



# FIRST

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

*God is still speaking,*

110 N. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022  
715-425-2052 — [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://www.firstchurchrf.org)  
Rev. Chris Myers: [chris@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:chris@firstchurchrf.org)  
Office email: [office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org)  
FEBRUARY 1, 2012

## Pastor's Corner

### Now What?

The pictures are not yet up on the walls. The kitchen still needs some major help getting organized. Direction signs will soon be forth coming. But for the most part we are settling in to our new space. It seems amazing to me that so much could be accomplished so quickly. In just six months we have rebuilt, renewed and added on to virtually every part of our building, except the sanctuary which was renovated ten years ago.

The only other time in the life of this church such dramatic change happened with regard to the building was back in 1932. On November 20, 1932, in the midst of the Great Depression, the church building burned to the ground. With much prayer, faith and hard work, it was soon rebuilt. In fact you could say that their faithfulness in rebuilding their church building enabled us to take the giant leap with our recent construction project. Their faith and hard work in rebuilding and renewing was their gift to us. And in much the same way, this recent expansion project is our gift to future generations of our church family.

Now that we are in and gearing up for the big open house in May, the question becomes, what's next? How are we going to use this expanded facility to further existing programs and expand in new ways to reach out to our community? Some hints of this are already appearing. This will be the major focus for the Church Council in 2012. How do we continue to support current programs while still envisioning the new work God has in store for us in our new space?

I hope you will be with us for the 2011 Annual Meeting on February 5th as we celebrate our accomplishments this past year and begin to plan for what God is doing among us in the new year. Please be sure to reserve your spot for lunch and childcare.

Pastor Chris

## National Youth Event Information Meeting on Wed, Feb 1 at 7:30 pm in the Youth Room

The meeting for the National Youth Event is Wednesday, Feb 1 at 7:30 pm (the end of the 2nd year confirmation class). National Youth Event is a gathering of about 4000 UCC kids aged 13 to 18 from across the country & around the world. It is held this year on the campus of Purdue University. Dates are July 10-13. I hope we have a HUGE group of kids going. Transportation is provided. Kids will spend the time in worship, service projects, doing large and small group activities. I will be showing a brief video about the gathering and provide a brief overview of the costs and process. Kids and PARENTS should attend. We will meet in the Youth Room. This only happens every 4 years so it is the one chance for our kids to attend. See Pastor Chris with questions.

## Annual Meeting

Please join us for the 2011 Annual Meeting **Sunday, February 5, following the 10:30 service.** Lunch and childcare provided. Please sign up!

## Church Office Closed

In recognition of the hard work the office staff put in during the construction and remodeling project, the church office will be closed on **Monday, February 6.** Thank you all!

*No matter who you are. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here!*

*We believe...*

*~The Christian faith is a life-long learning process.*

*~Our church family aspires to be the living presence of Christ in the world.*

*~Our faith in Jesus is demonstrated through our lives, actions, and commitments.*

*~We are striving to become a congregation of life-long givers.*

*~Worship is the center of our life together.*

# Moderator Notes

Although New Year's is past, it's still a good time to reflect on the blessings of 2011 and the opportunities of 2012. We have grown as individuals and as a church:

- Sunday school, Wednesday School and VBS programs that have children running eagerly into our building
- Adult forums and book discussions that raise questions and challenge our thinking
- Celebrations of lives – at funerals and baptisms; ordinations and confirmations
- Music programs that enrich our worship – voices and instruments; musicals for all ages and sounds of summer for congregation and community
- Missions that serve others from River Falls to St. Paul to Mississippi to Africa
- A wonderful church building from which our fellowship will grow and extend
- Worship that enriches, guides and supports our 21<sup>st</sup> century lives

Opportunities will abound in 2012:

- Meeting responsibly and faithfully the financial challenge to support our ministries
- Continuing to grow our programs with our time and talents
- Living out our belief each week that "no matter who you are and where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here."
- Growing as individuals in our own spiritual development
- Serving others with care, concern and compassion

On behalf of the Church Council, thank you for all your contributions to our collective faith journey this past year and in the year ahead.

