

## **Weekly Word – For Sunday, August 31, 2025**

### **Worship this Week:**

Humility and hospitality are two big themes in Jesus' ministry. Jesus calls us to be humble, which is counter cultural these days. And Jesus calls us to offer hospitality to strangers, also counter cultural. On this last weekend of the summer season (and last Sunday of summer worship at 9:30 am!), join us as we rest from our labors and learn more from Jesus about humility and hospitality. Join us!

We are in need of Nursery Workers for this Sunday. Please sign up here to help:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-56894730-summer>

Link to Worship Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/-gMtDGE-ypg?si=HHpD79i6WWm917Eb>

### **Sunday Bulletin**

#### **This Week**

Sun., Aug 31	9:15-10:45 am	Nursery Open
	9:30-10:30 am	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream
	10:30-11:00 am	Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:00-11:30 am	WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM
Mon., Sept 1		Labor Day – Church Office Closed
Tues., Sept 2	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
Thurs., Sept 4	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	10:00-11:00 am	Knitting Group
Sun., Sept 7	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
	11:15 am-12:00 pm	Orientation for Confirmation Grades 6-8 and Parents

#### **Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:**

Preacher:	Chris Myers
Celebrant:	Chris Myers
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Traci Hagberg
Deacons:	Karen Lloyd, Cindy Gandrud, Marshall Skule, Loral Keil, Brian Miller
Organist:	Marsha Pearson
Live Stream:	Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers:	Diane Crist
Trustee:	JP Okal
Coffee Fellowship:	Kathy Rausch, JoAnne Friedell
Counters:	Marie Roe, Mark Anderson

*Altar table flowers are given by Barb and Larry Peterson in celebration of their 58<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on September 2.*

## **Loving God**

**Sunday School Teachers Needed:** Sunday School begins again on **Rally Day, September 7**. Please volunteer to teach. All classes have teaching partners so no one teaches every week. **We need two more teachers.** Please sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-57689735-sunday>

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 need volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis. Please sign up at church or online:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-57916444-wednesday>

**Rally Day – September 7:** Join us for the first day of the program season! Here is our schedule for the day:

9:00 am—Choir Practice

9:00 am—Bible Study

10:00 am—Worship and Sunday School

11:00 am—Coffee Fellowship

11:00 am—Confirmation Orientation for Middle Schoolers/Parents

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

**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. If you have questions, 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](http://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**

**Simpson Shelter Supply Needs:** 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 and 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.

**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 Church. We are now set up to receive such gifts. Talk to the church office if you need more information.

**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](http://amongfriendsrf.com) and Facebook page. It is held at the church on **Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am to 3pm**.

**Among Friends Volunteers Needed:** The program meets two days a week and has 12 active guests. Training is provided & the rewards are phenomenal! They are particularly in need of male volunteers but are willing to receive all. Contact the program coordinator Sarah Schaffner at [amongfriendsrf@gmail.com](mailto:amongfriendsrf@gmail.com)

## **Loving Self**

**Knitting Group Update:** Please bring any hats, scarves or mittens to the green bin in the gathering area by **Thurs, Sept 18**. We will organize the items and arrange for them to be picked up by the Basics for Local Kids organization. We are thrilled to have so many people join us on Thursday mornings! The fellowship is wonderful and sometimes we work on the craft that we brought along. Feel free to drop in and see what we are up to!

**Coming Soon: Art Exhibit:** The exhibit *Cardboard Chronicles* will be displayed in the Fellowship Hall from **October 1 to November 13**. The exhibit will feature 25 original paintings by Rudolph Bostic that depict biblical stories painted on cardboard with enamel and house paint. Artist Rudolph Bostic is a longtime member of the Second African Baptist Church in Savannah, Georgia. Bostic found inspiration in the works of masters such as Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo. His art has appeared in folk art museums and galleries, particularly in the southern United States. Bostic paints as a reflection of his own spirituality. He wrote, "I try to express my love for God and the world."

