

Weekly Word – For Sunday, April 19, 2026

Worship this Week:

When do you recognize someone? On this third Sunday after Easter the gospel story tells us of Jesus again appearing to his disciples, but they do not recognize him which seems strange. I mean they have been with Jesus for a long time so you would think they would recognize him when he appears right next to them. But they don't, at least initially. In fact, do we recognize when God comes among us today? Join us at the 10:00 am Sunday worship service as the Bell Choir provides special music, Sunday School meets and Communion is celebrated with Coffee Fellowship to follow. Join us and invite a friend to join you!

Link to Worship Livestream: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/2C4su0V0oww?si=tScSulFFQSicT5ab>

Sunday Bulletin

This Week

Sun., Apr 19	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
Tues., Apr 21	11:45 am	Game Day
	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	6:30-7:30 pm	Boards and Committees Meetings
Wed., Apr 22	7:30-8:30 pm	Church Council Meeting
	1:00-2:30 pm	Adult Bible Study
	3:45-5:15 pm	Wednesday School
	6:30-7:30 pm	MS Class
	6:30-7:30 pm	HS Youth Group
	6:00-7:00 pm	Bells
Thurs., Apr 23	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
Sat, Apr 25	9:00-11:00 am	Spring Clean Up Outside
	12:00-4:00 pm	Earth Fest at UWRF
Sun., Apr 26	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:	Rebecca Ferguson
Deacons:	Becky Pajac, Lance Lueck, Liz Swank, Paul Shepherd, Kathy Tomlinson

Organist: Terry Mithun
Nursery: Kahla Fuller
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman
Trustee: Matt Bastien
Coffee Fellowship: Mission Ed Committee
Counters: Jean Smith, Dennis Linder

Loving God

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 meets in the Fireplace Room on **Wednesdays, 1:00–2:30 pm**. The group will start a brief series of conversations focused on the book *What Do We Mean By God?* by Keith Ward starting on April 22. Copies of the book will be available in the church office for \$8.00. If you have questions, please 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

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.

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: 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 then at amongfriendsrf@gmail.com

Loving Self

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, Apr 28 & May 12**. 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, Apr 28 & May 12**.

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 Days are **April 19 and May 17 at 11:45 am**. Join us!

Merry Widows: They will meet on **Wednesday, May 20 at 1:00 pm at Jonesy's Local in Hudson** (1801 Ward Ave between Maurices and the Bowling Alley). All widows are welcome to join us for dinner and conversation! See Linda Morrow for more information.

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

Gardeners wanted to help make our gardens look the best they can, so our church appears welcoming on the outside too.

Earth Fest is a free community celebration that includes food samples, entertainment, workshops, activities for all ages, and much more. Earth Fest will be held on **Saturday, April 25, from 12:00-4:00 pm at UW-River Falls University Center**. First Congregational will have a booth so stop by and see us. We are giving away Earth Balls! Check it out at www.hopeforearth.org and see the flyer for more information.

Spring Clean-Up, Saturday, April 25, 9:00 am: Please bring your gloves, rakes, blowers, pruning shears, etc. to help clean up the grounds at the church. Please sign up and join us!

Fundraiser: The Sycamore is having a fundraiser for Among Friends. You can get a hanging flower basket with your in-kind donation to Among Friends (\$20 or more suggested). Place your order by Friday, May 1 by calling 715-997-3441. Please see the flyer for more information.

Relay for Life: **Thank you very much for your generous donations** for Relay for Life/American Cancer Society. The overwhelming support of Soup Night, Hotdish Night, and individual donations allowed our church to donate \$2,454 toward the River Falls Relay for Life. Your donations put our church into the Rising Star level of giving (donations greater than \$1,000). The community Relay for Life event has raised over \$84,000. They will continue taking donations into August for the 2026 event. Thank you also for all the wonderful cooks and clean-up volunteers who helped with the meals. The soups and hotdishes were delicious and fun to try. This church amazes me with its generosity, willingness to help, and its compassion for others. Thank you again and God bless, Deb Hoffman.

