

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ
River Falls, Wisconsin
September 20, 2026**



A GROWING FAITH NEEDS
Heart, Head & Hands

WHAT WE TRUST. WHAT WE BELIEVE. HOW WE LIVE.

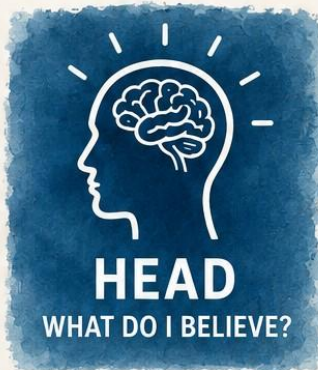


SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 13



Heart:

A Faith
You Can Feel



SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 20



Head:

A Faith That
Changes Your Mind



SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 27



Hands:

A Faith
You Can See



**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**
— RIVER FALLS —

Our mission is to *love God* and *serve others*.
Everyone is welcome because everyone matters.

www.firstchurchrf.org

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN**

September 20, 2026

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am

Gathering

"Faith is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted
in spite of your changing moods."

- C.S. Lewis

"Some things have to be believed to be seen."

- Ralph Hodgson

Welcome to our guests who are visiting with us today! - Activity bags are available for children. - Large print bulletins are available. - Visitors please stop at the welcome booth. - Please stand when noted by the * - Congregation responses are in bold. - Please note our worship service is livestreamed.	Our Mission is to Love God and Serve People. Everyone is Welcome Because Everyone Matters.
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GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We come to this place seeking something.

P: **But even more important, we come as people who are sought by God.**

L: Let us enter this time of worship with thankful hearts and open minds.

P: **Let us ask God to send the Holy Spirit among us giving us strength, courage and wisdom.**

L: Let us pray that we may have the mind of Christ.

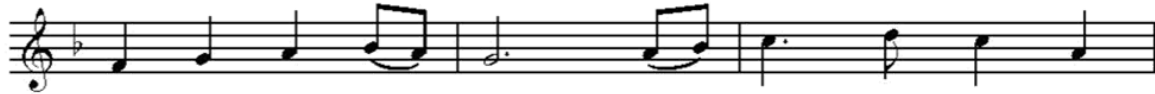
P: **And let us remember our call to be the body of Christ at work in the world today.**

All: **Come let us worship the God who leads us into life!**

All Are Welcome



1. Let us build a house where love can dwell And
 2. Let us build a house where proph - ets speak, And
 3. Let us build a house where love is found In
 4. Let us build a house where hands will reach Be -
 5. Let us build a house where all are named, Their



all can safe - ly live, A place where saints and
 words are strong and true, Where all God's chil - dren
 wa - ter, wine and wheat: A ban - quet hall on
 yond the wood and stone To heal and strength - en,
 songs and vi - sions heard And loved and treas - ured,



chil - dren tell How hearts learn to for -
 dare to seek To dream God's reign a -
 ho - ly ground, Where peace and jus - tice
 serve and teach, And live the Word they've
 taught and claimed As words with - in the



give. Built of hopes and dreams and vi - sions,
 new. Here the cross shall stand as wit - ness
 meet. Here the love of God, through Je - sus,
 known. Here the out - cast and the stran - ger
 Word. Built of tears and cries and laugh - ter,



Rock of faith and vault of grace; Here the
 And as sym - bol of God's grace; Here as
 Is re - vealed in time and space; As we
 Bear the im - age of God's face; Let us
 Prayers of faith and songs of grace, Let this



love of Christ shall end di - vi - sions:
 one we claim the faith of Je - sus:
 share in Christ the feast that frees us: All are wel - come,
 bring an end to fear and dan - ger:
 house pro - claim from floor to raft - er:



all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Generous God, **we confess that we often see the world through the narrow lens of what seems fair to us. We compare ourselves with others, keep track of who deserves what, and resent grace when it is given too freely. Forgive our small thinking and guarded hearts. Open our minds to your surprising ways, and teach us to rejoice when the lost are found, including ourselves. Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Hear the good news: God does not give us what we have earned.

P: **In Jesus Christ God's grace is offered freely.**

L: God's grace is wider than we imagine.

P: **And stronger than we thought possible.**

L: In Christ we are forgiven and set free.

