

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

September 15, 2021

*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

From Tragedy to Greatness

Isaiah Jewett was living his dream. Just a few weeks ago he qualified for the US Olympic team the men's 800 meter division after running his personal best and winning the NCAA title. He was ecstatic. He was off to Tokyo!

His first qualifying race at the Tokyo Olympics went well and he was in third place as he rounded the final curve of the semifinal which would position him for the final sprint to qualify for the semi-final and he hoped an Olympic medal. He was running the race of his life. But in that final curve, Jewett and Nijel Amos of Botswana got tangled up and fell down. Other runners hurdled over them hoping to avoid the same fate. It was every runner's nightmare. As sportscaster Jim McKay used to say—the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. Sometimes they happen just seconds apart.

But just as victory can be followed by heartbreak, a tragedy can turn into something greater. For Jewett this meant finishing the race. Looking at his fellow competitor who was also on the ground mourning his loss, the two shook hands and then arm in arm finished the race 54 seconds after the last person had crossed the finish line (see video here--https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWy_9hOyO3U). Not the way either wanted the race to end.

After the race, Jewett said this in an interview: *'If you are giving everything you have, you don't*

have anything to regret. Yes, it might turn out differently than expected, but that is life. At the end of the day heroes fall all the time, but legends always get up.'

Hebrews 12 talks about 'running with perseverance the race that is set before us.' How do we do this? By doing two things. First by looking to Jesus who is the 'pioneer and perfecter' of our faith. And second, by looking to 'cloud of witnesses,' the saints and those who have gone before us who show us how to get through our current difficulties. From them we will receive both strength and wisdom.

As we all work through a very different and difficult fall, let us learn from these athletes the need to get up and finish the race. Let us learn from those who have gone before us how to persevere. But most of all, let us lean on the strength and wisdom of Jesus and his love for us. Together as we move forward in faith and love, we will finish this race in grace.

Wishing all of you God's strength, Christ's courage and the Holy Spirit's peace as we continue the race of faith and life.

In Gratitude,
Pastor Chris

WORSHIP faithfully

A Note on Sunday Worship

We have moved back to the Fellowship Hall for worship. The Fellowship Hall provides

more space to gather and space out. It also has a bi-polar ionization system that treats and refreshes the air every fifteen minutes.

We have moved to our new fall schedule with the resumption of fall programming and the reopening of the church nursery and Sunday School with worship at 10:00 am. See the Fall

Sunday Schedule below. The livestream and radio options will continue.

For now, until we get through this current fourth wave of the COVID spike, we are asking all people to mask when they gather in groups, including Sunday Worship, confirmation and Sunday School events that are inside the church building.



Confirmation Resumes

Confirmation and Church Interns have resumed. With the addition of our new Youth Ministers, Sarah and Alex Plum, we now have lots of opportunities to learn and grow in the Christian faith. Please check out the church website or newsletter for the latest events and schedules. Please also make sure you are on the weekly Youth Update email that goes out every week with the latest news and schedules.

Fall Sunday Schedule

- 8:30 am—Coffee ready!
- 8:45-9:45 am—Adult Forum
- 9:00-9:45 am—Music Practice
- 10:00 am—Worship and Sunday School
- 10:30 am—Kids Preschool thru 8th grade leave for Sunday School
- 11:00-11:30 am—Coffee Fellowship (Fellowship Hall)
- 11:15 am—Sunday School Ends
- 11:30 am—12:30 pm—Middle or High School Youth Group

Our current falls schedule is above. For September at least, we are worshipping in the Fellowship Hall and asking people to mask when indoors following CDC guidelines. Please continue to pray for our church leadership as they seek to find ways for us to gather both safely and faithfully.

Fall Worship Series: Come And Be Fed!

One of the parts of Jesus' ministry that we do not think about is his ministry of feeding people. Put simply, Jesus fed people. He fed people with his teaching. He fed people by offering healing and welcome. He fed people by offering his own body and blood. As we begin the program year, our Fall Worship Series is 'Come and Be Fed!' Each Sunday, we will let Jesus feed us by focusing on one of the great themes in Jesus' ministry listed below:

Fed by his Love	Rally Day, Sunday, September 12
Fed by his Grace	Sunday, September 19
Fed by his Justice	Sunday September, 26
Fed by his Community	Sunday, October 3
Fed by his Healing	Sunday, October 10
Fed by this Generosity	Sunday, October 17
Fed by his Compassion	Sunday, October 24

This fall come and be fed at Christ's table and by his Word.



Come and Be Fed

'Come and Be Fed' is our fall theme. Below are some of the ways we hope to feed one another this fall.

