

## **Weekly Word – For Sunday, November 22, 2020**

*A quick note about finances:* As of this week, the church is about \$10,000 behind in its giving. We have already reduced staffing, turned off fridges and freezers, reduced heat and all the expenses we can. Please be sure to mail in your offering each week or month and consider making an extra gift to support the mission and ministry of our church as detailed below. Your generosity is the engine that drives our church. God bless you all!

**Worship This Week:** We end our **Gift of Faith Worship Series** by looking at our **Identity** as Christian people. The first followers of Jesus saw in their Christian faith a way to remake the world beyond traditional categories. Looking at Galatians 3:23-29 we get a glimpse of what this new community looks like. Could it be that our call today is to live into our new identity? Join us this Sunday online live at 10:00 am (archived on the church YouTube channel for later viewing) and on WEVR Radio at 11:00 am. Special Music includes a new song by Bryan Sirchio called ‘God Will See Us Through’ that you won’t want to miss. Join us!

YouTube link: [https://youtu.be/YcowIWGL\\_bU](https://youtu.be/YcowIWGL_bU)

## **Sunday Bulletin 11-22-20**

### **This Week:**

Sun., Nov 22	10:00-11:00 am	Worship Service Livestream (also on radio at 11:00 am)
Wed., Nov 25		No Wednesday Programs – Thanksgiving Break
Thurs., Nov 26		Thanksgiving Day – Church Office Closed
Fri., Nov 27		Church Office Closed
Sun., Nov 29	10:00-11:00 am	Worship Service Livestream (also on radio at 11:00 am)

**Giving Thanks Meal Thanks!** A HUGE thanks to Andy and Christina Krueger, Laura Miller, David Reilly, Bill and Martha Olson, JaNae and the Church Interns, the Welcoming Committee and ALL who enabled us to carry on with our Giving Thanks Meal last week. It was a treat!

**Sunday School:** The December Faith At Home Sunday School resource bags will be ready next Sunday, November 29, as we begin the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Please bring your November bags back when you pick up your new one. Please also remember to view the online Sunday School lesson each week.

**Confirmation and Interns:** Confirmation and Church Interns continue, for now, online via Zoom. Please watch for the weekly Confirmation Update emails and talk to Pastor Chris with any questions ([chris@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:chris@firstchurchrf.org)).

**Quarantining:** With the spread of COVID-19, more and more families are having to quarantine at some point. Please know that your church stands ready to support and help you as we can. We have volunteers who can run errands, pick up medicine or food, even deliver your Sunday School materials if you are quarantined. Please also know church staff are here to help you navigate the intense emotional pressures these situations bring with them. Contact the church office for more information ([715-425-2052](tel:715-425-2052)—[office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org))

**Sign Up Sheets:** All of the current sign-up sheets are on the church website. Go to the Resource page and then click on Sign Up Sheets.

**Wednesday Family Meals:** We will take a break from Wednesday Family Meals until at least after New Year’s.

**Advent Evening Prayer:** Each Advent we gather in the sanctuary for the beautiful, sung Holden Evening Prayer worship service at 6:30 pm. Once again, even a pandemic cannot stop us. Though we cannot safely gather in the sanctuary, a livestream of Evening Prayer will be held at 6:30 pm on Wednesdays, December 2, 9 and 16. Our singers will sing, our pastors will preach, and you can join at home. Look to future Weekly Words for more information and the link.

**Weekly Adult Bible Study:** The Adult Bible Study will read and discuss *Names for the Messiah* by Walter Brueggemann on **Wednesday, December 2, 9 and 16 from 1:00–2:30 pm, via Zoom.** All are welcome! Copies of the book are available in the church office for \$11.00 each. Please contact the church office for a Zoom link.

**Church Yoga:** Jan Hansen's church yoga group will hibernate for the next few weeks. You can still access archived yoga classes through their YouTube channel available on the church website on the Connect page.

### **6 Ways to Live Thankfully and Generously:**

**Gifting Our Shut-Ins and Special Friends This Christmas:** Each year our church families deliver potted amaryllis plants to our shut-ins and special friends. This will be an especially important endeavor this year. The plants are provided. We ask you to sign up, pick up your plant at church, pot it at home (it is super easy), then deliver it to the local shut-in you are assigned. Feel free to include some cookies, a Christmas card, or children's artwork. What a wonderful way to be the body of Christ in the world. Sign up today! Deliveries will start in early December.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-amaryllis>

**Angels On Earth Giving Tree:** Help local families this Christmas by signing up and purchasing a gift on the wish list. **Please go to the link below (also on the church website) to see the wish list. Type your name in the box of the gift you will buy.** The unwrapped gift needs to be at church **no later than Tuesday, December 8th.** Please give the gift cards to the church office. If you would like to make a cash donation instead, please send the check (made out to First Congregational Church with "Giving Tree" in the memo line) to the church office. Thank you for your generosity. Please call the church office with questions or for help signing up 715-425-2052.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DP\\_qeJ0xmzRqfnlpTqitfEnkuvrycQqLhbDyOhtWkVM/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DP_qeJ0xmzRqfnlpTqitfEnkuvrycQqLhbDyOhtWkVM/edit?usp=sharing)

