

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

August 1, 2026

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

**Everyone is welcome because
everyone matters.**



Pastor's Page

I recently returned from a two and half week road trip to see three of our nation's most impressive national parks: Tetons, Yellowstone and Glacier. This was my very first western road trip and what a trip it is! I was left in total and complete awe. Awe at the beauty and grandeur of the landscape – and of the journey out there through South Dakota on the way out and North Dakota on the way back. Thankfulness that folks before us decided to protect these gifts for future generations. And concern that places like Glacier will soon, at current rates, no longer have glaciers due to climate change.

The very first stories in Scripture are the two creation stories in Genesis. They remind us that this world is not an accident or merely a collection of resources to be used.

Creation is God's good gift to us and to future generations. Again and again, God looks upon what has been made and calls it "good." Human beings are then given the sacred responsibility not simply to use the earth, but to "till it and keep it" – to care for it as faithful stewards. We worship God the Creator, but one of the ways we honor the Creator is by treating creation with gratitude, humility, and care.

Summer is also a season of recreation. We head to cabins, lakes, campgrounds, hiking trails, golf courses, and backyard gardens. We fish, paddle, bicycle, picnic, and simply enjoy being outdoors. That is no accident. The word recreation literally means "to be created again." Time spent in God's creation has a remarkable way of renewing our bodies, calming our minds, restoring our spirits, and reminding us that there is a world much larger than our own worries and schedules. Jesus himself regularly withdrew to mountains, lakeshores, and quiet places to pray and be renewed.

As summer continues, I hope you find opportunities not only for recreation but also for re-creation. Take a walk through a park, watch a sunset, sit beside a river, tend a garden, or simply listen to the birds in your backyard. But do more than notice. Give thanks for the

beauty that surrounds us, pray for the wisdom to care for it well, and remember that every glimpse of creation's beauty points us back to the One who made it all.

May this season refresh your body, renew your spirit, and deepen your gratitude for the God who declared creation to be good.

See you in worship.

In Gratitude, Pastor Chris

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mon-Thurs, August 10-13
Youth Musical from 9:00 am
to Noon

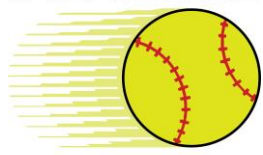
Thursday, August 13
Youth Musical Dinner and
Performance starting at 6:00 pm

Monday, August 17
Tools for School Supply Give Away
from 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Sunday, September 6
Last 9:30 am Summer Worship
Service

Sunday, September 13
Rally Day – Sunday School, Choir,
Adult Forum All Return and
Worship is at 10:00 am

SOFTBALL



LEAGUE

News and Game Schedule

If you like high scoring games, you should have been at our game on Monday. Servant of the Shepherd had some good scoring innings and so did we. Unfortunately, their score added up to more than ours. It was a fun time though and the winds made the heat of the day a fun summer night for softball. We lost so we are back to 4 wins and 4 losses and ranked 4th, but the season is not over yet. Our next two games are:

August 10 at 7:30 pm and August 17

No game on August 3rd, the city needs the fields for a tournament. Our playoff tournaments are on **August 17 and 24**. Come cheer us on! Any questions, contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945, debhoffman234b@gmail.com.

Summer Choir

Summer Choir is low stress and low commitment. We simply meet an hour before the service and sing a familiar song. The last date is **August 16**. Please consider joining us!

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 Kitchen Help Needed

Our church family 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. We still need *many* volunteers. Please help!

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*, the story of David and Goliath. It will be an entertaining evening. 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.

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study

The Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study will resume on **Wednesday, September 16, 1:00-2:30**. The group will study Revelation. Copies of the discussion book are available in the office for \$20.00 each. The fall is a terrific time to begin participating in Bible Study. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

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

Sunday School Teachers Needed

Even though the summer still goes strong, we need to gather Sunday School teachers for the fall. Sunday School is one of the most critical ministries we offer to support children as they learn and grow in faith. First Congregational uses a shared teaching model, so a team of three teachers shares responsibilities for an individual class. We need a *minimum* of 12 volunteers. Please, please volunteer. We have several extremely faithful teachers who have taught for many years. We need to add to the list of willing teachers. All curricula and materials are provided, and teachers teach approximately once every three weeks. For more information, please contact Pastor Stacy. To volunteer, please sign the list on gathering space table or sign up online.

SCHOOL SUPPLY EVENT

For River Falls School District
Families In Need

Location: First Congregational Church
110 N Third St



AUGUST 17 4:30PM-6:30PM SUPPLIES, SHOES & PICNIC MEAL

AUGUST 18 10:00AM-NOON SUPPLIES & SHOES

*First National Bank RF(through their 5K Fundraiser) donates all the shoes for the event-shoes cannot be guaranteed for every child

- To register, the parent/guardian and student must be in attendance
- Event volunteers will assist the students with supplies & shoes.
- Due to limited event space, parents/guardians will wait for their student on the main level of the church.

Thank You to our amazing sponsors, event partners & volunteers
We couldn't do this without you!

SCHOOL SUPPLY DONATIONS

We welcome all school supply donations, but
especially need:

*Quality Backpacks

(Need to last all year-Nike, Adidas, Lands End, High Sierra)

*Ticonderoga Pencils

*Dry Erase Markers

*Pencil Top Erasers

*Large Glue Sticks

*Wide Ruled Composition Notebooks

*TI-30XIIS Scientific Calculators



Rally Day

Sunday School, Sunday Morning Bible Study, choir and bells resume on Rally Day, **September 13**. All children who are three years old (and toilet-trained) are welcome in Sunday School.

