



# The SPIRE



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

September 2022

*“It is he who made the earth by his power,  
who established the world by his wisdom  
and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.  
When he utters his voice, there is a tumult of wa-  
ters in the heavens,  
and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth.  
He makes lightning for the rain  
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.”*  
+ Jeremiah 10:12-13

and Fire—made up all matter was the cornerstone of philosophy, science, and medicine for two-thousand years. These elements also speak to human temperaments:

Air represents intellect, mental intention, and connection to universal life force.

Earth represents grounding, the foundation of life, substance, connection to life path, and family roots.

Fire represents energy, a tool for transformation, connection to personal power, and inner strength.

Water represents emotional release, intuition, and inner reflection.

Sometimes when life gets complicated, it's important to simplify, to get back to basics, to remember the essentials. The Prophet Jeremiah spent his life reminding the Israelites what mattered most in their relationship with God. He saw how the people of God got distracted, busy, and forgetful of God's love, justice, and mercy.

To remind the Israelites of some basics, truth, growth, love, and forgiveness, the elements of their faith, he used vivid imagery to describe God, such as a potter at a potting wheel shaping clay. Jeremiah also described how God commands the earth, water, lightning, and wind. (Jeremiah 10:12-13)

When we gather together on Sunday, I invite you to remind yourself of these basics, that they may transform your faith and life, and help you experience the love of God.

See you on Sunday!

—Pastor Jeffrey



Welcome back to church!

This September we will return to our 10:30 AM worship services, starting Sunday, September 4th. This is a wonderful time to regather ourselves after a summer of journeys, vacations, hard work, rest, renewal, and hopefully some fun!

As we kick off our fall ministries, I wish to invite you to think about the basics of our faith. What matters most in the building blocks of your belief in God? Throughout September we will explore the elements of faith using the four elements described in Greek philosophy: Water, Air, Fire, and Earth.

The idea that these four elements—Earth, Water, Air,

*In Our Thoughts  
& Prayers*

**Prayers for health and healing...**

**For Health & Healing:** Dawn Scholtens (cancer surgery); Nate Berndt (stomach surgery); Loren Boone (cancer); Cal Edwards (foot surgery); Katie Del Ponte's grandmother (fractured hip, dementia); Rose Marie Freeman (sister of Al Jarreau, health); Van Smith (stroke, heart issues); 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); all those experiencing health issues in need of prayer.

**Katie Del Ponte** has asked for prayers for Nate's Grandma, mom (heart attack), dad (travel), and Katie's Aunt Liz (bronchitis, small brain bleed), a cousin (seizures), and MaKenzie (treadmill injury).

Prayers for our **campers** at summer camp and for wonderful memories around campfires.

For the **Afghan family** we sponsor. The family has been in the USA for 1 year in August, and our 6 month sponsorship of the family ends this month. Our support for them will continue in an unofficial capacity.

For an end to gun violence.

For expanding women's health care choices rather than restricting choice.

*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.



## Spire Deadline

Our next Spire newsletter will be for September, 2022. The deadline is Wednesday, Sept. 21, 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 *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



## Congratulations

... to **Tom and Debbi Konecny** for the birth of their newest grandchild, **Emmett Finn Konecny**, born to **Ben and Caitlin Konecny** in Colorado on June 30!

... to **Marguerite Penick** for the birth of her newest grandchild, **Mason Daniel Lavin**, born to **Lizbet and Frank Lavin** on July 6!

## September 2022 Worship Schedule

**Sunday, August 28 | Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost | Guest Preacher - Nicole Henning Herda, MDiv.**

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

**Sunday, September 4 | Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost | Communion | Labor Day Weekend | Gathering of the Waters | Return to 10:30 Worship**

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

**Sunday, September 11 | Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost | Rally Sunday | Blessing of the Backpacks**

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

**Sunday, September 18 | Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

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

**Sunday, September 25 | Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

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

**Sunday, October 2 | Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**

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



*First Congo Kids Playdate and Movie • August 18 (another photo on p. 7)*



As you are traveling this summer, whether it is through the national parks or on a warm sunny day at Green Lake, gather some water and share it with the church. On September 4, we will gather the water and bless it and use it throughout the year during baptisms. Please label your water when you drop it off at the church office by August 28 with your name and the location where the water was gathered.





