



# FIRST

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

*God is still speaking,*

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FEBRUARY 15, 2011

### Pastor's Corner

#### Now What?

For those that have not heard, the proposed building expansion project was approved by the congregation by an overwhelming majority, more than 90%. Thank you to all who participated in the discussion and process.

The next step involves reconvening the Building and Finance Committees who are now empowered to get firm bids and concrete rates from contractors and banks. Please pray for them and the work they will do. Building and managing funds are stressful activities.

We do not yet have a timeline of when the project will begin, nor how long the project will take to accomplish. The congregation will be informed through the weekly pulpit and bulletin announcements, weekly word email and the newsletter.

Thanks to many people who worked behind the scenes to get us to this point:

- \* The Capital Campaign Cabinet who worked weekly at some points.
- \* The Building Committee who worked with church leaders and committees, architects and contractors to come up with a sound plan.
- \* The Finance Committee who worked with local banks to get initial loan rates.
- \* Our Moderator Jean Smith and Vice Moderator Suzanne Hagen who spent many hours being a part of many committees.
- \* Our Church Council, Endowment Board and Endowment Committees who spent many extra hours working out details of the proposed plan.
- \* Those who worked behind the scenes at the Annual Meeting, especially Allie Miller and Kris Ainsworth who were on childcare/youth duty, the Millers and the Gustafsons who worked tirelessly in the kitchen, and the many who stayed late to do dishes and clean up.

Pastor Chris



### Church Family Skate

Come join us for an afternoon of winter fun. On **Sunday, February 20**, we will eat lunch together in the Fellowship Hall (\$3 per person/max \$15 per family) and then head over to UWRF Hunt Arena for the free skating time (1 to 2:30pm) where you may use your own skates or rent them. Please sign up for lunch or plan on meeting us over at the arena. This event is open to all of our church family members and non-members alike. Bring a friend! See Pastor Chris with questions.



### Bell Concert

The St. Olaf Bell Choir will be at First Congregational Church on **Friday, February 25** for a concert at 7:30 pm. Maddie Giordana from our congregation is a part of this choir and she is pleased to bring her group to her home church. A free-will offering will be received. Please come and bring a friend.

### Inquirer's Class

Those who are new to the church and would like to know more about its life and ministry are invited to come to the Inquirer's Class on **Sunday, Feb. 27**. Please see the article inside for more information.

*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.*

# Moderators Notes

As I write my first Moderator’s message, I note that a UCC daily on-line devotional scripture reference is from I Corinthians, chapter 12: “Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.” For me, this fits so well with my feeling of gratitude –

- for the faithful committee members and chairs who have contributed to our church in past years and do so as we move forward in 2011
- for our dedicated staff who both serve and lead as together we live out our Christian faith
- for all our members and friends who reflect thoughtfully, listen respectfully and work energetically to grow in mission and service to others



As we move forward with our worship, education, mission and fellowship programs and with our building project, I am looking forward to working with so many faithful, dedicated and committed people—

In fellowship, Suzanne Hagen

## TREASURER’S NOTES

Missy Luedtke

Financial Information for January and YTD:

	<u>January</u>	<u>2011 YTD</u>
Income	\$ 51,388.95	\$ 51,388.95
Expenses	\$ 32,562.36	\$ 32,562.36
Net	\$ 18,826.59	\$ 18,826.59

A full accounting of all income and expenses is always posted outside the church office door on the bulletin board.

## Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday Morning Bible Study group will meet **March 3, at 10:00 am.** The focus will be on the Book of Psalms. The study is led by Stacy Myers. All are welcome!

## Yoga Classes

Yoga classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 to 10:00 am in the Sunday School area. Yoga DVDs will be used for those interested in participating. Please bring a yoga mat and a large bath towel. There is no charge for being a yoga participant. Jan Hansen will return in April.

## Inquirer’s Class

Those who are new to the church and would like to know more about its life and ministry are invited to come to the Inquirer’s Class on **Sunday, February 27.** The purpose of the class is:

1. To learn more about the ministry and programs of First Congregational Church
2. To meet other people who are new to our faith community
3. To meet church leaders and staff.



Lunch is served and childcare is available. Our time together should be about 90 minutes including lunch. Completion of the class is the first step toward church membership.



Thank you to all who supported our Relay for Life bake sale on Sunday, February 13th. We raised \$303 for our team. Please join us at the Relay on **March 25-26** at the River Falls High School. More details to follow.

## Adult Forum

**February 20: *Shalom and the Story of the Exodus*, Stacy Johnson Myers**—The church has a responsibility to bring God's peace to the world. The forum will consider what the Exodus story and Jesus' teachings suggest about the nature of God's peace and its ability to transform our lives and the world.

**February 27: *School Board Referendum: Informational Session*, Alan Tuchtenhagen, Rick and Jennie Price**—In April, River Falls will face a referendum question related to school facilities. Come for an informational session about the plan to help you make an informed decision.

