

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

November 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

Giving Thanks

I am thankful we will soon be able to celebrate our annual Giving Thanks Meal in the Fellowship Hall again this year for the first time since 2019. After all we have been through since then, it is good, right and necessary that we stop what we are doing and simply give thanks. I hope you will join us on Sunday, November 13 for worship at 10am where the choir will debut a new commissioned choir piece and then we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a full meal complete with turkey and all the trimmings (please sign up so we have enough food and pie!).

At a recent church meeting I was asked to describe our church to an outsider. How would you do this? Here is some of what I said:

Ours is a church where 80 year olds lead yoga classes and 15 years olds serve on search committees because we recognize God has gifted all of us, regardless of age.

Ours is a church that asks the question—who in our community is overlooked?, and then goes on to make gift boxes for the men in treatment at the local drug and alcohol rehab home because we know God does not want us to feel isolated and alone and that everyone deserves a second chance.

Ours is a church that knows it needs to be fed before it can go out and feed others so it gathers for worship, but also gathers to make meals for the Simpson Shelter and takes time to eat together on Wednesday nights at family meals or to chat during Coffee Fellowship.

Ours is a church that knows education is a powerful part of our Congregational Church history and can help change the world, so it provides Wednesday and Sunday School, Confirmation and Church Interns programs, Bible Studies on Wednesday and Sunday and the Learning Community and scholarships for mission trips and college or technical school learning.

Ours is a church that recognizes there is far more that unites us than divides us, because Christ has made us all one in him.

Ours is a church that recognizes it has been blessed, so it seeks to share those blessings with the community and world.

Ours is a community where people seek to follow the Servant Savior Jesus Christ by learning the ways they have been gifted, and then looking for opportunities in which we can use our God given tasks to help heal a broken world.

Ours is a church that seeks each year to grow a little more generous, a little more in kindness, helping to create a 'conspiracy of goodness.'

Ours is a church that is not afraid of the future because we know God is leading and guiding us, and as our ancestors in faith once said, '*has yet more truth and light to shed on us and our world.*'

On Sunday, November 13th, in addition to worship, the Giving Thanks Meal and the debut of a new choir piece, we will dedicate our financial pledges for the coming year. Those pledges empower all that we do here at church. They are the engine that drives our mission and ministry.

We ask three things of you. First, if you don't pledge, start this year at any amount. Second, if you do pledge, increase your pledge, even if it is only slightly for that is how we grow in generosity. Third, consider participating in E-giving, which means you never have to write another check and your gift is always at work empowering the work we do inside and outside the church walls.

Especially this year, after all we have been through recently, let us stop and give thanks for the gifts of life and faith. See you in church.

In Gratitude,
Pastor Chris



All Saints Sunday

On Sunday, **November 6**, we celebrate All Saints Sunday, the day we remember those who have lived the life of faith and now rest in God's strong care. A white rose in memory of each of the saints of First Congregational Church will be placed on the communion table in their memory. This year, we are asking for the names of other saints, beyond the walls of our congregation who have died. If you have a loved one, friend or relative who has died this past year, please use the yellow sheets on the sign-up table so they can be included in the prayers on All Saints Sunday.



Welcome to the Rev. Deb Meyer

The Rev. Deb Meyer begins her ministry among us as our part-time Minister of Community and Outreach on Tuesday, November 1 in the church office and on Sunday, November 6 in worship. Please pray for Deb as she leaves her ministry setting in Henderson, Minnesota and moves to the Twin Cities where she will be closer to her daughter and grandchildren. On **Sunday, November 6**, the Mission Committee is hosting Coffee Fellowship in her honor. Please join us in welcoming her that day!

Sunday Morning Text Study

You are invited to participate in a conversation about each Sunday's scripture texts on Sunday mornings, **9:00-9:50 am in the Youth Room**. The conversations are engaging and everyone is welcome. This is a great opportunity to explore scripture. Please come! For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Adult Bible Study

Adult Bible Study meets **Wednesday afternoons, 1:00-2:30 pm**, in the Youth Room. The current focus is the New Testament book of Hebrews. All are welcome.

Back Bay Mission Trip

Deposits for the Spring Break Mission Trip to Biloxi, Mississippi are due. The dates are **March 11-18, 2023**. Please make sure you have your deposit into the church office to reserve your spot. *We have 5 spots yet to fill*. See Pastor Chris ASAP if you are interested!

Bibles to 6th Graders

Bibles will be given to the 6th graders on **Sunday, October 30**, at the 10:00 am worship service.

