

## YOUTH EVENTS

### Parents with Young Families! Let's take a Time Out!

- Calling all parents with young children! We know raising young ones is tiring & difficult at times so join us **TODAY from 11:30-1:00.** At this event you will enjoy: Words of wisdom from our presenter on the intersection between church & home life; table discussions/support from other parents; time for prayer; a Bouncy House!! & childcare and a meal. A free will donation is appreciated.



**Vacation Bible School**—The 2019 VBS theme is “God’s Creation!” Participants will use the tools of scientific inquiry to explore the wonder and interconnectedness of God’s marvelous creation. We need many kids and volunteers. Please volunteer to help. Please also register your children and spread invitations to other children. All are welcome! The dates are **Monday through Thursday, July 29–August 1, 2019, 9:00–11:30 am.** Registration forms are available in the church office and on the website.

**Saints of First Church Project: Adult Volunteers Needed**—At the end of 2018 a small group of high school students supported by Rebecca Ferguson and Suzanne Hagen began interviewing and recording the faith stories of members of First Congregational. This project brings together people to listen to and learn from wonderful saints among us. This project is also a way of preserving the history of congregation members. We would like to expand this project to increase the number of stories that are recorded. To do achieve this goal, we need more volunteers who are interested in spending a few hours gathering stories. Please consider volunteering for this important project. For more information, please contact Stacy Myers.

## FINANCIAL

### Treasurer’s Report

	Week of	
	Mar 10, 2019	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 12,592	\$ 111,080
General Fund		
Operational Needs	\$ 9,284	\$ 92,840

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](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org)) with questions. If you give electronically, please use the e-giving bookmark in the pew as the offering plate goes by.

### Building Mortgage Summary as of Dec 31, 2018

Original cost of Facilities Expansion	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining amount on Bank Loan	\$652,503.44
Cash on hand in the Building Fund	\$62,401.66
Interest Rate (Locked in through Jan 2023)	4.25%
Monthly Payment	\$8,320.41
Monthly interest paid Dec 31, 2018	\$2,453.11
Total interest paid in 2018	\$29,653.09

**Piano Fund**—Music is an integral part of our worship. The sanctuary Kimball grand piano which was purchased used from St. Bridget’s many years ago (2005) is beginning to show its age. The Music Committee is beginning efforts to raise funds to replace the piano. Please consider donating to help in our fundraising effort. Please write checks out to First Congregational Church and put “Piano Fund” in the memo area. Thank you for your kind consideration.  
~The Music Committee

## MARCH 17, 2019

*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: Mar 24; Apr 21  
Welcomers for: Mar 24, 31; Apr 7, 14, 21, 28  
Coffee Fellowship for: Apr 7, 14, 21, 28  
The sign-up sheets are on the back table. Thank you!

**SIGN UP**

**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

**Men’s Group**—Meets every other Tuesday in the Youth Room for coffee, treats, conversation & fellowship. Our next gatherings are **Tuesday, March 19 and April 2 at 8:00 am.** Join us!

**Book Group**—Will meet **Tues, March 26 at 3:00 pm at the church** to discuss **Days to the Gallows** by Katherine Spada Basto (historical fiction). The book focuses on the 1662 Hartford witch trials & Puritan life. Bobbie Kuhn will share additional information about that time period when we meet. Books are available in the church office.

**Easter Lilies** are offered for you to honor or remember someone & grace our worship space with beauty. The lilies will be displayed on Easter morning & may be taken home following the 10:30 service. To order an Easter Lily for \$13, please fill out the form on the sign-up table & place in the offering plate or leave in the office. Orders must be placed by **April 14.** Proceeds go to our youth fund.

**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!

## 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.**

**SIGN UP**

March 20—Relay for Life “Soup” meal  
March 27—Spring Break—NO meal  
April 3—Beef stroganoff, noodles, salad, bread  
April 10—Chicken ala king, fruit, biscuits  
April 17—HOLY WEEK—NO meal  
April 24—Last Meal—Pasta bar

**Inquirer’s Class**—Are you new to church? Want to know more about our life and ministry? Join us for the Inquirer’s Class on **Thurs, Mar 21 from 6:30-8:00 pm.** At this meeting, you will gather with other newcomers, meet church leaders, learn more about the mission and purpose of the church, as well as have time for questions. And you will get some excellent dessert! Childcare is provided. Please use the sign-up sheets or contact the church office ([office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org)). Attendance at this gathering does not mean you are ready to join the church, but does mean you want to learn more about its life and ministry. Join us!

**SIGN UP**

**Summer Sabbatical**—Every fifth year our church provides a sabbatical time for our Senior Minister. This is time away from the responsibilities of church life to rest, renew and study. This summer Pastor Chris will again be taking a sabbatical and Pastor Dave will again be serving as our sabbatical pastor. Pastor Chris will be on sabbatical starting Monday, May 6 and returns in mid August. He will be leading worship on both Confirmation (May 5) and Graduation (June 2) Sundays. He will also be present during Vacation Bible School. We are extremely fortunate that Pastor Dave will be assisting us this summer. Church leaders and staff are preparing now to make sure we have a seamless transition.

