



FIRST

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

God is still speaking,

110 N. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022
715-425-2052 — www.firstchurchrf.org
Rev. Chris Myers: chris@firstchurchrf.org
Office email: office@firstchurchrf.org
OCTOBER 1, 2011

Pastor's Corner

A Difficult but Necessary Decision

There is never a good time to decide to have children. There is never a good time to decide to move. And there is never a good time to make the commitment to tithe.

There is never a good time to begin to tithe, or least start working toward a tithe because 'something' always comes up to convince us that we could not possibly afford it with our current income or with our current financial circumstances. The market is down. College tuition is due. The kids need new _____. We have limited resources. The reasons are real and endless.

Truth be told, most of us would rather talk about our sex lives than our financial lives. This is unfortunate because Jesus had a lot more to say about our finances and possessions than he ever did about our sex lives. He seemed to think that everyone from the widow with only two coins to her name, to richest person in the kingdom, can and should tithe.

To tithe means giving away ten percent of your income for God's use. Recognizing that God works both inside and outside the church walls, I advocate for a 'modern tithe.' Give five percent of your income to what God is doing inside the church walls, and then give the other half of the tithe to what God is doing outside the church walls. If ten percent or five percent seems too scary, start at one percent or two percent. The important thing is to start someplace.

As one who has gradually worked up to a 'modern tithe' I can tell you it was not easy. There was always something that came up that needed our immediate financial attention. And the current financial meltdown hasn't helped the situation. Still we maintain the commitment to tithe. We see ourselves as blessed and are awed at the awesome ability we have to help heal God's world and be the hands of Jesus. How about you?

Pastor Chris

Construction Update



Sermon Series: Eight Things Christians Do Not Have to Believe and Still be Christian

Sept 11: God Causes Cancer, Car Wrecks
and Catastrophes

Sept 18: Good Christians Don't Doubt

Sept 25: Everything in the Bible Should
Be Taken Literally

Oct 2: Real Christians Can't Believe in Evolution

Oct 9: Women Can't Be Preachers and
Must Submit to Men

Oct 16: God Cares about Saving Souls
But Not about Saving Trees

Oct 23: God Loves Straight People
But Not Gay People

Oct 30: Bad People Will Be Left Behind

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

We believe...

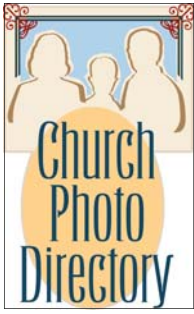
~The Christian faith is a life-long learning process.

~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.



PICTURE THIS!

Have you reserved a sitting time? We need you to reserve now—picture taking begins Monday, October 3! Last month you received in your newsletter a detailed insert explaining how to make an appointment at church on Sundays and on-line. The appointment table will be open during coffee fellowship and after second service and if you wish to reserve on line you will find the link on our church website. You can also call Alex Solberg at 715 222-6582 after 6:00pm to reserve a sitting time. Our goal is to get as many members as possible so if you have not reserved yet, please do so asap. Thank you.

TREASURER'S NOTES

Missy Luedtke

Financial Information for August and YTD:

	August	2011 YTD
Income	\$ 20,867.00	\$ 220,522.77
Expenses	\$ 22,498.01	\$ 223,523.24
Net	\$ -1,631.01	\$ -3,000.47

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

Adult Trip to New York City

Ever wondered what Pastor Chris does with our confirmands when he takes them to New York City? Do you ever wonder what they learn and where they go? Then come this coming Spring (Mar/April of 2012) as he leads an adult only New York City study trip. The theme is immigration and we will visit Ellis Island, The Lower Eastside Tenement Museum (first stop for many after Ellis Island), The Museum of the Overseas Chinese and host of other sights. This will be an active trip that will involve a fair amount of walking and taking the subway. A date for the trip has not been set but we hope to offer this trip sometime this Spring (March/April 2012). If you are remotely interested please use the sign up sheet to register your interest. If we have enough people a meeting date will be set to talk about costs, dates and a fuller itinerary (perhaps including a Broadway show, the UN, other museums). Please see Pastor Chris for more information.

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, October 16 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.

Upcoming Sunday Special Events

- Sunday, Oct 2 Youth Corn Maze (Grades 6-12)
- Sunday, Oct 16 Bibles given to 6th graders
Inquirer's Class



Feed My Starving Children Work Shift

The Mission Education Committee has reserved 25 spots at Feed My Starving Children in Eagan for **Friday, October 14, from 9:30 to 11:30 am**.

