

## SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)  
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Non Profit  
Organization US  
Postage PAID  
Permit No. 3734  
Rockford, Illinois

MARCH 2019

# THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

*Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace*



### A WORD FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Church,

With a deep and beautiful winter, we have been reminded often that we are not in control of our schedules. With Lent approaching, we will have the opportunity to allow God to show us that God is the author and renewer of our faith and our lives.

Let us join together to journey to the cross!

On Wednesday nights (6:00), we will share a soup supper and have a worship and learning experience around Bob Goff's book: *Everybody Always: Becoming Love in a World Full of Setbacks and Difficult People*. When Jesus said love your neighbor, he meant THAT neighbor/friend/aunt/cousin, too! We'll learn some concrete tools and call on the name of Jesus to help us.

Mindfulness with Sandy is back! Thursdays at 12:10, member and licensed therapist Sandy Williams will provide space for us to be quiet. The Psalm says to "be still and know that I am God." Being still is really hard for most of us. Come learn the practice of mindfulness that will bring you to the feet of Jesus.

Of course we will worship on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, in addition to every Sunday. Let us journey to the cross together!

Peace,  
Rebecca

### SAVE THE DATES

- April 6 – Kid's Night Out
- April 14 – Palm Sunday Potluck
- April 14 – Alternative Worship
- April 18 – Maundy Thursday
- April 19 – Good Friday
- April 21 – Easter
- April 28 – Annual Program Meeting
- April 28 – Ring in Spring Concert



### SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- March 3: Transfiguration**  
Andy Newgren Preaching: Transfiguration  
Matthew 16:24 -17:8
- March 10: First Sunday in Lent**  
Rev. Rebecca White Newgren preaching:  
Forgiveness  
Matthew 18:15-35
- March 17: Second Sunday in Lent**  
Rev. Rebecca White Newgren preaching:  
Laborers in the Vineyard  
Matthew 20:1-16
- March 24: Third Sunday in Lent**  
Rev. Rebecca White Newgren preaching:  
Wedding Banquet  
Matthew 22:1-14
- March 31: Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
Rev. Rebecca White Newgren preaching:  
Parable of Bridesmaids & Talents  
Matthew 25:1-13, 14-30

## NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST UCC CLERGY SPEAK OUT, LOBBY SENATORS IN SUPPORT OF GREEN NEW DEAL



UCC executives and environmental advocates are joining other allies concerned about climate change in speaking out for the Green New Deal.

"It's a massive program of investment in clean-energy jobs and infrastructure that would transform not just the energy sector, but the entire economy," said the Rev. Brooks Berndt, UCC minister of Environmental Justice. "It is meant both to de-carbonize the economy and to make it fairer and more just." *Read more online: www.ucc.org*

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) A BIG CALL TO ACTION' ON MENTAL HEALTH



When Doug Beach's son suffered a mental breakdown on an overseas trip, he didn't know what to do.

"We could have used a lot more help," Beach said, recalling the event.

His church was supportive, but staff and

clergy weren't familiar with the resources available to help people with mental health issues and their loved ones. Last week, Beach was part of a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) initiative working to change that. A committee charged with forming networks within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to work with mental health issues held its first meetings at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, Kentucky on Feb. 12-13.

*Read the full article online: www.presbyterianmission.org*

### OVERNIGHT CAFE RECAP

Rockford Overnight Café was a huge success! Open for the four nights of the polar vortex at the end of January, we served over 30 people in the course of the nights. We saved lives for sure, but we were blessed more than we gave. Thanks to all in the church and outside the church who came, gave, supported and donated. Thanks to Antwon Harris and Gerry Ford for opening the doors!



