

Weekly Word – For Sunday, April 7, 2024

Worship this Week:

Dents and scratches. We all have them. Those times when life left us with bruises. Jesus had them too. On this the second Sunday of Easter, the gospel lesson reminds us that the disciples recognized Jesus because of his scars. This is significant and tells us that even our dents and scratches can be used for God's purposes. Join us as Sunday School resumes and communion is celebrated at the 10am worship service.

Link to Worship Livestream: https://www.youtube.com/embed/4STcIDD_Ra4?si=IOF6McnIkaleoA4k

Sunday Bulletin

This Week

Sun., Apr 7	9:00-9:45 am	Music 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
Mon., Apr 8	7:00-8:30 pm	Cribbage
Tues., Apr 9	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00-10:00 am	Men's Group
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	12:00-1:00 pm	Women's Group
	6:30-7:30 pm	WISE Team Meeting
Wed., Apr 10	1:00-2:30 pm	Bible Study
	3:45-5:15 pm	Wednesday School
	6:00-7:00 pm	Bells
	6:30-7:30 pm	Confirmation Grades 6-9
	6:30-7:30 pm	Church Interns
	7:00-8:00 pm	Chancel Choir
Thurs., Apr 11	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	10:00-11:00 am	Knitting Group
Sun., Apr 14	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
	11:00 am-12:00 pm	Companion Meeting in the Fireplace Room
	11:00 am-12:00 pm	Endowment Grant Meeting
4:00-5:30 pm	Piano Concert featuring Jacqueline Schwab	

Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:

Preacher:	Chris Myers
Celebrant:	Chris Myers
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn
Deacons:	Karen Lloyd, Traci Hagberg, Brian Miller, Lance Lueck, Cindy Gandrud
Organist:	Marsha Pearson

Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Laura Miller
Trustee: Tim Bylander
Welcomers: Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn
Coffee Fellowship: Among Friends
Counters: Janice Healy, Trish Graves

Altar table flowers are given by Marsha Pearson in memory of Maynard Pearson.

Loving God

Sunday Morning Text Study: Join us each Sunday morning, **9:00–9:50**, to explore the scripture texts used in that Sunday’s worship. Participating in this discussion is a great way to prepare for worship.

Adult Bible Study meets on **Wednesdays from 1:00–2:30 pm**. The group is reading *Jesus is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered* by UCC pastor and writer Martin Copenhagen. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Damascus Project: Our Wisconsin Conference sponsors an online learning community called the Damascus Project with a wide variety of options to grow in faith and living. Their website is: www.the-damascus-project.org. And upcoming topics include a class on UCC History and Polity as well as Theology and Ecology. Check it out!

Loving Neighbor

Relay for Life: The Relay event is **Fri, April 12, from 6:00-11:00 pm at River Falls High School**. This year’s theme is Be Bop a Cure for Cancer, so ladies get out the ole poodle skirts & guys slick back the hair to help raise \$\$ for American Cancer Society. Here are some ways to help: 1. **Provide an item for the Silent auction.** If you cannot be there but want to share an item, contact Deb Hoffman; 2. **Buy luminaries** in honor of or in memory of friends and family on April 7th at church, at the event, or contact Deb Hoffman. The Luminary Ceremony is at 9:00 pm; 3. **Enjoy a spaghetti dinner** at the event from 5:00-8:00 pm; 4. **Make a donation** to our Relay Team. **Thank you** to all who have already donated. For more info, contact Deb Hoffman at debhoffman234b@gmail.com or (612)308-4945.

Brazilian Healthcare Mission: The newsletter from the Rev. Barb de Souza healthcare ministry in Brazil is available on the church website. Click on the “Serve” tab at the top and then select “Our Community” (<https://firstchurchrf.org/pages/our-community>) then find the Brazilian Healthcare Mission newsletter link or you can find a copy at church on the back table.

Scarves, Mittens, and Hats: Join our knitting group by making scarves, mittens and/or hats for school age children. We are supporting Basics for Local Kids in providing needed items from head to toe in Pierce and St. Croix counties. You can make scarves, mittens or hats at home from yarn, fleece or wool or **join us on Thursdays in the Fellowship Hall starting at 10:00 am**. While Basics for Local Kids distributes items in the fall, we can make items all year long. They have agreed to pick up any of our creations throughout the year. If you have any questions, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or firstroe@gmail.com

First Church Companions: The Companions meet quarterly to support each other, help new Companions learn about this role, & discuss questions or concerns. If you are willing to visit with someone in our church community and connect at least once a month with a call or visit, please sign-up. If you are interested in receiving regular visits, there is also a line on the same sign-up sheet for Buddies. Contact Pastor Deb or Lu Lueck with questions.

Companion Meeting: The Companions will meet on **Sunday, April 14 after church** in the Fireplace Room.

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**.

Among Friends Volunteer Needed: Among Friends is seeking someone who can spend 2-3 hours with them **each Tuesday in April from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm**. That person will be there as someone who will spend time chatting with our participants. Please contact the church office for more information.

Loving Self

New Hymnals: The new hymnals are here! If you have not paid for your hymnals, please do so this week!

Piano Concert: The Music Committee is hosting a concert featuring Jacqueline Schwab on **Sunday, April 14, at 4:00 pm**. Known for her work in over a dozen Ken Burns' documentaries, pianist Jacqueline Schwab will perform pieces from *Civil War*, *Baseball*, and *Mark Twain* as well as traditional Scottish tunes and her own works inspired by Ken's piercing window into American history. Refreshments and conversation with Jacqueline to follow. CDs will be available for purchase. Join us!

