

"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

JUNE 15, 2009

Pastor's Corner

As I write this, I am half way through my twelve-week sabbatical period. Slowly I am making progress on much neglected coursework as a part of my Doctor of Ministry degree. I am also reading many of the books that have accumulated on my shelves for the past ten years. In addition to reading and writing, I have also been able to worship in many different congregations. On a typical Sunday I try to worship in at least two different churches. I have been in UCC, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal and non-denominational churches so far. I am amazed at the diversity of these worship services and have learned so much by sitting in the pews.

Two brief notes about this. First, I am amazed at how lonely you can feel in worship sometimes as a newcomer or guest. Of all the churches I have visited, only in two churches have people come up to me and actually spoken to me. As a newcomer in other people's churches I had forgotten how lonely it can feel even entering or exiting a church when you don't know anyone and everyone seems so busy with their own conversations and friends. Simply put it takes courage to try out a new church, especially if you are by yourself! It reminds me again of how we all need to make a special effort to introduce ourselves to new faces. Perhaps even invite them to join you for coffee downstairs.

Second, I am reminded of how important the role of community is. Put simply, I miss seeing you and hearing what is going on in your lives, families, jobs and travels. Part of the reason we worship is to join together as a faith community. Some of the churches with whom I have worshipped have a profound sense of community. It is clear even to a newcomer that these people enjoy being around one another. And the best of these churches provide regular opportunities for people to get to know one another even better.

Once again let me express my profound thanks to all of you for allowing me this opportunity. I am thrilled to have been offered this opportunity and look forward to sharing with you much of what I have learned. I look forward to seeing you all on my first Sunday back in the pulpit, July 19 when we welcome Jay Beech as our musical guest as part of the 'Sounds of Summer' worship series.

In the meantime I hope you are enjoying many of our fine guest preachers and lay leaders. We are blessed to have been provided with so many faithful people who continue to lead our worship services week after week. Please be sure to thank them for offering their gifts.

May you all have a restful summer.

In Christ, Chris Myers, Pastor

Please Register

Now is the time to register for the 2009 summer program. Registration forms are available online at www.firstchurchrf.org or call the church office.



The Musical Workshop:

The Troubbable of Zerubbabel

June 19, 2009, 10:00 – 11:30 AM

June 22 – 25, 2009, 9:00 – 11:30 AM

Completed Grade 1 – Grade 8

A Day in the City with Pastor Chris

July 22, 2009, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Middle School and Senior High Students

VBS: *God's Amazing World*

August 3 – 6, 2009, 9:00 – 11:30 AM

Age 3 – Completed Grade 5

Sabbatical Contact Information

While Pastor Chris is on sabbatical, please use these numbers in case of emergency. The church office (425-2052) should always be your first call as they will have a full list of who is doing what. Outside of office hours, please use the following contacts:

Pastoral emergencies: Lu Lueck
home 425-9413 - cell 715-781-0138

Building emergencies: Tim Bylander
home 425-7437 - cell 715-497-9188

Church office or program questions:
Missy Luedtke - cell 715-222-5427

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.

Variance Request Granted

The Building Committee went before the City of River Falls, Board of Appeals on Wednesday, June 3rd to state the case for the requested variance to the set back requirements along the rear property line and alley. The Board of Appeals granted our request which will now clear the way for the committee to finalize the draft, update the budget requirement and come to the congregation for approval to move forward with the next phase of the project. We expect to have this ready for an all congregation meeting this September. If you have questions or comment, please don't hesitate to contact Bill Herris, committee chairperson, at 715-426-5047 or any other committee member.

TREASURER'S NOTES

Missy Luedtke

Financial Information for April and YTD:

	<u>April</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$ 19,627.99	\$ 151,802.71
Expenses	\$ 21,454.51	\$ 135,550.94
Net	\$ -1,826.52	\$ 16,251.77

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

Dinner And A Show, Anyone?

The musical, *The Troubbable of Zerubbabel*, tells the story of the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple (with a great deal of fun and creativity). **This musical will be presented on Thursday, June 25 at 7:00 pm. The evening will begin at 6:00 pm with supper in the Fellowship Hall.** Please come. Your attendance is a good way to show interest in the children of the congregation. Please sign the list or call the office to make a reservation.

2008 Deficit Update

So far \$1,440.00 has been paid toward the \$2,324.79 deficit from 2008. If you would like to help pay off this debt, please be sure to write "2008 Deficit" on your check and/or envelope. Thank you!

VBS Work Day

There will be a work day on **Tuesday, July 28 at 6:30 pm** for the purpose of getting ready for Vacation Bible School. We have many backdrops to paint and projects to do. Please come for an evening of fellowship and work/fun. For more information, please contact Stacy Myers. Please sign the list or call the church office if you are able to come.



