



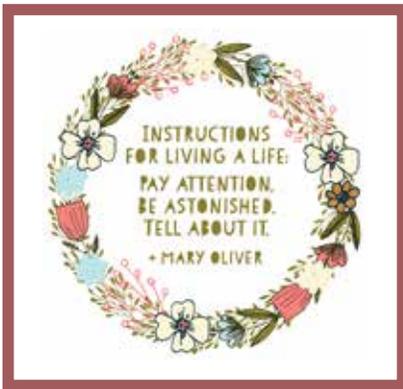
The SPIRE



First Congregational Church of Ripon • 220 Ransom Street • Ripon, Wisconsin 54971
☎ 920-748-5898 • office@riponcongregationalucc.org • www.riponcongregationalucc.org

January 2023

“[Jesus] said to him, “Go home to your own people, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and what mercy he has shown you.” — Mark 5:19



Happy New Year!

As we begin our 173rd year of ministry at First Congregational Church of Ripon in 2023, we will pause to reflect on our ministry of 2022, celebrate our accomplishments, and look towards our opportunities as a

church to serve our community in the coming year.

I invite all of our members to join us on Sunday, January 22, 2023 following the 10:30 AM worship service for our 2023 Annual Meeting.

Members of the congregation will be able to vote on the business of the church, including our 2023 slate of nominees for church leadership and committees, and our 2023 budget. I look forward to sharing this time with you as we work together as the church to live into God’s vision for us in 2023.

2023 Annual Meeting • Sunday, January 23, 2023 Following the 10:30 AM Worship Service

But what is our vision as the church? What are we called to do and be?

During the season of Epiphany, January 15 through February 19, we will explore in worship what it means to be called the church, and what we can do to live into that calling. Our theme, *Understanding Church*, begins with the questions, “What is the church? What is it for?” Using the lenses of mercy, faith, praise, justice, and humility, we can better understand what we are called to be and do in our community.

Creative team Elizabeth Myer Boulton and her spouse Matthew reflect in their blog, SALT Project’s *Strange New Worlds*, that in order to understand the church, we need to begin with what Jesus taught and modeled in his ministry. Rather than a building, the church was made up of people who surrounded Jesus and worked toward his vision of a peaceable kingdom. Even more than that, the church was not just a people, but an ideology centered on a simple spiritual ethic known as the *Gospel*, which means, literally, Good News.

Digging deeper, we might ask, what is the *Good News*? *And why do we share it?* The news of God’s love and the teachings of Jesus’ life, it turns out, is something worth sharing. The dictionary defines news as “newly received or noteworthy information, especially about recent or important events.” News requires someone with which to share it. And Good News is why we need the church.

Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:20) The Good News was the basis for gathering, and it was also the instructions Jesus left his followers. Jesus brought people in by saying “Follow me,” and then sent them back out into the world saying, “Go, and tell.”

To be the church we must *go out into the world*. Jesus models for us the most basic and profound way to think of our calling as *the church*. When we are living our beliefs on a daily basis, faithfully following Jesus out into the world, we are also inviting others to join us in the work of the Gospel.

Let’s explore being the church, together, this season of Epiphany, and learn how God is calling us out to share the Good News.

See you in the New Year,

—Pastor Jeffrey

In Our Thoughts & Prayers

Prayers for health and healing...

Don Amsden (hospice); **Marilyn Lehnherr** (illness); **Wendy Smith** (cancer); **Dawn Scholtens** (cancer); **Loren Boone** (cancer); **Katie Del Ponte's** cousin and **Tony Reilly's** niece **Jessica** (cancer); **Grandmother Cindy** from the **Berndt/Selz's** family (cancer); **Rose Marie Freeman** (sister of Al Jarreau, health); **Susan Osteen's** sister-in-law **Chona** (cancer); **Michele Wittler's** friend **Leslie** (hospice); **Tammi Kenton's** mother-in-law (memory); **Katie Berndt's** coworker (fall and head injury); all those experiencing health issues in need of prayer.

Prayers for peace in Ukraine and Russia and around the world.

Please note: If you wish to see your prayer request listed in next Sunday's bulletin or The Spire, please notify the church office.



Congratulations!

