

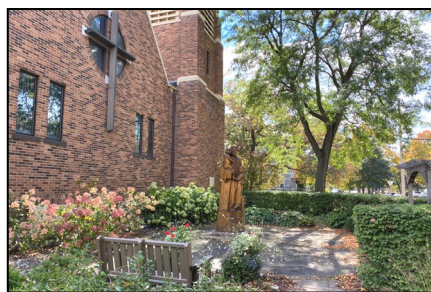
# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

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

August 15, 2025

*No matter who you are,  
no matter where you are  
on your spiritual journey,  
you are welcome here!*



## Pastor's Page

### The Tyranny of the Calendar

Around this time of year, many of us ask the question: Where did the summer go? Between home projects, vacations, visits with friends and family, camps, gardens, and hopefully some walks around the neighborhood, our brief Wisconsin summers go too quickly (anyone want to give me an amen?). Compounding our brief summer is what I call the 'tyranny of the calendar.' Let's face it, many, though not all of us, are overscheduled. We are forced to choose between good things and even better things. The result is that our calendars are overloaded leaving too many of us stressed out, overloaded and just plain pooped.

It is to this kind of chaos and tyranny that Jesus comes saying in Matthew 11:28: *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.* It is to this longing for a break that the biblical writers talk of Sabbath and a rest from our labors. Long gone are the days when Sunday mornings were unscheduled. Today you need to make a conscious choice to be in worship.

Labor Day is very early this year which means Rally Day will fall early as well, on Sunday, September 7th. There will be a lot of things going on that day and in the weeks following. Join us and bring some stressed out friends with you. Together may we experience the peace Jesus offers.

### **Rally Day 2025** **Sunday, September 7**

9:00 am—Sunday Morning  
Bible Study

10:00 am—Worship with Choir

10:15 am—Children (PreK–8th  
Grade) Leave for Sunday School

11:00 am—Coffee Fellowship

11:00 am—Confirmation Kick Off  
Event for Middle Schoolers

(The Event for High School  
Students is Sunday, Sept 14th)

## Sunday Morning Bible Study

Sunday morning Bible study group resumes on **September 7**. The group discuss the Bible passages used in worship. The groups meets at **9:00–9:50 Sunday mornings** in the Youth Room. Please join us! For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

## Upcoming Events

Mon–Thurs, August 18–21  
Youth Musical: *Malice in the Palace*

Thursday, August 21  
Musical Performance and Dinner  
at 6:00 pm — reserve for meal!

Sunday, August 24  
Cedar Valley Brass in Worship

Sunday, August 31  
Last 9:30 am Summer Worship  
Service

Monday, September 1  
Labor Day—Church Office Closed

Sunday, September 7  
Rally Day, return to regular  
10:00 am Worship and Sunday  
School

Sunday, September 14  
Spring Break Mission Trip  
Meeting after Worship

Tuesday, September 30  
Red Cross Blood Drive  
11:00 am to 5:00 pm

## Fall Confirmation Orientation: Required Meetings

The 2025 Confirmation Orientation Meeting for Middle School students will be after worship on Rally Day, **September 7**. This meeting is required for all confirmands in grades 6 – 8 and their parents.

The 2025 Confirmation and Church Intern Orientation Meeting for High School students will be after worship on **Sunday, September 14**. This meeting is required for 9th graders and High School students who will participate in the Church Intern program and their parents.

### Night of Dinner/Theater

You are invited to a night of dinner and a show on **Thurs, August 21**. Dinner will be served starting at **6:00 pm**, followed by the main feature: the musical *Malice in the Palace: The Story of Esther*. The show has wonderful music and clever lines. Please come to support the young people in the congregation. Sign up at church or online.



### Tools for School

We are collecting school supplies for local families. The School Supply Event will be **August 18 and 19** here at church. Typically we serve about 300 students. Thank you for your generous support of this needed local ministry. Please bring donations to church.

