



# The SPIRE



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

May 2023

*I love to tell the story of unseen things above.  
Of Jesus' radiant glory, of Jesus' endless love.  
I love to tell the story, because I know it's true;  
It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.*

—*I Love to Tell the Story*, #522 alternative text by Katherine Hankey, 1866, from *The New Century Hymnal*, Copyright © 1995 The Pilgrim Press.

One of my great joys in this church is to listen to people's stories. I LOVE hearing about past exploits, adventures, mishaps, and even struggles because I believe in the power of a story to transform lives.

I believe the most powerful story we have to tell is the story of our Christian tradition, that of Jesus. We like to tell his story. A LOT. And it is right and good that we do. In his story, we discover profound truths about how deeply God loves us, and all people on the earth. We learn how to care for our neighbor, children, even our own selves, even our own enemies. We find that love overcomes brokenness, light outshines darkness, salt is good for flavoring this life, and that God's love for us overcomes even death.

I don't think you can read the stories of Jesus and not come away from them changed. Transformed. Jesus offers us glimpses of the Kin-dom of God, of good and holy community, which we can achieve here on earth. This Easter season, I am working with volunteers within the church to help our congregation tell our own stories. My hope is that by hearing stories from your fellow church members, you will recall your own story. In sharing we will discover new truths and new love for

one another. This kind of practice is not foreign to the church; as little as 100 years ago, our own denomination urged congregants to share their faith story with the church as a part of their testimony.

Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel, my professor for preaching in seminary, helped me to understand that testimony is an important part of the Christian tradition, "So often in our congregations, beautiful stories of God float through the church unspoken... All Christians [...] can grow in their faith when they learn to talk to one another about God, and really tell it like it is." (Lillian Daniel, *Tell it Like it is*, 2006 The Alban Institute.)

Sometimes we shudder at the thought of talking about ourselves. Too much talking and we have pride. Too little and we are cheapened. Yet I believe if I have

the courage to tell my story, I can find a path of healing, a path of grace and enlightenment; I might experience something that feels like resurrection. Storytelling can move us out of places of brokenness and isolation into places of abundance and life. We can heal, and we can ground ourselves in love. When was a time you felt loved? What was that like? "Tell me your story..."

May you trust that your story is also God's Holy story,

—Pastor Jeffrey



## RESURRECTION STORIES

## *In Our Thoughts & Prayers*

### Prayers for health and healing...

**Hunter** (medical procedure); **Kaitlyn Boscaljon** (surgery); **Ken Hill** (cancer & surgery); **Don Amsden** (hospice); **Wayne Larson** (hospice); **Marilyn Lehnerr** (health); **Wendy Smith** (cancer); **Dawn Scholtens** (cancer recovery); **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); **Nancy Davis** (hospice), a neighbor of **Julie Mathias**; all those experiencing health issues in need of prayer.

Prayers for...

**Tina Solberg's** mom, **Doris**, who had hip replacement surgery and is recovering well.

Prayers for the Ripon community: for the tragic loss of an 18 year old high school student, **Michael Nuenthel**, who died from a drug overdose on April 7. Prayers for the two teens who were arrested and charged in his death. This tragedy comes nearly a month after the murder of a 20 year old woman, **Johanna Schultz**, who died on March 11. She was well known in Ripon and worked at several downtown stores and restaurants.

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.*

## 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.

### Our Condolences to ...

**Ryan Rutledge Miller**, roommate of **Nalani Amsden**, passed away in a car accident on April 5 in Emporia, KS. A memorial service was held for Ryan in Arthur, IL on April 12. Prayers for the Miller family, and for Nalani, Jeanne, and Bob.

**Anna Ramirez** passed away April 5, and was the grandmother of **Katie Del Ponte** and mother of Debra Reilly. Prayers for the Ramirez and Del Ponte/Reilly families.

**Vance Cope-Kasten** passed away on March 15. He was a retired professor of Philosophy at Ripon College, and a colleague of many of our church members. Prayers for family, wife **Janilyn** and his colleagues from Ripon College.

### Prayers of Joy

**Don Amsden**, who celebrated his 106th birthday on March 31.

**Tim Lyke** presented two bricks "kissing" to **Rusty & Kay, Rae Miller's** son and daughter-in-law, who had their wedding reception at the old Republican House from which the bricks were salvaged.



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 Patzloff*  
 Maintenance Officer *Lyle Mathias*  
 Membership. . . . . *Bev Christ*  
 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



## ***Artists, Photographers, Calligraphers, and Poets of All Ages***

The Membership Committee would greatly appreciate your help collecting homemade blank greeting cards that are blank inside. We will use these cards to send greetings and remembrances to our members each month. We are hoping to get a selection of cards that have been specially made by our members. It would be very helpful if you include an envelope or if your card is a standard business or personal envelope size. If not, we will find one. On the back or front of your card, please be sure to sign your art. Thanks to Dawn Scholtens for starting us off! Place cards in the basket near the Sanctuary entrance.