Earth Fest 2024 will be held on **Saturday, April 20 from 12:00-4:00 pm at UWRF**. Paul Douglas, a retired Twin Cities TV weatherman, will speak on "A Climate of Change: From Words to Action" at **11:00 am**. First Congregational will have a table set up at the fair. Our theme is "The Earth is Stressed - Are You?" We are giving away stress reducing paper labyrinths and resources on actions we can take to relieve the stress on the earth as well as our own mental health. We are also planning a free drawing for a weather themed basket. Would you like to connect with others by helping us at the Earth Fest table? Please sign up for a shift. For more information contact Pastor Deb, Rebecca Ferguson or Sally Steneman. Sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-48559880-earth>

Learning Community Event: In Our Own Voice, The Journey Toward Mental Wellness will be held in the Fellowship Hall on **Tuesday, April 30 at 6:30 pm**. Members of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will share their personal stories of what it is like to have a mental illness or to live with and care for someone with a chronic mental illness. Discussion will center around how we as a church can become more informed, inclusive, and responsive to those who have mental health needs. The session will conclude with question/answers, a survey and resources for attendees. Dessert will be provided. Please come and learn how we can support those who have mental health challenges in our church and community.

VBS Volunteers: Given Pastor Stacy's sabbatical we are gathering volunteers for VBS earlier than usual. Please volunteer to help! We need adult and teen workers. VBS will be July 29–August 1, 9:00–11:30 am. Pastor Stacy will be back for VBS. To volunteer, please sign the list on the sign-up table or on the church website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-47864154-vbsvolunteers>

Thank You to Savers: Thanks to everyone who has saved oatmeal containers, small things, and eyeglasses and brought them to church. *We are now done collecting those items* and Pastor Stacy intends to excavate her office so it does not resemble a disorganized recycling center. Bottom line: No need to bring these items anymore but stay tuned for future collections. Thank you!

WISE Team Meeting: The WISE Team will meet on **Tuesday, April 9 at 6:30 pm**.

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, April 17 at 1:00 pm at Kingdom Buffet in Hudson**. All widows are welcome to join us for lunch and conversation! See JoAnn Lentz for more information.

Women's Group: Interested in fellowship and community with other women? Pastor Deb invites you to join her every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month. Please bring a sack lunch. The next meeting will be **April 9 & 23**.

Men's Group: Our church men's group meets **every other Tuesday from 9:00-10:00 am**. All men are welcome to join us for coffee, donuts and lively conversation. Our next gatherings are **April 9 & 23**.

Let's Knit Together: Calling all who knit, crochet, or have a craft that can be brought to church. Join us on **Thursdays at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall**. We have a great time sharing our current projects and enjoying each other's company. Any questions, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or firstroe@gmail.com

Church Yoga: The 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.

Cribbage Night: The cribbage group meets on the second Monday at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 and the group decides which charity to donate to. Playing time starts at 7:00 pm. All players and abilities welcome. The next game will be on **April 8**.

Youth Events

Vacation Bible School: Children age 3 through completed grade 5 are invited to Vacation Bible School. The theme is *Christian Art: Stop, Look, Listen* and will feature Bible study, children's literature, Christian art and architecture, music, and an engaging variety of art projects from painting to felting. VBS is free and open to all community children. Registration forms are online or at church. Dates are **July 29–August 1, 9:00–11:30 am**.

Summer Children's Musical: Children who have completed grades 1-6 are invited to produce the musical *Rescue in the Night: The Story of Daniel in the Lions' Den*. Rehearsals include singing, learning lines, and working on the set and props. After four days of a whirlwind of rehearsals, the show will be presented on Thursday evening. The musical is directed by elementary music teacher Emma Cruciani and will be a fun week. All are welcome and there is no charge. Registration forms are online or at church. Dates are **August 19-22, 9:00 am–Noon for Rehearsals and August 22, 6:30 for Dinner and the Show**.

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 an option to give online via our church website.

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Mar 31, 2024</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 13,915	\$ 178,165
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,463	\$ 136,019

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

Mortgage Summary – As of April 1, 2024

Original Cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining Amount on Bank Loan	\$39,167.63
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>498,010.03</u>
Remaining Balance	\$ 98,635.97

Our current three-year capital campaign began June 2022 and will end in May 2025. It will eliminate our bank loan, fund a new church sign and upgrades to the audio-visual capabilities in the church building. Thank you!

People

- For the 200 who enjoyed a delicious Easter Breakfast and the over 400 people who were welcomed to worship on Easter Sunday, together may we be Christ's resurrected body at work in the world today
- For the Among Friends Program, which meets here at church on Tuesdays to help those with dementia and their families by providing a fun and safe place for them, may they be blessed with more participants and volunteers!
- For our baptism boom including Hope Withers (Erik and Vanessa) baptized February 25, Laney Sitz (Heather and Dan) baptized March 3, Nora Koecher (Dan and Mari) baptized March 10, and four Thompson children to be baptized on May 5, may they all grow in love and faith!
- For our amazing choir who participated in the It Takes a Village Choir Concert which raised over \$19,000 for the village in Haiti supported by River Falls area churches and for their work and extra effort on the Good Friday Cantata and Easter Sunday worship

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 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