

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://www.firstchurchrf.org)

May 15, 2022

*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

*For everything there is a season,  
and a time for every matter under  
heaven. - Ecclesiastes 3:1*

It has been a long, long winter. I can't ever remember anticipating spring and summer as much as I do this year. March felt like it went on forever. As I write this, the tulips in my backyard are only about 4 inches tall because of the late spring, yet today's high temperature is forecast to be 90

degrees. So much for spring. It feels like this year we will go straight from winter to summer, heating season to cooling season.

And yet those beautiful words from the book of Ecclesiastes remind us there is a season and time for everything. In God's wisdom there is a time and place for everything under heaven. Right now it is the time for our long-delayed capital campaign.

This capital campaign will accomplish three things vital to our current and long-term ministry goals.

First, it will pay off the remaining bank loan of \$495,000 on our church expansion and renovation project. Second, it will replace our cobbled together and antiquated **sound and video systems**, particularly in the sanctuary (our system still uses cassette tapes!). Finally, it will replace our old **church sign** with one that is lighted and on which worship times can be changed. It is time for this campaign.

The truth of the matter is all of us enjoy the fruits of these projects. Do you have a child in confirmation or church interns, Sunday or Wednesday School, youth group? You enjoy the fruits of this project. Do you watch the livestream at home, listen to the radio broadcast or attend worship

in person in the sanctuary? You enjoy the fruits of this project. Do you participate in yoga or coffee fellowship, Wednesday meals, choir or bells? You enjoy the fruits of this project. Do you like to have air conditioned and heated spaces with systems that work and are reliable? You enjoy the fruits of this project. Do you think it is important that we host community outreach programs like Among Friends, Blood Drives and School Supply Give Away? Then you enjoy the fruits of this project. The truth is we all enjoy these gifts from our church building. Now we need to do our part to pay for them.

Recently, all church families received a mailing with information on what we hope is our final capital campaign. I ask you to carefully read it, prayerfully consider your participation, and return the pledge card to the church office by the end of May. Your participation in this important campaign, no matter how big or small your pledge, ensures the current and future health of our church.

In Gratitude,  
Pastor Chris

## Planning Your Good Funeral

In this world, the only thing that can be certain is...death and taxes. Hopefully you already have a good handle on your taxes, but we at church can definitely help you with the first part. All of us will die. And a gift you can give your family is to plan your good funeral. Following up on a class Pastor Chris conducted back in 2019, on **Sunday, May 22 from 8:45 to 9:45 am** in the Youth Room, Pastor Chris will again conduct a Planning Your Good Funeral workshop which involves four things:

- Planning:** Doing this work now is a gift we can give to our family. A helpful hand out will include a one-page document to fill out and give to your family.
- Your:** You get to help plan your celebration of life—how cool is that?
- Good:** There is such a thing as a good funeral—it is celebrative and involves tears and laughter.
- Funeral:** Pastor will talk about the differences between Funeral, Memorial Services and Celebrations of Life.



Online scheduling is available for photo sessions which will be held on **May 31 to June 4**. To schedule your photography appointment online, either use the QR Code or go to [www.ucdir.com](http://www.ucdir.com), click on photography appointment scheduling login on the right side, enter **wi192** in the Church Code field and enter **photos** in the Church Password field.



Follow the prompts to schedule your family's appointment time. If you have 5 or more in your family, please use 2 consecutive time slots. The online scheduling option is not available Saturday or Sunday because we will be doing paper sign-ups at church.

**Appointments fill up quickly, so schedule as soon as possible to secure your preferred date and time.** Please call the church office with any questions or for help scheduling.

### Adult Forum

The last Bible text discussion for the program year will be on May 15. On May 22, Pastor Chris will lead a discussion about funeral planning. The Adult Forum will resume on September 11, 2022.

### Mortgage Summary—As of May 1

Original cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining amount on Bank Loan	\$491,316.43
Cash on hand in the Building Fund	\$91,240.07
Interest Rate (Locked in through January 2027)	3.39%
Monthly Payment	\$2,622.76

### 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 in Sanctuary
- 10:30 am—Kids Preschool thru 8th Grade leave for Sunday School
- 11:00-11:30 am—Coffee Fellowship in Fellowship Hall
- 11:15 am—Sunday School Ends

We are worshipping in the sanctuary and no longer require masks. Please continue to pray for our church leadership as they seek to find ways for us to gather both safely and faithfully.



BACCALAUREATE

### Calling all High School Seniors!

You are invited to the **2022 Baccalaureate Service at River Falls High School at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, May 25**. Local churches offer this service for graduating seniors and their families. It includes a powerful time of prayer and blessing when each pastor prays for each of the graduates individually. Pastor Chris is looking forward to blessing each of our graduating seniors. Talk to Pastor Chris or Alex for more info.



