Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church

318 N. Church Street, Rockford IL 815-963-8431

www.secondfirst.org

www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch

Non Profit Organization US Postage PAID Permit No. 3734 Rockford, Illinois

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Governing Council

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Membership

membership@secondfirst.org

Missions

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Music

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Trustees

trustees@secondfirst.org



THETOWER

Second Congregational UCC / First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace.

FEBRUARY 2017

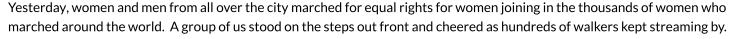
A SNIPPET FROM REVEREND REBECCA'S SERMON ON 1/22/17

To be an American this weekend is to be on heightened alert to our political surroundings. According to recent polls, 38% of Americans are elated by our new president and 48% are not so excited to put it nicely.[1] But everyone it seems is either watching or intentionally hiding from the commotion. I spent the weekend marching, rallying and shouting for justice, which seems like a good thing to do no matter who is president. Some of you have been with me in body and others in spirit.

During the time of the presidential inauguration a small group of interfaith citizens spent time in prayer at Just Goods.

Friday night, Pastor JR Flannagan of Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, whose kids came with us to snow camp, rallied a group to "bury the violence." We carried a casket down West State street and then all the way up Central Ave to Auburn, stopping along the way to pray and sing and shout away the violence and bring in peace. And by "we" carried

the casket, I mean I followed the casket and others carried it – those things are heavy!

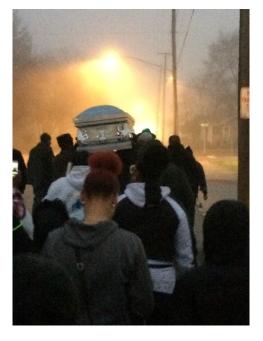


Each time the microphone came my way I said the same thing... and I am not sure it was the most popular thing to say... I tried to call people together across political lines across ingrained ideologies and patterns of being. It landed like a lead balloon when I yelled into a bullhorn at the Women's march that those gathered were both pro-choice and pro-life. **But I do believe that it is from the middle ground, that place where we can work together even when we disagree, that peace and justice reside.**

Check out our Facebook page to watch Rev. Rebecca on the stump after the Women's March.

[1] http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/first-read/trump-enters-office-historically-low-rating-n708071







UPCOMING EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER & DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

Soup Kitchen Opportunity February 4

Maynard is organizing it, so let her know if you can help. We work from 10 am to about 1:30 pm, and you can be there for all or part of the time. Lunch is prepared and served at the Jubilee Center. If you are interested or have questions, contact Marge at 815-980-5304 or mtm.home@me.com.

Jeremiah Development Annual Meeting February 9

Jeremiah Development will hold their Annual Meeting on February 9th at 5:30 in the Heritage Room. You are welcome to attend. Please, join us!

Annual Euchre Party February 18

The annual euchre party will be Saturday, February 18 at 7:00 pm at Katy Paterson's home, 4223 Lakeside Drive, Rockford. Please bring a snack and your own drink of choice. We welcome seasoned players, beginners, and anyone who would like to learn to play. Contact: Katy Paterson 815-964-0089 or 815-914-3002.

Mission Trip Parent Meeting February 19

Sunday, February 19, directly following Worship there will be a meeting for parents of 8th grade and high school students who are interested in attending the Mission Trip to Philadelphia in June. If you have any questions, Contact: Courtney Jonsson at courtney.jonsson@secondfirst.org

New signs at SecondFirst

Next time you're in the church, make sure to take a look at our new signs! Holly is pictured next to the sign. Thanks to Holly and the Membership Team for their hard work on this!



Family Bowling February 26

Our first lunch at the Soup Kitchen will be on February 4. Marge Join us for a fun filled afternoon of family bowling on Sunday, February 26th from 12:30-2:30 pm at Don Carter Lanes. Cost is \$5.00 per person and includes two hours of bowling and shoe rental. Please RSVP with the number attending to Debbie in the church office 8155-963-8431 no later than Wednesday, February 22. Questions? Contact Dyan Lofgren dyan.lofgren@secondfirst.org

Connection Through Prayer

We are really connecting as a congregation. One of the ways we can stay connected is through prayer. Beginning in January we will pray for people in our congregation and friends in the community. As a staff each week we will pray for several people. No specifics, just prayers of care, and the promise of God's love. We hope this will be an added comfort and blessing as we begin the New Year. Contact Becky Erbe becky@secondfirst.org

Save Your Wednesdays in Lent

Pastor Rebecca and team are planning an all church gathering every Wednesday in Lent. We will worship, pray, study scripture and be together as we journey toward the cross. Soup dinner from 5:45-6:30. Program 6:30 - 7:15 p.m. March 1 - April 5. More details to follow.

