

Weekly Word – For Sunday, March 26, 2023

Worship this Sunday:

We are almost there! Holy Week begins in just over a week on Palm Sunday, April 2. On this last Sunday of Lent, the scripture texts this week give us a sneak peek at resurrection. Resurrection is not just something to look forward to in the future, resurrection is also God's power at work in our world today. Join us as we look for signs of God's renewing work in our lives today. The choir will sing, and communion is celebrated at the 10am worship service. Join us!

Link to Worship Livestream: <https://youtube.com/live/2LPK-6wcM1s?feature=share>

Sunday Bulletin

This Week

Sun., Mar 26	9:00-9:45 am	Choir Rehearsal in the Sanctuary
	9:00-9:45 am	Sunday Morning Text Study in the Youth Room
	9:45-11:15 am	Nursery Open
	10:00-11:00 am	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream
	10:30-11:15 am	Sunday School (Pre-School – Grade 8)
	11:00-11:30 am	Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:00-11:30 am	WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM
Tues., Mar 28	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
Wed., Mar 29	3:45-5:15 pm	Wednesday School
	5:15-6:00 pm	Wednesday Meal
	5:45-6:30 pm	Bells
	6:30-7:00 pm	Lenten Prayer Around the Cross
	7:00-7:30 pm	Confirmation Year 3 (Grade 9)
	7:00-7:30 pm	Middle School Youth Group
	7:00-8:00 pm	Chancel Choir
Thurs., Mar 30	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
Sun., Apr 2	9:00-9:45 am	Choir Rehearsal in the Sanctuary
	9:00-9:45 am	Sunday Morning Text Study in the Youth Room
	9:45-11:15 am	Nursery Open
	10:00-11:00 am	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream
	10:30-11:15 am	Sunday School (Pre-School – Grade 8)
	11:00-11:30 am	Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:00-11:30 am	WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM

Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:

Preacher:	Chris Myers
Celebrant:	Chris Myers
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Marie Roe
Deacons:	Laura Anderson, Linn Lawrence, Suzanne Hagen
Organist:	Marsha Pearson
Nursery:	Kahla Fuller
Live Stream:	Ryan Luedtke
Trustee:	Scott Elsesser
Welcomers:	Callie Trautmiller
Coffee Fellowship:	Merry Widows – St. B's Donuts
Counters:	Janice Healy, Marie Roe

Altar table flowers are given by Gwen Kuchear in memory of John and Lois Bradley.

Altar table flowers are in celebration of Tim and Rene Bylander's 36th wedding anniversary.

Loving God

Wednesdays in Lent: Lent is a time to prepare our hearts and minds for Easter and Holy Week. Each Wednesday evening during Lent, we gather for a brief 30-minute ‘Prayer Around the Cross’ worship service in the Fellowship Hall. Our theme this year is ‘Be Still’ and worship allows time for prayer, scripture, singing and a brief message as we gather around a candle lit cross. Join us at 6:30 pm for worship and at 5:15 pm for the Wednesday Night meal.

Holy Week and Easter: Holy Week is the most important week of the Christian year. In just one week, we see the depth and breadth of the Gospel displayed from the excitement of Palm Sunday, the mystery of Maundy Thursday, the agony of Good Friday and the sheer joy of Easter. Briefly, here is what is being planned this year:

Palm Sunday	April 2	Festive Worship with Palms at 10:00 am
Maundy Thursday	April 6	Foot Washing – more coming!
Good Friday	April 7	Choir Cantata
Holy Saturday	April 8	Set up for Easter Breakfast
Easter Sunday	April 9	Worship at 9:00 and 10:30 am with Breakfast from 8:00 until 10:15 am

Sunday Morning Text Study: Sunday morning Bible text study is held at **9:00 am on Sundays**. Please join us for an engaging discussion of the texts. All are welcome!

Adult Bible Study: Adult Bible Study is held on **Wednesday afternoons 1:00–2:30 pm** in the Youth Room. For more information, talk with Pastor Stacy.

