



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

February 15, 2023

*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

Be Still. What do you think of when you hear these words? Be Still. *If only I could do that, I have so much to do!* Be Still. *My life is so boring, if I were any more still I'm not sure I would be alive!* Be Still. *Why should I be still when I can game, watch Netflix and hang with friends?* Be Still. *Sitting still is a waste, there is so much I need to do!* Be Still. *I'm afraid to be still, afraid of the silence, afraid of what I might hear.* Be Still.

This year, our Wednesday Lenten theme for our Prayer Around the Cross Lenten Worship is Be Still. The words are taken from Psalm 46 which begins with these words:

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in times of
trouble.*

*Therefore we will not fear,
though the world should
change, though the mountains
shake..., though its waters roar...
Come, behold the works of
the Lord... Be still, and know
that I am God... the Lord is
with us, the God of Jacob is
our refuge.*

The fact of the matter is, modern life is anything but still. The world is changing, too fast for some of us, not fast enough for others. Most, though not all of us, feel we have too much to do and too little time to get it done. Some of us feel like we have too much time on our hands and not enough direction or focus. Our Lenten theme asks us to be still and listen to God's voice which comes to us in scripture, in prayer, in eating and worshipping together. Join us each Wednesday in Lent from 6:30 to 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

In preparation for these services, please complete the survey on the sign-up table. They ask the following questions:

When I am still, I imagine...
When I am still, I understand...
When I am still, I worry...
When I am still, I remember...
When I am still, I regret...
Please respond by Ash
Wednesday, February 22.
In Gratitude, Pastor Chris



Join us again this year for Easter Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall served by our church youth.

The menu is still being determined (right now egg prices are crazy!), but we will again be serving a delicious home-made meal prepared by Chef Andy and his crew and served by our confirmands and interns. All proceeds go to our Youth Fund.

Parents of teens, please put this on your calendars, invite your friends and families to come, and look in the confirmation update about sign ups for work shifts. All confirmands and interns are expected to help set up and serve, cook and clean up. And we can also use some adult helpers! Talk to Alex to volunteer!



Ash Wednesday

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday worship on February 22 at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Just as Advent prepares us for Christmas, the season of Lent prepares us for Easter and Holy Week. The season begins with the imposition of ashes on either your forehead or hand.

Join us for the Wednesday Family Meal before (make a reservation on sign up table, online or on the church app!) and families with Middle or High Schoolers, please join us after worship in the Fellowship Hall to talk about Mission Trips, Boundary Water Trips and other trips like the Boston Trip.



Church Camps

Did you know our Wisconsin Conference UCC has an awesome, year-round camping program? There are camps in St. Germain and Green Lake that offer camping programs for young and old alike. Scholarships are available through the church Scholarship Committee. Check out our church camps at www.ucci.org.

New Members

The church will be receiving new members in late February or early March. Please contact the church office if you wish to be received into membership of the church.



Give Blood

Did you know our church regularly hosts blood drives? Join us on the following dates:

- Wednesday, May 17, from 9:00 am–3:00 pm
- Thursday, July 20, from 11:00 am–5:00 pm
- Friday, September 15, from 11:00 am–5:00 pm

You can register at www.redcrossblood.org



Boundary Waters Trip

If you are interested in a Boundary Waters trip this summer, Alex is collecting a list to begin planning! The dates we are looking at are **July 16-20, 2023**, but there may be some flexibility. We may need 4-6 adults if we need to separate into two groups.

An informational meeting will be Ash Wednesday, February 22, after the 6:30 pm service. Please sign up online.

Update: Learning Community on Christian Nationalism

Thank you to everyone who attended the Learning Community event on Christian Nationalism. 68 people came; a terrific turnout for our congregation. Taking time to consider issues at the intersection of life and faith is critically important for Christian people. If you are interested in a printed copy of the slides from the presentation or a copy of the bibliography, please contact Pastor Stacy. Many thanks to everyone who helped serve and clean-up from the dessert. Diane Welsh deserves particular mention for her help baking and coordinating everything in the kitchen. She even took home the laundry.

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 in a brief devotion, gives us a topic to discuss and we also have time to catch up. Talk to Pastor Chris, Roger Kampstra or Brad Williams for more information. Next gatherings are **February 21 and March 7 and 21**. Join us!