## Sunday School Teachers Needed: Urgent Need

Sunday School begins again on Rally Day, September 7. Please volunteer to teach. All classes have teaching partners so no one teaches every week. This is an important ministry and we need volunteers. If you have a Sunday School student, please consider volunteering. If you don't have children in Sunday School, please consider volunteering. The need is urgent. Please sign up on the sign-up sheet or online.

There will be a meeting for Sunday School teachers on **Thursday, September 4, 6:30–7:30 pm**.

## Wednesday School Workers Needed

Wednesday School begins on **October 1**. We also need volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis. Please sign the list on the sign-up table or volunteer on the website.

## Peach Thanks

A HUGE thanks to our Peach Team. Thanks to....

- Deb Hoffman who organizes this each year
- All who helped unload, count, stack and label the 500 boxes
- All who helped load them into cars, especially Randy Welsh and Connor Rude
- Our peach queens, Diane Welsh who staffs the pick up table and Marie Roe who makes phone calls
- Missy who deals with a LOT of phone calls in the church office about peaches
- All who purchased peaches

This is a fundraiser for our Youth Fund so thank you for your generosity!





## VBS Thanks

Another VBS year is in the books. We had a particularly wonderful week this year. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped during the week: Bea Adams, Eleanor Adams, Sonja Adams, Alice Follstad, Dawn Follstad, Judy Fuller, Derrick Graves, Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn, Christina Krueger, Sagan Linaberry, Brodie Lueck, Jenny Luedtke, Kenzie Merriman, Jamie Mills, Chris Myers, Katy Myers, Stacy Myers, Ann Nelson, Diane Olson, Melissa Oscanyan, Becky Pajac, Evelyn Purdy, Norma Revels, David Reilly, Kam Ross, Connor Rude, MiKayla Sanocki, Julia Skule, Marshall Skule, Vicki Swank, Lori Swanson, and Kim Swanson.

Thanks also to:

- Tim Bylander for building the amazing mud kitchen;
- Andy & Christina Krueger, chefs for the Thursday dinner;
- The Thursday evening kitchen crew that served and cleaned up;
- The bakers who keep the children supplied with marvelous cookies;
- MiKayla Sanocki for the fabulous bubble machines;
- Marshall Skule for this year's wooden "Marshall Project"; and to
- The folks who helped to put up and take down the backdrops.

First Congregational is a wonderful church family that supports children. The congregation's vitality is on full display during VBS. Thanks, everyone.





## Softball News and Game Schedule

What a game! We didn't win, but we played well with only 8 faithful players. There was some creative position playing and awesome catches to keep the score close till the opponent's last inning batting. Remembering that the goal is to have fun, we had fun and played with gusto as we stepped up to fill in gaps. We are in 3rd place with a record of 5 wins, 3 losses and one rain out. Looking ahead, our last 2 games are:

August 18 - 6:00 pm at Hoffman Park Field #2

August 25 - Time and Field TBD

Thanks to our faithful fans who cheer us on. Come join in the fun whether you are playing or cheering the team on. If you have questions, please contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945, [debhoffman234b@gmail.com](mailto:debhoffman234b@gmail.com).



## Spring Break 2026

Spread the word! Save the date! We have 20 spots for a Spring Break Mission Trip to UCC related Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi for **Spring Break of 2026: March 14-21**. Any youth age 14 and older and any adult who wants to spend a week working on rehabbing houses in sunny Biloxi is welcome to join. Note Hudson Spring Break is the week before but UWRF and many UW Schools are off when we are — we would love to have college students participate!

There will be a meeting on **Sunday, Sept 14 after worship in the Youth Room** to talk about the trip and begin sign ups. We expect this trip to fill quickly so make sure you are at the meeting! Alex Plum can provide details.



