

Name of Church
 First Congregational Church of Ripon UCC

Address
 220 Ransom St
 Ripon, WI 54971

Conference:
 Wisconsin

Association:
 Northeast (Wisconsin)

Title
 Pastor

Start Date
 August 1

Description
 Pastor

Church Contact Information

Phone: (920) 748-5898
 Email: Office@riponcongregationalucc.org

Listing Information

Web Presences

<http://www.riponcongregationalucc.org> Type: Other

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

No response

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name:
 Jane Anderson

Title:
 Rev.

Phone:
 (920) 540-2586

Email:
janderson@wcucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

First Congregational Church of Ripon is a spirited, historic, and Open and Affirming congregation in the Ripon area and is located adjacent to the Ripon College campus. Rooted in faith, guided by love, and called to justice, our church is committed to inclusive ministry, thoughtful worship, and community service. We believe we currently are at a pivotal point in our history. Our church recognizes it is time to think outside the box; to provide more engaging, relevant sermons that connect and speak to people's contemporary situations; to offer an innovative worship style; to implement a wider variety of music; to incorporate new and exciting ways to involve the congregation and attract new members, especially young families; and deepen our partnership with Ripon College. If an academic need aligns with the candidate's qualifications, Ripon College will consider an adjunct instructor appointment. We are seeking a courageous spiritual leader who is a dynamic and effective speaker, one who will connect current present-day issues with scripture and leave our congregation with a relatable message to contemplate and inspire them as they head into their work week.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

Education:

Ripon College: speakers, concerts, art exhibits, drama, athletics

Strong K-12 schools-Ripon Library: \$2 mill. renovation

Community Centric:

Bustling downtown, active Chamber and Main Street programs; summer concert series, farmers market, festivals. Strong business and industrial base.

Marcus Theaters started in Ripon and the first theater is still operational today in our downtown. All movies only cost \$6.

Nearby Green Lake is the home of the Thrasher Opera House, a small venue that hosts a wide variety of live music.

Innovation – Growth, Development, and Recreation:

40,000 square foot Boys & Girls Club opened in June.

Ripon College's \$24 mill. science building opened in June.

Micro-brewery/restaurant, popular winery with wood-fired pizza.

Attractive boutique stores.

Willmore Center offers indoor basketball and tennis courts, pool, exercise equipment, indoor track; new stadium for football and soccer.-10-year-old hospital's wellness/fitness center is open to public.-Wisconsin's deepest lake (237 feet), Green Lake, is 5 miles from Ripon: swimming, fishing, sailing, boating. Town Square Community Center features music and art events.-Three golf courses within a 10-mile radius. State-ranked disc golf course is 5 miles from Ripon.-Ripon and Green Lake feature running, hiking and biking trails. We love the Ripon/Green Lake area and we hope you will too. **At the end of our profile there are three videos for you to view about our vibrant and culturally rich community.**

Current size of membership

135

Average in person attendance

50

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

No

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Pastor

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

<https://wuccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/9-11-25-FINAL-2025-Compensation-Guidelines-for-Full-Time-Ministers-Wisconsin-Conference-August-2024.pdf>

Scope of Work

Some fields reference [The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ](#).

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the [Call Agreement Workbook](#).

[Download scope of Work](#)

3 core competencies that we imagine could be foundational in our next minister's relationship with the church.

First:

Inspiring and innovative – We seek a spirited and engaging preacher who has the energy and imagination to help us find new ways to worship, live our faith, and engage with our community.

Second:

Welcoming – We seek a leader who works at bringing new members into the church, who radiates God's love, and accepts people with differing views.

Third:

Compassionate – We seek the warmth of a minister who will visit those in need, share their faith, and comfort those in crises of physical or mental health.

Compensation and Support

The salary basis comes from the [Call Agreement Workbook](#), equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/ Housing Allowance. The Conference can assist in determining these amounts or provide a worksheet to be used to calculate these values.



Table with 4 columns: SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED, AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE(IF DETERMINED), IS THIS NEGOTIABLE, PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES. Rows include Salary, Housing Allowance, Pension/Annuity, Social Security and Medicare Offset, Medical/Dental Insurance, Life Insurance, Disability Insurance, and Worker's Compensation.

If needed, please comment further on your church's salary and benefits for the minister.

Salary Basis

- Salary is based on experience and will be based on the current Wisconsin Conference suggested guidelines (pages 6 & 7).
In line with UCC Compensation Guidelines, the annual housing allowance would be \$24,082 per year (based on roughly 1% of the median-priced home in this area multiplied by 12 months).

Benefits

- UCC ministerial health and dental insurance for the individual and family
UCC 401(k) retirement annuity
UCC life insurance
Communities of practice
Travel/Mileage
Social Security offset
Workers Compensation
4-week paid vacation
Holidays
Professional expenses
Sabbatical after 5 years of service

The expected living situation for our next minister.

We will provide a housing allowance. Housing is available in Ripon and the surrounding communities.

