

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

July 1, 2026

**Our mission is to love God
and serve people.**

**Everyone is welcome because
everyone matters.**

Pastor's Page

Recently our church exceeded its 10,000 diaper goal on the Mother's Day to Father's Day Diaper Drive. Congratulations! The total given was actually 10,936, a new record for us. Thank you! All of these diapers were given to the River Falls Food Pantry, Our Neighbors' Place and Turningpoint, who were very thankful to receive them. And thanks to our Mission Team who supported this drive yet again.

Diapers are expensive. Very expensive. The box I bought cost nearly \$50. In my darker moments I can hear a small voice in my head saying: If you cannot afford diapers, why are you having children? There is some truth to this. Diapers are a small cost of raising a family these days. Yet life is complicated and family economics can be precarious. A job is lost. Medical bills pile up. A car breaks down. Rent increases. An unexpected crisis occurs. Many loving and responsible parents find themselves struggling for a season.

That is where the church comes in.

Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly calls us to care for one another, especially those facing difficult circumstances. We are not called to judge whether someone deserves help, rather we are called to love our neighbors and respond with compassion.

One of the beautiful things about a diaper drive is that it meets a very practical need. A hungry child can receive food from a pantry, but diapers cannot be purchased with SNAP benefits. Parents often have nowhere to turn when they need them. Something as simple as a package of diapers can reduce stress, preserve dignity, and remind a family that they are not alone.

Jesus understood the importance of small acts of kindness. In Matthew 10:42 he says, *"And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."*

I don't know about your household, but my parents, other than a card, meal or phone call, they don't need much. I find it oddly comforting and even appropriate that our Mission Team runs this drive between Mother's and Father's Day. My dad does not need yet another tie and my mom seems happy enough with some flowers and a card. Yet I honored them with a package of diapers. And since we exceeded our goal by nearly 1000 diapers, apparently so did you. Thank you. God bless you church. And God bless those diapers!

In Gratitude, PC



River Falls Food Pantry



Turningpoint

Funeral Helpers Needed

Our church family is in need of one or two more people who will help set tables before funeral receptions in the Fellowship Hall. For many years, Gary and Judy Grimm have done this and will now 'retire' from this job. Thank you for all your work! Al and Dianne Barnes will remain in this capacity but would like help and back up. The task is relatively easy - set tables - and takes about an hour. Please contact the church office if you are interested and talk to Dianne and Al if you want more information. Thank you!

Upcoming Events

Thursday, July 9	River Falls Days Bluegrass Concert on Front Lawn from 6:00 - 8:00 pm with food for purchase from the Rollin' River Food Truck from 5:30 - 7:30 pm
Wednesday, July 22	Red Cross Blood Drive from 11:00 am - 5:00 pm
Mon-Thurs, July 27-30	Vacation Bible School from 9:00 - 11:30 am
Thursday, July 30	VBS Dinner at 6:00 pm with Program to follow
Mon-Thurs, August 10-13	Youth Musical from 9:00 am to Noon
Thursday, August 13	Youth Musical Dinner and Performance starting at 6:00 pm
Monday, August 17	Tools for School Supply Give Away from 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study

The Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study will resume on **Wednesday, September 16, 1:00-2:30**. The group will undertake an ambitious study of the last book in the Bible - Revelation. Copies of the discussion book are available in the office for \$20.00 each.



VBS Volunteers Needed

We still need adults to help with VBS, especially those interested in teaching. Please help! You can volunteer by signing the list in the gathering space or online. VBS will be **July 27-30, from 9:00-11:30 am**. Please help!

Summer Kitchen Help Needed

Our faithful, talented chefs, Andy and Christina Krueger, will cook for the VBS dinner and the Children's Musical dinner. They will need help serving and cleaning up. Please volunteer. The sign-up list is on the table in the gathering space.

VBS Cookie Bakers Needed



Homemade cookies are a special part of the VBS snack, so we need volunteers to bake cookies. Each volunteer is asked to bring four dozen cookies. A sign-up list is available on the gathering space table.

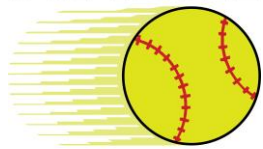
VBS Volunteer Meeting

The VBS volunteer meeting will be **Thursday, July 23, from 6:30-7:30 pm**. This is an important meeting to be ready for the VBS week.