New Members: The church will be receiving new members on **Palm Sunday, April 2**. Please contact the church office if you wish to be received into membership of the church.

Confirmation Sunday: Confirmation Sunday is always celebrated on the first Sunday in May. Join us on **Sunday, May 7**, as we welcome into the Christian faith our third-year confirmation students.

Loving Neighbor

Relay for Life: Our church is participating in Relay for Life and raising money for American Cancer Society. The Relay for Life event is **Friday, April 14, from 6:00-11:00 pm at the River Falls High School**. How can you participate or help?

1. Join the **Relay for Life Team**.
 2. **Provide funding** to the Relay team as they raise dollars for the American Cancer Society.
 3. Help provide an item/idea for the Relay for Life’s **Silent Auction**.
 4. Purchase a **Luminary Bag** “in Honor of” or “in Memory of” a special person. They will be available on Sundays prior to and at the Relay for Life event.
 5. Participate at the Relay Life Event by enjoying a **Spaghetti Supper from 6:00-7:30 pm** or **walking**.
- Have questions, please contact Deb Hoffman at debhoffman234b@gmail.com or phone 612-308-4945.

Relay for Life Thank You: Thank you very much to all of you who purchased soup at the annual Relay for Life Soup Night. You have helped the team raise over \$800. A huge THANK YOU to Lu Lueck, Diane Welsh, Laura Miller, Dave Reilly, Marie Roe and Deb Hoffman for all your delicious soups and donations of food to make our Soup Night a great success. Thank you also to the Joy Seekers for providing the yummy pies to go with our soups. We saw many happy faces as they tasted the soups and pies. Thank you everyone!!!

Spring Clean-Up, Saturday, April 29, 9:00 am: Please bring your gloves, rakes, blowers, pruning shears, etc. to help clean up the grounds at the church. Back-up date is Saturday, May 13. Please sign up and join us!

Among Friends is a community-based social respite program serving adults who have memory loss who reside in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. For more information, contact them at (715) 293-2561. Check out the website: amongfriendsrf.com and Facebook page. It is held at the church on **Tuesdays 9am to 3pm**.

Loving Self

Wednesday Meals: On Wednesday nights we offer a home-cooked meal in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$8 per person with a family max of \$30. **Meals are served from 5:15 to 6:00 pm.** We will not be offering drive thru, but you may go through the serving line and a meal will be packaged for you to take home. **Reservations must be placed by noon on Tuesdays.** You can sign up online, at church or by calling the church office.

March 29 - Boneless BBQ ribs, mac and cheese, potatoes, veggies, rolls

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-wednesday55>

Easter Breakfast – April 9: Join us for Easter Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall served by our church youth. The menu will be deluxe scrambled eggs, blueberry French toast bake, oven fried potatoes (a blend of sweet and red potatoes), bacon, sausage, an assortment of sweet breads and quick breads, fresh fruit medley, juice, and coffee. The cost is \$10 per person with a family max of \$40. All proceeds go to our Youth Fund. All confirmands and interns are expected to help set up and serve, cook and clean up. And we need some adult helpers! Talk to Alex to volunteer! **Please sign up by April 5:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-easter1>

Easter Lilies are offered for you to honor or remember someone and grace our worship space with beauty. The lilies will be displayed on Easter morning and may be taken home following the 10:00 service. To order an Easter Lily for \$15, please fill out the form on the sign-up table and place in the offering plate or leave in the office.

Orders must be placed by April 2. Proceeds go to our youth fund.

Concert: Internationally acclaimed performing artists Natalia Moiseeva, violin, and Ivan Konev, piano, will join as a duo to perform a program of Ukrainian music on **Sunday, April 2nd at 3:00 pm** in the sanctuary at First Congregational Church. We hope to see you there!