New Membership Class

Have you been thinking, "I would love to join SecondFirst Church but have no idea when or how I would do that?!" Or perhaps you would simply like to learn more about both of our churches and its people then how the Federation took place and let God and your heart lead you from there? The Membership Ministry Team along with Rev. Rebecca would like to schedule a class for this Spring. Please contact Holly Hegge at hegget2s@gmail.com or 815-323-9978 or Rev. Rebecca at 815-963-8431 if you are interested in learning more.

SMILE YOU ARE ON DEBBIE CAM

by Bob Langford

New digital video cameras have been placed at the four main entrances. With the previous video feed, it was impossible to determine if Steve Showers or Kathi Ferrero was ringing the doorbell. That signaled a security crisis. So before you ring the doorbell, practice your best smile and wave to Debbie.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Continue prayers for Ed Conklin, Scott Anderson, Mary Lea Freedlund, Phil Turner, and Philip & Shirley Davidson.

And we pray for all those at home and in long-term care facilities, who are not able to be in worship regularly, but who remain part of our family of faith: Thomas Hill (Bob Saunders uncle), Jim & Nora Jean Rollins, Miriam Richardson, Norma & Wayne Nicholson, Nancy Bert, Jan Elliott, Elsie Kayser, Marge Kildow, Ruthann Lenard, Beverly Lindsey, Marilyn Thayer, Ruth Todd, Ward Wallace, and Willene Ziebell

ONE BOOK ONE CHURCH

by Andy Newgren

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Join us for the month of February as honor Black History Month by exploring and wrestling with this momentous book. Written as a letter to his teenage son, Coates attempts to unpack the violence he witnesses against black men and the ongoing struggle against white supremacy. Winner of the 2015 National Book Award, it has been described as "required reading" by Toni Morrison and "essential, like and air and water" by A.O. Scott of the New York Times. This critical conversation both for our country and local community.

Ta-Nehisi Coates is a writer, journalist, and educator best known as a national correspondent for The Atlantic, where he regularly writes about cultural, social, and political issues. He was a recipient of a MacArthur "Genius" Grant in 2015.

Kickoff Event is Wednesday February 1st at 6:30 pm at SecondFirst Church

Discussion groups will meeting times now finalized! Select from the following times:

Wednesdays, 6:30 pm at SecondFirst Church, February 8 and 15

Fridays, 12:00 pm at Katie's Cup, February 10 and 17

Online discussion (discussions happens throughout the week as you're able)

Conclusion Event Wednesday February 22nd at 6:30 pm at SecondFirst Church

Get your copy of the book wherever books are sold, such as Barnes and Noble or Amazon. To sign up for a discussion group or more details Contact: Andy Newgren andy.newgren@secondfirst.org

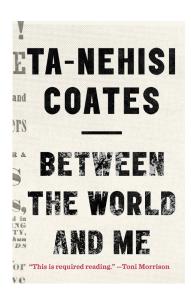
SNOW CAMP

by Courtney Jonsson



Joined by our friends at Jerusalem Baptist Church, Transit Youth Ministry trekked to Silver Birch Ranch during the first weekend in January. We spent our time sliding on the ice while playing broomball, tumbling down hills while cross country skiing, and gliding our way to the lake with our bellies on top of a tube. To say the least, Snow Camp was exactly what we expected. Actually, it is safe to say it was a little more than we expected. During group times we dove into the message of Pay It Forward. This concept is one that can change the world if it were to be put into action and everyone followed through. One person helps three people, and those three people go on to help three people. It trickles down and multiplies quickly so all people have been touched by an act of kindness. Our students came up with their own ideas to change

the world. They started by identifying what needs to change in their school, their neighborhood, in Rockford, in Illinois, and in our world. As the day progressed they were challenged to come up with an idea that can change the world and present it to the group. Eliminating fossil fuels, stopping deforestation, feeding the hungry, and creating a foreign exchange student program with mandatory participation were a few of the action plans. Our time together ended in creating our own list of who we planned to Pay It Forward to and prayed over the issues that were identified. Thank you for your prayers and gracious thoughts as some of the youngest members of our church invested in their faith. The growth I have witnessed out of these students in the past year has been remarkable.



