

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

November 15, 2025

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



Pastor's Page

There are eleven federal holidays in the United States and out of all of them I think Thanksgiving is my very favorite. There are no presents to buy. No decorations to worry about. No cards to send. Rather the day itself encourages us to stop, gather with family and friends, eat (my favorite part!) and give thanks. There is something wonderful about pausing to give thanks.

Most of us go about our daily living with our regular routines — work, school, church, community, sports. There is a rhythm to our weeks. Holidays like Thanksgiving mess with those routines, especially one that falls on a Thursday! And maybe every so often we need our routines to be messed up so that we appreciate what we have been given and how God calls us to use those gifts wisely.

Larry Bauer, one of the former chairs of our Discipleship Team, once spoke of the 5 stages of giving he has personally experienced.

Stage one he called 'unknown giving.' When parent's put a few coins in a Sunday School envelope and hand it to the child to bring to Sunday School class, this is an example of 'unknown giving.'

Stage two he called 'forced giving.' When I tell my kids to give a portion of their allowance to church or charity, this an example of 'forced giving.'

Stage three he called 'resentful giving.' When Larry had his first job, a newspaper route, and his parents forced him to give to church each week, this is an example of 'forced giving.'

Stage four he called 'giving out of obligation.' When we join any church or organization, we are obligated to support it.

Stage five he called 'delighted giving.' Delighted giving comes as a surprise for many. It happens when you realize that your giving helps not just other people, but most of all it helps you. It not only makes the world better, it makes you feel better. It give you joy, purpose and meaning.

On Sunday, November 16 we will dedicate our financial pledges for 2026. Your financial gifts empower everything this church does. I ask you to prayerfully, faithfully and joyfully support the

ministry of First Congregational Church as we seek to live out our mission of loving God, serving people and welcoming everyone because everyone matters.

A blessed Thanksgiving to you all.

In Gratitude,
Pastor Chris

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, November 16
Giving Thanks Meal and
Dedication Sunday,
New Members Received

Tuesday, November 25
Learning Community

Wed, December 3, 10 & 17
Evening Prayer Worship in
the Sanctuary at 6:30 Each
Wednesday During Advent

Sunday, December 7
Advent Workshop for Families
at 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, December 9
Christmas Luncheon in the
Fellowship Hall with the
Costumed Carolers from RFHS

Sunday, December 21
Children's Advent Musical

Wednesday, December 24
Christmas Eve Worship
at 4:00 and 10:00 pm

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.



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, registering online, or calling the church office.

Volunteers Needed for the Christmas Luncheon

Thank you to those who have already volunteered to help. We still need a few more volunteers for serving and the kitchen. Many hands make light work! We also continue to need cookie bakers which is sweet work.



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.



Children's Advent Musical

Sunday School children in pre-school through grade 5 have begun working on the Advent musical for 2025. It is important for the children to have consistent attendance so they are able to learn lines and songs. 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.



Christmas Shoebox

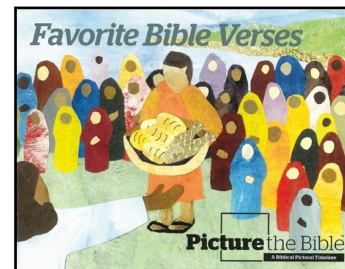
The drive for donations for Christmas Shoebox items for the gentlemen at the Kinnic Falls Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services in River Falls has begun. The items we collect are so very much appreciated by them. When you are out and about and see the items we have listed, grab a couple and before we know it, our list will be complete. If you would rather donate money, designate it for "Christmas Shoebox" and we will make sure all items are purchased. The list of items is on the gathering table.

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study

The Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study group is making its way through the Gospel of John. 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 group meets **9:00–9:50 Sunday mornings in the Youth Room**. Please join us! For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.



Memory Bible Verses

November's memory verse for elementary students is Luke 7:31—"Do to others as you would have them do to you."

Take in the day's news through the lens of "Do to others as you would have them do to you." What do you notice?

