



# 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)  
NOVEMBER 15, 2011

## Pastor's Corner

### On Living Through Exile

The Exile is nearly over. For months now our office staff and nearly all programming has been crammed into the old church basement. To say that it was claustrophobic is an understatement. Being in Exile is not fun. Just ask people who have to vacate one place and live in temporary quarters while a new space is readied for them. Just ask anyone who has ever had to live in a homeless shelter. Just ask anyone who has had to move to an independent living facility or nursing home. It is hard work living in Exile.

Thousands of years before our staff and programs were crammed into our temporary Exile in the church basement, the people of Israel experienced the real thing. The chosen people of God were defeated by the Babylonians and nearly the entire country was hauled off to live in Babylon. They stayed in Exile for over 50 years. The strange thing was, when King Cyrus suddenly and unexpectedly freed the Israelites and allowed them to go home, most of them preferred to stay in Exile. Why would people prefer to live in Exile?

We have a wonderful opportunity in moving into our new space. And with every opportunity there are also many temptations as well. One temptation will be to try to continue to do things the way we have 'always' done them. Of course in a congregation with a 157 year history there are few things we have 'always' done save perhaps love God and serve God's people. Even there how we worship, the people and ways we serve have changed significantly with the times. Another temptation will be to try to 'protect' our building. While I certainly do not want to be the first one to make the first stain on the carpet or mark on the wall, someone will. Buildings are meant to be used. This is especially true for churches. In fact I am excited about the new ways and innovative ministries people are beginning to think about for our new building.

Our Exile is nearly over. Won't you journey forward with us?

Pastor Chris

### Advent/Christmas Events

Nov 27—Advent Begins: Choir Singing

Dec 4—Advent 2: Advent Event for Families and Teens

Dec 11—Advent 3: Choir Singing and Bells Playing

Dec 18—Advent 4: Children's Christmas Program

Dec 24—Christmas Eve Worship Services at 4:00, 6:00 and 11:00 pm

Dec 25—Christmas Day Worship at 10:00 am

### **Discipleship Breakfasts**

All church members are invited to the Discipleship Breakfasts on **Sunday, December 4 at either 9:00 or 10:30 am.** At these gatherings in the new Fellowship Hall, we will gather for a simple breakfast then hear a presentation from the Discipleship Committee and Pastor about church goals and programs for the upcoming year. Childcare will be available for children of all ages during both the 9:00 and 10:30 am presentations. Please make a reservation so we have plenty of food, coffee and handouts for everyone.

*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.*

## Advent 2011

The Psalms during this coming Advent season contain the words 'to restore.' Our human dilemma is that all of us spend a great deal of time groping in the dark. This is much deeper than an earlier sunset or the end of daylight savings time. Too often we feel lost, alone and especially in recent times, afraid of the future. This Advent, I invite you to join us on a journey of restoration, looking to the Light God sends into the world in Jesus Christ.

Advent 1—November 27	Restoration of <b>HOPE</b>	Chancel choir sings
Advent 2—December 4	Restoration of <b>PEACE</b>	Praise Group
Advent 3—December 11	Restoration of <b>JOY</b>	Choir and Bells Christmas Music
Advent 4—December 18	Restoration of <b>LOVE</b>	Children's Christmas Program
Christmas Eve	Worship at 4, 6 and 11pm	Cider in Fellowship Hall
Christmas Day	One Worship Service at 10:00am	

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## Advent Marketplace

"The Marketplace" will be open during the each Sunday in Advent. At the Marketplace people will be able to buy Christmas gifts in a loved one's honor that will benefit vulnerable people around the world. The monetary gifts will be sent to Church World Service who will in turn provide the tangible gifts to communities around the world. Shoppers at First's Advent Marketplace will receive a lovely card and information regarding the selected gift. Please consider the Advent Marketplace as you make your 2011 shopping lists.



## Advent Evening Prayer

Advent Evening Prayer services will be held on **December 14 and 21**. Dinner will be served from 5:00 to 6:15 pm. Worship will be from 6:30 to 7:00 pm. It will be a lovely, contemplative service. Please come. Please make a reservation for the meal if you plan to attend.

