

Weekly Word – For Sunday, July 21, 2024

Worship this Week:

This Sunday our summer choir will again meet and grace us in worship. Like to sing? Join us at 8:30 am to rehearse an easy anthem as the summer choir helps lead us in worship at the summer 9:30 am worship service. Our gospel lesson this Sunday is the story of the Feeding of the 500 from Mark's gospel in which Jesus has compassion on his people. It shows us the power of compassion in our world yet today. This Sunday we also begin our collection of school supplies for the Tools For School program in late August. Join us for a fun, music-filled Sunday!

(PS. Our next summer choir Sunday will Sunday, August 25th.)

Link to Worship Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/qXcsj8lAO2c?si=d1cXAYuqDqMwMWwC>

Sunday Bulletin

This Week

Sun., July 21	8:30-9:15 am	Summer Choir Rehearsal
	9:30-10:30 am	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream
	10:30-11:00 am	Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:00-11:30 am	WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM
Tues., July 23	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	12:00-1:00 pm	Women's Group
Wed., July 24	6:30-7:30 pm	VBS Volunteer Meeting
Thurs., July 25	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	10:00-11:00 am	Knitting Group
Sun., July 28	9:30-10:30 am	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream
	10:30-11:00 am	Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:00-11:30 am	WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM

Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:

Preacher:	Chris Myers
Celebrant:	Chris Myers
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Rebecca Ferguson
Deacons:	Karen Lloyd, Cindy Gandrud, Lance Lueck, Traci Hagberg, Marshall Skule
Organist:	Marsha Pearson
Live Stream:	Jeff Hoffman
Trustee:	Jeff Hoffman
Coffee Fellowship:	Laura and Mark Anderson
Welcomers:	Norma Revels, Bobbie Kuhn
Counters:	Diane Welsh, Marie Roe

Altar flowers are given in celebration of Glenn and Jan Hansen's 40th wedding anniversary.

Loving God

Damascus Project: Our Wisconsin Conference sponsors an online learning community called the Damascus Project with a wide variety of options to grow in faith and living. Their website is: www.the-damascus-project.org. And upcoming topics include a class on UCC History and Polity as well as Theology and Ecology. Check it out!

Loving Neighbor

Tools for School: Once again this year we will be collecting school supplies for local families. As you are out shopping, please start collecting everything students might need this fall (crayons, pens, pencils, notebooks, backpacks, etc). The School Supply Event will be **August 19 and 20** here at church. Typically we serve about 300 students. Thank you for your generous support of this needed local ministry. Please bring donations and place them in the containers in the gathering area. Please also sign up to help sort and distribute items.

Save The Date! Feed My Starving Children is coming to River Falls! Thanks to a wonderful partnership of churches, individuals and businesses, including First Congregational Church, please mark your calendars for **Wednesday and Thursday, September 11 and 12**, when our community will pack 100,000 meals at Tattersall. Sign-ups will begin the end of July. Thank you to our Endowment Grant Team who granted \$3,000 to help pay for the \$30,000 cost of packing these meals. Exciting!

Thrivent Free Money: Do you have a retirement account through Thrivent? If so, you can designate some or all of your 'choice dollars' to a non-profit such as First Congregational Church. We are now set up to receive such gifts. Talk to the church office if you need more information.

Scarves, Mittens, Hats: Join our knitting group by making scarves, mittens and/or hats for school-age children. We are supporting Basics for Local Kids in providing needed items in Pierce and St. Croix counties. You can make them at home from yarn, fleece or wool or **join us Thursdays in the Fellowship Hall starting at 10:00 am.** If you have any questions, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or firstroe@gmail.com

First Church Companions: The Companions meet quarterly to support each other, help new Companions learn about this role, & 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. If you are interested in receiving regular visits, there is also a line on the same sign-up sheet for Buddies. Contact Pastor Deb with questions.

