

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

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

November 1, 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

What does this church do? Lots!  
Here is a partial list of the  
ministries, groups, outreach and  
mission activities your giving  
empowers:

- \* Men's Group
- \* Widows Group
- \* Among Friends
- \* Confirmation
- \* Pre-Confirmation
- \* Church Interns
- \* Choir
- \* Bell Choir
- \* Brass Group
- \* Yoga
- \* Among Friends
- \* Green Team
- \* WISE
- \* Wednesday Meals
- \* Church Video and Livestream

- \* Newsletter and Weekly Word
- \* Our Church's Wider Mission
- \* RF Food Pantry and 4 other local missions
- \* Caregivers
- \* Sunday and Wednesday Bible Study
- \* Sunday School
- \* Wednesday School
- \* Giving Thanks Meal
- \* College Packs
- \* Easter Breakfast
- \* Christmas Luncheon
- \* School Supply Drive
- \* Diaper Drive
- \* Advent Workshop
- \* Good Friday Cantata
- \* Summer Musical
- \* Christmas Musical
- \* Boston Trip
- \* Hospital and Home Visitation
- \* Back Bay Mission Trips
- \* River Falls Day Concert
- \* College Scholarships
- \* Learning Community
- \* Sunday Worship
- \* Advent Evening Prayer
- \* Lenten Prayer Around the Cross
- \* Vacation Bible School
- \* Feed My Starving Children
- \* Simpson Shelter
- \* Funeral Lunches
- \* Bibles to 6th Graders
- \* Memorial Garden
- \* Servant of Christ Aprons to 7th Graders

- \* Green Team
- \* Garden Geeks
- \* All Saints Sunday Roses
- \* Wellhaven Gatherings
- \* Blood Drives
- \* Inquirer's Class
- \* Coffee Fellowship

Thank you for your generosity.  
Our ministry here at First  
Congregational is possible  
because of the faithful support  
of people like you. As we prepare  
to welcome new families into our  
church membership, and as we  
look ahead to celebrate on our  
annual Giving Thanks Sunday  
on November 12th, we recognize  
that even with the faithful giving  
of so many people, our church is  
currently \$30,000 behind in its  
expected giving. We ask you to:

- If possible, please catch up with your pledged giving.
- If you have not given a gift this year, please do so.
- If you are able, please give an additional gift.
- If you make a one-time gift, please do so now.

We know the current economic environment is challenging for many so we appreciate your faithful giving that empowers the many ministries of our church. God bless you all and may God continue to bless our church and its many ministries.

In Gratitude, Pastor Chris,  
Moderator Kathy Rausch and  
Vice Moderator Marie Roe



## All Saints Sunday

On Sunday, November 5, we will celebrate All Saints Sunday, the day we remember the 'saints' of this church who have died and yet in faith live in God's holy Kingdom. Each year our faith encourages us to remember the earthly lives of those who have gone before us and to reflect on how they lived their lives faithfully. On All Saints Sunday we remember those who have died in the past year and give white roses to their families. Join us as we remember and celebrate their lives.

### Sunday Morning Text Study

The Text Study group meets at **9:00-9:50** Sunday mornings to discuss the Bible texts for the day's worship. Please come! For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

### Adult Bible Study

Adult Bible Study meets **Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 pm** and is reading and studying Genesis, the first book of the Bible. It is a highly engaged group with excellent discussions. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.



### Let's Feed Hungry Kids!

Join us on **Monday, November 6** as we take the church van and carpool up to Feed My Starving Children in Eagan to feed hungry kids. We will leave church on Monday at 10:30 am, work from 11:30 am to 1:15 pm packing meals, then go out for a late lunch before we head home. We have thirty spots reserved and there are both standing and sitting jobs you can do during the work shift.

Lunch is optional. Use the sign-up sheet and let us know if you are joining for lunch, riding in the van or driving yourselves. See Barb Peterson or Pastor Chris for details.

### Christmas Luncheon

You are invited to attend a Christmas Luncheon on **Tuesday, December 12, 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! The cost is \$10.00 per person. Please make a reservation by signing up at church, online, or call the church office. Please let the office know if you need a ride.



### Volunteers Needed for the Christmas Luncheon

Please volunteer to help with preparations for the Christmas luncheon. We need:

- Cooks for Monday, December 11.
- Volunteers to iron the tablecloths on December 11.
- Volunteers to serve and clean up on December 12.
- Bakers to make Christmas cookies.