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

No
n/a

How our church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment.

n/a

Additional reimbursements the next Pastor can expect to receive as part of their employment:

Reimbursement for use of personal vehicle.

Cell Phone and/or Internet.

Conference and/or Association meeting registrations

Other meeting registrations (or educational requirement registrations).

Criminal background checks.

Community of Practice Participation.

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in our association/conferences.

- Communities of Practice—Facilitated Profession Peer Support Groups paid for by the local church as part of the call agreement (optional). 60% of our clergy participate in a Community of Practice.
Seminary Debt Retirement Program
ACM Support
Conflict Transformation Team Support
Regional Gatherings
Ripon Area Ministerial Association: This organization is made up of ministers of almost all faiths located in the city of Ripon. The ministerial association provides an opportunity for ministers to enjoy a time of fellowship and to be involved in the activities and events of our community.

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

The ministry goals we envision our next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

- Attendance: Boost weekly worship service attendance by a measurable amount.
Community outreach: Partner with local organizations to address specific community needs (e.g. food bank, Boys & Girls Club, community dinners, making a safe space for all).

- Provides a sense of community and care: Contacts members who haven't been to church in a while, reaches out to those unable to make it to church, finds ways to help those unable to come find a way to still enjoy communion, thereby feeling connected to the church. While our ministry is conducted in English, we prefer someone who is clear with their words so that all audiences can understand them. Culturally specific capabilities include the skill to effectively communicate with and respond to the needs and preferences of diverse groups and levels of education. Since we are an Open and Affirming church, it is important that everyone should feel welcome and empowered. Based on what we have learned about who our church is, who our neighbors are, and who God is calling our church to become, we have chosen to highlight four areas of excellence from The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry. We envision that our next minister will further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas: 1. Strategically creating the future of God's Church. 2. Demonstrates excellent communication skills. 3. Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression. 4. Displays an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the UCC.

How our vision of the minister we are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

- A leader willing to engage with the communities our church is a part of, including Ripon, Berlin, Green Lake, Princeton, and surrounding areas.
- A leader willing to find ways to help young families, homeless people, and those with limited access to education.
- Helping the elderly who have no family or friends to visit them to feel connected to the community, gain access to mental health care, and seek support for vulnerable populations.

Language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

While our ministry is conducted in English, we prefer someone who is clear with their words so that all audiences can understand them. Culturally specific capabilities include the skill to effectively communicate with and respond to the needs and preferences of diverse groups and levels of education. Since we are an Open and Affirming church, it is important that everyone should feel welcome and empowered.

Based on what we have learned about who our church is, who our church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, these are four areas of excellence from The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry that our next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

1. Strategically creating the future of God's Church. 2. Demonstrates excellent communication skills. 3. Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression. 4. Displays an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the UCC.

Who Is God Calling Us to Become?

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who God is calling us to become as a congregation.

A united people who are dedicated to living and practicing our faith beyond the doors of our church. We want to engage in thoughtful reflection on Sunday's sermon so that we can better understand God's calling for us as individuals as well as a community. We wish to reach out to diverse communities to spread the word of God so that others may find safe haven and spiritual growth.

How God is calling us to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation.

This past year we were able to inspire four other local church ministers and their congregations to provide a meal, one each week, to those in need in our community. This provides a free meal to families, the elderly, and those struggling during hard times. Income information, housing status etc. are not required. By eliminating this requirement, people can come without shame or embarrassment. This can be very important to people in crisis. Our church took the lead in welcoming and settling refugee families from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan. We continue to promote a safe religious community for everyone no matter who they are or what they identify as; we want all to feel welcome here and provide a safe space to practice their faith without judgement or prejudice, based on how God has created them as we are Open and Affirming to all God's children. We strive to make sure our outreach extends not only to our immediate community but in the surrounding communities. The impact of our diverse congregation can be substantial in helping those who are facing difficult struggles including transportation issues, poverty, drug abuse, mental and physical health, personal tragedy, and broken families. We offer our space to programs (free of charge) to allow meetings and safe places for those needing to deal with these issues. We hope they can reach out for help without judgement or fear of harassment about joining the church. We wish to show that our kindness doesn't come from a place of wanting anything in return, but from the love we are expected to give to our neighbors based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Congregation Reflections

We would describe our congregation's life of faith as...

Our faith family at First Congregational Church of Ripon is grounded in the teachings given to us by Jesus. We worship together, pray for each other's intentions and for the world around us. We strive to make the world better through the work we do in our daily lives. Entering the church, one is first impressed by the connections seen in the congregation. The members are all different ages and have varied views and life experiences, yet the welcome and caring they share is an invitation extended to all. It is a safe place to explore how to increase our faith and realize the many ways in which we are on this spiritual journey together. We are an Open and Affirming community, which leads us to celebrate diversity and reach out to others. We offer many opportunities to follow Jesus' examples of caring and compassion, from needs in Ripon to those more global in scale.

We are a small congregation, members quickly find ways to be involved in a host of volunteer roles.