Next Learning Community: Exploring Polarization: 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 in the gathering space at church or online.

Compassion Fund

The Compassion Fund exists to offer direct help to church members and friends who are experiencing financial hardship. Begun during Covid to help pay people's rent and food bills, the Compassion Fund is again at work amidst the federal government shut down, helping people put food on their tables. If you wish to make a gift simply mark Compassion Fund on your check or envelope. Bless you for supporting those in financial need at this difficult time for so many struggling families.



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.

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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| Nov 19 | Bruschetta chicken over pasta, asparagus salad, garlic toast |
| Nov 26 | No Meal – Thanksgiving |
| Dec 3 | Lasagna and chicken alfredo, salad, garlic toast |
| Dec 10 | Chicken-ala-king served over biscuit with fresh fruit |
| Dec 17 | Meatloaf, baked potato, vegetable, bread |
| Dec 24/31 | Off for Christmas and New Years |



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.



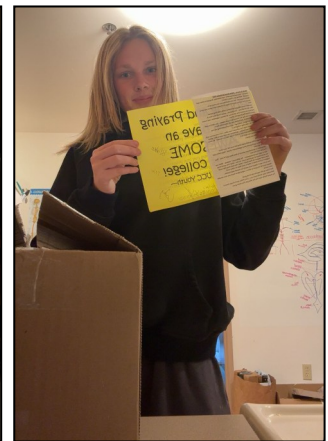
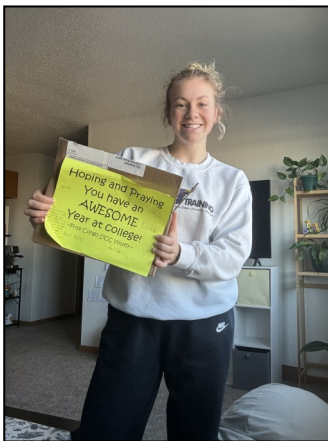
Reverse Advent Calendar

Advent, which begins right after Thanksgiving, is a time of waiting and watching for the arrival of the Messiah at Christmas. Many of us use Advent Calendars at home with small gifts and chocolates as ways of counting down the days until Christmas. For the past few years our Mission Committee has also encouraged folks to join the Reverse Advent Calendar—giving instead of getting. We all know that with government cuts and shutdown, many families are struggling to put food on the table.

Starting on Giving Thanks Sunday, November 16, our Mission Team will be handing out paper bags with the Reverse Advent Calendar attached. Each day (or week) we ask you to place items in the bag until it is full with 25 items for the Food Pantry. Bring the completed grocery bag back to church by Christmas (or earlier!). After they are dedicated, our Mission Team will bring all the items to the Food Pantry. Bless you for your generosity.

College Pack Thanks

We are receiving some nice thank you texts from our college students who are receiving their college packs. They went out recently so if you have not received yours by the end of next week, let us know. In the mean time, enjoy these pics. Favorite items? Silly String, fruit snacks and granola bars! Thank you congregation for your love of our young people.



Free Yarn

The knitting group has lots of free yarn for anyone who is willing to take it and make something. Please contact the office and arrangements will be made.



Advent Evening Prayer Returns

Each Wednesday in Advent, we gather for worship using the Holden Evening Prayer Service of simple songs, scripture and stories. Join us on **Wednesday, December 3, 10 and 17 at 6:30 pm** in the sanctuary for the absolutely lovely thirty-minute worship service. Youth Groups, Confirmation Classes and Interns, will all start in worship and then move to class afterward.

Please also consider joining us for dinner at the Wednesday Night Family Meals which are served in the Fellowship Hall to all who register by Tuesday night. Meals are served from 5:15 to 6:00 pm. Join us!

2026 Financial Pledges

All church members have been mailed pledge cards which we ask you to return to the church office by Sunday, November 16, which is also our Giving Thanks Meal Sunday. Please prayerfully consider your financial support for the mission and ministry of First Congregational Church for the coming year. We ask three things of you.

