

"The Congregator"

First Congregational United Church of Christ - 110 N. Third Street - River Falls, WI

Phone: 715-425-2052 - Website: www.firstchurchrf.org

Rev. Chris Myers: chris@firstchurchrf.org - Office email: office@firstchurchrf.org

JANUARY 1, 2010

Pastor's Corner

Amazing things happen on Christmas Eve, because a child was born long ago in a stable in Bethlehem of Judea.

We know the story. We have seen the star and heard the angels, and now God calls us to participate in the new birth, the new world proclaimed by the stories. The birth stories are not pipe dream, but a proclamation that what we see revealed in Jesus, is the way. The way toward a different kind of life, a different kind of future. God did not change the world until Mary said yes. And God will not change the world without human participation.

Howard Thurman, a great African American scholar, pastor and poet, called it the work of Christmas:

- When the song of the angels is stilled.
- When the star in the sky is gone.
- When the kings and princes are home.
- When the shepherds are back with their flock.
- The Work of Christmas begins...

... to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the brothers and sisters, to make music in the heart.

(excerpt from Christmas Eve Homily)

Pastor Chris



Church Office Schedule



Please note that the church office will be open as follows during the Christmas to New Year's holidays:

Dec. 24 ~ Open til Noon

Dec. 25 ~ Closed

Dec. 28-31 ~ Open til Noon

Jan. 1 ~ Closed

Advent Thanks



Thank you to all who participated in the Advent Marketplace this year. \$5,300 was given to our three projects: building wells through Church World Service, providing animals through the Heifer Project, and building houses through Habitat for Humanity. With the additional match from the Endowment Grant and Mission Committees, our total will be \$7,300. Thank you for making a difference this Christmas.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting has been set for **Sunday, February 7, 2010** after the second service.

Committee chairs will need to have their annual reports to Lu Lueck by **Monday, January 18, 2010**. Please email them to her at lu@firstchurchrf.org.

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 Submitted by Jean Smith

As we begin 2010, let us reflect on what was accomplished in 2009. The Church Council goals for 2009 were as follows:

Church Council Goals 2009

- Provide leadership and support to the building and finance committees when necessary
- Develop a Fellowship Committee to help provide more opportunities for outreach and create new fellowship opportunities
- Intentionally grow the church by ten families
- Develop a music component that relates to our church's core value in terms of worship
- Coordinate our publicity and marketing campaign

In one way or another each of these goals have been accomplished or at least are being addressed. Each month the Church Council works on New and Old Business, listens to the wants and needs of each of the church committees, does a focus session on one of our goals and we try to handle any other needs that the congregation would like addressed.

I feel good about 2009 and excited about 2010. As I stated last month, we have a Capital Campaign this year. We hope to raise the dollars needed to move forward on our building needs. More new families are visiting every Sunday. What excitement! As we move forward into 2010, please contact me if you feel there is something you would like the Church Council to address. If you have concerns, please contact me. If you are excited about something, please contact me. I look forward to serving this year as your Moderator and hope that you will join in all that First Congregational Church River Falls has to offer.

PLEASE NOTE: At this time there are 19 positions that need to be filled for our various church committees. Please contact the office or myself (715-531-1552) if you would like to serve or want more information about one of these positions. Generally, these positions are a 3 years term. If you have questions please call. Thank you in advance for considering a committee position. It makes the nomination process a great deal less stressful.

Christian Education: 1 position
Deacons: 5 positions
Endowment Fund: 1 position
Endowment Grant: 2 positions
Campus Ministry: 1 position
Memorial Committee: 1 position

Music: 2 positions
Trustees: 1 position
Personnel: 1 position
Scholarship: 1 position
Nominating: 3 positions

TREASURER'S NOTES

Missy Luedtke

Financial Information for November and YTD:

	<u>November</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$ 23,773.86	\$ 283,029.30
Expenses	\$ 22,641.59	\$ 284,038.44
Net	\$ 1,132.27	\$ -1,009.14

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



We are "crying out" for nursery attendants! We have Lacie Gordon and Jennifer Niemeyer that are donating their time but we need two more people so each person would only have to do one Sunday a month. Please let me know if you would be interested. Thank you, Lu

Pledges

Do we have your pledge? The green 'intention of giving sheets' were dedicated on October 25. These sheets enable us to effectively plan church programming for 2010. Please return yours as soon as possible in the collection plate, church office or mail. Thank you for your continued faithfulness!

