

WELLNESS

Yoga Class—Come & join a delightful group of people that enjoy the flexibility & exercise that yoga offers. The yoga group (men & women) meets **Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9:00-10:00 am** in the Fellowship Hall. Jan Hansen is the certified instructor. A donation is requested & is shared with local charities during the holiday season. We look forward to seeing new faces.

New Worship Series—You have a story. And if you are like most people, there are parts of your story that are happy & sad, surprising & joyful. This worship series helps us link our personal stories to the larger story of God acting in our world. Using our United Church of Christ Statement of Faith as a guide, this seven part worship series will help us to connect our story to the Great Story of God who is with us today. Join us!

We Believe: Where Your Story and God's Story Come Together

December 2: God Promises

Christmas Eve Worship Schedule:

4:00 pm—Family Candle Light Service

6:00 pm—Family Candle Light Service with Communion

11:00 pm—Candle Light Service with Choir and Communion

Join us! Bring your family and friends!

Please use the sign up sheets to be one of our Christmas Eve Liturgists at the 4, 6 or 11pm worship services on Monday, December 24th, Christmas Eve.

We are also in need of luminary lighters for the 6 and 11pm worship services.

FINANCIAL

Treasurer's Report

	Week of	Year to Date
	Nov 18, 2018	
General Fund Income*	\$ 7,615	\$ 400,526
General Fund		
Operational Needs	\$ 8,920	\$ 410,320

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

E-Giving—It is quick, easy & safe. It is designed to help both you with your home budgeting & financing of church ministries which continue even when you are away. Contact Missy (missy@firstchurchrf.org) with questions. If you give electronically, please use the e-giving bookmark in the pew as the offering plate goes by.

Pledge Sheets for 2019—Please be sure to return your 2019 financial pledge sheets to ensure our church is financially healthy. Without the generous support of church members & friends, we cannot continue to provide the mission & ministry we do. Church pledging supports everything we do from confirmation to Sunday School, bell choir & chancel choir, Wednesday Meals and Wednesday School, a place to worship & a place to grow, mission in our community & mission to the larger world.

The Discipleship Committee ask you to prayerfully consider the following three things:

- * If you do not pledge, start this year
- * If you do pledge, increase your pledge, even slightly
- * If you tithe, thank you, you have met the biblical standard of generosity

Pledge sheets were dedicated at the annual Giving Thanks Meal on Sun, Nov 11. If you have not yet returned your pledge sheet, please do so either through the mail, the offering plate or the church office. Please return them as soon as possible, but especially **before Sun, December 9** when the Trustees finalize the 2019 church budget. May God bless you & us together as we seek to be God's faithful and generous people. ~The Discipleship Committee

DECEMBER 2, 2018

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

Sunday Volunteers Needed

Liturgists for: Dec 23, 30; Jan 6, 13, 20, 27

Welcomers for: Dec 9, 16, 23, 30

Coffee Fellowship for: Dec 9, 23; Jan 6, 13, 20, 27

The sign-up sheets are on the back table. Thank you!

SIGN UP

Worship Service on Channel 16—The Sunday worship service is on River Falls public access channel 16 on **Wed at 9 pm & Thurs at 12 pm**. Jeff Hoffman records the weekly worship service. He needs a few more volunteers. Contact him jeffhoffman312@gmail.com or 715-425-5633.

Church Office Hours—The church office hours between Labor Day and Memorial Day are: Mon-Thurs: 8:30 am-4:00 pm; Friday: 8:30 am-Noon

WELCOME OPENLY

New Members to be Received on Sunday, December 9

On Sunday, December 9 at the 10:30 am worship service we will be receiving new members. If you would like to formally join the church as a member, please talk to one of the pastors or the church office before Mon, Dec 3.

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!

Among Friends Songfest—Among Friends will host a Holiday Songfest Tuesday, December 11 at 1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to this joyous time together. Martha TerMaat will accompany song leader Dave Reilly and, of course, dessert will be served. If you might be able to provide cookies or bars, please let Norma Veith know. We hope you'll join us!

WELCOME OPENLY

Family Meals—Join us each Wednesday night for a healthy, home cooked family meal in the Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$7 per person with a max of \$30 per family. **Please sign up by Tuesday at noon** so we have enough food. Please also sign up to help set, serve or clean up. Whether you are single, a couple or have a minivan full, join us as a church family each **Wednesday from 5:15 to 6:15 pm**.

Dec 5—Breakfast for dinner—eggs benedict, breakfast burrito, stuffed French toast

Dec 12—Chicken marsala, rice, veggies

Dec 19—Lasagna, chicken alfredo, salad, garlic toast

Dec 26—No family meal or programs

Advent Workshop—The Advent Workshop for families will be held following the 10:30 service today. The event will begin with a family-friendly meal followed by a chance to make a variety of Christmas ornaments. This is a great family event. Please join us!

Annual Christmas Luncheon—You are invited to attend a Christmas Luncheon on **Tuesday, December 4, at 11:30am-1:00pm**. 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! We have drivers willing to pick up anyone who needs a ride. The cost is \$10.00 per person. Please make a reservation by signing the list or calling the church office. Please let the office know if you need a ride.

Advent Musical: Important Information for Families

Children in pre-school through Grade 6 will begin work on the 2018 Advent Musical on November 18. Rehearsals will take place during Sunday School on all Sundays from November 18 through December 9. The musical will be presented on **Sunday, December 16 during the 10:30 worship service**. There will be a dress rehearsal on **Saturday, December 15, 10:00 am–12:00 pm**. The dress rehearsal is for all children in Grades 1–6. Pre-School and Kindergarten children do not attend the dress rehearsal but are part of the musical.

