

# “The Congregator”

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

Phone: 715-425-2052 - Website: [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://www.firstchurchrf.org)

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SEPTEMBER 15, 2009

## Pastor's Corner

Every summer, my family takes one or two weeks of vacation and retreats to a cabin on Lake Superior. I delight in hiking and reading; Stacy knits and reads; the kids revel in the freedom to climb trees and build forts; and all of us thrive on the absence of television, the internet and reliable cell phone service. In other words, we enter a way of living that is simple and healthy.

But then fall comes. We return home and re-enter patterns of life that are complex and hectic. Still we jump right in, kids back to school and playmates, Stacy and I return to routines at church and the community. But now we are doing these things at such a frantic pace, it sometimes sucks the life out of me. School, work, play, worship, even eating are divided in such a way that it is easy to find ourselves out of balance. Expectations of all the many parts conflict with one another and it can be hard to keep our bearings. Especially at this time of year, I think all of us yearn for a way of life that is whole and touched by the presence of God.

As part of my sabbatical, I thought much about practices of the Christian faith. Practices are those activities that address our fundamental human needs and when put together help form a way of life. Beginning this Sunday, Rally Day, September 13, I invite you to participate with me as we discover 7 Spiritual Practices. These are not exhaustive, but do speak to the exhaustion many of us feel at this time of the year. These 7 practices help ground us daily in the love and grace of Jesus. Join us for worship and bring a friend.

Sep 13	Introduction
Sep 20	Sabbath: Learning to Say No
Sep 27	Vocation: Living with Purpose
Oct 4	Community: Learning to Live with Others
Oct 11	Giving: It All Away
Oct 18	Humility: Moving Beyond Me
Oct 25	Hospitality: The Art of Welcoming
Nov 1	Praying: The Jesus Creed

Pastor Chris



## Rally Day Sunday, September 13

Worship at 9:00 and 10:30 am

Coffee Fellowship from  
10 until 10:30 am

Sunday School at 10:30 am

Ice Cream Sundaes  
at 11:30 am



Confirmation (grades 8 & 9)  
and  
Pre-Confirmation (grades 6 & 7)  
Meeting at 11:45 am

## Confirmation Kick-Off Event

At the Confirmation Kick-Off Event for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders, Pastor Chris will outline the program for the coming year. We will have a full listing of all the class times, retreats and events for the year. Please bring your calendars and willingness to help sign up for one event as a helper. 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Confirmands (9<sup>th</sup> graders) will learn more about their final 'big trip' to Boston in the spring. This is a mandatory meeting.

*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.*

# Youth to Feed Thousands

**Wednesday, September 16** is the first night of both Confirmation (years 2 and 3, grades 8 and 9) and the new Pre-Confirmation programs (grades 6 and 7).

We start our year as servants and will head to Feed My Starving Children in Eagan to feed others who desperately need our help. We will leave church at 5:00 pm and return at 8:15pm. We will need lots of adult chaperones and drivers. Please use the sign-up sheet to register. Parents are strongly encouraged to come with us for this servant event.

TREASURER'S NOTE\$		
Missy Luedtke		
Financial Information for July and YTD:		
	July	YTD
Income	\$ 20,775.00	\$ 199,399.98
Expenses	\$ 22,354.34	\$ 189,460.63
Net	\$ -1,579.34	\$ 9,939.35

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

## Weekly Email Begins

Do we have your current email address? The "Weekly Word" is a weekly email sent out on Thursdays that highlights upcoming church activities. Use the sign-up sheet at church to receive the "Weekly Word."

## Rally Day—Sunday School Begins

The new Sunday School year begins on **September 13**. Please be sure to come. The Sunday School lesson will end with a first day of Sunday School treat—ice cream sundaes. See you then!

## Fall Women's Fellowship Event (Note Date Change)

Women's Fellowship is planning to hold a **"Free Rummage Sale"** on **Saturday, October 3 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.**

So when you are cleaning out your closet, and find things you have not worn in some time – please pack them away to be donated to this "free" event. This is one way we all can give back to the community by providing nice clean clothing, linens, shoes, and small household items for those that may be in need. No toys or furniture please.

You may bring items beginning Sunday, September 27, following the church service.