Talents are freely shared and gratefully, joyfully received.

The times and political climate may change but our truths, values, and instructions do not.

We will continue to be guided by our faith while being open to new ideas.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

When polling the congregation about how they see themselves, the most often-mentioned quality was open-mindedness, tied in with our church's identity as Open and Affirming. We are not as ethnically diverse as in some parts of Wisconsin, but there is evidence that inclusiveness is appreciated. The church has always had close proximity to Ripon College, and the college influence (both in members coming from the faculty and administrative ranks and students volunteering in various roles over the years) may contribute to some independence of thought.

Many members mentioned our great, giving volunteers. No matter what the need is, people willingly step forward to meet the challenge. The Community Dinner is a great example. It's just one of the ways that our congregation is connected with the surrounding community. Activism and commitment to service are highly valued. As one member described it, First Congregational Church has a history of doing the right thing, welcoming immigrants, addressing food shortages, and it offers many ways to be of service to others.

A growing edge for our congregation and what we plan to strengthen as a congregation

Our church's "growing edge" is shared by many mainline protestant churches: How to demonstrate that God is still speaking at a time when organized religion is falling out of favor. We view this as an opportunity for our church to determine how we can be more intentional about being relevant, empathetic and helpful to our friends and members through worship, music, educational curriculum, book studies, mission work and more. We are looking for creative guidance from our next minister to help us capture the imagination and passion of members and non-members in our area.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Our church interior is a serene, sacred space where people can seek God's voice and be renewed in spirit. During worship, people greet each other with words of peace. Often smiles, hugs, and handshakes are exchanged, and visitors are made to feel welcome. The worship service includes: call to worship, scripture readings, sermon, prayer and benediction, interspersed with music. Our choir performs twice a month. Members present special music such as instrumental and vocal pieces. There is a Children's Moment when the youth come forward to hear this week's bible lesson or a relevant story. Sermons are generally based on the readings, with personal anecdotes or relevant topics included to give us a level of connection and to challenge us to grow spiritually and apply scripture to our daily lives. Parishioners are invited to share joys, concerns, and prayer requests for themselves and people in their lives, and for those suffering around the world. Communion is offered monthly. Fellowship hour follows the worship service. During the year there will be special events such as a potluck meal, Easter egg hunt, Halloween trunk-or-treat, chili cook-off, or board game event during the hour.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

A new director for the program has recently been hired with considerable experience as an educator. Some typical events include:

- Rally Sunday in early September
- Trunk or Treat on the Sunday closest to Halloween
- A Christmas Pageant
- A Souper Bowl Fundraiser to benefit local food banks
- A Children-led worship service in the spring
- Summer VBS program

Options for adults include:

- Book club
- Prayer shawl ministry
- Weekly coffee shop gathering
- Monthly 'Fellowship of the Grape' social at a member's home

The church is closely linked to the UCCI Daycholah Center in Green Lake (7 miles from Ripon). We believe outdoor ministry provides a unique and transformative space for spiritual formation. Above all, we seek to cultivate a faith formation culture where spiritual growth is not confined to a classroom, but is dynamic, lifelong, community-centered practice - where people of all ages are invited to grow in love, wisdom, and courage as followers of Christ.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

The committees typically meet once a month. Committees include: Worship, Finance, Faith Formation, Membership, Outreach, Buildings and Grounds, Nominating Committee, and Pastor Parish Relations. The minutes from their meetings are provided to the members of the cabinet before their monthly meeting. The church cabinet consists of the Executive Committee plus one representative from each committee. Issues are discussed and decisions are made at the cabinet level that generally impact committee work and/or the entire congregation. Personnel issues, hiring of staff, and evaluation of the pastor and church employees are all managed by the members of the Executive Committee.

When it comes to decision-making, 4 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

In times when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. These were the key leaders in taking this action and this was accomplished by...

As the leader of the congregation, the Moderator overall is responsible for all church crisis situations. The Moderator works with the head of Buildings and Grounds for property and building problems; the Executive Committee for personnel issues; and the Treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee for financial concerns. The pastor has a discretionary fund available to provide assistance for individuals or families that need immediate help with food, shelter, or transportation assistance.

A crisis that occurred: During the Pandemic, there were a few elderly people who didn't have access to viewing the online worship service. Our church opened up the sanctuary for those members and allowed them to socially distance themselves from one another and watch the virtual service in the sanctuary. This provided great comfort to those who were isolated in their homes. Besides the tech booth person, 4-5 church members would regularly attend.

Another situation involved a member who had issues with their car and couldn't commute to work while it was being repaired. The We Care group (part of the Membership Committee) stepped up and arranged rides for the member in the interim.

A copy of an organization structure, by laws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance

[1st Cong Current annual income.docx](#)

11-Year Report

Download a copy of the 11-Year Report developed with the help of our conference staff and UCC Data Hub.