SIGN UP

TODAY

WELCOME OPENLY

Men's Group—Meets every other Tuesday in the Youth Room for coffee, treats, conversation and fellowship. Our next gathering is **Tues, December 11 at 8:00 am**. Join us!

Cribbage Night—The group meets on the second Monday at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 & the group decides which charity. Playing time starts at **7:00 pm**. All players & abilities welcome. The winner of the Nov game was Dave Mountain. The next game will be **Dec 10**.

Passion Play 2020—If you were not able to attend the organizational meeting to see the Passion Play in Germany in July of 2020 & wish more information, please see Pastor Chris soon. There are only 20 spots available and a \$100 refundable deposit is needed.

Ask A Pastor—On the sign-up table is a new feature in our church life: the 'Ask a Pastor' box. Each month I hope one of the pastors on staff here at First Congregational will take turns answering your questions about faith, life and how we try to live them out today. What are the questions about the Bible, the Christian faith or practice you want to know? Or perhaps you want to know something more about our church life, ministry and practice? Ask away! Write your question on the form provided and drop it in the box. Or you can also email your question to office@firstchurchrf.org.

6th graders receive their servant aprons



GROW SPIRITUALLY

Adult Forum—The forum meets Sundays 9:00–10:00 am. During Advent, the Adult Forum will consider the work of three pastors who founded The Advent Conspiracy movement dedicated to challenging Christians to substitute compassion for the consumption that too often marks Christmas celebrations. The movement encourages people to practice countercultural concepts related to worship, spending, giving, and loving. Please come for conversation.

Dec 2, Worship Fully, Alan Tuchtenhagen—During the season of Advent, the Adult Forum will wait for Jesus' birth by pondering the following themes: Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, and Love All. The sessions are designed to encourage conversation.

Dec 9, Spend Less, Barbara Peterson—Advent is a time for preparing for Christ's birth. It has also become a time of great expenditure. How can we recapture the commitment to Advent as preparation and wisely spend our resources?

Dec 16, Give More, Alan Tuchtenhagen—One way to prepare for Christ's coming is to give of ourselves so others see the incarnate Christ in our lives & commitments. What does it mean to authentically give of your self?

Tuesday Bible Study meets on **Tuesdays from 1:00–2:30 pm**. The focus is *Why Christian?* by Douglas John Hall. Copies are available for \$22. Participants do not need to commit to every week. Come when you can.

SERVE GENEROUSLY

Giving Tree—Help local families this Christmas by taking an ornament from the tree, go shopping and **bring the gift back, unwrapped, with ornament attached to the church by Sunday, December 9**. Cash and checks are always welcome to help purchase fuel and grocery cards. Thank you for your generosity!

Christmas Shoebox Project—The yoga group, along with many others at First Congregational have supported a "Christmas Shoe Box" for the men at the Kinnic Drug and Alcohol Rehab Center in River Falls. The shoe box has contained socks, playing cards, puzzles & toothpaste just to name a few things. The wrapping and filling of shoeboxes will be done in early December and they will then be given to the men at Kinnic Drug and Alcohol Rehab Center. Please see the list of items we aim to collect on the sign-up table or in the newsletter. Your donations (items or cash) will be most welcome. Cash donations will be used to purchase needed items. Thank you for reaching out to these fellows.

Save Your Family Fresh Receipts!—ARC gets \$1,000 for every \$150,000 in receipts, so every dollar counts. ARC is the agency funded by local churches to help address the immediate needs of people in our community (rent, utility, gas, repair help). A box for receipts is on the back table.

Simpson Shelter Needs: New boxers—all sizes; new women's underwear—all sizes; bras—all sizes; cold breakfast cereal; ground coffee; white t-shirts—all sizes. There is a box in the gathering area.

Mother Bear Project—The Mother Bear Project is still going strong. If you knit or crochet, please consider crafting a bear for this important mission. For more information, contact Rene Bylander at 715-425-7437 or renebylander@gmail.com

Shrimp Boil! Join us for our annual Shrimp Boil on Sunday, January 27 following the late worship service at noon. Come enjoy a wonderful meal of shrimp, salad, bread and king cake (and hot dogs for non shrimp eaters!). All the proceeds go to our UCC partners at Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi which will host our mission team this March. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$7 for those under 12. Tickets must be purchased ahead of time so we have enough shrimp for everyone to enjoy. These make great Christmas gifts!

CARE PASSIONATELY

Prayer List—If you have people you wish to add to the church prayer list, please use the blue "I Wish" pew cards & put in the church office or the offering plate. If you wish to receive the weekly prayer list via email, contact the office.

Care Givers Program—An opportunity to serve members through an outreach program that pairs members providing visitors to those unable to be with us regularly in worship or activities. If you are interested in volunteering, have questions or are aware of anyone that would benefit from this, contact Jan Hansen at 715-821-4008.

Meal Ministry—Ever had a death in the family? How about something joyous & life changing like the birth of a baby? As a congregation we are called to 'care passionately' for one another & one of the ways we would like to do that is through a "Meal Ministry." A small stipend to help pay for food may be available. If you are interested, please contact the church office.

Thinking of You Cards—Please use them to send a note to someone who is ill, grieving or you just haven't seen in a while. Place them in the offering plate & we will deliver them. This is one of the ways we care for one another.

Among Friends, located here at church, provides a social respite for individuals with dementia & their caregivers. We are open 9 am-3 pm every Tuesday. Please contact Norma Revels 715-293-2561 or Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn 715-307-1182 if you are interested in knowing more.

Youth Dessert Auction

