



The SPIRE



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

April 2022

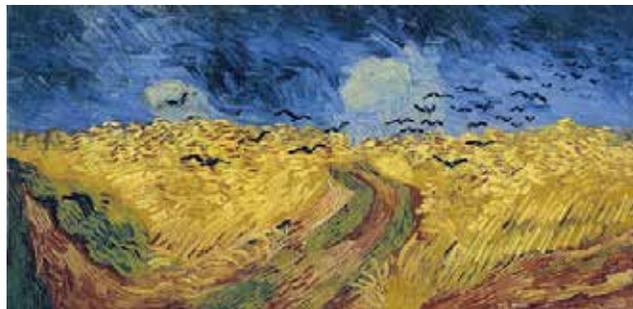
“The best way to know God is to love many things.”
—Vincent Van Gogh

*“Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He is not here, but has risen.”*
— Luke 24:5

This Lent we have been guided each Sunday by the paintings of Vincent van Gogh. From the earthy colors of “The Potato Eaters” to the scripturally inspired “Sower,” van Gogh’s art has helped us to take a closer look at our own spiritual life and the colors with which we paint our own faith.

We will feature some of van Gogh’s major works in the coming weeks (“Shoes,” “Starry Night,” “Café Terrace at Night,” “At Eternity’s Gate,” and “Wheatfield behind Saint Paul’s Hospital, Saint Rémy”) leading us to Easter Sunday, April 17 when we think about one of van Gogh’s last works.

“Wheatfields with Crows under a Stormy Sky” is the last major work of Vincent’s life (though it’s not his last painting: at the time of his death, he was working on a study of some exposed tree roots). He described it to Theo this way: “They are vast fields of wheat under troubled skies, and I did not need to go out of my way to try to express sadness and extreme loneliness. I hope you will see them soon – for I hope to bring them to you in Paris as soon as possible, since I almost think that these canvases will tell you what I cannot say in words, the health and restorative forces that I see in the country” (Letter to Theo, #649).



This painting is often interpreted as a portrait of menace and madness, but Vincent’s own description points in a different direction. The skies are “troubled,” he says, evoking sadness and loneliness, but the overall effect is an example of nature’s “health and restorative forces.” Vincent once insisted to Theo that looking at a “wheatfield, even in the form of a picture,” offered a great deal to suffering people, much more than abstract words or hollow assurances (Letter to Theo, #597). And the Japanese artists Vincent so admired often included humble, common birds (often black birds) in their compositions. The sky may indeed be stormy, but the regenerative powers of nature – both in the wheat and in the crows – rise to meet it.

The beauty of the forty days of Lent draws to a close – and the beauty of Eastertide begins, a fifty-day festival of light and resurrection: a stone rolled away at dawn; a joyful, astonished community; and a promise of the Spirit, the deep, fiery reds of Pentecost to come.

But Easter is also a time of shadows. The savior is risen – but the wounds of crucifixion remain. The brutal empire, by all appearances, is still in power. The disciples have betrayed and abandoned Jesus, melting away when it mattered most. Their shame, their sorrow, their wounds remain as well.

Vincent’s “Wheatfields with Crows under a Stormy Sky” can help us meditate on this mix of light and shadow. Easter is indeed a time for trumpets – but it’s only the beginning. The skies are still troubled.

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Prayers for health and healing...

Aya V. (heart & lungs); **Piper B.** (teeth); **Van Smith** (stroke, heart issues); **Loren Boone** (cancer); **Nate Berndt** (stomach surgery); **Brent Woyke, Janis & Cal Edward's son** (health); **Don Amsden** (health); **Lisa Reber, Maria's mom** (cancer); **Grandmother Cindy from the Berndt/Selz's family** (cancer)

We celebrate **Don Amsden** who has his 105th birthday on March 31; **Barb Mitchell** who returned to her "new" job at Ripon College; Retirement for **Janet Vossekuil**.

Prayers for the community, the loss of life, and for rebuilding after a tornado hit **Winneset IA**, hometown where Ed and Lou Scholtens are from.

Condolences to **Rev. Rob MacDougall**, Associate Conference Minister, who lost his wife, Wendy MacDougall, to cancer on March 1.

Condolences to **Kathleen Hones** whose mother, **Betty Sievers**, passed away March 18 in Iowa.

