

## **Weekly Word – For Sunday, February 22, 2026**

### **Worship this Week:**

We humans have an amazing ability to muck things up. But God has an even more amazing ability to make things right. By looking at the Olympic triumphs and failures we have seen this week, we will begin our Lenten journey toward Holy Week and Easter this Sunday at the 10:00 am Sunday worship service. Join us and invite a friend to join you.

Link to Worship Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/Gn3qgZF9gkY?si=FMZPT1Z2irEiwq8H>

### **Sunday Bulletin**

#### **This Week**

Sun., Feb 22	9:00-9:45 am	Music 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., Feb 24	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
Wed., Feb 25	1:00-2:30 pm	Adult Bible Study
	3:45-5:15 pm	Wednesday School
	5:15-6:00 pm	Wednesday Meal (sign up!)
	5:45-6:30 pm	Bells
	6:30-7:00 pm	Prayer Around the Cross Worship
	7:00-7:30 pm	MS Class
	7:00-7:30 pm	HS Youth Group
Thurs., Feb 26	7:00-8:00 pm	Chancel Choir
	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
Sun., Mar 1	10:00-11:00 am	Knitting Group
	9:00-9:45 am	Music 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:	Chris Myers
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Steve Koecher
Deacons:	Laura Anderson, Ann Nelson, Liz Swank, Becky Pajac, Heidi Cavaness
Organist:	Marsha Pearson
Nursery:	Kahla Fuller
Live Stream:	Jeff Hoffman
Trustee:	Scott Nelson
Coffee Fellowship:	Congregational Croissants
Counters:	Trish Graves, Allen Barnes

*Altar table flowers are given by Bobbie Kuhn in honor of their 57th wedding anniversary.*

## **Loving God**

**Prayer Around the Cross:** Our Lenten Prayer Around the Cross worship services resume each Wednesday until Holy Week. Join us in the Fellowship Hall at **6:30 pm** for this brief, meaningful, candle-lit service focused on prayer, simple songs and a brief, focused message.

**Holy Week and Easter:** Holy Week is the most important week for Christian people. It shows the depth and breadth of God's love. Challenge yourself to join us for all of the Holy Week services this year.

Palm Sunday, March 29	Sunday Worship and Procession of Palms at 10:00 am
Maundy Thursday, April 2	Worship at 6:30 pm
Good Friday, April 3	Choir presents their Good Friday Cantata at 6:30 pm
Holy Saturday, April 4	Youth set tables and prepare for the Easter Breakfast at 10:00 am
Easter Sunday, April 5	Worship at 9:00 and 10:30 am with Breakfast served from 8:00 to 10:15 am

**Sunday Morning Text 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](http://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**

**One Great Hour of Sharing** is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within the Wider Church Ministries. We need to support this ministry, maybe now more than ever. Envelopes are in the pews and on the sign-up table. Thank you for your generous support. - Mission Education Committee

**Habitat for Humanity:** St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity is holding their Foundations of Hope Gala on March 28th at Kilkarney Hills Golf Course from 5:30-9:30 pm. The Gala is celebrating the homeowners, volunteers, and work they have done for the past 30 years. Their next build will be in Baldwin for a health care worker. Register for the Gala by March 15th at [onecau.se/Celebrate30](http://onecau.se/Celebrate30).

**First Church Companions:** Are you interested in being a companion to someone in our church connecting with them at least once a month with a call or visit? Or would you like to have someone for a companion. Please use the sign-up sheet to be a companion or request someone to visit you.

**Basics for Local Kids:** There is a bin for donations. Volunteers are also needed. You can help families shop or you can help sort, restock or organize. Shifts are 2 hours. To sign up, 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.

**Grace Place** is a homeless shelter run by the Salvation Army in New Richmond. It is housed in the old St. Croix County Nursing Home. They operate on a short shoe-string budget and are delighted that we will support them with donations and meals. The shelter has three family rooms, a men's wing and a women's wing. They can house up to 50 people, two or three people to a room. If you have any questions, please see Carole Mottaz.