Among Friends is a community-based social respite program serving adults who have memory loss who reside in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. For more information, contact them at (715) 293-2561. Check out the website: amongfriendsrf.com and Facebook page. It is held at the church on **Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am to 3pm.**

Loving Self

Peaches: It's time to place your order for the delicious Washington State Peaches! 1 single-layer box is \$24.00; 2 or more single-layer boxes are \$23.00 each. **Orders must be placed by July 29 for pick up the 2nd or 3rd week of August.** There are 3 ways to order: 1. Email: office@firstchurchrf.org; 2. Sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-50272518-washington>; 3. Call: 715-425-2052 – Mon-Thurs from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm or leave a message with name, phone, and number of boxes. This is an annual fundraiser for our youth. Thank you for your support!

Game Day Sunday will be **July 21** following Coffee Fellowship. Please sign up.

Summer Choir: The Chancel Choir will be performing two more Sundays this summer: **July 21 and August 25!** If you're interested in a low-stakes singing opportunity, please join us! This is your chance to sing without committing to the year's schedule. We rehearse one hour before the service! All are welcome!

Softball News: Come cheer us on! Our next games are July 22 at 6:30 pm vs. Abundant Life and July 29 at 7:45 pm vs. First Covenant at Hoffman Park. If you have questions, contact Sarah Plum at (715) 418-9393 or Deb Hoffman at (612) 308-4945.

VBS Volunteer Meeting: The VBS volunteer meeting will be **Wed, July 24, 6:30–7:30 pm.** This is the most important chance to prepare for the week. Please plan to attend.

VBS Volunteers: Thanks to everyone who has volunteered to help with VBS 2024. We do still need a large number of additional adult and teen workers. VBS will be July 29–August 1, 9:00–11:30 am. To volunteer, please sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-47864154-vbsvolunteers>

Sunday School Teachers Needed: Sunday School begins again on **September 8**. Please volunteer to teach. All classes are team-taught and no one teaches every week. Please sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-50177972-sunday>

Mortgage Burning: You read that right. We are burning the church bank mortgage! Join us on **Sun, Sept 15** when, after worship, we will gather out on the church lawn to creatively burn our church mortgage leaving us bank debt free! More details to follow.

Women's Group: Interested in fellowship & community with other women? Pastor Deb invites you to join her at noon every 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month. Please bring a sack lunch. The next meetings will be **July 23 and August 13 & 27**.

Let's Knit Together: Calling all who knit, crochet, or have a craft that can be brought to church. Join us on **Thursdays at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall**. We have a great time sharing our current projects and enjoying each other's company. Any questions, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or firstroe@gmail.com

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.

WISE Corner: NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group is held **Thursdays at 6:30 pm at the River Falls Public Library**. For more information, call Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

Youth Events

Day Trip to the Cities for Grades 6-12: Alex is planning a fun-filled day in the Twin Cities visiting various locations based on group interest! You are welcome to invite a friend or two as we will travel in style in our church van. The final group itinerary will be determined based on group interest. Dates will be determined based on group availability. Please fill out the Day Trip to the City Interest form or email/text Alex at rfyouthgroup@gmail.com or 612-224-5894. [Day Trip to the City - Interest Form](#)

Late Summer Youth Retreat for Grades 6-12: Alex is planning a retreat to the Metropolis Resort and Action City! Our goal is to find two days between July 26-Aug 10 where we can stay in a [Bunk House](#) located right off the Metropolis water park. [Action city](#) is located inside the Metropolis resort. Passes include access to the indoor go-kart track, laser tag course, arcade, and the trampoline park. Once we have a strong group signed up, we will make reservations and plan around the group's interests! You are welcome to invite a friend! Male and female parents/chaperones are requested. Pricing will be determined soon but will be reduced for church members with the youth fund. Please fill out the Interest form or email/text Alex at rfyouthgroup@gmail.com or 612-224-5894. [Late Summer Youth Retreat - Interest Form](#)

Vacation Bible School: Children age 3 through completed grade 5 are invited to Vacation Bible School. The theme is *Christian Art: Stop, Look, Listen* and will feature Bible study, children's literature, Christian art and architecture, music, and an engaging variety of art projects from painting to felting. VBS is free and open to all community children. Registration forms are online or at church. Dates are **July 29–August 1, 9:00–11:30 am**.

