



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

110 North Third Street
River Falls, WI 54022
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www.firstchurchrf.org

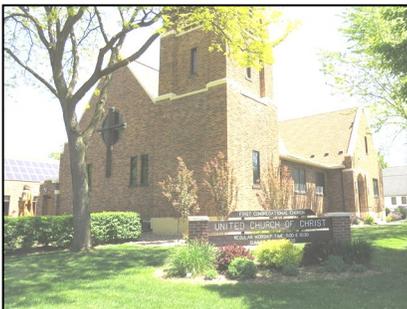
God is still speaking,

September 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**



Sabbatical Highlights

Greetings! How wonderful it is to be back at First Congregational after my summer sabbatical. First off, please know three things.

One, please know how grateful I am for the gift of this sabbatical. Second, please know how thankful I am for all the people (laypeople and staff people, especially Pastor Dave) who filled in for me while gone.

Third, please know how much I missed you and excited I am to be back!

As I write this (on my first day back!), I am working on ways to share some of my sabbatical experiences and insights with you including leading an Adult Forum later this fall. For now though, let me give you a quick update on the four goals of my sabbatical.

Goal One: Read. I spent a lot of time reading this summer. Something like 37 books total, plus daily scripture reading. Reading is one of the first things that gets cast aside when I get busy. Yet I think of reading as a kind of continuing education for our souls. Two books that particularly spoke to me are *Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times* by Adam Hamilton and *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith*. What I enjoyed about both of these books was their frank and faithful ways of addressing the anxiety that seems to mark our age.

Goal Two: Renew. I spent some time redeveloping our confirmation curriculum. While still based on our biblical timeline curriculum, I have added a section to each class that asks three important questions about each of the Biblical stories we encounter. What does this story teach me about myself? What does this story teach me about our world? What does this story teach

me about God and our call to live out our faith today? The Biblical story is not just a story about people who lived long ago that we are to memorize. Rather, it is our story and provides valuable insight to faithful and fruitful living today.

Goal Three: Refresh. One of the biggest gifts of this sabbatical time was intentional time spent with my parents and family. When you are on call 24-7, having this dedicated, uninterrupted time with family was a gift. I traveled with both my parents, creating some wonderful memories. I had no evening meetings so could take my kids on hikes, played lots of games and spent lots of time listening. I also got to worship at other churches (more about those experiences later).

Goal Four: Relax. Knowing that people at the church were being cared for and loved by capable people and staff enabled me to simply relax. It is hard for me to get away for more than a week. This time away gave me an opportunity to truly relax without worrying what I was going to preach on Sunday, write for the newsletter, or teach in confirmation.

I look forward to seeing you all in person and sharing some of my insights.

In Gratitude, Pastor Chris

GROW spiritually

Tuesday Bible Study Resumes in the Fall

Weekly Adult Bible Study will resume on **Tuesday, Sept 17, 1:00-2:30 pm**. The focus will be *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* by Marcus Borg. Copies of the book are available for \$13.00 in the church office. Participants do not need to commit to attending every week. Come when you can. Please sign the list indicating your interest.

Wednesday School Registrations

All children who will be in kindergarten through Grade 5 starting in the fall are invited to participate in Wednesday School at First Congregational Church.

Registration and permission forms for Wednesday School are available on the church website and at church. It is important to have advance registration in order to be adequately prepared for students. **Wednesday School begins October 2.** Please contact Stacy Myers with questions.

Rally Day & Parent Meeting

All parents of children pre-school through Grade 9, are asked to attend a brief orientation session on **Rally Day, Sept. 8, following the 10:30 worship service and Sunday School.** This is a very important meeting and required for all families of confirmands. Please be sure to attend.

Sunday School Teachers Meeting

There will be a meeting for Sunday School teachers on **Thurs, Sept. 5, 6:30-7:30 pm.**

Church Intern Draft

Church Interns are those post confirmation youth (grades 10-12) who wish to continue growing in their Christian faith by serving others and meeting together as a small group. The program year begins with the annual Church Intern Draft on **Wednesday, September 4 from 6:30 to 7:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.** All church committees, small groups and those seeking to work with an intern should have a representative at the draft. All interns & their parents should be at the draft and will be able to talk to various church representatives to learn about possible areas to serve. Free pizza dinner during the event. Join us!

Two Sunday School Teachers Needed

Many thanks to the people who volunteered to teach Sunday School. We still need two more teachers. Please consider volunteering. All classes are taught by a team so no one teaches every week. For more information, please contact Stacy Myers. To volunteer, please sign the list on the table.

Wednesday School Workers Needed

It is time to prepare for school-year programming. Wednesday School begins on **October 2.** We need adult volunteers, drivers to transport children from school to church, and people to provide snacks. Please consider volunteering. A sign-up list is available for volunteers.