1. If you do not pledge, please start this year.
2. If you do pledge, please increase your pledge, even if only slightly
3. If you have not signed up for E-giving, please do so—it is safe, easy and reliable

Everything you read in this newsletter is driven from your financial gifts, from worship to youth events, Among Friends to Food Pantry support, Family Meals to the Giving Thanks Meal, Bibles for students to the choir and bells, pastors and custodians. Thank you for your generous support of this church and all that it does.

People in the Pews: Jamie Follstad

My name is Jamie Follstad. I grew up in several different communities throughout the Midwest and Mountain West. I have lived in Dillon CO, Albuquerque NM, Lake City MN, Red Wing MN, and currently reside in River Falls. I have been attending First Congregational Church for almost 18 years, since my children were very small. The youth program and dedication to Christian education first drew my wife, Dawn, and I to the church and we continue to attend because of the church choir, active missionary activities and the fellowship and connections we have fostered with so many other members of the church.

One of my fondest childhood memories is participating in the yearly Christmas musical at the church we attended. Growing up in a musical family, we were all involved in putting on the show, be it participating as an actor, helping design and create the sets/props, or directing. One show I distinctly remember was about the Christmas Wookiee where I was cast as the wookiee but the costume we had was too short so they had to cut off the feet and I walked around with a furry costume that only reached down to my knees.

My family and I love to go camping and explore new locations. We have traveled all over the midwest and have even taken our camper to CA exploring National parks along the way. One of our favorite things is to hike the trails and enjoy the wildlife and beautiful scenery. Watching moose eating in a lake in Glacier National park was a highlight of that trip. One thing that we have started doing since my son, Noah, has gone to college in Marquette MI is to cliff jump into Lake Superior. We even got Dawn to jump this year after much persuasion and cheering.



NEW MEMBERS – November 16, 2025

Jeff and Heidi Cavaness – Jeff and I have been married for 28 years and have 3 adult children. We moved to River Falls last summer from Tomah, WI. We moved here to be closer to family in Ellsworth and the Twin Cities. Jeff is originally from Idaho, and I grew up in Hager City, WI. We are looking forward to becoming part of a community doing good works.



Jacob and Anna Morrison – We are the Morrison family, and we're so happy to be settling into life here in River Falls and becoming part of this church community. A little about us—my husband, Jacob, grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, and I grew up in both the Twin Cities and Denton, Texas. We met through a mutual friend when I moved to Tempe, AZ, shortly after college to begin teaching at a Lutheran grade school. After getting married, life took us on quite a journey — from Arizona to Texas in 2014. I switched careers from teaching to financial services when we moved to Fort Worth, TX. We lived in the DFW area for nearly ten years, but moved to Chippewa Falls, WI for a new job opportunity and the chance to experience small-town life in 2024. The new job was short-lived and didn't quite work out as planned, so I found a new role with my previous employer in Oakdale, MN and we moved into our house in River Falls this past June. It's been a great fit so far and throughout it all reminded us that God is faithful, and his plans are better than ours. We've been blessed with four children—Hazel (12), who's at Meyer Middle School; Lyla (9), who attends Rocky Branch Elementary; Malakai (4), who goes to preschool three days a week; & Stella (2) who enjoys lots of attention from her siblings. Jacob has been our family's stay-at-home parent since Malakai was born in 2021 and does an amazing job keeping everything running smoothly. We're so grateful to be here and look forward to getting to know everyone who's a part of this church community.

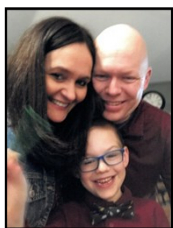


Tom and Melissa Oscanyan – Tom and Melissa live in Hudson, WI. We came to First Congregational Church at the invitation of our dear friends Ann and Scott Nelson. We enjoy music (and both sing in the River City Chorale), boating, reading, good dining, and travel. Melissa is a puzzle aficionado and Tom is in a chess club. And we have twin adult sons.

