



The SPIRE

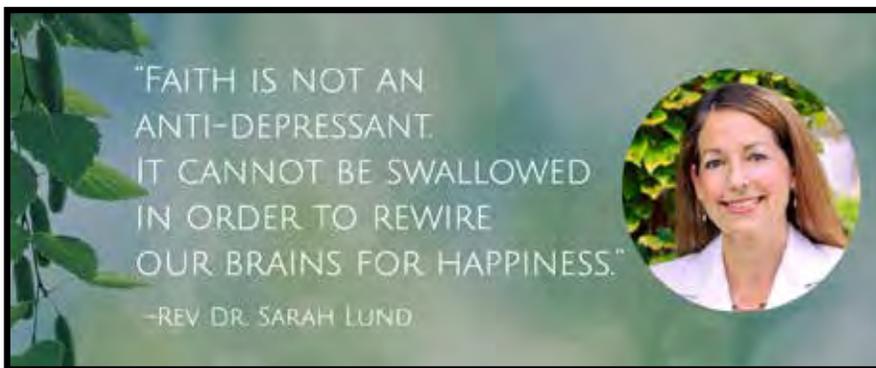


First Congregational Church of Ripon • 220 Ransom Street • Ripon, Wisconsin 54971
☎ 920-748-5898 • office@riponcongregationalucc.org • www.riponcongregationalucc.org

July 2022

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” — John 13:34

The church can be a major resource for people navigating mental health issues. However we should not substitute going to church with getting medical help for mental illness. Rev. Lund said, “Faith is not an anti-depressant. It cannot be swallowed in order to rewire our brains for happiness.” Rather our faith communities can act as support systems in the midst of receiving good health care for our minds from professionals. The church and medical professionals can work together to address mental health issues in our community.



As your pastor, I attended the Wisconsin Conference UCC Annual Meeting, June 10-12, 2022 at the Green Lake Conference Center. This year’s theme was “Building up the Beloved Community.” Recognizing the toll that the pandemic has taken on congregations, pastors and lay leaders, the meeting focused on tending to both individual and congregational wellness, lifting up best practices and good strategies for fostering healthy church dynamics and challenging our leaders to think in fresh ways about the Church. It was a beautiful three days of worship, workshops, business, and plenary sessions. We had several wonderful guest speakers, as well as presentations from conference staff and ministry leaders.

I especially enjoyed the keynote presentation by Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund. She spoke about Good Enough Love. She reminded us that only God’s love is perfect. Yet, sometimes we put too much pressure on ourselves and others to be perfect. What if there is another way, a “good enough” way, to love? By focusing on building beloved communities of good enough love, we make space for everyone to belong, including our imperfect selves.

Rev. Sarah Lund’s mission is to partner with others to share hope and healing. She serves as Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health Justice on the national staff of the UCC and as senior pastor of First Congregational UCC of Indianapolis, IN. In January of 2022, Sarah joined the US Department of Health and Human Services national Think Tank about faith communities and youth mental health. Sarah is the author of several books about mental health: *Blessed are the Crazy: Breaking the Silence About Mental Illness, Family, and Church* (2014), *Blessed Union: Breaking the Silence About Mental Illness and Marriage* (2021), and *Blessed Youth: Breaking the Silence About Mental Illness with Children and Teens* (2022), and a pocket-sized book for youth: *Blessed Youth Survival Guide* (2022). Sarah blogs at www.sarahgriffithlund.com.

I have copies of all of Rev. Lund’s books if you would like to read one of them. Her keynote address laid the groundwork for why our conference and our churches need to talk about Mental Health. She shared how her father had an undiagnosed mental health condition (bipolar disorder) which her family had to navigate as she grew up.

Continued on p. 3

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Prayers for health and healing...

For Health & Healing: **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.

For the **Afghan family** we sponsor.

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 August, 2022. The deadline is Wednesday, July 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 Patzloff*
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:
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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

Continued from page 1

Her pocketbook for youth, *Blessed Youth Survival Guide*, is dedicated to Rev. Lund's 16 year old niece, Sydney, who sadly died by suicide in November 2020. It is her hope, and mine as well, that our churches can be safe and supportive faith communities for all families facing mental health issues.

Mental health matters. It is no surprise that the past two years have wreaked havoc on everyone's stress levels, and we have all needed to focus on self-care and resiliency. The question was asked, "What have we done as a church to promote mental health and spiritual care during this time?" I would love to hear your perspectives and learn what we are doing well, and what we can improve.