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## Upcoming Sunday Special Events

- Nov 20 Jubilee Ringers
- Nov 27 Advent Begins
- Dec 4 Advent Family and Youth Events
- Dec 18 Christmas Program
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Worship
  - 4:00 pm Family
  - 6:00 pm Family with Communion
  - 11:00 pm Candlelight with Communion
- Dec 25 One Worship Service at 9:30 am

## 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 back sign-up area to enroll. Questions can be directed to our church treasurer Missy Luedtke or Bill Herreris 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.

# New Building Open House

Many people have asked when we will have an Open House to unveil our new building. Phase three of the building project (renovation underneath the sanctuary) will be complete around the end of December. We have tentatively scheduled an Open House for Sunday, February 12 in the afternoon. Additionally, the Building and Finance Committees are planning a celebration dinner for all those who have pledged to the Building Fund as a way of thanking them. This will take place in early spring. Please look to the newsletter, Weekly Word and bulletin announcements for more information.

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## Moving Thanks

A big, huge, gigantic thanks to the many of volunteers who moved furniture, books, office equipment, tables, chairs, nursery supplies and everything else that wasn't nailed down (and a few things that were nailed down!). In the space of 5 days we successfully moved everything that needed to be moved, cleaned it all, and began the process of finding new places to store our items. Please be patient with us as we experiment where to put things or how and where programs will be located. But please also accept our sincere and grateful thanks for all your help moving!



Cleaning all the tables and chairs



The next phase of construction has begun.



More cleaning



Wednesday School "graffiti" on old walls

# “Concealed Carry” Legislation

As you know, Wisconsin's new law, the Personal Protection Act, went into effect on November 1. The Church Council has received information on this from the conference and from relevant insurance carriers, specifically in regard to the issue of posting signage banning weapons on church property. A key point of discussion is the issue of church liability should an incident involving a weapon occur on church property. Some initial indications were that if signage were posted banning guns but we did not have a means to enforce the ban, we might be liable. Some other interpretations suggest that the standard liability provisos in existing insurance policies would apply. We have checked with a number of other area churches which are not choosing to post bans right now. For these reasons, the Church Council decided not to post at this time. As we learn more about the legislation's enactment and legal implications, we may well have further discussion in the Council and the congregation about appropriate action.

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## Adult Forum

### November 13: *A Systemic View at the Environmental Crisis*, Dave Hallstrom

The forum will consider the argument presented in *The End of Grown: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality*, by Richard Heinberg. Heinberg maintains that issues surrounding limited resources, environmental impacts, and financial systems are not individual challenges, but one large integrated, systemic problem. Background information is available on the church website.

### November 20: *Becoming Welcoming*, Barbara Peterson

Welcoming the stranger is an important Old Testament theme. Bringing unity among Jews and Gentles is an important New Testament theme. The forum will consider what it means and how it is possible to be a congregation that welcomes diversity.

### November 27: *The World in Jesus' Day*, Stacy Johnson Myers and Alan Tuchtenhagen

Jesus was born into a world of unrest. For many it was a time of discontent with the politics, economics, religion, and social relationship. The forum will consider the landscape of Jesus' world.

### December 4: No Adult Forum

Please attend the Discipleship Breakfast at either the 9:00 seating or the 10:30 seating.

### December 11: *The Annunciation in Art*, Stacy Johnson Myers

Art has long been an important way of both telling and interpreting biblical narratives. The forum will consider the story of Gabriel announcing to Mary that she will be the mother of God's son, through text and art.

### December 18: *Mary's Story*, Alan Tuchtenhagen

Time and time again the Bible tells us that God chooses unlikely people to do God's work. A young teenager was not a likely choice to be the mother of Jesus, and yet that was God's choice. The forum will consider Mary's story.

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## TREASURER'S NOTE\$

Missy Luedtke

	<u>Nov 6, 2011</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Budget Income	\$ 11,018.00	\$ 283,956.02
Budget Requirements	\$ 6,837.65	\$ 307,694.25

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

## Finances

We are significantly behind on our church giving. We need your help in the following ways.

1. If you have pledged and are behind, please try to catch up.
2. If you are on track on your giving, consider giving an extra gift.
3. If you have not pledged, please consider a one time gift.