Thank you from your Membership Committee. (Tina, Amber, Bev, Debbi and Jeffrey — contact one of us if you have any questions.)

## ***Spire Deadline***

Our next Spire newsletter will be for June/July, 2023. The deadline for submissions is Wednesday, May 17, at noon. Please submit materials to the church office, or email to Maria Dietrich at [dietrich.maria@gmail.com](mailto:dietrich.maria@gmail.com).



## ***Youth Mental Health First Aid Training***

**April 28 or April 29 | 8:00 AM-4:30 PM | First Congo Fellowship Hall**

We are offering two training opportunities for YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations.

These trainings are free to the general public. YMHFA is a one day training from 8 AM to 4:30 PM. Participants can register for either the Friday or Saturday training.

You can register online: <https://www.riponcongregationalucc.org/post/youth-mental-health-first-aid-training> or on a paper sign-up in office or during worship.

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## ***May Worship Schedule***

**Sunday, April 30 | Fourth Sunday of Easter | New Member Joining Sunday | Recognition of Graduates**

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

**Sunday, May 7 | Fifth Sunday of Easter | Communion | Worship at Daycholah Center, Green Lake**

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

**Sunday, May 14 | Mothers' Day | Ripon College Commencement**

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

**Sunday, May 21 | Children's Sunday and Bible Dedication**

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

**Sunday, May 28 | Pentecost Sunday | "Strengthen the Church" offering**

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



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

**COLLECTED  
174.5 LBS**

**GOAL: 500 LBS**

## *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. 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 now in a drive-through format due to COVID-19. Our next dinner will be held on May 23.



Every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month join us for an hour of Adult Education in the Chapel. Each Chapel Chat will feature a topic or speaker on a variety of subjects. Chapel Chats are open to everyone, and we will be seeking presenters to sign up for a Sunday to share a topic they are passionate about.



## *Register for UCCI Events and Camps!*

New and exciting events are planned at the three UCCI campuses: Moon Beach, Daycholah Center (Our local camp at Green Lake!), and Cedar Valley. Check out the full event list: <https://ucciprogram.org/events-2023/>

If you are interested in attending a UCCI summer camp or retreat, please let Pastor Jeffrey or CE Director Jeanne Williams know. There are scholarships available to help with the cost of camp.



Join us May 7, 2023, 10:30 AM at Daycholah Center. We will worship and join in communion with one another at the Ley Chapel.



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!

## ***Community Dinner Earns Second Grant***

The monthly Community Dinner sponsored by First Congregational Church has again received two grants this year.

The first came in February when the Dinner was awarded \$2,000 from the Webster Foundation of Ripon. This was presented at the same time nearly \$90,000 in grants were awarded to numerous community groups in Ripon and the surrounding area.

A second grant, this one for \$1,500, comes from the Fond du Lac Area Foundation and its Eleanor and William Rutz Memorial Fund. Susan Osteen wrote this grant application thinking that our Community Dinner fit the necessary criteria.

Thanks also for recent contributions to the Community Dinner from Mike and Kaitlyn Boscaljon, Kathleen Hones, Cal and Janis Edwards, Loren and Deanna Boone and the Souper Bowl Chili Cookoff.

—Loren Boone



**Happy  
Mother's  
Day**

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## **FELLOWSHIP OF THE GRAPE**

### ***FIRST MONTHLY MEETING OF FOG***

Saturday, May 6 from 5-6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

You may be asking what is FOG? We are glad that you asked! FOG stands for **Fellowship of the Grape** and it is a new effort by your Membership Committee to provide an opportunity for adults from our church community, to get together informally, enjoy some refreshments, and enjoy each other's company. Here's how it works:

We will gather on the first Saturday of each month from 5-6:30 p.m. This will be an adult only social event.

There will be a host who offers to hold the gathering at their home or selects another location such as the church or Vines and Rushes or even a pontoon boat etc. The host will notify the office to send a reminder (through the church emails & announcements). RSVPs are appreciated but not necessary.

You come and bring a bottle of wine or other beverage of your choice. The host will provide paper products, glasses and an appetizer or two. A couple of quests will also bring an appetizer.

Relax, chat, and get to know one another! Keep it simple!

Thanks,

Debbi Konecny

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

The Strengthen the Church Offering furthers the work of the national UCC and our conferences as we work together to start new churches and renew existing congregations, fund leadership development, and provide exciting new programs for youth and young adults. Together, we further our commitment to be a multi-racial/multi-cultural church, accessible to all. This special offering will be collected on Pentecost Sunday, May 28, 2023.

