

The SPIRE



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

November 2009

OFTEN IN LIFE I HAVE BEEN TOLD I WAS WRONG. I am sure you have been too. There are so many things to be wrong about that it makes your head spin, at least it does mine. But there are also things I am sure I am right about and one of those things is the practice of what for a better word I call Christian hospitality. It is a theme I am taking two weeks to talk about with the confirmation class. It is a core practice without which this church or any church cannot survive. It works like this; someone is a host and someone is a guest. At its best, when working well, you cannot tell the guest from the host. The roles become diffuse, however, not artificial. As I said in a sermon a couple of weeks ago, hospitality is the thing itself.

I have attended many churches this past year where I observed hospitality practiced as a means to swell attendance, fill church committees, or keep the church doors from closing. I must say, I felt icky when I saw that. Although greeted warmly, I felt overwhelmed by a cloying presence of the neediness of the organization and not genuinely cared for. I ran out the doors of more than one church this summer feeling that the presence of the Holy One was not gripping me because the people of those congregations were more interested in saving their organizations than they were in being hospitable. I was there to worship God with them, period. I entered their sacred worship space as a guest and was interested in that alone. I garnered all the information I could about the church, but mostly I wanted to pray, listen and sing and enjoy the presence of other Christians who, like me, are on a journey.

Hos-pi-tál-i-ty

When I see us at our best, that is what we are doing, welcoming people to join us in our sacred moments (that is the thing itself). Offering fellowship following worship is hospitality, and finding out how we might help our guests as they prepare to leave us is hospitality too. When folks choose to return, that is a bonus but not the thing itself.

I might add further that I love what we do at our community dinners. Members of our congregation sit with our guests, who come in all shapes and sizes. We offer them what we believe is a good meal, a commodity to take home with them, and our friendship. That too is true hospitality and as we continue to share it with our community there will be more and more people who will respond to the grace offered freely.

Do not get me wrong, hospitality is not practiced by one or two people; it is a ministry of the whole, and is literally nothing without you. The ministries of our church, behind the scenes, scratch and claw to get what they do right. Each ministry member in his or her own way knows that hospitality is the thing itself, and with the best of themselves, gives leadership in their actions for the rest of us.

Maybe it is as I have been thinking and feeling recently, that we have turned a corner in our community. I hear folks saying throughout our community, that they appreciate what our church has done in opening itself up to the whole city. They speak highly of our members and church being hospitable. And that, my friend, is good news and where we find ourselves today. I for one am happy with that. Thanks for practicing hospitality with me.

—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.



Dru Mansmith
David Williams
Alysse 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 December, 2009. The deadline is Tuesday, November 17, 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, Nov. 25, at 1:15 p.m. Please mark your calendars.

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

CROP Walk Thanks

Dear Ripon Church Friends,

THANK YOU for your support of the community-wide, interfaith CROP Walk to fight hunger held October 11th. You helped us raise \$4,600 for hungry people around the world and in Ripon and Green Lake. Last year we raised \$6,500 and the year before, \$5,400.

I thank the volunteers who served as recruiters and coordinators for their churches, the walkers and everyone who contributed to help make this CROP Walk successful. Barb Stellmacher is our treasurer who learned the job this year from Marjorie Kenyon-Cler. The top fundraisers were Derek Rodriguez with \$428 from Green Lake Federated Church, David Brink of Hillside Church with \$374, Marjorie Kenyon-Cler of Prairie Lakes Fellowship with \$360 and Laura Lyke of First Congregational, \$351.

Amount raised by churches:

Grace Lutheran: \$815

Hillside Assembly: \$806

Immanuel United Methodist: \$771

First Congregational: \$736

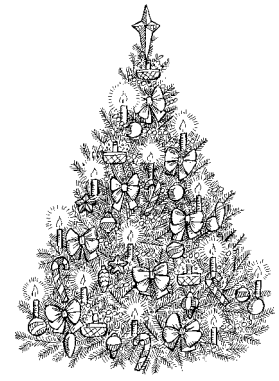
Green Lake Federated: \$593

Prairie Lakes U.U. Fellowship: \$550

Our Saviour's UCC: \$320

The Community Food Pantry, the Ripon Area Food Pantry and the Green Lake Food Pantry will share 25% of the total we raised. The remainder of your contributions will support the work of Church World Service (sponsor of the CROP Walk program nationwide) and other aid organizations that were designated on our walker sheets. On behalf of Church World Service and the Ripon Area Clergy Association, sponsors of the Ripon-area event THANK YOU ALL for walking to help those in need.