Middle School and High School Youth are invited to be fed as our new Youth Ministers, Alex and Sarah Plum lead separate Middle School and High School Youth Group events on alternating Wednesday evenings and Sundays (see website for schedule). The goal of these gatherings is simply to have fun together and help serve others. Come and be fed.

Bible Study will resume in September on Wednesday afternoons at 1:00 pm. Be fed in a small group as they explore God's Word and God's Way together. This group is open to all people. Come and be fed.

As chef Peter Kwong leads us in a bunch of two part **Cooking Classes** in our church kitchen. Each cooking class will include times to both learn how to cook new dishes plus time to eat together in the Fellowship Hall. Space is limited, cost is \$30 per meal/lesson and sign ups will begin in mid September. The October dates are Thursday, October 14 and 21 from 6-8 pm where we will be learning various Thai dishes. More dates and cuisines are coming in November! See description on back page. Come and be fed.

As we make **Music** together. Choir meets on Wednesday nights from 7-8 pm and Bells meets on Wednesday nights at 6 pm. For now we will be meeting masked to keep as safe as possible. We are also in need of musical small groups and solos to enhance our Sunday worship services. Come and be fed.

Adult Forum Resumes

On Sundays from Rally Day through October 24, the Adult Form will discuss the Bible texts used during worship. Come to learn, think, consider.



Altar Flowers

Please sign up to provide flowers for the altar for Sunday worship. Sign up at church or on the church website:

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

Welcomers Needed

Please sign up to be a welcomer on Sunday morning before the worship service. One person is needed for at the bottom of the stairs at the 3rd Street Entrance. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to the worship service. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-welcomers>

Coffee Fellowship Hosts and Liturgists Needed

Another sign of the return to normalcy at church is the return of both Coffee Fellowship and Liturgists.

Coffee Fellowship Hosts will be asked to serve Best Maid cookies which are in the church freezer, make lemonade and/or serve coffee. All the materials are provided, you will simply need to serve and clean up (at this point we are using disposable cups). Sign up at church or on the church website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-coffee>

Liturgists will lead us in the Call to Worship and one of the Scripture Lessons. The material will be emailed out on Thursday to practice. Sign up at church or on the church website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-liturgist>

Please note church interns can receive credit for either of these activities. Thank you for volunteering in these important ministries as we continue our journey.



Wednesday, September 15—All Students: Bonfire and Colleges Packs from 6:30-7:30 pm. Join us for pizza, smores and activities to begin the year. We will also make college packs to send out to our college students.

Sunday, September 19—Middle School: Brunch/Meet and Greet at church from 11:15 am-12:30 pm

Wednesday, September 22—Middle School: Youth Group at church from 6:30-7:30 pm

Sunday, September 26—High School: Brunch/Meet and Greet at church from 11:15 am-12:30 pm

Wednesday, September 29—High school: Youth Group at church from 6:30-7:30 pm

Rally Day Parent Orientation

The presentation for parents that was held on Rally Day is posted on the church website. A link can be found by going to the Grow tab and selecting the Confirmation page: <https://firstchurchrf.org/grow/pages/confirmation> (then click on the Parents Meeting tab).

Also a link to the Parent Meeting YouTube video on the website and here: <https://youtu.be/oykizL4K6fE>

Wednesday School Workers Needed

Wednesday School begins on **October 6**. We have a particular need for drivers to transport children from school to church, and people to provide snacks. Please volunteer. Please sign the list on the sign-up table or use the link on the church website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-wednesday18>

Adult Bible Study

Adult Bible Study meets **Wednesday afternoons, 1:00–2:30 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. The group is studying Second Corinthians. Join us.

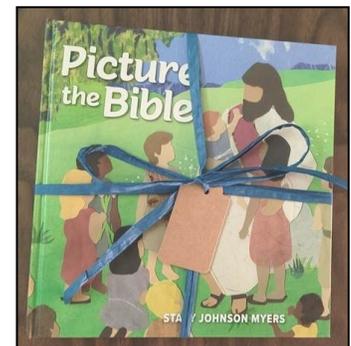
Wednesday School Registrations

All children who will be in kindergarten through Grade 5 in the fall of 2021, are invited to participate in Wednesday School. Registration and permission forms are available on the church website (<https://firstchurchrf.org/grow/pages/sunday-school>) and in the church office. It is important to have advance registration in order to be adequately prepared for students.