For the **Afghan family** our church is sponsoring.

For the people of **Ukraine and Russia**, and the world which prays for peace between the two countries.

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



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.

Congratulations

... to Susan Lyke, sister to Tim Lyke and Andy Lyke, on welcoming her new granddaughter Cecilia who was born in March.

... to the parents and family of Evelyn Scholtens who was born Sunday, March 27. Evelyn is the granddaughter of Dawn and Gary Scholtens, great-granddaughter of Ed and Lou Scholtens, and niece to Erin and Casey Ter Beest, cousin to Sawyer and Cora

Spire Deadline

Our next Spire newsletter will be for May, 2022. The deadline is Wednesday, April 20, at noon. Please submit materials to the church office, or email to Maria Dietrich at dietrich.maria@gmail.com. Please mark your calendars.



- 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 *TBD*
- Worship *Kathleen Hones*

Church Contact Info

Church office: 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 Freeman – Church Custodian Cell: 920-896-2152

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Loneliness and heartache hang in the air. And yet, at the same time, the loving, liberating power of God is on the move, vibrantly clear if we have eyes to see: in the wheat rising, the crows rising, the wind rising, and our spirits rising as we behold this dynamic, healing scene, this visual parable of restoration, proclaiming good news in ways that reach beyond words.

Join us this Easter Sunday as we proclaim: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

—Pastor Jeffrey

Confirmation Lock-in Friday, April 15

Confirmation students will gather at the church for an overnight lock-in on Friday April 15 from 9pm to Saturday at 9am. Activities will include food, games, fun, planning Easter Sunrise Service, and setting up the Church for Easter Worship. Bring a sleeping bag and a snack to share!



Don Amsden's 105th Birthday Party! Saturday, April 2

Don's 105th Birthday Reception
Saturday, April 2, 2022, 2:30-4 PM
Prairie Place, 749 E. Oshkosh Street,
Ripon WI
Library off the Great Room
Ice cream & cake • No gifts please



VINCENT VAN GOGH AND THE BEAUTY OF LENT

Lent 2022 Worship Schedule

Sunday, April 3 | Fifth Sunday of Lent | Communion | Van Gogh "Shoes" (in Paris)
John 12:1-8 You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me
10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

Sunday, April 10 | Palm Sunday | Van Gogh "Starry Night"
Luke 19:28-40 I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out
10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

Thursday, April 14 | Maundy Thursday | Van Gogh "Café Terrace at Night"
John 13:1-35 He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet
10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

Friday, April 15 | Good Friday | Van Gogh "At Eternity's Gate"
John 18:1-19:42 | 7 pm Community Worship, Location TBA

Saturday, April 16 | Holy Saturday | Van Gogh "Wheatfield behind Saint Paul's Hospital, Saint Rémy"
Matthew 27:57-66 | 9 am-5 pm Open Sanctuary for prayer & reflection

Sunday, April 17 | Easter | Van Gogh "Wheatfields with Crows Under a Stormy Sky"
Luke 24:1-12 Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen
8 am Sunrise Service led by Confirmands | 9 am Easter Breakfast
10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

Sunday, April 24 | Second Sunday of Easter
10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

Sunday, May 1 | Third Sunday of Easter | Communion
10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

Easter Service
8am Sunrise Service
9am Breakfast
10:30am Worship



Call for Delegates

Our church is seeking volunteers to serve as delegates to the upcoming Annual Meetings of the United Church of Christ:

Northeast Association Annual Meeting, Saturday April, 30 (two delegates needed)

Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting, June 10-12 (two delegates needed)

Please email the church office if you would like to volunteer as a delegate. Individuals can volunteer for one or both meetings. office@riponcongregationalucc.org

Building Up the Beloved Community



Wisconsin Conference UCC Annual Meeting

Join us at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Conference, to be held June 10 to 12 at the Green Lake Conference Center. This year's theme "Building up the Beloved Community," will recognize the toll that the pandemic has taken on congregations, pastors and lay leaders. We will focus on tending to both individual and congregational wellness, lift up best practices and good strategies for fostering healthy church dynamics and challenge ourselves to think in fresh ways about the Church.