Men's Group: The church Men's Group meets **every other Tuesday from 9:00-10:00 am** for coffee, treats and conversation. Pastor Chris leads us with a brief devotion and gives us a topic to discuss. **We will meet again on April 4 and 18.** All men are welcome!

Cribbage Night: The group meets on the second Monday at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 which is given to a charity. Playing time starts at **7:00 pm**. All players welcome. The next game will be **April 10**.

Merry Widows: The Merry Widows will meet **Tuesday, April 18 at 1:00 at Pastor Stacy's house**. All widows are welcome to join us for lunch and conversation! See JoAnn Lentz for more information.

Church Yoga: Jan Hansen's church yoga group meets on **Tuesdays and Thursdays** at the church from **9:00-10:00 am** and via Zoom. Please call the office to receive the Zoom link.

Softball News: Our church sponsors a softball team in the River Falls Church Family League. The family league is a co-ed division allowing players to play at the age of 14 (for safety reasons and city league rules) and requires teams to have three women on the field at all times. The games are played on Monday nights at Hoffman Park. Games will begin the first Monday after Memorial Day and continue until the second week of August. Practices will begin late April. Come join in the fun and laughs. If you have questions, contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945 or debhoffman2234b@gmail.com. If you are interested in playing, please sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-church3>

Civil Rights Pilgrimage: Our church has a history of pilgrimage trips. This fall we will add a new experience - A Civil Rights Pilgrimage. This 5-day pilgrimage will include stops in Atlanta, Birmingham, Selma & Montgomery. We will literally be walking in the steps of history to learn more about our country and our Christian faith. There will also be time to enjoy southern cuisine! **The trip will take place October 25-29, 2023.** Please contact Pastor Chris for info. Space is limited to 14 people.

Second Holy Land Tour: In 2019, 24 people from church participated in a Holy Land Tour to visit important places in our Christian faith like Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Galilee. We also learned about the cultural and political struggle between Jews and Palestinians and how the three great religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam literally converge in Jerusalem. Planning this tour took a long time. Pastor Chris is in the beginning stages of planning another Holy Land Tour. A date has not been announced, but if you want to be kept in the loop about developments and involved in determining the timing of a trip, please sign-up to register your interest.

Earth Fest 2023 – Sat, April 22, from 12-4 pm at Glen Park: Celebrating Community & Environmental Wellness: This community event is a celebration of the past, present, and future sustainability efforts in River Falls and the surrounding area. This family-friendly event includes live music, fun family & wellness activities, food sampling, a sustainability and wellness fair, free giveaways, & more. All are welcome! For more info: hope4creationrf.org/about-3 or facebook.com/earthfestRF

Youth Group

Boundary Waters Trip: Alex has shared an email to everyone who has signed up for the Boundary Waters Trip. If you have not received an email and you would like to, please reach out to Alex at rfyouthgroup@gmail.com.
Dates are Sunday, July 16 to Thursday, July 20.

June Service Trip Overview: Select 2-3 mission opportunities in the Twin Cities to serve the community. Trip will be determined on group size and skill set. Hotel stay at the Great Wolf Lodge and will have plenty of time spent in the waterpark. Lunch at Midtown Global Market. \$75 trip deposit and total cost! For youth grades 6 through graduated and will need a few chaperones. Please fill out the Google form (QR Code and link below) ASAP so Alex can find dates and make reservations. **Registration deadline is April 14.** Alex will reach out before final decisions are made.



Summer Service Trip QR Code to Google Sign-up

Or google form link: [Summer Service Trip Google Signup](#)

Middle School Retreat to Action City – Fall: Any middle school students interested in a retreat to Action City/Waterpark in the fall, please sign up here. An official date will be selected based on interested students' availability. Please sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-middle10>

Summer Programs

Vacation Bible School 2023: The 2023 VBS theme is “When Jesus Lived.” The dates are **July 31–August 3, 9:00–11:30 am**. The Fellowship Hall will be transformed into a series of structures depicting important places in Jesus' ministry. Please volunteer to help design and build temporary learning stations prior to the week. As always, we will need many adults and teen volunteers as well as cookie bakers. Registrations for students and sign-up sheets are available online or at church. Please invite relatives, friends, and neighbors to participate in VBS.