— Pastor Paul Nulton, Immanuel United Methodist Church
2009 CROP Walk Coordinator



Enchanted Forest

While you're shopping at the International Gift Market, stop in at the Enchanted Forest, where for a nominal admission fee you can vote for your favorite decorated tree while listening to Christmas music performed by a variety of local musicians. If you'd like to get in on the act, call Maria Dietrich at 748-7481. She's scheduling the performers.



Community Dinner

Our next Community Dinner will take place on Tuesday, November 24 from 5–6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!





CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday School is going well. The Christmas Program is scheduled for Dec. 20. Practice schedule and details will be coming soon. A special thank you to Cezar Munoz for his work with the drumline, which performed in church Nov. 1. And thank you to Hollie Becker for all her help in the nursery.

The confirmands raised money for the CROP walk and our church participation was excellent.

—Mary Lyke, C.E. chair

A Word from the Fellowship Committee

In an effort to best meet the needs of your committee when contacting potential new committee members, the Fellowship Committee would like to update you on a few changes for the upcoming recruiting season. First, if your committee is in need of additional members, please submit a list to the Fellowship Committee of three people that you feel would positively contribute to your committee's vision. This allows each committee the opportunity to focus the efforts of the Fellowship Committee to most closely meet your committee's needs. Also, we ask that each committee prepare a 5-minute explanation of its responsibilities and future goals to be presented to the congregation over the next several weeks before contact calls are made.

The goal of these changes is to make the recruiting process as efficient as possible while adequately addressing each committee's needs. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Donate for Drapes

Custom drapes were purchased by Women's Fellowship (with the help of Rae Miller and her committee) to cut the glare in the room from the western sunshine. They also may help with acoustics. The cost was \$4,439. We need to raise \$1,000 to pay the balance. If you wish to help pay for the drapes, please send a check to either:

- A. The church — Women's Fellowship Pass-Through Account or...
- B. Mary Lyke, treasurer; N9213 County Road FF; Ripon, WI 54971

RMC Lights of Love

The Ripon Medical Center Associates Inc. is sponsoring its 22nd annual community holiday project "Lights of Love." Each bulb on the large Christmas tree outside the Medical Center will have a special meaning. Colored bulbs are in recognition/appreciation of a living friend or family member, while white bulbs are in memory of a loved one. Names of those honored or remembered are placed on a special wall tree in the Medical Center lobby.

If you wish to contribute to this community project, forms are available in the church office. Donations collected this year will fund equipment for a new Bone Density Heel Scanner to increase public awareness of health risks associated with osteoporosis.

A special tree lighting ceremony will take place on Thursday, December 10th at 7 p.m. in Central Admitting. Everyone is invited to participate in this fun and meaningful event. Refreshments will be served. We will also have music and carols.



NOVEMBER 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship - All Saints 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship 6:30 pm Confirmation class			4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers 6:30 pm Fellowship Ministry meeting			
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship (Stewardship Sunday) 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship			4:45-7:30 pm- Weight Watchers 6:30 pm All Church Committee Meeting			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship		1 pm Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm Cabinet	4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship		5-6:30 pm Com- munity Dinner, Fel- lowship Hall	1:15 pm Newsletter prep for mailing 4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers	Happy Thanksgiving! 		
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship (Advent begins) 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship			4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers			



You are invited to purchase poinsettia plants to help beautify the Sanctuary during the Advent season. The plants will be large, trimmed florist quality plants and will be provided by our friends at the Flower Basket. This year's cost is \$16 each. The poinsettias will be on display in our Sanctuary through Wednesday, December 24. After that date, you are welcome to take your plant home, leave it for continued use at church, or use it as a gift for a friend or shut-in. Please fill out this form by 1 p.m. on Monday, December 1; You can place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church along with cash or a check.

Quantity: _____ x \$16.00 = total enclosed \$ _____

Name(s) as you wish them to appear: _____

(Optional): In honor of _____

(Optional): In memory of _____

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:

11/1 Jack Kraaz
11/8 Carissa Turk
11/15 Rick Coles
11/22 Dale Both
11/29 TBA

12/6 Jack Kraaz
12/13 Nancy Coles
12/20 TBA
12/24 TBA
12/27 TBA

GREETERS/USHERS:

Jim Gelhar & Pat Grahn
Bob & Nancy Royce
Bob & Nancy Royce
Roger & Margaret Eddingsaas
TBA

Janet Vossekui
Rick & Nancy Coles
TBA
TBA
TBA

COFFEE HOSTS:

Andy & Stephanie Prellwitz
Jack & Gail Rohde
Rick & Nancy Coles
Roger & Margaret Eddingsaas
TBA

Audrey Conant, Ruth Birge, Merle Good
TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA

FLOWERS:

TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA

TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA

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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Enter to Worship—Go Forth to Serve