[Download 11-Year Report](#)

Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	135
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	3
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	138

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	43%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	32%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	25%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	16
12-17	6
18-24	4
25-34	7
35-44	20
45-54	10
55-64	11
65-74	42
75+	19

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes



Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	2%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	24%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	7%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	47%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	20%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	16%
COLLEGE:	56%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	28%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	0%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	39%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	56%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	5%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

We have a number of professionals who work serving our community including: doctors, veterinarians, physical therapists, social workers, nurses, and teachers. Some members are retired from Ripon College while others currently work for the College as faculty or staff. There are community leaders, such as company presidents, retired newspaper publishers, farmers, lawyers, and directors of non-profit organizations. Our church is home to factory workers, mechanics, cooks, hair stylists, insurance agents, musicians, speech therapists, accountants, counselors, librarians, chefs, and landscapers.

The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

Our church's ethnic mix represents the makeup of the Ripon and Green Lake communities as a whole. The majority of our congregation is of northern European heritage. Approximately 4% of our membership has a different ethnic background including: East Asian, Micronesian, and Malaysian. The city of Ripon has a growing Latino and Hispanic community, which now exceeds 4% of the population.

What diversity means in our context?

On January 27, 2019, our congregation declared itself Open and Affirming.

Has our congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do we plan to hold one on the near future

No

Participation and Staffing



Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	10	Pastor & CE Director
Baptisms (number last year)	5	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	10	CE Director & Committee
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	198	Pastor & Worship Committee
Church-wide Meals	6	Multiple Committees
Choirs and Music Groups	12	Music Director
Communion (served how often?)	50	Worship Committee/Served Monthly
Community Meals	130	Special Committee
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	4	Pastor & CE Director
Funerals (number last year)	3	Pastor & Event Coordinator
Intergenerational Groups	40	Committees
Outdoor Worship	50	Worship Committee & Pastor
Public Advocacy Work	12	Outreach Committee & Pastor
Retreats	4	Coordinated with Daycholah
Weddings (number last year)	3	Pastor & Event Coordinator
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	134	Pastor & Worship Committee
Young Adult Groups or Classes	4	Pastor & CE Director
Youth Groups or Classes	6	Pastor

Worship Times

WORSHIP (TIME SLOT):	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
10:30	50	Pastor & Committees

Additional comments:

Communion is served monthly.

List of all members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained or commissioned ministers, or who hold Lay Ministerial Standing. Additionally the names of Members in Discernment in our congregation.

NAME	THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED
Amanda Edwards	none	Not yet assigned	pending	<input type="checkbox"/>

Previous pastors or retired ministers who currently hold membership in the church and their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

n/a

List of all current staff:

STAFF POSITION	HEAD OF STAFF	COMPENSATION	SUPERVISED BY	LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION
Interim Pastor	Michael Safford-Kennedy	part	Executive Committee	5 months
Church office manager & Social media coordinator	Kih Bergin	part	Executive Committee	3 months
Music Director	Kurt & Maria Dietrich	part	Vice-Moderator	20+ years
Custodians	Peggy & Rod Freeman	part	Vice-Moderator	20+ years
Director of Christian Education	Katie Del Ponte	part	Vice-Moderator	Starting August 2025

Reflection: What this information reflect about our congregation's overall ministry:

Our congregation has participated in some UCC - sponsored programs that help members gain knowledge or skills to address human concerns as a congregation. The tables above indicate the wide variety of ministries within our church community that have an impact on our membership and the local community.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	177316
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)	7747
Fundraising Events	1500
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	12475
Grants	2000
Rentals of Church Building	22309
Total	223347

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

200974

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget–list current budgeted expenses here.

[Download church budget](#)

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage?

44

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

- Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Strengthen the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

We used to ask parishioners to break down their pledge between the local mission and OCWM. However, in the past several years, we've been providing anywhere between \$10,000 and \$12,000 based on the cabinet's discretion.

If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, this is the percentage?

4

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

No loan debt

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

No response

Pictures





Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

Table with 5 columns: YEAR(S), PURPOSE, GOAL, RESULT, IMPACT. Row 1: 2016, Renovate sanctuary; Chancel and balcony construction; refinish flooring; change lighting and electrical rewiring; change heating system; add air conditioning; organ restoration; new pews; interior painting; full roof replacement; exterior painting; renovate narthex. 660000, 698000, Increased new members, increased request to use the sanctuary due to improved appearance of the space, comfortable pews, controlled temperature, and larger chancel for group performances and ceremonies. Accessible to chancel with ramp and better lighting for congregation.

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

Table with 5 columns: YEAR(S), PURPOSE, GOAL, RESULT, IMPACT. Row 1: 0, 0, 0, 0. Row 2: 0, 0, 0, 0.

Description the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

No response

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

384000

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?

As needed. We have not drawn any funds from our endowment in at least the past decade.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)?

0

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:

We have not needed to withdraw funds from our endowment in the recent past.

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last?

A long time! However, in this age of shrinking membership for all churches, who knows?

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

n/a

Other Assets

n/a

Reserves (savings):

30623

Investments (other than endowment):

81083

Does the church have a parsonage?