Our Community Dinner served the equivalent of 120 meals on December 20.

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. We look forward to getting to know you and to share with you the marvelous ways God is working in our church and beyond. 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.



...to those who have experienced a recent loss:

Our Saviour's UCC in Ripon lost their organist, **Craig Bowden**, who passed away unexpectedly after a very short battle with cancer on November 16. Keep the Bowden family in your prayers, along with our siblings in Christ at Our Saviour's UCC.

Spire Deadline

Our next Spire newsletter will be for February, 2023. The deadline is Wednesday, Jan. 18, at noon. Please submit materials to the church office, or email to Maria Dietrich at dietrich.maria@gmail.com.



- Pastor *Jeffrey Dodson*
- CE Director *Jeanne Williams*
- Moderator *Erin Ter Beest*
- Vice-Moderator. . . *Michele Wittler*
- Clerk *Justus Paul*
- Treasurer *Andy Lyke*
- Choir Director *Kurt Dietrich*
- Faith Formation . . *Barb Splittgaber*
- Finance. *Judy Neill*
- Historian *Robin Patzlaff*
- Maintenance Officer . *Lyle Mathias*
- Membership. *Deanna Boone, B. Christ, M. Lyke, A. Dalziel*
- Nominating. . *J. Christ, T. Konecny*
- Organist. *Maria Dietrich*
- Outreach *Dawn Scholtens*
- PPRC *Michele Wittler*
- Women's Fellowship *Susan Osteen*
- Worship *Kathleen Hones*

Church Contact Info

Office manager Ashley Dodson:
920-748-5898 or
office@riponcongregationalucc.org

If not in the office, Pastor Jeffrey Dodson can be reached at ...

Cell: (719) 330-8549 or by email, at jeffrey@riponcongregationalucc.org

Jeanne Williams, CE Director
jeanne@riponcongregationalucc.org

Rod & Peggy Freeman – Church Custodians - Cell: 920-896-2152



Wisdom from MLK

I am convinced that love is the most durable power in the world. It is not an expression of impractical idealism, but of practical realism. Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, love is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. To return hate for hate does nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate and evil, and this can only be done through love.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

Epiphany 2023 Worship Schedule: Understanding Church

Sunday, January 1 | New Year's Day | Donuts and Pajamas Sunday!

Dress casually (Pajamas encouraged!) and join us for a Christmas Hymn-sing for Worship in our Fellowship Hall.

10:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship online

Sunday, January 8 | Epiphany Sunday and Communion

10:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship online

Sunday, January 15 | Second Sunday of Epiphany

Understanding Church: Mercy

10:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship onlineE

Sunday, January 22 | Third Sunday of Epiphany | ANNUAL MEETING

Understanding Church: Faith

10:30 am Worship in-person | 11:30 am ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CHURCH | 4:00 pm Worship online

Sunday, January 29 | Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

Understanding Church: Praise

10:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship online

Sunday, February 5 | Fifth Sunday of Epiphany | Communion

Understanding Church: Justice

10:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship online

Sunday, February 12 | Sixth Sunday of Epiphany | Souper Bowl of Caring

Understanding Church: Humility



RECYCLING UPDATES



We are currently working with
NexTrex
and
Bic Corporation

2 JANUARY, 2023

THANK YOU SO MUCH

FOR YOUR RECYCLING EFFORTS

To date we have collected 430.9 pounds of plastic! We have about 69.1 more pounds to collect! Please continue to bring in plastic film (bags, bubble wrap, overwrap for water bottles, etc.). If we make our goal we will earn a bench made from recycled materials for our church grounds.

From the Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee would like to share some great news!

The **Food Pantry** received two full grocery carts from our October Calendar Food Drive. The Girl Scouts assisted Janis Edwards in loading the food and transporting it to the Traded Treasures Food Pantry. It was very rewarding to see the donated food each Sunday as it increased.

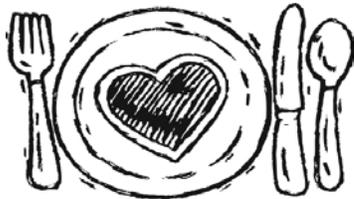
The October **Neighbors in Need** special offering collected \$1,058.46. Both of these achievements are a testament to the generosity of our congregation. Thanks to all who gave!!

