

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

October 1, 2025

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

Pastor's Page

On your way in to church this morning you saw this. It is a picture of the church memorial garden. You can see the flowers, you can see the statue of Jesus, but do you see that mound of white flowers in the middle—it is called a Sweet Autumn Clematis. They smell amazing. Something in the cooler and shorter autumn days makes them bloom. Each week you will see more and more of those blooms. Notice what is holding it all up. Buried under the vines is a trellis. Without that trellis there would be no blossoms, no sweet smells, just straggling vines that would cover up the garden and choke out all the other plants. If a vine does not have a trellis it will die. It is an image for our lives as well. An image for balanced, healthy, life. If your faith life does not have a trellis, a structure, some way to help you grow and blossom, it will wither away. One of the saddest parts of my ministry is watching people whose faith slowly dies because they have no structure, no trellis, no way to help them bloom and blossom, to be the person God needs them to be.



Last week we talked about silence and solitude, how Jesus regularly retreated into the wilderness, and how he used those moments to reset himself. Not to escape, not as a vacation, but as time to intentionally reflect and renew so he could go back into the world and change it. Silence and solitude are part of that trellis of faith. Worship is part of the trellis of faith. Prayer is part of the trellis of faith. Community, generosity, service to others are all on that trellis of faith. What are the parts of your faith life that need some help and attention? What are the parts that need to be given some extra nourishment? And what are the parts that need to be trimmed back?

(excerpt from September 21, 2025 sermon – Rebalance Worship Series)

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, October 1
Wednesday School and
Wednesday Family Meals Begin

Sunday, October 5
Spring Break Mission Trip
Deposits Due
Endowment Grant Requests
Deadline

Tuesday, October 7
Learning Community: The Art
of Rudolph Bostick

Sunday, October 12
College Pack Items Deadline

Tuesday, October 14
Inquirer's Class

Sunday, October 19
Music at First Church Concert

Sunday, October 26
Bibles to 6th Graders

Learning Community: Cardboard Chronicles

Please join us for the 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. Please sign up in the gathering space or online. Dessert will be served at 6:30 pm.

Fall Clean-Up—Sat, Nov. 1, 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, November 8. Please sign up and join us!

College Pack Items Needed!

One of the mission activities of the church youth program is to send College Packs to those off at school or the military. We ask each of our 6-12th grade families to bring items for the 30 College Packs we anticipate sending this year. Think necessary items, fun items and lightweight items as they will be shipped! Food is always good. So are dorms decs.

Please have them at church by **Sunday, October 12**. Thank you!

Neighbors in Need Offering

Neighbors in Need offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one third of the offering going to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two thirds supporting UCC Justice Ministries. Envelopes are in the pews, and we will be taking the offering through October. Thank you for your generous support.

Inquirer's Class

New to church? Want to know more about our life and ministry? Join us for the Inquirer's Class on **Tuesday, October 14 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. At this gathering, you will meet church leaders, other new folks and learn more about First Congregational Church. Dessert and childcare are provided. Please sign up at church.

*Music of
Rachmaninov,
Massenet
and Dvorak*

SUNDAY,
OCTOBER 19
3:00PM

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
110 N THIRD STREET, RIVER
FALLS WI 54022

HELEN CHANG, VIOLIN

NATALIA MOISEEVA, VIOLA

LUKAS GOODMAN, CELLO

IVAN KONEV, PIANO

FREE ADMISSION

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."



Adam and Eve Name the Animals, Rudolph Bostic

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Come and join the Sunday Morning text study group! Participants discuss the Bible passages used in worship each week. The groups meets at **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 group is making its way through the Gospel of John. For the next two weeks, the focus will be on John, chapters 2-4. The group meets in the library on **Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 pm**. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

Bibles for 6th Graders

The congregation will present Bibles to sixth grade students during worship on **October 26**.



Wednesday Night Family Meals Return!

