



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

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

God is still speaking,

July 15, 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

A few years back the youth group from St. Paul's United Church of Christ in neighboring Ellsworth would return from their amazing mission trips to share with the congregation the "God moments" they had experienced. During worship they and their leaders—usually twenty-strong—would all take the pulpit to tell about a moment

when they had experienced God during their week away, and it was always a powerful Sunday morning when they did. Their stories were truly inspiring.

All too often we plow through our weeks without giving much thought to God's presence, God's action, "God moments" in our lives. Whether at work, volunteering, or sitting at home we just have "too much to do" to notice God. During "down time" or in the embrace of the outdoors we may enjoy or reflect on God's presence, but even those times fall easily into thinking about everything else we should be doing...

God moments are not just about light and joy and happiness, however. The Ellsworth youth most often spoke of those moments when they experienced God in their relationships and hard work with the people and communities they served in great need. Their eyes and their hearts were opened—their faith deepened—in ways they had not imagined as they felt the presence of God in places and among families struggling to make a go of their own lives.

The cross reminds us that God is ever-present in the midst of trial and suffering. The cross in our time seems to be a little

too smooth and shiny, too individualized, too aligned with power. We too readily forget or ignore that it was a gruesome instrument of death used by an empire to control people and movements. When Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century the cross "got shined up," and the struggling, serving, sacrificing early community of faith morphed into "The Church."

Our journey of faith this summer seeks to underscore the teachings and lessons of the early community of faith as it moved beyond its beginnings and sought to make real the pathways of life that Jesus laid out—pathways that led to the cross. Therein is a phenomenal story, one that continues to beckon & call and (sometimes) unnerve us—and a story that reminds us each week that God moments are as real today as in the ancient past.

Take a deep look around this week and see, feel, and experience the God moments that await you every day. And give thanks to all the Ellsworth kids who remind us of this gift of life and hope!

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–August 1, from 9:00–11:30 am. All are welcome. We need a minimum of four additional students to meet our enrollment goal.

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

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.

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 Update

Many thanks to everyone who has saved and gathered important treasures (AKA: junk) for VBS. At this point, we are doing well on everything except letter blocks and plastic magnetic letters. Please keep those coming.

We also have a great need to borrow wood clamps that will hold together approximately 4” of glued wood. If you are willing to lend yours, please bring them to church, labeled, so we can get them back to you.



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.

Softball News

Come join in the kinship and cheer on your team. Our next games are:

July 22—6:30 pm
at Hoffman Park

July 29—7:45 pm
at Hoffman Park

If you have any questions please contact Matthew Thurston at (715)781-3626 or Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945.

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.

Come Sing with Summer Choir!

Did you ever want to just get up there and sing with the choir on Sunday morning? Two more opportunities lie before you this summer—**July 28 and August 18** our “Summer Choir” will pull together to provide Sunday morning worship leadership.

If you’ve ever wanted to “give choir a try” these are the days to do so! Come to church by 8:30 those Sundays to practice, and experience the joy and wonder of singing with a great choir in worship.

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

A Celebration of Life for Kris Ainsworth

There will be a celebration of Life held for Kris Ainsworth on **Saturday, July 20th from 1:00 to 4:00 pm at Hoffman Park.**

There will be food, music, pictures. Please bring your own chair and beverages.

Book Group Meeting

The book group’s next meeting will be **Tues, Sept 24 at 3:00 pm at the church** to discuss *Paris by the Book* by Liam Callanan (fiction). A wife and two daughters seek their husband/father in Paris after he simply disappears. They follow potential clues from the Madeline books to find him. Books are available for check out in the church office.



Ice Cream Social

The Annual Ice Cream Social at the historic Kinnickinnic Church will be held from **2:00-6:00 pm on Sunday, August 4.** The church is located on County Road J, less than a mile off of Highway 65 near River Falls. Ice cream, homemade pies, root beer floats and other beverages will be served. Musical interludes are scheduled from 3:00 until 5:00 pm. The social is sponsored by the Kinnickinnic Historical Association to maintain this historic church which is on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places.



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 was delivered on July 1st. 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 July 7, 2019 | Year to Date |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| General Fund Income* | \$ 8,986 | \$ 262,035 |
| General Fund Operational Needs | \$ 9,284 | \$ 250,668 |

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

SERVE
generously

Simpson Shelter Needs

- Travel size soap, shampoo, conditioner, body wash and lotion
- Disposable shaving razors
- Shaving cream
- Deodorant—trial size
- 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!

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. They are open from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm every Tuesday.



It’s time to place your order for the delicious Washington State Peaches!

Single layer box for \$20 or

Two or more single layer boxes for \$18 each box

This is an annual fundraiser for our youth.

You will receive a call when the peaches arrive - typically the week before or after Labor Day at the church.

To place an order contact:

Caren Prochnow at 715-425-6346 or cjprochnow@sbcglobal.net or
JaNae Westrich at jmwestrich@gmail.com

Please provide the number of boxes, your name, and a home and/or cell number. Order Deadline is August 15th

Thank you for your support!

Changeover in Choral Music Leadership

After a great run of ten years Scott Perau, our Choir Director, will be leaving us this fall. Scott has built the choir into one of the finest in the entire area and has given amazing shape to our entire music ministry. He and his family have resided in Red Wing four years, and with his teaching, family, and community commitments—coupled with traveling to River Falls, he felt it was time to make a change. We will certainly miss him, but church leaders have already begun the process of laying plans for transitioning to new choral music leadership. Scott will be with us to direct summer choir this month and in August as well, so we’ll have several opportunities to thank him and wish him and all his family well.

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.

**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

110 N. Third Street
River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #53
RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

JULY 15, 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 at Ezekiel 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 Softball Game at Hoffman Park 7:45 pm | 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 | | | |