Previously registered students do not need to register again. New students should register. Registration forms are available at church or 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.

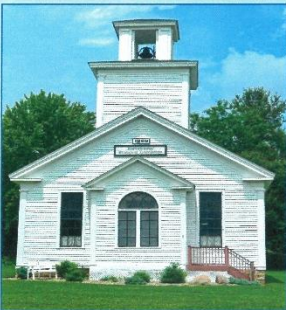
Memorial Garden Update

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



ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL



Join us at the
**Kinnickinnic
Historical Church**
1276 County Road J
River Falls, WI
**Sunday, August 2
1:00-5:00 pm**

☀️ *Delicious Ice Cream* ☀️
Pie ☀️ Cake ☀️ Root Beer Floats ☀️ Cones

**Kinnickinnic
Cemetery Tours
1:30 and 3:30 pm**



Enjoy entertainment and an opportunity to see your neighbors.

To volunteer or donate a pie, please contact
Patti Phillipps at 715-977-0354.

Back Bay Mission Trip Planned for April 2027

Ever wanted to go on a mission trip? Heard about the awesome experiences so many of our church folks have had at UCC related Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi? Just want to get out of town to someplace warm? Join us! Our church is sponsoring yet another trip to Back Bay Mission, **April 18 - 24, 2027**. A meeting will be held in early September. Please contact Carol Merriman or Pastor Chris for details. Use the sign-up sheet to register your interest.

SAVE THE DATE

HELP TURN HUNGER INTO HOPE...

...WITH YOUR OWN TWO HANDS

RIVER FALLS
**FEED MY
STARVING
CHILDREN**
MOBILEPACK™
SEPTEMBER 8 & 9, 2026
Online volunteer registration opens August 1st, 2026
Sign up to volunteer with your church,
friends, family, business, and more!

TATTERSALL
at Tattersall Event Center
River Falls, WI

**JOURNEY
CHURCH**

River
State
Bank
Falls



Summer Youth Group Events

Wednesday, July 29 - Conquer Ninja / Top Golf Combo

Depart church around 1:00 pm. Top Golf at 1:30 pm and Conquer Ninja (obstacle course) open gym at 3:00 pm. Alex expects this to cost \$15-20 per person and the church will cover the rest. Please email Alex at rfyouthgroup@gmail.com to confirm going!

Monday, August 3 - Activate

Alex has flexibility to schedule this any time before 5:00 pm and will reserve the 90-minute experience around the group's availability! Cost is \$10 per person, and friends are welcome with advanced notice. (Alex must reserve tickets for the exact group size.) Please email Alex at rfyouthgroup@gmail.com to confirm going!

Tuesday, August 4 - Main Event

Main Event is a brand new space that is opening in Woodbury featuring bowling, virtual reality, laser tag, billiards, arcade games, gravity ropes, human crane, and more! Once Alex has a group, he will reach out and make reservations. He is expecting it to be \$10-15 a person. Friends are welcome with advanced notice as Alex likely needs to reserve exact numbers. Please email Alex at rfyouthgroup@gmail.com to confirm going!

Sunday, August 16 - Kayaking the Kinni

Join us for kayaking the Kinni! The group will decide if we are kayaking the upper or lower. When you sign up, please let me know if you have your own kayaks or will need to borrow one. Please email Alex at rfyouthgroup@gmail.com to confirm going!

Learning Community for the Fall

Tuesday, October 13 at 6:30 pm: A Night in the National Parks!

Ever wanted to visit three of our most famous national parks: Tetons, Yellowstone and Glacier? Planning a trip there for next summer? Join Pastor Chris as he leads us on a quick 90-minute tour of three of our nation's most outstanding national parks. He will talk about both the beauty and grandeur of the parks as well as practical logistical things - where to stay, what to do and most important how far out to plan and book! Join us for a night in our National Parks!

Tuesday, November 10: The Churches of River Falls

River Falls has lots of churches, but do you know their history. Join us as River Falls native and historian Mark Anderson tells us some of the stories behind the churches of River Falls, including our own.



First Congregational Church,

Thank you for the time, gifts and energy you have invested in my future. I am so grateful. A new chapter begins. Thank you for the scholarship. It seriously means a lot and I feel blessed.

- Mason Peterson

What the Pastor is Reading

America's Founding Son: A Biography of John Quincy Adams
by Bob Crawford

In preparation for our nation's 250th birthday, I read this book. Written by of all things a Jazz musician, it is a great, accessible, detailed but still very readable book giving insight into the sixth president of the United States. His life spans an important part in the development of US history. He saw the battle of Bunker Hill from a hilltop near his childhood home, was the only president to become a member of Congress where he also served with a young member of Congress named Abraham Lincoln. It deals deftly with the original sin of our nation, slavery.

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 **October 4 & December 6**. Forms can be accessed at church office or on the website.

Among Friends Volunteers Needed

The program meets two days a week. 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



Red Cross Blood Drive

The next Red Cross Blood Drive held at the church is on **Monday, September 28, 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 July 19, 2026	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 11,099	\$ 333,288
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 327,932

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 firstroe@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 **Aug 11 & 25**.

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 **Aug 4 & 18**. Join us!

Merry Widows

They will meet on **Wed, Aug 19, at 1:00 pm at Tattersall in River Falls**. 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 is **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.

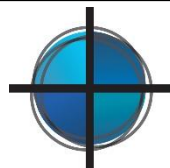
Among Friends

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

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

110 N. Third Street
River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

PERMIT #53

RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

AUGUST 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.