



# The SPIRE



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

May/June 2024

*“In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise; butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there’s a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.” —In the Bulb There Is a Flower, New Century Hymnal #433*

Summer time is a time of planning and waiting. It involves both work and rest, and the balance between the two can make for a wonderful season ahead of us.

I believe that our God is a wonderful gardener, who plants seeds all around us and within us. Seeds are powerful, for within them lie a world of possibility, new life, and extravagant beauty.

As a child, I remember my mother and father planting strawberry seeds in our front yard. At first, it seemed like we had just spent a lot of time digging around in the dirt and adding water to make mud. There wasn’t a lot to see and it didn’t look very beautiful. Yet I was instructed by my parents to continue to water the plot each day, and to wait and be patient. Growing something is hard work!

With diligence upon the promise of sweet strawberries, I continued to attend to the nurturing of the soil and seeds. Within a few weeks, I saw the beginnings of green plants sprouting through the dirt. They burst through the ground like glorious dancers emerging from behind draped curtains on a stage. The plants sprouted and extended their reach. I could see their courage unfold throughout the passage of time, us-



ing the resources provided to them to reach their full potential.

I doubt we actually had any strawberries that first summer, but for many years to come there were vibrant fruits to be picked by little hands to enjoy on warm summer days. The berries didn’t actually get very big, not like the ones you can find in the grocery stores, but that wasn’t the point. These were home grown strawberries! It didn’t matter the size, because the sweetness came from the care and nurturing offered to them. They were sweet because of a family’s love.

God is planting within us a life full of beauty and possibility. The seeds for those things we wish for are already present: they are the ideas, hopes and dreams that guide us on our way through life. They are the “someday I’ll...” and the “I wish...” that power our creativity and inspiration which help us to grow and become more than we are today.

The seeds planted by my family took a season or two to bloom, and some of the plants never fully matured. But the struggles of planting did not overshadow the celebration of strawberries enjoyed as the fruits of our labor, and the family that helped to grow those plants and those berries, grew further. This season I will be planting a garden with my kids, and my siblings have children with whom they will be planting gardens this spring as well. I wonder if my parents marveled those many years ago at watching tiny hands dig in the dirt.

*Continued on page 3*

### Prayers for health and healing...

For Health & Healing: **Norm Loomer** (fall and brain bleed, hospitalization); **Loren Boone** (several falls, hospitalization); **Audrey Conant** (strength, healing); **Debbi Konecny** (healing broken ankle); **Penny Allard** (health); **Kih Bergin** (health); **Dave Gallops** (recovery from stroke); **Ken Hill** (cancer, Myasthenia Gravis); **Steve Arbaugh** (stroke); the **new Afghan family's** 3-year-old (spina bifida); **Marguerite Penick's** brother, **George** (Alzheimers); **Sarah Seidler's** aunt, **Paula Watson** (hospice); **Dan Halwas' dad, Chuck** (heart surgery); **Michele Witter** (surgery); **Wendy Smith's** daughter, **Hannah** (melanoma); **Jeanne Williams' brother, Dan** (health); **Tammi Kenton** (cancer); **Gary Scholtens** (cancer recovery); **Wendy Smith** (cancer); **Katie Del Ponte's** cousin and **Tony Reilly's** niece **Jessica** (cancer); **Grandmother Cindy** from the **Berndt/Selz family** (cancer); all who are experiencing health issues and are in need of prayer; all who are undergoing **medical tests** and awaiting results

For the students, school staff, and families of **Mount Horeb Middle School**, which experienced a school shooting on May 1. Prayers for the community and for an end to gun violence and tragedies such as this.

For an end to the distrust in our world today. With scams increasing, people lying, different organizations promoting hate we are fearful most-times. Fearful to attend concerts, participate in worship, declare our true feelings and many otherwise normal living practices. God help us learn to live with peace of mind!

For Ariana Hones who is completing her second year at Yale Divinity School.

For the new Afghan family who were able to move into their apartment in March

For **Joe and Jan Kerch**. Joe was hospitalized from complications with pneumonia.

Prayers for peace in **Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine**, and around the world.

**Refugees** around the world and here at home.

*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. 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.



### Spire Deadline

Our next Spire newsletter will be for July/August, 2024. The deadline for submissions is Wednesday, June 19, at noon. Please submit materials to the church office, or email to Maria Dietrich at dietrich.maria@gmail.com.