**WELCOME OPENLY**

**GROW SPIRITUALLY**

**SERVE GENEROUSLY**

**CARE PASSIONATELY**

**Holy Land Pilgrimage Meeting**—Twenty-five people from our congregation will journey to Israel, Palestine and Jordan on a Pilgrimage April 1-15. **There is a final organizational meeting TODAY after the 10:30 am worship service in the Fellowship Hall.** In preparation for the trip, they and all church members are encouraged to learn more about the history and theology of the Old and New Testaments by attending the Adult Forums on Sunday morning that will help us better understand that part of the world & our faith.



**Back Bay Mission Trip Commissioning**  
Our Spring Break Mission Team leaves on **Saturday, March 23** for their week long trip to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS where they will help in hurricane reconstruction efforts through our UCC affiliated Back Bay Mission. Thank you for your faithful support of our recent Shrimp Boil, proceeds of which will be given to the Mission. **TODAY our mission team will be blessed at the 10:30 am worship service.** And they will help lead worship when they return on Sunday, March 30. We have 25 participants this year. Please pray for them as they seek to flex their discipleship skills. Pray for safe travel, strong hands, open minds and that they may be a blessing to those whose houses they work on.



**Relay for Life Fundraiser**—The River Falls Relay for Life Event is scheduled for **April 5-6th** at the River Falls High School from 6 pm-1 am. Our church's team is having its **Annual Soup Meal on March 20th at 5:15 pm** to begin our team's fundraising. All proceeds go toward the team's funds that are donated to the American Cancer Society. Luminaries will be available at the meal for \$10/bag ('in memory of' or "in honor of" someone special touched by cancer). Any questions, contact Deb Hoffman at (612) 308-4945.

**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 March game was Lee Christianson. The next game will be **April 8**.

**Adult Forum**—The forum meets Sundays 9:00–10:00 am.  
**Mar 17: The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Stacy Myers**—The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is in one of the oldest parts of Jerusalem. Tradition maintains that it is built on the site of the places where Jesus was crucified and then resurrected. The forum will consider the significance, architecture and art in this holy place.

**Mar 24: Synagogues in the Time of Jesus, Rebecca Ferguson**—During the time of Jesus few people were able to read & interpret the scriptures on their own. Synagogues were a place for people to come together to hear, learn about and ponder the scriptures. Come to consider the importance of synagogues for our ancestors in faith.

**Mar 31: Sites of the Trial and Final Hours of Jesus, Rebecca Ferguson**—Come for a "Great Courses" lecture about archaeological work that sheds light on places important in the gospel accounts of Jesus' final days. This is the last study session before the adventurers leave for the Holy Lands. Come & learn about places they will visit.

**April 7: Jesus' Ministry, Stacy Myers**—In preparation for Holy Week we will explore Jesus' ministry—what and how he taught, his vision of life, his miracles, and how the content of his work and ministry lead him to death on Calvary.

**Tuesday Bible Study** meets on **Tuesdays from 1:00–2:30 pm**. The group is discussing *Christian Basics: A Primer for Pilgrims* by Dorothy & Gabriel Fackre. The book is available in the church office for \$17. Participants do not need to commit to attending every week. For more information, contact Stacy Myers.

**Holy Week Schedule**  
Palm Sunday—Worship at 9:00 and 10:30 am with Choir and Palm Processional  
Maundy Thursday—Worship at 6:30 pm with Communion  
Good Friday—Worship at 6:30 pm with Choir Cantata  
Easter Sunday—Sunrise Worship at 7:00 am  
Breakfast 8:00-10:15 am (please make a reservation)  
Worship at 9:00 & 10:30 am with Choir and Communion

**Back Bay Mission Wish List**—They are in need of items for their personal hygiene kit. **Our group will take the items when they go on the mission trip in March.**

Hand towel (16x28), Wash cloth, Wide tooth comb, Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Bar of soap (bath size in wrapper), Plastic soap container, Deodorant (men or women), Razor (men or women), Men's jeans—waist size 32 or 34 (new or gently used).

There is a box in the gathering area. Thank you!

**Skates Needed**—Please consider donating hockey and figure skates to Sporting World to raise funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters. There is a container in the gathering area. Thank you! Carole Mottaz

**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:** Travel size soap, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, & lotion; Disposable shaving razors & shaving cream; Deodorant; Bath towels—gently used or new; New thermals for men & women—all sizes; New heavy duty hats & gloves for men & women; New bras—all sizes; New women's underwear—sizes 5 & 6; New boxer shorts—all sizes; New white t-shirts—all sizes; New white socks for men & women; Coffee (ground preferred), hot cocoa. ~There is a box in the gathering area. Thank you!

**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.

**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.

**A Gift of Art for Picture the Bible**—*Picture the Bible* is the name for the congregation's original collection of art depicting Bible stories. The art is woven into every area of the congregation's educational life. Five new images were commissioned with funds in memorial to Lois Smith.

In preparation for an expected book contract with The Pilgrim Press, we are commissioning eight new images to match eight Bible stories. The art will become part of First Congregational's collection and educational resources. The *Picture the Bible* committee invites people to make a financial gift to sponsor the commissioning of this new art. Tim and Linn Lawrence have already provided funds for a commission. Please consider making a gift to this project in memory or honor of someone or a particular event. \$500 will commission a double image and \$300 will commission a single image. For more information, please contact Brad Williams or Stacy Myers.