

Weekly Word – For Sunday, January 18, 2026

Worship this Week:

Sometimes Jesus gives us good advice. Sometimes Jesus gives us a good command (love your neighbor). And sometimes Jesus asks a good question. This Sunday Jesus asks each of us a good question: What are you looking for? How would you answer? Join us at the 10:00 am worship service as the Bell Choir provides special music, Sunday School meets and communion is celebrated.

Link to Worship Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/snVEOq1K2sY?si=JbzKjo3W8VBL8RU5>

Sunday Bulletin

This Week

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--|
| Sun., Jan 18 | 9:00-9:45 am | Bells Rehearsal in the Sanctuary |
| | 9:00-9:45 am | Sunday Morning Text Study in the Youth Room |
| | 9:45-11:15 am | Nursery Open |
| | 10:00-11:00 am | Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream |
| | 10:30-11:15 am | Sunday School (Pre-School – Grade 8) |
| | 11:00-11:30 am | Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall |
| | 11:00-11:30 am | WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM |
| | 11:45 am | Game Day |
| Tues., Jan 20 | 9:00-10:00 am | Yoga |
| | 9:00-10:00 am | Men's Group |
| | 9:00 am-3:00 pm | Among Friends |
| | 6:30-7:30 pm | Boards and Committees Meetings |
| | 7:30-8:30 pm | Church Council Meeting |
| Wed., Jan 21 | 1:00-2:30 pm | Merry Widows Lunch at Table on Main in River Falls |
| | 1:00-2:30 pm | Adult Bible Study |
| | 3:45-5:15 pm | Wednesday School |
| | 6:30-7:30 pm | MS Class |
| | 6:30-7:30 pm | HS Youth Group |
| | 6:00-7:00 pm | Bells |
| | 7:00-8:00 pm | Chancel Choir |
| | | |
| Thurs., Jan 22 | 9:00-10:00 am | Yoga |
| | 9:00 am-3:00 pm | Among Friends |
| | 10:00-11:00 am | Knitting Group |
| Sun., Jan 25 | 9:00-9:45 am | Music Rehearsal in the Sanctuary |
| | 9:00-9:45 am | Sunday Morning Text Study in the Youth Room |
| | 9:45-11:15 am | Nursery Open |
| | 10:00-11:00 am | Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream |
| | 10:30-11:15 am | Sunday School (Pre-School – Grade 8) |
| | 11:00-11:30 am | Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall |
| | 11:00-11:30 am | WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM |

Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:

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| Preacher: | Chris Myers |
| Celebrant: | Chris Myers |
| Cantor: | David Reilly |
| Liturgist: | Alan Tuchtenhagen |
| Deacons: | Paul Shepherd, Liz Swank, Lance Lueck, Becky Pajac, Kathy Tomlinson |
| Organist: | Terry Mithun |
| Nursery: | Kahla Fuller |

Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers: Susan Hagen
Trustee: Vicki Sippel
Coffee Fellowship: The Luedtke Family
Counters: Trish Graves, Dennis Linder

Loving God

Sunday Morning Bible Study: Please join us on Sunday mornings to discuss the Bible passages used in worship. The group meets from **9:00–9:50** in the Youth Room. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study: The Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study group is discussing Matthew Skinner's *Acts: Catching Up with the Spirit*. Copies of the book are available in the church office for \$16.00 each. The group meets in the library on **Wednesdays, 1:00–2:30 pm**. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

Upcoming: Ash Wednesday and Evening Lenten Worship: Ash Wednesday worship will be on Wednesday, February 18, 6:30–7:30 pm in the sanctuary. Throughout Lent, we will gather together on Wednesday evenings for simple Prayer Around the Cross services. Wednesday Evening Worship will be on Wednesdays February 25, March 4, 11, 18 and 25. Please plan to attend!

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

Basics for Local Kids: A big thank you to everyone who has donated items. Your support keeps us going. The next few months will be busy times at BLK and volunteers are needed. You can help families shop or you can help sort, restock or organize winter wear. Shifts are usually 2 hours and new days and times are available. To sign up for a day and time that works for you, go to <https://www.basicsforlocalkids.org/> or call Kim at 715-821-1623. Contact Renee Whipple at 715-307-5074 if you have any questions.

Empty Pill Bottles (Prescription Only): The River Falls Lions Club is collecting empty pill bottles, only the clear prescription bottles that are filled by our pharmacists, 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 tub is in the gathering area. If you have questions, contact Carole Mottaz.

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.

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**.

Among Friends Volunteers Needed: The program meets two days a week and has 12 active guests. Training is provided & the rewards are phenomenal! They are particularly in need of male volunteers but are willing to receive all. Contact then at amongfriendsrf@gmail.com

Loving Self

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, Jan 21 at 1:00 pm at Table on Main in River Falls**. All widows are welcome to join us for dinner and conversation! See Linda Morrow for more information.

