

Weekly Word – For Sunday, August 16, 2026

Worship this Week:

Some problems can be solved with a little elbow grease or ingenuity – but the divisions that wound our families, churches, and nation require something more. Drawing on Psalm 133, Acts 15, and Jesus' encounter with the persistent Canaanite woman, this Sunday we explore how genuine community grows when we listen humbly and speak courageously. Unity does not mean avoiding conflict or pretending we all agree; it means trusting that God can use difficult conversations to widen the circle of grace. Join us as we consider when faith calls us to sit down and listen – and when love demands that we stand up and speak. This Sunday is the last summer choir (come at 8:30 am to practice). Summer worship is at 9:30 am with Coffee Fellowship to follow. Join us and invite a friend to join you!

Link to Worship Livestream: https://www.youtube.com/embed/YdN7_nL8m0s?si=Q7MZJVdepWydiCkn

Sunday Bulletin

This Week

Sun., Aug 16	8:30-9:30 am	Summer Choir Rehearsal
	9:15-10:45 am	Nursery Open
	9:30-10:30 am	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream
	10:30-11:00 am	Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:00-11:30 am	WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM & 1550 AM
	11:45 am	Game Day
Mon., Aug 17	4:30-6:30 pm	Tools for School
Tues., Aug 18	9:00-10:00 am	Men's Group
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	10:00 am-12:00 pm	Tools for School
	6:30-7:30 pm	Boards and Committees Meetings
	7:30-8:30 pm	Church Council
Wed., Aug 19	1:00-3:00 pm	Merry Widows Lunch at Tattersall in RF
Thurs., Aug 20	9:00-10:00 am	Yoga
	9:00 am-3:00 pm	Among Friends
	10:00-11:00 am	Knitting Group
Sun., Aug 23	9:15-10:45 am	Nursery Open
	9:30-10:30 am	Worship Service in the Sanctuary and Livestream
	10:30-11:00 am	Coffee Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
	11:00-11:30 am	WEVR Broadcast 106.3 FM & 1550 AM

Assisting in Sunday's worship service are:

Preacher:	Chris Myers
Celebrant:	Chris Myers
Cantor:	David Reilly
Liturgist:	Kristin Andes
Deacons:	Liz Swank, Melissa Oscanyan, Heidi Cavaness, Kathy Tomlinson, Laura Anderson
Organist:	Marsha Pearson
Nursery:	Jacob and Anna Morrison
Live Stream:	Jeff Hoffman
Trustee:	Louie Filkins
Coffee Fellowship:	Knitting Group
Counters:	Jane Truesdill, Dennis Linder

Altar table flowers are given by Jean Smith in memory of her parents' August birthdays, Marlyn and Bernice Mohr.

Loving God

Sunday School Teachers Needed: 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. All curriculum and materials are provided, and teachers teach approximately once every three weeks. For more information, please contact Pastor Stacy. To volunteer, please sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-64860664-sunday>

Sunday School Teachers' Meeting: Sunday School teachers are asked to attend a teachers' meeting on **Thursday, September 10, 6:30 pm**. This meeting is a chance to get organized for the new Sunday School year. The meeting will conclude by 7:30 pm.

Rally Day: Sunday School, Sunday Morning Bible Study, choir and bells resume, 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: <https://firstchurchrf.org/pages/sign-up-sheets>

Sunday Morning Bible Study: Sunday morning Bible study group resumes on Rally Day, **September 13**. The group discuss the Bible passages used in worship. The group meets at **9:00–9:50** Sunday mornings in the Youth Room. Please join us! For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study: The Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study will resume on **Wed, Sept 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 being participating in Bible Study. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

Wednesday School Workers Needed: Wednesday School begins on October 7. We need volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis and adult and teen volunteers to help with the children. Please sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-65117201-wednesday>

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

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 at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-64011296-summer>

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.

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

Among Friends Board Members Needed: They need board members. They meet on the second Monday of each month at 4:00 pm. Please see Norma Revels for details.

Journey House (Ecumenical young adult outreach, located at 143 E Cascade Ave) is getting ready for the new school year! If you're interested in contributing, here are some ideas:

- **A Welcome to School Care Kit and Goody Bag.** We are asking for a donation of \$25. These bags will be what we hand out during the Involvement Fair and given to students throughout the months of September and October when we table. We are hoping to have 50 bags sponsored (if not more).
- **A suggested donation of \$30 to help sponsor our weekly gathering, Journey Nights.** The school changed their funding model for groups (less money for us to use) on top of everything being more expensive. Those who give any amount will be recognized. Those who give \$30 or more will receive their own Journey Night passport as a thank you gift. (These are what we are giving the students that give them a fun way to engage more with our Journey Night conversation.)
- **Amazon Wish List.** We created and plan on keeping up with an [Amazon Wish List](#).

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 Donations: Needed items: 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), belts, adult socks, 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 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.**

Loving Self

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

Harp Concert: Experience the calming, soothing effect of live therapeutic music. You are invited to a free concert by Certified Therapeutic Musician Kristin Andes and her harp on **Tues, Aug 25, from 6:30-7:30 pm.** Join us! Presented by the WISE Team

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, Aug 18 & Sept 1.** 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, Aug 25 & Sept 8.**

Game Day Sunday: Game Day is held on the third Sunday of the month. Our next Game Days are **Aug 16 and Sept 20 at 11:45 am.** 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 us for dinner and conversation! See Linda Morrow for more information.

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.

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 Street (Mei Mei's) and the 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.