For more info including agenda-at-a-glance, schedule of workshops, registration, volunteer opportunities and more, visit

<https://www.wcucc.org/about-wcucc/annual-meeting/>

Offering Envelopes



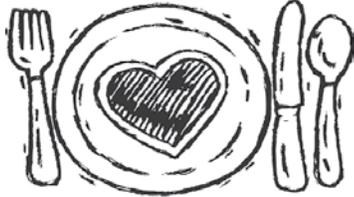
We have giving envelopes for anyone who hasn't gotten a set yet this year. Please let me know if you would like a set and I'll get them to you. —Andy Lyke, Treasurer



From the Outreach Committee

Spring is here, and summer is right around the corner! Flowers are blooming and gardens are starting! With that in mind, fresh produce is something that the food pantry desperately needs. As we prepare our gardens for delicious produce, please consider adding a few extra plants and bring the surplus with you to church so we can donate it to the food pantry this summer! If you have any further questions, please contact anyone on the outreach committee!

—Mike Boscaljon



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 April 26.

Help Stock the Pantry

During the month of April, the food pantry would appreciate your donations of peanut butter, jelly, and granola bars. 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



Lydia's Flute Recital Sat. April 9

All are welcome to attend a senior flute recital by our student staff member Lydia Wiley Deal, at 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 9, in Demmer Recital Hall in the Rodman Center for the Arts at Ripon College.

Lydia will play flute piano sonatas by J.S. Bach and Francis Poulenc, a flute duet by Goffredo Petrassi, and Cantabile et Presto by Georges Enesco. She will be assisted by Deb MacKenzie on piano, and Dr. Marc Sackman on flute.

Women's Sharing Table, Wednesday, April 20, 2022 7 PM - Fellowship Hall



**Speaker : Mary Pleiss
Education Coordinator
The Paine Art Center and Gardens**

Ubuhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence

Learn about a new form of bead art, the "ndwango," developed by a community of women living and working together in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Presentation, Conversation,
and a Beadwork Activity



Join the team at Daycholah Center

The hospitality and event programs we offer at Daycholah Center depend on finding passionate and caring people who thrive in a growth environment. Year-round, we have great opportunities for full-time, part-time, and flexible team members. Each summer we hire about 30 staff to fill a variety of needs and positions.

Current Openings

Assistant Kitchen Manager

Year-round, part-time position starting in April

Cabin Counselor

Live on-site from mid-June through mid-August

Program Manager

Full-time, live-onsite from mid-June through mid-August

Waterfront Manager

Full-time, live on or off-site, mid-June through mid-August

Guest Services Assistants *(for anyone over 18)*

Live on-site from June-August

Kitchen + Housekeeping Assistant

(perfect for high school-aged youth who do not live on-site)

Part-time, flexible hours varying between 1st and 2nd shifts. Includes weekends and some holidays.

“Working at camp taught me a lot about patience, responsibility, as well as friendship, love, and acceptance.” – Kendall



Scan for more info and application

Email the completed application or a resumé to:

Kaitlyn Boscaljon
Human Resources
Coordinator
920-745-8537 x3
kboscaljon@ucci.org



Daycholah Center
on the south shore of
Green Lake
W1010 Spring Grove Rd.
Ripon, WI 54971

ucci.org



Faith Formation

Sunday School - Zoom. Zoom. Zoom. That is how fast this Sunday School year has gone by. We have just seven weeks left before our Children's Sunday celebration on May 22nd. In those weeks, we are going to be learning some Old Testament Bible stories and skits to go with them. Practicing our Old Testament Books of the Bible rap, and continuing to practice our musical numbers with Miss Lydia. It will be very helpful to have kids here as much as possible over the next seven weeks as we prepare for our Children's Sunday service.

Good Friday for Kids - Pastor Jeffrey and Miss Jeanne will lead a children's worship service designed to teach children the meaning of Good Friday. Using kid-friendly materials, children will learn about the Way of the Cross and anticipate the wonder of Jesus' resurrection on Easter. The morning will also include Easter egg coloring, preparing the Fellowship Hall for our Easter Pancake Breakfast, and craft and play activities. Children ages 4-12 are welcome to join us in the Fellowship Hall from 9 AM until 11:30 AM.

Books of the Bible Project - Our elementary school children are learning a rap that will help them name the 39 books of the Old Testament. As they are learning to name the books of the Bible, the children are also learning some of the history of Judaism and Christianity, main characters in the story of our faith, and some pretty cool stories. This is a year-long project, and we hope to show you the results of this work at our Children's Sunday celebration in the Spring.