Preparing for Lent

On Wednesdays in Lent, March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for Prayer Around the Cross. Prayer Around the Cross is a time for fellowship, prayer, singing, and contemplation. In the midst of busy lives, it is a chance to center yourself, draw close to God, and listen. The 2023 Lenten theme is “Be Still.” To help leaders prepare, please offer your responses to the following prompts:

When I am still, I imagine...

When I am still, I understand...

When I am still, I worry...

When I am still, I remember...

When I am still, I regret...

You may give your responses on paper (forms on the sign-up table) or via email to: office@firstchurchrf.org. Your responses can be as short as one or a few words or as long as paragraphs. We hope many people will participate. While we will accept responses throughout Lent, the goal is to turn in the responses with the offering on Ash Wednesday, February 22. For questions, please contact Pastor Chris or Stacy.

Adult Bible Study

The Adult Bible Study Group meets **Wednesday afternoons, 1:00–2:30 pm**. This is an excellent opportunity to deepen your understanding of the Bible, your faith, and your connection to people in the congregation. Currently, the group is discussing *The Difficult Words of Jesus*, by Amy-Jill Levine. For more information, talk with Pastor Stacy.

Sunday Morning Text Study

Each **Sunday morning, 9:00–9:50**, people gather in the Youth Room to discuss the Sunday’s scripture texts. No one is an expert. Everyone learns. Please come.



Church Clean Up Inside

The Trustees need your help cleaning up inside the church on **Sat, Feb 18 at 9:00 am**. Cleaning supplies will be provided. Church Interns will receive double hours for helping out. Join us!

Civil Rights Pilgrimage

Our church has a history of pilgrimage trips. In addition to the bi-annual mission trip to Back Bay Mission, our youth head to Boston to learn more about both their Congregational Church heritage and our nation’s history. We also have led a Holy Land Pilgrimage to learn more about the biblical roots of our faith.

This fall we will add a new experience — A Civil Rights Pilgrimage. This 5-day pilgrimage will include stops in Atlanta, Birmingham, Selma and Montgomery. We will literally be walking in the steps of history to learn more about our country and our Christian faith. There will also be time to enjoy southern cuisine!

The trip will take place **October 25-29, 2023**. Space is limited to 14 people and an outline of the proposed itinerary is available from Pastor Chris. Act fast as spaces are going quickly.



Sat, Feb 18 to Sun, Feb 19, 7pm-10am—High School Lock-In—Theme: *Snow on the Beach*—Come in summer or beach themed clothes for an evening filled with fun activities and time spent with friends! Please sign up and invite a friend! Pack what you need for the evening (lock-in clothes/church clothes, sleeping needs, personal freshening-up items) and bring a cracker/salty item for the coffee fellowship charcuterie board.

Ash Wednesday Informational Meeting – February 22 – If you are interested in a June Mission Trip and July Boundary Waters Trip, please come to the informational meeting after the Ash Wednesday Service in the Fellowship Hall.

Summer Boundary Waters Trip with anticipated dates of July 16-20 – Ages: Recommended 7th grade and up. Please reach out to Alex at rfyouthgroup@gmail.com if you have any questions about the trip. Please sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-summer1>

Middle School Retreat to Action City – Late May – Any middle school students interested in a retreat to Action City/Waterpark in late May, please sign up here. An official date will be selected based on interested students' availability. Please sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-middle10>

Mortgage Summary—As of February 15, 2023

Original cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining Amount on Bank Loan	\$196,132.71
Interest Rate (Locked in through January 2027)	3.39%
Monthly Payment	\$2,622.76

Current Capital Campaign

Total Pledged	\$596,646.00
Total Received to Date	<u>374,569.12</u>
Remaining Balance	\$222,076.88

Our current three-year capital campaign began June 2022 and will end in May 2025. It will eliminate our bank loan, fund a new church sign and upgrades to audio visual capabilities in the church building. Thank you for your generous support of our church and its ministry!

