

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://www.firstchurchrf.org)

July 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

### The Joys of Small Town Living

One of my favorite songs to rock out with is *Small Town* by John Cougar Mellencamp. Especially this time of year, if I hear that song on the radio, the windows go down and I start belting it out in my car. It's not just the classic rock music that gets me, it is the lyrics. It talks about both the joys and pitfalls of small town living (see lyrics on next page). Even though it is growing,

River Falls is still a small town. And there are certainly joys and pitfalls in living in a small town like River Falls.

Joys like having one of your former confirmands be your grocery clerk or fix your car. Joys like having the pharmacist know from memory your kid has an allergy to a certain medication. Joys like running into neighbors in the local restaurant or walking through the park. And also joys like small town festivals such as our upcoming River Falls Days.

Yes, I know small town living comes with some downsides too. You pretty much have to drive to Woodbury to buy a pair of socks. And while in a small town you get to see all the people you know and like, it is also true you can't really escape from the people you don't appreciate. And don't even get me started on the local restaurant scene. All in all though, given the choice, small town living, especially these days, it's pretty nice.

Like church, one of the things that makes small town living meaningful is that everybody has to get involved. The small town I grew up in was much like River Falls. It was small (only 3500 people!), but located just outside a big city (I could ride my bike into Manhattan). In order for that small town to function well everyone had to get involved.

For example, in the Memorial Day Parade there were almost as many people in the parade as there were watching the parade. In much the same way, the church needs people to function well. It needs people to serve on committees and teams, serve meals to the homeless and to grieving families, to act as liturgists and worship leaders, coffee fellowship hosts and VBS helpers.

In a few weeks the Nominating Committee will begin its work of filling the slate of officers and committee members for the program season which begins in September. Serving on one of these teams is a great way, not only to use your gifts in God's service, but also it is a way to connect with other people. Please consider serving on one of these teams. And if asked, please say yes. And in the meantime, consider signing up to be a liturgist, coffee fellowship host, welcomer, nursery attendant on a summer Sunday morning. Consider helping out with VBS this year as a teacher or helper. Ask yourself – How can I serve God in one way both inside and outside the church walls?

So enjoy a small town summer. And join us on Thursday, July 7 from 6-8 pm as we enjoy pizza and a concert outside on the church lawn to kick off River Falls Days weekend.

In Gratitude, Pastor Chris



## Join Us for Pizza and a Concert!

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 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](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org) – Please provide name, phone and number of boxes.
2. Sign-up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-washington2>
3. Call: 715-425-2052

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 30

Original cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining amount on Bank Loan	\$338,663.49
Cash on hand in the Building Fund	\$208,819.80
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!

## *Small Town*

*by John Cougar Mellencamp*

Well, I was born in a small town  
And I live in a small town  
Probably die in a small town  
Oh, those small communities

All my friends are so small town  
My parents live in the same small town

My job is so small town  
Provides little opportunity, hey

Educated in a small town  
Taught to fear of Jesus in a small town

Used to daydream in that small town

Another boring romantic, that's me

But I've seen it all in a small town  
Had myself a ball in a small town  
Married an L.A. Doll and brought her to this small town

Now she's small town just like me

No, I cannot forget from where it is that I come from

I cannot forget the people who love me

Yeah, I can be myself here in this small town

And people let me be just what I want to be

Ooh nah, nah, nah, yeah, ooh yeah yeah

Got nothing against a big town  
Still hayseed enough to say  
Look who's in the big town  
But my bed is in a small town  
Oh, and that's good enough for me

Well, I was born in a small town  
And I can breathe in a small town  
Gonna die in a small town  
Oh, and that's probably where they'll bury me, yeah

## A Planetarium for VBS

Our congregation will build a cardboard planetarium in July. The planetarium will be geodesic dome made out of cardboard that is 16' in diameter and 10' tall. Tim Bylander has made templates for cutting, a special punch for the holes, and a rather ingenious contraption to help us score the cardboard to ensure perfect folds. Now we need workers. Work times are: **July 7–4:00 pm, July 12–4:00 pm, July 24–10:30 am.** Please sign up to help on the sign-up table at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-build>



## 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-vbsvolunteers1> 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.**

## VBS Teachers and Volunteers Needed

We still need four more adult teachers, a minimum of four additional adult craft volunteers, and teenage helpers for VBS. Please volunteer! <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-vbsvolunteers1>

## Youth Meetings

Alex and Sarah Plum would like to schedule individual or small group meetings with each youth/teen throughout the summer to get to know each other better! They will treat to Dairy Queen or Caribou! Please text us at 612-224-5894, or email at [rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com) if you would like to schedule a time! The Plums will reach out as well.



Alex is leading a Boundary Waters Canoe Trip open to youth and adults on **July 17-22.**

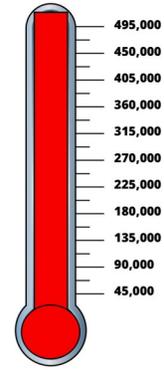
See flyer on the sign-up table and contact Alex for more details. Just two spots left!

## 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>

## Capital Campaign \$495,000 Goal!



## WE DID IT!

As of the end of June, we officially met our Capital Campaign Fundraising goal of \$495,000 to pay off our bank debt, upgrade our sound and video systems and install a new church sign.

Thanks to the cash gifts you have already given, we made a \$150,000 payment on our bank debt.

Thank you for your generosity and supporting the long term ministry of First Congregational!



### Softball News

Hello fans and players, here is the schedule:

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

July 18—7:45 pm—Field 1 vs. Christ Center

July 25—7:45 pm—Field 1 vs. Luther Memorial

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.

