

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

September 15, 2026

Our mission is to love God and
serve people.

Everyone is welcome because
everyone matters.

Pastor's Page

What does it mean to have faith? Is faith something we believe, something we feel, or something we do? The answer is yes! Join us September 13, 20, and 27 for a three-week worship series exploring Faith: Head, Heart & Hands. Just as we each have different ways of expressing love, we may also have a natural "faith language." Some of us connect with God through questions, learning, and ideas; others through prayer, worship, and experience; and still others through serving, helping, and putting faith into action. Over these three Sundays, we'll explore our own faith language while also discovering how God may be inviting us to grow in the other two - because a vibrant, growing faith needs head, heart, and hands.

Sunday, September 13:
Faith in our Hearts

Sunday, September 20:
Faith in Our Heads

Sunday, September 27:
Faith in our Hands

F A I T H

A GROWING FAITH NEEDS
Heart, Head & Hands

WHAT WE TRUST. WHAT WE BELIEVE. HOW WE LIVE.

HEART WHAT DO I TRUST?	HEAD WHAT DO I BELIEVE?	HANDS HOW DO I LIVE?
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 — ♥ — <i>Heart:</i> A Faith You Can Feel	SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 — 🧠 — <i>Head:</i> A Faith That Changes Your Mind	SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 — ✋ — <i>Hands:</i> A Faith You Can See

 **First Congregational**
United Church of Christ
— RIVER FALLS —
Our mission is to **love God** and **serve others**.
Everyone is welcome because everyone matters.
www.firstchurchrf.org

Upcoming Events

- Sun, Sept 13 Rally Day – Sunday School, Choir, Adult Bible Study All Return and Worship is at 10:00 am
- Sun, Sept 13 Confirmation Orientation for Middle School Students (Grades 6-8) and Parents
- Tues, Sept 15 First All Church Meeting Night with New Folks Joining
- Sun, Sept 20 Confirmation, Church Interns and Youth Group Orientation for High School Students and Parents
- Mon, Sept 28 Red Cross Blood Drive 11:00 am – 5:00 pm
- Sun, Oct 4 Back Bay Mission April 2027 Trip Meeting – 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall
- Sun, Oct 11 Bibles to 6th Graders During Worship
- Tues, Oct 13 Learning Community: Glacier, Tetons and Yellowstone National Parks

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Sunday morning Bible study group resumes on Rally Day, **September 13**. The group discusses 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 is studying the final book in the Bible, Revelation. The book, *Revelation*, by Catherine Gonzalez and Justo Gonzalez is the resource. Copies of the discussion book are available in the office for \$20.00 each. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.



Wednesday School

All children who are in kindergarten through Grade 5 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.



Bibles for 6th Graders

The congregation will present Bibles to six grade students during worship on **October 11**.

Wednesday School Workers Needed

Wednesday School begins on **October 7**. We need several more volunteers to provide snacks on a rotating basis. Please sign the list on the sign-up table or volunteer on the website.



Thank you so much for your generosity and support as I continue my education through my master's program. It has been such a joy to be a student again and rekindle my love for learning, and it would not have been possible without your support.

Thank you, Sarah Plum

Relax with Rose - Breathwork Techniques

Thursday, October 29, 6:30-7:45 pm in the Fellowship Hall

Learn and practice several different breathwork techniques. These quick techniques will help you step back and relax in a stressful moment or reduce your racing thoughts so you can fall asleep faster.

For more information, contact Rose Rude at 715-781-7032 or rar651@gmail.com.

Please sign up at church or online.

College Packs

Our church is truly an intergenerational family. Our folks range in age from newborn to two who just celebrated their 100th birthday! I am reminded of this every time I serve communion. I see the eager hands of young children communing for the first time and the hands of saints who have been around for decades. We are an intergenerational family.

Last month one of the many big mission events was Tools for School where we provided 350 River Falls School district students with school supplies. This month one of our big mission projects will be College Packs. Going off to school is a wonderfully exciting yet anxiety producing moment for many young folks. Freedom! But also new responsibility. New relationships and experiences! But also, the worry of finding new friends.