To volunteer, please sign the list on the sign-up table or contact Pastor Stacy.

### Children's Advent Musical

Sunday School children in pre-school through grade 5 will begin rehearsing the 2023 Advent Musical on November 12 during Sunday School. The dress rehearsal will be on Saturday, December 16, 10:00-12:00 noon for children in grades 1-5.

The musical will be presented during worship on Sunday, December 17.

### The Advent Workshop

The 2023 Advent Workshop for families will be in the Fellowship Hall following Sunday School on **December 3**, the First Sunday in Advent. The event includes a chance to make a variety of Christmas ornaments.

If you have friends or neighbors considering participation in a church family, invite them to join you! Please sign up at church or online.



## Family Meals Continue Through December

Each Wednesday night, we serve family style meals in the church Fellowship Hall from **5:15 to 6:00 pm**. Whether you are coming from Wednesday School or going to confirmation, youth group, choir or bells; whether you are eating as a large family or don't want to eat alone; whether you are young or old, all are invited to join us to eat.

Cost is \$9 with a family maximum of \$30. Sign up by Tuesday at noon for Wednesday's meal using the sign-up sheet at church or on the website. We also need helpers to serve and clean up. Here is our fall menu:

Nov 1 - Boneless BBQ ribs, mac & cheese, butter & parsley potatoes, vegetable, and roll

Nov 8 - Taco Bar (FMSC Night)

Nov 15 - Parmesan crusted chicken over rice pilaf, salad, and croissant

Nov 22 - No Meal - Thanksgiving

Nov 29 - Bruschetta chicken over pasta, asparagus salad and garlic toast

Dec 6 - BBQ ribs, mac & cheese, potatoes, veggies, and roll

Dec 13 - Baked pork chop, garlic mashed potatoes, red cabbage and cooked apples, and bread

Dec 20 - Meatloaf, baked potato, vegetable, and bread

Dec 27 - Jan 3 - Off for Christmas and New Years

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## 2024 Pledges to be Dedicated - Giving Thanks Sunday, November 12

All church families were recently sent the 2024 pledge cards in the mail. Your financial gifts power our church ministry. We ask that every church family complete a financial pledge and bring them to church on or before Giving Thanks Sunday, November 12 when they will be dedicated. We ask three things of our families:

- If you don't pledge, please start pledging this year
- If you do pledge, increase your pledge, even slightly, as a way of growing in generosity
- If you do not use electronic giving, sign up! It is fast, easy and you will never have to write a check again.

Thank you for your financial support of the many ministries of First Congregational Church.

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## January 26-27 for 6th-9th Graders

Due to popular demand, we are planning a winter retreat January 26 to 27 for our current youth in 6th through 9th grade! Here are the details for the trip.

**Metropolis Resort** - We will stay at the Metropolis Resort in Eau Claire, WI. We will stay as a group in a Bunk House which includes ten queen bunk beds, two bathrooms, a table with seating for twelve, and a full size refrigerator and a sink! Located right off the Metropolis water park.

**Chaos Water Park!** - Chaos water park is located inside the Metropolis resort! We will have the opportunity to attend and enjoy all of the attractions.

**Passes to Action City!** - Action City is located inside the Metropolis resort. Passes include access to...

- Indoor go-kart track (the largest track in the Midwest)
- Laser tag course/laser maze vault room,
- A massive arcade (over 150 video arcade, redemption games, and racers)
- Trampoline park (one of the largest in MN and WI)

If you are interested, please sign up with Alex at [rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com). Once we have a strong group signed up, we will make the reservations and plan around the group's interests!

We will travel as a group after school on Friday and return Saturday evening after a full day of fun! You are welcome to bring a friend depending on the group size! Male and female parents/chaperones are requested to help balance the needs of the trip. Pricing will be determined soon, but will be reduced for church members with the youth fund.

## Endowment Grants

Each quarter the Endowment Grant Committee meets to evaluate proposals for new ministries and projects submitted through our church committees. Does your group have a new idea you want to pursue? Is there a need in the church or community your group wants to address? Consider applying for an Endowment Grant! All proposals must come from a committee and the last date for submission is: **December 10**. Forms can be accessed through the church office or on the church website under ‘connect’ then ‘forms’ tabs.