### *From the Outreach Committee*

Are you a gardener? Do you have knowledge about native plants? The church is looking for a few individuals who are interested in looking into installing a native plant and/or pollinator garden at the church. We have the opportunity to apply for a **Kairos Creation Care grant** from the Wisconsin Conference to fund the project. The ad hoc committee would look at the grant application, determine if it is appropriate to apply, and then make a garden plan to submit to the grant committee. If this is something you would be interested in helping with or you know someone whose skills and knowledge could be of assistance, please contact Erin Ter Beest at erin.terbeest@gmail.com or 920-344-6758.



**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 September 27.

### *Help Stock the Pantry*

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



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

The family of **Corinne Rasmussen** who passed away on Tuesday, May 3. Corinne and her husband Buzz attended our church for several years before moving to the Madison area a few years ago. Her husband Buzz was involved with the RHS girls' tennis program for several years, coached with Nicole Moniz, and mentored Laura Lyke who was one of his players. A memorial service for Corinne will be held at Olbrich Gardens in Madison on September 18 from 1-4 PM.

## A Postcard from the Past



In May this year our church received a lovely letter from Mr. Lowell Joerg (Google him, if you think of it) who sent us a 100+ year old postcard of our church. We are not the first church he has helped reconnect with a long sent postcard.

In an interview in the Pegasus Senior Living Magazine, Lowell describes his hobby “redistributing happiness” in which he reaches out to churches across the United States, helping them to connect to their past through postcards.

This idea began for Lowell in an antique store in Minnesota when he noticed a postcard from Pennsylvania with a picture of a church on it from 1907. On a whim, he bought the card and sent it back to the address listed on it. Little did he know that the church would be celebrating its one-hundredth anniversary and posted the card for everyone to see. To his surprise, the church also responded back to him graciously with kind words of thanks. Thereafter, he decided to continue with this practice, to bring happiness to as many good folks as he could. “The world needs positivity and joy and I’m trying to provide a little of it,” he explained.

He is 94 and has enjoyed this hobby for 30 years. We have sent him a thank you note and a donation to help cover his costs.

We hope you might enjoy the ray of sunshine he has shared with our church in this simple and wonderful gift.

Here is his letter as he wrote it to us:

Good Morning:

“Time has come round,” wrote Shakespeare, and indeed it has...

Sometime ago I was at an antique store and found this circa 1910 picture card of your beautiful church. I’m thinking you might enjoy it. At any rate, I hope it brightens your day.

I said to myself, “By golly, I’ll send it home where it can be appreciated.” Our heritage is important to all of us. Enlarged and posted it will create some nice conversation.

Well, I gave 6.00 for it so if you want it for 7.00 or 8.00 or so it will really be appreciated. Toss in a little postage if you want, too. My dear wife, now passed, used to laugh at me and say, “If you hear from those folks you’ll have to take me to lunch.”

On June 26th I’ll be celebrating my ninety-fourth birthday. I just don’t know where all that time went. But thank goodness I’m still going strong “as far as I know.”

By the way, I like to call my little hobby a “RE-DISTRIBUTION OF HAPPINESS.” Our world sure needs it.

Here’s wishing you and your congregation the very best,

Lowell Joerg  
Oaks Assisted Living  
6725 Inglewood Ave, Apt. 201  
Stockton CA 95209

PS: Oh, yes, my daughter says you can find me on GOOGLE but I never look.



## ***Guest Preacher for Sunday, August 28***

Nicole Henning Herda, M.Div.



