

Weekly Word – For Sunday, November 16, 2025

Worship this Week:

Giving Thanks. It sounds so simple. It is more than a day, or even a season. Gratitude and thanksgiving are fundamental to our Christian faith. Join us this Sunday for Giving Thanks Sunday. At the 10:00 am worship service, we will dedicate our financial pledges for 2026 (bring yours from home, blank copies available!), present servant aprons to our 6th graders, enjoy our choir and welcome new members. After worship, we head to the Fellowship Hall for our Giving Thanks Meal (sign up below—last chance!). Join us as we kick off the Thanksgiving season this Sunday. Join us and invite a friend to join you.

Link to Worship Livestream: https://www.youtube.com/embed/csEf-n_dBSk?si=Ywb0OGCJrATwdTXT

Sunday Bulletin

Giving Thanks Meal: Join us for a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal after worship in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$10 per meal. Please include your pie choice of pumpkin or apple and let us know if you will bring a side dish. Sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-59753941-giving>

This Week

Sun., Nov 16	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	Giving Thanks Meal in the Fellowship Hall
Tues., Nov 17	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00-10:00 am	Men's Group
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	6:30-7:30 pm	Boards and Committees Meetings
	7:30-8:30 pm	Church Council Meeting
Wed., Nov 19	11:00 am-12:00 pm	Personnel Meeting
	1:00-2:30 pm	Adult Bible Study
	1:00-3:00 pm	Merry Widows Lunch at Perkins in Hudson, WI
	3:45-5:15 pm	Wednesday School
	5:15-6:00 pm	Wednesday Meal (sign up!)
	6:00-7:00 pm	Bells
	6:30-7:30 pm	MS Class
	6:30-7:30 pm	HS Youth Group
	7:00-8:00 pm	Chancel Choir
Thurs., Nov 20	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	10:00-11:00 am	Knitting Group
Sun., Nov 23	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

Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:

Preacher: Chris Myers
Celebrant: Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor: David Reilly
Liturgist: Jill Paulson
Deacons: Laura Anderson, Paul Shepherd, Kathy Tomlinson, Lance Lueck, Melissa Oscanyan
Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers: Rene Bylander, Lu Lueck
Trustee: Matt Meyer
Coffee Fellowship: Giving Thanks Meal
Counters: Trish Graves, Mark Anderson

Altar table flowers are given by Tanner and Madeline Pietz in celebration of their 2nd wedding anniversary on the 10th.

Loving God

Sunday Morning Bible Study: Please join us on Sunday mornings to discuss the Bible passages used in worship. The group meets from **9:00–9:50** in the Youth Room. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study: The group is studying the Gospel of John. Copies of the discussion book are available for \$20.00 in the church office. 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. And upcoming topics include a class on UCC History and Polity as well as Theology and Ecology. Check it out!

Loving Neighbor

Reverse Advent Calendars: “Reverse” reminds us Advent is a season of giving. Rather than getting a toy or candy each day, we will be adding a food item to the grocery bag. Each bag has a list of a suggested daily donation, but you can use your imagination and add whatever you want. When the bag is full, bring it in and leave it in the gathering area. The Mission Ed Committee will bring all the bags to the Food Pantry at the end of December. Thank you!

Sharing Families Giving Tree: If you would like to help some children have a better Christmas this year, please select an ornament from the tree and purchase a gift from their wish list. **The unwrapped gift with the ornament needs to be at the church no later than noon Thursday, December 11.** Please give the gift cards to someone in the church office. If you would like to make a cash donation instead, please make out to First Congregational Church with “Sharing Families” in the memo line. Thank you for your generosity. If you have questions, please contact Diane Welsh (651-334-3128 or 715-386-6620) or the church office.

Christmas Shoebox: The drive for donations for Christmas Shoebox items for the gentlemen at Kinnic Falls Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services has begun. If you would rather donate cash, just designate it for the Christmas Shoebox. **Donations are due by Dec 11.** The list of items needed is on the gathering table.

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.

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, eye masks, umbrellas, washcloths, padlocks, good buys on out-of-season clothing. All items MUST BE NEW. There is a box at the church for donations.

