

# The SPIRE



First Congregational Church of Ripon • 220 Ransom Street • Ripon, Wisconsin 54971  
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May 2010

IT IS HUMOROUS TO ME that on May 2nd we will be confirming six of our youth. I guess it strikes me as humorous because on that Sunday morning with their mentors, we will put our hands on them and invoke the infilling of the Holy Spirit. As I am writing this today I am reading the story of St. Paul's conversion from persecuting Christians to being one, and following Jesus from then on. He says of Jesus in Acts chapter nine, "He is the son of God." This means to me that in our lives of faith that Christ is the Son of God and not the Emperor who in Roman times was given that title. For Jesus' followers it is his way that we follow.

William Willimon wrote some years back that, it is odd, "The church lives by disruptive stories like that of Paul's conversion on the Damascus road. Yet we also bolt down the pews in our churches, build churches to look like fortresses that can never be shaken, and in general give people the impression that the Christian faith is the way to get everything tied down, definite, fixed, sealed in concrete." He adds, "The story of Paul's disruption suggests that our encounters with the Risen Christ are otherwise."

So here I am thinking about this diverse class and imagining who will be called from among them to follow the way of Christ, giving, serving, and leading us into the future. It is humorous because no one knows. The spirit blows where it will and creates change and new life. It drives people to go and serve, to learn and

prepare, and bring God's kingdom life among not only the likes of us but, to all those who need God's reality of loving kindness. I have over the course of the past

nine months worked, debated, argued, and prayed for and with these young ones, in the hope that they might catch a vision of the potential and possibility of the Kingdom of God. It is that Kingdom, where followers of the Christ are committed to nonviolence, unconditional love, and justice. It is a Kingdom where we no longer look at strangers as aliens, but include them as family even if they act against us. It is in essence coming closest to being our true selves, at least that self at the edge of our consciousness where we sense we should be.



It takes great courage to be a Christian. I believe that only with the help of the Spirit, can you or I follow. Only with the help of the Spirit can we be the Salt of the earth and Light of the world that the Sermon on the Mount teaches us to be. So I need you to join me on Confirmation Sunday and ask God to infuse these young people with the Holy Spirit. I want that for them. I want their ideas and leadership to continue to make this sphere of influence we live in today to be as the Holy One would have it. I want that for you, too.

—Jack

# 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.

## Summer Worship Time Change

Please be aware that we will switch to our summer worship time of 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 30. Sunday morning worship will be held at 9:30 a.m. through Labor Day weekend.

## 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!



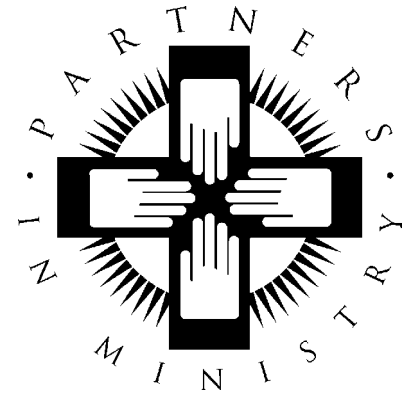
Our next newsletter will be for June, 2010. The deadline is Tuesday, May 18, at noon. Please submit materials to the church office or email to Maria Dietrich at [dietrichm@ripon.edu](mailto:dietrichm@ripon.edu). Assembly and prep for mailing will take place on Thursday, May 27, at 1:15 p.m. Please mark your calendars.



Wallace Abrahamson  
Avril Kaiser  
Jan Kohl  
Maurine Loomer  
Dru Mansmith  
Dorothy Sargent  
David Williams  
Alysse Zabel

## 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.



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 Prellwitz  
Choir . . . . . Kurt Dietrich/Sarah Kraaz  
Christian Ed Dir . . . . . Jeanne Williams  
Youth Group . . . . . Amanda Bolan  
Nursery . . . . . Hollie Becker  
Fellowship . . . . . Stephanie Prellwitz  
Finance . . . . . Rick Coles  
Historian . . . . . Nedra Martz  
Librarian . . . . . TBD  
Maintenance Officer Chris Holland  
Men's Group . . . . . Len Ringstad  
Organists . . . . . Maria Dietrich  
. . . . . & Sarah Kraaz  
Outreach . . . . . Robyn Volkmann  
PPRC . . . . . Audrey Lyke  
Women's Fellowship . . . . . Liz Ringstad  
. . . . . & Audrey Conant  
Worship . . . . . Nancy Coles

Pastor Jack Kraaz  
Office: 920-748-5898  
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Cell: 920-229-5243  
[jkraaz@charterinternet.com](mailto:jkraaz@charterinternet.com)

## Strengthen the Church

Strengthen the Church is the UCC's annual offering to help build our denominational future. Your gift to Strengthen the Church builds the UCC's future now by funding The Stillspeaking Ministry, new and renewing churches, youth and young adult ministries, and lay and pastoral leadership formation – especially among women and people of color. The God is Still Speaking Ministry spreads the message of God's love, reaching out especially to those who have felt there is no room for them within Christianity and the church – the excluded and alienated, the spiritually homeless, the questioning. In the last two years, Stillspeaking reached an estimated 25 million people through national, regional and local advertising. Directed to our church's Conference, Local Church Ministries, and The Stillspeaking Ministry, these gifts help invigorate congregations, foster new leaders and grow the UCC's presence as a community of extravagant welcome.

—the Outreach Committee



Our next Community Dinner will take place on Tuesday, May 25, from 5–6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

## Where's the Coffee?

Thanks to the efforts of Roger Eddingsaas, the fair-trade goodies are now locked in the glass fellowship hall cabinet. Currently, this cabinet holds Equal Exchange coffee (regular and decaf), chocolate, rooibos tea, baking cocoa, dried cranberries and hot cocoa. To purchase any of these items contact Diane in the office or any Outreach member (Robyn Volkmann, Anne Flasch, Sue Loomer, Bev Christ and Gregg Chatterson). The cabinet will also be unlocked during coffee hour.

— the Outreach Committee





# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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## *Confirmation May 2*

On Sunday, May 2, six of the youth of our church will be confirmed. We've heard their statements, and look forward to celebrating with them and welcoming them into the life of our church as full-fledged members. A reception for the confirmands will be held in the chapel following services on Sunday and before the luncheon for Ruth Birge.

## *Children's Sunday May 23*

May 23 will be Children's Sunday, the official end of the Sunday School year. The youth of our church will assist as lectors, ushers, coffee hour hosts, and musicians in creating a memorable service for us. Please join us for a pirate themed lunch and celebration after the service. Arrgh!

## *A Message From The Moderator*

For those of you who attended the church field trip on the 18th, I hope you had as marvelous a time as I did. I have not gotten off of the "high" so to speak, from the day.

For those of you who missed it, I am so incredibly sorry you did not experience the day with us.

We started the day with a bus ride down to Milwaukee where we worshiped at Grace UCC in Milwaukee, or sister church. The worship service was nothing like I have ever been to. It was so energizing and upbeat. We hugged, we danced, we sang, we praised the Lord and we were blessed beyond belief.

We shared a meal with the members of Grace and strengthened our special bond. They were so welcoming to us and it was simply put, a spiritual morning.

We made plans to partake in 3 events a year with Grace, a fellowship event, a worship event and an outreach event. Plans are in the works for them to join us in September for a barbeque and worship here at our church. This relationship is going to be so great for both churches and I encourage everyone to embrace it.

After the lunch, we went to the museum to see the Dead Sea Scrolls. WOW! That is really all I can say. It was a moving experience not to be forgotten. If you were not able to go, I would strongly suggest you drive down to see the exhibit. It was extraordinary and well worth the trip. The entire day was a tremendous experience and I feel so blessed to have shared it with those of you who went.

—Jennifer

## *Librarian Needed*

We are looking for someone to be the new librarian for the church library. This position takes approximately one hour of time a month. Lois Ellis will be happy to show you the ropes. Please contact the office if interested.

## *Worship Notes*

The Rev. Jerry Schrankler will be our guest pulpit leader on Sunday, May 16.

We are seeking a guest pulpit leader for Sunday, June 13. Please contact the office or a member of the Worship committee if you're interested in leading or would like to suggest someone else.

Note time change: summer worship schedule will run May 30 through Sept 6. Sunday services will begin at 9:30 a.m. and will be held in the Fellowship Hall.

## *Camp Scholarships*

Any youth who enroll in camp at either Pilgrim Center or Moon Beach are entitled to partial scholarships. Please contact Jeanne Williams for more information.

# MAY 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>25</b> 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship 6:30 pm Confirmation Class	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 5–6:30 pm Community Dinner, Fellowship Hall	<b>28</b> 4:45–7:30 pm-Weight Watchers	<b>29</b> 1:15 pm Newsletter prep for mailing	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School! 10:30 am Worship 11:30 Confirmation Celebration in chapel followed by Luncheon Fellowship in honor of Ruth Birge's birthday, in the Fellowship Hall	<b>3</b> Ries Driving School 7–9 pm Fellowship Hall	<b>4</b> Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>5</b> 4:45–7:30 pm-Weight Watchers Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>6</b> Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>7</b> Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>8</b> 8 am–6 pm Ripon College in Fellowship Hall
<b>9</b> 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship – Baptism for Elizabeth Olson 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	<b>10</b> 6:30 pm Worship committee meeting Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>11</b> Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>12</b> 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>13</b> Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>14</b> Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>15</b> 8 pm Ripon College Baccalaureate Service
<b>16</b> 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship – pulpit leader Rev. Jerry Schrankler 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship 1:30 pm RC Commencement	<b>17</b> Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>18</b> 1 pm Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm Cabinet Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>19</b> 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>20</b> 5:30 pm Women's Fellowship Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>21</b> Ries Driving School 7–9 pm	<b>22</b> 11:30 am–6 pm Amanda Falk shower, Fellowship Hall
<b>23</b> 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Children's Sunday-Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 5–6:30 pm Community Dinner, Fellowship Hall	<b>26</b> 4:45–7:30 pm-Weight Watchers	<b>27</b> 1:15 pm Newsletter prep for mailing	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 9:30 am Worship (Summer hours - note time change!) 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	<b>31</b> Church office closed for Memorial Day holiday	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>



# 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:

5/2 Jack Kraaz  
5/9 TBD  
5/16 TBD  
5/23 Youth  
5/30 TBD  
  
6/6 Jack Kraaz  
6/13 TBD  
6/20 TBD  
6/27 Claire Aither

## GREETERS/USHERS:

TBD  
TBD  
TBD  
Youth  
TBD  
  
Roger & Margaret Eddingsaas  
TBD  
TBD  
TBD

## COFFEE HOSTS:

Ruth Birge & Family  
TBD  
Lois Ellis  
Youth  
Amsden/Williams family  
  
Roger & Margaret Eddingsaas  
TBD  
TBD  
TBD

## FLOWERS:

Birge family  
TBD  
TBD  
Youth  
TBD  
  
Sally Gallun  
TBD  
TBD  
TBD

Are you interested in being a Worship Volunteer? Sign up on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall entrance. Ripon College student Hollie Becker is handling the nursery for the duration of the school year.

## First Congregational Church of Ripon

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

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