We will leave the church at 8:30 am and will have lunch at Houlihan's in Eagan following our shift. We are also in need of several drivers. The sign-up sheet is on the back table.



Moderator Notes

This September we began another vibrant program year in the life of our First Congregational Church. Mission projects are in full swing. The Adult Forum and First Thursday groups are gathering. Sunday School began with almost 100 children and more than 20 teachers. Wednesday School continues to grow. Some 40 young people in our multi-level Confirmation/Intern program gathered in fun and friendship to learn and serve. And, of course, we watch with excited anticipation the progress of our new addition.

We all know, too, that great beginnings and great work need to be faithfully sustained and supported. At this point in the year, our 2011 operating budget (not the separate building budget) shows a deficit of approximately \$30,000. (This consists of a \$20,000 shortfall in meeting our church's annual OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) contribution and about a \$10,000 shortfall tied to meeting our other operating expenses.) Our staff and committees are being excellent stewards of resources, and no standard operating expenses to date have notably exceeded budgeted amounts.

These are challenging economic times for a great many people. Nonetheless, on behalf of our Council, Trustees and Discipleship Committee, I ask that you pause to reflect on your financial commitment for the year, work to keep your contributions current, and, if possible, make an additional donation.

I, as do many of you I expect, find phrases and sentences (yes, even larger themes!) of Pastor Chris' sermons lingering in my thoughts. Speaking of faith on September 18, Chris reminded us that -

"God always has the first word – 'Come--,' 'Follow--,' 'Serve--.'
And we—we have the next: 'Yes--,' 'I'll try--,' 'Here I am.'"

Together, in faith, we can continue to grow, work and serve others, as Christ would have us do.

In fellowship, Suzanne Hagen

Adult Forum

Living as a Christian person is not an easy or automatic task. It requires deliberate attention to the content of faith and vision of life for God's people. It also requires a willingness to allow faith to shape one's daily life. This on-going process is easier in the company of others who struggle as well. Please come to the adult forum.

October 2: *Exploring Islam, Alan Tuchtenhagen*—Many Christians have a very limited understanding of Islam and view of what it means to be a Muslim person. The forum will explore the Islamic tradition with a goal of gaining a better understanding of our Muslim brothers and sisters.

October 9: *The Connection Between Environmental and Economic Collapse, Dave Hallstrom*—The forum will consider an interview with environmentalist and author Lester Brown. Brown outlines the connection between environmental and economic collapse leading toward the necessity for a completely changed way of life for the world's people.

October 16: *Walking a Mile in The Shoes of Constantine and Paul, Barry Butenhoff*—Barry Butenhoff, fresh from a trip to the Eastern Mediterranean (Istanbul, Ephesus, Athens, Delos), will offer pictures and perspectives on an area rich in religious, political and cultural history. We'll discuss how two key figures in early Christianity also crossed paths on their respective journeys.

October 23: *The Book of Ephesians, Stacy Johnson Myers*—On October 16 in the forum Barry Butenhoff offered a traveler's perspective on Ephesus. This week the forum will consider Paul's letter to the early Christians living in this region. What are the issues Paul address? What were the concerns facing the Ephesians?

October 30: *Worship, Liturgy, and the Reformation, Stacy Johnson Myers*—On Reformation Day, 2011, the forum will consider the important impact of the Reformation on Christian worship and liturgical practices. The forum will trace key Reformation themes in contemporary worship.

The UCC Statement of Faith

Creeds and Statements of Faith have been part of the Christian community since its earliest days. Such documents give voice to the collective convictions of a specific community. Creeds and Statements of faith do not appear out of thin air, they respond to concrete questions, conflicts, passions, and beliefs held by a group of people. It is necessary for users of these documents to understand the context out of which they came in order to give due regard to their meaning and purpose.

The story of the UCC Statement of Faith is intriguing. The UCC came into being in June 1957, with the union of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. When the new church was formed, its members agreed on a document, the “Basis for Union,” which called for a Statement of Faith to be written for the infant church body. The Statement of Faith was envisioned to be a testimony to the faith of the UCC.

Eventually a commission of 30 people (15 from each of the church bodies) was charged with the tasks of creating the statement. The commission included theologians, pastors, and lay people. The commission began their work with an extensive study of a variety of expressions of faith including: Nicaea and Chalcedon Creeds, Reformation Confessions, the Barmen Declaration, the confession of the UCC in Canada, and doctrinal basis of the WCC.