The need is very real and affects the day to day funding of our ministries. Thank you for your financial support.



## 2011 Advent Workshop

**December 4**, following the 10:30 service, will be the annual Advent Workshop. The event will begin with a family-friendly meal followed by a chance to make a wide variety of Christmas ornaments. This is a great family event. It is also a perfect opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to come to First Congregational Church. Consider issuing an invitation or two! Please make a reservation if you plan to attend.

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## Important Upcoming Sunday School Dates

Christmas Musical Sunday Rehearsals: Sundays, November 13, 20, 27, December 4, 11: During Class  
Christmas Musical Wednesday Rehearsal: Wednesday, December 7, 4:00 - 5:00 PM  
Christmas Musical Dress Rehearsal: Saturday, December 17, 10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon  
Christmas Musical: Sunday, December 18, 10:30 AM Worship Service

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## Confirmation Events

Wednesday, November 16, 6:30 pm Pre-Confirmation (6th Grade)  
Wednesday, November 16, 6:30 pm Confirmation Year 1 (7th Grade)  
Sunday, November 13, 11:30 am Pie Auction and Help Serve at the Thanksgiving Meal  
Sunday, December 4, 11:30 am Christmas Youth Servant Event (lunch then head out)

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## Youth Advent Event

While the younger kids are enjoying the Advent Event, December 4th, in the Fellowship Hall, our 6-12<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to a Advent Service event. We will gather together for lunch then head out for our afternoon mission. We should be back at church around 2:00 pm

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## Children's Advent Musical

Children in Pre-School through Grade 5 will present *How the Bells Chimed*, a lovely musical about sacrificial giving at Christmastime. Peggy Krasin is the director and Judith Permann is the accompanist.

It is important for children to attend Sunday morning rehearsals as well as the Saturday dress rehearsal on December 17, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon. All children are asked to dress in black for the performance.

**The musical will be presented during the 10:30 worship service on December 18.**



## YoUthCC Corner

### "In Honor of" or "In Memory of" Christmas

### Fundraiser

—The poinsettia/blanket program will begin the end of November and go through the first two weeks of December. Portions of the blanket sales go to World Church Services and the profit from the poinsettia plants go back to the youth funds. To order the poinsettias or the blankets, please use the Advent Marketplace form which will be included in the next newsletter and also in future Sunday bulletins. **The orders are due by December 11th.** Any questions, please contact Deb Hoffman (715) 425-5633.

Thank you all for your contributions and support of our youth.  
God Bless you all, Deb Hoffman

## COMMA CLUB ???

Although you may have heard the name tossed around, many of you may be wondering, “Just what is the Comma Club”? You will not see us on the official church slate of officers, as we are an *ad hoc* committee which has been working behind the scenes since 2004. Our name was inspired by the National UCC “God is Still Speaking” campaign quote “*Never place a period where God has placed a **comma***” -- Gracie Allen.

Our goal is simple... to promote and sustain a warm and welcoming atmosphere as reflected in our Committee Mission Statement: “*The Comma Club seeks to live out God’s gracious hospitality, as we open our doors wide, remembering that “no matter who you are, or where you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here”.*”

If you feel you have a knack for helping to open those doors... or simply a talent for talking to people, then this may be the spot for you.

### Here are a few of our ONGOING INITIATIVES:

1. **Worship Welcomers** – Provide first contact at the church doors, with special attention made to new guests. All church membership encouraged to sign up any week.
2. **ROVER** - Circulating Welcomers, who connect with all our members but especially our newcomers. Rovers act as a connection for newcomers, providing a friendly face to help answer their questions and recognize them on their next visit. They embrace the welcoming atmosphere of our place of worship and our membership, as well as encourage other members to do the same. A bi-monthly commitment.
3. **Weekly Welcome Packages** - trained volunteers deliver a Welcome Package to the home of new Guests to our church. The visit involves a brief (2-5 minutes) casual and friendly encounter, thanking them for worshipping with us and inviting them to come again. A bi-monthly commitment.
4. **River Falls Days** – annually, an enthusiastic group designs & builds a float for the River Falls Days parade, while a second group organizes & runs an intergenerational Marble Mania Tournament event. Fun one week/day commitment.

