

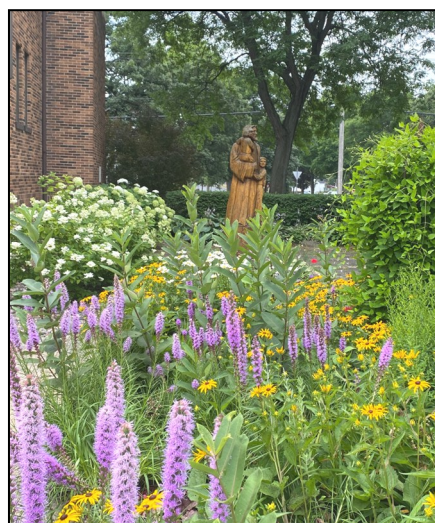
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

October 15, 2025

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



Pastor's Page

A few Sunday ago I began my sermon with this question: I do not have enough..... How would you answer it? Top answers that Sunday were: time, money, energy, wisdom, courage, patience and faith (see the worship livestream from Sunday, October 5th if you want to hear the rest of the sermon). Often times it does not feel like we have enough. But the consistent message of the Bible is that God has given us enough. And more deeply that we are ourselves enough.

Soon the church Discipleship Team will be sending out its annual pledge cards for the 2026 financial year. Each year we ask the members and friends of this church to support the mission of this church with their financial gifts. It is always a struggle. For the past several years we have ended the year with less than \$1000 in the checking account — just barely enough. This year we face two more challenges. We all know things cost more. We have also lost some of the saints of this church whose very generous financial giving has supported so much of what we do here at First Congregational Church.

This year more than perhaps ever before, we need you to do three things.

- First, if you don't pledge, please start this year.
- Second, if you do pledge, please increase your pledge, even if only slightly.
- Third, work toward a tithe recognizing all the ways God has blessed you and our call to share those blessings with others.

I am incredibly proud of the mission and ministry of this church. No other local church our size does more for its community than this church. Period. Full Stop. Whether it is youth programs or Among

Friends, men's or women's groups, music or worship, Sunday or Wednesday School, community outreach or church scholarships, fun things like concerts and meals or Learning Communities, this church makes a huge difference in our lives and in the life of our community. This year, more than ever, we ask for your generous financial support. Thank you.

In Gratitude, Pastor Chris

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, October 19
Music at First Church Concert

Sunday, October 26
Bibles to 6th Graders

Saturday, November 1
Fall Clean Up

Sunday, November 2
All Saints Sunday

Sunday, November 9
New Members Received
Conference Minister Rev. Franz
Rigert Preaches

Sunday, November 16
Giving Thanks Meal and
Dedication Sunday

Tuesday, November 25
Learning Community

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.

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!

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.

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.

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 **December 7**. Forms can be accessed through the church office or on the church website.

*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: The Biblical Art of Rudolph Bostic* is on display in the Fellowship Hall. The exhibit features 20 original paintings depicting biblical stories. Bostic's work appears in folk art museums and galleries in the United States, including in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC.

Bostic is a self-taught artist. As a teenager he worked in a bakery and realized the smooth cardboard baking supplies were delivered in would make suitable canvases for his work. For his whole painting career, Bostic used cardboard and whatever paint was available to him—typically house paint, acrylic paint, black markers, and glitter. Bostic is known for his use of vibrant color, his visually complex scenes, the painted cardboard borders that frame his work, and his fascination with angels.

Bostic commented, “I love angels. I believe angels are behind most of what happens on this earth, working for the forces of light. There are guardian angels and angels who oversee the weather. God has given each angel a specific job to do.”



Angels are God's messengers. Do you pay attention for voices that convey God's messages?

Basics for Local Kids

A big thank you to everyone who has donated items. Your support keeps us going. The next few months will be busy times at BLK and volunteers are needed. You can help families shop or you can help sort, restock or organize winter wear. Shifts are usually 2 hours and new days and times are available.

To sign up for a day and time that works for you, go to <https://www.basicsforlocalkids.org/> or call Kim at 715-821-1623. Contact Renee Whipple at 715-307-5074 if you have any questions.



Wednesday Night Family Meals

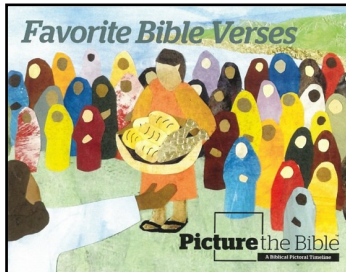
On Wednesday nights, we offer a home-cooked meal in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$9 per person with a family max of \$30. **Meals are served from 5:15 to 6:00 pm.** You can get your meal to go if you go through the line (indicate when you sign up). **Reservations must be placed by noon on Tuesdays.**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

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

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|--------|--|
| 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 |
| Nov 5 | Boneless BBQ ribs, mac & cheese, butter & parsley potatoes, vegetable, rolls |
| Nov 12 | Parmesan crusted chicken over rice pilaf, salad, croissant |
| Nov 19 | Bruschetta chicken over pasta, asparagus salad, garlic toast |

Youth Group News

The Middle School Youth Group will meet for a bonfire and games out on the church lawn for their next gathering on **Wednesday, October 15th from 6:30 to 7:30 pm.** Bring a friend and warm clothes as it gets cool at this time of year! See Alex for details.



Memory Bible Verses

Elementary Sunday School are involved in a Memory Bible Verse project for the current school year.

October's verse is Psalm 118:24 – "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

How will you fill your day with joy and gladness?