P: **Thanks be to God!**

L: May the peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: **And also with you.**

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

***GLORIA (Sung twice)**

Amen

(Led by the Choir)

Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen

Hearing the Word

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Jonah 3:10-4:11

PSALM 105:1-7 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

R Sing praise to God who has shaped and sustains all creation.

L: O give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name, make known God's deeds among the peoples.

P: **Sing to God, sing praises; tell of all God's wonderful works.**

L: Glorify God's holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

P: **Seek the LORD and God's strength; seek God's presence continually.**

L: Remember the wonderful works God has done, the miracles, and the judgements God has uttered, O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, God's chosen ones.

P: **God is the LORD our God; God's judgements are in all the earth. R**

Celebrating the Meal

All Christians are welcome at the Lord's table. The bread is gluten-free. The cup is alcohol-free.
Those choosing not to commune may receive a blessing from the servers.

The Invitation to the Meal

- L: Come people of God, let us sing!
P: **Let us sing for we are God's people and God has done wonderful things.**
L: Let us come into God's presence with joy and thanksgiving.
P: **Let us come into God's presence and let God feed us on the Bread of Life and the Cup of Blessing. Come Holy Spirit, come!**

The Great Thanksgiving

- L: The Lord be with you.
P: **And also with you.**
L: Lift up your hearts.
P: **We lift them up to the Lord.**
L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
P: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
L: It is right and good always and everywhere to give thanks...

The Words of Institution

- L: We praise your name as we proclaim the mystery of faith...
All: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

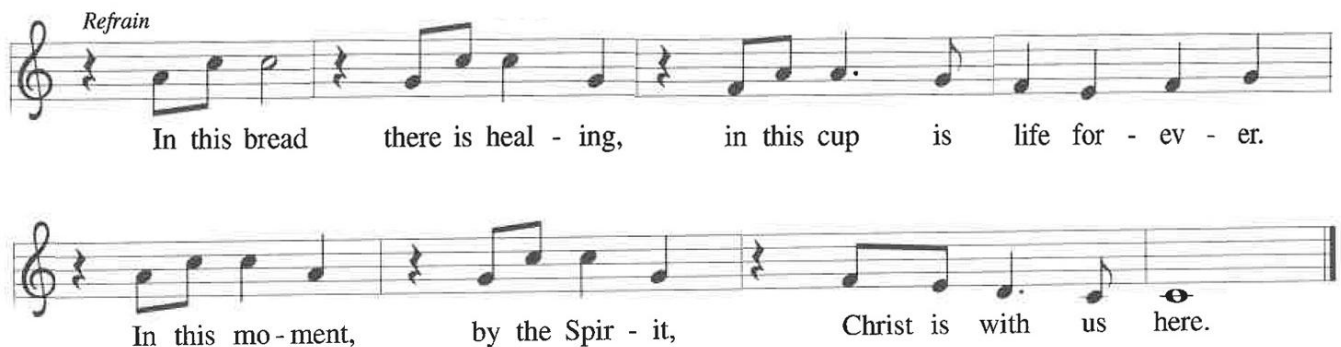
Prayer of Consecration

Distribution of the Elements

Hymns during the distribution of the elements:

Here Is Bread

Congregation join on refrain:



Taste and See

Congregation join on refrain:

***Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.
O taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.***

Be Not Afraid

Blue #430

Congregation join on refrain:

Refrain

Be not a - fraid. I go be - fore you al - ways. Come, fol - low

me, and I will give you rest.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: We give you thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Proclaiming the Word

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Chris Myers

SONG (Children preschool through grade 8 leave for Sunday School.)

I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river.

I've got peace like a river in my soul.

I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river.

I've got peace like a river in my soul.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 20:1-16

SERMON

Rev. Chris Myers

***HYMN**

I Sing the Almighty Power of God

Blue #31

***STATEMENT OF FAITH** – from the Iona Ecumenical Community in Scotland

L: Let us affirm our faith.