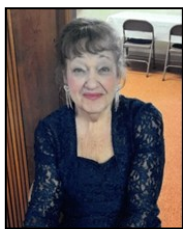
Tanner and Madeline Pietz – We are originally from Aberdeen, South Dakota, & will have been Wisconsinites for a year this August! Tanner is a vocal music teacher at Meyer Middle School & River Falls High School. Madeline is entering the second year of her master's program at UW Stout for Mental Health Counseling. Our family consists of the two of us and our sweet cat, Benny. We are so grateful to be a part of the wonderful community of River Falls & to be joining First Congregational.



Tracy Ronnander – I am married to Tim, and we have two boys Cody and Wil. I work for the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a wildland firefighter and land manager. I enjoy spending time watching both boys play football, basketball and baseball, I even got the chance to coach several teams along the way. When there is spare time outside of work and sports, I can be found working, skiing, motorcycling, snowmobiling, and 4-wheeling in the outdoors. I look forward to joining this amazing congregation.



Elizabeth Swank – Most people know me as Liz or as Alex's mom. I love the title "Alex's mom" and it is the greatest blessing that I have been given to have such a wonderful son. My husband Thomas and I have lived in River Falls for over 14 years. I am an attorney in the government sector and have worked as a government attorney since 2003. I practice law in Minnesota, but I'm also a licensed WI attorney. I have spent my career fighting for justice for some of the most vulnerable people. I feel honored to serve the community as a government attorney. When I'm not in the office, I enjoy spending time with my son, husband, mother and friends in the community. Alex, Thomas and I have 2 fur babies (dogs) and several fish, which of course Alex has named. Alex enjoys Scouts, soccer, gymnastics, theatre and swimming. He is 7 years old and attends school in River Falls. Like his parents, he's always up for an adventure. Alex loves science and all animals. He is smart, creative, and one of the kindest people you will ever meet. Thank you for welcoming us with open arms to join this wonderful church community.



Victoria Swank – My name is Victoria Swank, but I go by Vicki. I am a mother of 4 grown successful children and a grandmother of 5 wonderful boys. I am originally from Missouri where I raised my children on a farm. I was baptized and confirmed Lutheran. I was an international educator who worked and lived in 10 countries over a 20-year period which included Brazil, China, Romania, India, Libya, South Korea, Turkey, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, and Albania. I moved back to the States during Covid and decided to settle in River Falls so I could be close to my daughter Elizabeth, Thomas and my grandson Alex. I am now retired after teaching for almost 40 years in rural, inter-city, and overseas schools. I am now taking art classes at UWRF. Thank you for welcoming me to this church community.

What the Pastor is Reading

Separation of Church and Hate: The Sane Person's Guide to Taking the Bible Back from Fundamentalists, Fascists and Clock-Fleecing Frauds by John Fugelsang

Quite the title huh? This is another book recommended to me by a member of the congregation. John Fugelsang is a comedian and sarcasm oozes through this, but it is not just fluff. He makes some great points like — how did a religion based on the love Jesus showed and practiced come to have such a bad reputation in the world today? This book will challenge some of you, and the sarcasm morphs into contempt (and we know how I feel about that), but the premise and need is a good one — how can we reclaim the love of Jesus in our time?

Love Your Enemies: How Decent People Can Save America from the Culture of Contempt by Arthur C. Brooks

This book comes from the other side of the aisle than the one above. It also is good. I used it in the sermon on October 25th about the Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector. He gives a great and quite honestly realistic way for us to move beyond our culture of contempt. Timely!



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.

Each Wednesday we pick up between 20 and 30 kids at the four local elementary schools. They come to church, enjoy a snack, then move to a story, from there they go to crafts or playing with Legos and blocks, and our time ends with a prayer and song. Many contribute to this ministry (including your general fund gifts!), but we could not do any of it without our faithful volunteers. This year's volunteers include Sagan Linaberry, Mason Meyer and Emma Miller, our 6th graders who walk over from school to help with snacks, set up and clean up, Christina Krueger, Dave Reilly, Erin and Jen Syverson, Liz Swank who help with crafts and in the Lego room (and many of whom also volunteer to pick up kids at school!), and of course Pastor Stacy who organizes it all. We also need to thank those who donate snacks each week (but that will be for another day!). Thank you for these everyday saints who extend the mission and ministry of First Congo!