VBS Painting Work Night

Please come to help paint the VBS backdrops on **Tuesday, July 21, starting at 6:00**. The only talent necessary is the ability to paint within the lines (and we can help you learn if you don't know already!).

SOFTBALL



LEAGUE

News and Game Schedule

Despite the heat, the clouds and wind kept the night comfortable to play this past Monday. We played well against St. Bridget's team who we lost to the first time we played them. This time we won. Our record is back to more wins than losses 3:2. Our next two games are:

July 6 at 6:15 pm and July 13 at 7:30 pm

Players, please try to show up 30 minutes before the game.

Come cheer us on! We play every Monday at Hoffman Park throughout the summer. We are the team in the red shirts. Any questions, contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945, debhoffman234b@gmail.com.

Summer Nursery Volunteers Needed

During the summer months our church nursery is staffed by volunteers while our weekly, faithful nursery worker Kahla Fuller enjoys some time off. Please sign up for a Sunday to staff the nursery. Use the sign-up sheet at church or online. Thank you!

Summer Choir

Summer Choir is low stress and low commitment. We simply meet an hour before the service and sing a familiar song. The next dates will be **July 26 and August 16**. Please consider joining us!

JOIN US FOR A

FREE CONCERT

on the lawn

THURSDAY, JULY 9TH

FROM 6-8 PM

featuring

SLAPDASH BLUEGRASS BAND

and food for purchase

FROM 5:30-7:30 PM

by

ROLLIN' RIVER

FOOD TRUCK

at

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC

110 N 3rd St.

RIVER FALLS, WI

firstchurchrf.org | 715-425-2052

PEACE BE WITH YOU

Vacation Bible School

All are welcome! No Charge

Age 3 - Completed Grade 5

July 27-30th 9-11:30 AM

110 N 3rd St. River Falls, WI | 715-425-2052

First Congregational UCC

Scan QR code to register or visit: www.firstchurchrf.org

Night of Dinner/Theater

You are invited to a night of dinner and a show on **Thursday, August 13**. Dinner will be served starting at 6:00 pm, followed by the main feature: the musical *Rock Slinger and His Greatest Hit*. In case you can't tell, it is the story of David and Goliath. The show has fun music and clever lines. Please come to support the young people in the congregation. You may sign the reservation list on the sign-up table, call the church office or sign up online.

Fall Confirmation Orientation

The 2026 Confirmation Orientation for grades 6 - 8 will be on Rally Day following worship on Sunday, September 13. This meeting is **required** for all confirmands and their parents.

The 2026 Orientation for High School Confirmands (grade 9) and Church Interns will be following Sunday, September 20. This meeting is **required** for all confirmands and their parents.

Please reserve the dates and time now to avoid conflicts.

Memorial Garden Update

We are working with a sign company to erect two plaques (one for each side of the Memorial Garden). The names of the saints in the garden will be included on the plaque and will be a wonderful tribute to each one. We hope to have the plaques installed this fall. If you would like to know how to "reserve your spot" in the Memorial Garden, please contact the church office or pick up information in the gathering area.

- The Memorial Garden Committee

**THE
ROCK SLINGER
& HIS GREATEST HITS**

CHILDREN'S MUSICAL
August 10 -13, 2026 from 9-noon
Directed by Emma Cruciani, accompanied by Marsha Pearson
Dinner & Performance Aug. 13th, 6:00 PM
Completed Kindergarten-Grade 6

ALL ARE WELCOME NO CHARGE
First Congregational UCC
110 N 3rd St. River Falls, WI | 715-425-2052
Scan QR code to register or visit: www.firstchurchrf.org

Designed by Magnific www.magnific.com

VBS Fused Glass for Adults

Adults are invited to come to the VBS village on **Wednesday, July 29, from 1:00-2:30 pm** to make a square fused glass piece.

It is a lovely, fun project, and participants will be able to make their own designs. The cost is \$15.00.

Please sign up at the sign-up table or online.



Let's Feed Some Kids!

Join us on **Wednesday, September 9, from 6-8pm at Tattersall** as we feed 100,000 starving kids right here in River Falls. Our church is one of the sponsors of this Feed My Starving Children event and will have early access to packing times.

All our Middle and High School kids will have their first night of Confirmation/Youth Group this night, but **EVERYONE** is welcome to come and help. Sign up before July 15th to get your spot! Questions to Pastor Chris or Alex.

People in the Pews: Tom and Maxine Sitz

We have been members of this church for over 30 years. We joined when our oldest daughter started confirmation. Our children, Rachel, Angie and Dan were all confirmed here.

