



The SPIRE



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

Every February for the last thirty-seven years, I have burned palms in anticipation of Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Maybe I am a little off, but I do not think so regarding the importance of doing this for myself, year in and year out. I burn those ashes and think about my life. I think about my many flaws, weaknesses and shortcomings. I also think about the love that has been with me every day of my life, as well as the many opportunities I have had to get up and start over, knowing, I would continue to be enfolded no matter what I might try to do next. I don't know about you, but I think your life may be full of subtle twists and turns like mine. There may even be regrets for which you have not found a way to compensate. If we are companions of the way, it may be that Lent is a time to slow down, reflect and start again, with renewed trust and hope in God and yourself. So, for me, entering the season of Lent is about as sacred as my life gets.

We are a congregation that follows the church year. We have taken seriously the various seasons of that year. Presently we celebrate Epiphany and the manifestation of the Christ to the world and a light, we believe, that cannot be extinguished. This year on Ash Wednesday, the church begins the season of Lent which calls for contemplation about our lives, penitence for the sin in our lives and a focus on the grace that carries us even when we do not feel worthy to be carried.

A friend of mine asked me today if when I graduated from Divinity School I became divine. I told him before I went into the school I was a straight shooter. I came out of it smoking a pipe, swearing like a sailor, and far more human than when I enrolled. I also came out a tad humbler, and reliant on the grace the ashes of Ash Wednesday represent. I am moving in my life toward wholeness and I need Lent not so much to belabor that I am human, as that I am part of a story that is salvific and a reminder that there is a divine spark in me. I continue to be amazed each year with new companions I find on the way who think about the same thing. That is why I know you will join me and others for the service on February 17th at 7 p.m.

I invite you to join me this Lent in contemplation and renewal. I invite you to penitence, and a reminder that in the Christ event we find our life and hope together.

—Jack



Food Pantry in Desperate Need

The Ripon Community Food Pantry is in desperate need of boxed meals!

All members of our church are asked to donate at least one boxed meal to the Ripon Community Food Pantry (2 doors down from Campus Cinema).

Boxed Meals are things like Tuna Helper, Hamburger Helper, that sort of thing. These can be purchased very inexpensively at Sav-a-Lot.

Please help if you are able!

Ash Wednesday

The Ash Wednesday service, held on February 17th at 7 p.m., will mark the official beginning of the season of Lent. It is a moving service in which we celebrate our mortality and our renewed identity with Christ. Holy Communion will be celebrated.



Our next Community Dinner will take place on Tuesday, February 23, from 5–6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

Our Church on YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter

Sunday, February 28 at 5 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. A presentation by Jack Christ about some possible ways to use the Internet and video technology for church programming. This grew out of a discussion at the recent Strategic Planning meeting. Please join us! The more ideas, the merrier!

The Green Lake Animal Shelter & the Goose Blind present the Second Annual...

FUR BALL

Saturday, Feb. 13th at 6:30 pm

Goose Blind, Green Lake

Enjoy a night dedicated to our furry friends with Food Stations, wine tasting, strolling magic by the magnificent Rondini and “Pup” arazzi photos. Great value! Only \$30 per person. Get your tickets now – limited quantity available!

Proceeds from the fundraiser go to animal shelter. Tickets available at Goose Blind & Animal Shelter.



...and Cookie Walk

Friday, February 12

11 a.m.–1 pm in Fellowship Room

Traditional Chop Suey Luncheon and Dessert Buffet

featuring live music

Cookie Walk 10:30 am–1:30 pm

Cookies \$6 per pound

Luncheon tickets are \$5.50 in advance and \$6 at the door. Tickets are available at Ripon Drug and from any member of Women's Fellowship.



Sunday, February 7th

7:30 am – 12:30 pm

Our Saviour's Church

343 Scott Street, Ripon

Adults \$5, Seniors \$4, Children \$3

Tickets may be purchased from any Ripon Cub Scout or at the door.

Help Support Ripon's Cub Scout

Pack 3735



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Chicago Mission Trip

Ripon College Senior Jessica Solverud organized the second youth-mission trip to urban Chicago. Adele Parks, Anna Hones, Laura Lyke and chaperones Stephanie Prellwitz and Tim Lyke spent nearly two days serving in a variety of ways to help the poor, hungry and homeless. They helped prepare, served food at and cleaned up a soup kitchen; they just sat and talked to clients while they waited for their food; they helped package and deliver U.S. government commodities to people in South Chicago; they dined in ethnic restaurants; and they attended a gospel service at an inner-city church.

