



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

110 North Third Street  
River Falls, WI 54022  
715-425-2052  
www.firstchurchrf.org

# God is still speaking,

July 1, 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**
- **Welcome openly**
- **Grow spiritually**
- **Care passionately**
- **Serve generously**



## Pastor's Page

The Fourth of July is a splendid national holiday. Family and community gatherings and picnics, concerts, and fireworks make the day truly joyful. During our years in Chicago we joined a million others—yes, a *million* people—at the lakefront for spectacular fireworks coordinated with music and topped off with the 1812 Overture that brought everyone cheering to their feet. People of every race, nationality, language,

faith, and dreams gathered and enjoyed being together—a genuine experience of the nation we seek to be and become.

What I really like about the Fourth is that it reminds us and renews in us the vision and ideals of the founding principles of the country—principles we continue to strive for and make real for all. We seem to do a lot more “arguing” (to put it nicely!) these days about who we are, might be, and should be as a people in an increasingly fragmented world. This one day in July, filled with music and food and community and vision, does wonders bringing us together.

We have lived through much turbulence in the past and will likely continue to do so. Sometimes it's a challenge to reconcile our faith with our feelings for the country we call home. Sometimes our anger toward those we disagree with simmers and builds and erupts. I really like what the late Bill Coffin—pastor, teacher, friend of all—said about patriots in any country: “Good patriots,” he wrote, “carry on a lovers quarrel with their country, a reflection of God's lover's quarrel with all the world.”

God's “lover's quarrel with all the world” is a rather jarring image in light of our foundational teaching that “God is love.” What I hear Coffin saying is that God's love—unconditional as it is and yet demanding—butts up against our human ways, our waywardness, our sin. It *is* something of a quarrelsome

love that expects much of us and that we so frequently fail to live out. We quarrel with God and God “quarrels” with us to help us turn around our lives and our living. And so it is with citizens and countries, with citizens of every background who love their country deeply and who seek in many ways to help it live up to its ideals and vision.

Early followers of Jesus didn't have “countries” to contend with, but they did have the Roman Empire keeping a close eye on them. They had to determine how they might spread Jesus' teachings and God's new way clearly and boldly. Their journey in this regard was not easy and they sometimes paid the price with imprisonment and with their lives. Yet they carried on, learned new ways of teaching and living together in community, and helping others to see and to understand the new life that Jesus brought to the human family, in spite of their differences.

We are still on a similar journey. As we celebrate the Fourth of July 2019 let us give God thanks for this journey, for the “lover's quarrel” that God shares with us and that we share with country and (sometimes!) with one another.. but always—always!—grounded in the faith that compels us to seek God's ways and to live together as a beloved community.

Pastor Dave Ostendorf

*GROW*  
*spiritually*

## Vacation Bible School

July 29–August 1  
9:00–11:30 am

*Please Register Now*

The 2019 VBS theme is “God’s Creation!” The dates are Monday through Thursday, July 29–Aug 1, from 9:00–11:30 am. All are welcome. We need a minimum of 16 additional students to meet our enrollment goal.

Registration forms are available in the church office and on the website. *Please* help with recruitment.



## Cookies for VBS

We need cookie bakers for VBS. We need three people each day during the week of VBS (July 29–August 1) to bake four dozen cookies for snack. Please volunteer! The cookies are a highlight! Please sign the list on the sign-up table.

## VBS Painting and Work Night

Tuesday, July 16  
6:00 pm

The 2019 VBS Painting and Work Night will be Tuesday, July 16, starting at 6:00 PM. There will be lots to paint, so please volunteer to help. Please sign the volunteer list.

## VBS Volunteer Meeting

Thursday, July 25  
6:30–7:30 pm

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to help with VBS. There will be a meeting for all volunteers on Thursday, July 25, 6:30–7:30 PM. This is an important meeting to be sure that everything is organized for the week. If you have questions, talk to Stacy Myers.

## VBS & VBS Dinner

Thursday, August 1  
6:00 pm

The VBS dinner and celebration will be held on August 1 starting at 6:00 pm. Please join us! Let us know you are coming by signing the list.

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## Save for VBS & Special Help Needed

The 2019 VBS theme is *God’s Creation!* One emphasis will be recycling and upcycling. The children will work together and with adults to create new things from old things. In order for this project to work, we need cool old stuff to upcycle. Please scout out your old stuff and save things we could use for this project.