10 Years of Solar Energy

This past September we celebrated our 10th year of generating clean energy through our church solar panels. In general, those panels produce between a third and a half of the electricity we use each month. Over the past year, they have produced 23,000 kwh which is the equivalent of:

- 43,500 lbs of Co2
- 22,000 lbs of coal burned
- 3.5 homes energy use per year
- 45 barrels of oil consumed
- 900 propane cylinders used

Thank you to all who contributed to this effort!

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.

Learning Community

EXPLORING POLARIZATION

- Why are American legislatures so polarized?
- What policies might help bridge the growing ideological gulf?

Nonpartisan conversation
All are welcome



Andrew Myers
Stanford Ph.D. Candidate
Political Economics

NOVEMBER 25, 2025, 6:30 PM

First Congregational Church
110 N. Third St. | River Falls, WI



Christmas Eve Worship Services

4:00 pm Family Worship with Children's Story, Communion and Candles

10:00 pm Worship with Choir, Communion and Candles

Please join us as we welcome the Christ child into our world and lives and consider inviting a friend

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI



Wednesdays are Busy at Church!



Around 3:00 pm the Middle School kids arrive to set up snacks. Then volunteers arrive with 20-30 kids from our local elementary schools. After a quick snack, there is a story, followed by crafts or Legos, ending with a prayer and singing. Then at 5:00 pm folks gather for the Family Meal, then Youth Group, Bell and Choir Practice and Confirmation and Church Interns. Join us for wild Wednesday at church!



Tax Savings and Church Blessing

If you have appreciated assets and are looking for a way both to reduce your taxes and contribute to the church mission and ministry, consider donating some of our Required Minimum Distribution to the church.

Stock Giving—Donating appreciated assets avoids federal capital gains taxes and provides a federal income tax deduction for the current market value of the gift. Similar state tax benefits are also provided in most of the country. Most importantly, you'll be making a powerful difference for your church or another charity.

IRA Giving—For church supporters age 70.5 or older, IRA gifts present a powerful way to save while you give. Generally speaking, IRA gifts are always tax-free and can help you reduce your future tax burden, satisfy a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) if you have to take one, while supporting your congregation.



Knitting Group News

Joan Hyland has made this beautiful quilt with scraps of fabric from her previous projects. A friend helped her finish it and she has decided to donate it to Sleep in Heavenly Peace; an organization that makes and delivers complete beds

for children who do not have one. What a blessing to have someone who can make a difference in someone's life!



Let's Celebrate!

Please join as we celebrate 60 years of the combined ministry of Pastors Chris and Stacy during Coffee Fellowship (11:00am) on **Sunday, November 23**. 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!

Merry Widows

They will meet on **Wednesday, November 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.

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 Nov 9, 2025	Year to Date
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.

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

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING — Minutes for October 21, 2025

Treasurer's Report – Missy reports that the budget is still behind at this time. She has had a couple members inform her that they will be making their annual contributions soon and that will help the budget. The situation typically improves by the end of the year but this year, it will be close. Concerns expressed about the budget in the next couple of years and needs to be closely monitored. The annual Discipleship campaign will occur over the next 4 weeks. Missy reported that the payment of funds from the Wisconsin Conference are behind. Chris will follow up with them regarding that. Those funds go into the category “other funds” and that also includes rental income for use of space and events. We are currently behind on Mission payments at this time. Those funds are typically paid up by the end of the year.

New Business: Take a photo for church newsletter! Council photo scheduled for next month—please be prepared!

Wise (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged) designation next steps—Marie will review past minutes to locate the information about the process.