Please seriously consider joining our team, in some capacity. Being *ad hoc*, we meet only quarterly on an as needed basis, and our “members” have no specific term of office. We have evolved over the years to a small leadership of 3 and a faithful group of volunteers distributed amongst our initiatives, but we are always looking to expand our energies and our team!

**Comma Club**—Wendy Hill, JoAnn Lentz, Lu Lueck (staff)

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Each month we hope to highlight 2 of our amazing college students. Please keep them in your prayers and perhaps even send them a note.

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**Jennifer Hoffman** is attending Michigan Technological University, 505 E McNair Hall, 1801 Townsend Dr., Houghton, Michigan 49931. She is majoring in Civil Engineering and anticipating to graduate in March 2014. She is looking forward to her second year at Michigan Tech, playing broomball and will be active in intramurals again, attending a leadership/community service conference as treasurer of the Memorial Union Board, and as a desk receptionist in the dorms.

**David Querna** is attending University of Wisconsin—Stout, 215 14th Ave. West, Menomonie, Wisconsin. He is majoring in Business Administration: Supply Chain Management and anticipating to graduate in 2013. He is looking forward to living in a house with roommates instead of living in the dorms. He is done taking general education classes so the rest of his classes will be business classes in his area of study.

## Katie Jo Fuller Ordination

It is always a joy to participate in an ordination—the recognition of someone as an ordained pastor. First Congregational Church rejoices that our own Katie Jo Fuller has been approved for ordination and received a call to be Assistant Pastor at St. John’s UCC, Collinsville, IL. Her Ordination Service will be at First Congregational on **Sunday, January 22 at 3:00 pm** with a reception to follow. Her Ecclesiastical Council (an opportunity for people to ask Katie Jo questions and get to know her better) will be held on Saturday, January 21 also at First Congregational. Please mark your calendars so you can be a part of this special event.

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## Concerning People

To us a child is given!

Lori and Jeff Johnson welcomed Vaughn Charles Johnson on Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. Mom, Dad, baby and brothers are all well. Congratulations Johnsons!

## Thursday Morning Bible Study

The First Thursday Bible Study will be held on **December 8, 9:30-10:00 am**, led by Stacy Myers. All are welcome!

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## First Thursday Fellowship

The First Thursday Fellowship will be held on **December 8 from 9:00-9:30 am** at the church. Please join us.

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## 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, January 8 at 11:30am**. 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.

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## First Coffee Fellowship in the New Fellowship Hall—November 6, 2011



# **Nominating Committee Information and Appeal**

Over the next month, we are going to be featuring our various church committees in our appeal for volunteers to serve on these various committees. If there is a committee that catches your eye and you are interested in serving in one of these positions, please feel free to contact Jean Smith, Suzanne Hagen, Sheila Peterson, Virginia Hilden, Vanessa Bjork or Lu Lueck in the church office. Thanks.

## **Discipleship: 3 positions needed**

Plans and implements programs that solicit support for the congregation's ministry in the form of time, talent and treasure.

Programs monitored: Conducts annual discipleship/stewardship campaign and the time and talent survey.

This committee consists of 6 members for a 3 year term meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

## **Music: 3 position needed**

Supervises the music program of the church with leadership from the Music Coordinator.

Programs monitored: Worship and liturgical music, Choir, Bell Choir, Junior Choir, Sounds of Summer Worship Series and special music.

This committee consists of 6 members for a 3 year term meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

## **Trustees: 4 positions needed**

Responsible for business and financial affairs of the church and the church building and property.

Programs monitored: Develops and oversees budget, maintains church building and parsonage, organizes spring and fall clean up days.

This committee consists of 9 members for a 3 year term meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

## **Personnel: Appointed position, 3 needed**

Responsible for all church staff. Develops job descriptions, conducts reviews and evaluations, hire and release church staff.

This committee consists of 6 members appointed by the Moderator meeting as needed 3 to 4 times annually.

## **Nominating: 3 positions needed**

Solicits and suggests people to fill ministry positions on church boards and committees.

This committee consists of 5 members appointed by the Moderator meeting as needed 2 or 3 times in December and January.