Rally Day, Sunday, September 8

Rally Day marks the beginning of the program year. Sunday School and the Adult Forum resume as well as our two Sunday morning worship services. In addition, after the late worship service there is brief but very important parent meeting in the Fellowship Hall for all parents of children in pre-school through 9th grade. During this time we will provide an overview of Sunday School and information about the Confirmation program including the Third Year Trip.

Our schedule that day will be:

8:00 am	Choir Practice
9:00 am	Early Worship and Adult Forum
10:00 am	Coffee Fellowship
10:30 am	Late Worship and Sunday School
11:30 am	Parent and Confirmation Meeting

We look forward to an exciting program year!

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.

Book Group Meeting

The next meeting will be **Tuesday, September 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.

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.

Bell Choir Information/Introduction Night

Have you ever wondered how to play a bell or what bell choir is like? Are you interested in joining the handbell choir, but you need more information? Here's your chance to find the answers to all your questions! We will be having a **bell choir information/introduction night on Wed, Sept. 4 from 6:00-6:30 pm in the music room**. This is an opportunity for anyone ages 15 and up to learn the basics of playing handbells and to ask any questions they may have about the group. For more information contact Jamie Mills at degolierjamie@gmail.com.

Cribbage Night

The group meets on the second Monday at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 and the group decides which charity to donate it to. Playing time starts at **7:00 pm**. All players & abilities welcome. The next game will be **Mon, Sept. 9**.

Men's Group Gathering!

Our men's group meets every other Tuesday in the Youth Room for coffee, treats, conversation and fellowship. Our next gatherings are **Tues, Sept. 17 & Oct. 1, at 8:00 am**.

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

GIVE graciously

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 Aug 18, 2019	Year to Date
General Fund Income *	\$ 5,770	\$ 293,948
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,284	\$ 306,372

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

Thank You Notes

Dear UCC Scholarship Committee, Thank you for your generous financial assistance with the upcoming 2019-20 school year. Senior year for me already! Your support has contributed to my making the most of these four wonderful years and I can't thank you enough! Additionally, I am deeply saddened by Bob's recent passing. He was approachable, interesting and, in turn, influential. I am certain that his presence in the committee and the UCC in general will be missed. Thoughts and prayers, Colin Cosgrove

Dear First Congregational UCC, Thank you for being such a wonderful community and providing so many opportunities to learn and grow, both in and outside of church. In the past seven years, this church has been a positive environment for me. I always looked forward to Wednesday afternoons where I got to volunteer with Wednesday School and my time playing in the bell choir. I am extremely grateful for the scholarship I received as it will help me attend a school where I can continue to learn and grow as a young adult. I will be attending Michigan Technological University, and while I am excited to start this new journey, I will miss the friendly faces around this church Wednesdays and Sundays and the volunteer opportunities I've had. Sincerely, Mya Davis

Dear First Congregational Church, Thank you for all the support you've given to me over the years. Also, thanks for the scholarship and for the blanket. I will always take it along with me on the journey that God set before me. Best regards, Derick Graves

Dear First Congregational Church, Thank you very much for the continuing education scholarship. I am excited to utilize it as I begin my fourth year of school. I appreciate the continued support from my church family. Thanks again. Sincerely, Alyssa Larsen

Members of First Congregational Church, It is with deep gratitude that I write to thank you for your continuing support of my college education. I am honored to accept this scholarship and the vote of confidence it represents. As I embark on my senior year, I'll tackle many new challenges. I'm most looking forward to being a TA for an economics course and working as a research assistant in the political science department! I'm also adding on two minors: data science/statistics and international relations. It promises to be an exciting and fulfilling year. Thank you again for your most generous support. In gratitude, Andy Myers

Dear Church, Thank you for the generous scholarship and for supporting me during these last 16 years. I am using the scholarship to attend St. Olaf College where I am studying math and economics. This church has taught me, among other things, that being blessed requires more than just recognizing it, but actually acting on these blessings. The church has given me many opportunities to do this including Back Bay Mission, VBS, Deacons, and the dish room. Once again, I really appreciate the support and generosity of this congregation. Sincerely, Matthew Myers

Dear Church, Thank you so much for the church scholarship that I have received. I am very excited for college and this scholarship will help me financial to reach my dream. I am so glad for this church and all the memories I have made. I will remember all these memories as I go off to college. Thank you all! Katy Myers

Confirmation Program for Grades 7-9 begins!