VBS - Children of the Old Testament - Children ages 4-12 will learn stories from the Old Testament that feature children like themselves. With music, arts and crafts, games, and skits, this will be an active week that will culminate in a show for families and a picnic. Mark your calendars for July 18-21, 9-11:30 AM and July 21, 5:30 PM.

Art After Church During Lent - Art After Church will continue for the next two weeks. Look for opportunities to create a still life in shoes and your own version of Van Gogh's Starry Night. The artwork created during Lent will be on display in the hallway outside the sanctuary on Easter Sunday.

—Jeanne Williams, Faith Formation



Art
After
Church!





Easter Flowers

Once again our sanctuary will be filled with assorted spring flowers/Easter lilies.

If you would like to donate a plant in memory or honor of someone, please provide your name, their name, and your check/cash of \$12.00 for each plant. Make checks payable to First Congregational Church.

Thank you.

—Barb Mitchell

Number of plants _____ @ \$12 = \$ _____ total

Given by _____ (as you wish it to appear in the Spire)

In honor / memory / celebration of _____
(Circle one)

In honor / memory / celebration of _____
(Circle one)

Place this slip along with your cash or check in the collection plate or deliver it to the church office (locked box next to office door) no later than Sunday, April 3. We're sorry but you cannot specify a particular choice of plant. Thank you.

Worship Volunteer Schedule

Date	Lector	Ushers/Greeters	Worship Slides	Coffee Fellowship Hosts
April 3	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Jane Cotter/Kathleen Hones	Dan Volkmann	Lyke Families
April 10	Katie Del Ponte	Kaitlyn & Mike Boscalon	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Del Ponte and Reilly/Henke
April 17	Michele Wittler	Janis and Cal Edwards	Gary Scholtens	Boscaljon & Osteen Families
April 24	Stephanie Prellwitz	Bev & Jack Christ	Erik Dietrich	Grady & Dalziel Families
May 1	Preston Osteen	Grace & Ruth Retzlaff	Katie Del Ponte	Dodson & Williams families
May 8	Lelani Sanchez	Anne Flasch/Audrey Conant	Tim Lyke	Capelle & Manuel families
May 15	Mike Boscaljon	Katie & Ben Grady	Marguerite Penick	Vossekuil & Penick families
May 22	Deanna Boone	Aelwyn Tumas/Dan Volkmann	Erik Dietrich	Prellwitz & Solberg families
May 29	Justus Paul	Penny & Jim Allard	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Neill & Grout-Paul families

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!

APRIL 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Nursery 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	6-7 pm Daisy Troop meeting	11 am Campus Christian Fellowship	5:30 pm Youth	6 pm NA meeting 7-9 pm Choral Union		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Nursery 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	6-7 pm Daisy Troop meeting	11 am Campus Christian Fellowship	5:30 GS Brownie meeting 5:30 pm Youth	6 pm NA meeting 6-7:30 Girl Scouts Troop 6238 7-9 pm Choral Union		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9 am Sunday School 9:15 Choir Rehearsal 10:15 am Nursery 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 12 pm Worship Committee	6-7 pm Daisy Troop meeting	11 am Campus Christian Fellowship 5 pm Sharing the Table at Grace 6:30 pm Cabinet meeting	5:30 pm Youth 7 pm PPRC meeting	6 pm NA meeting 7 pm Maundy Thursday Service 7-9 pm Choral Union	6:30 pm Good Friday Community Service at Grace Lutheran	9 am-5 pm Open Sanctuary for prayer & reflection
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
8 am Sunrise Service  9 am Choir Rehearsal 9 am Easter Breakfast 10:15 am Nursery 10:30 am Easter Worship	6-7 pm Daisy Troop meeting	11 am Campus Christian Fellowship	12 pm Spire deadline 5:30 pm Youth 7 pm Women's Sharing Table event 7 pm PPRC meeting	6 pm NA meeting 6-7:30 Girl Scouts Troop 6238 7-9 pm Choral Union		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
9 am Sunday School 10:15 am Nursery 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	6-7 pm Daisy Troop meeting	11 am Campus Christian Fellowship 5:30 pm Community Dinner	5:30 pm Youth	6 pm NA meeting 7-9 pm Choral Union		



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