## **Journey House Campus Ministry: All positions filled**

Ecumenical ministry to students and staff on the campus of the University of Wisconsin at River Falls.

Works with the Campus Minister and our partner churches-the United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to provide bible studies, worship and programming on the campus of UWRF

This committee consists of 3 UCC members plus 9 other ecumenical members for a 3 year term meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month.

## **Pastoral Relations: All positions filled**

Provides support to pastor and feedback from the congregation. Works with Personnel and Church Council to ensure prompt, frank communication between pastor and congregation.

This consists of 4 members appointed by the Moderator meeting 3 times a year.



It's not been the best of years but we're up for the "Undie Sunday" Challenge!



Simpson Shelter is one Minnesota-based organization that we can really support!

The Vikings versus the Packers in the annual  
**"Undie Sunday" Challenge Benefiting Simpson Shelter**

Donate underwear, socks, and personal care items for men and women and place items in the bin of your favorite team.

**Donations accepted from November 6 to November 20.**



**Coffee Matters**

The price of the Cloudforest coffee offered for sale at the church has increased. The price has been constant for several years and in recent years the cost of coffee has increased dramatically. The new prices are:

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 LB regular \$11.00 | 5 LB regular \$51.25 |
| 1 LB decaf \$12.00   | 5 LB decaf \$56.25   |

The coffee is grown in the state of Chiapas, Mexico, by small, independent farmers. These are some of the poorest people in this hemisphere. Please consider helping them out by buying some of their coffee. It is truly excellent coffee.

**The Girls Singers of the Hit Parade  
 Christmas Show**

(Jennifer Grimm, Colleen Raye, Debbie O'Keefe)

In support of:

**FORWARD**

River Falls Public Education Foundation

**Monday, December 5 at 7:00 pm (social hour at 6:00 pm)  
 River Falls High School Auditorium**

Tickets: \$12 Adults; \$8 Students  
 Available at Dish & Spoon, Dick's Market,  
 Cindy Haskins 715-425-5451

Don't miss this nostalgic presentation of classic Christmas songs. If you remember and love the TV Christmas Specials during the 50s and 60s, this is the show for you. Holiday tunes in the stylings of the The Lennon Sisters, Andrew Sisters, McGuire Sisters, King Family, Osmonds and more will delight the audience as well as the sing-a-longs and light-hearted banter and stories. Costumed with brilliant Christmas ball gowns and packed with hits, personality and great singing—you'll have a wonderful holiday memory and experience for all ages.

**Gospel Music Benefit Concert**

The River Falls Community Gospel Choir together with students from the University of Wisconsin—River Falls, and members from the Minnesota Chapter of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, under the direction of Dr. Camilla Horne, a Lecturer of Music at UWRF will put on a free gospel music benefit concert for Our Neighbor's Place, a day center serving the homeless in River Falls. The concert will take place at **7:00 pm on Thursday, November 17th at the Newman Center/Thomas Moore Chapel** on 5th and Cascade in River Falls.

This mass gospel choir will be performing many gospel standards and there will be several well-known Gospel soloists from the Twin Cities and the St. Croix Valley.

**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

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 RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

November 15, 2011

2011 NOVEMBER 2011						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
13 Undie Sunday 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 Thanksgiving Meal and Pie Auction	14 Mission Education Mtg 5:00 pm	15 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am 3rd Tuesday 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's Boards & Committees Meetings 6:30 pm Church Council 7:30 pm	16 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:30 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Pre-Confirmation (6th Gr) 6:30 pm Confirmation Year 1 (7th Grade) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 9:00 pm Worship Service on Channel 16	17 Yoga 9-10:00 am  Worship Service on Chnl 16 12:00 pm	18	19
20 Undie Sunday 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 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	23 No Wednesday Activities	24 Thanksgiving Day Church Office Closed  No Yoga  Worship Service on Chnl 16 12:00 pm	25 Church Office Closed	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	28 Endowment Grant Requests Due	29 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am	30 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:30 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			

**Yoga Classes**

Yoga classes are led by Jan Hansen and are held every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00-10:00 am. Men and women, experienced or inexperienced—all are welcome to participate. We meet in the back of the sanctuary. Bring a yoga mat and a large towel. Come and enjoy!!