—Janet Vossekui

Help Stock the Pantry

During the month of January, the food pantry would appreciate your donations of pancake mix and syrup, hot cereal, rolled oats. Ongoing needs include paper grocery bags, peanut butter, and personal toiletry items such as a deodorant, soap, and feminine hygiene products. Cash donations are always very much appreciated as well. Donations may also be dropped off at the church and will be delivered to the pantry. Thank you for your help!

—Outreach Committee



COMMUNITY DINNER

Our Community Dinners, held on the fourth Tuesday of every month, are temporarily in a drive-through format due to COVID-19. Our next dinner will be held on January 24.



"He's today's greeter."



In Celebration of:

Family given by Ed & Lou Scholtens
Dorothy Hasegard given by Susan & Preston Osteen
Don Amsden given by Jeanne Williams & Bob Amsden
Scout and Piper, our incredible kids! Given by Kaitlyn & Mike Boscajian
Jeffrey Dodson's ministry given by Loren & Deanna Boone
My family home for Christmas given by Kathleen Hones
Our awesome church family given by Bev & Jack Christ

In Memory of:

Jackie Howery given by Susan & Preston Osteen
Loved Ones given by Loren & Deanna Boone
Dan and Ardis Mitchell given by Barb Mitchell
Nicole Moniz given by Tom Moniz (2)
Doug and Audrey Lyke given by Mary & Tim Lyke
Murray and Tom McNair given by Mary & Tim Lyke

Because it's Christmas

Scott Henke (2)
The Retzlaff family
The Blessings family bring given by Janis & Cal Edwards (2)
The Dodson family (2)

Wreaths given by Lyle & Julie Mathias in Memory of their parents Claire & Kathaleen Mathias and Skip & Nancy Stein

Wishing All a Happy New Year!

Thanks to all of you who donated a plant for our Sanctuary this Christmas Season. The donations certainly enhanced our beautiful Sanctuary!

TASTY CREATIONS

Make this yummy treat to remember what happened on each day of Creation.

What you need:

- 6 large pretzel rods
- Candy melts (white, chocolate and blue)
- Green sprinkles
- White or star-shaped sprinkles
- Fish crackers
- Animal crackers
- Adult help



What you do:

1. With help, melt the three colors of candy melts in separate dishes. Microwave for 30 seconds at a time, stirring until soft.
2. Decorate one pretzel for each day of Creation:
 - Dip half in white and half in chocolate to show light and darkness.
 - Dip half in white and half in blue to show separation of the atmosphere.
 - Dip half in chocolate, add green sprinkles and dip half in blue to show land, plants and water.
 - Dip in chocolate and add white or star sprinkles to show the stars.
 - Dip in blue and add fish crackers to show sea life.
 - Dip in chocolate and add animal crackers to show land animals.
3. Share the Creation story – and the snack – with a friend!





Faith Formation - Happy New Year!

New Year, New Time for Sunday School

It is good to try new things, but sometimes they don't work out as well as you had hoped. That is the case with having Sunday School during the worship service. We just didn't have enough time to teach our curriculum, do fun activities, and have friendship time for the First Congo Kids. We also learned how important it is to have kids in the service for baptisms, communion, and special music. Going down to Sunday School after the Children's Moment in the service, just didn't

give us any flexibility. So we are returning to our former schedule for Sunday School in January.

Beginning on January 8th, parents can drop off their kiddos beginning at 9:00. We will start our lessons and music time at about 9:20 and come up to the sanctuary at around 10:20. Children can then return to the classrooms after the Children's Moment or special events for friendship time and activities.



Our World Religions class for older children (Grades 4-7) will take place during the Sunday School time, so those folks should also come at 9:00.

We hope this new schedule will give parents a little time to relax and help our First Congo Kids grow in faith and friendship in the New Year.

Thank You!

Thanks to everyone who participated in our pageant or helped with the luncheon. It was a lovely celebration. Special thanks to Pastor Jeffrey, Maria Dietrich, Morgan Sullivan, and Becca Parker for everything they did to help with our production of *The Grumpy Shepherd*.