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

5:30 PM - Prime Time

Line Youth Group

6:00 PM - Transit: Orange

6:30 PM - Adult Education

7:00 PM - Martin Ringers

9:15 AM - Free Showers

Thursday, February 9

9:30 AM - Carillons

5:30 PM - JD Board

6:00 PM - Bellcanto

Friday, February 10

1:00 PM - Horizons Bible

Saturday, February 11

6:00 PM - Rec Night

Sunday, February 12

11:00 AM - Peanuts

11:15 AM - Christian

Monday, February 13

10:00 AM - Women's

5:00 PM - Deacons

6:00 PM - Adult Ed

Tuesday February 14

9:00 AM - Thrift Shop

9:30 AM - Presbytery at

10:00 AM - Baby Diaper

8:00 AM - Men's Fellowship

9:15 AM - Free Showers

Education Ministry

Rehearsal

Fellowship

Committee

Yorkville

Closet

9:00 AM - Koffee Klass

9:20 AM - Wee Worship

10:00 AM - Worship Service

11:00 AM - Fellowship Hour

11:15 AM - Fair For All Shop

10:20 AM - Sunday School

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

7:00 PM - Choir

Meeting

Study

Wednesday, February 1 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

12:00 PM – Jeremiah Dev NIC

5:00 PM - Membership

5:30 PM - Prime Time 6:00 PM - Transit: Orange

Line Youth Group
7:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, February 2

9:15 AM - Free Showers 9:30 AM - Carillons

9:30 AM - Deaconesses

6:00 PM - Bellcanto

Friday, February 3

7:00 PM - Choir

No scheduled activities

Saturday, February 4

10:00 AM - Soup Kitchen 10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, February 5

Communion

9:00 AM – Koffee Klass 10:00 AM – Worship Service

10:20 AM - Sunday School

11:00 AM - Fellowship Hour

11:00 AM - Peanuts

Rehearsal

11:15 AM – Nominating Committee

11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop 11:30 AM - Transit Blue Line

Monday, February 6

Youth Group

9:15 AM – Free Showers

5:15 PM – JD NOC

6:00 PM – Love Rockford 7:00 PM – Faith and Environment Committee

Tuesday February 7

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast

9:00 AM - Thrift Shop

1:00 PM – JD Executive

Meeting

Wednesday, February 8 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

12:00 PM - Plus Size Closet

5:00 PM - Trustees

Wednesday, February 15

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting 5:30 PM - Prime Time

6:00 PM – Transit: Orange Line Youth Group

6:30 PM – Adult Education 7:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, February 16

9:15 AM – Free Showers

9:30 AM – Carillons 6:00 PM - Bellcanto

6:15 PM - ARC Open Gym

Friday, February 17
No Scheduled Events

7:00 PM - Choir

Saturday, February 18

10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic 7:00 PM – Euchre at Katy Paterson's

Sunday, February 19

9:00 AM – Koffee Klass 10:00 AM – Worship Service

10:20 AM – Sunday School

11:00 AM - Fellowship Hour

11:00 AM - Peanuts Rehearsal

11:15 AM – Music Ministry

11:15 AM – Fellowship Ministry

11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

Monday, February 20,

9:15 AM - Free Showers

Tuesday February 21 7:00 AM – Men's Prayer

Breakfast

9:00 AM - Thrift Shop 1:00 PM - Executive

Committee

6:00 PM - Pop Up Dinner 7:00 PM - Mission Ministry Wednesday, February 22

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting

12:00 PM - Plus Size Closet

5:30 PM - Prime Time

6:00 PM – Transit: Orange Line Youth Group

6:30 PM – Adult Education 7:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, February 23, 2017

9:15 AM – Free Showers

9:30 AM – Carillons

5:30 PM – Governing Council 6:00 PM - Bellcanto

7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, February 24
No Scheduled Events

Saturday, February 25 10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, February 26

Bell Sunday

9:00 AM - Koffee Klass

9:45 AM - Peanuts Prep

10:00 AM – Worship Service

10:20 AM – Sunday School 11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour

11:15 AM – Nominating

Committee 11:30 AM – Fair For All Shop

12:30 PM – Family Bowling

Monday, February 27
9:15 AM – Free Showers

Tuesday, February 28

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast

9:00 AM - Thrift Shop 10:00 AM - Baby Diaper

Closet

6:00 PM - Discernment and Vision



Kids enjoying the new carpet

FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

by Valerie Blair

I have to share this wonderful little bit about another staff member. I didn't observe this from the organ bench itself, but outside, in the little parking lot we use on Park Ave. I was coming to practice, and pulled into a parking spot just before Becky Erbe got in her car and left (I don't think she saw me). I was about to get out when I heard someone honk, so I looked in my side mirror to see why anyone would be honking at me for getting out of my car. In the mirror, I saw Becky's red car stopped on Park Ave., in the middle of the street, and then heard her yell at someone or something out her car window. I couldn't figure out why gentle Becky would yell at anyone, especially because she has such a pastoral connection to so many people on the street around here. Then I saw it, one of those squirrels who runs into the street, and then can't decide whether to go back, or make a run for it...just standing there contemplating survival. And Becky was determined not to run over that squirrel. I watched her wait, yell, and finally get him to move. And I thought, this is why she is following the path she is, and why both my children talk first and most about Becky, when they talk about church. Such wonderful caring for all God's creatures.