**Next Learning Community: Cardboard Chronicles:** Please join us for the next Learning Community event on **Tuesday, October 7, at 6:30 pm**. The focus will be a conversation about the art exhibit *Cardboard Chronicles: The Art of Rudolph Bostic* that will be displayed in the Fellowship Hall starting October 1. This is the second (and final) art exhibit made possible through the grant First Congregational received from the Lilly Foundation.

**Merry Widows:** They will meet on **Wed, Sept 17 at 1:00 pm at Applebees in Hudson**. 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 meets **every other Tuesday from 9:00-10:00 am** in the Youth Room. All men are welcome to join us for coffee, donuts and lively conversation. We gather for an hour and Pastor Chris leads us into a brief discussion. Our next gatherings are **Tues, Sept 9 & 23**. Join us!

**Women's Group:** Interested in fellowship & community with other women? You are invited to join the group at noon every 2nd & 4th Tuesday. Please bring a lunch. The next meetings will be **Tues, Sept 9 & 23**.

**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 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)

**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.

**WISE Corner:** NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 6:30 pm at 113 East Elm Street (Mei Mei's) and the Peer Support Group meets the same evenings at Luther Memorial Church at 6:30 pm. Our church WISE Team meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm. For more info, call Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

## **Community Life**

**Softball News:** This will be the last softball update of the summer. The team ended the season with a record 6 wins and 4 losses, a three-way tie with two other teams in the league standings. We ended our season with 6 of the 8 teams having a fun night. We began with a picnic with brats and hot dogs grilled by Andy Krueger and the rest of the food was provided by the different teams. It was fun watching the teams share conversation with each other as they enjoyed their meal. Thank you all for an awesome year filled with laughter, encouragement, and friendship. It's been an honor playing softball with you this summer. See you all next year.

**Partnering for Our Sustainable Future: A Community Conversation Hosted by Hope for Earth - Thurs, Sept 18, 6:30-8:30 pm at River Falls High School:** Hope for Earth is launching the Climate Action and Resiliency Initiative, and we want your voice at the table! Together, we'll explore practical ways to improve everyday life, like making energy more affordable, reducing waste, strengthening local food systems, and creating inviting green spaces. You'll learn about different focus areas of the initiative, share your thoughts, and (if you're interested) sign up to be part of an action team helping to shape the future of our community. No experience needed, just your ideas and energy. Light refreshments provided. Free and open to all. RSVP at <https://www.hopeforearth.org/>

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

### **Youth Events**

**Confirmation Orientation: Required Meetings:** The 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 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.

**Wednesday School:** All children who will be in kindergarten through Grade 5 in the fall, are invited to participate in Wednesday School. Elementary students in River Falls are picked up at the 4 elementary schools in town at the end of the school day. Wednesday School concludes at 5:15. Registration & permission forms are at church and on the website. 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.

**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, September 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.

### **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 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>Aug 24, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,747	\$ 356,971
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 361,182

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

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

### **People**

- For Barb and Larry Peterson who celebrate their 58th wedding anniversary on September 2, may your love continue to grow
- For all the volunteers who made the Tools for School Drive and the Youth Musical, along with all our regular programming, possible—whew it was busy week! See the prayer request below.
- For our church building team of Tim, Farnum and Troy who have been working overtime fixing the bell tower, moving tables and keeping everything clean, we appreciate you!
- For the gift of peaches and the youth ministries they will enable
- For the gift of Labor Day, may we appreciate those who labor on our behalf

Do you have upcoming news or celebrations to share with the congregation? Graduations? Birthdays and Anniversary celebrations? Please email them to [office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto: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](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org)

### **Church Office Hours:**

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

Friday – Closed

### **Church Staff Contact:**

Church Office - 715-425-2052

Pastor: Chris Myers - [chris@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:chris@firstchurchrf.org)

Education: Stacy Johnson Myers - [stacy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:stacy@firstchurchrf.org)

Youth: Alex Plum – [rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com)

Office/Finance: Missy Luedtke - [missy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org)

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)

Building: Troy Zakrzewski – [ztruck51ford@gmail.com](mailto:ztruck51ford@gmail.com)

Maintenance: Tim Bylander - [timthefixitguy@gmail.com](mailto:timthefixitguy@gmail.com)