



# The SPIRE



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

June/July 2023

*“The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” —John 3:8*

## Breeze

“Ugh!” I said as I pried the window open in our kitchen. After a long winter and fickle spring, it was time to open the windows in the house and let in a fresh wind. The weather outside was finally cooperating, so it was time for the storm windows to get opened to air out the house and let our family enjoy the sweet Wisconsin weather this time of year (at least before the 90 degree days start up with all the humidity)!

Opening the windows, however, was not a breeze in our 1893 Queen Anne Victorian home we purchased in 2020. The ancient windows groaned and creaked as I tried to “gently” force them open. The paint on the windows in some places needed a razor blade to separate wood from wood. Time had sealed up the windows such that they declined to cooperate. They were not very forgiving.

I huffed and I puffed and tried to push the kitchen window open without breaking the glass. At last (after I uttered some encouragement to the window, which I cannot repeat here) the window relented and rose a few inches before becoming stuck again. I pushed and nudged the window again. A couple of more inches. Repeat. Finally I got the window open. But the character of the window was such that if I let go, the whole window pane would come crashing down, probably sealing itself shut again. With this consequence in mind, I bore the weight of the old heavy window as I reached for the wooden dowel we use to prop it open, and wedged it in place.

“Ah! The fresh breeze!” I exclaimed as sweat poured down my forehead. It felt good to enjoy the fruits of my late spring labor.

## The Spirit

Jesus tells us that the Spirit is fickle. It is like the wind that blows wherever it may, and where it goes, no one knows. We can hear it, experience it, feel its breeze on our face coming in through the window. But we do not know where it comes from or where it goes. The Spirit is full of mystery, and it surprises us. So too, Jesus says, are those born of the spirit. They go to new places. Try new things. Show up unexpectedly, or maybe just when we need them.

The Holy Spirit, it seems, is out there doing its thing, just like the wind, but it takes some work to notice it, or to know what you’re looking for. Jesus puts it this way: To see the divine in the world, you must open yourself to the divine. To be “born” of it. Instead of solely seeing our lives in terms of what we own (or don’t) and how successful we have been (or not),

Jesus wants us to not focus on the perfect lawfulness of our lives, but on the playful gentleness of love and grace. When we conform to this world, as Nicodemus has done, we can do everything “right” and still feel lost. Jesus says the answer is not what we have built (such as a Victorian house, a successful business, a comfy retirement), but what God has built (God’s kingdom, love, justice, kindness).

There is a whole divine world out there, like the sweet summertime breeze wisping away through the trees. But if we are stuck up inside the perfect lives we’ve built, there’s no way for us to feel the Spirit move. We need to open a window.

The windows of our hearts, however, can sometimes be stuck and unrelenting, like the antique windows of a Victorian home. Opening them to let the wind in is not impossible, like Nicodemus thought. The windows of our hearts need to be coaxed and nudged, in just the right way, to allow for God’s fresh Spirit to blow into our lives, and delight us.



## In Our Thoughts & Prayers

### Prayers for health and healing...

**Carla McNair** (hospice); **Marguerite Penick** (compound fracture both bones in left arm); **Barb Mitchell's Nephew** (health); **Lynn Grout-Paul** (health); **Tammi Kenton** (cancer surgery, chemo & radiation); **Gary Scholtens** (cancer); **Hunter** (health); **Ken Hill** (cancer & surgery); **Wayne Larson** (health); **Marilyn Lehnher** (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); **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 peace in **Ukraine and Russia** and around the world.

Prayers for safe travels for several members of our church as they travel to Australia with Barlow Park Charter School: **Katie Grady, Rachel** and **Dave Minch.**

Prayers for **Marilyn Lehnher** who moved in April to Willowbrook Apartments, 615 W Oshkosh Street in Ripon.