Softball News: It's that time of the year when the temperatures are getting warmer and the grass is turning green that we think of fun outside activities like softball. Once again, our church will sponsor a softball team in the River Falls Church Family League. The family league is a co-ed division. The league prefers players to be 14 years old for safety reasons and it's the city league rules. The co-ed description requires teams to have three women on the field at all times, so ladies please don't be afraid to sign up and play. The games are played on Monday evenings at Hoffman Park. Games will begin the first Monday after Memorial Day and continue until the middle of August. Practices will begin the first Monday in May. There is a sign-up sheet on the table or contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945, debhoffman234b@gmail.com.

Red Cross Blood Drive: Help hope bloom! Please join our **Wed, May 20th First Congregational Church Blood Drive from 11am – 5pm** and save up to 3 lives with 1 donation. One hour of your time can ensure readily available blood resources for patients in the coming weeks. All donors will get a \$20 Amazon.com e-gift card "Thank You!" via email, but the feeling you'll leave with is priceless - [Click here to sign-up today!](#)

Endowment Grants: Each quarter the Endowment Grant Committee meets to evaluate proposals for new ministries and projects submitted through our church committees. Does your group have a new idea you want to pursue? Is there a need in the church or community your group wants to address? Consider applying for an Endowment Grant! All proposals must come from a committee, and the next due date is **July 5**. Forms can be accessed through the church office or on the church website.

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.

Youth Events

Scholarships Due: Please note that church scholarships are due the first Sunday of May, this year **May 3rd**. Three different kinds of church scholarships are available: High School Seniors, Secondary and Graduate School, and Spiritual Growth and Church Camp. All the details are on the church website under the connect tab (then look for forms). Forms must be in the church office by May 3rd and will be awarded on Graduation Sunday which will be Sunday, May 31st at 9:30 am. Applicants should plan to be in worship that day to receive their award.

Confirmation Sunday: Confirmation Sunday for our 9th graders will be **Sun, May 3rd** at the 10:00 am worship service. Please be sure your Confirmation Day Form has been returned to the church office. A cake and reception in their honor will follow in the Fellowship Hall following worship that day.

Graduation Sunday: Mark your calendars as we celebrate Graduation Sunday on **Sun, May 31st** at the 9:30 am summer worship service. We will honor our graduating high school seniors as well as award church scholarships. Let us celebrate their many accomplishments together as a church family!

VBS and Summer Children's Musical: Dates for the 2026 children's summer programs are:

VBS: July 27-30, 9:00 to 11:30 am. Theme is: My Peace I Give to You

Children's Musical: August 10-13, 9:00 am to Noon. The show will be *Rock Slinger and His Greatest Hits*

VBS is for children age 3 to completed grade 5. The musical is for children who have completed kindergarten through completed grade 6. Emma Cruciani will be the director. In case you can't quite tell, the musical will be the story of David and Goliath...told with a bit (or a lot) of humor! We will need adult and teen volunteers for VBS. Please save the dates! Registration forms are online and at church. Please invite friends and neighbors.

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>Apr 12, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 5,975	\$ 151,550
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 169,620

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

People

- For our pastors, deacons, choir and musicians who worked so hard during Holy Week and Easter, God bless you all!
- For all who made the Easter Breakfast a satisfying success, especially Chef Andy and his great team!
- For the \$25,000 given by church folks to help refugees in Ukraine, you are angels
- For those who received blood from the recent blood drive in our Fellowship Hall and for those who will donate at the next one on Wednesday, May 20th, may it bring life
- For all those who helped cook, serve, set up and clean up for our Wednesday Night Family Meals which are now over the season - God bless you all!
- As we count down to three more Wednesday School sessions, we are thankful for all our helpers who are so gracious in giving their time

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