There are two wonderful adventures planned for this summer:

The **South Dakota Trip** will be to Pine Ridge reservation and include stops at Mt. Rushmore and the Badlands. The dates are **June 20-25** and cost should be about \$400. Scholarships will be available. A flyer is available at church with details. Sign up now through [rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com).

And we will have 2 groups headed to the **Boundary Waters July 17-21**. Leave Sunday afternoon, camp at Sawbill Lake, then enter the BWCA for 3 days, then back. No experience necessary! Cost should be around \$250. A flyer is available at church with details. Sign up now through [rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com).



### Vacation Bible School

Please mark your calendars for the 2022 VBS. The theme is *Great Joy!* VBS dates are **August 1-4, 2022, 9:00-11:30 am**. Registrations are

available on the church website <https://firstchurchrf.org/pages/sign-ups-forms>. Please register your child and spread the word. All are welcome!

### VBS Volunteers

We plan to return to a pre-pandemic VBS format for the summer of 2022. We need many adult and teen volunteers. Please volunteer at this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-vbsvolunteers1> or by signing the list on the sign-up table. For more information, please contact Pastor Stacy.



### Because Sometimes You Just Need to Party

On **Thursday, July 7**, the church is hosting an epic kick off to River Falls Days Weekend: a pizza truck and a Bluegrass band out on the church lawn. Recognizing we all need something fun to look forward to and recognizing also how long this pandemic has dragged on, the Music Committee will be hosting a concert out on the church lawn with a local Bluegrass band providing the entertainment. More details as the date approaches. Mark your calendars!

### Pre-School Scrapbooks

In worship on May 22, pre-school children will receive a scrapbook filled with their Sunday School projects for the year. The scrapbook summarizes stories and ideas preschoolers have considered over the past school year.

### Graduation Sunday

**Sunday, June 5** will be Graduation Sunday at the one 9:30 am worship service. Join us as we recognize our graduating seniors. On this day our Scholarship Committee will award both High School Senior Scholarships and Continuing Education Scholarships. A reception honoring all our students will follow worship in the Fellowship Hall. Join us!



### Upcoming Memorial Services

Jim Kuhn died peacefully at home recently surrounded by his family. A Celebration of Life will be at Glen Park on Friday, May 20, at 11:00 am with Pastor Chris presiding and a lunch to follow. Jim will be interred in the church Memorial Garden.

The family of Judy Permann are planning a Celebration of Life for Judy on June 18 at Church with a lunch in the Fellowship Hall to follow and interment in the church Memorial Garden.

## People In The Pews: Marsha Pearson

My parents moved to River Falls when I was a year old which technically makes me a ‘townie.’ First Congregational United Church of Christ in River Falls has been the only church I have attended and been a member of. I went to Sunday school here, was confirmed here, was married here, and said goodbye to family and friends here. This church has always been here for me, in good times and in bad, giving support, counsel, and providing valuable fellowship.

I have had the pleasure of being an organist/pianist here since 2002. Being able to share my music during worship has been an incredibly rewarding experience. I have many favorite hymns that I like to play and sing along with, but if I had to pick my all time favorite it would be “Let Us Break Bread Together.”

Home and family are very important to me. Spending time with my son and daughter in-law, and getting the chance to watch my grandson grow up is a true blessing. Since my retirement, I have been active in numerous musical ensembles in the community and at UWRF as a trombonist.

One of my favorite Bible passages is Matthew 17:20: *He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”* It reminds me how important faith and strength are and the boundless opportunities life has to offer.

### 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.



### Offering QR Code

1. On your device, open your Camera app or QR Code app
2. Point your camera at the QR Code
3. Click tab ‘Give Online’



### Care Givers Needed

The Church Care Team identifies shut-ins and senior friends and then matches other church members to visit them in their homes. It is a tangible way of making the love of Christ visible. Many wonderful friendships have emerged from these caring relationships. The Care Team is in need of a few more members who would be willing to be matched with a senior or shut-in. Please contact the church office to volunteer or the current Care Team Members (Jan Hansen, Jill and Merle Paulson, Vicki Hoffman, Kathy Wochomurka, Callie Trautmiller, Diane Welsh, Pastors Chris and Dave).

### Treasurer's Report

	Week of	Year to Date
	May 8, 2022	
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,990	\$ 219,085
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,909	\$ 188,281

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

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

### Church Staff Contact Info

Pastor: Chris Myers—[chris@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:chris@firstchurchrf.org)  
Office: Missy Luedtke—[missy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org)  
Education: Stacy Myers—[stacy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:stacy@firstchurchrf.org)  
Mission: Dave Ostendorf—[dave@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:dave@firstchurchrf.org)  
Youth: Alex and Sarah Plum—[rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com)  
Music: Jamie Mills—[degolierjamie@gmail.com](mailto:degolierjamie@gmail.com)  
Choir: Sarah Plum—[sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com)  
Building: Farnum Fuller—[farnumfuller@gmail.com](mailto:farnumfuller@gmail.com)  
Maintenance: Tim Bylander—[timthefixitguy@gmail.com](mailto:timthefixitguy@gmail.com)

# Engaging the Word, Engaging the World...

## Upcoming

**Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ Annual Meeting, Green Lake Conference Center.**

“Building Up the Beloved Community,” the theme of the Meeting will recognize the impact of the pandemic on congregations and their communities, and focus on tending to wellness and best practices for fostering healthy church life in our time. Carol Merriman will be our congregation’s Delegate to the Meeting. More information can be found at the Conference website.