Packing College Packs has been an annual activity for our youth groups for many years now. On graduation Sunday as they get ready for the next phase of their lives, we give our high school seniors fuzzy warm blankets to remind them of God's nearness and their church home who stands with them. And once they are away - at school or the military - we send them college packs. We invite the congregation to join this ministry to our church college kids and those who visit with us from UWRF and CVTC. We ask you to provide both necessary and fun items college students may enjoy. They are mailed so think light weight! Have fun with this! We expect to pack about 30 college packs this year. And *if you have college student, please email the church office their mailing address.* Thank you for remembering our church kids this way. Keep them in your prayers. The deadline for these is **Sunday, October 4.**



Discover the Joy of Singing Together!

by Side Side Choir

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

WHERE: We meet at the First Congregational Church, a comfortable and easy-to-access location: 110 N. Third St., River Falls, WI

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

Join SIDE-BY-SIDE CHOIR!

 We are a proud member of the Giving Voice Network, a community of choirs around the world that are increasing well-being and redefining the narrative of dementia. Learn more at givingvoicechorus.org



Thank You Sunday School Teachers

Thanks to all who are teaching Sunday School this year! All our teaching is done in teams so folks can teach when their schedules allow. Last week they had fall training. All materials are provided. Please be sure to thank them when you see them.

What the Pastor is Reading

Canoeing with the Cree by Eric Sevareid

Imagine this, back in the year 1930, two high school senior boys in Minneapolis decide to paddle a canoe from Minneapolis, through Mankato, up the Red River and into Canada all the way to Hudson Bay. This short book catalogs their adventure. Written by a young man who eventually worked with Edward Murrow. This is a short fun read, and it is amazing to think this was done in the age before cell phones and navigation apps.

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

Journey House News

Journey House (an 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. We are hoping to have 50 bags sponsored.

- **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](#).

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 on **Sunday, October 4** after worship in the Fellowship Hall. Please contact Carol Merriman or Pastor Chris for details. Use the sign-up sheet to register your interest.

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.

FMSC 2026 Update

Thank you church! About 100 of us First Congo folk turned out last night to pack meals for Feed My Starving Children right here in River Falls. We joined basketball players from UWRF, other local churches and community members. We had nearly all of our 6-12th graders and just as many adults packing meals together. Our youngest packers were 2nd graders and our oldest in their nineties. Together we packed 32,832 meals which will feed 89 kids for a year. And during the two-day packing event we packed a grand total of 139,968. And even if you did not pack, you did help. FMSC is one of our church Mission Partners which means every time you put something in the church offering plate, a portion of that money goes to support FMSC. This year our Endowment Grant Committee again graciously helped to pay for these meals. Thank you church! This is what faith looks like. Here are some pics of the night.



Wednesday Night Family Meals Return October 7!

On Wednesday nights, we will 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. The menu will be:

Oct 7 Taco bar

Oct 14 Swedish meatballs, butter and parsley potatoes, vegetable and roll

Learning Communities 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.

Basics for Local Kids (BLK)

BLK is a non-profit organization that provides winter-wear to local kids in need from infant to 18 years old. Please consider making a donation of gently used or new coats, snow pants, boots, hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, or socks. Donations can be placed in the bin near the alley door entrance.

Beginning in October volunteers are needed to help families shop, or to sort and restock items. To volunteer go to www.BasicsforLocalKids.org or call Kim Johnson at 715-821-1623. Thank you for your generous, continuing support. Other questions contact Renee Whipple 715-307-5074.

