

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ www.firstchurchrf.org

November 1, 2026

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

**Everyone is welcome because
everyone matters.**



Pastor's Page

What does this church do?

Lots! Here is a partial list of the ministries, groups, outreach and mission activities your giving empowers:

Men's Group
Widows Group
Among Friends
Confirmation
Church Interns
Youth Group
Choir
Bell Choir
Brass Group
Yoga
Among Friends
WISE
Wednesday Meals
Church Video and Livestream
Newsletter and Weekly Word
Our Church's Wider Mission
RF Food Pantry and 4 other
local missions

Caregivers
Sunday and Wednesday Bible
Studies
Sunday School
Wednesday School
Giving Thanks Meal
College Packs
Easter Breakfast
Christmas Luncheon
School Supply Drive
Carnations for Moms on
Mother's Day
Compassion Fund to pay rent
and assist with bills
Mother's to Father's Day Diaper
Drive
Advent Workshop
Good Friday Cantata
Summer Musical
Christmas Musical
Confirmation Big Trip
Hospital and Home Visitation
Back Bay Mission Trips
River Falls Day Concert
College Scholarships
Learning Community
Sunday Worship
Advent Evening Prayer
Lenten Prayer Around the Cross
Vacation Bible School
Feed My Starving Children
Simpson Shelter
Funeral Lunches
Bibles to 6th Graders
Memorial Garden
Bibles and Servant of Christ
Aprons to Middle Schoolers
Garden Geeks
Children's Christmas Musical
All Saints Sunday Roses
Side By Side Choir
Blood Drives

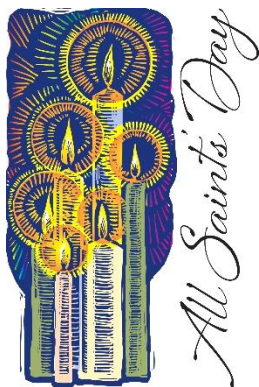
Inquirer's Class
Coffee Fellowship
Summer Youth Musical
Knitting Group
Tools For Schools

Thank you for your generosity. Our ministry here at First Congregational is possible because of the faithful support of people like you. As we look ahead to celebrate on our annual Giving Thanks Sunday on November 15th and the dedication of financial pledges for 2027, we ask you to:

- * If you have not given a gift this year, please do so
- * If you do not pledge, start this year
- * If you do pledge, please increase your giving, even if only slightly
- * Work toward a tithe recognizing all the ways God has blessed you and our call to share those blessings with others.

We know the current economic environment is challenging for many, so we appreciate your faithful giving that empowers the ministries of our church. May God continue to bless our church and its many ministries.

In Gratitude, Pastor Chris



All Saints Sunday

On the first Sunday in November, we celebrate All Saints Sunday when we remember all those 'saints' in the life of this church who have died this past year and now live in God's holy kingdom. Families of those who have died this year are invited to receive a white rose in memory of their loved one which will be placed on the Communion Table.

Following worship this year and before Coffee Fellowship, we will go outside to the church Memorial Garden and briefly dedicate a plaque that will be unveiled with the names of all those saints who have been welcomed home to the church Memorial Garden. Please be sure to join us for this special day.

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Sunday morning Bible study 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.

Mark Your Calendars

Even while we enjoy fall, please remember these annual upcoming events:

- Advent workshop—December 6 following worship.
- Christmas luncheon—December 8, noon.

Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study

The Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study is having a grand adventure exploring the last book in the Bible, Revelation. The group meets in the library on **Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 pm**. For information about the next theme, contact Pastor Stacy.

Important Upcoming Dates for Families

Please keep the following dates in mind as you plan your schedules:

- Advent musical rehearsal during Sunday School (Pre-School - Grade 5): November 15, 22 & 29, December 6, 13.
- Advent musical dress rehearsal (kindergarten - Grade 5): December 19, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon.
- Advent musical presentation: December 20, during worship.

Used Men's Ties

Wednesday School needs used men's neck ties to turn into aprons. If you are fall cleaning and find unneeded ties, please bring them to the church office. Thanks!



Wednesday Night Family Meals

On Wednesday nights, we 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:

- Nov 4 - Boneless BBQ ribs, mac and cheese, butter & parsley potatoes, vegetable, roll
- Nov 11 - Parmesan crusted chicken over rice pilaf, salad, croissant
- Nov 18 - Bruschetta chicken over pasta, asparagus salad, garlic toast
- Nov 25 - No meal - Thanksgiving
- Dec 2 - Lasagna and chicken alfredo, salad, garlic toast
- Dec 9 - Chicken-ala king served over biscuit with fresh fruit
- Dec 16 - Meatloaf, baked potato, vegetable, bread