In fellowship, Suzanne Hagen, Moderator

## TREASURER'S NOTES

Missy Luedtke

Dec. 31, 2011

Budget Income \$ 357,641.99

Budget Requirements 357,279.69

Net Income \$ 362.30

Jan. 22, 2012

Budget Income \$ 23,228.06

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

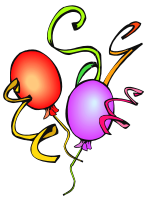
## Annual Meeting

The 2011 Annual Meeting will be held on **Sunday, February 5** following the 10:30 am worship service in the Fellowship Hall. Lunch will be served (please make a reservation) and childcare provided. In addition to the normal business of electing officers and approving budgets, there will also be updates on the new building and it's financing. There will also be a proposal from the Church Council for some constitutional changes about church leadership. Please mark the date on your calendars and sign up for the meal.

**E-Giving**—More and more parishioners are signing up for e-giving. It is quick, easy, and safe. It is designed to help both you with your home budgeting and financing of church ministries which continue even when you are away. Simply complete the application form found in the sign-up area to enroll. Questions can be directed to our church treasurer Missy Luedtke or Bill Herris and Larry Bauer on the Discipleship Committee. If you already give electronically, please use the e-giving bookmarks in your pew as the offering plate goes by.



**Relay for Life**—Our team will have a bake/craft sale on **Sunday, February 5th** between services & after the 10:30 service. Please support this worthy cause by bringing baked goods and/or crafts to sell, purchasing items or purchasing a luminary.



## OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION: Come Share the Blessing of Our New Addition with the Community!

To accommodate the completion of the stage 3 building project, the date has changed from February 12 to **MAY 6th from 1-4 pm**. Please mark your calendar, invite friends and family members and come to celebrate. The day will include a ribbon cutting ceremony, performances by our Chancel Choir and the Puppet Ministry, building tours, special programs for the youth, a buffet of snacks and cookies with punch and coffee.

### River Falls Church Choirs Present 9<sup>th</sup> Annual "It Takes A Village" Benefit Concert

On **Sunday, February 19<sup>th</sup>**, the church choirs from River Falls and the Community Gospel Choir will present a benefit concert for the people of Haiti. The concert will be held at Ezekiel Lutheran Church in River Falls at 7:00 pm. Many different genres and styles of music will be performed, and Dr. Camilla Horne of the UW-River Falls music department will lead the 100+ voice combined choir in two exciting numbers to conclude the concert. There will also be congregational hymn singing, and retired UW-River Falls professor, Curt Larson, will give a presentation about the sister village in Haiti. All proceeds help to aid the people of Haiti in building homes and schools. Please join the River Falls community at the "It Takes a Village" concert for an excellent night of music and a wonderful cause!

### Building Update

Construction is over! After 6 long months, our new building and renovation project is complete! Starting this Sunday you will see some changes.

- The Elm Street doors are open
- The nursery has moved to its permanent location downstairs, under the sanctuary
- The music space is open and will be the new place for bells and choir to practice
- Our Music Coordinator, Scott Perau, finally has an office again
- The 'sign up' table will be moved to the gathering space outside the sanctuary

### Cribbage Night at the Church

The inaugural cribbage night was a great success with 24 people in attendance on Monday, January 9. Duane Church organized the event and Bob and Janet Johnson donated the cards. The group will continue to meet on the second Monday of each month at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 each night. After the "pot" gets established, the group will decide on a charity to which the money will be given.

Playing time starts at 7:00 pm. At the February gathering, we will play singles from 7 until 9. If people wish to continue until 9:30, a double's challenge will be offered. **The next date is February 13.** You do not need to register in advance. Come and enjoy a night of fellowship. Please invite others that might be interested. Refreshments are not provided.

### Yoga Classes

Yoga classes are held in the Youth Room in the lower level of the church every **Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 to 10:00 am**. Bring a yoga mat and join the group!

### Wednesday School Snack

#### Volunteer Needed

Wednesday School is in need of **one more** volunteer to provide snack for the Wednesday School participants. Please call the church office to volunteer.