Family Activities for Spring Semester - A schedule of family activities for the spring semester will be published soon.

— Submitted by Barb Splittgaber, Faith Formation Committee Chair, and Jeanne Williams, C.E. Director

Worship Participation Schedule

Date	Lector	Ushers/Greeters	Tech Booth	Coffee Fellowship Hosts
Jan. 1	Ashley Dodson	Dodson Family	Ashley Dodson	Donuts!
Jan. 8	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Tony Reilly & Scott Henke	Gary Scholtens	Flasch and Group-Paul
Jan. 15	Erin Ter Beest	Barb Mitchell/Tammi Kenton	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Grady and Lyke
Jan. 22	Amber Dalziel	Grace and Ruth Retzlaff	Tin Lyke	Boone and Christ
Jan. 29	Gary Scholtens	Janet Vossekuil and Andy Lyke	Dan Volkmann	Mitchell and Kenton
Feb. 5	Dan Volkmann	Mary & Tim Lyke	Erik Dietrich	Wittler and Dalziel
Feb. 12	Kaitlyn Bosciljon	Deanna & Loren Boone	Katie Del Ponte	Souper Bowl of Caring
Feb. 19	Andy Lyke	Ed & Lou Scholtens	Gary Scholtens	Seidler-Halwas and Prellwitz
Feb. 26	Tom Moniz	Katie & Nate Berndt	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Volkmann/Tumas, Hones

Thanks
for your
participation

Please try to meet this schedule. If you cannot help on the Sunday assigned...

- Please switch Sundays with someone else and then notify the church office (748-5898 or office@riponcongregationalucc.org) of the change.
- We all appreciate your participation!

JANUARY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 4 pm Online Worship	2	3 11:30 am Ripon Noon Kiwanis	4	5 10:30 am Discussion Group 6 pm NA meeting	6 9 am Coffee at Mugs	7 2 pm RACT open mic
8 9 am Sunday School and World Religions 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 11:45 am Outreach 12 pm Worship committee 12 pm Confirmation 4 pm Online Worship	9	10 11:30 am Ripon Noon Kiwanis 5 pm Sharing the Table at Grace 6:30 pm Cabinet meeting	11 5:30 pm Youth Group	12 10:30 am Discussion Group 6 pm NA meeting 7 pm RC Choral Union	13 9 am Coffee at Mugs	14 11 am League of Women Voters
15 9 am Sunday School and World Religions 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 12 pm Confirmation 4 pm Online Worship	16 	17	18 12 pm Spire deadline 5:30 pm Youth Group	19 10:30 am Discussion Group 6 pm NA meeting 7 pm Membership Committee 7 pm RC Choral Union	20 9 am Coffee at Mugs	21
22 9 am Sunday School and World Religions 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship, Annual Meeting 4 pm Online Worship	23	24 5:30 pm Commu- nity Dinner	25 5:30 pm Youth Group	26 10:30 am Discussion Group 6 pm NA meeting 7 pm RC Choral Union	27 9 am Coffee at Mugs	28
29 9 am Sunday School and World Religions 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 12 pm Confirmation 4 pm Online Worship	30	31	1 5:30 pm Youth Group	2 6 pm NA meeting 7 pm RC Choral Union	3 9 am Coffee at Mugs	4

Future Events:

February - Black History Month

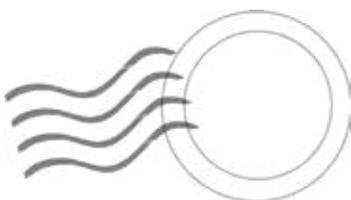
Feb. 22 - Ash Wednesday

April 9 - Easter



Get Connected on Facebook

Want to learn more about what is going on at the church? Wish you could get updates and see photos about community outreach and other church events? It's easy! "Like" us on facebook at www.facebook.com/RiponCongregationalUCC.



Paper and ink and postage - oh my! If you're getting a hard copy of this Spire and would prefer an electronic version, please give the church office your email address. Send it to office@ripcongregationalucc.org. Thanks!

First Congregational Church of Ripon

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

220 Ransom Street • Ripon, Wisconsin 54971

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Enter to Worship—Go Forth to Serve