P: We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of the One God, maker and sustainer of earth, sea and sky. Born of Mary, faithful to the God of Abraham and Sarah, Jesus healed the sick, served the poor, and proclaimed heaven on earth. Condemned by the religious, crucified by the state, He died but transformed even death and rose to life everlasting. He blessed the disciples with his Holy Spirit and sent them forth, east and west, north and south. We commit ourselves to Jesus, to one another as brothers and sisters and to the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors)

Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**

...Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

MISSION MOMENT – Michelle Jensen – Journey House Campus Ministry

GATHERING OUR GIFTS – Chancel Choir

Surely The Presence

Arr. by Jack Schrader



(Directions at
end of bulletin)

***OFFERTORY**

We Give Thee But Thine Own

***We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone a trust, O Lord, from thee.***

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Generous God, all that we have is a gift of your grace. Receive these offerings and open our minds to see how they may become good news: providing enough for those in need, welcoming those left waiting, and building a more just world. Bless these gifts and we who offer them. Amen.

Sending

***HYMN**

You Are Salt for the Earth

Black #181

***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

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Side by Side Choir

This past Monday, the Side by Side Choir began bringing together people in the community and those with dementia to sing. Thank you church for helping to sponsor this program.



SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Chris Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Jill Paulson
Deacons: Heidi Cavaness, Paul Shepherd,
Liz Swank, Kathy Tomlinson
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Trustee: Scott Nelson
Welcomers: Lu Lueck, Deb Hoffman
Coffee
Fellowship: Interview Team
Counters: Marie Roe, Wendy Querna

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Christopher Myers
Education Pastor: Stacy Johnson Myers
Youth Minister: Alex Plum
Music Coordinator &
Bell Director: Jamie Mills
Choir Director: Sarah Plum
Organists: Terry Mithun,
Marsha Pearson
Building Manager: Timothy Bylander
Church Moderator: Marie Roe
Office Administrator: Missy Luedtke
Nursery Attendant: Kahla Fuller
Custodians: Farnum Fuller,
Troy Zakrzewski

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Sept 13, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 2,607	\$ 413,488
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 418,396

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.



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'

River Falls Feed
My Starving
Children Event
2026

139,968 meals
packed.
Thank you!



Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

Those who are ill or recovering:

Eric (friend of Liz Swank), Steve and Janice Withers (father and mother of Erik Withers), Sam Morrisette, Nathaniel (friend of the Kruegers), Bruce (father of Melissa Oscanyan), Ryan Cottrell (friend of the Koechers), Diana (friend of Janice Healy), Greg (friend of Ron Ruhnke), Nolan, Kelly (sister-in-law of Cindy Gandrud), Jill (daughter of JoAnn Mathews), Connie Pajac (sister of Jeff Pajac), Dave Woeste, Laurie (sister of Becky Pajac), Joan Hyland, Samantha Church (granddaughter of Duane Church), Eunice Filkins, Linda Morrow

Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:

- For our new church leaders as the program year begins, our Moderator Marie Roe and Vice Moderator Louie Filkins, for our Church Council and all new committee members, may we better live into our mission statement to love God and serve others, everybody is welcome because everybody matters
- For our 15 Sunday School teacher and for Chris, Stacy and Alex who lead confirmation, church interns and youth group, may we all have a fun and faith-filled year
- For the Tools for School program which recently provided over 350 River Falls kids school supplies, may this help them and their families have a great school year
- For our summer youth musical "The Rock Slinger," the story of David and Goliath which 16 of our kids presented recently, what amazing things you can do in a week with some help, thank you!
- For our 2026 VBS program 'Peace Be With You' which ran recently with over 50 kids, what a great week!
- For all those who bought, unloaded and ate peaches as part of our youth fundraiser, enjoy them!
- For our church softball team as they played their final game of the season, thanks for a fun-filled year!

Prayers for our world:

- For those affected by recent tornadoes in Appleton, Neenah and Menasha, and for those in our church who contributed \$5000 to help them rebuild, with the help of good neighbors may they recover quickly
- For those struggling to afford basic necessities - food, rent, childcare, healthcare - that God would provide for them through caring communities, compassionate assistance, meaningful work, and generous hearts
- For those in our armed forces and their families, may we support them and may God watch over them
- For farmers, especially small family farms, struggling to stay viable with so many economic challenges
- For stability and peace in Sudan, Iran, Gaza and Ukraine
- For our Among Friends program as they seek more board members (see Norma Revels or Marshall Skule for details), and may their program continue to grow and provide support to families with dementia

Prayers of thanksgiving:

