

Weekly Word – For Sunday, January 11, 2026

Worship this Week:

Although we are only days from his birth at Christmas, this Sunday we remember that Jesus was baptized. We also welcome by baptism Evelyn Adele Sitz into the faith and family of Jesus Christ. Baptism is never an ending, always a beginning. How can our baptism make a difference in the world today when for many of us it is a distant event in our past? Join us at the 10:00 am worship service as the choir sings, Sunday School and the Adult Forum resume. Coffee Fellowship follows at 11:00 am. Join us and invite a friend.

Link to Worship Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/OBeVIyzSyiA?si=qdAKlrEpxDOD6Ht3>

Sunday Bulletin

This Week

Sun., Jan 11	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
Tues., Jan 13	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	12:00-1:00 pm	Women's Group
Wed., Jan 14	12:00-1:00 pm	Investment Committee Meeting
	1:00-2:30 pm	Adult Bible Study
	3:45-5:15 pm	Wednesday School
	6:30-7:30 pm	HS Class
	6:30-7:30 pm	MS Youth Group
	6:00-7:00 pm	Bells
	7:00-8:00 pm	Chancel Choir
Thurs., Jan 15	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	10:00-11:00 am	Knitting Group
Sat., Jan 17	10:00-11:00 am	James Filkins Visitation
	11:00 am-12:00 pm	James Filkins Funeral
	12:00-2:00 pm	James Filkins Funeral Lunch at River Falls Golf Club
Sun., Jan 18	9:00-9:45 am	Bells 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
	11:45 am	Game Day

Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:

Preacher:	Chris Myers
Celebrant:	Stacy Johnson Myers
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Traci Hagberg
Deacons:	Jena Most, Becky Pajac, Liz Swank, Melissa Oscanyan, Laura Anderson

Organist: Marsha Pearson
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers: Diane Olson
Trustee: Louie Filkins
Coffee Fellowship: Alice Reilly-Myklebust & Evie
Counters: Diane Welsh, Allen Barnes

Altar table flowers are given by the Sitz family in celebration of the baptism of Evelyn Sitz and are given by Lillian Tan in memory of Dr. James Tandias and Lily T. Wong.

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 Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study group is discussing Matthew Skinner's *Acts: Catching Up with the Spirit*. Copies of the book are available in the church office for \$16.00 each. The group meets in the library on **Wednesdays, 1:00–2:30 pm**. 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

Red Cross Blood Drive: The next blood drive held at the church is scheduled for **Fri, Jan 9, 11:00 am–5:00 pm**. Call 1-800-733-2767 or go to www.redcrossblood.org and enter: firstcongregationalrf to schedule an appointment.

Giving Tree Thank You: On behalf of the Sharing Families Giving Tree program, I would like to thank our congregation for their generosity. Because of our congregation, 10 families, including 20 children, will have a happier Christmas this year. Thank you again! From Diane and Randy Welsh.

Christmas Shoebox Thank You: Thank you everyone! The Christmas Shoebox collection for the gentlemen at the Kinnic Rehabilitation and Alcohol Treatment was once again a success. With your donations of either cash or items we were able to provide 60 boxes and bags with the essentials that you and I sometimes take for granted. These gifts we bring are very much appreciated by those present. Please take note of the beautiful, signed card that they provided. Thank you again. Marie Roe and Jean Smith

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

Creative Prayer Flow - Carrie Windett MA, ATR-BC, LPCC, Be Still Art + Healing, LLC - Thurs, Feb. 19 6:30-8:00 pm: This group will meet in the youth room. In this workshop, you'll explore Sensorimotor Art Therapy's guided drawing's three resourcing movements before moving into a time of watercolor play; an invitation for joy and connection. The experience will conclude with reflections on Christ-centered truths and witnessing others. No artistic experience is required - just open hands and a willing heart to try.

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wed, Jan 21 at 1:00 pm at Table on Main in River Falls.** All widows are welcome to join us for dinner and conversation! See Linda Morrow 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, Jan 20 & Feb 3.** 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, Jan 13 & 27.**

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.

Game Day Sunday: Game Day Sunday is held on the third Sunday of the month. Our next Game Day is **Jan 18 with a new time of 11:45 am.** Join us!

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 St (Mei Mei's) and the Peer Support Group meets the same evenings at First Congregational 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

Annual Reports Due: All Committees, please submit your Annual Reports, preferably electronically, by **Mon, Jan 12** to Missy Luedtke at missy@firstchurchrf.org. Annual Reports will be available to the congregation on Sun, Jan 18 for the Sun, Feb 1 Annual Meeting.

Annual Meeting: The Annual Meeting of the congregation will be **Sunday, February 1** in the Fellowship Hall starting at about 11:15 am. In addition to receiving reports, passing budgets and electing officers, we will also hear ministry updates from many of our teams and committees. Please sign up and join us!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-61402176-annual>

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.

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>Dec 31, 2025</u>
General Fund Income	\$ 557,322.26
General Fund Expenses	\$ 549,379.68
2025 Net Income	\$ 7,942.58

	<u>Jan 4, 2026</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 34,546.22

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

A new budget will be approved at the Feb 1 Annual Meeting.

People

- For heads of our church teams and committees compiling their 2025 Annual Reports for the 2025 Annual Meeting on February 1, may you deftly and joyfully summarize your accomplishments
- For our church secretary Missy Luedtke compiling the Annual Report and keeping us all on track, bless you
- For Farnum Fuller and Tim Bylander who took down our church Christmas Trees and Troy Zakrzewski who vacuumed up a LOT of pine needles, thank you!
- For 10 years of generating clean solar energy with our church solar panels, thanks be to God!

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