No

Description of all buildings owned by the church:

The church was built in 1868; current sanctuary was renovated in 2016, organ reworked and updated in early 2019, Fellowship Hall, kitchen, classrooms, and restroom addition was in 2017. Roof re-shingled in 2017, parking lot resurfaced and striped in 2018, exterior repainting was completed in 2019.

Description of non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

We have a license agreement to use a bit of college property for the outdoor playground and the college thought that \$1 per year would make it a good value for both sides.

Accessibility features of our building(s):

- Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance
Accessible parking spaces
Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)
Access to worship spaces, including chancel and pulpit, for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Access to child care spaces for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Listening devices in the sanctuary, or wireless technology to connect to hearing aids
Large print bulletins
Closed-captioning on sanctuary screen and/or livestream
Wheelchair access in bathrooms
Handrails on all stairs
Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)
Curb cuts
Accessible bathroom on each oor
Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

Everywhere but the balcony. The elevator accesses the first 3 floors (just not the balcony). There is also ramp access to the chancel/pulpit.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

The pastor, office manager, custodian, and education director will order budgeted items. Building and Grounds will receive prior approval before purchasing items or initiating a project. We have a charge account at our local grocery store, and a credit card we use for small purchases. We have a membership at Costco where we buy supplies for our monthly community dinner. The Finance Committee and Cabinet address financial issues. The Finance Committee is responsible for creating the budget with the Treasurer and with input from the committees. Final approval is required from the congregation.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what this information reflects about our congregation's mission and ministry:

Long term, the church steps up to meet our initiatives, whether missions or infrastructure. Short term, we support several local missions as needed.

Historical Information

Significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation.

1. Our Church was founded in 1850 and we will be celebrating our 175th birthday this fall of 2025.
2. Church's role in abolition of slavery.
3. Refugees: Our church has had a prominent role in settling multiple refugee families – The Latvians in the early 1950s, a family from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2016, and an Afghan family in 2021 (whom we are continuing to help).
4. In 2010 and 2011, we sponsored the Busia Compassionate Center Orphanage in Busia, Kenya. We did a clothing drive and held a fundraising dinner to send clothes and shoes to orphans, as well as building bunk beds on site and purchase mattresses.
5. 20 years ago, fund raising (over \$1 million pledged) for reconstruction/replacement of the offices, bathrooms, classrooms, fellowship hall and kitchen. Our chapel was completed and a handicapped accessible elevator was added. The sanctuary renovation was completed in 2017 with the installation of air conditioning, updating of the pipe organ, and the addition of a video booth.

A specific change our church has managed in the recent past.

On January 27, 2019 we declared ourselves officially to be Open and Affirming.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....". These are our congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

We live by our proclamation of being Open and Affirming. This means being open to all opinions, politics, and beliefs. We engage in meaningful conversations without judgement and with an open mind. However we also understand that some have different views than our own.

The most recent major conflict through which our church has navigated.

The church hasn't had any recent major conflicts. Any concerns that the pastor has, or that the congregation has, are brought to the pastor-parish relations committee where issues are discussed and addressed. None have been major during the past quarter century.

Ministerial History:

Name: Jeffrey Dodson	Years of service: 6	UCC Standing
Name: Joanna D'Agostino	Years of service: 6	UCC Standing
Name: Jack Kraaz	Years of service: 10	UCC Standing
Name: Debora Hillgartner	Years of service: 2	
Name: John Bixby	Years of service: 3	
Name: Catherine Carlson	Years of service: 3	

What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people who provided ministerial leadership.

We value someone who helps the church family to grow and is socially connected to and invested in the members and community. We value someone who is sincerely interested in, connected to, and engaged with youth. We seek someone who brings new ideas but appreciates the history of the church and its congregation. We welcome innovation.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

Yes

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Yes

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

Yes

Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

Community Vision

How the relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in service and advocacy.

We believe that faith is meant to be lived - not only within the walls of our sanctuary.

- We have supported refugee resettlement efforts, partnering with local agencies to welcome and assist families as they build new lives in safety. We provided furnishings, transportation, guidance, friendship, and encouragement.
- We are committed to supporting justice and inclusion. As an ONA congregation, we advocate for LGBTQ+ equality, support local Pride events, and the Ripon HS Social Justice Alliance.
- We support local service organizations, contribute to food pantries, and participate in seasonal giving efforts. Many of the members are actively involved in public service & nonprofit work, carrying the mission of the church into their daily lives.
- Our connection to the UCC extends our impact globally through mission offerings and partnerships that address: disaster relief, climate change, and equality. We nurture a love for creation & outdoor ministry through our relationship with Daycholah Center.

Our congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ.

- We are a part of the wider UCC Church, locally, regionally, and nationally. That relationship strengthens our own ministry and challenges us to grow. We regularly participate in conference meetings, and our members serve as delegates and volunteer in different capacities.