Men's Group

The church Men's Group meets **every other Tuesday from 9:00-10:00 am** for coffee, treats and conversation. Pastor Chris leads us with a brief devotion, gives us a topic to discuss and we also have time to meet and catch up. Join us! Talk to Pastor Chris or Brad Williams for more information. Next gatherings are **November 1, 15 and 29**. All men are welcome!

Fall Clean-Up

Sat, Oct 29, 9:00 am

Please bring your gloves, rakes, blowers, pruning shears, etc. to help clean up the grounds at the church. Back-up date is Saturday, November 5. Join us!

Family Resource Center

The Family Resource Center is in Room 107. Children, teens and families are invited to check out books, games, toys, and activity bags for young children. The room is also set up with a comfortable place for reading, Legos ready for building, a space for games, and building blocks.





Family Meals

On Wednesday nights, we offer a home-cooked meal in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$8 per person with a family max of \$30. **Meals are served from 5:15 to 6:15pm.** Confirmants and interns are \$5 each and are encouraged to eat with their classes at 6:00 pm prior to class or activities at 6:30 pm. We are not offering drive thru service this year, but you may go through the serving line and a meal will be packaged for you to take home.

Reservations must be placed by noon on Tuesdays. You can make a reservation online, the sign-up table or by calling the church office.

Nov 2—Spaghetti and meatballs, salad, garlic toast

Nov 9—Taco Bar (chicken & beef) with fiesta corn salad & Spanish rice (youth leave for FMSC at 6pm)

Nov 16—Meatloaf, garlic mashed potatoes, mac and cheese, vegetable, bread



Giving Thanks Meal

The Annual Giving Thanks meal will be **Sunday, November 13, after the 10:00 am worship service** in the Fellowship Hall. Join us for a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal as we kick off the season of giving thanks. Taking time to sit, eat and converse with one another is a gift that has been taken away from us for too long. Invite your friends and neighbors to join you, but please be sure to sign up! The cost is \$8 and we ask each family or group to bring either a side dish or pie (apple or pumpkin). Come Ye Thankful People Come! <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-giving2>

Children's Advent Musical

Sunday School children in kindergarten through grade 5 will begin rehearsing the 2023 Advent Musical on November 13 during Sunday School. Dress rehearsal will be on Saturday, December 17, 10:00 -12:00 noon for children in grades 1-5.

The musical will be presented during worship on Sunday, December 18.



2022 Christmas Luncheon

You are invited to attend a Christmas Luncheon on **Tuesday, December 6, starting at noon.** The Fellowship Hall will be decorated, the food will be delicious, the company hard to beat, and the River Falls High School Costumed Carolers provide the entertainment. Please come! We have drivers willing to pick up anyone who needs a ride. The cost is \$10.00 per person. Please make a reservation and let the office know if you need a ride. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-christmas2>



Commissioned Composer Piece

In the beginning phases of discussing a commission for our Chancel Choir, it was decided by the music committee that we choose a composer from an underrepresented population. We were able to do this in multiple facets, as our composer, Lawren Brianna Ware is both a female composer and a composer of color. Our committee felt it was important to uplift underrepresented composers, and therefore, we were excited to begin the commission process with Dr. Ware. Dr. Ware just finished her doctoral degree from UW Madison in music composition and was very excited to begin the commission process with us!

As we began discussing ideas, Dr. Ware suggested a tribute piece to the war in Ukraine. We agreed this would be a lovely idea, especially given our church's generosity in raising money to send to our sister church in Hungary. Once we decided on the topic, Dr. Ware and Sarah decided on Psalm 46 to represent both God as our refuge and strength in a time of trouble, but also acknowledging that nations in uproar are held by his righteous hand.

The Chancel Choir will present the world premiere of *Psalom na sylu*, or Psalm for strength, on November 13 before the Giving Thanks Meal.



Sunday, October 30 - Trunk or Treat

All youth should wear their costumes to church that morning and then go to the trunk or treat event after worship!

Wednesday, November 9 - Feed My Starving Children Night

All Confirmands, Interns, Pre-Confirmands. We will depart at 5:45 pm from church for our work reservation from 7:00 to 8:45 pm. Dinner line at church opens at 5:15 pm (make a reservation!) and the bus leaves at 5:45. We work from 6:45 to 8:30 pm and are back here at 9:15 pm. A long, but worthwhile night. **We need 7 adult chaperones!** We need all our kids grade 6-12 to participate to help pack meals. Please contact Pastor Chris if you are NOT going and please email Pastor Chris if you can help chaperone.

Sunday, November 13 - Giving Thanks Meal

This is an all kids on deck Sunday where we expect all our youth (grades 6–12) to help with the meal on Sunday or setup on Saturday morning. **I also need about 6 parents who can help chaperone.** We will put you in shifts so you will not miss out on eating! We will be setting tables on Saturday, November 12 starting at 10:00 am. Please email Pastor Chris if you can help chaperone.

