

# The SPIRE



First Congregational Church of Ripon • 220 Ransom Street • Ripon, Wisconsin 54971  
920-748-5898 • Email: [firstucc@charterinternet.com](mailto:firstucc@charterinternet.com) • Website: [www.riponcongregationalucc.org](http://www.riponcongregationalucc.org)

September 2009

DIANA BUTLER BASS WROTE IN HER LOVELY BOOK, “Christianity For the Rest of Us”, “Once upon a time in America, Protestant congregations were village churches that offered weary immigrants a new home in a new world.

I read those lines for the third time today and thought to myself returning from sabbatical that our survival as a church community is related to remembering what it was like being pilgrims in a new land. Paraphrasing Diana Butler Bass, what is needed are mainline churches recovering their identities as village churches where we do not remember the church from a political point of view but as a kind of people that is grounded in tradition and opens its doors to wayfarers. Those churches are a kind of place where a community of practice is both spiritual and open at the same time. A place where its doors are not barred by threats of eternal damnation but rather open with hope. The things people do together in community for the sake of God and the world mark its sacred space.

The places and people I visited while away were people who were starving for this kind of place, where they could practice faith and seek their spiritual center, guided by the spirit of the community itself. I visited a number of churches where I would feel uncomfortable being a member, for fear of being seen for what I am, someone who has missed the mark but who desperately is seeking a place to be, without being forced to say words, or agree with how someone might view me. I felt happy to return to this community.

I visited First Congregational Church of Scottsdale, Arizona, a few years ago and met a man whose name was Marlin. He had been suffering from full blown AIDS and was in remission at the time. He was happy and pleased to be a part of that church because from the day he walked through the doors the people of the

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“ I feel that at its best  
our congregation is a village church  
and that our practice of  
radical Christian hospitality  
is how we can and will enter the future.”

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# 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.



Dru Mansmith  
David Williams  
Alyse Zabel

## 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 September, 2009. The deadline is Tuesday, September 22, 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 Wednesday, Sept. 30, at 1:15 p.m. Please mark your calendars.

## Congratulations

...to Andy & Stephanie Cutler Prellwitz upon the occasion of their wedding on August 8.

## Regular Worship Time and Location Resume

Please be aware that, beginning on September 13, our Sunday morning worship will be held at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary.



## 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 Stephanie Prellwitz
- Youth Group . . . . . Amanda Bolan
- Nursery . . . . . Hollie Becker
- Church Maint. Officer: Mark Alling
- Fellowship Ministry . . . . . Sue Loomer
- Finance . . . . . Rick Coles
- Historian . . . . . Nedra Martz
- Librarian . . . . . Lois Ellis
- 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  
Email: jkraaz@charterinternet.com



## Memories of Nancy

We all have so many memories of Nancy Livingston, and we miss her! A few of us from the church decided to write down some of our thoughts about her, and share them with you. Nancy contributed so much to our church, the college, and the community. However, this tribute deals primarily with Nancy's gifts to our church.

**Tuesday, September 22,  
5–6:30 p.m.**

Our July 28th dinner marked six months of hosting the Ripon Community Dinner. Although the number of participants remains constant at about 30, including volunteers and members of our congregation, the response is genuinely warm and appreciative.

For our August 'Back to School' cook-out/picnic we offered each child a school supply item. We obtained permission from the Ripon Public Schools to circulate our monthly flier to parents at school registration(s) in August.

The September dinner will be held on Tuesday, September 22. Hope to see you there.

—Dale Both

These are some thoughts about Nancy:

- She was always a "lady".
- Nancy cared deeply about our church and the people in it; she wanted the church to be the best that it could be.
- She was conscientious and hard working.
- She was independent, and gently yet forcefully expressed her views; she never said a negative word about anybody.
- She always included others in conversations and activities.
- One friend said that Nancy "was like a big sister to me."

Nancy was involved in the life of our church in many ways. These are a sampling:

- She was an active member of Bradford Circle.
- Nancy was the first secretary of Church Women United.
- She and her husband Jack had the chapel created in the old education wing.
- In 1968 she helped spearhead the project of the rebuilding of the church basement and creation of the new kitchen; she supervised the day-to-day work of the builders.
- She was on the Membership Committee and was in charge of We Care. Nancy mailed hundreds of cards to people in need of sympathy, encouragement, or congratulations.

One church member and friend of Nancy said, "Nancy had a way of making people feel special. She was a very giving person, and yet she also knew how to receive graciously. She seemed to be the most popular resident wherever she lived. Everyone loved Nancy!"

Another friend said, "Kind, thoughtful, bright, and funny. This was the Nancy Livingston I was blessed with in friendship for over 40 years. As far as I'm concerned she had no faults. She was eager to include me in times of great joy, and though she was a tiny woman she had broad shoulders and loving arms in times of trouble. Right up to the end of her life she thought of ways to make things easier for someone else, including members of her assisted living home. It was my honor to know and love her."