**Grace Place Donations:** Needed items: **Sidewalk salt (urgent need)**, shampoo – large or travel size, conditioner – large or travel size, body wash – large or travel size, body lotion – large or travel size, new or like-new wash cloths, new or like-new bath towels, new or like-new hand towels, new or like-new twin and full sheets, new or like-new twin and full size blankets, new pillows, good buys. There is a bin at 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](http://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](mailto:amongfriendsrf@gmail.com)

### **Loving Self**

**Creative Prayer Flow—Thurs, Feb 19, 6:30-8:00 pm:** The workshop will be led by Carrie Windett MA, ATR-BC, LPCC, Be Still Art + Healing, LLC. 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. Please sign up and join us. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-62292692-bestill>

**Merry Widows:** They will meet on **Friday, February 20, at 1:00 pm at The Sycamore in River Falls.** They will have pizza and dessert for lunch. 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, Mar 3 & 17.** 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, Feb 24 & Mar 10.**

**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](mailto: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 **Mar 15 at 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**

**Fused Glass Project:** The Christian Education Committee is organizing a project to create a large fused glass piece of art that will hang by the main stairwell. The theme of the piece will be Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Artists will learn to cut and arrange glass pieces to create the design. Once the art is complete, it will be fused in a glass kiln and then hung on the wall.

**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.

Feb 25 - Lasagna and chicken alfredo, salad, garlic toast

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-61959440-wednesday>

Mar 4 - BBQ pork, mac 'n cheese, potatoes, vegetable, roll

Mar 11 - Chicken marsala, rice, asparagus, salad

Mar 18 (Spring Break) - Relay for Life Soup Supper

Mar 25 - Beef stroganoff, noodles, salad, bread

**Relay for Life Soup Night:** Once again the Relay for Life team will have its annual Soup Night to raise money for Relay for Life. Our **Soup Night is March 18 from 5:15-6:00 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. The cost of the meal is a donation of \$9/person or \$30/family as with other Wednesday night meals. There will be a variety of soups, some fruit, & dessert. You can sample/eat as many of the soups as you like. The **Relay for Life Event is Fri, April 10** beginning at 5:00 pm at the River Falls High School gym. The theme this year is "We are the World, United for a Cure." It will have many opportunities to participate in the event with teams selling items, selling luminaries, and the silent auction. Please plan to participate or help our church's team raise money for the fundraiser. If you have questions or would like to join our team, contact Deb Hoffman at [debhoffman234b@gmail.com](mailto:debhoffman234b@gmail.com) or (612)308-4945.

**Join us for Easter Breakfast – Sunday, April 5:** Easter Breakfast will be served from **8:00 am to 10:15 am.**

Cost is \$10 per person with a family max of \$40, all of which goes to our Youth Fund for mission trips and opportunities. Please sign up by Wednesday, April 1. Sign up at church or online:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-62422535-easter>

**Name Tags:** We encourage you to wear your name tags so that everyone 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](mailto: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>Feb 15, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 8,293	\$ 101,531
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 79,156

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

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

### **People**

- For the gift of the season of Lent a time to return to God and remember our priorities
- For the gift of winter in all its varieties (all of which we have seen this week!)
- For those who will receive blood from the March 16th blood drive in our Fellowship Hall, may it bring life
- For the return of our full Family Meals each Wednesday during Lent, starting Ash Wednesday night (sign up!)
- For our master Plinko builder Marshall Skuhl who created a hit for the Among Friends group, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:chris@firstchurchrf.org)

Education: Stacy Johnson Myers - [stacy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:stacy@firstchurchrf.org)

Youth: Alex Plum – [rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com)

Office/Finance: Missy Luedtke - [missy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org)

Music: Jamie Mills - [degolierjamie@gmail.com](mailto:degolierjamie@gmail.com)

Choir: Sarah Plum – [sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com)

Building: Farnum Fuller – [farnumfuller@gmail.com](mailto:farnumfuller@gmail.com)

Building: Troy Zakrzewski – [ztruck51ford@gmail.com](mailto:ztruck51ford@gmail.com)

Maintenance: Tim Bylander - [timthefixitguy@gmail.com](mailto:timthefixitguy@gmail.com)