After extensive study, the members of the commission were asked to each write a statement, and the result was 23 statements. The commission extensively reviewed each statement and identified important themes. Four members were then asked to write another statement taking into account discussion and input of the group. From the four statements, one was chosen. It had been originally authored by Roger Shinn. In a memoir, Shinn explained that he received a letter inviting him to write one of the final four statements just prior to a long car drive with his family. He said that at each rest stop he scribbled down notes. When the family stopped for the night, Shinn gathered up his notes and realized he had a nearly complete draft. With only a few additions, Shinn sent in his draft. This draft was then meticulously reviewed by the commission. Finally the draft went to be ratified by the General Synod.

Roger Shinn makes the point that it is more than modesty that requires him to recognize the fact that although one person had to put pen to paper to write the draft, he could not possibly have written the statement apart from the study and input of the entire group. Shinn pointed out that the intent of the UCC Statement of Faith was never to replace the ancient classical creeds of the Christian Church. The statement, in the words of Shinn, demonstrates “fidelity to traditional faith with freshness of expression.”

UCC Statement of Faith

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.

Amen.



Sunday School Teacher Needed

We need one Sunday School teacher to work with young children. Please volunteer. The need is great. Teachers work with a team of teachers so they do not have to teach every week. To volunteer, please call the church office or contact Stacy Myers.

Snack Volunteers Needed

We need a few more volunteers to bring snacks on a rotating basis for Wednesday School. Please consider volunteering.

Wednesday School Registrations

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are invited to participate in the Wednesday School program. Registration forms are available at church or online. We must have a registration/permission form in order for children to participate and to transport them to Wednesday School. **The forms must be turned into the office by Monday, October 3, 2011.** The first Wednesday School is October 5th.

Confirmation Events

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| Sunday, October 2 | Corn Maze (6 th -12 th grades) Cost \$5 for maze and meal |
| Wednesday, October 5 | Pre-Confirmation (6th Grade) meet at the church at 6:30 pm
Confirmation Year 1 (7th Grade) meet at the church at 6:30 pm |
| Wednesday, October 12 | Confirmation Year 2 (8th & 9th Grades) meet at the church at 6:30 pm |
| Wednesday, October 19 | Pre-Confirmation (6th Grade) meet at the church at 6:30 pm
Confirmation Year 1 (7th Grade) meet at the church at 6:30 pm |
| October 21-23 | Confirmation Retreat to Minneapolis for Years 1 & 2 (\$50 is due now!) |
| Wednesday, October 26 | Confirmation Year 2 (8th & 9th Grades) meet at the church at 6:30 pm |



Youth Bells - The Youth Bell Choir will be performing during the October 30th worship services. The rehearsal schedule is as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Wednesday, October 12 | 6:00 - 6:30 pm |
| Wednesday, October 19 | 6:00 - 6:30 pm |
| Wednesday, October 26 | 6:00 - 6:30 pm |
| Sunday, October 30 | 8:00 - 9:00 am (perform during the 9:00 and 10:30 services) |

Youth bells are open to any youth in our church from grades 5-12. If you are younger than 5th grade and would like to participate, please contact Scott Perau sperau@gmail.com.

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!!

Worship Service on Channel 16

The Sunday worship service will now be seen on River Falls public access channel 16 on **Wednesdays from 9:00 to 10:00 pm, and Thursdays from 9:00 to 10:00 am.** Thanks very much to Jeff Hoffman who is leading the team to record the weekly worship service. He still is in need of a few more volunteers. Please contact him at jeffhoffman312@gmail.com or his home phone 715-425-5633.

Life in Transition

Imagine taking all the stuff in your house and packing it into half the space. Basically that is the situation with our church building for the next few months. Some of the changes you will notice are:

- The only access to the church building is through the Elm Street doors
- The lift and ramp are inaccessible until the new elevator is installed
- Offices are now downstairs in the Sunday School rooms
- The nursery is downstairs in the Blue Room
- Coffee Fellowship will be either outside in nice weather or downstairs
- Both lower level bathrooms are open
- Church doors are locked when the church office is not open (note this includes weekends. If you need to get into the building during non-business hours, please contact a staff member ahead of time.)

If you haven't checked out the new offices or progress on the building site, do so soon!



Tile in the new kitchen



We are Gulliver living in a Lilliputian world.



Hallway to the new Fellowship Hall

The Big 3

First Congregational has a lot to offer, but what things should everybody in our community make a priority? Doing the Big 3 will help you connect and grow in your faith life.