Wednesday School begins October 6. For COVID-mitigation, all participants will wear masks. Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

Picture the Bible Book

We have a copy of *Picture the Bible* for each family with pre-school or elementary-aged students. If you didn't get your copy on Rally Day, please pick it up in September. You may talk with Pastor Stacy or come to the church office.





Thank You to Sunday School Teachers and Interns

One of the most important programs for children is Sunday School. The congregation owes a significant debt of gratitude to the adults and interns who volunteered to teach this year:

Kaye Anderson, George Beatty, Susan Beatty, Jennie Friese, Kathryn Hector, Christina Krueger, Larissa Lueck, Evan Luedtke, Ryan Luedtke, Stacy Myers, Sarah Meyer, Ann Nelson, Lisa Plackner, Ella Shepherd, Mara Shepherd, Jolene Sullivan, Christina Treu

Thank you!



New Church App

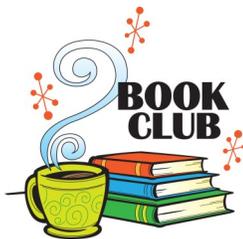
The church has a new mobile phone app. You can download it from the church website or by scanning the QR Code to the left (directions below) which can also be found on a flyer on the sign-up table and Facebook.

The App includes: Live and Past Services, Weekly Word, Newsletters, Sign Up Sheets, Events Calendar, Prayer Wall, Giving, Bible, News Feed, Push Notifications

Call the church office with any questions or if you need help.

Five easy steps to get our church app on your mobile device:

1. On your mobile device, open your Camera app or QR Code app
2. Point your camera at the QR Code above or visit: <https://bit.ly/FCCApp>
3. Click on the link that pops up
4. Install the Church App - Tithe.ly onto your device
5. Open the Church App (skip login if prompted) and get connected with our church



September Book Club

Enjoy reading? Enjoy chatting about books? Enjoy just chatting sometimes? Well, you are warmly welcome to become part of the First Congregational Church Book Club. The Church Book Club reads a wide variety of books, sometimes deeply profound books and other times just fun books. Read the whole book? Great. Not quite finished with the book? Great. Come be together and puzzle together some gleanings from the book.

The Book Club will meet at on **Thursday, September 23, at 8:00 pm at the church.** The September book is *Lake of Tears* by Mary Logue. Copies are available in the church office. Questions? Please contact Jan Johnson, Rebecca Ferguson, or Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn.

Church Yoga

Jan Hansen's church yoga group meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the church Fellowship Hall from 9:00-10:00 am and via Zoom. Please contact the church office to receive the Zoom link.

Engaging the Word, Engaging the World...

Upcoming

September 22 - 25, Rock the Block, Habitat for Humanity, River Falls

A community-wide effort to refresh homes in the city, along with a playground, green space landscaping, picnic tables and benches. *Volunteers especially needed Friday, the 24th and Saturday, the 25th* for playground and landscaping work. For more information or to participate, please contact Larry Peterson of Mission Education at 715-377-5007 or Pastor Dave at 715-441-6559. A sign-up sheet is also available on the Gathering Area Table. Please respond soon!! Come Rock the Block!!

Updating

Washcloths to Back Bay, Biloxi, Mississippi

A box packed with over 100 new washcloths was shipped to Biloxi, Mississippi September 6 from church in response to recovery needs generated by Hurricane Ida flooding. Washcloths will be gathered till September 19 for another shipment, so please bring what you can and put them in the boxes in the Gathering Area. Back Bay Mission has been a long-time Mission Partner of the congregation, and we are blessed to be able to continue our sharing with the people there during times of even greater need than usual.

October: Among Friends Returns!

Among Friends is returning on October 5 from 9:00 am till 2:00 pm at the church with a grand reopening after many months away! This innovative, locally-run social respite program for older adults with memory loss or physical frailties and their caregivers in Pierce and St. Croix Counties is a true gift for many. The Among Friends Board is also welcoming new members; more information about the program and the Board can be found at <https://amongfriendsrf.wordpress.com/>, by calling 715-293-2561, or emailing amongfriendsrf@gmail.com.

Unfolding

Afghan Refugee Resettlement

Conversations continue among leaders from River Falls churches and the larger community about the possibility for resettlement support for thousands of Afghan refugee families at Fort McCoy. While many churches, organizations, and agencies are responding in both Wisconsin and Minnesota it is still early in the process. If you are interested in more information or in working with Mission Education and others as resettlement unfolds please contact Pastor Dave at dave@firstchurchrf.org. We will update the congregation as needs and possible responses become clearer.



Virginia (Ginny) Hilden Memorial Gathering has been scheduled for **Sunday, October 3** from 10:00 am to

2:00 pm at the Glen Park Pavilion.