VBS Design and Builders Sign Up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-vbsdesign>

VBS Volunteers Sign Up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-vbsvolunteers2>

VBS Cookie Bakers Sign Up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-vbscookie>

Registration Form: <https://firstchurchrf.org/grow/pages/vacation-bible-school>

Summer Kids' Musical: Children who have completed kindergarten through grade 6 are invited to participate in a summer musical program. The group will practice four mornings and produce a wonderful musical in the evening of the fourth day. Rehearsals are **July 17–20, 9:00–Noon**. The performance will be July 20 and will include dinner. The musical is open to all children in the congregation and community. Please spread the word. Registrations are available online or at church. We also need adult volunteers to help paint backdrops, create props, and guide the children. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Musical Volunteers Sign Up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-musical>

Registration Form: <https://firstchurchrf.org/grow/pages/vacation-bible-school>

Sign Ups

Coffee Fellowship Hosts Needed: Please sign up to help host and serve. Everything you need is provided, you just need to get there a little early to get things ready, serve and do a quick clean up. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-coffee>

Liturgists Needed: Please sign up to be a Sunday liturgist. You will lead us in the Call to Worship and a Scripture text. The bulletin will be sent via email to you on Thursday. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-liturgist>

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 & one person is needed at the ramp entrance. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to the service. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-welcomers>

Altar Table Flowers: Please sign up to provide flowers for the altar for Sunday worship. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-altar>

Church App: The church has a mobile phone app. You can download it from the church website or by scanning the QR Code found on a flyer on the sign-up table and Facebook.



Offering QR Code

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

Finances

THANK YOU to all of you for your support of the mission and ministry of our church through your tithes, offerings, and gifts. Your generosity empowers our church! Please be sure to sign up for e-giving or mail/drop off your gifts. There is also now an option to give online via our church website.

	<u>Mar 19, 2023</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,915	\$ 130,407
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,268	\$ 123,216

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

Mortgage Summary – As of March 15, 2023

Original Cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining Amount on Bank Loan	\$194,127.68
Interest Rate (Locked in through January 2027)	3.39%
Monthly Payment	\$2,622.76

Current Capital Campaign

Total Pledged	\$596,646.00
Total Received to Date	<u>376,939.12</u>
Remaining Balance	\$219,706.88

People

- For Theo Paul Kearns, son of Sara and Trevor, grandson of Norma and Roger Veith as he is baptized this Sunday, that he may grow in faith and love
- For the River Falls Food Pantry, one of our mission partners, as it seeks to feed hungry local families, may God bless your work
- For ARC one of our mission partners who is approaching the one-million-dollar mark in giving to local struggling individuals and families, may God continue to bless and deepen your efforts

- For church leaders and musicians preparing for our Lenten Prayer Around the Cross worship services on Wednesday nights, may they fill us with God's peace and purpose

Do you have upcoming news or celebrations to share with the congregation? Graduations? Birthdays and Anniversary celebrations? Please email them to 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. 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 office at office@firstchurchrf.org

Church Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday – 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

Friday – 8:30 am to 12:00 pm

Church Staff Contact:

Church Office - 715-425-2052

Pastor: Chris Myers - chris@firstchurchrf.org

Minister for Community and Outreach: Deb Meyer – deb@firstchurchrf.org

Education: Stacy Johnson Myers - stacy@firstchurchrf.org

Youth: Alex and Sarah Plum – rfyouthgroup@gmail.com

Office/Finance: Missy Luedtke - missy@firstchurchrf.org

Music: Jamie Mills - degolierjamie@gmail.com

Choir: Sarah Plum – sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com

Building: Farnum Fuller – farnumfuller@gmail.com

Maintenance: Tim Bylander - timthefixitguy@gmail.com