## Updating

**Care for Creation Crew (CCC) is up and running!!** Mission Education has established the Care for Creation Crew to guide the congregation into a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future at home and in the congregation. Rebecca Ferguson, Matt Meyer, Natasha Rayne, and Barbara Peterson invite you to join them in the CCC journey, aptly named in the historical context of the Civilian Conservation Corps of old. See a CCC leader for more information, and watch newsletters for Sustainable Living Tips and other information...

**Our Mission Partners.** As summer rolls around, please keep our Mission Partners close to mind and heart as they continue their vital commitments serving so many in great need. Our gifts support Among Friends, Assistance and Resource Center (ARC), Back Bay Mission, Feed My Starving Children, River Falls Community Food Pantry, River Falls Free Clinic, St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity, Our Neighbors’ Place, Servant of the Shepherd, Refugee Relief, Turningpoint, UCC Church Camps, and Our Church’s Wider Mission. We are grateful for their work and for the congregation’s partnership with them.

## Upcoming...

**Veterans Gathering.** By early summer, Mission Education will host a Veterans Gathering, after a long pause due to the pandemic. If you’re a veteran please be sure to complete the UCC Veteran’s Contact form <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084BA8AA2AAAFD0-uccveterans> For more information contact Rose Rude at 715-781-7032 or [rose.rude@uwrf.edu](mailto:rose.rude@uwrf.edu) More details about the gathering will be coming soon...



## Church App

The church has a mobile phone app. You can download it from the church website or by scanning the QR Code to the left. Call the church office if you need help.



## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

**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. Sign up at church or on the 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 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.

# Church Council Meeting Summary

April 19, 2022

Treasurer's Report - Budget is doing well. Building repair expenses are higher than normal. PPP money - recording needed to be moved into the correct category on the budget spreadsheet. Discussion occurred regarding the return to passing the offering plate over the summer, so children are again involved in the giving process. Council discussed the potential of having interns assist with passing the plate. With PPP money correction, motion to approve made by Brian, second made by Kathy R., passed by Council.

## **New Business:**

RFSD Proposal - Brad provided information to keep Council informed of the following consideration. River Falls School District Renaissance Academy has asked for the potential of housing the program in the church for 3 months next year (Jan, Feb, March 2023). There are approximately 55 students enrolled in the program. The District has contacted several churches in River Falls in addition to us. Brad, Tim, and the Trustees are asking the school a lot of questions regarding the arrangements. At this time, no decisions are being made.

Capital Campaign Update - Joel said video is made and Beacon Gatherings are scheduled. Everyone is asked to sign up.

Dave O Retirement Celebration - Speakers: Chris, Rose, Mike N, Rebecca - Christina will make a cake.

New Hire - Chris, Joel/Kathy (Mod), Rose (Mission), Diane (Pers), Stacy (CE). Opening/job description for 25% position is being advertised. Ordained clergy is preferred.

Potential Focus for Fall Council - Where is God leading us? Marie offered to assist with organizing reading materials for council review in the fall.

Nominating Committee—Joel/Chris need names for replacing committee members. Lu, Karen, Marsha, Joel, Pastor Chris serve on the committee. Each committee to review with their members whose terms are ending and how many new members will be needed. This information will be provided to Missy after May meetings.

## **Old Business:**

Church Van Update - To be built this June in Kansas City. May be delivered in time for the mission trip.

Weekly Communion - ongoing discussion regarding how to include the children in the offering, keeping communion every week through the summer.

## **Ministry Updates:**

Christian Education - Resource center discussion. Lu will paint. RedCat sound system is ordered. Coordination re: Mental Health and Wellness programming. Middle School aged Sunday School attendance numbers are down.

Deacons - new communion bread recipe (gluten free), wine change did not go well.

Endowment Grant - The Endowment Grant Committee met in person on April 4, 2022. The committee received one grant request. Budget balance prior to grant approval; \$15,871. The committee approved the following grant request: Christian Education Committee: \$1,600 for a Redcat portable sound system. There were no ungranted requests. Funds remaining following the awarding of grants: \$14,271. The next grant request deadline is May 31, 2022. The next committee meeting will be June 6, 2022.