A light lunch will be served and RSVPs to Laura Rau at laurasuerau@gmail.com are very much appreciated. Please join us to celebrate Ginny and her life.

New Committees and Church Council Terms Begin

Our church committee structure works on a program year from September through August. Committees generally meet the third Tuesday of each month. The new program year will begin on **Tuesday, September 21**, when all committees will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 pm for a brief orientation before heading to their small group meetings from 6:45 to 7:45 pm, followed by Church Council from 7:45 to 8:45 pm. Please pray for our church leaders as they seek to guide us in these difficult times.



Family Meals Resume

Family meals will resume on **Wednesday, October 6** in both to-go and in-person format. The cost is \$8 per meal with a family max of \$25 per family. Please sign up by Tuesday night and indicate to-go or in-person. The menu is below:

Oct 6—Lasagna and chicken alfredo, with salad, and garlic toast

Oct 13—Roasted turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, vegetable, and dinner roll

Oct 20—Boneless BBQ ribs, macaroni and cheese & garlic mashed potato, vegetable, and biscuit

Oct 27—Parmesan crusted chicken with hollandaise sauce, rice pilaf, asparagus salad, and croissant

Nov 3—Meatloaf, baked potato, macaroni and cheese, vegetable, and dinner roll

Nov 10—Roasted pork loin, baby red potatoes, sweet red cabbage, glazed carrots, and bread

Nov 17—Chicken marsala over rice, fruit, vegetable, and croissant

Nov 24—No Wednesday Programming/Meals—Thanksgiving

Boston Trip for Confirmands

We now have three years of confirmands who (hopefully) will be headed to Boston for their Big Trip at the end of their confirmation experience. We have tentatively set a date of April 21-24, the weekend after Easter, as the date for this trip. Later this fall we will set a meeting time with parents and confirmands to explore how this trip might take place. With kids sharing rooms and all the COVID uncertainty, there is lots of uncertainty, but please know we have not forgotten about this trip, its purpose and the hope that all of those who want to go, will be able to go. Stay tuned.

Back Bay Mission Spring Break Trip

The Spring Break Mission Trip will (hopefully) be March 12-19 to UCC related Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi. Last's years trip was cancelled due to COVID and at this point we are still hoping to be able to go, but are waiting to see how the fall unfolds. The need is great down South yet we want to make sure we can safely accomplish this trip. Please look to the newsletter for updates about this important ministry.



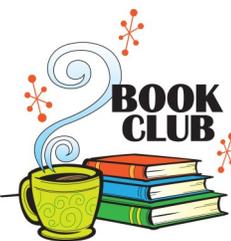
Dear Chris and members of First Congregational Church,

Wendy and I offer our thanks to you for the kind words, prayers and soft prayer shawls. It has been deeply helpful knowing of your support. This has been a difficult time for us and gifts and prayers like yours lift our spirits. The results of Wendy's initial treatments have been encouraging, so day by day Wendy does what she can to work with the medical care. We look for beauty, joy and laughter each day. Blessings to you, stay healthy, Rob and Wendy MacDougall (Rob is our WI Conference UCC Conference Minister

Brazilian Healthcare Mission—The latest newsletter from the Rev. Barb and Gus de Souza healthcare ministry in Brazil is available on the church website. Click on the “Serve” tab at the top and select “Our Community” and find the Brazilian Healthcare Mission newsletter link or find a copy on the back table.

People in the Pews: Kathy Wochomurka

1. *Where did you grow up/hometown?* I was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. I moved here, from Maine, where I finally found a place to call "Home."
2. *How long have you been attending First Congregational Church?* I started attending UCC in the Spring of 2014. I had recently, moved to River Falls, in October of 2013. I was searching for a new UCC and wandered in. The choir was just ending their season and I asked if I could join in the Fall.
3. *What keeps you coming back?* The choir and friends whom I could not do without.
4. *What is your favorite hymn and why?* Hear I am Lord. Certain hymns touch me deeply as they remind me of specific times in my life. This one is most definitely at the top.
5. *What is your favorite hobby or pastime?* I work fulltime for Workforce Resource Inc., a Partner of the Job Center of Wisconsin, located in River Falls. This is the career I had chosen in Maine and had worked in this field for over 20 years. I was fortunate to find employment, in the same field, in River Falls.
6. *Tell us something about you or your family that my surprise us?* I have 2 grown children. My son lives with his wife and their 2 children in Maryland. Yes, I am able to be a "Nana" for Blake, 5 years old and Vivian, 3 years old. My daughter lives in Bend, Oregon.



