



# The SPIRE



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

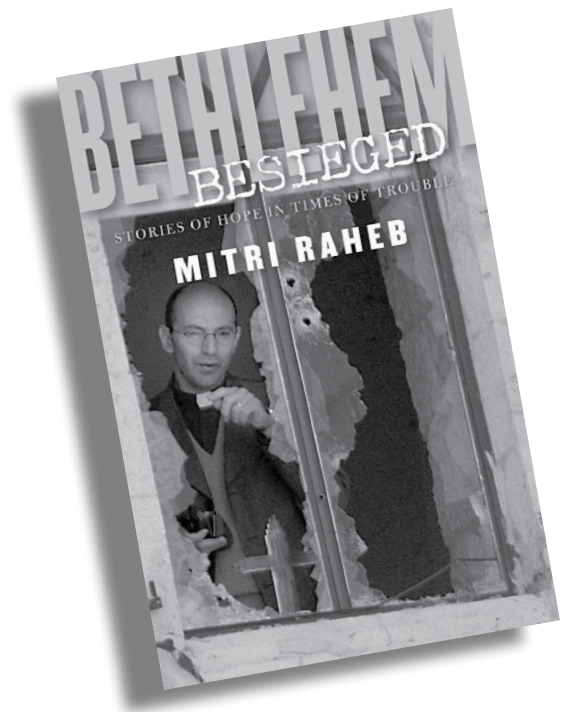
I KNOW YOU MIGHT BE BUSY TODAY. However, I am glad you took a few minutes to read the Spire. In the space I am afforded, I want to tell you a story about a wonderful minister I met at the Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting. He was the special speaker at a workshop the Thursday the meeting began. His name is Mitri Raheb. He is the pastor of the Bethlehem Christmas church. Pastor Raheb spoke about the difficulties of the Palestinian people who have been walled into their cities with no privileges to move about the rest of Palestine, which is the nation of Israel. He talked about the great difficulties Palestinians face without being able to leave their towns and cities. I thought I would hear day-long stories of victimization due to the powerful Israeli military and right-wing government. Indeed, that is part of the story, but the greater story is how this man and his church overcame obstacles in their path and started schools, a major health care clinic, and a college, all during the Israeli occupation and ghettoizing of his city, Bethlehem. He is a Lutheran pastor who works with his Muslim neighbors and, indeed, anyone he can.

I thought I was taken with him, but Tim Lyke, too, heard about Mitri at Rotary. He called his sister Sue to see whether or not she had heard of him, and indeed she had. She said she knew of his work in Bethlehem and that he was known as a great man. He follows the path of Christ who served all who had need. His work I believe is congruent with who we are as a church at our best. I love what Mitri represents to the historically troubled region where he lives. That is only part of the story. You can read the story yourself in a book he wrote titled, "Bethlehem Besieged". I finished it yesterday and thought you might want to read it. I will order several copies of this book and will host a book group on July 25th. I hope you will come.

There is another reason for you to read this book. It is because Mitri's daughter Tala is coming to Ripon as a high school exchange student. The coincidence should not be lost on any of us that he spoke at a meeting on June 11th and that his 15-year-old daughter will be in our community this next school year. She will be hosted in Ripon by the Gelhar family. We hope to see her among us often. It would be good and right for our church family to read about her family, and what her church has to teach us about being Christian in the midst of persecution in their traumatic world.

Feel free to talk to Jim or Pat about Tala and her family. This is one of those opportunities to truly step outside of ourselves and learn about the Palestinian issue together. I look forward to seeing you at the book discussion July 25th at 5 p.m. at the church.

—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 Sunday morning worship will be held at 9:30 a.m. through Labor Day weekend. We will return to 10:30 a.m. worship on September 12.

## 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 August, 2010. The deadline is Tuesday, July 20, at noon. Please submit materials to the church office or email to Maria Dietrich at dietrichm@ripon.edu. Assembly and prep for mailing will take place on Thursday, July 29, at 1:15 p.m. Please mark your calendars.



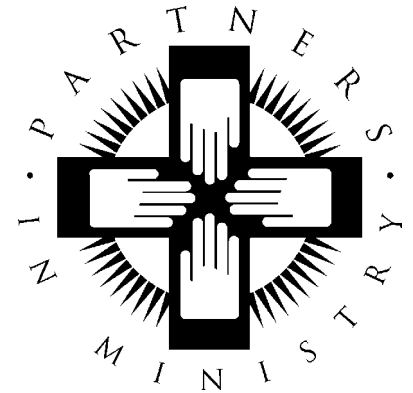
Wallace Abrahamson  
Jeannette Kilner  
Jan Kohl  
Dru Mansmith  
Dorothy Sargent  
Alysse Zabel



**JULY**

## 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  
Fax: 920-748-5182  
Cell: 920-229-5243  
jkraaz@charterinternet.com

## Guest Speaker

On Sunday, July 18, we will have a special guest speaker at our church. She is Nicole Bice, who many of us know mainly as the daughter of Bev and Jack Christ. Nikki will be here at the request of the Outreach ministry. We invited her to speak because the committee became very excited about a project she is passionate about and thought we might be interested in being involved with her one way or another.

What Nikki does is work with an international co-op of credit unions. Her work takes her all over the world. In third world countries she is involved in helping to train people about how to become self-sustaining, thereby building a future for themselves and the world they inhabit. Her work has taken her to Kenya, where she became involved with an orphanage. It is a place the government dumps children whose parents have died, often from AIDS or other disease. Nikki wants to show us pictures of this place and the possibility of hope in a dismal area of the world where the population is struggling to survive.