Nicole is a recent graduate of Eden Theological Seminary of St. Louis, MO and Lakeland University. She is married and has one child, and lives in Two Rivers, WI. Nicole was a student at the Wisconsin Conference UCC's Lay Academy and has been active in the Wisconsin Conference UCC for much of her life. In April of this year Nicole completed an Ecclesiastical Council and has been approved for ordination in the United Church of Christ pending a call to serve a ministry. She is actively seeking her first call. Please welcome Nicole as our guest preacher on Sunday, August 28.



## ***Worship at Daycholah Sunday, Sept. 25***

Mark your Calendars!

We are returning to Daycholah Center (W1010 Spring Grove Rd.) for worship on Sunday, September 25. Please join us for a family friendly service at 10:30 AM in beautiful Ley Chapel on the shore of Green Lake, with a reception to follow. There will not be a worship service at First Congregational Church that Sunday, as we will be at Green Lake. Daycholah Center is one of our three church camps in Wisconsin (UCCI.Org) which offers sacred space in the beautiful outdoors. All are welcome!

## ***Puppet Ministry Opportunity***

Scott Street Puppet Ministry is looking for new members. If you are interested in helping spread God's word and love, please come check us out. We meet at 6:15pm on Tuesdays at Our Saviour's Church in the puppet room. We will start meeting again on Tuesday Sept 6th. There is no requirement other than to have fun. Stop in and check things out!

If you have any questions feel free to contact Jim Schultz at [schum-jm@hotmail.com](mailto:schum-jm@hotmail.com) or Amy Borgardt at [borgardt4@gmail.com](mailto:borgardt4@gmail.com). We look forward to having new members join us!

## ***Jeanne Williams to Retire***

First Congo Families,

It has been my privilege to serve as Director of Education at First Congregational for the past six years. Now it is time to pass that responsibility on to another person who will develop the program in new ways and continue the tradition of providing a welcoming space for children and their families at our church.

My teaching career has spanned decades and included children, youth, and young adults in a variety of educational settings. To be able to bring my skills and interests into the church setting and work with your children is the best capstone I can think of for that career. I thank you for letting me be part of your lives, for the privilege of knowing your children, and for the joy of sharing God's love with a new generation.

While I will step aside from my position at the church, I am not stepping away from First Congregational Church. You will see me at worship, at church events, and, after a bit of a respite, on church committees.

Blessings to you all,

Jeanne





## Faith Formation

### A New Sunday School Year Begins Soon

Our Sunday School year will begin with Rally Sunday and a blessing of backpacks and school bags on September 11th. During Fall Semester, we are going to use the “church school” model for our program. Kids will come to church with their families, attend the first part of the service, and then go to the classrooms for their Sunday School lessons and music. Sunday School staff will bring kids up to the Fellowship Hall at about 11:45, giving grown ups a bit of time to chat among themselves. The playground will be staffed during coffee hour when weather permits outdoor play.

As you plan your family schedule for the fall, we hope you will make attendance at Sunday School and worship a priority. Kids get the most out of Sunday School when they attend regularly, know the routines of our classes, and can see how the stories and concepts help us live meaningful lives.



### Why Sunday School Matters

- 1) Kids learn the stories of our faith and the worship practices (prayer, liturgy, music, stewardship, etc.) that help us walk in Christ’s footsteps.
- 2) Kids learn how to be a member of a church family that does good works and cares for its members, its local community, and the world.
- 3) Kids develop deep relationships with other children and caring adults, and they see how their parents make and maintain relationships with others.
- 4) Kids learn from the creativity and perspectives of others, and learn to value people with different life experiences.

5) Kids and youth learn to have respectful discussions about faith, religion, values, and other tough topics.

6) Kids learn that Christianity is an important part of their family’s culture and traditions.

Each week you make a choice about coming to church and Sunday School. Every time you choose to come, your children see that you value being part of our First Congo church family. We hope you will choose to come often. We miss you when you aren’t here.