On Wednesday nights, we will offer a home-cooked meal in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$9 per person with a family max of \$30. **Meals are served from 5:15 to 6:00 pm**. You can get your meal to go if you go through the line (indicate when you sign up). **Reservations must be placed by noon on Tuesdays**. You can make a

reservation online, the sign-up table or by calling the church office.

- Oct 1 *Taco bar
- Oct 8 *Pulled pork, vegetable and rolls
- Oct 15 Swedish meatballs, butter and parsley potatoes, vegetable and rolls
- Oct 22 Beef stroganoff, noodles, salad, bread
- Oct 29 Chicken marsala, rice, asparagus, salad

*Line opens early (4:45pm) for HS & MS youth going to Activate (5-9pm) who sign up!

More Wednesday School Snack Makers Needed

We continue to need volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis. Please sign the list on the sign-up table or volunteer on the website.

Wednesday School

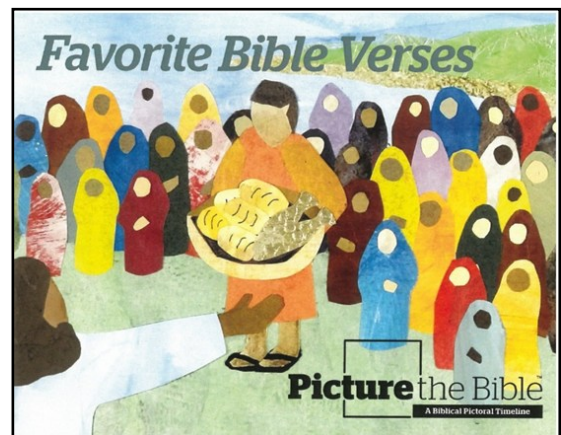
All children who are in kindergarten through Grade 5, are invited to participate in Wednesday School. Elementary students in River Falls are picked up at the four elementary schools in town at the end of the school day. Wednesday School concludes at 5:15. Registration and permission forms are available 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. Registration forms need to be to the church office by **September 28**. Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

Memory Bible Verses

Elementary Sunday School are invited to participate in a Memory Bible Verse project for the current school year. Children received books on Rally Day that identify a memory verse for each month, and invite children to participate in three specific challenges for each passage:

- I can find this text in the Bible.
- I know if this text is in the Old or New Testament.
- I have memorized this Bible passage.

As they complete the challenges for each passage, students can meet with a pastor to share their accomplishment and earn a sticker for their books. While stickers are fun, what is most meaningful (hopefully!) is the chance for pastors to connect with kids.



Sunday School Teachers

Many thanks to the people who volunteered to teach Sunday School this year. All these people are busy yet have agreed to teach this year.

Thank you to: Laura Anderson, Marg Downing, Traci Hagberg, Kim Korent, Christina Krueger, Alex Plum, Mackenzie Merriman, Jen Meyer, Sarah Meyer, Stacy Myers, Becky Pajac, MiKayla Sanocki, Emma Shepherd, Mara Shepherd, and Vicki Swank.

Endowment Grants

Each quarter the Endowment Grant Committee meets to evaluate proposals for new ministries and projects submitted through our church committees. Does your group have a new idea you want to pursue? Is there a need in the church or community your group wants to address? Consider applying for an Endowment Grant! All proposals must come from a committee, and the next due date is **October 5**. Forms can be accessed through the church office or on the church website.

Youth Group News

Both our Middle and High School Youth Groups are headed to Activate in Roseville, MN on **Wednesday, October 1 (MS) and 8 (HS)**. Alex hopes to fill the church van and you do need to sign up early. The dinner line for Wednesday meals will open at 4:45 pm for those going on the trip!



Knitting Group Update

The knitting/crocheting group is donating 17 scarves, 38 hats, 2 headbands and 7 sets of hats, scarves and/or mittens to Basics for local kids. We are thrilled to be able to help families in need.