The confirmation program begins on Wed, Sept. 11 with two different bonfires. Our 6th Grade Pre-Confirmation kids will gather at their leader's house, Diana Villeneuve's, for their bonfire so they can get to know one another (204 S. Cudd Ave RF, 763-443-7035). Please bring an item for the food pantry and a snack to share.

The other classes (Grades 7-9/Years 1-3) will gather at the Anderson house (W10382 880th Ave—just west of town off Division Street) for their bonfire. This group should bring a snack to share and an item for the college packs to be sent to our church freshman off at college (please bring 10 identical items that you think a college student might like—silly putty, snacks, Halloween stuff all make great gifts—be creative!). Both bonfires take place from **6:30 to 7:30 pm on Wednesday, September 11.**

Thereafter classes meet approximately every other Wednesday at church - see the schedule on the church website. Questions to Pastors Chris and Stacy.

*SERVE
generously*

Simpson Shelter Needs

- Bar soap and body wash
- Conditioner
- Deodorant
- Razors
- Shaving cream
- Personal tissue packets
- Towels
- Men's t-shirts—all sizes
- Men's boxers—all sizes
- Men's crew socks
- Women's crew socks
- Women's bras—all sizes
- Women's underwear—sizes 5 and 6
- Coffee

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

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.

Among Friends

Tuesdays, 9:00 am—3:00 pm
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 here at the church.

Blankets for Simpson Shelter

Thanks to arrangements made by Cori Fosmo, Simpson Shelter will receive 200 blankets no longer needed by UWRF. We have a mountain of blankets at church. Please volunteer to take some blankets home, wash and dry them and return them to church so we can transport them to the Simpson Shelter. Thank you for your help!

Newsfeed

From The Investment Committee

Committee Members: Kris Roen, Jean Smith, Wendy Querna, Roland Roe, Brad Williams/Moderator, Fred Trautmiller/Advisor, Chris Myers/Staff

Have you seen the new addition in the pew card slot? These graphic announcements were developed at the request of the Investment Committee to "Plant the Seed". There will be different ones displayed throughout the year and they all use our Picture the Bible artwork.

The Investment Committee would like you to remember First Congregational when creating and/or reviewing your estate plan for inclusion in your "planned future giving". Schedule a meeting with your financial planner, lawyer or accountant for personal investment advice. With a little planning TODAY, you can make a big difference tomorrow.

Sustainable Living: Tip of the Month

Do you have old household chemicals or prescriptions that you're not sure what to do with? Many of these items could be harmful to our health and to the environment if not properly recycled or disposed of. There is a free hazardous waste & pharmaceuticals collection even for residents of Pierce & Pepin County on **Sat, Sept. 21 8:00 am to noon at the Pierce County Recycling Center in Ellsworth.** If you live outside of this area, check with your local recycling authority for information on recycling these hazardous items. -Brought to you by the Mission Education Committee

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
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RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SEPTEMBER 1, 2019



2019 SEPTEMBER 2019						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	2 Labor Day Church Office Closed Among Friends Board Meeting 6:00 pm	3 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-3:00 pm	4 6:00 pm Bells Intro Night 6:30 pm Church Intern Draft 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 9:00 pm Worship on Chnl 16	5 Yoga 9-10:00 am Sunday School Teachers' Meeting 6:30-7:30 pm	6	7
8 Rally Day 8:00 am Choir Practice 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast 11:30 am Parent Meeting	9 Cribbage 7:00 pm	10 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-3:00 pm Newsletter Deadline	11 3:00 pm Among Friends Volunteer Training 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Bonfire Night for All Confirmation Classes 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 9:00 pm Worship on Chnl 16	12 Yoga 9-10:00 am	13	14
15 8:00 am Choir Practice 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	16	17 Men's Group 8:00 am Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-3:00 pm Bible Study 1:00-2:30 pm Wellhaven Gathering 3:00 pm Boards and Committees Meetings 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting 7:30 pm	18 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Confirm Yr 1 (7th Gr) 6:30 pm Confirm Yr 3 (9th Gr) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 9:00 pm Worship on Chnl 16	19 Yoga 9-10:00 am	20	21
22 8:00 am Bells Practice 9:00 am Worship Service - Wade Peck Baptism 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	23	24 Yoga 9-10:00 am Among Friends 9:00 am-3:00 pm Bible Study 1:00-2:30 pm Book Group 3:00 pm	25 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Pre-Confirm (6th Gr) 6:30 pm Confirm Yr 2 (8th Gr) 7:00 pm Church Interns 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 9:00 pm Worship on Chnl 16 Newsletter Deadline	26 Yoga 9-10:00 am	27	28 Kearns/Veith Wedding 2:00 pm (offsite)
29 8:00 am Choir Practice 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	30 Strategic Planning 6:15 pm Endowment Grant Requests Due					