MESSAGE FROM TITO CEVALLOS

O, Lord, Rekindle my soul to affirm my walking with you!

You know me better that no one in this world, O God; You made me and called me to serve you 44 years ago when I did not know how you really are, the God of love, facilitator of life, and the supporter of those who are at your side working hand by hand with you. In favor of those who suffer calamities, oppression, sickness, solitude; and I have been doing my part with gratitude and thankful heart.

I became so sick last year, and only with your power, and the prayers and support of my church and family I was rising again to live to revive my mission at the field you chose for me. I am firm in your path, walking with you again and again. I ask you to rekindle my soul with the anointing of your Holy Spirit for wisdom, health, direction, and the word to testify your faithfulness, support and love, to bring to your mission field to those who should be saved by the power of grace.

Let Shalom Comunidad De Paz UCC be an instrument of your mercy and love, and also the extension ministry of the SecondFirst, just to reach out the brokenhearted immigrants, which need a family of faith for companionship, and making easier the hard road they must cross far away of their own countries, families, and languages. Bless O Lord our Chapel and our Mission Committee to serve you with all our passion every Sunday 11:00 am, that only with your blessings we could accomplish our deep desire to serve you effectively, as a facilitator of life.

O, Lord, rekindle our soul with the power of your spirit to serve you and honor you in our midst. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust, (Psalm 40: 1-4)

AGO JANUARY SYMPOSIUM

by Valerie Blair

The Rockford Chapter of the AGO (American Guild of Organists) held a workshop at church on Jan 28th. Area Organists, choir directors and hand bell directors were in attendance. Our own Julie Cook Ramirez led sessions on handbells, using the Whitechapel bells, and Emmanuel Episcopal's organist Wayne Hatwich presented on the ornamentation of J. S. Bach. Greg Gyllsdorff gave an overview of the organ, and Ron Weber of St. James Lutheran Church in Chicago gave a session on ideas for working with smaller choirs, and summertime music. James Marck of Court Street Methodist led a preview rehearsal for the Rockford Festival Choir day happening March 25th, open to any and all singers. Finally, three young organists who were AGO Scholarship recipients gave a concert on our E. M. Skinner organ. What a great day for areas church musicians and educators, and wonderful way to showcase our church and its fine organ.

HEAR YE, HEAR YE! MORE MUSICIANS COMING TO SECONDFIRST

by Paul Laprade

Besides all the spirit-filled music presented on Sundays, SecondFirst has always been blessed by performances which add to our lives as a music-loving community. Here is a short (and not complete) list of musical events to add to your calendar:

Bradley University Choir – Saturday, March 25th, 7:00 pm at Court Street United Methodist Church

Our church has been so busy that we have 'given' this concert to our friends at Court Street! The Bradley University Choir has performed at our church several times in the past, and this is perhaps its final season with conductor John Jost. Our church will be asked to also help with homestays.

Rock Valley College's Three Choirs Concert - Sunday, April 23rd, at 3:00 pm

Rock Valley College's choirs sing music by Brahms, Burleigh, and Britten! Come see Valerie play the piano for them! (\$10/adults; \$5/students and seniors)

Westminster Choir College Bells -- Thursday, May 23rd, at 7:00 pm

Its performances are broadcast annually on NPR...it performs with the largest set of bells (8 octaves) and largest set of chimes owned by any performing ensemble...it has nine well-selling CDs...it performs with the large "Basso Profundo" aluminum-cast bells that are the newest phenomenon in ringing...it has been featured on the "Today" show, and has accompanied singer Josh Groban at Rockefeller Center....the Westminster Choir College Bells are holding their FIRST ever performance in Rockford on May 23rd. It will be stopping on tour (after an appearance at Carnegie Hall) to perform at SecondFirst church. This may be one of finest visiting bell groups you will ever see and hear! Please support us with homestays and by spreading the word about this rare concert event. (\$20/adults; \$10/students and seniors)

We hope you will join us in this exciting season of music at SecondFirst!