## Mean Dad's Club

I recently read a great book called No: Why Kids of All Ages Need to Hear It & Ways Parents Can Say It. Written by noted author and speaker David Walsh, I have found it to be a helpful and truthful guide to being a better dad. It is full of life examples and practical strategies to help dads grow in their role as fathers. In order to help myself grow in my role as a dad, I am proposing a 'Mean Dads Club'. My vision is that this will be a short-term, small group of dad's whose only purpose will be to grow in our role as fathers. To be a member of the Mean Dad's Club we will commit to three things:

- Meet for five Thursday nights in October (Oct 1, 8, 15, 22, 29) centered around Walsh's book
- Participate in one dad's only servant event (to be determined by the mean dads)
- Participate in one father and kid fun event (again, to be determined by the mean dads)

Please see Pastor Chris for more info on the 'Mean Dads Club.' Copies of the book are available for \$15 in the church office. Use the sign-up sheet to register your interest.

**Acolyte Training**—All 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders are encouraged to participate as acolytes at the 10:30am worship services. Acolyte training will be provided from 11:30 to 11:45 on Sunday September 20 and 27. Once trained, acolytes will sign up for dates to serve. Please use sign up sheets.

# Feed My Starving Children



Feed My Starving Children is returning to River Falls at St. Bridget's Church on **September 24-26**. There are nine shifts during that time period. **Our church has reserved 50 slots for Friday, September 25, from 4 to 6 pm.** Sign the sheet in back of church if you can help during that time. If that doesn't work, you can sign up for other shifts by going on FMSCRF. Each shift can handle 140 individuals along with additional people to work the "warehouse"—lifting 30 to 40 pounds is required. People are also needed for the set-up and clean-up crews.

This project requires nearly 1,300 people and approximately \$42,500. Each individual working is asked to solicit \$37 in pledges. However, that is not a requirement. Anyone interested in helping should write a check to the church and mark it FMSC. The goal of the River Falls project is to prepare as many meals as last year—263,000, which translates into feeding 722 children for a year. Each meal costs approximately 17 cents to package. Please consider helping out by volunteering and/or donating so that the number of children dying daily (18,000) from starvation can be reduced.

Following the work shift, the Mission Committee will be hosting a potluck dinner at our church for anyone interested. You don't have to work to attend. Rolls and beverages will be provided. Please sign up for that as well.

## Wednesday School Workers Needed

The education of children is critically important for the congregation. Wednesday afternoons and evenings at First Congregational are important times for working with and teaching young people. We are in great need of drivers, snack providers, and especially adult leaders. At this point we have only two adult leaders and we must have more. Please, please consider volunteering.

## Wednesday School Registrations Due

Registration and permission forms for Wednesday School participants are now due. It is important to have advance registration in order to be adequately prepared for students. Wednesday School begins October 7.

## Sunday School Teachers

Many thanks to those who have volunteered to teach Sunday School. It is wonderful to have a large group of willing workers. Of course there is still room and need for another teacher or two! Please volunteer.

2009-2010 Teachers: Lucia Bell, Patti Filkins, Louie Filkins, Cindy Gandrud, Deb Hoffman, Rhonda Klink, Christina Krueger, Tanya Larsen, Katie Miller, Stacy Myers, JonPaul Okal, Rick Price, Jennie Price, Karmin Richter, Rose Rude, Michelle Simpson, Joan Swanson, Martha TerMaat, Anne Tuveson, Jane Wakefield.

## Pre-Confirmation Program Begins

All 6th and 7th graders are invited to join the Pre-Confirmation Program to begin this fall. This small group experience will fill the gap for those who have 'graduated' from Wednesday School and are not yet eligible for confirmation. Much like our three-year confirmation program, this small group experience will help prepare our young people for a life of faith. Our focus will be on a mix of fun and service activities.

It will be co-lead by Pastor Chris and our Youth Minister, Diana Johnson Villeneuve. It will meet on alternate Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. **Please come to the organizational meeting on Rally Day, Sunday September 13 following the 10:30 am worship service.**



## Bonfires

Deb and Jeff Hoffman have again graciously opened their home (and yard!) for a youth bonfire.

The Pre-Confirmation Bonfire for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders is from **6 to 7:30 pm on Wednesday, September 30.**

And the Confirmation Bonfire for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders is from **6 to 7:30 pm on Wednesday, October 7.**

A few parent chaperones are needed. Confirmands (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders) will be packing boxes for our college students. Please bring an item for the college packs.