Community Life

Night of Dinner/Theater: You are invited to a night of dinner & a show on **Thurs, Aug 13**. Dinner will be served starting at **6:00 pm**, followed by the main feature: the musical *Rock Slinger and His Greatest Hit*. The show has fun music and clever lines. Please come to support the young people in the congregation. Sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-64675757-musical>

Tools for School – August 17 & 18: Typically, we serve about 300 students. Thank you for your generous support of this needed local ministry.

Peaches 2026: The wait on the peach truck to arrive brought some anxious concerns, but when the truck finally arrived our unloaders were awesome getting the truck unloaded, labeling and getting the boxes inside. Everyone worked fast! As Chris said, "it was chaos, but an organized chaos." People were lined up on the sidewalk to get their peaches and the peaches left as fast as we could get them up the elevator. We ordered 464 boxes and ended up with 494 boxes. Thanks to word of mouth, the reputation of the peaches, and people wanting more, they were all gone by the end of the day Monday. Yeah!! A huge thank you to Missy in the office for setting up the online order, monitoring in-church orders, answering the phone orders, and answering many questions. Thank you to Diane Welsh for putting together the order list. Thank you so much for the patience of the unloading crew waiting for the truck to arrive and then when it did, they worked fast and efficiently. The pick-up crew at the table was awesome too. At one point on Saturday, the unloaders and table crews were one in same in order to get all the orders filled. I owe everyone a HUGE thank you!! The final THANK YOU is to you, our customers; it's your purchases of the peaches that keep this fundraiser going year after year. The youth fund will have earned over \$2000. Thank you again for another great Peach fundraiser. God Bless you all, Deb Hoffman

Thank You Note: Words seem insufficient to convey my thanks for the many expressions of comfort and caring shown to me and my family at the time of Joyce's passing, and in the days following. The many beautiful and uplifting cards and memorial donations, gifts of food, prayers, and more. In addition, a sincere word of thanks for all the kind gestures of love extended to Joyce and myself during the several months she was in Hospice Care. We both received blessing upon blessing during that time. Special thanks to Pastor Chris for his faithful ministry of love and caring. Joyce and I and our family have been richly blessed! Our church family has surely been a special gift of God's grace, love, and support. To God be the glory! Sincerely, Roger Kampstra

Softball News: It was another glorious night for softball this past Monday night. As one of our players said, "it was a fun game too." We had some great hits, tense moments as our player inched past the opponents to get to their base, and some calls not to our favor, but that's the way the game goes. We won giving us a record of 5 wins and 5 losses. Next week, playoffs begin and our game is **August 17 at 7:30 pm**, the field and team are yet to be determined. **August 24th** will also be a fun night for all teams with a picnic and one field being a fun game and the other field will be the finals of the playoffs. Come join us for the game and the picnic. We will have enough food for all. Any questions, contact Deb Hoffman at (612)308-4945, debhoffman234b@gmail.com.

Side by Side Choir - Discover the Joy of Singing Together!

Who: People living with memory or thinking changes, their care partners, family, friends, and community volunteers who enjoy helping others.

What: A welcoming choir where people gather to connect and thrive by sharing music, joy, and laughter!

When: Join us weekly on **Mondays at 10:00 am** for our fall season of music and engagement. **Rehearsals start on September 14, 2026**, and will conclude following our concert on Saturday, December 5 at 10:30 am.

Where: We meet here at the First Congregational Church, a comfortable and easy-to-access location.

To learn more or sign-up contact: Norma Revels at 651-416-9530 or sidebysidechoir@gmail.com

Committee Needs Update: Thank you to all that said *YES!!* when asked to serve. **We are still in need of 2 Deacons and 1 person for the Christian Ed Committee.** Please consider giving of your time to help our church in any of these openings. The term begins in September 2026 and runs for three years.

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.

Endowment Grants: Each quarter the Endowment Grant Committee meets to evaluate proposals for new ministries and projects submitted through our church committees. Consider applying for an Endowment Grant! All proposals must come from a committee, and the next due dates are **October 4 and December 6.** Forms can be accessed through the church office or on the church website.

Learning Communities for the Fall:

Tues, Oct 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!

Tues, Nov 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.

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

Summer Youth Group Events: **Sun, 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!

Fall Confirmation Orientation: The Confirmation Orientation for grades 6–8 will be on Rally Day following worship on Sunday, Sept 13. This meeting is **required** for all confirmands and their parents. The Orientation for High School Confirmands (grade 9) and Church Interns will be following Sunday, Sept 20. This meeting is **required** for all confirmands and their parents. ***Please reserve the dates and time now to avoid conflicts.***

Wednesday School: All children who will be in kindergarten through Grade 5 in the fall are invited to participate in Wednesday School. Elementary students in River Falls are picked up at the four elementary schools in town at the end of the school day. Wednesday School concludes at 5:15. Registration and permission forms are available on the church website and in the church office. It is important to have advance registration in order to be adequately prepared for students, particularly due to transportation needs. Wednesday School begins **October 7.** Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

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>Aug 9, 2026</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 6,502	\$ 347,747
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 361,856

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

*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

People

- For the gift of peaches
- For Bobbie Kuhn who celebrates her 80th birthday on Thursday, August 27, may you enjoy many more!
- For our Garden Geeks who tend our church garden and our Lawn Mowing Team who keep everything looking great, God bless you all!
- For the gift of summer, may we savor every bit of it
- For those who gave blood at our last blood drive, may it bring life

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 – Closed

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