Outreach team: Dawn Scholtens, Anne Flasch, Janis Edwards, Janet Vossekuil, and new member Aelwyn Tumas



## *Faith Formation - Sunday School News*

**Sunday School Every Sunday at 9 a.m.** After Easter we will return to learning about Jesus' parables with the younger kids and older kids will be learning about Buddhism in our World Religions class.

**First Congo Kids' Time** - Children who attend Sunday School may return to the classrooms after the Children's Moment in the worship service for a snack and time for play and craft activities. We will bring children to the Fellowship Hall for coffee hour at the end of the service.

**Nursery Care** - Our Sunday School staff will provide nursery care for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers during the Sunday worship service. If no one is in the nursery when you arrive or when you need to leave the service to calm a child, just ask two staff members to accompany you to the nursery. We are very happy to have this one to one time with our youngest First Congo Kids.

**Spring Family Activities** - Please join us for these activities:

• **Friday, May 5th - 9 AM-3 PM - Field Trip to Bookworm Garden in Sheboygan**

Families and children (ages 3-12) will travel to Sheboygan to visit Bookworm Garden, an interactive garden that celebrates children's books. Everyone should bring a lunch for a picnic on the grounds. Entrance fee will be paid by the church. Transportation can be arranged for children whose parents have to work that day. We will leave from the church parking lot at 9 AM.

• **Sunday, May 21st - 9:00 AM - Noon - Children's Sunday, Last day of Sunday School, All Church Lunch**

We will celebrate all we have learned in Sunday School with special activities during the church service, a lunch during coffee hour, and some special games and activities.

**We Will Continue our Plastic Recycling!!!** Keep bringing your plastic bags and film to church so that we can earn another recycled bench. The cabinet will decide on the use of this second bench at the church or as a gift to a local organization.

**Fill Your Piggy Banks for Heifer!!!** Once again this year, Faith Formation and Outreach will sponsor a collection for the Heifer Foundation during Children's Sunday on May 21st. Stash away your coins and small bills to help us help a family get the livestock or gardening supplies they need to support themselves

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

### *Worship Participation Schedule*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lector</b>	<b>Ushers/Greeters</b>	<b>Tech Booth</b>	<b>Coffee Fellowship Hosts</b>
May 7	Grace Retzlaff	Solberg Family	Katie Del Ponte	Capelle and Manuel families
May 14	Mike Boscaljon	Erin & Casey Ter Beest	Gary Scholtens	Neill and Christ families
May 21	Gerry Nelson	Tim Lyke	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Lyke and Dodson families
May 28	Justus Paul	Jack, Carter & Tom Moniz	Tim Lyke	Grout/Paul, Moniz families
June 4	Ed Scholtens	Rachel & Dave Minch	Tim Lyke	Grady and Solberg families
June 11	Andy Lyke	Dan & Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Erik Dietrich	Iserman and Neill families
June 18	Jack Christ	Katie & Ben Grady	Katie Del Ponte	Nelson/Harper and Grady
June 25	Katie Berndt	Barb Mitchell/Amber Dalziel	Gary Scholtens	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 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
9 am Sunday School and World Religions 10:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship 12 pm Confirmation	11:35 am Ripon College- Catalyst project		5:30 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion Group 6 pm NA meeting	9 am Book-worm Garden	5 pm Fellowship of the Grape
Chapel Reserved for Ripon College						
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
9 am Sunday School and World Religions 10:30 am Worship at Day-cholah (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship		5 pm Sharing Table at Grace 6:30 pm Cabinet meeting	5:30 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion Group 6 pm NA meeting	9 am Coffee at Mugs RC Baccalaureate	
Chapel Reserved for Ripon College						
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
9 am Sunday School and World Religions 10:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship 12 pm Confirmation			11 am PEO mtg 12 pm Spire deadline 5:30 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion Group 6 pm NA meeting	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
9 am Sunday School and World Religions 9 am Chapel Chat 10:30 am Worship - Children's Sunday (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship 11:45 am Membership comm. 12 pm Confirmation		5:30 pm Community Dinner	5:30 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion Group 6 pm NA meeting	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
10:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship 12 pm Confirmation	Memorial Day		5:30 pm Youth Group	10:30 am Discussion Group 6 pm NA meeting	9 am Coffee at Mugs	5 pm Fellowship of the Grape

**Future Events:**

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month



## Get Connected on Facebook

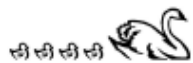
Want to learn more about what is going on at the church? Wish you could get updates and see photos about community outreach and other church events? It's easy! "Like" us on facebook at [www.facebook.com/RiponCongregationalUCC](http://www.facebook.com/RiponCongregationalUCC).

**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***