### Second Holy Land Tour

In 2019, 24 people from church participated in a Holy Land Tour to visit important places in our Christian faith like Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Galilee. We also learned about the cultural and political struggle between Jews and Palestinians and how the three great religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam literally converge in Jerusalem.

*Given the current situation in the Middle East, there is a great uncertainty about when this trip might happen but we are tentatively planning for a trip in either October 2024 or April 2025.*

Please use the sign-up sheet to indicate your interest and time frame. Space is limited to 25 people.

### Join the “Adopt a Street Drain” Team

You can help keep our waters clean this fall. The leaves are tumbling and some will end up along your street curb. You can help keep our street drains free of leaf debris by sweeping or raking along the curb on your block and clearing debris from the street drain. The key is to keep the street drain open. All kinds of litter and pollution can end up in the street drain and you can help keep the Kinnickinnic free from that litter.

Please don’t rake the leaves into the street for collection either. And while you are outside talk to your neighbors about helping with the project. The drains are on city property so you can clean up around them even though they may not be in front of your home.

The UCC Green Team thanks you.

### Current Capital Campaign

Total Pledged	\$596,646.00
Total Received to Date	<u>444,776.61</u>
Remaining Balance	\$151,869.39

### Mortgage Summary—As of Nov 1, 2023

Original Cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining Amount on Bank Loan	\$101,229.38
Interest Rate (Locked in through January 2027)	3.39%
Monthly Payment	\$2,622.76

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 the audio visual capabilities in the church building. Thanks to your generosity and faithful, upfront giving for the current Capital Campaign, we were able to make a \$75,000 payment on the principal last month. Thank you!

### Treasurer’s Report

	Week of	
	<u>Oct 22, 2023</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 13,186	\$ 394,825
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,268	\$ 441,524

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)  
Education: Stacy Myers—[stacy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:stacy@firstchurchrf.org)  
Mission: Deb Meyer—[deb@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:deb@firstchurchrf.org)  
Office: Missy Luedtke—[missy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:missy@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)

## Christmas Shoebox

We are fast approaching our drive for items and cash donations for Christmas Shoebox items for the gentlemen at Kinnic Falls Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services. The items we collect are so very much appreciated by them. (If you want to read the thank you notes from the past couple of years just ask to see them, we'd be more than happy to show you). We just wanted you to be thinking of this project and when you are out and about and see the items listed, you can grab a couple and before we know it, our list will be complete. If you would rather donate cash, just designate it for the Christmas Shoebox and we will make sure all items are purchased. Thanks to all of YOU, we are making a difference. The Christmas Shoebox list is on the gathering table. Blessings, Jean Smith and Marie Roe



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## Reverse Advent Calendars

The Reverse Advent Calendars will be back during the month of December! Grocery bags with a list of suggested daily donations will be available by December 1st. Let's work together to exceed the 1500 lbs of groceries we donated to the Food Pantry last year! Contact Larry Peterson at 715-377-5007 or Sally Steneman at 651-208-4128 for more details.

## Financial Support for Art Commissions

Many thanks to Eunice Filkins, Suzanne Hagen, and Jan Hansen for their generous financial gifts toward two new Picture the Bible images, *Manna and Quail in the Wilderness* and *Jesus' Anointing at Bethany*. These images will be excellent additions to the Picture the Bible collection.

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## First Church Companions

A small group of church members are working to invigorate our visits to church community members. We call ourselves "First Church Companions." The "**Companions**" will meet quarterly to support each other, help new Companions learn about this role, and discuss questions or concerns. If you are willing to visit with someone in our church community and connect at least once a month with a call or visit, please sign-up at the Gathering Table.

If you are interested in receiving regular visits or recommending someone who might appreciate visits, there is also a line on for "**Buddies.**" Contact Pastor Deb or Lu Lueck with questions.

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## New Members to be Received

On our Giving Thanks Sunday, November 12, during the 10:00 am worship service, we will be receiving new members into our life and ministry. Please be sure you contact the church office before Wednesday, November 8, to make sure all the documents have been submitted.



