

The SPIRE



First Congregational Church of Ripon • 220 Ransom Street • Ripon, Wisconsin 54971
920-748-5898 • Email: firstucc@dotnet.com • Website: www.riponcongregationalucc.org

February 2009

It is hard to believe but I think I overheard Dale Both talking to some folks after the annual meeting saying that she and others were planning on starting the community dinner on February 24th. It is a meal for both the needy and disenfranchised and any of us who want to dine with neighbors. I cannot think of anything better to be doing with church time and resources than giving away food and substance. If that is her plan, I am all for it. February 24th is Fat Tuesday, a night for eating rich food and celebrating before the start of Lent on February 25th, Ash Wednesday.

I think it is fitting that as a church community we enter Lent open to letting go of some things. Maybe a little fasting—and I am not talking about no meat on Fridays—would be good. For the sake of others, to let go of some of our assets like food and money is a good exercise to become aware of many of our neighbors who are not cutting it today. Last night I talked to one of our retired members and he has lost most everything he had in the stock market, but today he still is willing to come to church and find a way to give. The hard truth is that Lent is a time when we are reminded that no matter our life situation, we are God's. We come from dust with nothing and we return to dust with nothing. In between we live as sisters and brothers in the midst of a kingdom of love where the one we love and worship showed us in death and resurrection that there is more joy in the world following Christ than we can find anywhere else.

That's why we feast on Fat Tuesday and reflect on Ash Wednesday. On Ash Wednesday we remember who and whose we are, as we in humility accept ashes on our forehead or hand and leave church to serve where and how we are led.

So, feast and fast. It balances out. And know that the realm of the Holy surrounds you and me and everyone.

I trust that Lent will be a time of renewal for you and all those in your life.

Shalom,

—Jack



L E N T

Welcome!

We've been anticipating your arrival! It's true, because we believe that every person who comes to join us for fellowship was sent by God. Here at First Congregational Church of Ripon, we want you to experience Christ and be greatly blessed. We look forward to getting to know you and to share with you the marvelous ways God is working in our church. It won't take you long to discover that we are truly a "church family," rich in the relationships that matter most. We grow, worship, serve, laugh, cry, learn and reach out to the world together. We reach out to you, as well. Our doors and hearts are always open.

If you've been thinking, praying, searching, or hoping for a place to belong, we would like, again, to say Welcome! We're glad you found us.



- Jan Kohl
- Elizabeth Kraebber
- Nancy Livingston
- Dru Mansmith
- Len Ringstad



Our next newsletter will be for March, 2009. The deadline will be Tuesday, February 17 at noon. Please submit materials to the church office or email to Maria Dietrich at dietrichm@ripon.edu. Assembly and preparation for mailing will take place on Thursday, February 26 at 1 pm. Please mark your calendars.

Worship Volunteers

Please sign up to volunteer for lector, greeter/ushers, coffee fellowship hosts, flowers and nursery duty. The new permanent location for the sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the entrance to the Fellowship Hall. We still have slots to fill for the current month and beyond. Thanks in advance for all your help!



LENT BEGINS

The Ash Wednesday service will take place at 7 p.m. on February 25 in the Chapel. It is an ancient, moving service in which ashes are imposed on the forehead or back of the hand with the words, "from dust you have come, to dust you shall return." The service will be celebrated with Holy Communion and the singing of familiar hymns. Plan to attend. It will be nothing without you.



- Pastor Jack Kraaz
- Moderator Jennifer Aither
- Vice-Moderator Janet Vossekuil
- Clerk Maria Dietrich
- Treasurer Tim Aither
- Administrative Ass't Diane Falk
- Children's Choir Stephanie Cutler
- Choir Kurt Dietrich/Sarah Hughes
- Christian Ed Dir Jessica Solverud
- Church Maintenance Officer: Tom Konecny
- Fellowship Ministry Sue Loomer
- Finance Rick Coles
- Historian Nedra Martz
- Librarian Lois Ellis
- Men's Group Len Ringstad
- Organists Maria Dietrich
. & Sarah Hughes
- Outreach Ruth Jones
- PPRC Roger Eddingsaas
- Women's Fellowship Liz Ringstad
. & Audrey Conant
- Worship Norm Loomer

Pastor Jack Kraaz
 Office: 920-748-5898
 Fax: 920-748-5182
 Cell: 920-229-5243
 Email: jkraaz@dotnet.com

Community Dinners Begin February 24

Recently, you may have heard me address our Congregation about a plan to offer a dinner for the needy and disenfranchised of our community. It would be held here at First Congo, once a month to begin with and hopefully could expand to twice a month upon another church or organization joining in. I have discussed this with other churches in an effort to plant a seed in our community, to make this an ecumenical event.