- Pastor *Jeffrey Dodson*
- Christian Education *Ashley Dodson*
- Moderator . . . . . *Penny Allard*
- Vice-Moderator. . . *Jeanne Williams*
- Clerk . . . . . *Justus Paul*
- Treasurer . . . . . *Andy Lyke*
- Choir Director . . . . *Kurt Dietrich*
- Faith Formation . . . . *Ruth Retzlaff*
- Finance. . . . . *Judy Neill*
- Historian . . . . . *Robin Patzlaff*
- Maintenance Officer *Gary Scholtens*
- Membership. . . . . *Bev Christ*
- Nominating. . . *J. Christ, T. Konecny*
- Organist. . . . . *Maria Dietrich*
- Outreach . . . . . *Dawn Scholtens*
- PPRC . . . . . *Jeanne Williams*
- Women's Fellowship *Susan Osteen*
- Worship . . . . . *Kathleen Hones*

### Church Contact Info

Director of Administration & Communications: Kaitlyn Boscaljon: 920-748-5898 or office@riponcongregationalucc.org  
If not in the office, Pastor Jeffrey Dodson can be reached at ... jeffrey@riponcongregationalucc.org

If you need to contact church custodians Rod & Peggy Freeman (or anyone else) please utilize the private church directory.

(Continued from page 1)

Did they imagine a future where we kids would grow up with families of our own, planting gardens of our own?

The miracle of all this was being present with my family to witness to the power of love, of God's love in the world. The collective response to the sharing of strawberries was one of gratitude, not only for berries, but for the community that grew them, the sacred community which has at its center the mystery of a gracious and loving God. We do not always know how the seeds will grow, or what the fruit will be like, but we plant anyways, and we do trust in the nurturing power of God to be present in the work and labor and rest of such a loving act as planting.

What seeds have been planted in your life? In your heart? How have you been tending to the care and nurturing of those seeds?

This summer at FCC we will be doing some planting ourselves. I will lead us in a sermon series this summer called, "Planting Dreams."

May you know that you matter, that you are greatly loved, and that God has planted a seed of an incredible life within you. Nurture it, and yourself, through all the things you will do this summer. And remember that this sacred community at FCC will help you grow along the way, and that is a miracle to celebrate every day.

Wishing you love like the sweetness of homegrown strawberries,

Rev. Jeffrey



## Prayers of Joy

Congratulations to **David and LaVonne Butler** who celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary on May 2.


For our **Children of the church** who led a wonderful worship service for Children's Sunday on April 28.

Congratulations to **Zoey Pugh**, daughter of **Adam and Maggie Pugh**, who was Baptized on Saturday, April 20. **Zoey** is the granddaughter of **Marguerite Penick**.

**Janet Vossekuil's** niece **Rachel**, a Ripon high school teacher, and her husband are moving to Stevens Point to start new work, and are expecting a new baby soon.

Congratulations to **Katherine Myszewski and Wyatt Thomas**, two of our former Children's Ministry staff members and Ripon College students, who were married on March 22 in Milwaukee.

Congratulations to **Jamie Edwards and Aya Volkmann**, recipients of church scholarships that will help them go to Beloit College and Fox Valley Technical College, respectively. **Jamie** plans to study art and creative writing, and **Aya** plans to earn a degree to be a Medical Assistant.



... to **Sarah Seidler's** best friend's younger sister, **Katie May (Salm) Notino**, died on March 16 at 41 years old after a choking accident.

... to **Deanna Boone** at the passing of **Loren Boone**, who died at home on May 4. Our prayers and love are with Deanna.



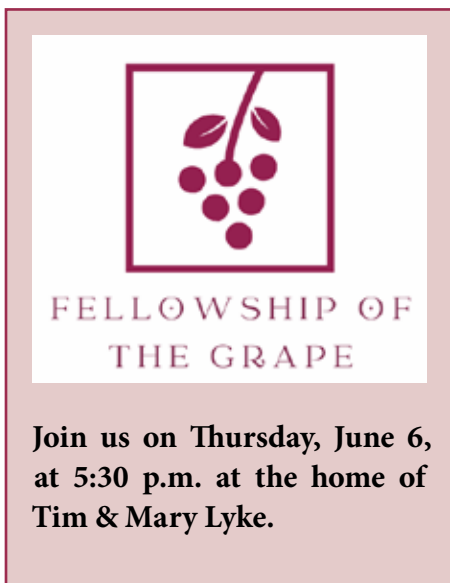


## Called to Care Team

Volunteer to visit at-home church members, those in the hospital, or church members in need of community and connection. We will meet monthly to discuss care plans and visits. This NEW Ministry Team is open to any new volunteers. Join us on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 9 a.m. - Pastor Jeffrey



Each Thursday at 10:30 a.m. join us in the Chapel for coffee or tea and lively discussions on various topics of the day using faith, politics, and the daily news. All are welcome!