Blessings and best wishes as you begin a new academic year,

— Miss Jeanne, Faith Formation



## Plastic Recycling

Our church is involved in two recycling programs for the next six months. The Trex program involves collecting plastic film products (grocery and produce bags, bubble wrap and plastic mailers, product overwraps for paper products and water bottles, and bags from salt. We have handouts that list the projects to be collected available for you to take home. Our goal for the Trex program is to collect 500 pounds of plastic film by January 31, 2023. In return, the Trex corporation will give us a bench made from recycled plastics for our playground.

In addition, during the same time we will collect...

- mechanical pencils
- Glue stick tubes and caps
- Markers and caps
- Highlighters and caps
- Stick pens and caps
- Watercolor containers

Packaging from these products will be recycled by the Bic corporation. Look for containers by the church entrances and in the Fellowship Hall.



**RECYCLE BEYOND THE BAG**

Recycle your household bags & wrap into Trex's Earth-friendly composite decking and railing!

**FROM THE STORE**

- ✓ Produce bags
- ✓ Store bags
- ✓ Ice bags

**FROM YOUR PANTRY**

- ✓ Ziploc® & other reclosable bags
- ✓ Cereal box liners
- ✓ Case overwrap
- ✓ Bread bags

**FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR**

- ✓ Newspaper sleeves
- ✓ Dry cleaning bags
- ✓ Bubble wrap
- ✓ Plastic e-commerce mailers

Plastics must be clean, dry and free of food and organic residue.

**RECYCLED IN AMERICA** **NexTrex**

[trex.com/recycling](http://trex.com/recycling) 1-800-Buy-Trex





***“Who assigned me to do coffee hour?”***

***“Why am I a lector?”***

***“I didn’t sign up to be an usher.”***

Such sentiments have been expressed lately, particularly by folks who are relative newcomers to our church.

On behalf of the Worship Committee, I apologize that we haven’t made a better effort to share with you how we all participate in serving our church during worship time. Or that you weren’t told when you joined the church that membership in a Congregational setting includes responsibilities to help out on an occasional Sunday morning.

Many years ago we had sign-up sheets for folks to volunteer to be ushers, lectors or bring “coffee-hour” eats. That didn’t work very well as the sheets had many vacancies.

So about 8-10 years ago we created an “opt-out” system where we signed folks up to help out, without their permission, with the understanding that they could “opt out” of those tasks for which they felt unqualified or uncomfortable. This has worked well and assured that no burden falls too heavily on any one individual or family.

So while we are grateful for your continued help on Sunday mornings, please be assured that should you have a task you’re not comfortable doing or are not available to do during a particular stretch of time, you can let church administrative assistant Ashley know so that she doesn’t include you on future volunteer charts. The corollary also is possible: If you’d like to do something not on the chart, please let Ashley know, too!

Reminder that if you are signed up to help out on a Sunday, please find your own substitute if you are unable to serve.

Thanks all, for recognizing that “many hands make light work” (Nehemiah 3:8).

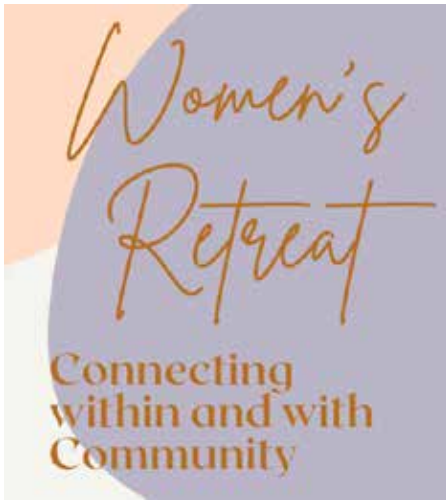
— Tim Lyke on behalf of the Worship Committee

## ***How to Host Coffee Fellowship, in Six Easy Steps***

1. Make the coffee. (20-30 minutes ahead of time, get those pots a-goin.’ We put up a sign in the kitchen to help with the measurements: 1/2 cup coffee grounds for every 10 “cups” of coffee, or 1.5 cups for a full 30-cup pot.)
2. Heat water for tea.
3. Put out cups, napkins, plates, spoons/stir sticks, tea bags, cream and sugar. (Disposables are OK; let the office know if we’re running low on any supplies.)
4. Provide juice and/or a jug of water for kids.
5. Provide light snacks. We’re not expecting a catered meal! Please try to include something that’s gluten-free; some folks need that option.
6. Clean up. Put garbage in bins. Drain and wash coffee pot and any non-disposable dishes. Wipe down counters and table-tops and put the Fellowship Hall back in order.