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



## June Birthdays

- 5 Seine Solberg
- 16 Sam Solberg
- 17 Bev Christ  
Stella Grady
- 20 Nate Berndt
- 22 Blaze Manuel
- 24 Piper Boscailon  
Andy Prellwitz
- 27 Judy Neill
- 30 Ainslie Dodson

## July Birthdays

- 1 Peggy Freeman
- 2 Susan Osteen
- 9 Abigail Minch
- 11 John Dalziel
- 12 Jack Christ  
Kameron DelPonte
- 16 Preona Capelle
- 20 Deanna Boone
- 21 Ed Scholtens
- 23 Tom Moniz
- 24 Katie DelPonte
- 25 Lou Scholtens
- 27 Finnegan Grady
- 29 Casey Ter Beest
- 31 LaVonne Butler

## Our Condolences

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

**Todd**, cousin of **Susan Osteen**, passed away at 61 the first week of June after 2 years battling COVID. Prayers for his family and for the medical debt they have incurred.

**Bob Amsden, Jeanne Williams**, and family of **Don Amsden**, who passed away on April 28, just weeks after celebrating his 106th birthday.



- 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

## *Prayers of Joy*

**Oaklyn Ann Minch** was born to **Samantha and Kyle Minch** on June 2, 2023.

**Audrey Conant** celebrated her 94th birthday on May 27.

**Tom Moniz** was recognized by Insight Magazine as a “40 Under 40” inspiring business leader in the New North of Wisconsin.

Students who have graduated this past month:

- **Grace Retzlaff**, RHS. Will attend UW-LaCrosse in the fall. Grace is receiving a \$1,000 scholarship from our church. Grace is working at Daycholah Center this summer.
- **David Lyke**, University of Notre Dame with a Master’s of Science in Engineering, Science, and Technology Entrepreneurship.
- **Andrea Aul**, Mayo Clinic Residency. Will move to Green Lake with her husband, Bryce, this summer.
- First Congo’s new **wildflower garden** and all the volunteers who helped plant on June 4. Thank you!
- **Barb Mitchell and Wendy Smith** for hosting Fellowship of the Grape on June 3.

## *Spire Deadline*

Our next Spire newsletter will be for Aug/Sept, 2023. The deadline for submissions is Wednesday, July 19, at noon. Please submit materials to the church office, or email to Maria Dietrich at [dietrich.maria@gmail.com](mailto:dietrich.maria@gmail.com).

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But once we start to open our hearts up to the Spirit blowing through our lives, we will know that the tedious task of opening up was well worth it.

### **A Spirited Summer Adventure**

Our Summer worship features the sermon series Spirited Summer: A Season of Wind, Water, and Flame. Every 4 weeks we will journey with the Spirit and one of these spirit elements, discovering the Good News in our lives of where the Spirit is leading us.

Following the Spirit where it leads is an adventure, and I want us to literally take an adventure this summer. Where will the Spirit take you? Who knows. I just know that wherever you go and whatever you do, God will go with you and be with you. Just be ready to say “yes!” to that new wind blowing in your life!

### **Summer Bucket List**

To help us with our Spirited Summer adventures, I have created a space on our church facebook page for posting what might be on your summer bucket list. What do you want to do this summer? Where do you want to go? What might you want to accomplish or discover? Where have you been and what have you been doing?

I invite you to list what is on your summer bucket list on our facebook page, and let others know where you hope the Spirit might take you over the next few months, or the surprising places you have been led. Go to our facebook page and begin sharing what is on your **Summer Bucket List**:

<https://www.facebook.com/RiponCongregationalUCC>

Here is to being of the Spirit, and going where it sends you,



—Pastor Jeffrey

## *The Pastor’s Bookshelf: What is Pastor Jeffrey reading this month?*

### *May*

- The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving by Lisa Miller
- Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha by Tara Brach
- Live Wire: Long-Winded Short Stories by Kelly Ripa
- Red Hot Living: Becoming a JOYful Badass Sager by Lynn Young
- Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others by Barbara Brown Taylor

### *June*

- The Power of Vulnerability: Teachings of Authenticity, Connections and Courage (Audio) by Brene Brown
- The Ten Trusts: What We Must do to Care for The Animals We Love by Jane Goodall
- Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey by Jane Goodall
- Learning Humility: A Year of Searching for a Vanishing Virtue by Richard J. Foster
- Promises to Keep: On Life and Politics by Joe Biden
- There Is No Good Card for This: What To Say and Do When Life Is Scary, Awful, and Unfair to People You Love by Kelsey Crowe and Emily McDowell



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

**COLLECTED  
381.8 LBS**

**GOAL: 500 LBS**



**FELLOWSHIP OF  
THE GRAPE**

**Saturday, July 1 from 5-6:30 p.m.  
hosted by Bill & Judy Neill**

FOG is an opportunity for adults from our church community to get together informally, enjoy some refreshments and each other's company. We'll gather on the first Saturday of each month from 5-6:30 p.m. (adults only). The host offers to hold the gathering at their home or another location such as the church or Vines and Rushes or even a pontoon boat, etc. RSVPs are appreciated for planning purposes, but not required.