- For Hallah Jensen (daughter of Michelle & Neal) and Andrew Cariveau, and Glory Etzel and Nathan Lawrence (son of Linn and Tim Lawrence) who were recently married, may they continue to grow in love
- For the Side by Side Choir which began practicing in our Fellowship Hall this past week connecting community members and those with dementia through the gift of music and song, may their joy grow
- For the 139,968 meals packed at the Feed My Starving Children event held here in River Falls recently, may it bring life and hope to those who receive this food and to us
- For the Rev. Bob Wang who began as new our Minister for Community and Outreach and whom we welcome during Coffee Fellowship this Sunday, may he use his many gifts and help us become a more loving, generous and welcoming community
- For Darlene Sumption who celebrates her 100th birthday in September, you are an inspiration!
- For the gift of our Sunday School teachers, you are God's workers in our midst, thank you
- As the mowing season slowly comes to end, we thank this year's church Mowing Team (Mark and Laura Anderson, Roger Kapping, Lee Lueck and Randy Welsh) for all their hard and hot work this past summer!
- For our Garden Geeks who tend our church garden and keep everything looking great, God bless you all!
- For our Youth Fund which received \$3136 from those wonderful peaches we all enjoyed
- For those who will give blood at our next blood drive on Monday, September 28, may it bring life

For those grieving the loss of loved ones:

- For the family of Jeff Healy (brother of Steve Healy) who died recently, may he join the saints in light
- For those who will be welcomed home to the church Memorial Garden, Kate Wolfe on September 16 and Glenn Hansen on October 17, may their memory continue to inspire us
- For the families of Terry Mills (father of Tim Mills), Galen Matzek (brother of Sue Danielson), Kathy Deiss (aunt of Ann Nelson), Robert (Bob) Peterson (brother of Larry Peterson), may they be remembered with thanksgiving

If you have people you wish to include on our prayer list, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.

Announcements

Loving God

New to Church: Are you a first-time visitor? Please stop at the welcome table in the gathering area to receive a special welcome gift from us!

Fall Worship Series: Faith In Our Heads, Hearts & Hands: What does it mean to have faith? Is faith something we believe, something we feel, or something we do? The answer is yes! Join us for a three-week worship series exploring Faith: Head, Heart & Hands. Just as we each have different ways of expressing love, we may also have a natural "faith language." We'll explore our own faith language while also discovering how God may be inviting us to grow in the other two - because a vibrant, growing faith needs head, heart, and hands.

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 group is discussing Revelation. Copies of the book are available in the church office for \$20.00 each. The group meets in the library on **Wednesdays, 1:00–2:30 pm**. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

Wednesday School Volunteers Needed: Wednesday School begins on **October 7**. We need volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis. Please sign the list on the sign-up table or volunteer on the website.

Loving Neighbor

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? Join us! Our church is sponsoring yet another trip to Back Bay Mission, **April 18-24, 2027**. **An information meeting will be held on Sun, Oct 4, following worship**. Please contact Carol Merriman or Pastor Chris for details. Use the sign-up sheet to register your interest.

Basics for Local Kids (BLK): BLK is a non-profit organization that provides winter-wear to local kids in need from infant to 18 years old. Please consider making a donation of gently used or new coats, snow pants, boots, hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, or socks. Donations can be placed in the bin. Beginning in October volunteers are needed to help families shop or to sort & restock items. To volunteer go to www.BasicsforLocalKids.org or call Kim Johnson at 715-821-1623. Thank you for your generous, continuing support. Other questions contact Renee Whipple 715-307-5074.

Journey House: (Ecumenical young adult outreach) If you're interested in contributing, here are some ideas: **A Welcome to School Care Kit & Goody Bag**. We are asking for a donation of \$25; **A suggested donation of \$30 to help sponsor our weekly gathering, Journey Nights; Amazon Wish List**. We created and plan on keeping up with an [Amazon Wish List](#).

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 & female), belts, adult socks, good buys.

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.

Among Friends Volunteers Needed: The program meets two days a week and has 12 active guests. Training is provided & the rewards are phenomenal! Contact them at amongfriendsrf@gmail.com

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.

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

Loving Self

Inquirer's Class: New to church? Want to know more about our life and ministry? Join us on **Tues, Oct 27 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. At this 90-minute gathering, you will meet church leaders, other new folks and learn more about First Congregational Church. Dessert and childcare are provided. Please sign up at church.

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 & lively conversation. Our next meetings are **Sept 29 & Oct 13**.