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'



Cribbage Night

The cribbage group is meeting on the second Monday at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 and the group decides which charity to donate it to. Playing time starts at **7:00 pm**. All players and abilities welcome. The next game will be **November 14**.

Mortgage Summary—As of Oct. 31

Original cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining amount on Bank Loan	\$280,776.19
Cash on hand in the Building Fund	\$215,636.52
Interest Rate (Locked in through January 2027)	3.39%
Monthly Payment	\$2,622.76

Treasurer's Report

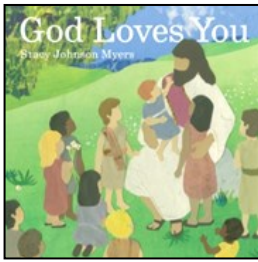
	Week of	
	Oct 16, 2022	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 7,009	\$ 383,593
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,909	\$ 416,178

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



New Book Featuring Picture the Bible Art

The Pilgrim Press has released a new book featuring Picture the Bible art, entitled *God Loves You*. The book is designed for young children, and features a simple storyline with the fundamental message all children need to hear: “God loves you,” all the time, without exception. Books are available on The Pilgrim Press website (www.thepilgrimpress.com) and Amazon.

To help save shipping costs, First Congregational will place one large book order. If you want to be part of this order, please sign the list on the sign-up table or online. The cost of the book with a modest shipping cost will be \$10.00. Please bring money to the office or place in the offering plate marked “God Loves You Book Order.” **All orders and money are due by November 15.**

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



Cookie Making Event

The Shoebox Project would like to have home-made Christmas cookies to deliver with the items to be given to the Kinnic Drug and Alcohol Rehab Center residents on December 14. There is a sign-up sheet on the table for people to sign up to volunteer their time and recipes for this cookie making event on **Friday, December 9 at 10:00 am in the church kitchen**. All supplies will be furnished. If you have a special recipe that you wish to share, please contact Jean Smith at 715-781-6880 or Eunice at 715-497-4514.

Will be a fun time! We will even order pizza for lunch and, of course, there will be tasting! Join us!

Christmas Shoebox Project



The yoga group and church members have supported a “Christmas Shoebox” for the men at the Kinnic Drug and Alcohol Rehab Center in River Falls. We are collecting items and will fill the boxes and bags and deliver them to the Kinnic Rehab to show that we all care! These shoeboxes contain socks, playing cards, puzzles, soap, toothpaste, and many other items. A list of items is on the sign-up table. Cash donations will be used to purchase any needed items. If you have questions, please contact Jean Smith at jsmithler@yahoo.com or at 715-781-6880 or call the church office.



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.

Church Council Meeting Summary - October 18, 2022

Treasurer's Report: Amended budget provided to Council due to discrepancy by accounting contractor on Among Friends staff salary. Missy advised Council to note the increase in insurance needs due to van insurance. We are falling behind with donations - typically by this time of the year we are receiving an increase in giving. Currently we have spent less than the budgeted funds at this point. Trustees reviewed the budget and discussed budget plans.

New Business:

Damage from hailstorm—4-5” rips in the flat roof: All of the roof area was new in 2013 except for the Sanctuary. The entire roof needs to be replaced with a preliminary estimate of \$200,000. The estimate includes the gas disconnect and reconnect and removal and return of solar panels. Brad Williams will be managing the construction work. The new van sustained damage and is scheduled to be repaired on Dec. 19. The insurance payment for the damage has been received. Pastor Chris and Tim will make final decisions about the extent of work completed on the van. During their meeting the Trustees passed the vote to apply for endowment grant funds to cover the cost of the deductible for the roof.

Welcoming and Endowment Grant Committee updates—Trustees and Deacons discussed having assigned members assist the Welcomers committee to greet prior to services. One of them will also assist with any visitors.

Old Business:

New Hire for Minister of Community and Outreach—A new computer purchased for Pastor Deb's use. She will begin in the office on Nov. 1st. Her first Sunday here is the 6th and she has agreed to provide "Tell me a story" on November 13. On November 20th she will help with communion.

Name Tag Board follow up—Karen L-Marshall provided a drawing of the proposed board that he could build. Marie made the motion that we move forward with the name tag board. Marshall S. will build the board, two individuals have volunteered and will maintain the board and members who lost their name tags will have to cover the cost to replace them. Kathy R. will submit an endowment grant proposal to cover the costs of the board and new member tags.