You bring a bottle of wine or beverage of your choice. The host provides paper products, glasses and an appetizer or two. A couple of guests also bring an appetizer.

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

Thanks,

The Membership Committee



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. Please label your water when you drop it off with your name and location where the water was gathered for the blessing on September 3rd!

**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.



**Coffee Hour Supplies Needed**

Can you help stock our supply of coffee hour supplies?

We are in need of: wooden coffee stir sticks, 8 oz juice/ water cups, napkins, plates, and individual liquid creamers. Please drop off items in the kitchen. Please no styrofoam products.



**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 June 27 and July 25, serving at 5:30 p.m.

**DISCUSSION  
GROUP**  
Thursdays at 10:30

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!



**NEW**

## **First Congo Ripon Book Club**

Join our new Book Study Group on Facebook! We will be featuring great books to read, scheduling in-person times to meet up and talk about those great books, and engaging one another in our favorite quotes or recommending a new book to read. Join this group by going to our church Facebook page: [Facebook.com/RiponCongregationalUCC](https://www.facebook.com/RiponCongregationalUCC) or click here to request to join the group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/211201561811804>



## **Help Stock the Pantry**

During the month of June, the food pantry would appreciate your donations of peanut butter, jelly, applesauce, and canned fruit. For July: pancake mix, syrup, and juice. Ongoing needs include paper grocery bags, peanut butter, and personal toiletry items such as 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

# **Spirited Summer: A Season of Wind, Water, and Flame**

**June 18 to July 9 - Flame**

**July 16 to August 6 - Wind**

**August 13 to September 3 - Water**

**Sunday, June 4 | Pride Sunday | Communion**

9:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship online

**Sunday, June 11 | Baptized by Wind, Water, and Flame | Baptism of Caleb West (son of Connor and Bailey Hoch West)**

*Luke 3:1-22, John Baptizes Jesus*

9:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship online

**Sunday, June 18 | Spirit & Flame: Kicking Off The Shoes | Fathers' Day**

*Exodus 3, Moses and the Burning Bush*

9:30 am Worship in-person & Summer Sunday School | 4:00 pm Worship online

**Sunday, June 25 | Spirit & Flame: Some Rules to Follow**

*Deuteronomy 5, The 10 Commandments from the Fire of Mt Sinai*

9:30 am Worship in-person & Summer Sunday School | 4:00 pm Worship online

**Sunday, July 2 | Spirit & Flame: Dancing When It's Hot | Communion**

*Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*

9:30 am Worship in-person & Summer Sunday School | 4:00 pm Worship online

**Sunday, July 9 | Spirit & Flame: Heated Encouragement**

*Hebrews 12, God is a Consuming Fire*

9:30 am Worship in-person & Summer Sunday School | 4:00 pm Worship online

**Sunday, July 16 | Spirit & Wind: How to Begin Again**

*Ecclesiastes 1, Vanity of Vanities*

9:30 am Worship in-person & Summer Sunday School | 4:00 pm Worship online

**Sunday, July 23 | Spirit & Wind: The Perils of Paul | VBS Celebration**

*Selections from the Book of Acts*

9:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship online

**Sunday, July 30 | Spirit & Wind: Nothing Can Separate Us | Joint Worship Service with Our Saviour's UCC**

*Romans 8:26-39, The Spirit Intercedes*

9:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship online

**Sunday, August 6 | Spirit & Wind: Sails & Rudders | Communion**

*James 3, Wisdom from Above*

9:30 am Worship in-person | 4:00 pm Worship online





## *Faith Formation - Sunday School News*

### **Summer Sunday School - Journeys and Adventures - After the Children's Moment in the Worship Service Sunday June 10 - July 16, 2023, during worship**

On June 10th, we will begin a six week Summer Sunday School session. Children will come down to the classrooms after the Children's Moment. We will read books on the theme of Journeys and Adventures and create artwork and stories on that theme. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to bring visiting friends or family.