Softball News

What a fun season and great team! We placed third behind two tough teams. Our team is bonded by friendships, family, and team spirit cheering each other on through all situations of many games. We welcomed 5 new players this year and they all said, see you next season, yeah! It's fun meeting new people, sharing an activity, and bringing together fellowship in honor of our God. Thank you to our team, see the picture for players this year. Thank you also to our faithful fans: Barry, Bobbie, Jill, Patty, Karen, Rachael and her son, Allie, Lou, Lu, Fallon, Lee, and many more who came to cheer us on. See you all again next May for practice and June for our next season. God bless you all. Respectfully Deb Hoffman



Front row: Anna Morrison, Ben Jaeckel, Deb Hoffman, Jen, Erin, and Jared Syverson

Back: Louie Filkins, Mason and Cindy Peterson, Josh Hudson, Bryan Jaeckel, Matthew Thurston, Theo Syverson and Todd Gustafson

Missing from the photo: Jeff Hoffman, Kevin Syverson, Stacy Lundsford, and Rhett Theisen

People in the Pews – Angie Knutson

Where did you grow up/hometown? I grew up in Isanti, MN on a hobby farm with my 2 older twin sisters. My parents raised sheep and crops as well as had outside careers, so things were busy! My sisters and I were very involved in 4-H along with many other activities in the community. I credit parents for raising me with a strong sense of community, hard work and service to one another.

Where do you live now? I live a little bit south of River Falls with my husband Josh and 9-year-old son Dylan. We have a black lab Shadow and a bunny named Raindrop. We have lived in River Falls since 2016. We landed in River Falls after searching for a home after getting married. We were looking for a smaller community to raise our son but that also allows for an easy commute to our jobs in St. Paul. I think River Falls is a gem of a town and I have been so inspired by the community's spirit/energy and all the diverse opportunities available.

How long have you been attending First Congregational? I first started attending First Congregational in 2021. I had been looking for a place to nurture the spiritual side of life and introduce my son to Jesus. Church had been an important part of my childhood, and I was eager to re-engage with my faith and get involved in the community.



What keeps you coming back to church at First Congregational? In my experience, finding a home church can be a tricky endeavor. I was immediately at ease at FCC and was energized by the purpose and message of this church. FCC's devotion to community outreach is important to me as well as the diverse educational programs. FCC has stretched me to grow in my faith and provided the opportunity to give back to the River Falls community. I am also proud of FCC's example to my son on how to be a faithful servant to others.

What is your favorite Bible passage, quote, or hymn. Why? I have always loved the hymns "Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore" and "I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry". Life is full of trials. These hymns' message is that God is with you always and this comforts me greatly.

What is your favorite childhood memory? I had an idyllic childhood for which I am forever grateful. My best memories are being with my friends showing my lambs at county and state fairs. We also always took a family vacation in August which usually involved towing the pop-up camper behind the minivan and staying at a KOA campground while seeing the sites in Washington DC, Orlando, Glacier National Park, and many other places. These trips were always memorable.

What is your favorite hobby or pastime? I feel like I am in the busy part of my life with working full time, a house to manage, a son to raise and aging parents to check on. Large chunks of free time are hard to come by, but I always try and have a few moments to myself each day. I like to play the piano, go for walks with the dog, work in the garden, and connect with my friends.

Tell us something about your or your family that may surprise us. We have a large yard that consists of almost 2 acres of "mowable" area. I do most of the mowing and love it. When we first moved to our house in River Falls, I decided we needed to upgrade our mower to keep up. After consulting with the guys at the Kubota dealership station at the Pierce County Fair, I unilaterally bought a zero-turn mower. I do all the maintenance on it which includes changing from mowing blades to mulching blades, changing the oil and filters, and scheduling it for repairs if needed. My retired farmer father is very proud!

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.



Among Friends Board Members Needed

Among Friends is a respite program for families with dementia. They need board members.

They meet on the second Monday of each month at 4:00 pm. Please see Norma Revels for details.

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 Sept 6, 2026	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 1,262	\$ 396,908
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 407,088

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 **Sept 22 & Oct 13**.

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 **Sept 15 & 29**. Join us!

Merry Widows

They will meet on **Wed, Sept 16, at 1:00 pm at Mariachi Loco 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 Days are **Sept 20 & Oct 18 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.

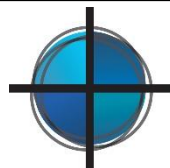
Among Friends

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

SEPTEMBER 15, 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.