UCC History and Polity Course

First Congregational Church is sponsoring a one-day workshop led by Dr. Martha Baumer, former professor at Eden Theological Seminary. The workshop will meet from **9:00 to 3:00 on Friday, February 12, 2010**, and will include a luncheon. The cost of the day, including lunch, is \$10.00 per person. This is an excellent Adult Education opportunity. For more information please see Stacy Myers. Please register by calling the church office or signing the list on the sign up table.

Important Dates

Sunday School resumes on January 10, 2010 and Wednesday School resumes on January 13, 2010.

Habitat Build

First Congregational Church will be having a Habitat build in New Richmond on **January 30, 2010**. The first twelve people to sign up will be able to help build the house for a well deserving homeowner. Please sign up on the back table.



COFFEE MATTERS

The *Cloudforest coffee* offered for sale in the church lobby is grown by farmers in the central highlands of Chiapas, Mexico. They are some of the poorest people in this hemisphere. A reliable market for their coffee at *Fair Trade* prices is of extreme importance to them. It may even make the difference between staying in their village or deciding to make the long and dangerous trip to “El Norte” in the hopes of finding work as an illegal immigrant.

If you drink coffee please consider making this excellent, **organic, shade grown** coffee your coffee of choice. During the holiday season keep it in mind as hostess gifts and stocking stuffers. Decaf coffee is available upon request, as is coffee in 5 lb. packages which sell for about \$1 less per pound.

Dead Sea Scrolls Trip

A traveling exhibit of the famed Dead Sea Scrolls is coming to the Science Museum of Minnesota this spring. The church has reserved 30 spots for **Tuesday, April 13, 2010**. We will leave the church at 10am, have a bite to eat, enter the exhibit at noon. Our time at the museum should end around 2pm and we will return to the church around 3pm. The cost is \$20 and includes admission to the museum, exhibit and an audio guide. We must have payment when you sign up for the trip. We will take the church van and need others to drive. Please see Pastor Chris for more info.

For Your 2010 Calendar

As you fill in dates on your 2010 calendar add this event:

January 22 from 9:30-11:30 am—Feed My Starving Children trip to Eagan

They have room for 30 people and will leave the church by 8:30 am, returning after fun and fellowship over lunch on the way home.

This trip is our response to our country's Day of Volunteerism/Martin Luther King Day.

Sign up and join us. It's fun, it's easy and it will warm your heart.



First Congregational Reads, 2010

Three years ago, our congregation started a First Congregational Reads project. The idea was simple: we would invite the congregation to read a common book and talk about it. The last two years have been quite successful. We have had many readers and our discussions have been interesting and thought-provoking. One of the great values of this project is that diverse members of the congregation come together to learn from each other.

This year I invite you to read *Conquering Fear: Living Boldly in an Uncertain World*, by Harold S. Kushner. We will gather together during the Adult Forum on February 28, 2010 to discuss the book. The book is available in the church office for \$17.00.

Rabbi Kushner wrote the book to grapple with the questions and issues that many people not only face in their lives but also fear. He addresses suffering, disappointment, guilt, and forgiveness. He also considers terrorism, experiences of rejection, growing old, and the fear of death. Kushner attempts to outline such fears and then address them in a measured, realistic manner. He also directs his readers to turn to the religious tradition to find resources for coping with and confronting fear.

I hope you decide to read this book and participate in the discussion. One of our responsibilities as people of faith is to explore issues at the intersection of life and faith. "Fear" and our response to fear, in my estimation, lie right in the center of that intersection.