The time has come to put this plan into action. But I need your help. Will you and your family consider volunteering for one dinner a year? It would entail purchasing, preparing and serving food at a dinner. I and at least one other volunteer would always be there to assist you at the event.

I do realize that this is a huge request, not only of your time but of your financial resources. I wouldn't be asking if I didn't believe the need exists in this community. I see our church as being a leader in helping people who, more than ever, are struggling.

Once the extent of the need is more clearly defined I will begin Phase 2. That phase is to outreach to businesses and organizations to help with the cost as well as for participation. I would also attempt to connect to other resources such as making application with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Commodities program for food assistance. However, this phase cannot begin without knowing the extent of the need; i.e. we as a congregation must get the ball rolling before those resources can be contacted for help.

I'm sure many of you will have questions before making a decision to participate or not. Please feel free to contact me at church or by phoning me at 748-1285.

Respectfully,

Dale Both

Mardi Gras Lasagna Meal

Sunday, Feb. 22 • 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Grace Lutheran Church
430 W. Griswold St., Ripon.

Adults \$8; Children 6-12 \$4;
kids under 6 free

Purchase tickets at Grace Lutheran
Church or by calling 748-5433.

First Sunday is Food Pantry Sunday

You are asked to bring canned goods and non-perishable items on the first Sunday of each month and place them in the box marked Food Pantry in the church narthex. You are encouraged to also bring your loose change that day and place it in the offering plate or in a basket by the food pantry box. Donations will go to the food pantry.



...and Cookie Walk

Friday, February 13

11 a.m.–1 pm in Fellowship Room

Traditional Chop Suey Luncheon
and Dessert Buffet

featuring live music

Cookie Walk 10:30 am–1:30 pm

Cookies \$6 per pound

Luncheon tickets are \$5.50 in advance and \$6 at the door. Tickets are available at Ripon Drug and from any member of Women's Fellowship.



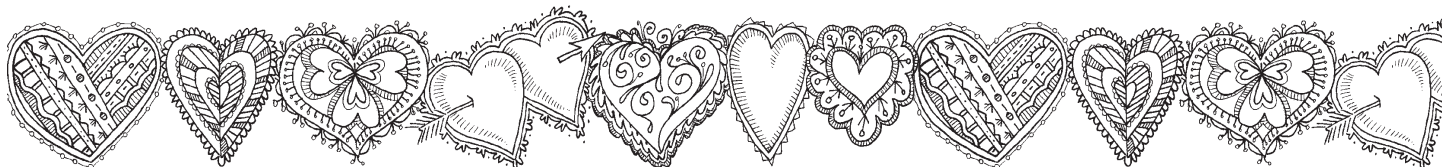
Sunday, Feb. 1

7:30 am–12:30 pm

Our Saviour's Church
343 Scott St., Ripon

Adults \$5, Seniors \$4, Children \$3

Buy tickets from a Cub Scout or at the door. Help support Ripon's Cub Scout Pack 3735.





CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The adult book discussion group will meet in March, April, and May with dates and times to be announced. We'll be reading *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* by A. J. Jacobs; *Jesus*, a novel by Depak Chopra; and another title not yet determined. Copies of the books will be available early in February.

The adult Bible Study series, "Eclipsing Empire: Paul," will continue to meet on Sundays at 3 p.m. through February 15 in the Fellowship Room. Any and all are welcome to join the group regardless of previous attendance.

Help Pilgrim Center

Would you please start saving your Campbell labels? Along with Scott Street Church we are collecting labels to help Pilgrim Center obtain some needed equipment. Campbells no longer wants the front of the labels, but rather the picture of the child and the bar code from each label. If you turn in the entire label the needed part will be cut out. Remember, labels include not only soup, but things like V-8 products, dinners, chili, beans, Swanson dinners, and Pepperidge Farm cookies. (A complete list of products can be found on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Room.) The collection container will be next to the water cooler on the Fellowship Hall landing. Thank you!

—Women's Fellowship

Start the New Year by Joining the Choir!

Both the Youth Choir and the Adult Choir will resume after a short holiday break on Sunday, January 4.

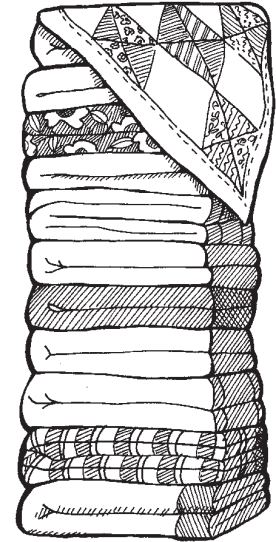
The Youth Choir is conducted by Stephanie Cutler and meets in the chapel on Sundays from 9–9:30 a.m.