**Attention All Turkey Lovers!** Mark your calendars for **Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am.** The Turkey Lunch/Brunch sign-up sheets will be showing up soon. Watch the bulletin and Congregator for more details.

## Health-Care Reform and People of Faith

James Gustafson, a UCC theologian, strongly maintains that all issues of life and faith belong in the church. It is within the community of faith that Christians come together to explore issues of the day and figure out what the Bible and the tradition have to say about and to them. Christians will not necessarily come down in the same place on given issues, in fact often they come down in different places. What is important, however, is not agreement, but the commitment to struggle as people of faith to make sense of life and the issues we face.

The issue of health-care reform is great in our country today. It is a complicated issue. In preparation for the Adult Forum on September 13, I have been studying this issue. I do not pretend to be an expert; in fact, I am far from an expert on health-care policy. I am prepared, however, to help us think about the role of the faith community in health-care reform. We will consider that people of faith can:

*Be a moral standard.* The faith community can remind people and public officials that access to health care is not just a financial issue, but rather a profound moral issue of life and death. The Bible reminds us that every person, rich, poor and those in between, is valuable and should be protected.

*Be a force of reason.* Often when people are learning new ideas or thinking about issues in new ways, fear can become a factor. It is often easy to fear what we do not understand. In addition, it is not uncommon for the various “sides” of issues to encourage people to fear opposite sides. Over and over again the Bible tells us not to fear the future. Instead, people of faith are to be bold and strong, trusting in God. It is important for the faith community to encourage people to base their ideas on fact and research and not succumb to adopting the fear of others.

*Be a voice for the vulnerable.* Part of the definition of being “vulnerable” is that it is difficult or impossible to speak on your own behalf. The poor and children are often among the voices that are not heard. The community of faith can speak and act on behalf of “the least of these.” We can ask ourselves, “What does this plan or proposal say to those who are poor or to those who are very young?”

I encourage you to ponder this issue as a person of faith. “A Guide to the Health-Care Reform Debate” written specifically for people of faith is available in the office.

Stacy Johnson Myers, Christian Education Coordinator

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## Adult Forum

**September 13: *People of Faith Consider Health Care Reform*, Stacy Johnson Myers**—Health-care reform is a raging issue in our country. The forum will consider biblical perspectives of the common good, identify central issues in the debate, and consider the role of the faith community in health-care reform.

**September 20: *The Moral Center: Politics for the Common Good*, Alan Tuchtenhagen**—Jim Wallis' latest book, *The Great Awakening*, suggests that there are moral choices and challenges beneath political debates. The common good as a public agenda can provide both a vision and the spirituality for the public engagement of faith. The forum will consider the choices and challenges we face in our daily lives and use Wallis' ideas to help us understand them.

**September 27: *Issues in Living Green: Solar Water Heating*, Gerry & Lori Larson**—Stewardship is a critically important issue for God's creatures called by God to have “dominion” over the creation. The forum will consider solar water heat, one strategy for both using and protecting natural resources. Hope for sun—a demonstration will be part of the forum!

**October 4: *The Worship and Education Connection*, Stacy Johnson Myers**—Worship and education should by nature to be held tightly together. On World Communion Sunday the forum will explore the nature of worship and education and their relationship.

**October 11: *African-American Settlers in Pierce County*, Tim Ericson**—Pierce County was home to one of Wisconsin's earliest and largest African-American communities. The first Black settlers arrived in 1855—the same year First Congregational was founded. By 1900 they had all but disappeared. Where did they come from and why? How well did they fit into the dominant Caucasian community? Why did they leave and where did they go? The adult forum will peak into this little-known chapter of Wisconsin history and consider interracial relationships during the 19th century.

## Fall Cruise

This will be no mystery trip. . . . . it's time to sign up for viewing the fall colors from the **Afton \* Hudson Cruise Lines** with lunch on the water. We are scheduled for **Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>**; leaving the church at 11:15AM; cruising from 12:00-2:00PM and back at church by 3:00PM. The menu will consist of roasted pork loin buffet, garlic mashed potatoes, fresh vegetables, assorted pasta salads and carrot cake. The fee is \$26.00 per person, which will be collected at the church before we leave. We are aiming for a minimum of 25 people, so please let us know on the sign-up sheet if you are interested and feel free to bring a friend.