- Our congregation is proud to have a strong and active relationship with camps, including (UCCI).
- We have engaged with the Damascus Project, a collaborative learning initiative of the WI and MN conferences. We have participated in online courses and leadership development offerings that deepen theological understanding, enhance lay ministry, and prepare future church leaders.
- In recent years we have begun conversations around the Doctrine of Discovery - acknowledging the church's historical complicity in systems of colonization and oppression. Our proximity to ancestral Ho-Chunk land and our connection to Daycholah Center - whose name honors Indigenous heritage - gives this work particular relevancy and meaning.

How our church engages with the community organizing movements in our community.

First Congregational Church of Ripon has been a progressive voice in the area throughout its 175-year history. Early members were instrumental players in the formation of the Republican Party (at that time an abolitionist movement). Over the years, we have supported a number of refugee settlement efforts and did fundraising for an orphanage in Kenya. More recently, we were instrumental in expanding our own monthly free community dinner so that now every Tuesday one of the local Ripon churches hosts a dinner for those experiencing food insecurity. We regularly donate foodstuffs, household and personal care supplies to our local food pantry. We have also been supportive of the local Black Lives Matter events, as well as Ripon High School's Social Justice Alliance and Pride Club rallies. Our ONA status has made us stand out in Ripon as a faith family supportive of LGBTQ+ rights.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations, through [Just World Covenants](#) or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

Just Peace.
Open and Affirming (ONA).
Immigrant Welcoming.

What the above statement(s) mean(s) to our community. How our congregation plans to work toward the above statements of witness in the future.

Some members of our congregation have expressed interest in learning about how to become a WISE Congregation for Mental Health.

Our congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

- Through the Ripon Area Ministerial Association, (RAMA), we join neighboring congregations to organize shared worship services, public prayer gatherings, and collaborative outreach initiatives to care for the people of Ripon.
- Our congregation supports efforts at Ripon College that affirm the diversity of belief. Our chapel, which faces the Ripon College campus, is open for students of all faiths to gather. We would like to continue to explore more ways to provide an opportunity for students and faculty to participate in interfaith discussions on campus or in our church building.
- First Congregational Church participates in seasonal ecumenical worship services, such as:
 - Blue Christmas Service - offering a place for those who are grieving a loss during the holiday and those who have increased mental health issues.
 - Good Friday Worship and Baccalaureate services held in partnership with other churches, often rotating locations and sharing the leadership of the service.

How our mission statement compares to the actual time spent engaging in different activities.

- Our faith is 2,000 years old, but our thinking is not. We believe God is still speaking. We believe we have an opportunity to improve and grow our ministry through a renewed commitment to transformation by applying timeless values to our modern context. We believe our faith endures because it is renewed intellectually, emotionally, and at times, intuitively through our church.
- We do this through connecting the teachings of Jesus Christ to the lives of the marginalized; people challenged by war, political divisions, rising prices, income disparity, under-nourishment, drug use, terror, distrust between countries and among neighbors, personal isolation, political incivility, home foreclosures, deadly weather, depression, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, the decline of marriage, and growth of single-parent families.

The scope of work assigned to our pastor(s). How their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time.

- We understand that the role of a pastor extends far beyond the pulpit. We seek someone who is compelled to embrace our wonderful city and who values forming community ties and fostering relationships beyond our congregation. We encourage our pastor to serve not only our congregation, but the greater community.
- There are many different opportunities for your new pastor to become involved and make connections in Ripon. We believe that in order to help our church grow, it is essential that our pastor be socially connected to, and interested in our community's families and youth. We also hope our pastor will find this work to be rewarding and reinvigorating.
- We also respect that a pastor's workload is multi-faceted, and at times, unpredictable. We are aware of the need for balance between serving the church, community, and self-care. We encourage our pastor to have an open dialogue with the Pastor Parish Relations Committee about maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

No response

From looking at our congregation's The ARDA or MissionInsite report, these trends and opportunities are what stood out to us.

- 5.1% are non-Caucasian and of that, 4.1% are Hispanic/Latino.
- 9.1% of school aged students are Hispanic/Latino.
- 95% speak English at home.
- There is a fairly even split between white collar and blue collar workers in town.
- 24.6% in the area have a Bachelor's Degree or higher.
- 91.9% graduate from High School or higher.
- 10.4% live below the poverty level.
- 17% of children under age 18 live below the poverty level.
- The median age in Ripon was 43 in 2023. This increased by 9% in 10 years.
- Ripon is making investments in new housing developments to support future growth.

How our congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to our church, and b) other neighborhoods with which our church connects.

- Our demographics seem to mirror the area, except that our congregation has a greater percentage of people with college and advanced degrees. (Approximately 82% of our congregation has a Bachelor's or advanced degree. Our church sits adjacent to the Ripon College campus.)
- Because we are an ONA church, we have LGBTQ+ members and visitors who regularly attend our church.

How the demographics of the community are currently shaping ministry, or not.

We may wish to consider how to better minister to our community's aging population.

What we hear when we talk to community leaders and ask them what our church is known for.

