

Weekly Word – For Sunday, March 15, 2026

Worship this Week:

Anybody order any snow? Sounds like we will get a lot this weekend! Worship happens in person, online or on the radio. If you cannot safely get to church, join us online! In the Bible, healing takes place in surprising ways. In a world that needs so desperately to be healed, join us as we talk about healing and wholeness during our Lenten journey. Worship is at 9:00 am and coffee fellowship will follow at 11:00 am.

Link to Worship Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/taFmWCipvzA?si=ZLe0sAUXO-T2sv2a>

Sunday Bulletin

This Week

Sun., Mar 15	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 NO Sunday School
	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
	Mon., Mar 16	11:00 am-4:00 pm
Tues., Mar 17	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00-10:00 am	Men's Group
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
Wed., Mar 18	1:00-2:30 pm	Adult Bible Study
	3:45-5:15 pm	Wednesday School
	5:15-6:00 pm	Wednesday Meal (sign up!) – Relay for Life Soup Supper!
	5:45-6:30 pm	Bells
	6:30-7:00 pm	Prayer Around the Cross Worship
	7:00-7:30 pm	MS Youth Group
	7:00-7:30 pm	HS Class
Thurs., Mar 19	7:00-8:00 pm	Chancel Choir
	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	10:00-11:00 am	Knitting Group
Sun., Mar 22	1:00-3:00 pm	Merry Widows Lunch at St. Croix Lanes in River Falls
	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	

Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:

Preacher:	Rev. Nancy Swanson
Celebrant:	Rev. Nancy Swanson
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Jean Smith
Deacons:	Jena Most, Laura Anderson, Liz Swank, Melissa Oscanyan, Karen Lloyd
Organist:	Marsha Pearson
Nursery:	Kahla Fuller
Live Stream:	Jeff Hoffman
Welcomers:	Norma Revels

Trustee: Mike Danielson
Coffee Fellowship: Diane Olson, Lu Lueck - St. B's Donuts
Counters: Marie Roe, Mark Anderson

Altar table flowers are given by Steve and Lara Koecher in celebration of their 37th 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 will begin studying the book of Ruth on March 11. The beginning of a study is a good time to join the group. The group meets in the Fireplace Room on **Wednesdays, 1:00–2:30 pm**. To receive a copy of the study book or 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

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 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.

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 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 them at amongfriendsrf@gmail.com

Loving Self

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Thursday, March 19 at 1:00 pm at St. Croix Lanes** 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, Mar 17 & 31.** 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, Mar 24 & Apr 14.**

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 **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.

Mar 18 - Relay for Life Soup Supper – Variety of soups, fruit, dessert

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-62146802-wednesday>

Mar 25 - Beef stroganoff, noodles, salad, bread

Apr 1 - Holy Week - No meals

Apr 8 – Relay for Life Hotdish Night

Relay for Life: The annual **Soup Night**, a fundraiser for Relay for Life, will be **Wed, March 18 from 5:15 to 6:00 pm.** We will have a variety of soups to taste and enjoy. New this year as another fundraiser is **Hotdish Night on Wed, April 8.** We will be serving a variety of hotdishes to taste and enjoy. We will even have the winning hotdish from our church’s “Hotdish Competition” years ago available to enjoy. We will have luminaries available both nights to make “in honor of” or ‘in memory of” a special person. The cost is \$10/bag. Our team is also looking for some silent auction items/ideas to share at the event. The cost of the meals is a donation to Relay for Life. A suggested amount would be \$9/person or \$30/family as with other Wednesday night meals. For the meals, there will be a variety of soups or hotdishes, depending on the night, fruit, and desserts. The **Relay for Life event is Friday, April 10**, beginning at 5:00 pm at the River Falls High School. The theme this year is “We are the World, United for a Cure.” There will be opportunities to participate at the event with teams selling items and luminaries, and the silent auction. The luminary service is at 9:30 pm and the event ends at 11:00 pm. Please plan to participate or help our church’s team raise money. If you have any questions or would like to help with the meals, contact Deb Hoffman at 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.** The menu will be blueberry French toast, eggs benedict casserole, scrambled eggs with cheese, sausage links, bacon, mixed fresh fruit, Danishes & cinnamon rolls, coffee, apple & orange juice & milk. 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 Wed, Apr 1 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. 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>Mar 8, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 1,257	\$ 110,960
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 113,080

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 \$25,000 given by church folks to help refugees in Ukraine, you are angels
- For the gift of the Relay for Life Soup Supper on March 18th and for their Hot Dish Night on April 8th
- 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 (sign up!)

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