

Weekly Word – For Sunday, August 23, 2026

Worship this Week:

This Sunday Jesus asks a question to his disciples - who do you say that I am? It is a question all of us have to answer as people of faith. Who is Jesus to us? Is he just a wise man with good advice or something more? Who is this God we seek to follow today. Join us at the 9:30 am summer worship as Emma Cruciani, who helped lead our summer Youth Musical, provides special music. Coffee Fellowship follows afterward. The church nursery is open and staffed. Join us and invite a friend to join you!

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

Sunday Bulletin

This Week

Sun., Aug 23	9:15-10:45 am	Nursery Open
	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 & 1550 AM
Tues., Aug 25	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	12:00-1:00 pm	Women's Group
	6:30-7:30 pm	Harp Concert
Thurs., Aug 27	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	10:00-11:00 am	Knitting Group
Sun., Aug 30	9:15-10:45 am	Nursery Open
	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 & 1550 AM

Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:

Preacher:	Chris Myers
Celebrant:	Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Rebecca Ferguson
Deacons:	Paul Shepherd, Brodie Lueck, Liz Swank, Kathy Thomlinson, Fallon Lueck
Organist:	Marsha Pearson
Nursery:	Diane Olson
Live Stream:	Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers:	Norma Revels, Jo Anne Friedell
Trustee:	Tim Bylander
Coffee Fellowship:	Morrison Family
Counters:	Marie Roe, Allen Barnes

Altar table flowers are given by Mike and Suzie Danielson in memory of Linda Huppert (sister of Mike).

Loving God

Sunday School Teachers Needed: First Congregational uses a shared teaching model, so a team of three teachers shares responsibilities for an individual class. All curriculum and materials are provided, and teachers teach approximately once every three weeks. For more information, please contact Pastor Stacy. To volunteer, please sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-64860664-sunday>

Sunday School Teachers' Meeting: Sunday School teachers are asked to attend a teachers' meeting on **Thursday, September 10, 6:30 pm**. This meeting is a chance to get organized for the new Sunday School year. The meeting will conclude by 7:30 pm.

Rally Day: Sunday School, Sunday Morning Bible Study, choir and bells resume, resume on Rally Day, **September 13**. All children who are three years old (and toilet-trained) are welcome in Sunday School. Previously registered students do not need to register again. New students should register. Registration forms are available at church or online: <https://firstchurchrf.org/pages/sign-up-sheets>

Sunday Morning Bible Study: Sunday morning Bible study group resumes on Rally Day, **September 13**. The group discuss the Bible passages used in worship. The group meets at **9:00–9:50** Sunday mornings in the Youth Room. Please join us! For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study: The Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study will resume on **Wed, Sept 16, 1:00-2:30**. The group will study Revelation. Copies of the discussion book are available in the office for \$20.00 each. The fall is a terrific time to being participating in Bible Study. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Wednesday School Workers Needed: Wednesday School begins on October 7. We need volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis and adult and teen volunteers to help with the children. Please sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-65117201-wednesday>

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

Summer Nursery Volunteers Needed: During the summer months our church nursery is staffed by volunteers while our weekly, faithful nursery worker Kahla Fuller enjoys some time off. Please sign up for a Sunday to staff the nursery at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-64011296-summer>

Back Bay Mission Trip Planned for April 2027: Ever wanted to go on a mission trip? Heard about the awesome experiences so many of our church folks have had at UCC related Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi? Just want to get out of town to someplace warm? Join us! Our church is sponsoring yet another trip to Back Bay Mission, **April 18-24, 2027**. A meeting will be held in early September. Please contact Carol Merriman or Pastor Chris for details. Use the sign-up sheet to register your interest.

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 them at amongfriendsrf@gmail.com

Among Friends Board Members Needed: They need board members. They meet on the second Monday of each month at 4:00 pm. Please see Norma Revels for details.

Journey House (Ecumenical young adult outreach, located at 143 E Cascade Ave) is getting ready for the new school year! If you're interested in contributing, here are some ideas:

- **A Welcome to School Care Kit and Goody Bag.** We are asking for a donation of \$25. These will be handed out during the Involvement Fair & given to students throughout the months of September & October.
- **A suggested donation of \$30 to help sponsor our weekly gathering, Journey Nights.** The school changed their funding model for groups (less money for us to use) on top of everything being more expensive. Those who give \$30 or more will receive their own Journey Night passport as a thank you gift. (The passport gives students a fun way to engage more with our Journey Night conversation.)
- **Amazon Wish List.** We created and plan on keeping up with an [Amazon Wish List](#).

First Church Companions: Are you interested in being a companion to someone in our church connecting with them at least once a month with a call or visit? Or would you like to have someone for a companion. Please use the sign-up sheet to be a companion or request someone to visit you.

Grace Place Donations: Needed items: New adult undergarments (underwear up to size XXL), new bras, new or like-new sweatpants up to size 4X, new or like-new T-shirts up to size 4X, new shoes (adult men and female), belts, adult socks, good buys. There is a bin at church for donations.

