. Sincerely, William Tuchtenhagen

Dear First Congregational, Thank you so much for the church scholarship that I received this year! With two parents who serve as educators, I am proud to be a part of a church who shares the same value for education. You have truly made a difference in my life. Thank you again! Sincerely, Evan Luedtke

Use Water Well

Because water comes so easily into our homes, we can forget to respect how essential water is to all life. Turn of the water when you brush your teeth, or as you soap up in the shower. Make it a practice to save the water you run until you get hot water; use it on your plants, indoors or outside. Water your lawn and garden sensibly: more deeply but less often. Choose plants and grass types that require less water. Use mulch on beds to keep the moisture where the plants need it. How else can we be responsible stewards of this precious commodity?

Brought to you by the Care for Creation Crew, part of the Mission Education Committee



Softball News

Hello fans and players, here is the schedule:

June 20 - 7:45 pm - Field 2 vs. Luther Memorial

June 27 - 7:45 pm - Field 1 vs. St. Bridget's

July 4 - No Game

July 11 - 6:30 pm - Field 1 vs. Servant of the Shepherd

July 11 - 7:45 pm - Field 2 vs. Christ Center

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.

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 July 25 and September 26. The committee has about \$14,000 left to grant this year. Forms and more information are available on the church website.

People in the Pews: Lara Koecher

1. *Where did you grow up/hometown?* I grew up in a few different places. I was born in Bozeman, Montana then moved to Vermillion, South Dakota (when still a baby) where my Dad finished graduate school. From there we moved to Frederick, Maryland where we lived until I was ten. My Dad was transferred to the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and we moved out to Corcoran, Minnesota where I stayed until I graduated high school.
2. *Where do you live now?* My husband, Steve, and I live southwest of River Falls out in Clifton Township. We moved to the area from New Brighton, MN in 2007 and were surprised how quickly we felt at home in the River Falls community.
3. *How long have you been attending First Congregational Church?* We started coming about 10 years ago. Our first visit here started out as a "trial" because we had not really found a church that felt like home to either of us after we moved to the area. My husband Steve was born and raised Lutheran and I was born and raised Catholic. We knew we both wanted to attend church together. Although I wanted to try UCC for quite some time, it took a while to convince Steve it was okay to go outside of the Lutheran church. Do you know what he said after our first Sunday? "I really liked it. Let's go back!"
4. *What keeps you coming back to church at UCC?* The thing that keeps me (us) coming back is kind of what drew me in — "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." I felt that the very first Sunday we came and I still feel it today.
5. *My favorite church hymn* is "On Eagles Wings." My first memory of this song is at my Grandmother's funeral when I was about 14 years old. I had never heard it before that day. The song touched me then and still does every time I hear it.
6. *Something that may surprise others* is that my husband and I have been married for 33+ years. I became a mother at 19 and Steve a father at 21. We married 4 months later. We are blessed to have "grown up" together" while we continue to "grow together." We have two children and 6 grandchildren. Life is busy but never boring. We are thankful to call First Congregational Church of River Falls our church home.

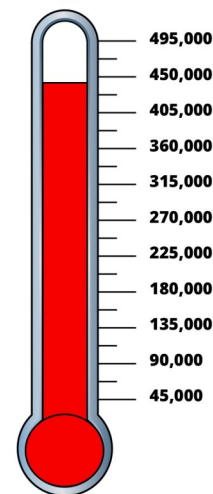


Congratulations Back Bay Mission!!

100 years of transforming lives! They are celebrating helping save and transform lives for the last 100 years, and we have been a big part of that. We have been helping people stay in their homes since Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. We have also helped them at their Food Shelf and the Micah Day Center.

Please go to their website to learn the history of this amazing mission at www.thebackbaymission.org. Stay tuned as we will give updates as we get ready to go back next March. We will also be having a Shrimp Boil Fundraiser. If you have questions or want more info, please contact Carol Merriman or Pastor Chris.

Capital Campaign \$495,000 Goal!



Please return your pledge cards
by the end of June!

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.redcrossblood.org/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>

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.