Giving Thanks Meal – Sunday, November 15

Join us on Sunday, November 15th, for our annual Giving Thanks Meal in the Fellowship Hall. Served after the 10:00 am worship service at around 11:00 am, this is your sneak peak of the Thanksgiving feast we will all enjoy later in the month with our families complete with all the fixins. Please sign up and we ask folks to bring a side salad. We expect about 250 people so sign up early! We also need folks to help clean up. Serving is done by our 6-12th graders. Come Ye Thankful People Come!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, November 1

All Saints Sunday and dedication of
Memorial Garden plaque

Tuesday, November 10

Learning Community: The Churches
of River Falls

Sunday, November 15

Giving Thanks Meal and Dedication
of Pledges

Tuesday, November 17

All Church Meeting Night - 6:30 pm for
Committees and 7:30 pm for Council

Wednesday, November 25

Blood Drive in the Fellowship Hall from
11:00 am to 5:00 pm

Tuesday, December 8

Christmas Luncheon with River Falls
High School Costumed Carolers

Winter Evergreen Porch Pots Sun, Nov 22, 1:00 pm



You are invited to make an evergreen porch pot to decorate for winter. Evergreen porch pot experts, Laura Anderson and Diane Clark, will help you learn to make one. All needed materials will be provided. If you want a specific pot, bring a one to two-gallon container, otherwise use a container that is provided. Note: recycled Christmas popcorn tubs work well.

Please bring a garden pruner (if you have one) and work gloves are recommended. While you don't need to pay for the materials, please give an offering of \$25 which will in turn be given to the River Falls Food Pantry. You may bring your offering to the church office or place it in the offering plate marked Porch Pots. Please sign up. Space is limited to 12 participants.

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. For more info talk to Lu Lueck or Pastor Bob.

Side By Side Choir Concert

Each Monday morning, we in the church office enjoy the sounds of the Side by Side Choir practicing in the Fellowship Hall. This choir is comprised of community members and those with dementia. What wonderful music they make together! They will be presenting a concert on **Saturday, December 5th at 10:30 am** in the Fellowship Hall. Mark your calendars!



2026 Discipleship Campaign

Each year the church conducts a Discipleship Campaign to financially support the ministry of First Congregational Church. Literally every program you see in the pages of this newsletter is supported through your financial giving. Thank you!

This year pledge cards will be mailed in late October and will be dedicated at the Giving Thanks Meal on Sunday, November 15th. We ask all our church members and supporters three things:

- First, if you don't pledge, please start this year.
- Second, if you do pledge, please increase your pledge, even if only slightly.
- Third, work toward a tithe recognizing all the ways God has blessed you and our call to share those blessings with others.

We understand that economic circumstances are difficult especially for our younger families so thank you for digging extra deep this year to enable our programs and ministry to continue as we seek to minister to our community.

Learning Community: The Churches of River Falls

Please join us for the November Learning Community event about churches in River Falls. Why? Well, churches, like old houses, barns, gas stations, and train stations, are intriguing. They were built with vision, determination, and hope. As time marched on, some church buildings were lost to fire or storms. Some were remodeled, moved, or repurposed.

On November 10, congregation member Mark Anderson will show slides of the early churches of River Falls and what became of them. He will share a few stories, artifacts, and memories with the slides. If you have pictures or artifacts to share, please bring them along! The event will be **Tuesday, November 10, at 6:30 pm.** Please register online or use the sign-up page in the gathering space.



Reverse Advent Calendar Coming

Advent, which begins right after Thanksgiving, is a time of waiting and watching for the arrival of the Messiah at Christmas. Many of us use Advent Calendars at home with small gifts and chocolates as ways of counting down the days until Christmas. For the past few years our Mission Committee has also encouraged folks to join the Reverse Advent Calendar - giving instead of getting. We all know that with government cuts and shutdowns, many families are struggling to put food on the table. Starting on Giving Thanks Sunday, November 15, our Mission Team will be handing out paper bags with the Reverse Advent Calendar attached. Each day (or week) we ask you to place items in the bag until it is full with 25 needs items for the Food Pantry. Bring the completed grocery bag back to church by Christmas (or earlier!). After they are dedicated, our Mission Team will bring all the items to the Food Pantry. Bless you for your generosity.

Tax Savings and Church Blessing

If you have appreciated assets and are looking for a way both to reduce your taxes and contribute to the church mission & ministry, consider donating some of your Required Minimum Distribution to the church.

Stock Giving - Donating appreciated assets avoids federal capital gains taxes and provides a federal income tax deduction for the current market value of the gift. Similar state tax benefits are also provided in most of the country. Most importantly, you'll be making a powerful difference for your church or another charity.