Game Day Sunday: Game Day Sunday is held on the third Sunday of the month. Our next Game Day is **Jan 18 with a new time of 11:45 am.** Join us!

Creative Prayer Flow—Thurs, Feb 19, 6:30-8:00 pm: The workshop will be lead by Carrie Windett MA, ATR-BC, LPCC, Be Still Art + Healing, LLC. In this workshop, you'll explore Sensorimotor Art Therapy's guided drawing's three resourcing movements before moving into a time of watercolor play; an invitation for joy and connection. The experience will conclude with reflections on Christ-centered truths and witnessing others. No artistic experience is required - just open hands and a willing heart to try. The group will meet in the youth room. Please sign up and join us.

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. Our next gatherings are **Tues, Jan 20 & Feb 3.** Join us!

Women's Group: Interested in fellowship & community with other women? You are invited to join the group at noon every 2nd & 4th Tuesday. Please bring a lunch. The next meetings will be **Tues, Jan 27 & Feb 10.**

Let's Knit/Craft Together: Join us on **Thursdays at 10:00 am.** We meet at **The Sycamore on the first Thursday of each month and in the Fellowship Hall the other Thursdays.** 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 meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 6:30 pm at 113 East Elm St (Mei Mei's) and the Peer Support Group meets the same evenings at First Congregational Church at 6:30 pm. Our church WISE Team meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm. For more info, call Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

Community Life

Pizza Party: Until our full Wednesday Night Family Meals resume on Ash Wednesday, February 18th, we will hold a Pizza Party on Wednesday Night from 5:15 to 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. This week our pizza will come from Steve's Pizza here in River Falls. Salad, fruit and drinks will also be served. When you sign up, suggest pizza toppings and we will do our best to accommodate them. Normal pricing of \$9 per person with a family max of \$30. Join us!

Jan 21: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-61670642-wednesday>

Church Clean Up Inside: The Trustees need your help cleaning up inside the church on **Sat, Jan 31 at 9:00 am.** Cleaning supplies will be provided. Church Interns will receive double hours for helping out. Please sign up.

Annual Meeting: The Annual Meeting of the congregation will be **Sunday, February 1** in the Fellowship Hall starting at about 11:15 am. In addition to receiving reports, passing budgets and electing officers, we will also hear ministry updates from many of our teams and committees. Please sign up and join us!
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-61402176-annual>

Tiny Home Summit: Please Come! Every night in River Falls, there are people who experience homelessness. You are invited to join seven River Falls churches (including First Congregational) in cooperation with Our Neighbors' Place to learn about a project to build Tiny Homes to help lessen homelessness in our community. Pastor Chris will be a presenter. Please come! The Tiny Home Summit will be **Thurs, Jan 29 at 6:00 pm** at Luther Memorial Church in River Falls. Go to the Facebook page for more information:
<https://www.facebook.com/share/17wJu6tCtk/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Radical Imagination for Climate Hopeful Futures – Thurs, Jan 29, 6:30-8:00 pm: This presentation will feature Lil Milagro Henriquez, Founder and Executive Director of the Mycelium Youth Network, as she shares how we can build climate-resilient, hopeful futures grounded in scientific truth. This event is part of the Sustainability Speakers Series. The presentation is virtual only so Hope for Earth is planning a Watch Party to bring people together! You can watch the presentation live through the River Falls Public Library Facebook and YouTube pages, or you can join Hope for Earth for the in-person watch party at Junior's Restaurant with free appetizers and beverage ticket. RSVP for in-person watch party required at <https://forms.gle/7AmLCVboDEpB2jL9A>. Please see the flyer for more information.

Name Tags: We encourage you to wear your name tags so that everyone can call you by name. It would also help the deacons when you take communion. If you do not have one, please let Missy in the church office know at missy@firstchurchrf.org. In appreciation, the Welcoming Committee.

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>Dec 31, 2025</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| General Fund Income | \$ 557,322.26 |
| General Fund Expenses | \$ 549,379.68 |
| 2025 Net Income | \$ 7,942.58 |
| | <u>Jan 11, 2026</u> |
| General Fund Income* | \$ 40,096.22 |

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

A new budget will be approved at the Feb 1 Annual Meeting.

People

- For heads of our church teams and committees compiling their 2025 presentations for the 2025 Annual Meeting on February 1, may you deftly and joyfully summarize your accomplishments
- For our Trustees and their helpers cleaning the church on Saturday, Jan 31, thank you!
- For our mid-winter experiment of Pizza and Salad for our Wednesday Night Meals—let's eat together
- For our church secretary Missy Luedtke compiling the Annual Report and keeping us all on track, bless you
- For 10 years of generating clean solar energy with our church solar panels, thanks be to God!

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 – 8:30 am to 12:00 pm

Church Staff Contact:

Church Office - 715-425-2052

Pastor: Chris Myers - chris@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

Building: Troy Zakrzewski – ztruck51ford@gmail.com

Maintenance: Tim Bylander - timthefixitguy@gmail.com