Capital Campaign Update: Sign—Tim B, Louie F, Chris M, Kathy R, Andy K-discussed at Trustee meeting. Louie has contacted the city re: the need for a special sign request. Louie and Pastor Chris will schedule a conference call with the sign company from Eau Claire. Sound—Joel L, Mike S, Jeff H, Dave R, Chris M—They did have an initial meeting. Joel will schedule another meeting.

Ministry Updates:

Christian Education—Programming is all up and running and going well. New Confirmation and Pre-Confirmation resources have been added. Interns provided a meal at Simpson Shelter. Youth Groups are dressing up for Halloween Trunk or Treat outside on Oct. 30. There has been consistent attendance at both Bible Study groups. Numerous Advent celebration activities are being planned. Marshall S. will make Advent wreaths. Jan 29th event - will do a cardboard city as a family activity. New children's board book published: "God Loves You." Copies will be available to purchase as Christmas gifts.

Deacons—AED training completed tonight at the meeting. They agree to provide training to other committees. May begin having containers of hand sanitizer on the end of each pew. Evelyn Purdy polished the Chalice for the Deacons committee

Discipleship—Prepared mailings of the pledge form for the fall campaign. They will host coffee fellowship Oct. 30. Nov. 13 is Dedication Sunday.

Mission Education—At their meeting they discussed the potential for online donations towards funding specific items. Coffee Fellowship planned for November 6th to welcome Pastor Deb. (special treats are being planned). Christmas shoebox project assistance was discussed. Obtained an endowment grant to fund food purchases for Simpson Shelter.

Music—Meeting was Oct. 1. Discussed the commissioned piece. Planning for music performances for the next year.

Personnel—The committee had their first meeting; The 2nd meeting is scheduled for Thursday. Beginning to schedule staff reviews. All reviews and recommendations will be done in November.

Trustees—Statue cleaning has been completed. There is a light out on the cross. The committee discussed the damages from the storm and the insurance coverage. The fall outdoor clean-up is scheduled. 2023 Budget work will begin. The committee revised the committee operations manual.

Pastor—Sunday Oct 30 Trunk or Treat after worship organized by the youth group. All Saints Sunday on Sunday Nov 6. 12 saints from this church. New this year will be adding everyday saints—names of those from outside the church. Wed, Nov 9—Feed My Starving Children night. 60 adults and kids going—first time since 2019. Sunday, Nov 13—Giving Thanks Meal. Sign up now!

Moderator—There is currently \$217,000 in the building fund. There is a \$283,398 balance on the loan. We will decide at some future point when to complete another paydown on the loan balance.

Next meeting is Nov 15. Respectfully Submitted, 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 women's t-shirts—sizes S, M, XL, and XXL
- Deodorant
- Shaving cream and razors
- Travel size shampoo, conditioner, body wash, and bar soap
- Towels
- Toothbrushes

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.

Sustainable Living Tip

Do you find yourself dreading another winter of cold air drafts in your home or business? Consider having a home energy audit (or assessment) done. Home energy audits can identify the parts of your home or business that use the most energy, and identify specific steps you can take to make your building more comfortable, efficient, and save you money. Audits that use a blower door test and/or an infrared camera are the most useful for identifying areas that need more air sealing or insulation. The results may surprise you! And many electric utilities offer significant discounts or reimbursements for having an audit performed. Check with your utility provider for more information.

— Brought to you by the Mission Education Committee

Do you Smile? Do You smile ?

Did you know the church has received nearly \$500 from Amazon through its Amazon Smiles charity program? It is fast, free and easy to set up. If you have an Amazon account go to smile.amazon.com and register First Congregational Church of River Falls. Then each quarter the church will receive a small portion of total amazon shopping. Start smiling 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.

Volunteer Opportunities at Among Friends

Among Friends is seeking one or two volunteers on Tuesdays to provide transportation for 2 female participants who live in Hudson. Clients could be picked up at 9:00 am from their locations in Hudson and returned home from the church to Hudson at 2:00 pm. Mileage reimbursement would be provided. Also, we need a volunteer to set up for lunch and do dishes from 11:30 am-12:30 pm. For information, call Norma at (651) 260-5725.



Among Friends

Among Friends is a community-based social respite program serving adults with memory loss who reside in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. For more information about Among Friends, 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 the last Tuesday of the month.**



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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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NOVEMBER 1, 2022



First Communion Information for Parents

When do children at First Congregational Church begin taking Communion?

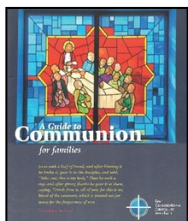
There is no uniform age at First Congregational Church when children begin participating in the Lord's Supper. Some children are pre-school age, others are in elementary school, and some wait until confirmation to begin taking Communion. The Bible and church history do not give decisive guidelines about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