We've been married 51 years and have 7 adorable grandkids. All of them have been baptized here too.

Maxine grew up in Prescott where her mother still lives in her own house at age 98. Tom is originally from Mauston, WI, until he moved here at age 17. We were drawn to this church after listening to Del Permann and we liked the confirmation program.



Tom is a 1967 graduate of UWRF. Shortly after graduation, he was drafted into the US Army. After discharge, he spent his career in Ag Finance working for Farm Credit and then for the City of St. Paul. We live on a farm east of River Falls and farm some land that has been in our family for over 120 years.

Time with family is important to us and we are thankful to have our children live relatively close to us and that our grandkids can be a part of the church and the Sunday school program.

This church and Pastors Chris and Stacy make everyone welcome and offer so many services and opportunities. We are so grateful.



Peaches

It's time to place your order for the delicious Washington State Peaches! One single-layer box is \$27.00; two or more single-layer boxes are \$26.00 each. **Orders must be placed by July 27 for pick up around August 7th.**

There are 3 ways to order:

1. Email: office@firstchurchrf.org - please include name, phone, and number of boxes
2. Sign up at church or online on the church website www.firstchurchrf.org
3. Call: 715-425-2052 - Mon-Thurs from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm or leave a message with name, phone, and number of boxes

This is an annual fundraiser for our youth. Thank you for your support!

What the Pastor is Reading

This is Not Who We Are: America's Struggle Between Vengeance and Virtue by Zachary Shore

Catchy title huh? That is what attracted me too. In the first half of the book, his section 'Enemies' investigates how fear, anger, and prejudice produce decisions that violate our highest ideals. And in the second half titled 'Saviors,' he focuses on a less familiar story - how Americans worked to soften the consequences of previous actions. Shore's argument is that America has always contained both of these impulses. Good read for history and political folks!

Endowment Grants

Each quarter the Endowment Grant Committee meets to evaluate proposals for new ministries and projects submitted through our church committees. 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 dates are **July 5 and October 4**. Forms can be accessed at church office or on the website.



Thank you to everyone for all the cards remembering Lyle Wood on his 100th birthday. He was one happy man receiving so many wonderful birthday wishes! - Helen and Lyle



Red Cross Blood Drive

The next Red Cross Blood Drive held at the church is on **Wednesday, July 22, from 11:00 am-5:00 pm**.

See the flyer for more info. Call 1-800-733-2767 or go to www.redcrossblood.org and enter: firstcongregationalrf to schedule an appointment.

Tools for School

We are collecting school supplies for local families. As you are out shopping, please start collecting everything students might need this fall (crayons, pens, pencils, notebooks, backpacks, etc.).

The School Supply Event will be on **August 17 & 18** here at church. Typically, we serve about 300 students. Thank you for your generous support of this needed local ministry.

Please also sign up to help sort and distribute items.

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.

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 St (Mei Mei's) & Peer Support Group meets the same evenings at First Congregational Church at 6:30 pm.

For mental health issues, please call 988. For more info, call Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

Treasurer's Report

	Week of <u>June 28 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 13,800	\$ 283,770
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 294,008

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

Grace Place

Supply needs:

- New adult undergarments (underwear up to size XXL)
- New bras
- New or like-new sweatpants up to size 4X
- New or like-new T-shirts up to size 4X
- New shoes (adult men and female)
- Adult socks
- Belts
- Shampoo, conditioner, body wash & lotion-large or travel size
- Good buys

There is a bin at 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: toilet paper, cereal, peanut butter and cooking oil. 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 fristroe@gmail.com

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.

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 **July 14 & 28**.

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 **July 7 & 21**. Join us!

Merry Widows

They will meet on **Wed, July 15, at 1:00 pm at The Sycamore for a potluck lunch**. All widows are welcome to join for dinner & conversation! See Linda Morrow for more info.

Game Day Sunday

Game Day Sunday is held on the third Sunday of the month. Our next Game Day are **July 19 and August 16 at 11:45 am**. Join us!

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.

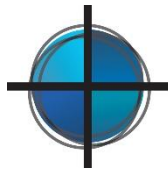
Among Friends

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**.



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'



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:
Chris Myers 715-426-2075
chris@firstchurchrf.org

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

110 N. Third Street
River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

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NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

PERMIT #53

RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

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JULY 1, 2026

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 and 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 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.