Treasurer's Report

	Week of	
	Feb 12, 2023	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,223	\$ 67,426
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,268	\$ 71,876

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
 Education: Stacy Myers—stacy@firstchurchrf.org
 Mission: Deb Meyer—deb@firstchurchrf.org
 Office: Missy Luedtke—missy@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 Associate Conference Minister Coming to River Falls

The Rev. Michael Jones, our new Associate Conference Minister in the Wisconsin Conference, will be our guest preacher on Sunday, February 26. Originally from Ohio, Michael received a bachelor's degree in Religious Studies from Indiana University and a Master of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School.

He previously served as pastor in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Michael chaired the Chicago Metropolitan Association Church and Ministry Team for five years and worked in other Association and Illinois Conference roles as well. In his free time, Michael enjoys spending time with his family, swimming, playing the piano, singing and studying history. He is married to husband Blake and they have two young daughters. They live in Eau Claire.

The Association Minister provides guidance and support to the churches and pastors in the Northwest part of Wisconsin. Join us for worship and Coffee Fellowship on **Sunday, February 26th** as we welcome Michael to Wisconsin and River Falls!

Relay for Life

Once again our church is participating in Relay for Life and raising money for American Cancer Society. The Relay for Life event is **Friday, April 14, from 6:00 to 11:00 pm** held at the **River Falls High School**. How can you participate or help?



1. **Soup Night - Wednesday, March 8 from 5:15 to 6:15 pm.** The Relay Team is having their annual Soup Night where you can come and sample a variety of soups or enjoy just one for the Wednesday night meal. What's new this year is a piece of pie is included with your soup. The pie is being provided by Joy Seekers, a new committee inviting people to have a chance to form new friendships, join an activity at church, or share time with shut-ins. Cost of the meal is a donation or the recommended \$8/person and \$5/child or a minimum of \$30/family.
2. Join the **Relay for Life Team**.
3. Help provide an item/idea for the Relay for Life's **Silent Auction**.
4. Purchase a **Luminary Bag** "in Honor of" or "in Memory of" a special person. They will be available at Soup Night, on Sundays prior to, and at the Relay for Life event.
5. **Participate at the Relay Life Event** by enjoying a **Spaghetti Supper from 6:00- 7:30 pm** or **walking around the track**. This year's event has shortened the hours to 6:00 to 11:00 pm.
6. On March 6, join the **Survivor Reunion** which includes a meal.

Stay tuned for more information in the upcoming weeks. Have questions, want to participate, or join the team, please contact Deb Hoffman at debhoffman234b@gmail.com or phone 612-308-4945.



Joy Seekers Event

Let's Bake Pie! - Tuesday, March 7, 5:00 pm

Join us as we make pie crust from scratch. Pies will be baked and served March 8 at the Wednesday meal. A light supper will be offered. No cost, but please sign up on the table or online:

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



Wednesday Night Family Meals

Wednesday Night Family Meals are back! Starting on Ash Wednesday, February 22 and continuing through March, join us for a delicious homemade meal in the Fellowship Hall each Wednesday night. We serve from 5:15 to 6:00 pm. You can eat in the Fellowship Hall or reserve a takeout meal and go through the line to take your meal(s) home with you.

Join us also for Ash Wednesday Worship at 6:30 pm and after that for the brief 30-minute Prayer Around the Cross Lenten Worship Services in the Fellowship Hall from 6:30 to 7:00 pm.

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

Ash Wednesday, February 22 - Lasagna and chicken alfredo, salad, garlic toast

March 1 - Bruschetta chicken over pasta, asparagus salad, garlic toast

March 8 - Relay for Life Soup Supper

March 15 - Corned beef and cabbage, red potatoes and carrots OR Swedish meatballs, parsley potatoes, veggies and rolls

March 22 - Parmesan chicken over rice, salad, croissant

March 29 - Boneless BBQ ribs, mac and cheese, potatoes, veggies, rolls

April 5 - Holy Week - No meals

What the Pastor Is Reading

How To Beat Procrastination in the Digital Age by Dr Linda Sapadin

This is a great, practical book for any who have struggled with procrastination. Not all procrastinators are the same. She carefully examines six different kinds of procrastination: Perfectionist, Dreamer, Worrier, Crisis-Maker, Defier, and Pleaser. The best part is she offers advice and help overcoming each of these tendencies.