## Wednesday Night Suppers

Again, Women's Fellowship will be providing Wednesday Night Suppers **beginning October 14 through November 18**. If you would like to participate by cooking, cleaning or serving, please sign up on the back table.

## Yoga Classes

**Yoga is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 am.** They meet in the Sunday School area. Please bring a yoga mat and a large bath towel. Any questions, call Jan Hansen at 425-5211.

## From broken down bikes to rebuilt bikes:

Whether young or old, remember the thrill of bicycling for fun? This is something Tim Bylander, a member of our congregation, is trying to continue for everyone who is in need of a bike and cannot afford a new one. Tim 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". With the anticipation of Christmas and knowing how the economy has affected many families, he would like to rebuild as many bikes as possible. To do this, Tim is asking for your help; if you have used or parts of old bikes you would like to donate, please contact Tim at (715)425-7437. Thank you in advance for all your help.



## Jammin' for the Shelter

Few things are better than homemade jam. Except, that is, homemade jam that supports a good cause! The River Falls Jammers is a group of women who have made delicious jam which is now being sold at churches throughout the community including ours. All proceeds go to 'Our Neighbor's Place' the new River Falls homeless shelter. The jammers are also in need of sugar, pectin and pint/jelly jars or cash donations to help purchase the supplies. Thank you for your support!

## OUR NEIGHBOR'S PLACE

Please remember Our Neighbor's Place shelter and their immediate and ongoing needs:

- Grocery items: (please deliver to Servant of the Shepherd - Elm Street door)
- Sunday BBQ supplies, frozen meals, canned meat, coffee, laundry detergent, soap, gas cards, paper towels, toilet paper, diapers (all sizes but 5-6 in particular)
- Private homes - individuals willing to offer temporary housing

## MISSION MILITARY APPEAL

We invite you to bring toiletry donations to be sent to NW Association UCC Pastor Deris Rice of Sparta, WI who is deployed as a Chaplain in Iraq. Our own Del Permann is currently tending to the Sparta UCC Congregation in his absence, and so we feel a special connection to assist the men and women under the care of Rev Rice.

**Please support this cause by bringing the following items:**

Personal sized: bars of soap, deodorant, toothpaste, dental floss, toothbrushes, shaving cream, feminine hygiene products, shampoo, lotion, conditioner, shower shoes, hard candy, beef jerky, and protein bars.

~Thank you, Mission Education Committee

**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

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**PASTOR'S HOME PHONE NUMBER**

Chris Myers 715-426-2075  
 chris@firstchurchrf.org

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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 River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

September 15, 2009

2009		SEPTEMBER		2009		
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>13 Rally Day</b> 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 11:35 am Confirmation Kick Off	<b>14</b> Journey House Meeting 7:00 pm	<b>15</b> Yoga 9:00 am  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	<b>16</b> Confirmation 2 & 3 and Pre-Confirmation go to Feed My Starving Children Leave at 5:00 pm Return at 8:15 pm  6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 7:00 pm Chancel Choir	<b>17</b> Yoga 9:00 am  Kettle Bells 4:30 pm	<b>18</b> Lay Academy →	
<b>20</b> 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 11:30 am Acolyte Training	<b>21</b> Building Committee Meeting 6:30 pm	<b>22</b> Yoga 9:00 am  4th Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's	<b>23</b> 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)	<b>24</b> Yoga 9:00 am  Kettle Bells 4:30 pm	<b>25</b> NEWSLETTER DEADLINE  Feed My Starving Children at St. Bridget's 4:00-6:00 pm Potluck at First Congregational afterwards  Youth Ministry Lay Academy →	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 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 Acolyte Training	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Yoga 9:00 am	<b>30</b> Pre-Confirmation (Grades 6 & 7) Bonfire at Deb Hoffman's 6:00-7:30 pm  6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 7:00 pm Chancel Choir			

**River Falls in Bloom**

The River Falls in Bloom Commemorative Book is now available for \$20 at Global M.A.D.E., First National Bank and State Bank. There are beautiful pictures of River Falls and much information about our heritage and where we are going environmentally.

**Volunteers Needed**

Interfaith Volunteers are needed to drive individuals to or from adult day program in Hudson on M, T, or Th. Drivers are also needed for dialysis on Fridays to Stillwater. For information please email or call Nancy Abrahamson, 381-4360 or [nancysa@co.saint-croix.wi.us](mailto:nancysa@co.saint-croix.wi.us)