*"There are many things that are essential to arriving at true peace of mind, and one of the most important is faith, which cannot be acquired without prayer."*  
~John Wooden

## Adult Forum

February 5: *Was Do the Bible and the Theological Tradition Say about People?* Stacy Myers

"Theological anthropology" is the technical term for exploring what the Bible and the Christian tradition say about being human. Come with your ideas and questions ready for an interesting discussion.

February 12 & 19: *First Congregational Reads*, Stacy Myers

The 2012 First Congregational Reads selection is *Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived*. The Adult forum is the context for discussions about the book. Come and discuss, come and listen.

February 26 & March 4: *Bible 101*, Stacy Myers

*Bible 101* is a congregation-wide project aimed at increasing biblical literacy among adults in the congregation. Over the past years more than 125 people have participated. If you have not participated, please come. The two-hour program will be divided into two sessions to fit the adult forum schedule.

---

---

### First Congregational Reads

"First Congregational Reads" is now a well-established tradition. This year's selection is *Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived*, by Bob Bell. Copies are available in the church office for \$17.00.

### Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday Morning Bible Study group will meet **February 2 at 9:30 am**. The study is led by Stacy Myers. All are welcome!



### Bible 101: Come Once, Come All

Four years ago we started "Bible 101," an opportunity to engage adults of the congregation in Bible study. Over 125 adults participated in the program. The intention is to offer the sessions periodically so as to include new members as well. Three new sessions are planned. Each Bible 101 conversation is two hours in length and is designed to help people understand the overarching story of the Bible and its major themes. Participants are asked to sign up for one session. The conversations will be led by Stacy Myers. Please come if you have not attended a session. Please consider coming again. The following dates and times are available:

Sunday, February 26, 9:00 – 10:00 am (Adult Forum)—first half of Bible 101

Sunday, March 4, 9:00 – 10:00 am (Adult Forum)—second half of Bible 101

Tuesday, March 6, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Thursday, March 8, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

---

---

### Lenten Cooks & Kitchen Workers

During the Wednesdays in Lent, we will gather together for a meal and an Evening Prayer worship service. Several people and families have already signed-up and we still need more cooks, servers, and clean-up folks. To volunteer, please sign the list on the sign-up table or call the church office.

### Upcoming Dates

Thur, Feb 16...Church Ladies Cook-Off in the Fellowship Hall

Sun, Feb 19...It Takes a Village Choir Concert

Wed, Feb 22...Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper and Worship

Sun, May 6...Open House Celebration

## Biblical Literacy and Christian Education

Biblical literacy is important for people of faith. "Biblical literacy" is more than simply recognizing stories from the Bible. It includes wide familiarity with all types of biblical narratives, being able to interpret them, recognizing common themes, and knowing how individual narratives relate to each other. The task of biblical interpretation is never-ending as new themes have a way of becoming apparent as peoples' lives and the world change.

Several years ago, First Congregational undertook a project entitled *Bible 101* to assist adults in gaining biblical literacy. More than 125 adults participated in the project. The intent has always been to periodically offer *Bible 101* to allow for increased participation. The time has come to offer *Bible 101* again.

If you have not participated in *Bible 101*, please consider doing so. If you would like a re-fresher opportunity, please come. *Bible 101* is a one time commitment of two hours. Please consider signing up. You may sign up on the sign up table or call the church office. For more information, please contact me.

Stacy Johnson Myers  
Minister of Christian Education



### River Falls Reads Hotdish and Jello Contest: Sign Up

The River Falls Library is organizing a "Hotdish and Jello Contest" as part of their River Falls Reads program. The event will be held at First Congregational Church on **February 16, starting at 6:00 pm**. For \$1.00, people can come and sample eight different hotdish and jello creations and vote on their favorites. For those interested in staying, there will be a talk entitled "Hot Dish and Hot Flashes" by author and humorist Janet Martin. Apparently Janet Martin has some funny observations to relay about church kitchens and small towns. If you are interested in coming, please sign the reservation list and bring your dollar to the church office.

### Congregational Help Needed

We are looking for a few people to take over filling positions for coffee fellowship hosts and welcomers on Sundays. We think that two people for each position would be better than one. We also feel that these are very important ministries and our services would definitely be lacking without them. If you are interested please let Lu know in the office. Thank you.