Our denomination offers resources and staff to assist congregations in addressing mental health issues within their communities. The United Church of Christ Mental Health Network is a ministry of our wider church that equips and supports churches for addressing mental health issues. (www.mhn-ucc.org)

The UCC Mental Health Network works to reduce stigma and promote the inclusion of people with mental illnesses/brain disorders and their families in the life, leadership and work of congregations. Together we envision a future in which people with mental illnesses feel welcomed, supported, valued and included in their congregations.

With a vision for greater mental health support in our churches, the Wisconsin Conference UCC has brought forth a resolution encouraging local churches to learn about becoming a W.I.S.E. congregation

July 2022 Worship Schedule

Sunday, July 3 | Fourth Sunday after Pentecost | Communion | 4th of July weekend

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

Sunday, July 10 | New Member Joining Sunday | Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

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

Sunday, July 17 | Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

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

Sunday, July 24 | Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

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

Sunday, July 31 | Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

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

Sunday, August 7 | Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, Communion

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

(A WISE congregation has joined the mission to being Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged in the Mental Health of the community and the wider world) through prayer and study. The Wisconsin Conference UCC will return to this resolution next June 2023 and take a vote to become a W.I.S.E. conference. Our church can participate in this important work, and the good news is that our church is already exploring ways to better support mental health here in Ripon.

We are a vibrant and active conference of the United Church of Christ, and it was a blessing to hear from leaders across the state about the ministries they have been engaged in over the past few years. This was the first in-person Annual Meeting since 2019, and we had a lot to share and a lot to celebrate as the United Church of Christ.

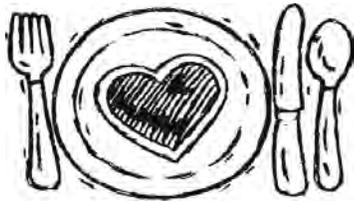
With the help of local churches addressing local community issues and state-wide issues, especially around mental health, we will have many more things to celebrate in the year to come.

—Pastor Jeffrey



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!



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 July 26.

Help Stock the Pantry

During the month of July, the food pantry would appreciate your donations of pancake mix, syrup, and juice. 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 **Sherrie Lamb** who passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, June 25, the morning of what was to be her wedding day.

Lou Scholtens, whose sister Barbara Koskamp passed away in Iowa on June 15

The family of **Ardis Mitchell**, who passed away on April 24. We hold the Mitchell family in prayer: **Sue & Dave Conant, Bette, Barb Mitchell, Garrett**, and other family. A memorial service is scheduled for July 9, 2022, at 1:00 pm in the Vesper Circle, at Green Lake Conference Center.



"With liberty and justice for all."

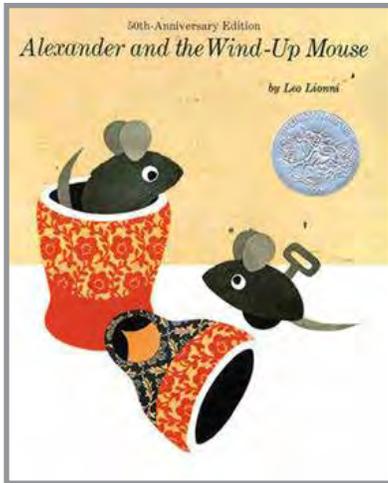
perhaps
you were
created for
such a time
as this

Faith Formation



Summer Church School Continues — Grace in the Stories of Leo Lionni Children ages 3-11 are welcome to join Miss Jeanne and Miss Lydia for our Summer Church School program each Sunday. Following the Children's Moment in our Sunday Service, children come to the classrooms for storytime, music, and activities. Storytime will feature classic picturebooks by Leo Lionni and music will feature Old Testament songs. With each story, we are asking the question, "What is the grace in this story?" In this way, the children can begin to understand how

grace comes into our lives in our everyday activities and learning. After music time with Miss Lydia, children will go out to the playground, and they will join the grownups for coffee hour at the end of the church service.



A take-home activity related to the story will be given to the children each Sunday. This will allow the children to share the stories we have read with their families.

First Congo families will also receive a book of six Leo Lionni stories to add to their family library and share with their children.

We hope you will join us for our Summer Church School program!