The Good Life: Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness by Robert Waldinger and Marc Schulz

This is another great, practical book that looks at how people can create a more meaningful and satisfying life. Analyzing data from the longest clinical study in human history, they have concluded the most powerful influence on whether people live long and fulfilled lives is this: relationships.

Solito: A Memoir by Javier Zamora

We all know immigration is an important issue facing us right now. This is the autobiographic story of a 9 year old El Salvadoran on his journey through Central America to the US. It is not easy to read and solutions to the immigration problem are not easy. And yet our Christian faith teaches us Jesus himself was a refugee fleeing from Herod to Egypt. An important book to read.

Being The Church In A Post-Pandemic World by Katy Kotan

Written by a United Methodist Bishop this is a helpful book to help church leaders as they navigate through this strange post Covid world.

Note: Many of these books are available to borrow from the church office.

Chancel Choir and Bell Choir Recruitment

Have a little bit of a musical itch and thinking about wanting to sing in the choir or play bells. Here's your chance, the Music Committee and choirs are reaching out to the congregation and their friends to let you know the Bell and Chancel Choirs are looking for new members.

We understand you are busy and cannot participate all the time, but the choirs are open for you to try out with the only requirement of you participating in practices prior to the related Sunday's performance.

The practice schedule is: Wednesdays the Bell Choir practices from 6:00-7:00 pm and Vocal/Chancel Choir practices from 7:00-8:15 pm. Both choirs also practice an hour before worship on the Sunday they perform. Please consider joining in the fun! We look forward to welcoming you. For more information contact: Bell Choir—Jamie Mills: degolierjamie@gmail.com or Chancel Choir—Sarah Plum: sarah.e.plum95@gmail.com.



Hope for Creation Book Study

Hope for Creation invites you to a community book study of *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature* by J. Drew Lanham. The author is a poet, wildlife biologist and 2022 recipient of a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship. "In me, there is the red of miry clay, the brown of spring floods, the gold of ripening tobacco. I am, in the deepest sense, colored." From these fertile soils—of love, land, identity, family, and race—emerges *The Home Place*, an unforgettable memoir. The book study meets three Tuesdays: February 21, 28 and March 7, 6:30-7:30 pm via Zoom. An 'in-person' discussion hosted by Journey House will also be held at UWRF.

Please sign up for details by sending an email to hope4creationRF@gmail.com by February 17. Each participant is responsible for securing their own copy of the book. Consider supporting a local business by purchasing the book from Fox Den Books (117 S. Main, River Falls).

AAUW Honors Ann Gustafson

At its January 21 meeting, the River Falls Association of University Women (AAUW) honored Ann Gustafson for her more than 50 years of leadership and service at the local, state and national levels.

Ann served as president of the River Falls branch, president of the state association and sat on many national boards and committees. Ann was instrumental in establishing the Legacy Circle throughout the upper midwest region to support the continuation of the research and advocacy initiatives of AAUW.



UCC and Wisconsin Roots for Underground Railroad

One of the most astonishing stories in US history is that of the Underground Railroad, that quiet network of people stretching from the deep South to the Upper Midwest and New England, aiding escaping slaves in their treacherous, dangerous quest for freedom. Over four decades some 100,000 people traveled hundreds of miles along the abolitionist network that weaved through safe shelters in private homes, churches, river caves, barns and outbuildings and into Canada.

One of the northernmost Underground Railroad stops was Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Green Bay. In 1855 a family of escaped slaves was sheltered in the church's belfry after their pursuers found them protected by a local indigenous community. The family stayed at the church until a steamer arrived to transport them safely to Canada. Founded in 1836 as First Presbyterian Church, the deeply abolitionist congregation included among its early membership an enslaved woman. In 1899 the church became Union Congregational, and has since been recognized by the National Network to Freedom, one of over 700 sites nationwide comprising the Underground Railroad. Today the congregation continues its historic commitments to racial justice.

The courage and bravery of those who traveled the Underground Railroad is remarkable and hard to fathom in our time, as is the commitment and faithfulness of those who sheltered them on their dangerous journey to freedom. Their long-ago stories are notable benchmarks for those of us in this century, seeking to be faithful to the call of our holy texts to justice. For Green Bay's Union Congregational UCC and for all those who created, sustained, and traveled the Underground Railroad, we give deep thanks.