## Summer 2024 Worship Schedule

**Sundays: 9:00 am Faith Formation  
10:30 am Worship in-person (4 pm online) • 11:30 am Fellowship  
Communion every first Sunday of the month**

**Summer! June 2 through August 25: Worship at 9:30 am, Fellowship at 10:30**

**Sunday, May 5 | Worship at Daycholah Center**

**Making Peace: Befriend**

10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Saturday, May 11 | Ripon College Baccalaureate Service**

8 pm in Sanctuary

**Sunday, May 12 | Communion | Mother's Day | Ripon Col. Commencement**

**Making Peace: Adapt**

10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Sunday, May 19 | Confirmation Sunday | Pentecost**

10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Wednesday, May 22 | Ripon High School Baccalaureate Service**

7 pm in Sanctuary

**Sunday, May 26 | Trinity Sunday | Memorial Weekend**

10:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Sunday, June 2 | Communion Sunday | Summer Worship Begins**

**Pride/ONA Sunday**

9:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Sunday, June 9 | Planting Dreams**

9:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Sunday, June 16 | Planting Dreams**

9:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Sunday, June 23 | Planting Dreams**

9:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Sunday, June 30 | Planting Dreams**

9:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Sunday, July 7 | Communion Sunday | Guest Preacher**

9:30 am Worship IN-PERSON | 4:00 pm Worship ONLINE

**Sunday, July 14 | Joint UCC Worship on the Village Green, 9:30 am**



**KEEP BRINGING IN  
YOUR PLASTIC  
BAGS AND FILMS**

**COLLECTED  
481.8 LBS**

**GOAL: 1,000 LBS**



**COMMUNITY DINNER**

Our Community Dinners, held on the fourth Tuesday of every month, are now in a drive-through format. Our next dinners will be held on May 28 and June 25, serving at 5:30 p.m.



### ***Help Stock the Pantry***

During the month of May, the food pantry would appreciate your donations of boxed cereal, boxed meals such as mac and cheese, hamburger & tuna helper, and noodle-roni. June: peanut butter, jelly, apple-sauce, canned fruit. Ongoing needs include paper grocery bags, peanut butter, and personal toiletry items such a deodorant, soap, and feminine hygiene products. Cash donations are always much appreciated as well. Donations may also be dropped off at the church and will be delivered to the pantry. Thanks for your help!

—Outreach Committee

### ***Strengthen the Church***

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Our church will receive the STC offering on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024.

Thank you,

Anne Flasch, Outreach Committee



Sharing your special event, memory, or in honor of someone is special with a bouquet of flowers for our Sunday morning worship.

Flower coordinator Julie Mathias is available to discuss an altar flower arrangement requests. We will discuss what you would like, the date you would like to reserve, and your dedication for the arrangement. Contact Julie Mathias by phone or text message. 920-229-2305.

### ***Coffee Fellowship***

Friday Coffee Fellowship takes place at 9:30 AM at Mugs Coffee Shop. We hope you'll join us!



## Shawl Ministry

The Shawl Ministry Team meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 in the Chapel. The purpose of this group is to share time together while creating knit and crochet items to support and warm members of our congregation and community. In our first months, the Shawl Ministry has made a variety of small prayer squares and mini-prayer shawls for Pastor Jeffrey to share with folks who are experiencing challenges and may be comforted by holding a tangible sign of our church's support. In addition, we have created prayer shawls for ill and home-bound congregants and red shawls/scarfs for our five confirmands. In addition, individuals are working on baptismal and baby shawls.

While we will continue to work on the projects mentioned above, the team is also starting a new project in conjunction with a national initiative called Warm Up America. Warm Up America was started in 1991 right here in Wausau, Wisconsin. The purpose of the organization is to: provide knitted and crocheted blankets, clothing, and accessories made by volunteers across the country for people in need. First Congregational's Shawl Ministry will do Warm Up America's work as a local activity, making items for our church and the Ripon community.

Our first Warm Up America project will be to create patchwork blankets and lap robes of knitted and crocheted 7" by 9" rectangles. We are using acrylic (Washable!) worsted weight (#4) yarn. You can use any colors or patterns you like to make rectangles for this project. With worsted weight yarn. You can use knitting needles US size 7-9 or crochet hook sizes US G-6, 7, or H-8 (4.0, 4.5, 5.0 MM) depending on your knitting/crochet style. The only requirement for these rectangles is that they measure as close to 7" by 9" as possible so they can be easily sewn together.