Nikki's story grabbed our whole committee, and we asked her to be with us on July 18 to share it with the rest of you. Her story is something I am sure you will not want to miss. Plan on a beautiful morning at First Congregational Church on Sunday, July 18.

—Jack

## New Members

During the June 27th church service in the Ley Chapel at Pilgrim Center in Green Lake, we accepted as new members Diane Light and Buzz & Corinne Rasmussen. Welcome!

## Sad News

Cheryl Kuhn died of cancer on June 4, 2010, at the age of 61. She, her husband John, and their children, Erin and Adam, were members of our church about 30 years ago before moving to the Appleton area. John is a former administrator of the Ripon Hospital. Cheryl was a good friend of Sue Loomer and Sheila House. She will be greatly missed.

## America the Beautiful

Katharine Lee Bates (1859-1929) wrote, edited and taught English in her native Massachusetts. Occasionally, she wrote hymns, too.

On a trip to Colorado, Bates was greatly impressed by amber waves of grain, fruited plains and purple mountain majesties. She believed that God had definitely shed his grace all across this land. A visit to the summit of Pikes Peak inspired Bates to write her most famous poem-hymn, "America the Beautiful." Bates also realized that patriotism was an important part of America. She was grateful for heroes "who more than self their country loved and mercy more than life." She wanted all Americans to realize how God had shed his grace on them and had crowned what was good "with brotherhood from sea to shining sea."

Bates embodied the spirit of thankfulness to God for all she had experienced and been given.



Our next Community Dinner will take place on Tuesday, July 27, from 5–6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

## Community Dinner

Thanks to so many of you who have helped make our monthly Community Dinner a success. Every month we see new faces. I can't stress enough how not only donations but participation at the dinner has a positive impact on our success. Please plan to attend on the 4th Tuesday of each month, beginning at 5 p.m.

Donations of a household item are always appreciated. You can place your item in the white laundry basket located at the entrance of the Fellowship Hall.

## Help Wanted

It's been nearly a year and a half since the first Community Dinner was held. I've seen much growth and development yet I can't help but believe the best is yet to come.

On behalf of my fellow coordinator Janet Vossekul and myself, we're seeking someone to help us continue to develop and coordinate this mission.

Please contact me at 748-1285 if you have an interest and a desire to get involved.

—Dale Both



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## *Delegates Attend Conference Annual Meeting*

The annual meeting of the Wisconsin Conference of the UCC was held June 11–13 at the Green Lake Conference Center. Jack Kraaz and Norm and Sue Loomer attended.

Delegates were given the book *This Odd and Wondrous Calling* to read before the weekend. The keynote speakers and authors of this book, Lillian Daniel and Martin Copenhaver, spoke about their public and private lives as ministers. Delegates had the opportunity to attend two workshops at the meeting.

An important item on the business agenda was the Wisconsin Conference restructuring plan. Part of the plan is to assign two staff people to cover the four associations, instead of the four staff people we have now. The proposal passed with a vote of 256 yes, 60 no, and one abstain.

Full details on the plan may be found at the Wisconsin Conference website <http://www.wcucc.org>.

## *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*

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.

## *You're Invited*

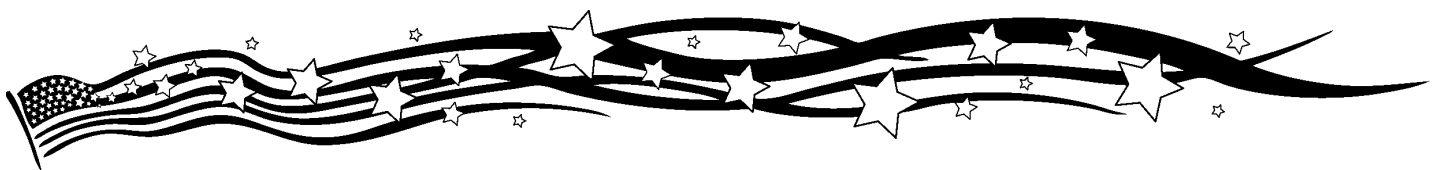
Emmanuel United Church of Christ cordially invites you to the installation of Reverend Annette K. Wolf as Pastor and Teacher of Emmanuel United Church of Christ, 1306 Michigan Street, Oshkosh, Wisconsin on Sunday, July 11, 2010 at 3:00 pm. Luncheon to follow.



# JULY 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 9:30 am Worship in the Ley Chapel at Pilgrim Center, Green Lake 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	28	29	30 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	1	2	3
4 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	5	6	7 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	8	9	10
11 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	12	13	14 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	15	16	17
18 9:30 am Worship, featuring Nikki Bice, guest speaker 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	19	20 6:30 pm Cabinet 1 pm Newsletter Deadline	21 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	22	23	24 3–6 pm DeGroot wedding in Fellowship Hall if inclement weather
25 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	26	27 5–6:30 pm Community Dinner, Fellowship Hall	28 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	29 1:15 pm Newsletter prep for mailing	30	31

Future Events:  
 August 6–7: Maxwell Street Days  
 August 7: Cookie Daze  
 August 21 New students arrive at Ripon College  
 August 26: Welcome potluck, RC



# 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:	GREETERS/USHERS:	COFFEE HOSTS:	FLOWERS:
7/4 Jack Kraaz	TBD	Norm & Sue Loomer	TBD
7/11 Coles family	Coles family	Coles family	TBD
7/18 TBD	TBD	Ruth Birge, Audrey Conant, Merle Good	TBD
7/25 TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
8/1 Jack Kraaz	TBD	TBD	TBD
8/8 TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
8/15 TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
8/22 TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
8/29 TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

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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