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 **Sept 22 & Oct 13**.

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

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.

Let's Knit/Craft Together: Join us on **Thursdays at 10:00 am. We meet at Sycamore on the first Thursday of each month & the Fellowship Hall the other Thursdays**. We have a great time sharing our projects & enjoying each other's company. For more info, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or firstroe@gmail.com

Game Day Sunday: Game Day is held on the third Sunday of the month. Our next dates are **TODAY & Oct 18 at 11:45 am**.

WISE Team: NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group meets on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays at 6:30 pm at 113 East Elm St. & Peer Support Group meets the same evenings at the church at 6:30 pm. For mental health issues, please call 988. For info, call Marg Downing at 715-307-5905.

Community Life

Red Cross Blood Drive: The next Blood Drive held here is on **Mon, Sept 28, 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.

Wednesday Meals Resume on Oct 7: On Wednesday nights, we offer a home-cooked meal in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$9 per person with a family max of \$30. **Meals are served from 5:15 to 6:00 pm**. You can get your meal to go if you go through the line (indicate when you sign up). **Reservations must be placed by noon on Tuesdays**. You can make a reservation online, the sign-up table or by calling the church office. The menu for Oct 7 is: Taco bar.

Preschool Screening: The School District of River Falls is hosting a free preschool screening on **Fri, Oct 23**. This is designed for families who live within district boundaries & have concerns about some aspect of their 2-1/2 to 5 year old child's development. For more info or to request an appointment time, contact Ann Nelson at 715-425-1819 ext. 3101 or ann.nelson@rfsd.k12.wi.us.

Fall Clean-Up, Sat, Oct 24, 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, Oct 31 Please sign up and join us!

Relax with Rose - Breathwork Techniques: **Thurs, Oct 29, from 6:30-7:45 pm in the Fellowship Hall** - Learn and practice several different breathwork techniques. These quick techniques will help you step back and relax in a stressful moment or reduce your racing thoughts so you can fall asleep faster. For more info, contact Rose Rude at 715-781-7032 or rar651@gmail.com. Please sign up at church or online.

Side by Side Choir: For those living with memory or thinking changes, their care partners, family, friends & community volunteers who enjoy helping others. It is a welcoming choir where people gather at the church to connect & thrive by sharing music, joy & laughter! Join us weekly on **Mondays at 10:00 am** for our fall season. Rehearsals have start will conclude with a **concert on Sat, Dec 5 at 10:30 am**. To learn more or sign-up contact: Norma Revels at 651-416-9530 or sidebysidechoir@gmail.com

Learning Community: **Tues, Oct 13 at 6:30 pm: A Night in the National Parks!** - Ever wanted to visit 3 of our most famous national parks: Tetons, Yellowstone & Glacier? Join Pastor Chris as he leads us on a 90-minute tour of three of our nation's most outstanding national parks. He will talk about both the beauty & grandeur of the parks as well as practical logistical things - where to stay, what to do & most important, how far out to plan & book! Join us for a night in our National Parks!

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 Orientation for High School Confirmands (grade 9) & Church Interns will be following worship **TODAY**. This meeting is **required** for all confirmands & their parents.

College Pack Items Needed! One of the mission activities of the church youth program is to send College Packs to those off at school or the military. We ask each of our 6-12th grade families to bring items for the 30 college packs. Think necessary items, fun items & lightweight items as they will be shipped! Food is always good. So are dorms decs. Please bring them by **Sun, Oct 4**.

Bibles for 6th Graders: The congregation will present Bibles to six grade students during worship on **Oct 11**.

Wednesday School: All children in kindergarten through Grade 5 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 and it concludes at 5:15. Registration and permission forms are available at church and online. Wednesday School begins **October 7**. Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Jonah 3:10-4:11

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the LORD and said, ‘O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.’ And the LORD said, ‘Is it right for you to be angry?’ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, ‘It is better for me to die than to live.’

But God said to Jonah, ‘Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?’ And he said, ‘Yes, angry enough to die.’ Then the LORD said, ‘You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?’

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 20:1-16

‘For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, “You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.” So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, “Why are you standing here idle all day?” They said to him, “Because no one has hired us.” He said to them, “You also go into the vineyard.” When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, “Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.” When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, “These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.” But he replied to one of them, “Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?” So the last will be first, and the first will be last.’