1. Come on the Weekend: Make worship a priority every weekend
2. Join a Group: Being a small group helps you get to know others and opens you to transformation and spiritual growth
3. Serve Others: Commit to serving others within the church, in the community and beyond.

Mission 1: Our UCC Shared Vision

“Is this not the fast that I choose, to loose the bonds of injustice, to let the opposed go free, and to break every yoke...Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house?” Isaiah 58:6-7

What is Mission 1 and why are we doing this, now?

Mission 1 is a focused time effort meant to raise awareness and reduce hunger in the world now. UCC congregations, colleges, seminaries, and health and human services agencies will join together in a collective mission campaign to collect more than 1 million food items for local food banks, raise \$111,111 in online donations for Neighbors in Need (NIN), and write 11,111 letters to Congress (in support of Bread for the World’s 2011 Offering of Letters) asking that U.S foreign assistance be reformed to more effectively serve the world’s 2011 poorest people. The dollars raised online, the 11,111 letters, and the 11 food items are tied into this years’ observance of November 11, 2011 or 11-11-11.

What will we do at First Congregational UCC, River Falls and when?

- Kick-off will be with our traditional October 2nd Neighbors in Need offering, one of our church’s five for five missions.
- Next begins our four week Food Pantry collection, an opportunity for each of us to donate 11 items to our River Falls Food Shelf during the month of October. We will target the weekly offerings by focusing on the following:
 - Breakfast item donation October 9th
 - Lunch item donation October 16th
 - Dinner item donation October 23rd
 - Cash or Dick’s Cash Card October 30th (for every \$1 donated, RF Food Shelf can purchase \$9 of food through Second Harvest or discounted items @ Dick’s Market with the cash card.)
- Next will come our hands-on service at Feed my Starving Children on October 14th (sign up in the back of the church).
- Last will be an Offering of Letters Sunday during the coffee hour November 6th.

This is a one time, focused effort to be our sister and brother’s keeper, the hands of Christ on earth, the hope of those who are hungry. Remember, God loves a cheerful giver so give as the spirit moves you.

Mission Education Committee, respectfully submitted by Bonnie Jones Witthuhn.

ARC—Assistance & Resource Center Fundraiser

ARC is holding a Schwan’s Home Service Fundraiser to help fund the organization. You can come and purchase your favorite Schwan’s items directly from a Schwan’s Home Service representative at the River Falls State Bank parking lot on Sunday, October 9th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

You could also pre-order by calling 1-888-SHWANS or on-line at www.schwansfundraising.com (use campaign ID 36602). All orders need to be placed by October 5th. For more information, please see the flyer on the back table or on the bulletin board. Thank you in advance for your support!

Our Neighbors’ Place Renovations

Handy men and women (18 yrs or older) are needed to help with renovations to the new Emergency Shelter on Cedar Street. Work party hours are Wednesdays & Thursdays from 6:00-9:00 pm. See the sign-up sheet at church or the following ONP website for more info. Required Waiver/Contact paperwork is available in the church office or online at www.ourneighborsplace.org

**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

October 1, 2011

2011 OCTOBER 2011						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 All Worship Sunday World Communion Sunday 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast 11:30 am Youth Corn Maze	3 Directory Pictures 2:30-9:00 pm Endowment Grant Meeting 6:30 pm	4 Directory Pictures 2:30-9:00 pm Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am	5 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	6 Directory Pictures 2:30-9:00 pm Yoga 9-10:00 am Worship Service on Chnl 16 12:00 pm First Thursday Fellowship 9:00 am Bible Study 10:00 am	7 Directory Pictures 2:30-9:00 pm	8 Directory Pictures 10:00 am-4:00 pm
9 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	10 Directory Pictures 2:30-9:00 pm Mission Education Mtg 6:30 pm NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	11 Directory Pictures 2:30-9:00 pm Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am 2nd Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's Personnel Mtg 6:00 pm	12 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	13 No Yoga Worship Service on Chnl 16 12:00 pm	14 Feed My Starving Children Work Shift 9:30-11:30 am	15
16 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service — Bibles to 6th Graders 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast 11:30 am Inquirer's Class	17	18 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	19 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Youth Bells 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	20 Yoga 9-10:00 am Worship Service on Chnl 16 12:00 pm	21 Confirmation Retreat Friday-Sunday	23
23 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	24	25 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am 4th Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	26 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Youth Bells 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	27 Yoga 9-10:00 am Worship Service on Chnl 16 12:00 pm	28	29
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