### Sub Drivers Needed for Sundays

Hal Ohlsen is our regular volunteer driver on Sundays but he is out of town frequently for his job. We are looking for a few subs that can fill in for him. He picks up four ladies about 10AM and takes them home after second service. We have three subs at present but they too are often out of town. If you could help us out please call Lu in the church office. Thank you.

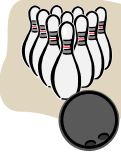


### Thanks to Sheila Peterson

Many thanks to Sheila Peterson who worked hard to organize the beautiful new nursery. If you have not yet seen it, be sure to stop by (and don't miss the nursery bathroom!).

## Temple Visit

All our Confirmands are headed to Temple of Aaron in St Paul, on **Friday, February 24** for a worship service. We will leave at 6:00 pm, have a tour at 7:00 pm and then worship at 8:00 pm including a Bar Mitzvah. A brief reception follows and we hope to be back in River Falls at 9:45 pm. Pastor Chris expects all Confirmands to participate and realizes this will crimp their Friday night social life!



## Bowling Party

The senior high youth (post-confirmation) are having a bowling party on **Sunday, February 12 after second service**. We will meet at the church and proceed to the bowling alley. Please RSVP Deb Hoffman (612) 308-4945 call/text or email at [debhoffman234b@hotmail.com](mailto:debhoffman234b@hotmail.com). There will also be a sign-up sheet in the back of the church. See you soon for a striking good time!

## No Wednesday School: February 1, 2012

Due to the early release at the River Falls elementary schools on February 1, 2012, we will not have Wednesday School.

## Ash Wednesday

Our pre-confirmands (6<sup>th</sup> graders) will again be serving the Annual Ash Wednesday Pancake Dinner on **Wednesday, February 22 from 5:00 until 6:30 pm with worship following at 6:30 pm**. This will begin six consecutive Wednesday night family meals at church. We are in need of people to help cook, clean up and serve the meals. Please sign up for each meal if you plan on dining with us and also sign up to help prepare and clean up.

## 2012 VBS Dates

As you make your summer plans, please be sure to save these dates. Remember: we need kids to participate and adults to volunteer! 2012 summer program dates are as follows:

Elementary Musical: June 25 – 28, afternoons

Older Kids' Musical: June 25- 28, mornings

VBS: July 30 – August 2, mornings

## Christmas Musical DVD Available

If you would like a DVD copy of the recent children's Christmas musical, please contact the office. The copies are available for a free-will offering.



## Katie Jo Fuller's Ordination Sunday, January 21, 2012

Thanks to Church Council, our Moderator Suzanne Hagen and Pastor Chris for all their hard work to make Katie Jo Fuller's ordination day special. She has been called to St. John's UCC in Collinsville, IL to be their Associate Pastor. Congratulations Katie Jo!

## Our Neighbors' Place

The apartment sponsored by our church is changing families. The present family is moving out February 1 and the new family will move in as soon as we have the apartment cleaned. **Thursday, February 2 beginning at 1:00 pm**, we will be cleaning the apartment. Anybody who can help, please stop by. There is a sign-up sheet on the back table or contact Deb Hoffman at 425-5633 or email at [debhoffman234b@hotmail.com](mailto:debhoffman234b@hotmail.com). Thanks for your help!

### Volunteers Needed

Caring, compassionate men and women who desire to help one's neighbor by listening to their needs and providing information to available resources. Our Neighbors' Place Day Center is open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Shifts are flexible; 2 & 4 hrs, 1 shift a week, every other week, once a month-you decide. Training is provided. Stop in or call to set up an information session to see if this is the right volunteer opportunity for you. The Day Center is located at 136 North Riverwalk, RF, the # is 715-426-9000, please ask for Mary Jo Sutton.



### Community Pancake Supper

**Monday, February 13th, St. Bridget Catholic Church, 211 E. Division**

Street, River Falls, will have a pancake

supper to benefit the River Falls' homeless shelter. Serving will be from **4:00 to 7:00 pm**.

Menu includes homemade pancakes, eggs, ham, fresh fruit, coffee & milk. Cost: donation.