**Christmas Shoebox Project 2020:** Our Christmas Shoebox Project will go on even during these strange times of a Pandemic! For many years, the yoga group & members have supported a "Christmas Shoebox" for the men at the Kinnic Drug & Alcohol Rehab Center in River Falls. Even though these are strange times, the NEED is still there, & we will again collect items, wrap, & deliver the boxes to show that we all still care! The look on the faces & the thankfulness is something I wish all of you could see. A list of items is below. **Please bring donations to the church by December 14.** Cash donations will be used to purchase any needed items. If you have questions, please contact Jean at [jsmithler@yahoo.com](mailto:jsmithler@yahoo.com) or at 715-781-6880.

Updated Items: Wall calendar, games (Uno-puzzles-table), toothbrush, floss, deodorant, coffee mug, hot chocolate mix, decks of cards, chapstick, combs, razors, nail clippers, socks, winter gloves, packaged snack or popcorn, wrapped candy, disposable facemasks (new this year!). If we can get new ones & at least 60: sewing kits

**Advent Ornament Kits:** Our traditional Advent Workshop will be offered this year with a twist. Age-appropriate kits of materials to make four ornaments will be offered for pick up. The cost for each kit (designed for one person) will be \$5.00, with a family maximum of \$20.00. **Please sign up by Friday, November 20.** The following kits are available:

Preschool & Kindergarten: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-advent>

Elementary Children: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-advent1>

Big Kids & Adults: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-advent2>

Please call the church office to pay via credit card or you may pay when you pick up the kit(s). **The kits will be available starting on November 29,** the First Sunday in Advent, the same day families will pick up new Faith At Home bags.

**Among Friends Volunteers Needed—two opportunities:** If you have a willing heart and a voice to share, we need 4-6 individuals who are willing to be part of a duet or quartet sharing 2-3 songs while being socially distanced outside of our participants' homes. This can be done at a time convenient for you that also works for our Among Friends participants. Please contact Bonnie at 715-307-1182 phone/text or email me. Thanks.

**Free Money for Church Ministries:** The church has created an Amazon Smile account through which the church can receive a portion of the price of each purchase you make through Amazon. It is important to know that you need to do two things for the church to receive this money. First, go to Amazon Smile by typing in [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and then add First Congregational Church River Falls to your Amazon Smile. Second, every time you order you must order through your Smile account by going to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). Once you do this, the church will receive 0.5% of each eligible order. Please contact the church office if you have questions.

**Finances:** Please maintain your financial pledge or even consider an extra gift. Gifts can be mailed, dropped at the church office, or even better, sign up for e-giving through this form (Electronic Giving Form). There is also a secure mail drop in the right-hand pillar of the front entrance of the church building which is checked daily.

	Nov 15, 2020	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,240	\$ 431,660
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,582	\$ 440,772

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

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

**2021 Financial Pledge:** The Discipleship Committee sent out 2021 financial pledging information in a recent mailing. Please prayerfully consider your financial giving to support the church mission and ministry in the coming year and return your pledge form by November 15. We ask you to do three things:

- \* If you don't pledge, please begin this year.
- \* If you do pledge, please increase your pledge, even if only a little bit.
- \* If you do pledge, please consider signing up for electronic giving which is safe, reliable and easy.

Your generosity is the engine that drives our mission and ministry. Your giving changes lives and helps make this world a brighter, more hopeful and graceful place. Thank you!

### **People:**

- For Andy and Christina Krueger, Laura Miller, JaNae and the Church Interns and many others who made our Annual Giving Thanks meal happen safely, even in the middle of a pandemic!
- For Eunice Filkins who made pocket prayer quilts for shut-ins and Joan Hyland who made yet more quilts to be given at baptisms
- For Zac Johnson who signed to play basketball at Augustana University in Sioux Falls, SD. Go Augies!
- For those who helped make our fall Wednesday Night meal program a success!
- For Virginia and Don Larson who will celebrate their 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary on November 20—wow!

Do you have other upcoming news and celebrations to share with the congregation? Graduations? Birthday and Anniversary celebrations? Please email them to [office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org) by Wednesday of each week to be included in the Weekly Word which is sent out on Thursdays.

**Prayer:** Prayer connects us with God and our neighbors. If ever there were a time we need connection, it is now. Each week in the bulletin there is a prayer list of people, situations and thanksgivings that is also sent out by email to help people in their prayer life. You can sign up by contacting the church office ([office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org)).

### **Church Staff Contact:**

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Music: Jamie Mills - [degolierjamie@gmail.com](mailto:degolierjamie@gmail.com) - 715-419-0850

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