The Adult Choir is conducted by Kurt Dietrich and Sarah Hughes and meets in the choir room (in the basement) on Sundays from 9–10 a.m. All singers of high school age and up are welcome in the Adult Choir.

Meditation Resumes

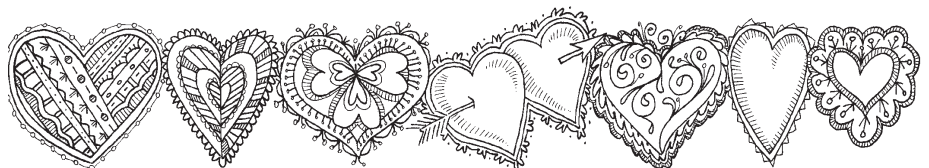
The winter session of the meditation group will continue on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel through February 17. Zen Buddhist based seated and walking meditation. Wear comfortable clothing; the Chapel temperature can be unpredictable. Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind: no prior meditation experience required or expected.

—Bob Amsden



Project Linus Fond du Lac County Chapter "Make A Blanket" Day

Our third annual "Make a Blanket" Day will be held at the Fond du Lac American Legion Hall, 500 Fond du Lac Ave, Fond du Lac, WI on February 7th from 9 am to 4:30 pm. Please join us for an hour or all day. This year we are asking everyone to bring their own fabric for the blankets that will be made. Our mission is to provide love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are seriously ill or traumatized through gifts of new, handmade blankets lovingly created by volunteers. We accept any quilt, afghan or blanket made for children in need from preemie to age 18. Their need is great but we can fill it!

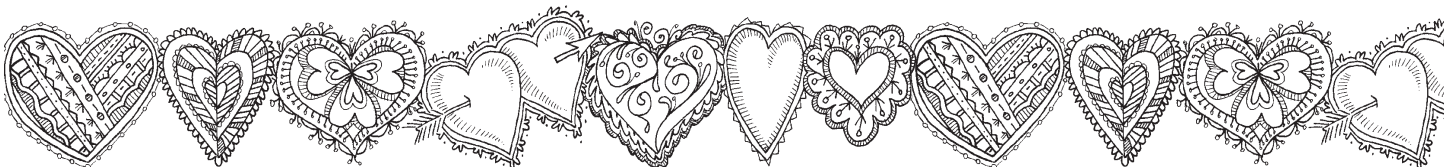


FEBRUARY 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9 am Choir Rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship with Food Pantry & loose change collection 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	2 6:30 pm Worship Committee meeting	3 7-9 pm Ries Driving School 7:30-8:30 pm Meditation in Chapel	4 4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers	5 7-9 pm Ries Driving School	6	7 8:30-1 pm Green Lake Festival of Music, Fellowship Hall
8 9 am Choir Rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	9	10 7-9 pm Ries Driving School 7:30-8:30 pm Meditation in Chapel	11 4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers 6:30 pm All-church committee meetings.	12 7 pm PPRC mtg. 7-9 pm Ries Driving School	13 Annual Reports due! Valentine Luncheon (11-1) & Cookie Walk (10:30-1:30)	14
15 9 am Choir Rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	16	17 1 pm Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm Cabinet 7-9 pm Ries Driving School 7:30-8:30 pm Meditation in Chapel	18 4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers	19 7-9 pm Ries Driving School	20	21
22 9 am Choir Rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	23	24 7-9 pm Ries Driving School	25 4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers 7 pm Ash Wednesday Service	26 1:15 pm Newsletter prep for mailing 7-9 pm Ries Driving School	27	28

The Crossroads Charter School is in our building weekdays 8-4 p.m

Future Events:
Palm Sunday April 5
Maundy Thursday April 9
Good Friday April 10
Easter April 12



Schedule of Morning Worship Volunteers

Thanks
for your
participation

Please try to meet this schedule. If you cannot help on the Sunday assigned...

- Try to switch Sundays with someone else
- Notify the appropriate Worship Committee member
- Notify the church office (748-5898)
- We all appreciate your participation!

LECTORS:

2/2 Jack Kraaz
2/8 Andy Prellwitz
2/15 Diane Beres
2/22 Rick Coles
3/1 Jack Kraaz

GREETERS/USHERS:

Tim & Jenn Aither
Bob & Sally Gallun
TBA
TBA
TBA

COFFEE HOSTS:

Jeanne Williams
Audrey Conant/Ruth Birge
TBA
Lois Ellis/Janet Vossekuil
Aithers

FLOWERS:

TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA

Are you interested in being a Worship Volunteer? Sign up on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall entrance.

First Congregational Church of Ripon

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ
220 Ransom Street • Ripon, Wisconsin 54971

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Enter to Worship—Go Forth to Serve