Cardboard City Fun



People in the Pews: Carol Merriman

1. Where did you grow up/hometown? River Falls
2. Where do you live now? River Falls
3. How long have you been attending First Congregational Church? All my life.
4. What keeps you coming back to church at First Congregational? People, pastors, mission work, community involvement.
5. What is your favorite Bible passage, quote, or hymn? Not sure I have a favorite, like a lot of different ones for different reasons.
6. What is your favorite childhood memory? Attending church with my grandparents. My grandpa used to count the people that came.
7. What is your favorite hobby or pastime? Spending time with my great granddaughter.
8. Tell us something about you or your family that may surprise us. There are six generations of mine that have attended and belonged to this church.



Hope 4 Creation Wins 2022 Non-Profit Award

Hope 4 Creation was affirmed February 2 as the 2022 Non-Profit of the Year by the River Falls Chamber of Commerce at Kilkarney. H4C grew out of the 2-part discussion (and dinner, of course!) between about 40 First Congregational Church's and St. Bridget Church's members of the Pope's encyclical on Climate Change and Poverty, initiated by our own Rev. Dave Ostendorf and Father Jerry. Although both Rev. Dave and Father Jerry have moved on, their leadership helped make the on-going ecumenical success of H4C possible. Here's what the Chamber said in their Facebook page about why they salute the vibrant organization:



Hope for Creation - River Falls works to create a hopeful, sustainable future through interfaith collaboration, education, and advocacy. This group accomplished a lot in 2022, including:

- ♦ Launching Sustainability Pledge Campaign, supported and signed by community leaders including UWRF, CVTC, City of River Falls, and the River Falls School District
- ♦ Hosting Sustainability Speaker Series
- ♦ Co-sponsoring "Powered by Electric"
- ♦ 2nd Annual Community Read - Hope Jahren's *The Story of More*
- ♦ Launching Earth Fest, a showcase for sustainability in the River Falls community!

River Falls is lucky to have a non-profit devoted to sustainability in our community - thank you for your hard work! Kudos to H4C!

Be sure to attend the Second Annual Earth Fest Celebration on April 22 at Glen Park, and look for our own Mission Education-staffed First Congregational table.

CHURCH COUNCIL SUMMARY JANUARY 17, 2023

Treasurer's Report: Missy reported that the accounts ended the year with a positive balance of 223.43. All bills were paid in full, all missions were paid in full. During the Trustees meeting, there were questions about the figures for payroll. Most positions were paid less than budgeted. Missy verified that Jamie works in two positions and was paid in full. There were positions that were not fully staffed for the whole year. Missy also reports there have been continued issues with some miscoding done by the bookkeeping firm.

New Business:

Reports and Accounting: Missy and Chris report that some work on budget and account was easier when it was completed with-in the office. The Among Friends Board has acquired a volunteer to assist them with their budgeting and tracking of grants. The bookkeeper has been doing a good job on the payroll but not on the reports and accounts. Difficult to find someone who is qualified and knows QuickBooks. The position is very part-time and difficult. (discussion to be continued).

2023 Budget: Louie - trustees did not get through the budget so it is not approved at this time. They scheduled another meeting for next Tuesday to give Louie additional time to obtain more information on specific accounts. Council discussion occurred that according to the congregation bylaws the approved budget must be provided to the congregation 2 weeks prior to the annual meeting. After full Council discussion: a Motion was made to pass a tentative 2023 budget pending the review of the full trustees committee. (Passed by Council.)

2022 Annual Meeting—Joel and Kathy – Agenda - reviewed and approved. Food: Decision made to serve cheese and meat trays, fresh fruit and council members to provide pans of bars. Presentations: Presenters identified for following committee presentations: CE, Deacons, Discipleship, EG, Mission, Music, Trustees, Welcoming, PTB, Music and Welcoming.

Old Business:

WCUC and Bay Mission Capital Campaign Request Follow Up—Discussion on fine tuning presentation at annual meeting for a total of \$20,000 for both campaigns. We have ¼ already seeded in the funds.