Mission Education - Earth Day is April 24<sup>th</sup>. Large community program at Glen Park. Sustainability Tips will be added to newsletter again. Beginning Veterans luncheons again. Mental Health training on May 11th and 18th. They will REALLY miss Dave.

Music - Bell choir concert and Downton Abbey concerts went well. July 7th on the lawn performance. Choral music commission is being written with a performance planned for November.

Trustees - Discussion about lawn and garden. RFSD proposal discussion. Need assistance for indoor/outdoor cleanup on the April 30th

Pastor- Judith Permann Memorial Service to be held on June 18. Bob Miller interment to be held on July 6.

Attendance was very high at both Easter services - early service had more attendees. Deacons, Musicians, Pastors and Youth did great work. Sign up for appointments for the photo directory. Update regarding the donations for Ukraine refugees - over \$10,000 so far. Stacy exploring further refugee support with Lutheran Social Services. 2 Youth Mission Trips this summer to South Dakota in June and Boundary Waters in July. VBS will be held in August. Boston Trip being planned for April 20-23, 2023.

Adjourn NEXT MEETING: May 17, 2022 (off in June and July, meet on August 23)

Respectfully submitted, Jo Anne Friedell, Clerk

# SERVE generously

## Simpson Shelter 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!

## 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.

## Save Your Batteries to Recycle!

We have a container available for recycling all those old, depleted batteries. Start saving them now and bring them to church. We'll pass them on to the recyclers and keep them out of landfills and the environment in our ongoing commitment to sustainability.

## Ukraine Relief

Many of you are asking what you can do for the people of Ukraine. Please pray and please consider making a financial contribution to help them. Pray for changed hearts. Pray for world leaders to find a way to peace. Pray for people fleeing violence that they may find safe places to stay. Pray for those opening their homes and schools and churches.

Please also consider making a financial contribution. Working through our partner church in Hungary, the Reformed Church, which borders Ukraine and has been housing refugees in houses and churches, we will regularly send financial support. We have sent over \$12,000. Our next deadline will be **May 15**. Thank you for your prayerful support.

## 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. 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. Last quarter the church received over \$100 for this account, but that amount could grow greatly if you add the church to your Amazon account. Do it today!

## Empty Pill Bottles

The River Falls Lions Club is collecting empty pill bottles, both prescription and over the counter, to send to Africa where there is an urgent need. The bottles will be washed, and the labels soaked off before they are shipped. A blue collection tub is in the gathering area. Please see Carole Mottaz with questions.

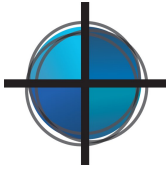
## Among Friends

Among Friends has re-opened and is accepting new referrals. Among Friends is a community based social respite program serving adults who have memory loss who reside in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. In April we enjoyed music, chair yoga, a concertina performance, starting herbs for spring planting and a variety of games and activities. In May special activities will include a Kentucky Derby party, a visit from service dogs in training, and making fresh flower bouquets.

For more information about Among Friends, call (715) 293-2651.

Also, check out our website: [amongfriendsrf.com](https://amongfriendsrf.com) and our Facebook page. Among Friends is held at the church on Tuesdays from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

**Guests are invited to join us for coffee from 9:30–10:00 on Tuesday, May 31.**



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Website: [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://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  
Farnum Fuller, Custodian

Pastor's home phone number:  
Chris Myers 715-426-2075  
[chris@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:chris@firstchurchrf.org)

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
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MAY 15, 2022



## First Communion Information for Parents

### When do children at First Congregational Church begin taking Communion?

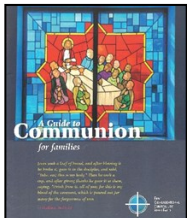
There is no uniform age at First Congregational Church when children begin participating in the Lord's Supper. Some children are pre-school age, others are in elementary school, and some wait until confirmation to begin taking Communion. The Bible and church history do not give decisive guidelines about the age to begin celebrating the Lord's Supper. The decision about when people are welcome at the Lord's Table has largely been made by local worshipping communities. Our practice is to include children when they and their parents think they are ready to participate.

### How will I know when my child is ready?

Some parents choose infant communion for their children. Many parents wait until their children express an interest. Typically, children are ready to participate in Communion when they start asking questions about this sacrament. One important theme of Communion is inclusion: All are welcome at the table of the Lord. If a child feels excluded, it is a good time for that child to begin participating.

### My child does not yet receive Communion. Should she/he still come forward?

Yes, all people are invited to come forward to the servers at the Communion distribution time. Children who will not be communing should keep their hands folded (as opposed to reaching out). This is a signal to the pastor and deacons that the child desires a blessing.



## Communion Resource for Families

First Congregational Church has a new *Guide to Communion*. The resource was specifically designed for families, but it could be helpful for adults as well. Copies of the guide are available on the table in the gathering space.