Stacy Johnson Myers
Christian Education Coordinator

Adult Forum

January 10: *Hinduism*, Venki Pegadaraju
Hinduism encompasses many different spiritual practices and relies on ancient texts called the *Vedas*. Venki Pegadaraju will discuss the history and content of the Hindu tradition.

There is no Adult Forum on December 27 and January 3.

January 17, 24: *Cash Positive, Carbon Negative, and Energy Independence*, Dr. Kelly Cain
Dr. Cain is a professor of Environmental Science at UWRF and the director of the St. Croix Institute for Sustainable Community Development. He will discuss the need for and means to achieve a national energy policy that is cash positive, carbon negative, and energy independent.

Weekly Email

Do we have your current email address? The "Weekly Word" is a weekly email sent out on Thursdays that highlights upcoming church activities.

Please send the church office your updated email address at office@firstchurchrf.org.

Church Family Trip to Holden Village— July 11-18, 2010

Please see the flyer on the back table for more information. Talk to Pastor Chris to be put on the email list.

Christmas Program

Thanks to all who helped with this year's Christmas program on Sunday, December 20. Special thanks go out to our director, Peggy Krasin, accompanist Judith Permann, and all the members of the Christian Education Committee who helped with props, rehearsals, costumes, scripts and so much more.



Youth Winter Retreat

The Youth Winter Retreat for 6th and 7th graders will be **Friday, January 8 to Saturday January 9, 2010**. We will be heading to a new waterpark in Eau Claire, Club Chaos. We have space for 16 youth and will need at least three adult chaperones. Please use the sign-up sheets to let us know you are coming. Payment of \$30 is required when registering.

Confirmation Retreat

The Confirmation Retreat for 8th and 9th graders will be an Urban Immersion Service Retreat to Minneapolis, **February 5-7, 2010**. This is always a highlight of the confirmation experience. Forms will be out soon. Please make sure these dates are on your calendars.

Boston Meeting for 3rd Year Confirmands

All Third Year Confirmands and parents are to attend a meeting on **Sunday, January 11** after the 10:30 am worship service to finalize the trip to Boston in April, 2010. The cost is \$250 for those youth who participate in fundraising and \$350 for those who do not. Thank you to the Endowment Grant Committee who graciously subsidize this trip.



From Broken Down Bikes to Rebuilt Bikes

Tim Bylander has taken over for Cecil Bjork the task of rebuilding bicycles to give away to kids and adults in our community. He is in need of used bikes or parts to repair or put together "new bikes". If you have used or parts of old bikes you would like to donate, please contact Tim at (715) 425-7437. Thank you for your help.

**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
 Jean Smith - Moderator

Office Phone: 715-425-2052
 Office E-mail: office@firstchurchrf.org
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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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 U.S. POSTAGE PAID

PERMIT #53
 RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

January 1, 2010

2010 JANUARY 2010						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 9:00 am Worship Service 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	4 Kettle Bells 5:00 pm	5	6 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Confirmation Year 2 (8th Grade) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 7:30 pm Confirmation Year 3 (9th Grade)	7	8 Pre-Confirmation (6th & 7th Graders) Winter Retreat →	9
10 8:00 am Chancel Choir 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast 11:30 am 3rd Year Confirmands Mtg—Boston Trip NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	11 Kettle Bells 5:00 pm	12 2nd Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's	13 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Pre-Confirmation (6th & 7th Grades) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	14	15	16
17 8:00 am Jubilee Ringers 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	18 Annual Reports Due to Lu in the Church Office Kettle Bells 5:00 pm	19 3rd Tuesday Soup 'n Sandwich 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's Boards and Committees Meetings 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting 7:30 pm	20 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Confirmation Year 2 (8th Grade) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 7:30 pm Confirmation Year 3 (9th Grade)	21	22 Feed My Starving Children Work Shift 9:30 am-11:30 am	23
24 8:00 am Chancel Choir 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast	25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Kettle Bells 5:00 pm	26 4th Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's	27 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Pre-Confirmation (6th & 7th Grades) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	28	29	30 Habitat Build in New Richmond
31 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast						