

The SPIRE



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

June 2010

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that it is June already. We are in the season of Pentecost in the life of the church. Living out again the rhythm of the church year, I am aware that Jesus' life recorded in the gospels expresses again and again that God was in and with him. As he lived and acted, he constantly said that God's kingdom was near, at hand, and in his followers. Following his crucifixion, his disciples who over the course of his ministry behaved badly, were left with memories of Jesus' life, and with a great deal of uncertainty and fear. However, the story read on Pentecost Sunday (Acts 2: 1-21) spoke of an invasion of the spirit that drove them out of their cloisters and into the world around them. It allowed them to break their insular homogeneity, and begin telling the story of Jesus and that God's kingdom of love, grace, peace and justice was an alternative vision to the sway of the dominant culture in which they lived, which was one of anger, violence, and reciprocity (an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth).

Of course, living and being part of a dominant culture which practices anger, violence and reciprocity is not good news because I am complicit with this culture and most often am not aware of it. For the likes of you and me reading this story, as my friend Kevin Mundell says, "it makes us very uncomfortable because the story tells us that now God is in us". If God is in us then why are we afraid of the stranger, why do we resist change and why are we not more open to doing the things that God is doing in Christ? Why, indeed, do we still practice anger, violence and reciprocity? Believe me, I tell you that I am writing to myself. I am often telling you to be a part of God's good news when I resist it myself. I want to do everything by consensus but am aware that nobody thinks or believes exactly what I do. I bind the spirit by my wishes and will. Are you aware as I am that those first spirit-infused believers were all killed by

violence because their gentle spirit violated the powers that be as did Jesus' spirit?

Someone told me a long time ago that being a Christian was easy; accept Jesus into your heart, study the bible, witness to others, and save your money, and everything would work out. But that person left out Jesus saying, "come follow me"! If someone acts badly to you, do not reciprocate. You feed the poor and if you have two coats give one away. I think that is getting personal, if you know what I mean. I have five or six coats, I like them and now this crazy faith is suggesting I should open my hands, my heart, my wallet and give freely to those who I may think do not deserve it. I commit a sin when I am aware of the cost of being a Christian and do not act on it.

God is still speaking...

So today, as I am thinking about the kingdom of God which I believe I am a part of, I want to be renewed, I want to remember, I want to open myself again so that I am not looking at anyone else, just my flaws, and reclaim my true self in a world that needs to turn from the powers of darkness to the grace of light which most assuredly shines when I allow the spirit to move me off the proverbial dime. I somehow believe that your deepest need and mine is met when we become complicit with the possibility that the Holy One is still at work in and among us. That is what the story means to me. God help me to open my being to God's realm and share the good news that God is still speaking and has a new word for you and me.

—Jack

Thank You

I want to say thank you to everyone who sent cards, memorial gifts, and expressions of condolence at the death of my mother April 20th. I felt wrapped up in your grace, prayers and love. While that time was difficult for me personally and for my family, we are thankful that my mother is no longer suffering from Parkinson's disease and is at peace. What so many of this church family did for me during that difficult month allowed me to grieve freely.

Again, thank you.

—Jack



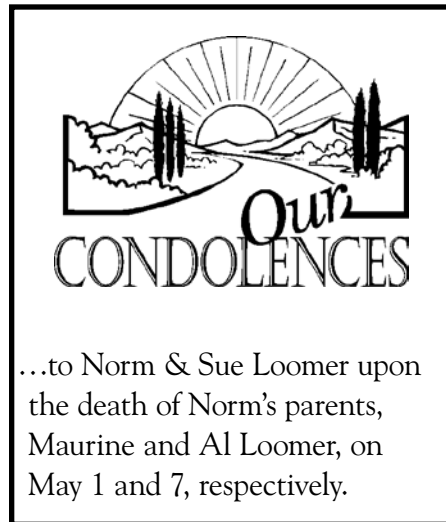
Where's the Coffee?

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

A Day at the Lake

On June 27th we will be holding our church service in the new Ley Chapel at Pilgrim Center in Green Lake. Please do not worry, we will have coffee, juice and treats following worship. The setting is so beautiful that you might tune out the service and simply relish being in the presence of the setting itself. You will want to invite family, extended family and friends to this very exceptional opportunity to be together for an uplifting and joyous morning of worship at the Pilgrim Center, Green Lake, Wis. Service, as always in the summer, will be at 9:30 a.m. The Ley Chapel is handicapped-accessible, and is located at the west end of the campgrounds. Plan now to attend.



Community Dinner News

I hope that you were able to join us on April 23rd for a very special community dinner. My dear friend and co-worker, Bertha Granado, put on quite a Mexican feast in honor of Cinco de May. What a truly good friend Bertha has come to be for our congregation. The event was very well attended. We continue to see participation gradually grow. So many have been regular attendees who openly share their lives with us.

I have decided to avoid passing around a clip board during worship, asking for volunteers. Instead, there will be a sign-up sheet available in the Fellowship Hall. Please look for it near a photo display that I recently created.

If you are wondering how you can help, each month we need household items. People often ask about what they can purchase. Laundry soap would be at the top of the list. It's universal in that it doesn't matter if you are a family of children, or elderly, everyone needs laundry soap. Other items in high demand are cleaning products, toothpaste, shampoo, bar soap, and paper products.

Once again, I want to thank you for the amazing support you have given to this mission. I have been inspired numerous times in the last year.