Thank you for hosting!





### Women's Retreat at Daycholah Center

Friday, Sept 23 | 5 PM -Sunday, Sept 25 | 12 PM

Sponsored by Women's Sharing Table, First Congregational Church

These past two years have been a challenge for all of us. Many of us struggle with all the shifts and losses that have occurred. Relationships have been lost or changed, and core values have been rocked. However, little shifts are happening all the time to guide our new normal. It is time to reconnect with our higher selves, to others with whom we are forming new communities, and to our environment. These connections are invaluable and will allow you to set a reinvigorated tone for your life.

This retreat is designed to nourish, restore, and inspire you. Within a safe and intimate group of fellow wise women in the beautiful setting of Daycholah Center on Green Lake, you can create:

- Inner strength
- Mindfulness
- Nature awareness
- Connection to other women

Brochures and registration forms for this event will be available in the church office. \$200 per person covers meals, lodging, and activities.

### Worship Volunteer Schedule

Date	Lector	Ushers/Greeters	Worship Slides	Coffee Fellowship Hosts
Sept. 4	Lynn Grout-Paul	Julie & Lyle Mathias	Erik Dietrich	Del Ponte and Reilly/Henke
Sept. 11	Grace Retzlaff	Youth/Confirmands	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Boscaljon and Osteen
Sept. 18	AVAILABLE	Erik & Kurt Dietrich	Erik Dietrich	Iserman and Konecny
Sept. 25	Susan Osteen	Judy & Bill Neill	Katie Del Ponte	Dodson and Williams
Oct. 2	Debbi Konecny	Tom Moniz/Mike Boscaljon	Dan Volkmann	Capelle and Manuel families-
Oct. 9	Dan Volkmann	Seidler-Halwas Family	Marguerite Penick	Kenton and Penick families
Oct. 16	Janis Edwards	Amber Dalziel/Ashley Dodson	Tim Lyke	Prellwitz and Solberg families
Oct. 23	Andy Prellwitz	AVAILABLE	Tim Lyke	Neill and Grout-Paul
Oct. 30	Penny Allard	Barb Mitchell/M&S Wittler	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Grady and Dalziel 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!

# SEPTEMBER 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
9:30 am Worship 9:45 am First Congo Kids 10:30 am Fellowship			5:30 pm Youth	6 pm NA meeting 7 pm RC Choral Union	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	Labor Day (Office closed)		5:30 pm Youth	6 pm NA meeting 7 pm RC Choral Union	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
10:30 am Worship - Rally Sunday 10:45 am Sunday School 11:30 am Fellowship 12 pm Worship Committee		5 pm Sharing the Table at Grace 6:30 pm Cabinet meeting	5:30 pm Youth	6 pm NA meeting 7 pm Membership Committee 7 pm RC Choral Union	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
10:30 am Worship 10:45 am Sunday School 11:30 am Fellowship			8:30 am PEO meeting 12 pm Spire deadline 5:30 pm Youth	6 pm NA meeting 7 pm RC Choral Union	9 am Coffee at Mugs 1 pm wedding rehearsal  Women's Retreat at Daycholah 5 pm Friday - noon Sunday	1 pm Palmer/Waltenberry wedding
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>
10:30 am Worship - Daycholah Center 10:45 am Sunday School 11:30 am Fellowship		5:30 pm Community Dinner	5:30 pm Youth	6 pm NA meeting 7 pm RC Choral Union	9 am Coffee at Mugs	Mental Health First Aid training



## 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).



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**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***