Capital Campaign Update—Sign - Tim B, Louie F, Chris M, Kathy R, Andy K - No updates. Sound - Joel L, Mike S, Jeff H, Dave R, Chris M - Meeting to be scheduled.

Roof Update - Roofers are currently working on the addition. Sanctuary work may not be completed until spring. Ice dams are a concern there so that will also be worked on at that point.

Church Van Update – Detailing-work is occurring at this time.

Ministry Updates

Christian Education-Annual meeting-Stacy will present. Ideas for goals were discussed. Programming is going well. Cardboard City is January 28th.

Deacons-Inquirers class will take place next week. One goal for the committee is an Emergency Preparedness plan. They identified that it is very slippery in the entrance area. New rugs for that area have been ordered here next week for both main entrances. During the discussion about entrance safety, there was a suggestion and discussion about having an intern and or/welcoming/trustees to assist elderly members out on the sidewalk. They are purchasing new candles for the altar and cleaning old wax.

Discipleship-Contacting members for 'people in the pews.'

Mission Education-Earth Fest plan for a table with spiritual resource materials, Lisa Hart (from Conference) will provide a presentation next month on WISE at 5 pm for dinner. Asking Council members to attend. Mission Moments will begin next week, Giving Tree for Our Neighbor's Place for Lent.

Music-Working on finding a date for the spring concert. RF Days kickoff event, fall events are being planned. Organ was tuned.

Trustees-Lawn tractor was repaired. There is discussion to consider a capital campaign fund to purchase a new one as they are approximately \$15,00-\$20,000. Feb 18th-winter clean-up day is scheduled with back up day of Feb 25th.

Welcoming Ministry-Joy Seekers are supported. New member introductions and support ideas. Gift bag supply lists getting copied.

Pastor - Jack Merner, former pastor, died in December at 102 years old. The congregation sent a condolence card. The 4 pm Christmas Eve service was very full (200+ attendees), small number at 11 pm and normal number of attendees for Christmas Day service. The Reverse Advent Calendar program with 25 days of food for the Food Pantry provided about 1500 pounds of food. Great idea from Larry Peterson and the Mission Committee. Wednesday night meals are on pause until Ash Wednesday. The Back Bay trip will be small this year. 12 will be attending rather than the usual 24 because it conflicts with the school band trip. The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday Feb 5. Each committee provides two to three minutes of highlights/goals in 2022. Reminder to the Council: members responsible to serve and clean up after the meal. Organizing an Emergency Plan group-2 Deacons, 2 Trustees, 1 pastor, 1 EMT/fire person from the congregation. Purchased 2 hearing devices for people to try. Devising a method to better report the Building Fund amounts. The Total Mission giving for 2022: \$145,325 +Advent food+shoe boxes+Angels on Earth. Thanks extended to outgoing Moderator Joel Larsen.

Submitted by Jo Anne Friedell, Church Clerk

NEXT MEETING: Feb 21: Marie Roe will serve as clerk for the February Council meeting.

*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.



SIMPSON
HOUSING SERVICES

Simpson Shelter News

40 years ago Simpson Homeless Shelter opened in Minneapolis when Simpson Methodist Church noticed people sleeping in their church doorways. Since then, Simpson Shelter has expanded. Today, they have taken ownership of the old Simpson Church. After recent fundraising efforts, the shelter is temporarily moving to a different location while the old church building is demolished and a new shelter and apartment complex is built. The new shelter will have 70 shelter beds, 42 low cost apartments, an onsite clinic and social worker and a commercial kitchen to serve meals. The Simpson Shelter is one of our church mission partners. Several members of the church have acted as overnight hosts and we annually provide meals for guests. We also contribute financially to the Shelter. Please pray for their guests and staff as they navigate this transition.



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 **March 13**.

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.



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, contact them at 715-293-2651. Also, check out the website: amongfriendsrf.com and the Facebook page. Among Friends is located at the church and is held on **Tuesdays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**.



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'

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.



FIRST
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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
Deb Meyer, Minister for Community and Outreach
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

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PERMIT #53

RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FEBRUARY 15, 2023

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 & one person is needed at the ramp entrance. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to worship. 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.