## Let's Knit (or Sew, or Quilt, or...) Together

Calling all who knit, crochet or have a craft that can be brought to church or want to learn. Join us on **Thursdays at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall**. We will have a great time sharing our current projects, learn about *Knit a Difference and Crochet, Too!* and enjoy each other's company. If you want to learn, we will show you how we knit or crochet.

Any questions, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or [firstroe@gmail.com](mailto:firstroe@gmail.com).





## New Hymnals

The Music Committee would like to purchase new hymnals for our congregation. We have selected a hymnal that more closely matches the music we sing during worship services. We already have pledges for 100, but we need an additional 125 copies to serve the congregation at peak times of year. Each hymnal costs \$15 and we are looking for donors. If you would like to dedicate a hymnal to a special person, we will insert a label inside the front cover in honor of that person. Please sign-up at the Gathering Table and provide your name, number of copies, and the name of the person/s you wish to honor.

## Upcoming Events

Sunday, November 5	All Saints Sunday
Monday, November 6	FMSC Trip and Lunch For All
Wednesday, November 8	All Youth Trip to FMSC
Sunday, November 12	Giving Thanks Sunday and Meal
Sunday, December 3	Advent Workshop
Wednesdays, Dec 6, 13 & 20	Advent Evening Prayer
Tuesday, December 12	Christmas Luncheon with RFHS Carolers
Sunday, December 17	Children's Christmas Program

## Night in Norway

For those who could not attend the presentation, but would like the information, the PowerPoint presentation Pastor Chris shared is available on the church website on the homepage.

## Coming in January: Cooking Class with Peter Kwong

He is back! After a long break due to Covid and health issues, local cook Peter Kwong will be back to help lead us in two Chinese Cooking classes. Dates will be Tuesdays, January 23 and 30, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm in the church kitchen. Sign-ups will be in December. Class is limited to 15 people and will cost about \$25 per person and must be paid ahead of time. A full menu of the class will follow.

## “WISE” Corner

*Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaging*  
for Mental Health and Wellness

*I face challenges with strength, and each challenge increases my ability to persevere.*  
*Romans 5:3*

### Lion's Breath

Lion's breath is a yoga breathing (or *pranayama*) exercise. It is helpful for anyone looking for a breathing exercise to calm themselves. Sit in either a chair or on the floor, with your hands on your knees or flat on the floor.

- Spread your fingers wide and inhale through your nose.
- Open your mouth and stick out your tongue. Stretch it down to your chin.
- Do a big exhale, pushing the air across your tongue and making a “ha” sound from the depths of your abdomen.
- Take a short break by breathing normally before starting again.
- Repeat the cycle several times to see the benefits.

## SERVE generously

### Simpson Shelter Needs

Urgent supply needs for June:

- Men's T-shirts—all sizes
- Men's boxers—all sizes
- Men's short socks
- Women's white crew socks
- Personal size body wash
- Flip flops/shower shoes

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

### 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.

### Empty Pill Bottles (Prescription Only)

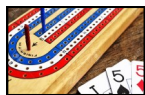
The Lions pill bottle collection has been put on hold for a month because the organization that ships the bottles to Africa doesn't have funds to ship them all. The program will resume in October but only for the clear prescription bottles that are filled by our pharmacists.

Thank you so much for making this program the success it is. If you have questions, please contact Carole Mottaz.



### Fall Clean-Up, Sat, Nov 4, 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 Sat, Nov 11. Please sign up and join us!



### Cribbage Night

The cribbage group meets on the second Monday at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 and the group decides which charity to donate to. Playing time starts at 7:00 pm. All players and abilities welcome. The next game will be November 13.

### Men's Group

Our church men's group meets every other Tuesday from 9:00–10:00 am in the Youth Room. All men are welcome to join us for coffee, donuts and lively conversation.

We gather for an hour and Pastor Chris leads us into a brief discussion that for the next few weeks will focus on the 9 fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control).

Our next gatherings are November 7 and 21. Join us!

### Church Yoga

The 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'



### 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 715-293-2561. Also, check out the website: [amongfriendsrf.com](http://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.



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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  
Deb Meyer, Minister for Community and Outreach  
Missy Luedtke, Office Administrator  
Kathy Rausch, 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)

## 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

NOVEMBER 1, 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.

## Newsletter Deadlines

The church newsletter is sent out twice a month. Deadlines are the 10th and 25th of each month. Items should be sent to the church office no later than those dates.