We are grateful to all who have supported our efforts. If you have any yarn you would like to donate to us, please drop it off in the church office.

Contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 if you have any questions.

What the Pastor is Reading

Genesis: Artificial Intelligence, Hope, and the Human Spirit by Henry A. Kissinger, Eric Schmidt (Google), Craig Mundie (Microsoft)

This is the final book written by Kissinger at nearly 100 years old! By now we have all heard of Artificial Intelligence/AI, but what does it have the potential to do? Will it help or hinder human progress, or both? I just started it, but wanted to learn something more about AI. Let me know if you have recommendations!

Every Valley: The Desperate Lives and Troubled Times that Made Handel's Messiah by Charles King

One of my favorite pieces of music is Handel's Messiah. We all know I am not a musician, but I love both the music and words/theology behind this great work and have always wanted to know more about it. This book gives the background on what life and society was like as Handel wrote this piece and why it quickly became so popular.

Youth Group Has Started!

Every Wednesday night Alex gathers with either our Middle or High School youth for fun, fellowship and usually food as well. Recently the Middle School kids met and headed out to play a rousing game of Gaga Ball (google it). Next week our High School Youth Group will meet. Friends are encouraged to join!

A full calendar can be found on the church website under the 'grow' and 'confirmation' tabs. A highlight of the night was when the Ice Cream Truck saw the group and literally parked in front of them. It was a sign—ice cream was purchased. Here are some pics. Join them! And be sure to thank Alex who is God's gift to our congregation.





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.

Remember the old Abba song—Money, Money, Money? It is a classic that talks about not having enough money. Each week here at church a dedicated and trained group of volunteers works in teams to count and receive our church offerings. It is a big, needed yet often unrecognized job. Money is given for the General Fund (which funds most day to day church operations), but funds are also collected and counted for things like Coffee Fellowship, Wednesday Meals, Yoga, Among Friends, Youth and Mission Trips. Currently our team of 10 counters is overseen by Marie Roe. If you have an interest and would like to join the team, talk to Marie. Our current counters include Allen Barnes, Trish Graves, Dennis Linder, Marie Roe, Jean Smith, Jane Truesdill, Diane Welsh, Mark Anderson, Scott Nelson, and Vicki Sippel. Please be sure to thank them!



Spring Break 2026

We have 5 spots left 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! Sign up has begun.

We have 5 spots left for this trip but you must register and have a \$150 deposit in by **October 5**. Please see Alex for details.

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.

WISE Corner

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group meets on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays at 6:30 pm at 113 East Elm Street (Mei Mei's) & 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.

Treasurer's Report

	Week of Sept 21, 2025	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 8,474	\$ 390,641
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 403,674

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
 Education: Stacy Myers—stacy@firstchurchrf.org
 Office: Missy Luedtke—missy@firstchurchrf.org
 Youth: Alex Plum—rlyouthgroup@gmail.com
 Music: Jamie Mills—degolierjamie@gmail.com
 Choir: Sarah Plum—sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com
 Building: Farnum Fuller—farnumfuller@gmail.com
 Troy Zakrzewski—ztruck51ford@gmail.com
 Maintenance: Tim Bylander—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

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 **Oct 14 & 28**.

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.

Men's Group

Our church men's group meets **every other Tuesday**. We gather for conversation and fellowship around a scripture verse or story. All guys are welcome to join us at **9:00 am in the Youth Room**. Our next gatherings are **Oct 7 & 21**. Join us!

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 **October 13**.



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 Camera app or QR Code app
2. Point your camera at the QR Code
3. Click tab 'Give Online'



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 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
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CHURCH, UCC
RIVER FALLS

Office Phone: 715-425-2052
E-mail: office@firstchurchrf.org
Website: 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
Troy Zakrzewski, Custodian

Pastor's home phone number:
Chris Myers 715-426-2075
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

OCTOBER 1, 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.