Empty Pill Bottles (Prescription Only): The River Falls Lions Club is collecting empty pill bottles, only the 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.**

Loving Self

Harp Concert: Experience the calming, soothing effect of live therapeutic music. You are invited to a free concert by Certified Therapeutic Musician Kristin Andes and her harp on **Tues, Aug 25, from 6:30-7:30 pm.** Join us! Presented by the WISE Team

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, Sept 1 & 15.** 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, Aug 25 & Sept 8.**

Game Day Sunday: Game Day is held on the third Sunday of the month. Our next Game Day is **Sept 20 at 11:45 am.** Join us!

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, Aug 19 at 1:00 pm at Tattersall in River Falls.** All widows are welcome to join us for dinner and conversation! See Linda Morrow for more information.

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 Street (Mei Mei's) and the Peer Support Group meets the same evenings at First Congregational Church at 6:30 pm. For mental health issues, please call 988. For more info, call Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

Community Life

Committee Needs Update: Thank you to all that said *YES!!* when asked to serve. **We are still in need of 2 Deacons and 1 person for the Christian Ed Committee.** Please consider giving of your time to help our church in any of these openings. The term begins in September 2026 and runs for three years.

Softball News: Monday was our first playoff game and we WON!! Yeah! Way to go team! Our next game is Monday, August 24 at 6:15 pm. The winner of that game goes to the championship game at 7:30 pm. We are planning on a long night of softball. August 24th will also be a fun night for all teams with a picnic and having one field at 7:30 pm available for a fun game for kids of all ages while the other field has the championship game. Come join us for the playoffs and the picnic. We will have enough food for all. All activities are at the softball fields at Hoffman Park. Any questions, contact Deb Hoffman at debhoffman234b@gmail.com.

Side by Side Choir - Discover the Joy of Singing Together!

Who: People living with memory or thinking changes, their care partners, family, friends, and community volunteers who enjoy helping others.

What: A welcoming choir where people gather to connect and thrive by sharing music, joy, and laughter!

When: Join us weekly on **Mondays at 10:00 am** for our fall season of music and engagement. **Rehearsals start on September 14, 2026**, and will conclude following our concert on Saturday, December 5 at 10:30 am.

Where: We meet here at the First Congregational Church, a comfortable and easy-to-access location.

To learn more or sign-up contact: Norma Revels at 651-416-9530 or sidebysidechoir@gmail.com

Red Cross Blood Drive: The next Red Cross Blood Drive held at the church is on **Monday, September 28, from 11:00 am–5:00 pm**. See the flyer for more info. Call 1-800-733-2767 or go to www.redcrossblood.org and enter: firstcongregationalrf to schedule an appointment.

Endowment Grants: Each quarter the Endowment Grant Committee meets to evaluate proposals for new ministries and projects submitted through our church committees. Consider applying for an Endowment Grant! All proposals must come from a committee, and the next due dates are **October 4 and December 6**. Forms can be accessed through the church office or on the church website.

Learning Communities for the Fall:

Tues, Oct 13 at 6:30 pm: A Night in the National Parks! - Ever wanted to visit three of our most famous national parks: Tetons, Yellowstone and Glacier? Planning a trip there for next summer? Join Pastor Chris as he leads us on a quick 90-minute tour of three of our nation's most outstanding national parks. He will talk about both the beauty and grandeur of the parks as well as practical logistical things - where to stay, what to do and most important, how far out to plan and book! Join us for a night in our National Parks!

Tues, Nov 10: The Churches of River Falls - River Falls has lots of churches, but do you know their history. Join us as River Falls native and historian Mark Anderson tells us some of the stories behind the churches of River Falls, including our own.

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.

Youth Events

Fall Confirmation Orientation: The Confirmation Orientation for grades 6–8 will be on Rally Day following worship on Sunday, Sept 13. This meeting is ***required*** for all confirmands and their parents. The Orientation for High School Confirmands (grade 9) and Church Interns will be following Sunday, Sept 20. This meeting is ***required*** for all confirmands and their parents. ***Please reserve the dates and time now to avoid conflicts.***

Wednesday School: All children who will be in kindergarten through Grade 5 in the fall are invited to participate in Wednesday School. Elementary students in River Falls are picked up at the four elementary schools in town at the end of the school day. Wednesday School concludes at 5:15. Registration and permission forms are available on the website and at church. It is important to have advance registration in order to be adequately prepared for students, particularly due to transportation needs. Wednesday School begins **October 7**. Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

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>Aug 16, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 3,616	\$ 368,342
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 373,164

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

People

- For the gift of the Pierce County Fair and Minnesota State Fair, let the good times (and food!) roll!
- For Bobbie Kuhn who celebrates her 80th birthday on Thursday, August 27, may you enjoy many more!
- For our Garden Geeks who tend our church garden and our Lawn Mowing Team who keep everything looking great, God bless you all!
- For the \$3136 raised from peaches that will go to our Youth Fund, thank you!
- For the gift of summer, may we savor every last bit of it
- For those who will give blood at our next blood drive on Monday, September 28, may it bring life

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

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