### Afghan Resettlement in Eau Claire Update

In late winter, a group of churches in Eau Claire in collaboration with Lutheran Social Services welcomed a cluster of families from Afghanistan to their community. First Congregational provided funds to support this endeavor.

The families are doing well. They are learning English, have fulltime jobs and driver's licenses, and are adapting to their new lives.

The churches in Eau Claire are now planning to bring one or two additional families related to their existing families to Eau Claire. This is good news.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

An important emphasis for the coming 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. Please register for these important sessions by adding your name to the list on the sign-up table or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-mentall>

## Memorial Gifts

Memorials were given in honor of Judith Permann which the family has directed to the Music Fund.

*join us*

**JULY 7TH 6-8 PM**

First Congregational UCC | 110 N 3rd St. River Falls

**FOR** A FREE CONCERT  
ON THE LAWN



*Featuring the*  
**BIGMOUTH  
BUFFALO  
STRING BAND**

**AND** ARTISAN PIZZA  
*FROM* A Wandering Fire Pizza Truck

**PIZZA BY RESERVATION ONLY**

*Sign up by June 26th*  
**FOOD IS LIMITED**  
**SCAN THE QR CODE**  
*or call 715-425-2052*



## What the Pastor is Reading

**The American Experiment: Dialogues on a Dream** edited by David M Rubenstein is a collection of essays on the dream of America. It has sections by Ken Burns, Madeleine Albright, Jon Meacham and Rita Moreno. Great book as we approach the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and remember the ways our country has both dreamed and fallen short of those dreams.

**How Emotions are Made: The Secret Life of Brains** by Lisa Feldman Barrett, as the title suggests, talks about emotions. A PhD and prof at Harvard as well as a doctor at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, she talks about her research into how emotions are not just automatic, they are constructed over a life time of learning. In fact she says we have more control over our emotions than previously thought.

**His Truth is Marching On: John Lewis and Power of Hope** by Jon Meachum tells the story of Civil Rights leader John Lewis from a faith perspective. Powerful.

### 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
	June 19, 2022	
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,283	\$ 254,603
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,909	\$ 247,725

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



On **Monday, August 15, and Tuesday, August 16**, families in the River Falls School District can receive free school supplies for the upcoming year through the Tools for School Event. Please see the flyer for more information.

The sorting and distribution of supplies will be here at our church. Please use the sign-up sheets if you can help sort and/or assist families during the give-away.

Please bring your donated school supplies to our church **by Friday, August 12**.

If you would like to give by check, please make a note "Tools for School" in the memo line. Thank you for your generosity.

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## Pastoral Acts

- A Memorial Service for Judith Permann was held Saturday, June 18. Please keep her husband Pastor Del, daughters Jen and Rachel and grand daughter Elena in your prayers.



## 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](#)



## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Entrance. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to the worship service. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-welcomers>

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## 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.



## 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](http://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.

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## 2022 Relay For Life Fun Facts

1. # of Relay Teams registered = 26
2. # of Participants registered = 158
3. # of Survivors registered at event = 45
4. Total Survivorship years represented = 675 years
5. # of Luminaria Bags sold = 258
6. # served at the River Falls Rotary spaghetti dinner = 266
7. 144 silent auction items raised \$4,900
8. All Star Individuals who raised over \$2,500
  - Diane Ullom (U-You Sisterhood Team) so far \$3,278
  - Alice Cernohous (HAIRitage Hous Team) so far \$2,565
9. Top Team is U-You Sisterhood raising so far \$14,522. This was their 20th year of being a Relay Team. They've raised over \$290K in the 20 years.
10. RFL event has raised over **\$86,300** with funds still coming in! The event goal was \$75,000. See current fundraising totals on their website: [www.RelayForLife.org/RiverFallsWI](http://www.RelayForLife.org/RiverFallsWI)
11. First Congregational Church gave \$4,207 this year!



Dear First Congregational, Thank you for the generous gift received for my work through intern hours. I appreciate this gift and will use it towards pursuing Welding this fall at Northwood Technical in New Richmond.

Thank you so very much! Josh Sippel

Dear First Congregational, Thank you for the college scholarship that I received in June. This will assist me to continue my senior year at Eau Claire. I am working towards the completion of my Business Administration major with an Information Systems minor. I appreciate the ongoing support of the church community.

Thank you, Derick Graves

Dear First Congregational, Thank you so much for the scholarship I received and the endless support throughout my life thus far. I plan to continue college at UW—Stout, as a sophomore this year. I aspire to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Construction Management to one day have a positive impact on future clients and coworkers' lives.

Thank you for your time, Zachary Martin

Dear First Congregational, Thank you for the money! I feel very honored to receive such a wonderful scholarship. The church has helped me in so many amazing different ways. So thank you for that and as well I cannot wait to attend Western Washington University this fall.

Thank you, Aeva Noreen

## 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 ask 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. 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 at church**. 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](https://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](https://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!

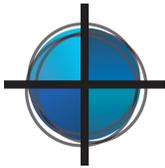
## Empty Pill Bottles

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](https://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, July 26.**





FIRST  
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CHURCH, UCC  
RIVER FALLS

Office Phone: 715-425-2052  
E-mail: [office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org)  
Website: [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://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](mailto:chris@firstchurchrf.org)

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## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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JULY 1, 2022



## First Communion Information for Parents

### When do children at First Congregational Church begin taking Communion?

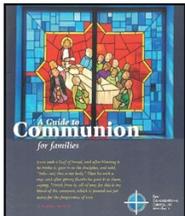
There is no uniform age at First Congregational Church when children begin participating in the Lord's Supper. Some children are pre-school age, others are in elementary school, and some wait until confirmation to begin taking Communion. The Bible and church history do not give decisive guidelines about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