**March 6: *Jesus' Transfiguration*, Stacy Johnson Myers**—Jesus' transfiguration is one of the most confounding stories in scripture. The forum will explore the function and possible interpretations of the story. Insight from the St. John's Bible will be considered.

**March 13: *Exploring Islam*, Alan Tuchtenhagen**—While many of us have a strong foundation in our own religious tradition, most of us are not familiar with the religious traditions of others. The forum will explore Islam, the tradition followed by an estimated one-fifth of the world's population.



### Back Bay Mission Commissioning

On **Sunday, March 6**, the 20 participants going on the Spring Break Mission Trip to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS will be commissioned into service at the 10:30 am worship service. Following the worship service there will be a final planning meeting for participants in the Fellowship Hall. The group will be in Biloxi from March 12th to the 19th. Please pray for them and the people whose houses they will be working on.

### Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper

Our pre-Confirmands (6th graders) will be serving the Annual Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper on **Wednesday, March 9** from 5:00 until 6:30 pm. The Ash Wednesday Worship Service will be at 6:30 pm and will include imposition of ashes and communion. This is an All Worship Wednesday and all Confirmands and their parents are expected to attend. Please make a reservation for the meal.

### Lenten Cooks and Kitchen Workers

Lent begins on March 9, Ash Wednesday. We will gather together for a meal and evening prayer during the Wednesdays in Lent. We are in need of one more cook, and people to help with serving and clean up. Please consider volunteering. The meals provide a wonderful opportunity for fellowship. Please sign the list at the church.

## The 2011 Summer Program for Kids

Registration forms for the 2011 Summer Program are available on-line. Sessions:

Elementary Musical, completed grades 1 – 5	June 20 – 23, 2011, 9:00 – 11:30 AM
Middle School Musical, completed grades 6 – 8	June 20 – 23, 2011, 1:00 – 3:30 PM
Day in the City, completed grades 6 - 12	July 6, 2011, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Vacation Bible School, age 3 – completed grade 5	August 1 – 4, 2011, 9:00 – 11:30 AM

**NEW Church Directory**—There have been many inquiries about having a new directory. Two people have volunteered but we need one more to help head up this project. If you are interested in helping to coordinate this effort, please contact Lu in the church office.

## Spring Fling

Country Fair needs a facelift. Thus, we are giving you the opportunity to participate in its replacement, "Spring Fling." Bob Gustafson has agreed to lead this new endeavor. We will preserve some of the best of Country Fair and expand and enhance other opportunities.



Country Fair has been around many years and contributed much to Women's Fellowship. But this year we are seeking participation from men, women, and children for this event. All the details have not been worked out by an energetic committee, but here are some of the highlights.

Spring Fling will begin with a dinner honoring women on Mother's Day, May 8. Dinner will be served right after the second service. No woman over the age of 18 will be allowed to work at the dinner that day. Andy Krueger, resident chef, has agreed to coordinate this effort along with Bob. Tickets will be sold in advance for this event that will feature both an adult and children's menu. We are encouraging people to bring guests to this dinner.

May 8 will also be the kickoff for the silent auction. With this newsletter you are receiving a sheet requesting a donation for the auction. The donation may be either a specific item or a service. We believe there are many people in our congregation that could offer one or both. It's time to put on your creative caps. To get you started, here are some ideas to consider: hosting a dinner in your home; lawn mowing, gardening help, child care, teaching a skill, a day or weekend at your cabin, athletic event tickets, special baked items that can be "cashed in" throughout the year, a day on the river if you own a boat, a lesson in a skill area, etc. Auction donation sheets will need to be returned by Sunday, May 1. The auction will close after the second service on May 15. If you care to donate more than one item, additional copies are available in the church office.

Events on Saturday, May 14 will include a "picnic" lunch as well as some of our favorite features from Country Fair: pies, plants, rugs, crafts, a bake sale, and, of course, food. We will not be collecting attic treasures, housewares, or linens this year. More activities will be happening that day as well including a carnival on the front lawn with activities for the young and young-at-heart.

So mark your calendars now. We hope you have an item or service to donate to the Silent Auction. Let's make this an event that is fun for all members of the family. Guys, the women of this church have done most of the fundraising over the years. Now, let's make this a gender-neutral event with help from everyone.

Watch the bulletin and newsletter for further information about "Spring Fling."



On Monday, January 31, twenty-one courageous volunteers braved the elements and headed to Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) in Eagan to package food for the starving children around the world. As always, it is a very humbling experience to partake in this humanitarian project. Poverty around the world continues to exist and approximately 18,000 children die daily as a result. Along with several other groups, we packaged over 13,000 meals that morning despite arriving a little late because of the road conditions. That translates into providing 36 children food for a year.

However, no government aid nor organization provides any of the necessary funds to purchase the food ingredients for this very basic meal. The cost of our packaging that morning was approximately \$3,200. The annual budget for FMSC is \$25 million (94% of the budget goes directly to the food program).

FMSC will be in River Falls with its mobile unit on May 12, 13 and 14. Watch for announcements when our church will have organized time slots.

