



The SPIRE



First Congregational Church of Ripon • 220 Ransom Street • Ripon, Wisconsin 54971
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October 2009

I HAVE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT CONFIRMATION and the great class we started with on September 20th. Confirmation, over the many years I have been a pastor, has generally involved many people, exerting a great deal of effort, poured into the lives of teenagers who may or may not want to be participating in this activity. The issue of scheduling meetings and agreeing on time is an adventure in itself every year. However, the Church, this Church, has said that, it is very important that the youth take a confirmation course.

I believe that confirmation is important as a time of Christian formation. I am pleased to say that to this time, after two classes, that the youth involved are quite mature and are thinking of ways in which to make their world a better place in which to live. They have chosen mentors from among our congregation and are willing to engage their mentors in serious dialogue about their faith or lack of it, as well as any topic that might arise from their fertile young minds. This past two weeks our topic has been worship and church history. As we were talking about worship last evening in class we talked about funerals. We talked about the Christian view of the funeral and why we have them as a part of our worship practice. I was pleased and amazed that they each held a point of view that was well thought out.

At the end of the class I attempted to point out that from Baptism through all the stages of our lives in the church,

we worship and sing to God our praise. In the Church, over the course of our lifetimes, we laugh, lament, love, succeed and fail as part of an intentional community and at the end bring our loved ones who have died to the church to worship one more time. We sing, we pray, we laugh, and we cry and claim our faith in the risen Christ. We do what we can to mark the meaning of lives that are now past. Writer and poet Thomas Lynch said in his

Some have walked away
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book, *The Undertaking*, "The dead don't care, but they do matter." By marking their lives and stories we come to think of them in terms that take on sacred meaning. From start to finish, I told the class we are part of a community in which we are not only living but indeed are carried throughout our days. And, one last time we worship together, claiming our faith and the hope of resurrection.

I have heard people talk about the flawed lives of Christians and the many failures of the church. Some have walked away, while others return, but in the midst of it all what I know is that we continue to sing and believe that from our births to our deaths each one of us has a sacred story to tell. In this place that story has the opportunity to be told again and again. I thank God for the privilege to walk with people through their stories whether they believe them sacred or not.

—Jack



Community Dinner Great Success

On August 25th our monthly community dinner was held. At one time the place was packed, standing room only. What a delight!

For the first time, we were hosts to four families (other than our own) with children. I personally had the opportunity to speak to those families. One young mother, presumed to be a single mom, reluctantly told me of her recent personal and financial hardship. She told me that she had been out of work since March and was scheduled for surgery soon. She didn't know where the money would come from to cover all of the costs to enroll her daughter in kindergarten the following week. Her daughter, quite a delightful young lady I would add, was engaged in the "KIDS' CORNER," a table we set up with activities. and looks forward to our next dinner when she can break out the box of sidewalk chalk I purchased but was unable to use due to rainy weather.

I'm reminded of Jack's message on a recent Sunday morning entitled "Twin Towers." For those who didn't have the pleasure of hearing one of Jack's better messages the twin towers signify a person's rise to the top both as it relates to personhood, talent, training/skill, role/task, status, and preeminence. Basically, those at the top can only look down at those beneath them while those at the

bottom can only struggle and strive to do better. Many people we serve with this mission or hope to serve, are at the bottom floors. It is a humbling experience to do a small part to help them to greater things.

Our next dinner is to be held on Tuesday, September 22nd which will have passed by the time of this printing. The October dinner is Tuesday, October 27th. Hope you can make it.

Finally, a special thanks to Lyle Mathias. Lyle generously donated fresh sweet corn for this and last month's dinner, shucked no less!!!

—Dale Both

New Choir Members Welcome

Both the Youth Choir and the Adult Choir welcome new members at any time during the school year.

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

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



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.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Rally Sunday, September 13, kicked off the Sunday School year with high energy as the students prepared lunch for the congregation, living out this year's theme to serve others.

Regular Sunday School classes resumed on September 20 and we are off to a busy start. If you have any friends who would like to join us on Sunday mornings for Sunday School, please invite them! We'd love to have them join in our fun and fellowship.

Confirmation classes also began on September 20. Six students will be attending classes and meeting with their mentors to better understand the Christian faith and their own faith journey. Their first mission project will be to raise money for the CROP Hunger Walk on October 11. Please consider making a pledge to our confirmands.

Neighbors in Need October 4

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 Hocak 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.

Host Families Needed

Have you ever wondered about the life of a teenager in Europe? The Educational Foundation for Foreign Study is seeking a host families for two girls from now until the end of the school year. One girl is from Italy; she enjoys reading, cooking Italian food, musicals, tennis and would like to try working with young children or older people as a community service activity. The second girl is from Germany and enjoys drama, camping, choir, and nature. She would like to try snowboarding and horseback riding. For more information, please call Margaret at 920-229-4763.

Oops! (Church Bulletin Bloopers)

Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.

Attend and you will hear an excellent speaker and have a healthy lunch.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, superb entertainment, and gracious hostility.

Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 pm - prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

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

—The Outreach Committee

OCTOBER 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	28	29	30 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	1 Ripon College using Fellowship Hall 7:30 am–4:30 pm	2 Ripon College using Fellowship Hall 7:30 am–4:30 pm	3 Ripon College using Fellowship Hall 7:30 am–noon
4 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship; Neighbors in Need offering taken 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship 11:45 am Fellowship Ministry	5 Sun. Oct. 4–Tues. Oct. 6 NE/NW Association Clergy Retreat	6	7 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	8 1–3 pm Women’s Fellowship, Fellowship Hall	9	10 9 am–noon Cleaning of Fellowship Hall/Kitchen
11 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship 1 pm CROP Walk, starts and ends at our church	12	13	14 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	15	16 Zahn wedding rehearsal	17 Zahn wedding, David Joyce officiating
18 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	18	20 1 pm Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm Cabinet	21 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	22	23	24
25 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 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
1 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	2	3	4 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	5	6	7
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> Future Events: October 16-25: Ripon College Fall Break October 29-30: Public school break </div>						



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:

10/4 Jack Kraaz
10/11 Claire Aither
10/18 TBA
10/25 TBA

11/1 Jack Kraaz
11/8 Carissa Turk
11/15 TBA
11/22 TBA
11/29 TBA

GREETERS/USHERS:

TBA
Bob & Nancy Royce
Bob & Nancy Royce
TBA

TBA
Bob & Nancy Royce
Bob & Nancy Royce
TBA
TBA

COFFEE HOSTS:

Jack & Gail Rohde
TBA
TBA
TBA

TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA

FLOWERS:

TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA

TBA
TBA
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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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