Summer Children's Musical: Children who have completed grades 1-6 are invited to produce the musical *Rescue in the Night: The Story of Daniel in the Lions' Den*. Rehearsals include singing, learning lines, and working on the set and props. After four days of a whirlwind of rehearsals, the show will be presented on Thursday evening. The musical is directed by elementary music teacher Emma Cruciani and will be a fun week. All are welcome and there is no charge. Registration forms are online or at church. Dates are **August 19-22, 9:00 am–Noon for Rehearsals and August 22, 6:30 for Dinner and the Show**.

Fall Confirmation Orientation: The 2024 Confirmation Kick-Off will be **Wed, Sept 11, 6:30–7:30 pm**. This meeting is **required** for all confirmands (in grades 7–9) and parents.

Sign Ups

Coffee Fellowship Hosts Needed: Please sign up to help host and serve. Everything you need is provided, you just need to get there a little early to get things ready, serve and do a quick clean up. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-coffee>

Liturgists Needed: Please sign up to be a Sunday liturgist. You will lead us in the Call to Worship and a Scripture text. The bulletin will be sent via email to you on Thursday. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-liturgist>

Welcomers Needed: Please sign up to be a welcomer on Sunday morning before the worship service. One person is needed at the bottom of the stairs & one person is needed at the ramp entrance. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to the service. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-welcomers>

Altar Table Flowers: Please sign up to provide flowers for the altar for Sunday worship. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-altar>

Church App: The church has a mobile phone app. You can download it from the church website or by scanning the QR Code found on a flyer on the sign-up table and Facebook.



Offering QR Code

1. On your mobile device, open your Camera app or QR Code app
2. Point your camera at the QR Code
3. Click the tab 'Give Online'

Finances

THANK YOU to all of you for your support of the mission and ministry of our church through your tithes, offerings, and gifts. Your generosity empowers our church! Please be sure to sign up for e-giving or mail/drop off your gifts. There is also an option to give online via our church website.

Treasurer's Report

	<u>July 14, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 8,864	\$ 302,388
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 292,964

A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

Mortgage Summary – As of July 15, 2024

Original Cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining Amount on Bank Loan	\$0

(Reminder: Still need to pay for sound/audio upgrade and new church sign!)

Current Capital Campaign

Total Pledged	\$596,646.00
Total Received to Date	<u>537,279.23</u>
Remaining Balance	\$ 59,366.77

A Debt Paid! We did it! Thirteen years after we embarked on an ambitious 2.5 million dollar expansion and renovation of our church facility, we just paid off our bank mortgage! Thank you, thank you, thank you for your generous giving which enabled this to happen. Please also remember the Building Campaign continues because now that the bank debt is paid, we still need to pay for an upgraded sound/video system and a new church sign.

The campaign runs through May 31, 2025, and we look forward to having enough money to complete these last two projects. We are also planning a mortgage burning party in the fall. And once again, thank you!

People

- For the 111 patients who will receive blood thanks to the recent blood drive at our church, bless you!
- For local families benefiting from the diaper drive sponsored by our Mission Team as a way to honor our parents, together we contributed over 7000 diapers!
- For Joyce and Roger Kampstra who celebrated their 60th anniversary July 11, may your love continue to grow!
- For Glenn and Jan Hansen as they celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary, may you celebrate heartily!
- For Bonnie and Dick Jones Witthuhn who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Saturday, August 10th, may God continue to grace with you gratitude and grace
- For Ruth Anne White as she celebrated her 94th birthday on July 13th, congratulations!

Do you have upcoming news or celebrations to share with the congregation? Graduations? Birthdays and Anniversary celebrations? Please email them to office@firstchurchrf.org by Wednesday of each week to be included in the Weekly Word which is sent out on Thursdays.

Prayer: Prayer connects us with God and our neighbors. Each week in the bulletin there is a prayer list of people, situations and thanksgivings that is also sent out by email to help people in their prayer life. You can sign up by contacting the office at office@firstchurchrf.org

Church Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday – 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

Friday – Closed

Church Staff Contact:

Church Office - 715-425-2052

Pastor: Chris Myers - chris@firstchurchrf.org

Minister for Community and Outreach: Deb Meyer – deb@firstchurchrf.org

Education: Stacy Johnson Myers - stacy@firstchurchrf.org

Youth: Alex Plum – rfyouthgroup@gmail.com

Office/Finance: Missy Luedtke - missy@firstchurchrf.org

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