## Youth and Young Adult Bible Study

Alex has been leading a weekly high school & young adult Bible Study over the summer. They meet at local coffee shops, generally on Tues or Wed. They flip between morning & evening. Want to connect? Call or text him for the next gatherings 612-224-5894

## Journey House Summer Send-Off - Aug 22, 6:00-8:45 pm

All young adults (18-40ish) are invited to join Journey House (143 E. Cascade Ave) for a campfire and outdoor game night - an evening of fun, fellowship, and connection with fellow young adults from River Falls and neighboring communities! S'mores, food, and snacks will be provided. You will also have an opportunity to learn more about Journey House and the exciting new Young Adult Ministry they are starting. Go to their website for more information: <https://journeyhousecampusministry.org/>

**THANK YOU!!**  
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for the scholarship support! I really appreciate your generosity and all the encouragement you've shown me. It means a lot to have my church family behind me as I take this next step. Thanks again for believing in me!

- Murphy Beatty

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to continue my academic career with the church scholarship! It means so much to me that I have such a wonderful congregation on my side. I am so thankful! - Stella Theisen

Thank you very much for awarding me a church scholarship. This scholarship is not just a financial blessing, but also a reminder of the love and encouragement my church has given to me. Thank you for believing in me and my education. I hope that one day I will have the opportunity to bless others the way you have blessed me.

With gratitude, Ryan Luedtke

Thank you so much for the scholarship! The support I have received from you guys has been tremendous and inspiring. Thank you for teaching me the importance of helping others. Thank you again for the scholarship and support as I finish out my last year at WWU.

- Aeva Noreen



## Rally Day

Rally Day, when Sunday School, Sunday Morning Bible Study, choir and bells resume, is **September 7**. All children who are three (or nearly three) years old (and toilet trained) are welcome in Sunday School.

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## Wednesday School

All children who will be in kindergarten through Grade 5 in the fall of 2025, are invited to participate in Wednesday School. Elementary students in River Falls are picked up at the four elementary schools in town at the end of the school day. Wednesday School concludes at 5:15. Registration and permission forms are available on the church website and in the church office. It is important to have advance registration in order to be adequately prepared for students, particularly due to transportation needs.

Wednesday School begins **October 1**. Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

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Among Friends may be the best kept secret in River Falls. Each Tuesday and Thursday, they meet from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm for fun, food and fellowship. Among Friends is a ministry to families with dementia. It offers a safe place for those with dementia to connect with others and a needed break for families to rest or do errands.

Recently, they held a carnival day complete with games, food and prizes. If you know someone who may be interested, check out their website at <https://www.amongfriendsrf.com/> or talk to Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn, Norma Revels, Marshall Skule, Rich Clymer, all who volunteer there.



## What The Pastor is Reading

The Salt Path by Raynor Winn — What would you do if you lost your house and job, plus were sick to boot? Chances are not go for a 400 mile hike, but that is what this couple did facing troubling personal circumstances. This is a wonderful book that is part travel memoir (they walk the South West Coast Path around Cornwall, England), part social commentary (when they tell people they meet they are homeless, the conversations end and when they say they are hiking, people talk to them for hours), and part personal triumph, this has been an enjoyable read. Spoiler alert — I don't yet know how it all ends!



### Church Angels

*Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2*

So much of the work of the church goes on almost invisibly. We all know of those who teach and sing and usher and welcome and serve, but there are also angels among us who do things behind the scenes that few know about. Taking our cue from the scripture verse above, we will try to draw attention to some of these unsung angels among us.

You may know Rich Clymer from worship. He and his wife Shari Just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this summer. Rich is a retired school superintendent who most recently served in Hastings. Rich recently became one of our volunteers at Among Friends. He says it is one of the most meaningful and fun decisions he has made in retirement. He joins Marshall Skule, another church member, and volunteers and together they help either Tuesday or Thursday (or both!) from 9am to 3pm. Among Friends has lots of guy guests now so they help keep the guys busy and active. The next time you see him, thank him for being a church angel!

## Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study

The Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study resumes on **September 10**. The group will study the Gospel of John. This will be an in-depth yet accessible study of John. Copies of the discussion book are available for \$20.00 in the church office. Prior to the first meeting, please read the book's introduction. You could also read the whole of John's gospel from beginning to end over the summer. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

### Thrivent Free Money

Do you have a retirement account through Thrivent? If so, you can designate some or all of your 'choice dollars' to a non-profit such as First Congregational. We are now set up to receive such gifts. Talk to the church office if you need more information.