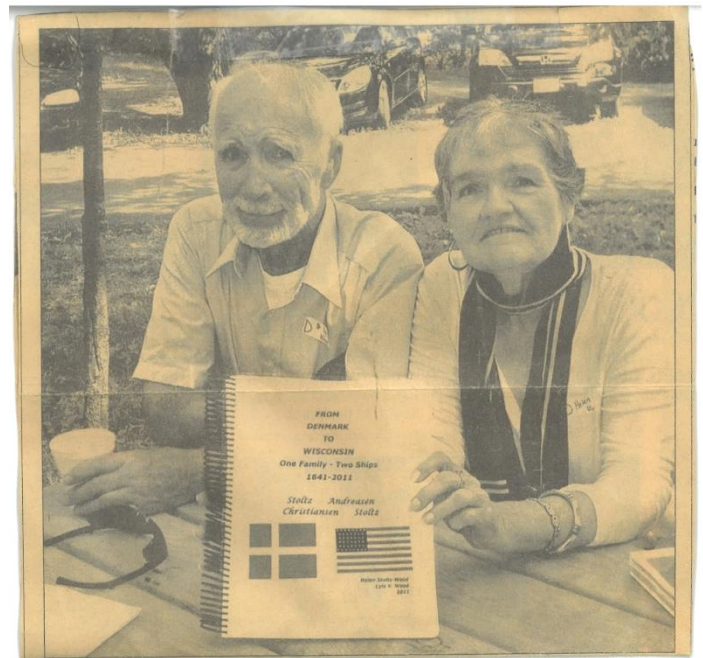
IRA Giving - For church supporters age 70.5 or older, IRA gifts present a powerful way to save while you give. Generally speaking, IRA gifts are always tax-free and can help you reduce your future tax burden, satisfy a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) if you have to take one, while supporting your congregation.

People in the Pews: Lyle and Helen (Stoltz) Wood

Lyle and I were both born in and grew to adulthood in Polk County, Wisconsin. Lyle served his country in the United States Army for two years - part of that time in Korea, coming home to help his parents on the farm. We married in our local rural Lutheran Church.

To be closer to our jobs in the Twin Cities, we purchased property in Houlton, St. Joseph Township - St. Croix County, Wisconsin where we soon started building our first home.

Four children (3 daughters and 1 son) and 12 years later, we had completed that first house - only to discover that while we were taking the kids to Disney World, our house burned down and we needed to start all over again - same property only this time with help from a builder.



We lived in this new house while all four of our children graduated from Houlton Schools and then Hudson High School. Once the kids were all out of school, we sold the Houlton House to our son, purchased our daughter's house in Hudson where we lived until the large corner lot of this house, with all the yard work, became too much for us to keep up. We now live in the Heritage Blvd Cottages across Hanley Street from U-Line - just off Highway 35 in the direction of River Falls.

We have attended First Congregational Church for the 4-5 years after selling the 7th Street house and moving into the cottage. We continue to attend First Congregational to listen to the great music, meaningful sermons, and to meet and greet fellow members. We recognize most of the UCC rituals after having membership at St. Peter's UCC in Stillwater, MN for many, many years. We enjoy the weekly communion and people who are happy to share a hug - even to a new person.

Our favorite hymns/Bible passages are any and all of the OLD words: Jesus Love Me, especially I suppose.

Favorite childhood memory would be any that have to do with families - even broken families have some good memories.

Hobbies - Lyle's "thing" was deer hunting, first with his dad and two brothers, and then with his son and grandsons.

Mine: outside of completing credit after credit at UWRF as I worked toward my degrees, I love researching family history (genealogy), then setting out to PROVE what I found and recording the information to share with family.

Surprise: Lyle was much better at horseback riding and roller skating than I ever was - that does not mean I did not skate or ride (because I did) it just means he was better at it than me.

Christmas Shoebox



We wanted to remind you of this project for the gentlemen at Kinnic Falls Alcohol & Drug Abuse Center in River Falls. The items we collect are so very much appreciated by them. When you are out and see the items we have listed, grab a couple and before we know it, our list will be complete. If you would rather donate money, designate it for "Christmas Shoebox" and we will make sure all items are purchased. The list is on the gathering table. Thanks to all of you, we are making a difference.

2027 Back Bay Mission Trip

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**. Please contact Carol Merriman or Pastor Chris for details. Use the sign-up sheet to register your interest. **Please let them know no later than November 15 so we can reserve transportation!**

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 date is **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 **Wed, Nov 25, 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.

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 at church. 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 at 715-307-5074.

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 Oct 18, 2026	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 9,370	\$ 464,274
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 11,308	\$ 474,936

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
Mission: Bob Wang - pbobcca@outlook.com
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 **Nov 10 & 24**.

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 **Nov 10 & 24**. Join us!

Merry Widows

They will meet on **Wed, Nov 18, at 1:00 pm at Eunice Filkins' home**. Lunch will be provided. 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 **Nov 22 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.

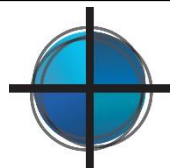
Among Friends

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
Bob Wang, Minister for Community and Outreach
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

NOVEMBER 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.