Old Business: Endowment Loan Study Group – Louie and Marie reviewed the updated financial information regarding the investment committee recommendations as well as the constitution to provide direction on how to proceed with the spending of the funds. It does have to go to a Congregational vote at the annual meeting. The motion was made by Marie that, we as Church Council, support proposal A, as previously discussed, with the entire gift from Jan H plus interest from matured CD along with supplement from the building fund balance to reach \$300,000 payoff of the Endowment loan.

Numbers: Gift from Jan Hansen \$254,810
Endowment Loan Amount (\$300,000)
Endowment Value \$708,112
Potential Cost of Tuck Pointing \$200,000+
Current Building Fund Balance \$84,891
Brick and Mortar Fund Balance \$11,562

Proposal A—Use Hansen gift and some of capital fund balance to pay off Endowment Loan

Proposal B—Combine remaining balance from Building Fund and new campaign to pay for tuck pointing

Tuck Pointing Update - Louie reported that a 2nd bid was obtained for \$195,000. It was not as detailed as the first bid. The 1st bid included repair of the louvers. The sub-committee will meet with the company for additional specifics on the bid. Each year it is delayed increases the costs as well.

RF Tiny Homes Project for Homeless – Chris—Local churches have been meeting together to create tiny homes at the churches. The City of River Falls has approved the plan to move forward. Hope Lutheran and Luther Memorial are interested in beginning the project. The structures will be very basic with no plumbing but include composting toilets. They will need a Leadership Team from the churches. By next summer—could have the initial houses built and ready to live in.

Minister for Community Update – Marie—Personnel has begun meeting and will be expanding their search after the holidays. Team: Marie R, Chris M, Alan T, Stacy M, Karen L, Intern, Sally S, Deb H, Jen S

Ministry Updates:

Christian Education (Angie) - 2026 budget reviewed and submitted to Louie. Ongoing programs—no major changes. Increase in preschool and younger Sunday school children. Discussion about doing a fused glass project during Lent. Proposed future discussion group regarding technology use.

Deacons (Lance) - Review of procedures for new members. Safety training discussion—could be good for new members.

Discipleship (Chris) - Pledge sheets will get sent out, speakers for the next 4 Sundays, Coffee Fellowship this Sunday.

Endowment Grant (Norma) - Provided by Marie: There were 3 applications for funding this quarter. The committee approved \$4000 for disaster relief supplies requested by the Mission Ed Com. We also approved \$1000 for purchase of a commercial mixer requested by the Church Council. This will be extremely helpful for the large events. We also approved \$4000 for seed money requested by the Trustees for future repair of the bell tower. Our allocated funds for 2025 have been fully spent.

Mission Education (Larry) - New director for Among Friends has been hired. Chose 3 Mission Friends: Servant of the Shepard, Back Bay Mission and Habitat for Humanity to send discretionary funds to. Larry—Mission moment this Sunday to talk about the programs the committee supports.

Trustees (Louie) - Fall clean up is Nov 1. Requesting committees submit their budgets by November 20.

Welcoming Ministry (Deb) - Updated the mission statement, working on goals, Lu will speak with Chris about the companions/buddy program, discussed coffee fellowship

Pastor (Chris) - college packs sent out and receiving thank you messages from the students. Wednesday meals have returned. There were 60 attendees this week. Joint event with Pierce county ADRC today, 13 deaths in the church this year. Men's Group is going well. A new director has been hired for Among Friends. Annual staff reviews have begun. Roman Klink was just married to Julianna Hanson, Steve Hove funeral will be held this Friday (10/24), Need to devise a plan for a Sabbatical/Vacation—it is now 2 years past due. Nov 2 is All Saints Sunday, Nov 9 the Wis Conference Minister, Franz Rigert will preach and Nov 16 we will hold our Giving Thanks Sunday Meal. Next meeting is November 18.

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 **Nov 25 & Dec 9 & 23**.

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 **Nov 18 & Dec 2 & 16**. Join us!

Cribbage Night

Players meet at the church and are asked to donate \$2. Playing time starts at **7:00 pm**. All players and abilities welcome.

Cribbage night is ending and the last game will be **December 8**.



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:
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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

110 N. Third Street
River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

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RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

NOVEMBER 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.