### **Vacation Bible School and Summer Musical - The Perils of Paul - July 17-20,**

**9-noon | Auditions and Musical Practice Sundays June 25, July 9, and July 16 at 11:00 AM**

You've heard of Paul's encounter with Jesus on the Road to Damascus. Paul was quite the traveler and children will learn about his many travels and work with congregations in VBS stories and activities and also through the songs and script of a musical—The Perils of Paul. Auditions and musical practice will take place after church on several Sundays in late June and July with dedicated practice during our VBS sessions. The musical will be presented to the congregation at our VBS celebration and potluck dinner on Thursday, July 20th.

### **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.

### **Camp Scholarships Available - Daycholah is more affordable than you might think!**

If you are thinking about having your kids attend a camp session at Daycholah Center, financial help is available through the camp itself, the Northeast Association of the Wisconsin Conference of the UCC, and through our own First Congregational Church Campership fund. Please contact Pastor Jeffrey to find out more.

— 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>
June 4	Ed Scholtens	Rachel & Dave Minch	Tim Lyke	Dodson and Solberg
June 11	Andy Lyke	Dan & Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Tim Lyke	Iserman and Neill families
June 18	Jack Christ	Katie & Ben Grady	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Nelson/Harper and Grady
June 25	Katie Berndt	Barb Mitchell/Amber Dalziel	Gary Scholtens	AVAILABLE
July 2	Loren Boone	Grace and Ruth Retzlaff	Daniel Volkmann	Hones and Seidler-Halwas
July 9	Tammi Kenton	Michele & Skip Wittler	Erik Dietrich	Boscaljon and Osteen
July 16	Barb Mitchell	Tony Reilly & Scott Henke	Katie Del Ponte	Edwards and Flasch
July 23	Ruth Retzlaff	Justus Paul & Lynn Grout-Paul	Tim Lyke	Mitchell and Kenton
July 30	Rachel Minch	Tom & Debbi Konecny	Gary Scholtens	Lyke and Lyke

*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!

# JUNE/JULY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>28</b> 10:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 11:30 am Fellowship	<b>29</b> Memorial Day	<b>30</b> 11:30 Ripon Noon Kiwanis	<b>31</b> 8:30 am Cross- roads breakfast 5:30 pm Youth	<b>June 1</b> LGBTQ+ Pride month 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>2</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>3</b> 5-6:30 pm Fel- lowship of the Grape
<b>4</b> 9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 5:30 pm Youth Group	<b>8</b> 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>9</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Outreach comm 11 am Worship committee	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 5 pm Sharing Table at Grace 6:30 pm Cabinet meeting	<b>14</b> Flag Day 5:30 pm Youth Group	<b>15</b> 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>16</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> <b>Happy Fathers' Day!</b> 9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Membership comm.	<b>19</b> Juneteenth	<b>20</b> 10 am WCUCC Historical commit- tee meeting 7:30 pm RACT board meeting	<b>21</b> 5:30 pm Youth Group	<b>22</b> 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>23</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>24</b> 1 pm Cooke baby shower
<b>25</b> 9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 5:30 pm Commu- nity Dinner	<b>28</b> 5:30 pm Youth 7 pm GLFM concert, Balour- det String Quartet	<b>29</b> 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>30</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>July 1</b> 5-6:30 pm Fel- lowship of the Grape
<b>2</b> 9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 	<b>5</b> 5:30 pm Youth Group	<b>6</b> 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>7</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Outreach comm 12 pm Worship committee	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 5:30 pm Youth Group	<b>13</b> 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>14</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Membership comm	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 12 pm Spire Deadline 5:30 pm Youth Group	<b>20</b> 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>21</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 5:30 pm Commu- nity Dinner	<b>26</b> 5:30 pm Youth Group	<b>27</b> 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>28</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 9:30 am Worship (4 pm online) 10:30 am Fellowship	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 5:30 pm Youth Group	<b>3</b> 10:30 am Discussion grp 6 pm NA meeting	<b>4</b> 9:30 am Cof- fee at Mugs	<b>5</b> 5-6:30 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***