### Red Cross Blood Drive

The Red Cross Blood Drive held at the church is on **Tues, Sept 30, 11:00 am–5:00 pm**. See the flyer for more info. Call 1-800-733-2767 or go to [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) and enter: [firstcongregationalrf](http://firstcongregationalrf) to schedule an appointment.

### Treasurer's Report

	Week of Aug 3, 2025	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 7,075	\$ 313,021
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 329,313

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)  
Education: Stacy Myers—[stacy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:stacy@firstchurchrf.org)  
Office: Missy Luedtke—[missy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org)  
Youth: Alex 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)

## SERVE generously

### Simpson Shelter

Supply needs—Great Buys:

- Men's T-shirts—sizes M, XL, XXL, XXXL
- Bras—all Sizes
- Personal size body lotion
- Personal size baby oil
- Nail care kits
- Men's & women's shower shoes
- Textured/natural hair products
- Personal size hair conditioner
- Personal size toothpaste
- Umbrellas
- Good buys on out of season clothing

**All items MUST BE NEW.**

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

### Empty Pill Bottles (Prescription Only)

The River Falls Lions Club is collecting empty pill bottles, only the clear prescription bottles that are filled by our pharmacists, 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 tub is in the gathering area. If you have questions, contact Carole Mottaz.

### River Falls Food Pantry

The pantry is currently in need of: cereal, peanut butter and jelly.

Information about donations is on their website at <https://rfcfp.org/>. Donations can be brought to 705 St. Croix Street during their hours of operation:

Mondays 10:00 am—12:00 pm  
and 6:00—7:30 pm  
Wednesdays 1:00—5:00 pm  
Thursdays 6:00—7:30 pm  
Fridays 10:00 am—12:00 pm



### Let's Knit/Craft Together

Join us on **Thursdays at 10:00 am**. We meet at **The Sycamore** on the first Thursday of each month and in the **Fellowship Hall at church** the other Thursdays. 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](mailto:firstroe@gmail.com)

### Women's Group

Interested in fellowship and community with other women? You are invited to join the group at noon every 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month. Please bring a lunch. The next meetings will be **Aug 26 & Sept 9**.

### Church Yoga

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

### Merry Widows

They will meet on **Wednesday, August 20 at 1:00 pm at Culvers**. All widows are welcome to join us for dinner and conversation! See JoAnn Lentz for more information.

### Men's Group

Our church men's group has decided to continue meeting this summer **every other Tuesday** (usually we take some time off over the summer). All guys are welcome to join us at **9:00 am in the Youth Room**. Our next gatherings are **Aug 26 & Sept 9**. Join us!



### Veterans Coffee Chat

Held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at 9:30 am at The Sycamore in River Falls. Coffee and pastries are provided. Contact Megan at The Sycamore 715-997-3441 with questions.



### 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'



**Among Friends**  
RIVER FALLS, WI

Among Friends is a community-based social respite program serving adults with memory loss who reside in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. For more information, contact them at 715-293-2561. Also, check out the website: [amongfriendsrf.com](http://amongfriendsrf.com) and the Facebook page. Among Friends is located at the church and is held on **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**.





FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH, UCC  
RIVER FALLS

Office Phone: 715-425-2052

E-mail: [office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org)

Website: [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://www.firstchurchrf.org)

## STAFF

Chris Myers, Pastor

Stacy Johnson, CE Minister

Missy Luedtke, Office Administrator

Marie Roe, Moderator

Alex Plum, Youth Minister

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 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

110 N. Third Street

River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

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PERMIT #53

RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

AUGUST 15, 2025

## 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 & one person is needed at the ramp entrance. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to worship. 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.

## Newsletter Deadlines

The church newsletter is sent out twice a month. Deadlines are the 10th and 25th of each month. Items should be sent to the church office no later than those dates.