People in the Pews: Jerry Anderson

Where did you grow up? I was born in RF in a house on East Maple Street in 1947. After my older brother passed away in a sand cave in, my parents left the farm. My family moved to southeast WI and my dad worked on road construction. I went to a one room school and had another boy in my class until we moved back to RF when I was in fourth grade.

Where do you live now? Pat and I live in Sterling Ponds north of RF.

How long have you been at First Congregational? Ten years

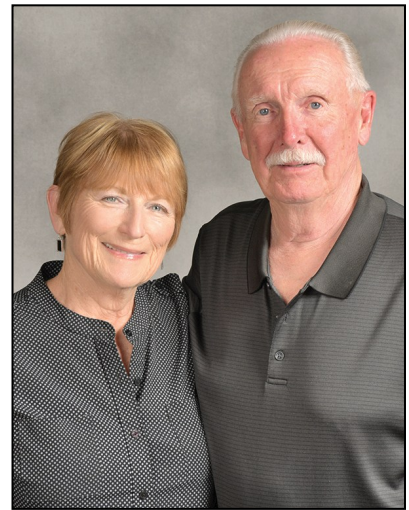
What keeps you coming back to First Congregational? The ministry and the people. Every time we enter our church, it feels like we are coming home.

What is your favorite childhood memory? Going to my grandfather's farm for the summer and helping him with his vegetable gardens. Friends I grew up with. Delivering the St. Paul Pioneer Press on my bike every morning.... I was an eastside boy.

What is your favorite hobby or pastime? Fishing and taking my classic car for a ride with my wife

Tell us something about you that might surprise us We climbed Mt Sinai in Egypt during the middle of the night to watch the sunrise with our daughter. It was amazing!

We lived on Third Street in RF not far from First Congregational. My father passed away when I was twelve years old, and my mother purchased a big house one block from North Hall at Fourth and Walnut Street in RF. To make ends meet, she turned it into a rooming house for seventeen college students. They called it "Ma Brown's House." Over the years, I grew up with many guys that were like brothers to me.



What the Pastor is Reading

A Marriage at Sea: A True Story of Love, Obsession, and Shipwreck by Sophie Elmhirst

This was a fun read. Imagine a couple falling in love then deciding to leave everything behind and sail from their home in England to New Zealand in 30 foot boat. They almost made it if it weren't for a whale. This is a quick read, interesting and witty.

Midnight at the Pera Palace: The Birth of Modern Istanbul by Charles King

Istanbul is on my bucket list. It has a long history of cultures and religions who cross paths. This book traces part of its history from the late 1800's. I just started it and it is interesting. And it is not World War 2 fiction!

Learning Community

Thanks to all who turned out to learn more about the art of Rudolph Bostic, the last part of Stacy's sabbatical project and funding from the Lilly Endowment.



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.

By now most of us know about the Among Friends program for families with dementia that offers respite care each Tuesday and Thursday (and if not, check out their great Facebook and webpage!). This amazing program would not have happened without the faithful and loving leadership of two of its founders — Norma Revels and Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn. Begun in 2017 out of a local needs assessment by our church Mission Team, Among Friends has grown and thrived.

Just today 20 people, guests and volunteers, gathered for chair yoga and coffee, Word of the Day and walks around the block, puzzles and games, crafts and homemade lunches, mini golf and cribbage, poetry and painting projects and so much more. None of this would be here if it were not for the leadership shown by Bonnie and Norma. Bonnie is a retired pastor and high school English teacher. Norma is a retired social worker. They helped steer the program from its launch, through Covid, expansion from one to two days a week, and most recently through the sudden loss of its director.

Norma and Bonnie are the first to admit this program is needed, valued and takes place through the work of so many faithful volunteers. Yet it is also true that these two have gone above and beyond to make it into the thriving program it is today. Please thank them for being church angels. And pray for a new director to be selected soon!

Next Learning Community: Exploring Polarization

The next Learning Community event will be **Tuesday, November 25, 6:30 pm**. The conversation will explore polarization.

American legislatures are more polarized today than at any moment in the past half-century, and there is little end in sight. Two important questions are: Why are American legislatures so polarized? And what policies might help bridge this growing ideological gulf? In the upcoming Learning Community event, Andy Myers (congregation member and Stanford PhD candidate in Political Economics) will present his ongoing research that helps address these questions, focusing on campaign finance, local press coverage, election administration, and candidate supply.

It is possible to allow fear and impressions to dominate one’s understanding of issues. This presentation will be a nonpartisan conversation focused on data-driven evidence to help people understand important issues of the day. Please come!

Please sign up in the gathering space at church or online. Dessert will be served at 6:30 pm followed by the presentation and discussion.



Spring Break 2026

We have 2 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!

We have 2 spots left for this trip but you must register and have a \$150 deposit in ASAP! Please see Alex for details. The next step is to get plane tickets so please make sure Alex has your full name and date of birth as it appears on your government issued ID and your deposit check!

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 Oct 5, 2025	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,537	\$ 407,907
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 424,920

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—rfyouthgroup@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:

- Women's white crew socks
- Men's white crew socks
- Men's t-shirts sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL
- Personal size shampoo
- Personal size conditioner
- Personal size body lotion
- Rain ponchos, umbrellas
- Eye masks
- Washcloths
- Padlocks
- 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 28 & Nov 11**.

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 21 & Nov 4 & 18**. 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 **November 10**.



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
CONGREGATIONAL
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 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.