The Neighbors in Need offering, which we will receive on October 4, supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

- Through UCCTakeAction.org, our national Justice and Witness Ministries office offers resources, news updates, and action alerts on a broad spectrum of justice issues.
- Working with members of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network (a network of thousands of UCC justice and peace advocates), Justice and Witness continues its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice.
- Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Historically, forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hockak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and northern Nebraska.
- Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches and their pastors are supported by CAIM. CAIM is also an invaluable resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations in the U.S.

Neighbors in Need helps make another world possible. It needs your support. Please give generously.

—The Outreach Committee

## ***Congregational Meeting September 20***

A congregational meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 20, immediately after the service, in order to vote on the purchase of a new sound system for the sanctuary. A donor has come forward to cover the quoted cost of the proposal submitted Feb. 21, 2009 by Metro Sound & Video, a New Berlin-based company that has installed audio/video systems in more than 900 churches. References are listed at [www.metro-sound.com](http://www.metro-sound.com). Norm Loomer, Jack Kraaz and Tim Lyke met last winter with Metro's Mike Kujak to discuss our church's current equipment and needs. The audio proposal costs \$12,140 and includes a mixer, digital processor, amplifier, 3 way loudspeaker, transformer, 1 wireless headworn microphone, 2 pulpit/lecturn mics, equipment rack, and more equipment. The price includes labor, tuning and training. The company has clients throughout the Midwest including the Milwaukee, Madison, Chicago, and Green Bay areas. It offers a 100% guarantee of complete satisfaction.

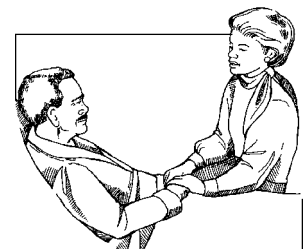
## ***Volunteer for Hospice Hope***

The next training session will be held in Fond du Lac on Saturday, September 18th and Saturday, October 3rd from 9 am – 4 pm.

If you have a desire to be of help to others, develop your ability to relate well to people during times of crisis, grow personally, give something back to your community, experience the challenges of new experiences, and have a direct personal impact on your world, please consider being a hospice volunteer.

Volunteers are valued team members who play a crucial role in hospice services by supporting patients and families in: direct patient care, respite care, bereavement care, administrative work, transport and deliveries. Training is geared for this special type of volunteer service. Volunteers are placed in their own geographic areas. Application deadline is Tuesday, September 8th.

For more information call Cathy Wolfe, Volunteer Services Liaison at 920-924-4662 or 1-800-236-4156. Application and interview must be completed prior to the first class.



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church embraced him and tried to help him live a full life. He told me he was a lapsed Christian, and had wandered around the Phoenix basin looking for a church that would not only accept him as he was but would welcome and embrace him. He was leery at first but found the people of that church welcoming and waiting for him to arrive there. In small groups, bible studies, and being present, he told me he had found a home and had found a new harmony in his life that he had never before experienced. He said he had been rejected because of who he was and the disease that marked him in the larger world and his family but now he was home.

I thought to myself, this is the real deal. He was a dying man arriving home in the world of Christian community. A welcome mat was out for him and all people who happened through the doors of that place. The glory of it is that when next I visited that church he was the greeter. When I sat down for service he came and sat with me. I feel that at its best our congregation is a village church and that our practice of radical Christian hospitality is how we can and will enter the future. I do trust you feel the same.

—Jack



## **Ripon Area CROP Walk**

Sunday, October 11, 2009 at 1 pm

2- or 5-mile walk

Registration and walk begins and ends with refreshments at  
First Congregational Church 220 Ransom St.

For information contact the church office  
or Rev. Paul Nulton at 748-6695.

**Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty**

75% goes to Church World Service.

25% goes to Ripon and Green Lake Food Pantries.

## **Affinity Hospice Seeks Volunteers**

Affinity Visiting Nurses Hospice offers the following opportunities:

**Hospice Patient Volunteer:** Volunteers are needed to sit with patients and provide companionship, help the caregivers and offer emotional support to patients and families.

**Community Outreach Team:** Volunteers are needed to sit on a committee to implement, design and execute community events and awareness of hospice. Plan annual fundraiser events to help offset costs to our patients, represent hospice and help with marketing/PR. Monthly meetings.

**Clerical Support Volunteer:** Volunteers are needed to assist with clerical duties including labeling and assembly of mailings; assembly of charts and binders; filing, typing, data entry and shredding of confidential waste paper. Volunteers work in the Neenah office.

Contact Kristyna Torres, Volunteer Coordinator, for more details at 920-727-2000 or email: [Kristyna.Torres@ministryhealth.org](mailto:Kristyna.Torres@ministryhealth.org).



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## Sunday School Rally Sunday September 13

All children — pre-school age through 7th grade — are invited to begin Sunday School with a focus this year on “Service to Others.”

Rally Sunday will kick off our classes beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the chapel. This also will be our last day to collect money for the “Pennies for Peace” fundraiser.