- Our church is considered one of the most progressive churches in Ripon.
- As evidenced by our Open and Affirming vote in 2019, we are recognized as a welcoming church.
- Many of our members are active in all types of organizations in the community.
- Our church building is on the National Historic Registry and our church's 175-year history is closely tied with important historical events locally and nationally.

- Our church is known to have beautiful facilities available for community use.
- We have a close relationship with Ripon College.
- Our congregation is active in social issues.

What new people in the church say when asked what got them involved.

- They liked the welcoming, friendly, atmosphere.
- Theology and beliefs of the church.
- Diversity of thought in the congregation.

References

SEE BELOW

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we are grateful for the opportunity to call a new pastor to help our congregation understand your will and the gospel lessons lived out by your Son. Please guide us as we are inspired by your holy Spirit to minister to others in faith and love. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, who teaches us how to live and how to love, we pray. Amen.

Statement of Consent

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

For example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.

This profile was created by the Search Committee which consists of Mary Lyke (Chair), Kih Bergin, Anne Flasch, Preston Osteen, Meg Schwemmer, Sarah Joy Solberg, and Daniel Volkman, with invaluable input from:

- Former Christian Education Director, Jeanne Williams
- Treasurer, Andy Lyke

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Around the Corner with John McGivern:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyU_uMINYYs

Ripon overview, narrated by Judy Neill:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAYpoLdyKdc>

Ripon's Dickens of a Christmas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cd9f6SfaPw>

***See references below.**

Reference 1:

Brian H. Smith

Professor Emeritus of Religion, Ripon College

Long relationship with First Congregational Church of Ripon including guest lecturer, former Interim Pastor (1994-95)

Profile of First Congregational Church in Ripon, WI

May 28, 2025

Areas of strength in church's ministry

One area of strength of the First Congregational Church's ministry has been the quality of pastors it has had over the past 30 years.

I have lived in Ripon since 1987 and have known and worked with former pastors of First Congregational Church during that time – including Cathy Carlson, Jack Bixby, Greg Turner, Jack Kraaz, Joanna D'Agostino and Jeffrey Dodson. What has impressed me about all of them was their solid theological preaching combined with a commitment to social justice. They were not afraid to challenge the congregation to new ministries and outreach into Ripon, while ministering to the pastoral needs of the congregation.

Whoever the new pastor will be now is standing on the shoulders of giants. This is not meant to intimidate, but to remind them of the great traditions this church has had in pastoral leadership. They should be proud to be part of such a tradition and be able to continue it into the next phase of the church's future.

An area for improvement

An area for improvement (and I say this as Professor Emeritus of Religion at Ripon College) is to be more imaginative and active on the college campus. Since I retired in 2020 there have been no courses in Religion taught at Ripon College. There is no longer a professor teaching various religions (as I did for 33 years) and only one professor of Philosophy. The students are hungry for meaning and the new pastor and church members should explore how they can relate to the college campus more actively than in past years. On-campus discussions in the dorms by the pastor and pastoral team could be a way to make the church more visible in the college community, along with more activities at the church that would attract both faculty and students. This is the church that helped found the college in 1851 and helped save it from an embarrassing mistake about Darwinism and evolution in the late 19th century. The college president at that time, Edward Merrell, wanted to forbid the teaching of Darwin in the Biology Department but the pastor of the church, Rev. Stephen Newman, also taught mathematics and astronomy at the college. He was influential in protecting academic freedom among the faculty to pressure the president to reverse his position and evolution remained a part of the science curriculum. (See the history of the first 150 years of the church, "Living Stones," written and preached by Brian Smith and Rev. Debora Hilgartner in 2000). The church should act more as the college's conscience as it did in the past

and spiritual guide in the future – without proselytizing or becoming a pain in the neck. The new pastor and church leaders need to give some serious and imaginative thought on how to do this more effectively than has been done in the recent past.

My significant experience with the church

I had the unique opportunity of serving as unofficial interim pastor at the church for almost a year in 1994-1995 when the church was in transition in search of a new pastor. It was a moving experience for me to get to know such wonderful people who belong to this church. There is an incredible range of beliefs and outlooks with much tolerance and respect for one another and this inspired me very much. These are good people who have helped sustain the church over many years and also have made very important contributions to the Ripon area. I still am asked periodically to preach when a pastor is away and am humbled and thrilled to do so. Though not of their denomination, the people graciously receive me and I them. I hope to continue this relationship with the church for as long as I live in Ripon.

Sincerely,

Brian Smith



Jolene Schatzinger

City Council Member, City of Ripon, Wisconsin

Email: jolene@cityofripon.com

Phone: 920-427-5510

Reference for First Congregational Church Pastoral Search

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter as a community member, City Council member, Ripon College alumna, and Executive Director of a Fond du Lac area non-profit organization, in support of First Congregational Church's search for a new pastor. It is an honor to share my perspective on the many ways this congregation serves and enriches the Ripon community.