VBS - July 18-21st - Tales of an Ancient King

To continue with our Old Testament Sunday School learning, our Vacation Bible School will feature stories about King David. Each day will include storytime, activities, arts and crafts, music, and practice for our concluding play about David and Jonathan's special friendship. Look for details and registration information coming through email and USPS in the next few weeks. Children are

welcome to invite friends and family to join them at VBS.

On Thursday, July 21st, VBS will conclude with a presentation of our play at 5:30 and a family picnic at the church.

Rally Sunday - September 11, 2022 - We will begin a new year of Sunday School with an emphasis on learning about the New Testament

—Jeanne Williams, Faith Formation

From Sea to Shining Sea





*Congrats to Grace Retzlaff for completing a trip to Alaska with her Girl Scout Troop!
Grace is pictured above, second from the left.*

Worship Volunteer Schedule

Date	Lector	Ushers/Greeters	Worship Slides	Coffee Fellowship Hosts
July 3	Katie Grady	Jeanne Williams/Janet Vossekuil	Marguerite Penick	Volkman & Hones families
July 10	Tammi Kenton	Michele & Skip Wittler	Gary Scholtens	Moniz & Allard families
July 17	Marguerite Penick	Tony Reilly & Scott Henke	Gary Scholtens	Dietrich & Wittler families
July 24	Ruth Retzlaff	Youth/Confirmants	Sarah Seidler-Halwas	Christian Education comm.
July 31	Rachel Minch	Tom & Debbi Konecny	Erik Dietrich	Edwards & Flasch families
August 7	Dan Volkman	Billie Jean & Sasiwo Manuel	Katie Del Ponte	Minch & Mathias families
Aug. 14	Marguerite Penick	Lou & Ed Scholtens	Tim Lyke	Seidler-Halwas & Retzlaff
Aug. 21	Casey Ter Beest	Tony Reilly & Scott Henke	Marguerite Penick	Scholtens & Scholtens
Aug. 28	Grace Retzlaff	Barb & Todd Splittgaber	Gary Scholtens	Lyke & Lyke 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!

JULY 2022

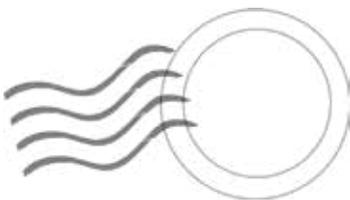
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
9:30 am Worship 9:45 am First Congo Kids 10:30 am Fellowship	5 pm Ripon Community Theatre rehearsal (RACT)	5:30 pm Community Dinner	5 pm RACT rehearsal 5:30 pm Youth	5 pm RACT rehearsal 6 pm NA meeting	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9:30 am Worship 9:45 am First Congo Kids 10:30 am Fellowship	Office closed 	5 pm RACT rehearsal	5 pm RACT rehearsal 5:30 pm Youth	5 pm RACT rehearsal 6 pm NA meeting	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9:30 am Worship 9:45 am First Congo Kids 10:30 am Fellowship	5 pm RACT rehearsal	5 pm Sharing the Table at Grace 6:30 pm Cabinet meeting	5 pm RACT rehearsal 5:30 pm Youth	5 pm RACT rehearsal 6 pm NA meeting	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9:30 am Worship 9:45 am First Congo Kids 10:30 am Fellowship	9 am VBS 5 pm RACT rehearsal	9 am VBS	9 am VBS 12 pm Spire deadline 5 pm RACT rehearsal 5:30 pm Youth	9 am VBS 5 pm RACT rehearsal 5:30 pm VBS finale 6 pm NA meeting 7 pm Membership Committee	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
9:30 am Worship 9:45 am First Congo Kids 10:30 am Fellowship	5 pm RACT rehearsal	5:30 pm Community Dinner	5 pm RACT rehearsal 5:30 pm Youth	5 pm RACT rehearsal 6 pm NA meeting	9 am Coffee at Mugs	
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
9:30 am Worship 9:45 am First Congo Kids 10:30 am Fellowship			5:30 pm Youth	6 pm NA meeting	9 am Coffee at Mugs	

Future Events:
Sept. 4 return to 10:30 am Worship
Sept. 11 Rally Sunday



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.



Paper and ink and postage - oh my! If you're getting a hard copy of this Spire and would prefer an electronic version, please give the church office your email address. Send it to office@ripcongregationalucc.org. Thanks!

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

