

The SPIRE



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

FOR WHATEVER REASON, I have always found Easter preaching kind of a drag. After all, when you think about it, the message of the four gospels tells us, “the Tomb was Empty,” period. They then go on to tell us about sightings of the Risen One. I find it difficult to talk about because I wasn’t there, and the faith I have in resurrection is faith, and has not been tested in any real crucible. There, I said it, and now who knows what I will say on April 4th at the Easter service. What I do know is, the Easter hymns and music trump anything I could say verbally. I believe the hymns and music witness to the faith and hope I carry about within me each day; that life trumps death, if we can get past the horror and fear of our own deaths.

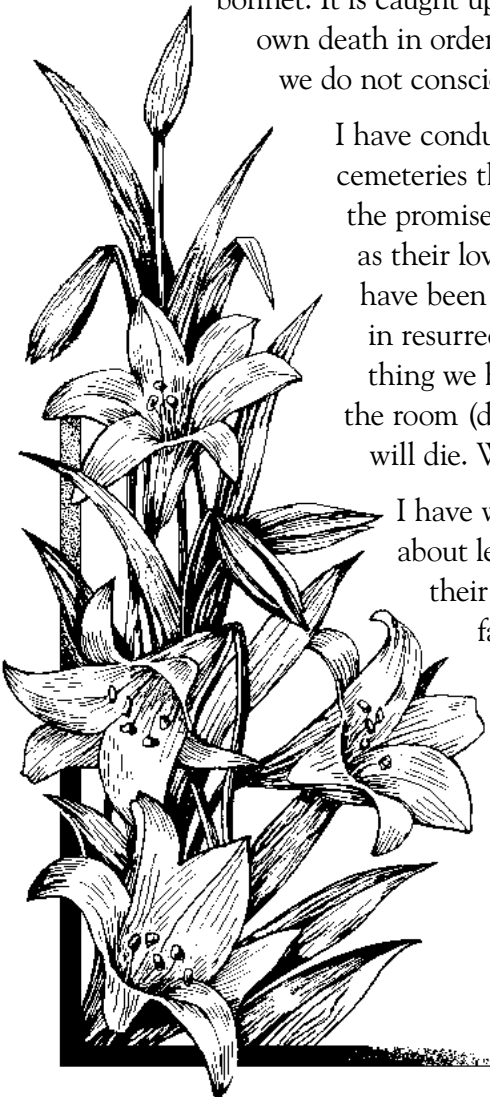
For me, Easter has always been more than putting on a nice tie and slacks. It is more than you putting on an Easter bonnet. It is caught up in the possibilities of trusting the Christ who scriptures tell us embraced his own death in order that we not be afraid of our own. So we sing about what we believe even when we do not consciously think that it is about the promise of resurrection.

I have conducted hundreds of memorial services since being a pastor, and been to more cemeteries than my friends at Butzin-Marchant funeral home. I have witnessed with people the promise of resurrection, and felt their hope as they leave this world, and heard that hope as their loved ones celebrate their lives and its significance after they have died. There have been very few times in my years as a pastor that I have not found both faith and hope in resurrection among people I have served. I do not know if it is bred into us, or is something we have decided on, but we believe that death has lost its sting. It is the elephant in the room (death) itself that we are no longer in awe of so that we can admit openly that we will die. We also believe that that may not be the end, that there is more.

I have wondered for many years why people who love the church are often thoughtful about leaving parts of their estate to the church. I believe it is that they have faith that their legacy is a symbol of resurrection and renewal. I believe it is in order that their faith may be transmitted to another generation. I believe that is what Easter is all about. That is why I sing my heart out and even get dressed up for that one day of the year. It is to say that although I will die, it is not the end. Christ has risen, we sing. Christ has risen, we pray. Christ has risen indeed.

Happy Easter, to you and yours. I hope you are here April 4th to raise the roof on this old church with your heart and voice. Although my words to you cannot fully express this day, I believe our voices and glorious music will.

—Jack





Community Dinner

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

Animal Shelter Fundraiser

The Green Lake Animal Shelter is proud to announce their 4th Annual Lucky Dog Catsino Night which will be Saturday, April 10th at Great Hall on the Ripon College Campus. Doors open at 6:30, with gaming from 7:30 – 10:30, and hors d'oeuvres and refreshments available all evening. This event is fun for all skill levels! The professional dealers of the Mr. Blackjack Company will teach as you play. There will be raffles for fabulous prizes, with the drawings at the end of the evening. Tickets for this fundraiser are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door, and include a free drink and chips for gaming. Call 920-294-3042 for more information.

St. Catherine of Siena Springfest

Saturday Evening, April 17
 Parish Hall & Activity Center
 218 Blossom St., Ripon
 Serving Dinner 4 – 7 pm
 Raffle Drawing 7:30 pm
 Ticket Prices: Adults - \$8; Students/Seniors (65+) \$7; Child \$4
 Two live shows by Scott Street Puppeteers
 Live Entertainment
 Free Jumping Castle for Children
 Silent Auction: Washing Machine donated by Alliance Laundry Systems
 Bake Sale

Seeking a New Church Librarian

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.





CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Bring a Friend to Church

On Sunday, April 11, the Long Range Planning Committee and the church cabinet are encouraging you to bring a friend to church. That Sunday in the history of the church is known as Low Sunday. It is the Sunday after Easter, when attendance wanes. "Bring a Friend" Sunday is a way of showcasing our great church to our friends and getting the message out about First Congregational Church. We are planning a great post-Easter service that day followed by a luncheon for all. As with everything around here, it will be nothing without you. More information will be coming in the next few weeks.

April 18th Field Trip to Milwaukee

Our church hosted the fabulous gospel choir from Grace United Church of Christ in Milwaukee the last week of January. After the service, Pastor Kraaz and Moderator Jennifer Aither were talking with Pastor Washington about the idea of our possibly becoming sister churches. Pastor Washington invited us to bring our entire congregation to Milwaukee to attend their church and let the Grace people provide us a light lunch after their service. We have arranged for a motor coach to take 47 people to Milwaukee on Sunday, April 18, to worship. (We can arrange for another coach if necessary.) A bonus for this trip will be a visit after lunch to see the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit at the Milwaukee Public Museum. The combined cost for the bus ride and the Milwaukee Museum will be thirty-two dollars per person. Because we do not want any to miss out on this opportunity, the church will provide scholarship money for any for which this might pose a financial strain. If you are interested and haven't yet signed up, please call the church office at 748-5898 to register.

Some asked about church here in Ripon that day. Pastor Kraaz will hold a service in Ripon, for those who cannot go to Milwaukee, at 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 17th. All are invited to attend.



On Easter Sunday, after church, join us for a special Easter Fellowship and an Easter Egg hunt!

Fond du Lac County Tornado/Severe Weather Awareness Week

National Tornado and Severe Weather Awareness Week has been designated for April 19–23, 2010. The Statewide Tornado Drill will be conducted on Thursday, April 22nd, 2010. The mock tornado watch will be declared for the entire state at 1:00 pm. The mock tornado warnings will be staggered throughout the state at designated times by specific NWS offices. The mock tornado warning for Fond du Lac County will be issued by Sullivan Weather at 1:20 pm (conclude at 1:25 pm). The EOC Communications Room will activate. There will be NO "All Clear" message. If severe weather is present in the State on this date, the drill will be held at the same time on Friday, April 23, 2010. If severe weather persists through Friday, the drill will be canceled. Although participation in this statewide drill is voluntary, I highly encourage an active role.

If you have any questions or require further information, please call Erin Gerred, Director of Fond du Lac County Communications/Emergency Management at (920-929-3288).

APRIL 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Palm Sunday Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship	29	30	31 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers 1:15 pm Newsletter prep for mailing	1 7 pm Maundy Thursday com- munion service of Tenebrae	2 1 pm Good Fri- day community service at Hill- side Assembly of God	3
4 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am No Sunday School! 10:30 am Easter Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship and Easter Egg Hunt 2–11 pm Amanda Pryzbyl party Fellowship Hall	5	6	7 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	8	9	10
11 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship – Bring a Friend! 11:30 am Potluck Luncheon Fellowship 6:30 pm Confirmation Class	12 6:30 pm Wor- ship commit- tee meeting	13	14 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	15	16	17 8 am–4 pm Ripon College in Chapel, Fellowship Hall and Adult Lounge 5 pm worship (in place of regular Sunday service)
18 All-Church trip to Milwaukee for worship at Grace UCC, lunch, and Dead Sea Scroll exhibit at Milwaukee Public Museum	19	20 1 pm Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm Cabinet	21 4:45–7:30 pm Weight Watchers	22	23	24 10 am–4 pm Stephanie Prell- witz Fellowship Hall
25 9 am Choir rehearsals 9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Coffee Fellowship 6:30 pm Confirmation Class	26	27 5–6:30 pm Com- munity Dinner, Fel- lowship Hall	28 4:45–7:30 pm- Weight Watchers	29 1:15 pm News- letter prep for mailing	30	1

Future Events:
 May 2: Confirmation Sunday
 May 20: Women's Fellowship An-
 nual Meeting & Potluck Dinner
 May 23: Children's 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:

4/4 Jack Kraaz
4/11 TBD
4/18 Milwaukee
4/25 TBD

5/2 Jack Kraaz
5/9 TBD
5/16 TBD
5/23 Rick Coles
5/30 TBD

GREETERS/USHERS:

TBD
Janet Vossekui, Jeff Grinde
Milwaukee
TBD

TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD

COFFEE HOSTS:

TBD
Jim & Dorothy Sargent
Milwaukee
TBD

Ruth Birge & Family
TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD

FLOWERS:

Easter Lilies
TBD
Milwaukee
TBD

TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD
TBD

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.

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A Congregation of the United Church of Christ
220 Ransom Street • Ripon, Wisconsin 54971

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Enter to Worship—Go Forth to Serve