—Dale Both



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

An Update from Ben Konecny

The day has arrived – and let me tell you, I am very, very glad to be able to say that! After three years, I have graduated from Vanderbilt Divinity School. I can't decide if it feels like it has taken an exceedingly long time to get here, or if the time has flown by, but regardless, it is nice to be at this point in my formal academic career —the very end.

As I entered Vanderbilt three years ago, I felt called to ordination and parish ministry. My excitement for following this path had much to do with my work with the children at First Congo. Through that experience, I realized how passionate I was about church leadership and how fulfilling it was to spend time being involved in a community that offers friendship, spiritual growth, and outreach into the world.

During my first and second years at Vanderbilt, however, my focus changed and I was less convinced I wanted to embark in this particular vocational direction. I thought possible teaching or non-profit work was to what I was being called.

This past year, my third and final one in Divinity School, turned out to be an unexpected watershed experience for me. After having completed a year of hospital chaplaincy and a summer of community organizing, my spirit for church work was renewed and greatly enhanced. This past winter, after being mentored by a local pastor, I joined a UCC congregation in Nashville and began the ordination process in the Tennessee-Alabama Conference of the Southeast Region of the UCC. Now, as I progress through the ordination process, I hopefully will also be accepted to participate in a chaplain residency program at a local hospital for the duration of this upcoming year. After that, I guess only God knows ... however, I will probably try to have a say in it!

I am not sure when I will be back in Ripon. When I do make it back, I will look forward to seeing many of you. In the meantime, please know how thankful I am to have you in my life, and how much your support and encouragement has meant, and continues to mean, to me.

Blessings,

Ben Konecny

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

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, thanks to Women's Fellowship. Please contact Mary Lyke for more information.



Sunday Brunch

The women of Grace Lutheran Church of Ripon are hosting a Sunday Brunch on June 6, 2010

Serving from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Scrambled eggs, link sausage, french toast, fruit, pastries, coffee, milk and juice.

Adults: \$6.50

Children 5-12: \$3.00

Age 4 and under: FREE

50% of the money raised will go to the local food pantry.

Tickets available at: Ripon Drug, Pick 'n Save, Curves, U.S. Bank (Phyllis Nielsen) and Grace Lutheran Church office, 430 W. Griswold St., Ripon.

Ripon College

Home Away From Home Program

Program Goals

The purpose of the program is to provide an opportunity for cultural exchange between international students and members of the Ripon community. The Home away from Home program will provide international students with a network of support and resources that extends beyond Ripon College. This program will give members of Ripon the Ripon community and surrounding communities the opportunity to share U.S culture with international students.

Overview

Community members are matched with international students and encouraged to invite the students to partake in typical social activities. These social activities will provide a platform for cultural exchange.

Some examples of social activities:

- Family Meals
- Local Sporting Events
- Holiday Celebrations
- Trips
- Sightseeing
- Family Gatherings
- Walks
- Picnics



The program is what those involved make of it. It is our hope that Ripon College's international students have the most positive experience they can have. We also hope the Ripon community can benefit from shared experiences with these students. It is our hope that a strong and long lasting bond can be created between Ripon College's international student programs and the Ripon community.

If you would like to take part in the program or have any questions please contact me.

Sincerely,

Marcus Neeld

Program coordinator for Multicultural and International Student Affairs
NeeldM@ripon.edu

(See reverse side for application)



Home Away From Home Program

Host-Family Application

Please list all family members' names: _____

Residence address: _____
Street Address *City* *Zip*

Residence telephone: _____

Email: _____

Family's occupation: _____

Please indicate why you are interested in this program:

Please indicate any foreign languages spoken in the home:

What are your hobbies/special interests?

Are you interested in hosting a student from any particular region?


Do you have any comments you would like to make, or is there anything you would like a student to know about your family?

When this application is completed please return it to:

Marcus Neeld
Office of Student Activities
Ripon College
PO Box 248
Ripon, WI 54971-0248

Or email to: NeeldM@ripon.edu.

JUNE 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 9:30 am Worship (Note summer worship time, in effect through September 6) 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	31	1	2 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	3	4	5 Brooke Bogdanske wedding, 3:30 p.m., sanctuary
6 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	7	8	9 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	10	11	12
13 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	14 6:30 pm Worship committee meeting	15 6:30 pm Cabinet	16 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	17	18	19 Julie Mathias hosting shower, 12–4 p.m., Fellowship Hall & kitchen
20 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship  Father's Day	21	22 1 pm Newsletter Deadline 5–6:30 pm Community Dinner, Fellowship Hall	23 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	24	25	26
27 9:30 am Worship in the Ley Chapel at Pilgrim Center, Green Lake 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	28	29	30 1:15 pm Newsletter prep for mailing 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	1	2	3

Future Events:
 July 4: Independence Day
 July 10: Twilight Tour Garden Walk for United Way
 August 6–7: Maxwell Street Days
 August 7: Cookie Daze



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:

6/6 Jack Kraaz
6/13 TBD
6/20 TBD
6/27 Claire Aither

7/4 Jack Kraaz
7/11 TBD
7/18 TBD
7/25 TBD

GREETERS/USHERS:

TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD

TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD

COFFEE HOSTS:

Sarah Kraaz
TBD
TBD
TBD

TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD

FLOWERS:

Sally Gallun
TBD
TBD
TBD

TBD
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.

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Enter to Worship—Go Forth to Serve