GOVERNING COUNCIL UPDATES

by Carolyn Greenlaw

Guest Andy Newgren presented a new idea: to transform the outdoor west facing wall of the gym, to include a mural depicting hope and peace. A committee would research possibilities for the design as well as research grants and funding. The idea is sent to DVT Ministry team. Ed Conklin made a report on the existing Presbyterian Endowment. Requests for funding a church project should be made in writing to the Endowment Committee. Becky Erbe is visiting shut-ins and managing showers for neighbors in need. Becky is collecting shampoo, hand and foot warmers. Pastor Rebecca has been approached by city officials concerning our church becoming a warming center. The Boots have been delivered to Haskell School, a pair for each child. Transform Rockford Shared Values will be voted on in January GC. Negotiations for Contract for Parking Lot car rental spaces to the Library is continuing. Number of neighborhood guests for Wednesday Night has increased. January 29 is all church annual budget meeting following worship. Full minutes available in office.

WE ARE ONE: SECONDFIRST CHURCH

by Carolyn Greenlaw

At the Women's Fellowship Brunch on October 22, our speaker asked the scores of Church members attending, which ones of us were Presbyterian and then which ones of us were Congregational. We all looked around at each other and tried to remember the origins of each church friend. It was an interesting exercise and one that brought home to us how we have really become one. Remember that cold December 30th day in 2012 when the church bells were all ringing as we met together in the street to join in our first service as one church?

We love our name, Second Congregational First Presbyterian Church. It tells of our history and our story as one new church. We have been together as one church all of 2013 through the beginning of 2017. Four full and wonderful years. At our December 2016 Governing Council Meeting we voted to make the spelling of our name SecondFirst. All together with no space in-between. That's how we are, all together with no space in-between. Happy Birthday SecondFirst Church.

TRANSFORM ROCKFORD'S SHARED VALUES

by Sally Hoff

Thank you to all those who took the time to share their opinions of the Shared Values of Transform Rockford with Roger Greenlaw and/or Sally Hoff. Many people wanted to discuss other elements of the efforts to transform our community or get updates on the progress of the volunteer corps' work as well. The Shared Values of Inclusion, Caring, Respect, Transparency, Trustworthiness, Unity, Ideation, Responsibility, and Interconnectedness have been met with approval by our congregation to date. Governing Council will formerly vote to affirm them on January 26th, thereby adding SecondFirst Church to a growing list of religious organizations that affirm the values upheld by the Transform Rockford effort "as a foundation for a civil and cultivating environment."

LOVE ROCKFORD: CLOTHES CLOSET TEAM

April 29 is the big day! Jeremiah Development (JD) is sponsoring the first Love Rockford event. The Clothes Closet Team (CCT) is headed by three SecondFirst members: Becky Erbe, Darlene Riddle, and Marge Maynard. As we all know, many hands make for manageable work and we are looking for more team members. CCT members can participate in a number of ways...



- ▶ 1-3 coordinators will work at Court Street United Methodist Church and Emmanuel Episcopal Church to publicize the need for donations of clean, gently used clothing, the when and where of dropping off donations, and the overall timeline.
- Sorting Teams at each of the three JD churches will sort the clothing donations into bags according to gender and general size. The clothing will be collected beginning March 1 and will be stored at each church until the week of Love Rockford.
- Delivery and Set-Up Teams will work on April 25-27 at the Clothes Closet site to organize the space and items.
- Day-Of Team will staff the Clothes Closet on April 29
- Clean-Up Team will package leftover items for donation
- Individuals can help in other ways: secure wire hangers for hanging clothes, collect plastic shopping bags, make a donation of clean, gently used clothing, help someone else make a clothing donation, be a contact person to approach area retailers for any clothing extras they may have (eg. Kohl's).

We have opportunities big and small, short-term and longer-term. You can be involved in more than one Team! YOU are an important part of the success of the Love Rockford Clothes Closet. To get involved, please call the SecondFirst Church office at 815-963-8431 and leave your contact information with Debbie Wise. We WILL call you back!

LOVE ROCKFORD is coming Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 10 AM - 2 PM. See www.loverockfordil.org for more info.

A LOT OF PARTY "POP UP DINNER"

Tuesday, February 21, 6:00 pm

In October we hosted the first ever "Pop-up Dinner" in the parking lot. It was a great success! So much that we have decided to gather again on February 21. We will be roasting hot dogs and marshmallows.

If you have a fire pit or fire wood that can be used for this event please. Courtney can arrange to pick up your fire pit or wood. Stay on the lookout for a formal invitation to this event.

Contact: Courtney Jonsson courtney.jonsson@secondfirst.org



Photo from the first pop up dnner