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.

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 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 then at amongfriendsrf@gmail.com

Loving Self

Next Learning Community: Exploring Polarization: Tues, Nov 25, 6:30 pm: 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 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 explore an important challenge of the day. Please come! Please sign up at church or online:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-59595578-learning>

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, Nov 19 at 1:00 pm at Perkins 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, Nov 18 & Dec 2.** 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, Nov 25 & Dec 9.**

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

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

Let's celebrate! Please join as we celebrate 60 years of the combined ministry of Pastors Chris and Stacy during coffee fellowship (11:00) on **Sunday, November 23rd**. Their ministry with us for 22 years has helped our church thrive, grow and has given us a deeper understanding of our faith and our commitment to God's message of love. We will have cake, fruit and other treats to recognize and give thanks for their dedication to our church family. Note cards will be available that day to pass along your words of thanks and gratitude. Come celebrate their gift of giving to us!

Wednesday 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.

Nov 19	Bruschetta chicken over pasta, asparagus salad, garlic toast https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-59411974-wednesday
Nov 26	No Meal—Thanksgiving
Dec 3	Lasagna and chicken alfredo, salad, garlic toast

Poinsettias for Christmas Eve: Poinsettia sales in honor or memory of someone special have begun. The order forms are on the table. The cost is \$15.00 each. Please return the order form with payment by **Dec 14**. The plants will be on display for the Christmas Eve services. You may pick your plants up after the 10pm service on Christmas Eve. Proceeds of the sales go toward youth activities.

Cookie Exchange: The WISE team has a Cookie Exchange planned for **Sunday, December 7** in the Fellowship Hall following service. Please bring four dozen cookies. Place six cookies in a baggie or clear container, labeling it with the cookie type and recipe. You will go home with eight different types of cookies. Please sign up at church on the gathering table.

Annual Christmas Luncheon: You are invited to attend a Christmas Luncheon on **Tuesday, December 9, at 12:00 noon**. The menu features Norwegian meatballs and a large collection of Christmas cookies. Please come! The cost is \$10.00 per person. Please make a reservation by signing the list on the sign-up table, calling the church office or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-59975675-christmas>

Volunteers Needed for the Christmas Luncheon: Please volunteer to help with the Christmas luncheon. We need cooks, kitchen workers, and cookie bakers. Please indicate your willingness to help by signing the lists on the sign-up table in the gathering space.

The Advent Workshop: The 2025 Advent Workshop for families will be in the Fellowship Hall following Sunday School on **December 7**, the Second Sunday in Advent. The event includes making a variety of Christmas ornaments. If you have friends or neighbors considering participation in a church family, invite them to join you! Please sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-59975616-advent>

Name Tags: We encourage you to wear your name tags so that new people and some not so new, can call you by name. It would also help the deacons when you take communion. If you do not have one, please let Missy in the church office know at missy@firstchurchrf.org. In appreciation, the Welcoming Committee.

Youth Events

Children's Advent Musical: Sunday School children in pre-school through grade 5 will begin rehearsing the 2025 Advent Musical on November 9 during Sunday School. The dress rehearsal will be on Saturday, December 20, 10:00 – 12:00 noon. The musical will be presented during worship on Sunday, December 21. It is important for all children to regularly attend Sunday School and be present for these rehearsals.

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>Nov 9, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 10,742	\$ 472,582
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 478,035

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

People

- For the Krueger family and their helpers whose behind the scenes work enables our Giving Thanks Meal again this year, God bless you all!
- For 10 years of generating clean solar energy with our church solar panels, thanks be to God!
- For all who are serving or have served in the military as we celebrated Veterans Day this past week, thank you for your service
- For the gift of bread, may it nourish our bodies, souls and spirit
- For the 40 some people who turned out to clean up our church grounds recently, you rock!
- For our church musicians who each week bring their gifts to grace our worship service, thank you!

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

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

Building: Troy Zakrzewski – ztruck51ford@gmail.com

Maintenance: Tim Bylander - timthefixitguy@gmail.com