Special thanks to Kris Roen, Bob Gustafson and Deb Hoffman who drove the vehicles through less-than-ideal conditions.  
-Mission Ed Committee

## Mission Moment - Tuesday Banquet

It takes only 2-3 hours of your afternoon and it's a chance to meet neat people, work with friends, and meet other church members you don't see other than on Sunday. It's also an opportunity to meet other people in our community and have the satisfaction you were able to contribute and help others looking for friendship and an evening meal. What is this "it" I am referring to? It's the Tuesday Banquet and it occurs twice a month at St. Bridget's Church. Local churches and organizations take turns providing the meals and the clean up of the dishes and fellowship area.

The Tuesday Banquet began in our community years ago and was held at our church until approximately 2 years ago. The purpose of the Tuesday Banquet is to provide a balanced meal to those needing help with their food bill and a clean, warm place to eat. It also provides companionship during a meal for those who would normally eat alone, and it allows the churches and area clubs to become involved in our community needs.

We have read and heard many times throughout the Bible to go and serve our Lord; Tuesday Banquet is one of those opportunities. Scripture tells us about ministry, mission, and meals. How does ministry pertain to Tuesday Banquet? It provides a place to be together with our other churches and community organizations. Mission is provided through the giving of those preparing the meal, cleaning up, and providing a welcoming place for people who want to share a meal. The third word meal was a profound moment in the breaking of the bread with others in biblical times. Today, the Tuesday Banquet is a meal of sharing fellowship, food, and the act of giving.

Our church is very fortunate, we have three dedicated members that oversee the organizing of the meals and clean up, but they need your help to complete the tasks. The second Tuesday of the month coordinator is Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn. Our fourth Tuesday of the month coordinators are Julie Larson and Michael Noreen. Our church is responsible for parts of nine meals per year. The only requirements of you are to wear closed toed shoes (no sandals), wash your hands when you arrive at the church, and wear gloves. The meal tasks required of the evening will vary depending on if we prepare the meal or have to clean up. Julie, Bonnie, Michael or Brenda (the overall Tuesday Banquet chairperson) will guide you to the jobs that need to be accomplished.

**This is where you, the volunteers can help.** There is a sign-up sheet at the back of the church with a list of the dates that our church is responsible to prepare the meal or clean up. Please consider signing up for at least one of these dates. If you have questions, contact Julie Larson, Bonnie Jones-Witthuhn or Lu Lueck at the church office. I have helped many times and look forward to the next opportunity that I can help.

### Food prep dates are:

June 14  
June 28  
October 11  
December 27

### Clean up dates are:

March 8  
April 26  
October 25

In case, you caught the fact that there are only seven dates listed above that is because the post confirmation class and a second Tuesday crew have already served a meal and cleaned up in January. So thank you to our young people, their parents and other volunteers for their help already. Please reflect on your mission through the church, check your schedules, and sign up to help with the Tuesday banquet

Thank you for your help and service. God Bless you and your dedication.  
Deb Hoffman and the Mission Education committee members



## Community Pancake Supper

On **Tuesday, March 1**, St. Bridget's Catholic Church will have a pancake supper to benefit the River Falls' homeless shelter. Serving will be from 4:00 to 7:00 pm in the church dining hall. Menu includes homemade pancakes, eggs, ham, fresh fruit, coffee and milk. Cost: Donation.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**STAFF**



Chris Myers - Pastor  
 Lu Lueck - Parish Coordinator  
 Missy Luedtke - Office Assistant  
 Stacy Johnson - CE Coordinator  
 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

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

February 15, 2011



2011 FEBRUARY 2011						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
13 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 11:30 am Relay for Life Bake Sale 7:00 pm It Takes a Village Concert at Ezekiel	14	15 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am  3rd Tuesday Soup 'n Sandwich 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's  Boards & Committees Meetings 6:30 pm  Church Council Mtg 7:30 pm	16 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Confirmation Year 1 (7th & 8th Grades) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 7:30 pm Confirmation Year 3 (9th Grade)	17 Yoga 9-10:00 am	18	19
20 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	21	22 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am  4th Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's	23 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Pre-Confirmation (6th Grade) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	24 Yoga 9-10:00 am	25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE  St. Olaf Bell Choir Concert 7:30 pm	26
27 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 11:30 am Inquirer's Class	28					

**Summer Church Camp**

Summer church camp brochures are available online at ucci.org. We hope you will consider this as part of your summer scheduling for your children or the whole family.

**Journey House Campus Ministry Update**

This month we have many exciting activities planned. Our service project for March is to send care packages to soldiers serving overseas—if you would like to donate something to send you may drop it off at Journey House. Journey House would like to ask for your kind donation of new, non-Teflon skillets and pans. We could greatly use these items for preparing meals for our events. If you can make this donation, please drop them off at 143 E Cascade Avenue or contact Yvonne Wilken at 715-425-2391. We look forward to seeing you at one of Journey House's wonderful events. Please check us out on facebook under Journey House Campus Ministry.