Marble Mania

Want to experience fun and excitement during River Falls Days? Engage yourself either as a volunteer or a participant in Marble Mania. The Comma Club is sponsoring this event in conjunction with RF Days. **Marble Mania starts at 11:00 am on Friday, July 10**, with marble instruction. Tom Fletcher, owner of Essence of Nonsense in St. Paul, will serve as our guide. From noon until 1:00 pm entrants will have an hour of practice time. Starting at 1:00 pm a single-elimination tournament with age categories follows. Awards will be given to top finishers.

This event is open to people from 7 to 107. For a \$2 entry fee, each participant will receive a take-home marble package as well as supporting the purchase of marbles for children in Barb de Souza's Brazilian mission project.

Application forms are available in the church office or at firstchurchrf.org. **Fee must accompany application form.**

Volunteers are needed for the event. Contact Bob Gustafson at 425-2516. We want this to be an intergenerational event so hone your marble skills and join the fun.

On the Trinity & Words to Graduates

Sunday, June 7 was Trinity Sunday and Graduation Sunday. It was a full day! The Gospel text was the story of Nicodemus, recorded in John 3:1-17. Here are two excerpts from my sermon that day:



On the Trinity:

...I won't try to explain this doctrine to you. Ultimately the Trinity is not something that can be taught or explained. The Trinity has to be experienced. But sometimes a few guiding words can be helpful as we try to interpret our experiences. I will try to provide such guidance.

God the Father created the world and all within it. But as Dorothy Sayers once said, God was not content to call the creation good from a distance. So God came into the world, not to tell us how to live, not even to show us how to live, but to actually live with us. God came very near to us as the incarnate, suffering Son. God remains with us still, even when we do not perceive it, as the Holy Spirit. The nearness of God in the Holy Spirit makes God's promise of never-ending love, grace, and salvation new every single day.

Words to the Graduates:

...We, all of us, are proud of you. You have grown into fine young women and men. You've learned a lot already, and you have much, much more to learn. Learning is hard. It requires that you find the courage to ask hard questions, even and especially when those questions threaten what you already believe to be true. But unlike Nicodemus, ask your questions in the light of day, not in the dark. Be brave. Ask questions about the world and your place in it. Ponder what constitutes truth and how to recognize justice. Figure out what the world needs and how you can contribute. Imagine a world that matches God's vision and work for it. And finally, keep grounded in your faith and remember that we will always be happy to see you.

Stacy Johnson Myers
Christian Education Coordinator



Teachers' Meeting

All VBS teachers and volunteers are asked to attend the VBS Teachers' Meeting on **Thursday, July 30 at 6:30 pm**. Curriculum will be distributed, jobs assigned, and plans finalized. It is important that all teachers attend this meeting.

Summer Time is Casual & Relaxing

Casual attire, happy relaxed companionship, the joys of our beautiful world in its peak season... what better time than the summer to Bring a Friend to join you in worship? Well actually ANYTIME is the perfect time to do this, but here is the opportunity to provide an even more enriching worship experience during our special "Sounds of Summer" Sundays.

Open invitations are available in the office and brochure display areas. They include the dates of our upcoming guest musicians: **July 19 – Jay Beach, Aug 9 – Peter Mayer**

Please help yourself to as many invitations as you like, adding your own personal comment as you pass it along to a friend, neighbor, work associate, etc. We would love to have your friends experience worship time with us at First Congregational UCC.

Blankets for Graduating Seniors

Eleven students from First Congregational received a fleece blanket in honor of their High School graduation. The blankets were embroidered by Liz Ohlsen. Each blanket bears the UCC symbol and the words "First Congregational Church." Through these blankets the congregation sends its support with our students as they embark on new adventures.



Alex Harter, Abby Harter, Alex Solberg, David Querna, Michael Harty, Mark Parsons, Laurel Bergland, Sarah Hoffman

Not pictured: Josh Krueger, Lucas Meyer, Bryan Roe

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

STAFF



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

June 15, 2009

2009 JUNE 2009						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
14 Sounds of Summer— River Falls Brass 9:30 am Worship Service 10:00 am WEVR Broadcast 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	15 Softball	16 Feed My Starving Children Work Shift 9:30-11:30 am 3rd Tuesday Soup 'n Sandwich 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's Boards and Committees Meetings 6:30 pm	17	18 Yoga 9:00 am	19 Youth Musical 10:00-11:30 am	20
21 Father's Day 9:30 am Worship Service 10:00 am WEVR Broadcast 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	22 Youth Musical 9:00-11:30 am Softball	23 Yoga 9:00 am 4th Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's	24	25 Yoga 9:00 am Youth Musical Dinner and Performance 6:00 pm NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	26	27
28 9:30 am Worship Service 10:00 am WEVR Broadcast 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	29 Softball	30 Yoga 9:00 am				

Email Addresses Needed—By fall of 2009, we want to send out a weekly church email update. We need you to get your current email address to the church office as soon as possible. You can email them to office@firstchurchrf.org. Thank you for your help!

Electronic Giving—If you are gone for some of the summer months, don't forget that you can sign up for e-giving so that the church bills can continue to be paid over these summer months. Just contact the church office for details and forms.