Some ideas are:

- Keys
- Wooden children’s blocks
- Children’s wooden blocks with letters
- Plastic magnetic letters (the kind people put on refrigerators to help children learn letters)
- Scrabble tiles

Most importantly we need creative people who can share their talents to work with children to refashion this old stuff into cool new stuff. Please talk with Stacy Myers to volunteer.

# Gatherings

## Yoga Class

**Tuesdays and Thursdays**  
**9:00-10:00 am**  
**Fellowship Hall**

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

## Patriotic Songfest

**Tuesday, July 2**  
**1:30 pm**  
**Fellowship Hall**

Please join us for a patriotic songfest in the Fellowship Hall at church on **Tuesday, July 2, at 1:30 pm**, hosted by Among Friends volunteers and participants. This is a dementia friendly event. After approximately 45 minutes of music, we will share complimentary beverages and ice cream sundaes. There are no age requirements, so bring your friends and families for a lovely no-cost afternoon of patriotism and fellowship.

## Softball News

Way to hustle! Our team won again this past week. Our record is 3:1. Thanks to our awesome fans who cheer us on and support us weekly. Come join in the kinship and cheer on your team. Our next four games are:

July 1—7:45 pm at Hoffman Park

July 8—6:30 pm at Hoffman Park

July 15—7:45 pm at Hoffman Park

July 22—6:30 pm at Hoffman Park

If you have any questions please contact Matthew Thurston at (715) 781-3626 or Deb Hoffman at

(612)308-4945.



## 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](mailto:renebylander@gmail.com)

## Nursery Help Needed

We will need volunteers to fill in for the summer. If you are a regular user of the nursery, please consider being a nursery volunteer. A sign-up sheet is on the table.

## Church Pew Clean Up

We are looking for a small team to help straighten up the church pews each week. Please sign up if you are interested.



## Garden Helpers Needed

We are in need of helpers on our garden crew. You do not have to be an expert gardener to be part of this group. Please use the sign-up sheet if you are interested and see Lu Lueck with questions.

## Men's Group Gathering

Our men's group will stop for the summer and will start again in the fall. Please watch for dates.

## Texas Couples Dancing

Classes will stop for the summer and will start again in the fall. Please watch for dates. Any questions, call Tim Hoopman 715-425-2796.



On **Monday, August 5, and Tuesday, August 6**, families in the River Falls School District can receive free school supplies for the upcoming year through the Tools for School Event. Please see the flyer for more information.

The sorting and distribution of supplies will be here at our church. Please use the sign-up sheets if you can help sort and/or assist families during the give-away.

Please bring your donated school supplies to our church **by Sunday, July 28**. If you would like to give by check, please make a note "Tools for School" in the memo line.

Thank you for your generosity.



## Piano Fund

*Our Journey of 1,000 miles* has been

accomplished! Thank you to all who contributed to our Piano Fund. Our new Boston Baby Grand Piano with all the accoutrements will be delivered on July 1st. Be sure to be at church on Sunday, July 7th to witness its inaugural Sunday! Again, a **BIG THANK YOU** to all our generous contributors!

*GIVE  
graciously*

### Save 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.

### E-Giving

Many parishioners are signing up for e-giving. It is quick, easy, and safe. It is designed to help both you with your home budgeting and financing of church ministries which continue even when you are away. Simply complete the application form found in the sign-up area to enroll. Questions can be directed to our church treasurer Missy Luedtke. If you already give electronically, please use the e-giving bookmarks in your pew as the offering plate is passed.

## Treasurer's Report

	Week of June 16, 2019	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,878	\$ 237,230
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,284	\$ 222,816

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

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

### Sustainable Living Tip

In the summer months as we especially enjoy the blessings of refrigeration, we can also follow some simple tips to conserve electrical energy:

- Allow hot food left-overs to cool before putting them in the fridge.
- Instead of leaning on the open refrigerator door deciding what we want to eat (we're probably all guilty of this), keep an updated list of snacks and drinks posted on the fridge door and decide what you're craving before going in.
- A full freezer does not have to work as hard as one that is half empty. Fill plastic jugs with water & freeze them to fill up the empty space (plus you can use the frozen jugs in a cooler instead of buying ice).
- By periodically cleaning the coils on the back or bottom of your fridge, ridding them of dust bunnies that may have formed, your fridge will not have to work harder than need be. A vacuum & a long handled slender brush works great for this.
- Brought to you by the Mission Ed Committee

## Simpson Meal

We will be serving our very popular summer picnic to residents of the Simpson Shelter on **Wednesday, July 17**. We need bars, workers to prepare the meal and others to serve the meal at the shelter.

Please see the sign up sheet in the gathering area. For more information, please contact Carole Mottaz.

## Simpson Shelter Needs

- Travel size soap, shampoo, conditioner, body wash and lotion
- Disposable shaving razors and shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Bath towels—gently used or new
- New bras—all sizes
- New women's underwear—all sizes
- New boxer shorts—all sizes
- New white t-shirts—all sizes
- New white socks for men and women
- Coffee (ground preferred), hot cocoa

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

## Health Care Directives Support

Identifying and articulating your desires regarding personal health care wishes to be followed by other people in the event you are not able to make decisions for yourself is a wise thing to do as well as a gift for your loved ones. A folder with all needed materials is available in the church office.

Linn Lawrence, member of the congregation and registered nurse, is willing to help people and families navigate the materials as they make these plans.

For information, please call the church office or speak to one of the pastors.

## Among Friends

**Every Tuesday**

**9:00 am-3:00 pm**

**Contacts:**

**Norma Revels 715-293-2561**

**Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn  
715-307-1182**

Among Friends provides a social respite for individuals with dementia and their caregivers. We are open 9:00 am to 3:00 pm every Tuesday.

## Garden to Table—Lunch at Among Friends

Right before our eyes chef Katy put a watermelon on end, sliced it the long way, diced it into a dish, and dashed it with mint & lemon. We watched, ready to eat, but not yet—patiently waiting as she prepared the next dish of sliced cucumbers, dill, and sour cream. Now, ready to eat, there is still more to watch as she puts together salami & cheese and cherry tomatoes wrapped in a leaf of basil then splashed with a balsamic reduction. At last she said the long awaited words, “Lunch is ready.”

Our tables presented us with the fruits of an herb garden—tastes of mint, dill and more.

Today was the fruit of a long journey to the table, a journey of growing a garden to feasting at this lunch. We started this journey several weeks ago when Norma, Ruth, & the good folks at Among Friends planted, tended & watered those herbs in preparation for lunches & snacks this summer.

As we left the lower level activity space this morning, on our way to lunch in the dining room, we made a stop outside the church backdoor to admire the herb garden—the mint, the dill, the oregano, the chives, the sage & the basil. All are growing well and waiting until their moment to become part of our lunch, our snack, or our activity time. On our way to the dining room we stopped, smelled & even sampled a little bit of mint, a sprig of dill.

Among Friends has been growing an herb garden for the past month thanks to a healthy eating grant from the Allina Foundation & the grace of our church members who allow our garden to grow on the back steps of our church.

Stop and smell the herbs. They help make our food delicious. Thank you!

**First Congregational United  
Church of Christ**

Office Phone: 715-425-2052  
E-mail: office@firstchurchrf.org  
Website: www.firstchurchrf.org



**STAFF**

Chris Myers, Pastor  
Dave Ostendorf, Minister for Community and Outreach  
Stacy Johnson, CE Minister  
JaNae Westrich, Youth Pastor  
Missy Luedtke, Office Coordinator  
Brad Williams, Moderator  
Scott Perau, Choir Director  
Jamie Mills, Music Coordinator and Bell Choir Director  
Marsha Pearson, Organist  
Terry Mithun, Organist  
Tim Bylander, Building Supervisor  
Dave Mountain, Custodian

Pastor's home phone number:  
Chris Myers 715-426-2075  
chris@firstchurchrf.org

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
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RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

JULY 1, 2019



2019 JULY 2019						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Among Friends Board Meeting 6:00 pm Softball Game at Hoffman Park 7:45 pm	2 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-3:00 pm	3	4 Independence Day Church Office Closed	5	6
7 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	8 Softball Game at Hoffman Park 6:30 pm	9 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-3:00 pm	10 PEO Meetings in the Fellowship Hall and Youth Room 10:00 am-3:00 pm Newsletter Deadline	11 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-12:00 pm	12	13
14 Father's Day 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	15 Softball Game at Hoffman Park 7:45 pm	16 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-3:00 pm VBS Painting and Work Night 6:00 pm	17 Mission Ed Committee Preparing and Delivering Meal to Simpson Shelter	18 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-12:00pm	19	20
21 9:30 am Worship Service - Meyer Baptism - Morsch Baptism 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	22 Softball Game at Hoffman Park 6:30 pm	23 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-3:00 pm	24	25 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-12:00 pm VBS Teachers' Meeting 6:30 pm Newsletter Deadline	26	27
28 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	29 Vacation Bible School 9:00-11:30 am Endowment Grant Requests Dues	30 Vacation Bible School 9:00-11:30 am Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-3:00 pm	31 Vacation Bible School 9:00-11:30 am			