Once we've collected a bunch of rectangles, we will put them together and make finished blankets for our church members and others in the community who would might need a warm blanket. These blankets along with our other projects will supplement other outreach activities of the church.

If you would like to support the Shawl Ministry you can do so by:

1. Joining our group on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 AM in the Chapel. If you haven't done yarn crafts for a while or are just beginning, help is available during these sessions, and we can get you started with yarn, patterns, and needles/hooks.
2. Can't make it to the group meetings? You can make and contribute blanket rectangles, finished shawls, prayer squares, or mini-shawls by dropping them off at the church office. Contact Jeanne Williams if you need help, patterns, or materials.
3. Donate yarn for projects. We are happy to take in leftovers from your projects as some of our work uses small amounts.

Thank you! —Jeanne Williams

### Worship Participation Schedule

Date	Lector	Ushers/Greeters	Tech Booth	Coffee Fellowship Hosts
May 5	Justus Paul	Retzlaff and Splittgaber	Gary Scholtens	Worship Committee
May 12	Wendy Smith	Erin & Casey Ter Beest	Daniel Volkmann	Neill and Iserman
May 19	Gerry Nelson	Aelwyn Tumas/Daniel Volkmann	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Mary & Tim Lyke and Grady
May 26	Meg Schwemmer	Jack, Carter & Tom Moniz	Tim Lyke	Grout-Paul and Dietrich
June 2	Ed Scholtens	Rachel & Dave Minch	Erik Dietrich	Dodson and Minch
June 9	Tom Konecny	Dan & Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Daniel Volkmann	Christ and Ed & Lou Scholtens
June 16	Jack Christ	Michele & Skip Wittler	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Ter Beest and Mathias
June 23	AVAILABLE	Bill Neill and Kih Bergin	Daniel Volkmann	Christ and Seidler-Halwas
June 30	Jeanne Williams	Grace & Ruth Retzlaff	Gary Scholtens	Hones and AVAILABLE

*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!

# MAY/JUNE 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>April 28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>May 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
9 am Faith Formation 10:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship	6 pm RACT rehearsal	11:30 am C3 min 6 pm RACT rehearsal	9:30 Prayer Shawls 6 pm RACT rehearsal 6 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion grp 1 pm Tea & Cookies at Prairie Place 6 pm NA meeting 6 pm RACT rehearsal	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs 6 pm RACT rehearsal	5 pm FOG
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
10:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship	6 pm RACT rehearsal	6 pm RACT rehearsal	9:30 Prayer Shawls 6 pm RACT 6 pm Ripon Area Education Fund 6 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting 6 pm RACT rehearsal	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs 11 am RC Bacc. rehearsal 6 pm RACT reh.	8 pm Ripon College Baccalaureate
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
9 am Faith Formation 10:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship 11:45 am Outreach, Worship	6 pm RACT rehearsal	6 pm RACT rehearsal 6:30 pm Cabinet	9:30 Prayer Shawls 11 pm PEO mtg 12 pm Spire deadline 6 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting 6 pm RACT rehearsal	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs 6 pm RACT rehearsal	11 am Baptism
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
9 am Faith Formation 10:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship 11:45 am Membership comm	6 pm RACT performance	6 pm RACT performance	9 Called to Care 9:30 Prayer Shawls 6 pm RACT performance 7 pm RHS Baccalaureate	10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting 6 pm RACT performance	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs 6 pm RACT performance	
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>June 1</b>
10:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 11:30 Fellowship	6 pm RACT performance	5:30 pm Community Dinner 6 pm RACT performance	9:30 Prayer Shawls 6 pm RACT performance	10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting 6 pm RACT performance	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs 6 pm RACT performance	
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Outreach, Worship			9:30 Prayer Shawls 6 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion grp 5:30 pm FOG at Tim & Mary Lyke's home 6 pm NA meeting	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs	8-12 We Love First Congo Work Day Event
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Membership comm		6:30 pm Cabinet	9:30 Prayer Shawls 12 pm Spire Deadline	10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs 2 pm RACT Children's Auditions	2 pm RACT Children's Auditions
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship	6 pm RACT auditions		9:30 Prayer Shawls	10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs	
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship	6 pm RACT rehearsal	5:30 pm Community Dinner 6 pm RACT reh.	9 Called to Care 9:30 Prayer Shawls 6 pm RACT reh.	10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs	5 pm FOG
<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship	6 pm RACT rehearsal	6 pm RACT rehearsal	6 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	9:30 am Coffee at Mugs	5 pm FOG

**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***