First Congregational Church has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to community outreach and hospitality. Through its free monthly meal ministry, the church provides nourishment and fellowship to individuals and families from throughout the community, embodying a spirit of compassion and service. This consistent outreach reflects the congregation's deep care for the well-being of others and its desire to be a steady presence of support.

In addition, the church's willingness to open its beautiful and welcoming space for a variety of community events demonstrates an ongoing commitment to being a gathering place for people of all backgrounds. Whether hosting educational talks, civic meetings, or interfaith gatherings, First Congregational plays a vital role as both a spiritual and community hub. Its location adjacent to Ripon College allows for natural connections with students and faculty, and the church further strengthens these ties by inviting members of the college and broader community to speak on Sunday mornings, offering thoughtful reflections on current topics. I was fortunate to witness this myself when my husband, Henrik, was invited to speak as part of this program.

Beyond these tangible ministries, First Congregational Church is seen by many in our community as a progressive beacon of light and comfort — offering a safe and welcoming space for meaningful dialogue, compassionate action, and spiritual growth that reflects the evolving needs of the broader community.

While no church is without areas of growth, I believe First Congregational's continued dedication to being an inclusive, outward-facing congregation will serve it well as it welcomes new leadership. Its ability to listen, adapt, and remain grounded in its mission gives me great confidence in its future.

I am grateful for the impact First Congregational Church has on Ripon and the surrounding communities, and I am honored to provide this reference as part of your search process. I trust that the congregation's next chapter will continue to build on its strong foundation of faith, service, and community engagement.

Sincerely,

Jolene Schatzinger

Reference 3:

Kat Griffith

Quaker - Winnebago Friends Worship Group, local activist, frequent area lecturer on social justice topics, regular contributor to the Ripon Commonwealth Press (articles about county government operations), a member of the Fond du Lac County Board of Supervisors, and long-time friend to this congregation

June 13, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the First Congregational Church's search for a new pastor. I would like to share what I have experienced of this wonderful congregation as a community member.

In recent years I have been involved in a number of initiatives for social justice. Over and over, I have found that many of those who got involved were members of First Congregational UCC, or the church as a whole showed up with an institutional commitment. The congregation has shown itself eager to learn about a variety of issues, from immigration to white privilege to becoming an LGBTQ-affirming congregation to refugee resettlement. I and others have been invited to speak on these and other issues, lead coffee hour discussions, preach, write a bulletin insert, or even start ongoing initiatives.

One initiative I can speak to personally is RARA -- the Ripon Area Refugee Association which was birthed in Fellowship Hall in 2015. This group, which included a number of members of the congregation as well as community members, helped settle a Congolese refugee family of nine. Over the course of two years, we set up two apartments, taught a member of the family to drive, helped with transportation to innumerable appointments, made many visits to the family, provided some financial assistance, and hosted a number of festive gatherings to welcome the family more fully. A few years later, we supported an Afghan family of nine for resettlement. The heavy lifting throughout both of these initiatives was done substantially by members of First Congregational, and the church also made a significant donation to cover some of the beds which had to be purchased for the families.

Over the years I have been invited to speak about the Doctrine of Discovery, immigration (several times), and to help organize and run a workshop on the dispossession of Native Americans throughout US history. I have also been privileged to work with the former pastor of the church on the semi-annual PIT counts of unhoused people in the area. The pastor also spoke at several community events, including vigils for racial justice, Ripon PRIDE, etc.

Another initiative of the church for which I am grateful is its physical hosting of one of our School District's charter schools. I used to teach in our local high school, and our growing population of at-risk kids has long been close to my heart. Our school for at-risk kids was

housed in the basement of the church in a pleasant, modern, well-equipped space for a number of years. It was a wonderful location, a block from downtown, and right next to the Ripon College campus - a steady source of volunteer tutors and mentors. It is a wonderful arrangement for the District and a true service to the community (not to mention a revenue stream for the church!)

The church facility has also been my go-to location for many types of meetings and events. With the beautifully remodeled kitchen and Fellowship Hall, as well as more intimate spaces, it is a venue that can accommodate a wide variety of events. Our high school GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance) held many of its out-of-school meetings at the church for several years, and I had students host several fundraisers there as well, for everything from the Make-A-Wish Foundation to an environmental justice organization in Tijuana. The church also hosts monthly Community Meals -- an important service in a community whose number of children receiving free or reduced-price lunches at school has doubled in the last decade.

I belong to a worship group (Quaker) that has chosen not to invest in a building we meet in homes. There are many benefits to this form of simplicity, but I will be the first to say that I also greatly admire the substantial commitment Ripon's First Congregational Church has made in having a space that welcomes so many so graciously. I admire all those who had the vision, commitment and courage to make such an investment. And I am very grateful for their generosity to community members who have needs and ideas and initiatives aplenty and need a place to house them!

I cannot say enough good things about this congregation. If I were not a committed Friend, I'd sign up at Ripon's UCC in a heartbeat. I am pleased to be a friend of and sometimes collaborator with a church so committed to being a positive and welcoming community institution.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Kat Griffith
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955 Ransom St.
Ripon WI 54971