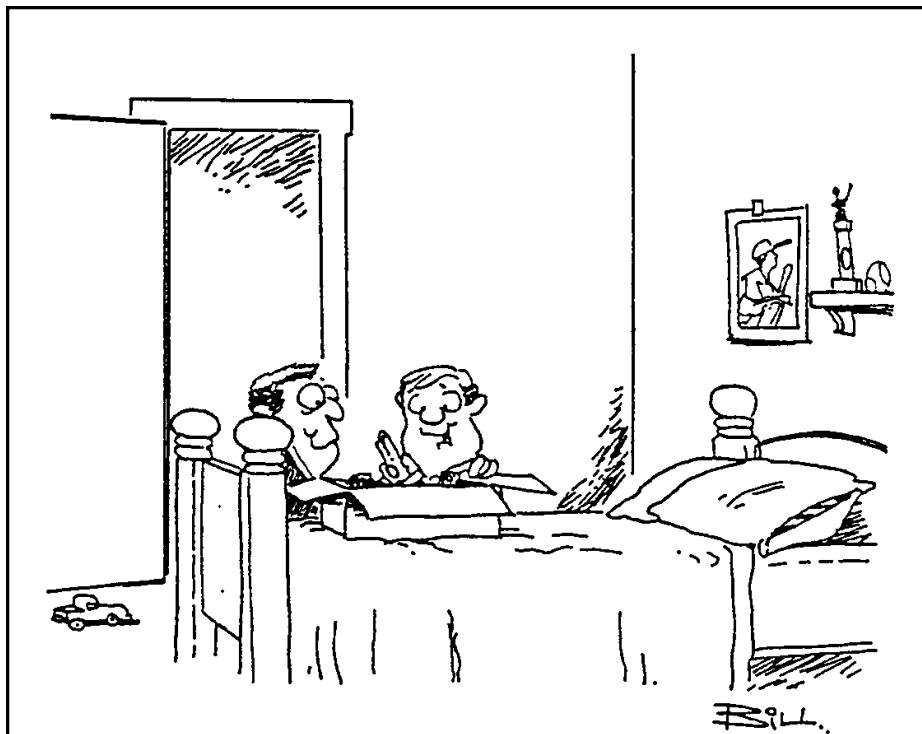
A picnic lunch will be served following worship in the fellowship hall with the help of our Sunday School students. Hope to see everyone there!

## Confirmation classes to begin

Confirmation classes will start the week of Sept. 13 for 8th/9th graders. Pastor Jack will be scheduling a meeting for parents and confirmands to explain the class schedule and student expectations for the year.

## Adult Education

Exciting new adult education offerings will be starting this fall.



“Sling shot, squirt pistol, tacks, rubber bands, spit wads, frog....YEP! I’d say we’re well-equipped for Sunday school!”

## Top Five Reasons to Join the Choir

5. You’ve just been selected for jury duty and want to get used to sitting with a group of people.
4. From your special vantage point in the choir loft, you’ll be able to survey the entire congregation and play our special guessing game called “Who’s Sleeping, Who’s Praying?”
3. When Jack starts “preaching to the choir,” he’ll be talking to you.
2. You always wanted to see who comes late to worship but were afraid to run around and look and...
1. It’s just like American Idol, only we let you stay.




Both the Youth Choir and the Adult Choir will get back into the swing of things beginning Sunday, September 13.

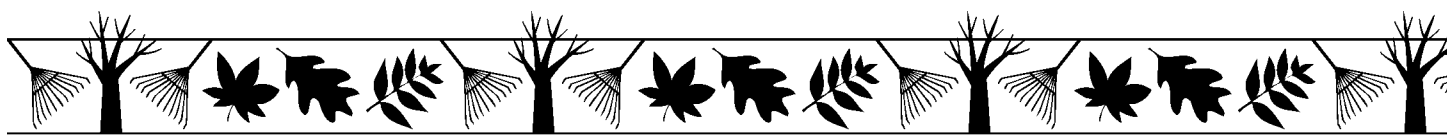
The Youth Choir will be conducted by Stephanie Prellwitz and will meet in the chapel on Sundays from 9–9:30 a.m.

The Adult Choir is conducted by Kurt Dietrich and Sarah Kraaz and will meet 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.

# SEPTEMBER 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship			4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship			4:45-7:30 pm- Weight Watchers 6:30 pm Outreach		Ripon College in Fellowship Hall 2-6 pm	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Rally Sunday: Sunday School begins 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship and Rally Sunday picnic	Confirmation class begins	6:30 pm Cabinet	4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers 6:30 pm All-church committee meetings			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship		1 pm Newsletter Deadline 5-6:30 pm Com- munity Dinner, Fel- lowship Hall	4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers			
27	28	29	30	1 (Oct.)	2	3
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship			1:15 pm Newsletter prep for mailing 4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship			4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers			

Future Events:  
 October 16-25: Ripon College Fall Break  
 October 29-30: Public school break



# 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:

9/6 Jack Kraaz  
9/13 TBA  
9/20 TBA  
9/27 TBA  
10/4 Jack Kraaz

## GREETERS/USHERS:

Parks family  
TBA  
TBA  
TBA  
TBA

## COFFEE HOSTS:

Amsden/Williams  
Rally Sunday picnic  
TBA  
TBA  
TBA

## 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*

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