Church Council Meeting Summary—May 17, 2022

Treasurer's Report: Missy reports that April income is low because the last Sunday in April was added to the May count. Insurance is paid in full for the whole year. Worker's Comp will be paid yet. Finances look good going into the summer. All missions are ½ paid at this point. No endowment funds have been utilized.

Discussion regarding the offering plate being passed: Decision to pass the plate beginning May 29th approved by Council.

New Business:

Capital Campaign Update: Joel will be sending emails to follow up with everyone. He has asked that Church leadership to prayerfully consider making a pledge to retire the debt, purchase the new church sign and purchase the audio video equipment. discussion about the video created to debut the campaign and how to have it viewed by as many members as possible in person.

Sign quotes: Chris has met with a sign making firm. Looking at several choices and they will provide quotes for the costs of each. Trustee committee will be authorized in the fall to work on the plans, possible variance request to the city (and have the authority to spend the variance funds if necessary).

Audio Video Quotes: No quotes yet. 2 vendors came in to review the present system. They need to meet with the Audio Video team to discuss needs.

Dave New Hire: Chris, Joel/Kathy (Moderator), Rose (Mission), Diane (Personnel), Stacy (CE), The team has not met yet. Job description will be on the website and gathering table. Also needing to find substitutes during time frames that Chris and Stacy go on vacation. May consider lay persons to provide the sermons. Deacons may need to assist with additional service duties

RFSD proposal - Joel/Brad: It is likely the school district has found an alternative location for the classes.

Nominating Committee: Joel/Chris need names for replacing committee members: Committees need to provide names of the members that are going off committees and need to be replaced in the fall. Provide information to Missy.

Old Business:

Church Van Update: Should be here by the end of June.

Weekly Communion: Continued through summer. Review again in August.

Ministry Updates:

Christian Education: Red Cat system is in. Mental Health and Wellness/Mission Ed committee partnership. Stacy was able to get 3 physicians from Hudson Physicians to provide educational mental health workshops in the fall. Graduation Sunday plans set, VBS dates set.

Deacons: A new wine will be tried again on Sunday. If it doesn't go well, they will return to Mogen David. Will begin ringing the bell at the beginning of the service again.

Discipleship: No meeting. Continuing People in the Pews

Endowment Grant: No meeting. Deadline is May 31st for review at the June 6th meeting. \$14,271 balance at this time.

Mission Education: No report

Music: No report

Personnel: No report

Strategic Plan: No report

Trustees: Sign discussion, maintenance issues. Compressor for the sprinkler system may be leaking. Ants in the building; coffee maker issues-blowing a circuit-may need some rewiring work in that area.

Welcoming Ministry: Requesting that Chris remind visitors about the Welcome Table.

Pastor: To hold the August 23 meeting at Pastor Chris' house, on his deck. (7:30 pm)

Moderator: No report

Picture the Bible: No report

NEXT MEETING: Aug 23, 2022 (off in June and July, meet on August 23—late due to Tools for Schools!)

Submitted by Jo Anne Friedell, Church Clerk

SERVE generously

Simpson Shelter Needs

- New men's boxers—sizes S, M, L and XL
- New men's t-shirts—sizes S, M, L, XL, and XXL
- New women's underwear—Sizes 5, 6, 7, and 8
- New bras—cup sizes B, C, & D
- Deodorant
- Shaving cream and razors
- Travel size shampoo, conditioner, body wash, and bar soap
- Haircare products for natural, textured, or curly hair
- Mending kits

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 are asking what you can do for the people of Ukraine. Please pray and please 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 \$15,000. Our next deadline will be **June 30**. Thank you for your prayerful support.

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.

amazon smile Free Money for Church Ministries

The church has 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, 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 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.**





FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH, UCC
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

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

110 N. Third Street
River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

PERMIT #53

RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

JUNE 15, 2022

First Communion Information for Parents

When do children at First Congregational Church begin taking Communion?

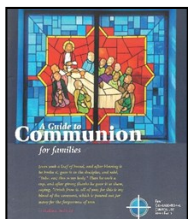
There is no uniform age at First Congregational Church when children begin participating in the Lord's Supper. Some children are pre-school age, others are in elementary school, and some wait until confirmation to begin taking Communion. The Bible and church history do not give decisive guidelines about 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.