October Book Club

Come join us **Thursday, October 28, 3:00 pm**, for what promises to be a very lively discussion of the most recent Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *The Night Watchman*, by our 'Twin Cities'

neighbor, Louise Erdrich. Based on the life of her grandfather and the very real treaty issues of 1953, the novel also explores the lives of a whole community struggling with "the worst and best impulses of human nature."

You can pick up a copy of the book at the church office (including 2 large-print copies). Come whether you've finished (or not yet even begun!) the novel, and enjoy time with thoughtful readers and a wise and gifted author.

For more info, call Rebecca Ferguson, Jan Johnson, Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn or Suzanne Hagen. (We'll make adjustments to our plan as Covid dictates at the time, but we're wearing masks inside the church building now.)

AAUW Book Sale

The annual American Association of University Women's (AAUW) Book Sale will be the last three weeks of October - Thursdays from 10am to 7pm, Fridays from 10am to 7pm and Saturdays from 10am to 4pm at the former Global Made, 120 N. Main Street, RF.

Bring donations to the bins at Family Fresh and Dick's Market, River Falls or to County Market, Hudson. Drop off large quantities at the sale site on Wednesdays from 4 to 6pm and Saturdays from 10am to 12pm now through October 9.

Proceeds will be used for scholarships. Thank you for your support.

Mother Bear Project

So what did you do over the summer? When Salena was looking for something to do, her grandmother Dianne Barnes, shared the Mother Bear Project, a ministry that provides those in Africa living with AIDS a home-made teddy bear with a personal note from its creator. Over the summer Salena made 10 bears.

When the church has 50 of them we send them to Africa. We are close to the goal so if you would like the pattern to crochet a bear or two, contact the church office.

We also take donations of yarn. What a great way to stay busy and help out! God bless you Salena and may God bless all those who receive your creations!



amazon smile 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 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. Once you do this, the church will receive 0.5% of each eligible order. Please contact the church office if you have questions.

Last quarter the church received over \$75 for this account, but that amount could grow greatly if you add the church to your Amazon account. Do it today!

Simpson Shelter Supply Needs

- Twin, full, and queen size blankets and sheet sets—new
- Pillows—new
- White t-shirts—new, sizes small & medium
- Large tubs of Country Time Lemonade and Kool Aid mixes (we use these in Igloo containers for meals)
- Hot sauce
- Coffee—ground, caffeinated
- Products for textured and natural hair
- New shower curtains and shower rings

There is a box at the church for donations. Thank you!

Treasurer's Report

	Week of Sept 5, 2021	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 4,450	\$ 329,965
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 333,432

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

Church Staff Contact Info

Pastor: Chris Myers—chris@firstchurchrf.org
 Office: Missy Luedtke—missy@firstchurchrf.org
 Education: Stacy Myers—stacy@firstchurchrf.org
 Mission: Dave Ostendorf—dave@firstchurchrf.org
 Youth: Alex and Sarah Plum—rlyouthgroup@gmail.com
 Music: Jamie Mills—degolierjamie@gmail.com
 Choir: Sarah Plum—sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com
 Building: Dave Mountain—focusfan2001@yahoo.com
 Maintenance: Tim Bylander—timthefixitguy@gmail.com



FIRST
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RIVER FALLS

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
Missy Luedtke, Office Administrator
Joel Larsen, Moderator
Alex and Sarah Plum, Youth Ministers
Jamie Mills, Music Coordinator and Bell Choir Director
Sarah Plum, 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

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

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SEPTEMBER 15, 2021



Come and Be Fed—Thai Cooking Class

Expand your horizons (and your taste buds) as you learn about and create mouth-watering Thai specialties. Chef Peter Kwong will share with you all the secret ingredients and just how easy it is to make all these delicious dishes in your own kitchen. Peter is the husband of UCC Pastor Coleen Kwong who served Hope UCC in Cochrane, WI and he has led many Community Education classes here in River Falls. With our beautiful church kitchen, he will be leading two different Thai Cooking classes that will include instruction, hands on cooking demonstrations, and time to eat what we cooked! The cost is \$30 per person. He will lead two different Thai cooking classes on Thursdays, October 14 and 21 from 6:00-8:00 pm. We will be masked when cooking in the kitchen, then when eating we can move to the Fellowship Hall to spread out and eat what we have made. Sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-thai> or on the church website. Space is limited to 15 people at each class. Come and be fed.



Sign Up Sheets: All of the current sign-up sheets are on the church website. Click on the “Connect” button at the top of the page and then select “Sign Ups/Forms.”