The three confirmands and adults who shared this experience together came away with lasting memories and plans to return next year.

We hope they will share more about their trip with our congregation during an upcoming Sunday service.

—Mary Lyke, former Christian Education Chair

Adult Education Offerings

Sunday, February 14th at 5 p.m.

Don and Orion Hones will make a presentation about their trips to the Arizona border and their work among people on the border. Their work may be controversial to some. Come and find out what they have been doing. We will meet in the Fellowship Room. Coffee will be provided.

Sunday, February 21st at 5 p.m.

The topic will be, “The Bible, The Recession and Our Neighbor”. We will look at a paper written by Walter Brueggemann suggesting that last year’s economic downturn highlighted our need for one another. Copies of the paper are available on the shelf outside the church office.

March 7th

On Sunday, March 7, at 5 p.m., First Congregational Church of Ripon will host Thomas Ashley- Farrand, a Hindu priest and story-teller, for a dialogue regarding his faith and Meditation. Mr. Farrand is a graduate of Ripon College (class of 62), with further studies at Marquette University. He has done over a dozen different workshops that have been very well received across North America and London, England. He will be at Ripon College March 8 and 9. All are welcome to attend and learn more about the Hindu faith and practice.

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

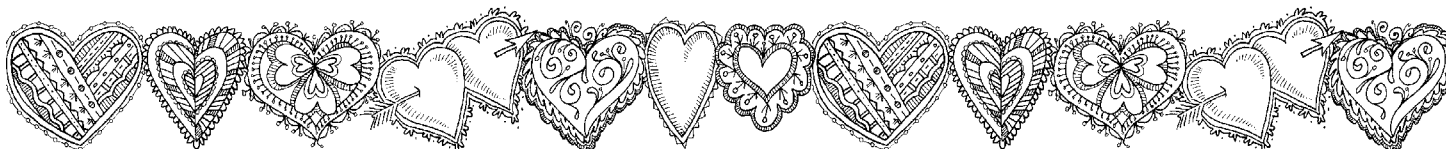
2009 Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign

In exchange for their warm, on Friday December 18th, a few brave members of First Congregational Church raised \$392.93 for the Salvation Army. During the 2009 bell ringing season, Riponites collected a total of \$12,776.55 for this worthwhile cause. Thank you to those of you who donated your time to ring bells for the Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign.

FEBRUARY 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship		Ries Driving School 7-9 pm	4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers	Ries Driving School 7-9 pm		Ripon Food Mill Coop Dinner 5-8 pm
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	6:30 pm Wor- ship commit- tee meeting	Ries Driving School 7-9 pm	4:45-7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	Ries Driving School 7-9 pm	10:30 am-1:30 pm Valentine Luncheon & Cookie Walk	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship 6:30 pm Confirmation class		1 pm Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm Cabinet Ries Driving School 7-9 pm	4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers 7 pm Ash Wednes- day service	Ries Driving School 7-9 pm	Ripon College in FH/Chapel/ Downstairs classroom 10 am-5 pm	Ripon College in FH/Chapel/Down- stairs classroom 8 am-4 pm
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship 6:30 pm Confirmation class		5-6:30 pm Com- munity Dinner, Fel- lowship Hall Ries Driving School 7-9 pm	4:45-7:30 pm Weight Watchers	1:15 pm News- letter prep for mailing		
28	1	2	3	4	5	6
9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship 6:30 pm Confirmation class			4:45-7:30 pm- Weight Watchers			

Future Events:
March 28: Palm Sunday
April 4: Easter Sunday



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:

2/7 Jack Kraaz
2/14 Andy Prellwitz
2/21 Tim Lyke
2/28 Rick Coles

3/7 Jack Kraaz
3/14 TBA
3/21 TBA
3/28 Rick Coles

GREETERS/USHERS:

Jeff & Amy Grinde
Tim & Mary Lyke
Rick & Nancy Coles
Rae Miller

Tim & Mary Lyke
Bob & Nancy Royce
Bob & Nancy Royce
Roger & Marg. Eddingsaas

COFFEE HOSTS:

TBA
TBA
Tony & Cindy Butler
Mary Lyke

Elvera Perr/Diane Umbarger
TBA
Audrey Conant/Ruth Birge
Roger & Marg. Eddingsaas

FLOWERS:

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