### Second 8-Part Sermon Series:

## Things Christians DO Need to Believe

Jesus' Identity: Who is Jesus? (preview preached Nov 20)

1. Jesus' Priority: What Matters Most? (Jan 8)
2. Jesus' Grace: Am I Accepted? (Jan 15)
3. Jesus' Work: Where is God? (Jan 22)
4. Jesus' Example: What Brings Fulfillment? (Jan 29)
5. Jesus' Death: What About Suffering? (Feb 5)
6. Jesus Resurrection: Is There Any Hope? (Feb 12)
7. Jesus' Legacy: Is the Church Still Relevant? (Feb 19)
8. Jesus Promise: Who is the Holy Spirit? (Feb 26)

Post Script: Jesus Vision: What is God's Dream for the World (Mar 4)

(The first 8-part Series: 8 Things Christians Don't Need to Believe was preached this past fall.)



### Birthday Invitation

The family of Ray Anderson invites you to a special 80th birthday celebration in the Fellowship Hall following the 10:30 worship service on **Sunday, March 4th**. No gifts please.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**STAFF**



Chris Myers - Pastor  
 Lu Lueck - Parish Coordinator  
 Missy Luedtke - Office Assistant  
 Stacy Johnson - CE Minister  
 Scott Perau - Music Coordinator  
 Organists - Marsha Pearson,  
 Barb Wall  
 Tim Bylander - Building Supervisor  
 Dave Mountain - Custodian  
 Suzanne Hagen - Moderator

Office Phone: 715-425-2052  
 Office E-mail: office@firstchurchrf.org  
 Website: www.firstchurchrf.org

**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

STANDARD PRESORT  
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID

PERMIT #53  
 RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

February 1, 2012



2012 FEBRUARY 2012						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 NO WEDNESDAY SCHOOL 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Confirmation Year 2 (8th & 9th Grades) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 7:30 pm National Youth Event Parent Information Mtg 9:00 pm Worship Service on Channel 16	2 Yoga 9-10:00 am  Thursday Bible Study 9:30 am  Worship Service on Channel 16 12:00 pm	3	4
5 All Worship Sunday <b>9:00 am Worship Service</b> 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship <b>10:30 am Worship Service</b> 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast 11:30 am Annual Meeting Relay for Life Bake Sale	6 Church Office Closed	7 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am	8 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Pre-Confirmation (6th Gr) 6:30 pm Confirmation Year 1 (7th Grade) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 7:30 pm Church Interns 9:00 pm Worship Service on Channel 16	9 Yoga 9-10:00 am  Worship Service on Channel 16 12:00 pm	10 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	11
12 8:00 am Chancel Choir <b>9:00 am Worship Service</b> 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship <b>10:30 am Worship Service</b> 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	13 Cribbage Night at the Church 7:00 pm	14 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am  2nd Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's	15 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Confirmation Year 2 (8th & 9th Grades) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 9:00 pm Worship Service on Channel 16	16 Yoga 9-10:00 am  Worship Service on Channel 16 12:00 pm  Library Reads Hot Dish & Jello Contest 6:00 pm	17	18
19 8:00 am Jubilee Ringers <b>9:00 am Worship Service</b> 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship <b>10:30 am Worship Service</b> 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast 7:00 pm It Takes a Village Concert at Ezekiel	20	21 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am 3rd Tuesday 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's Boards and Committee Meetings 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting 7:30 pm	22 3:30 pm Wednesday School 5-6:30 pm Pancake Supper (Served by Pre-Confirmands) 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Worship Service (All Confirmands Attend) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 9:00 pm Worship Service on Channel 16	23 Yoga 9-10:00 am  Worship Service on Channel 16 12:00 pm	24 Confirmands Temple Visit Leave at 6:00 pm Return at 9:45 pm	25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
26 8:00 am Chancel Choir <b>9:00 am Worship Service</b> 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship <b>10:30 am Worship Service</b> 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	27	28 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am  4th Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's	29 3:30 pm Wednesday School 5-6:30 pm Family Meal 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Lenten Worship 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 9:00 pm Worship Service on Channel 16			