## KOFFEE KLASS

March Schedule

### MARCH 3

#### **Digging: Uncovering one of Israel's biggest finds**

Come hear updates on recent significant archeology discoveries at Magdala, situated on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, an overview of Israeli excavations, and the work of the Israeli Antiquities Authority through the lenses of biblical scholars and archaeologists. Led by Lenore Lund

### LENTEN SERIES (March 10, 17, 24, April 7, 14)

#### **Pilgrimage: Journeys of life and faith**

Journeys can be physical, both far away and around the corner, metaphorical, spiritual and, hopefully, something we are all still on. This series will pull from the arts, other faith traditions, and stories to frame our Lenten journey to the cross. Moderated by Andy Newgren

**March 10:** Why pilgrimages?

**March 17:** Others' pilgrimages: A look at the Hajj

**March 24:** Writing our journey: Insight from Anne Lamott

**April 7:** Jesus: A life of pilgrimage, Part I

**April 14:** Jesus: A life of pilgrimage, Part II

**March 31:** Dialogue: Conversations on current events (TBD)

ALL SESSIONS MEET IN THE HERITAGE ROOM

8:30 a.m. Coffee & gathering

8:45 a.m. Session begins

Contact: [andy.newgren@secondfirst.org](mailto:andy.newgren@secondfirst.org)

## CROSS COURT STREET

By Sue Kanthak, Executive Director, Jeremiah Development

If you're looking for ways to cross the cultural divide, join Jeremiah Development as we cross Court St! Beginning March 16th and once a month after that, we will be hand delivering a newsletter to residents who live in the Jeremiah area. We began last summer, stopping when the weather got cold. The goal is to use the newsletter as an instrument to knock on doors and get to know our neighbors while delivering useful information about the community. As we get to know each other, we can begin to bring about meaningful change. Jeremiah would like to have more input and planning from the neighbors who live in this area. We all know how difficult it is to come to a meeting or event in an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people. If we are known as those really nice people we talk to each month, our neighbors may be more inclined to participate in shaping their neighborhood. Jeremiah would like a team of about 8-10 people willing to give up 2-2.5 hours on a Saturday morning once a month. We have a core group of about 6 people that delivered last summer and we would like to add to that team. We meet at 9 am and we are done by 11-11:30. Coffee and fruit or donuts are available to help kick off the morning. If you are interested in participating, please email Sue Kanthak at [sue@jeremiahdevelopment.org](mailto:sue@jeremiahdevelopment.org). I promise you will get great exercise and have fun!

## KID'S NIGHT OUT

Saturday, April 6, 4:00 to 6:00

Want to spend some extra time with your church friends and have the chance to get to know them a little better? Family CE is hosting a Kid's "Night Out". We will watch a movie, have something to eat, and other activities. Wear your PJ's or comfortable clothes so that you can relax with your friends. This activity is designed for Kindergarten through 5th grade children. Parents you are welcome to drop your kids off at 4 and then return at 6 to pick them up. Family CE will provide all the adult supervision. Please sign up [dyan.lofgren@secondfirst.org](mailto:dyan.lofgren@secondfirst.org) or [debbie.wise@secondfirst.org](mailto:debbie.wise@secondfirst.org).

## TOP CHEF RICE CRISPY FUNDRAISER

The Top Chef Rice Crispy Fundraiser for the Youth Mission Trip this summer to Nashville was immensely successful. Through the generous donations we made \$284.00. It was the S'mores rice crispy treats, with Golden Grahams and chocolate chips made by Madeline Archer that took first place. However, the caramel M and M's, peanut butter, butterscotch, and Coco Pebbles also were deliciously successful! During our fundraiser the students were available for our second Tech and Talk. They were able to answer questions to those in our community who had questions about phones, tables, or any technology. We are so proud of our young people as they continue to find ways to be a gift in our congregation.



Rev. Rebecca and Aubrey took six of our confirmation youth to Stronghold for a confirmation retreat. But first they stopped at Sam's and had ice cream before dinner.



Rev. Rebecca White Newgren and Director of Youth Ministry, Aubrey Barnett, joined the kids for their retreat. Pictured above are some of the team-building exercises.

## CORNER BEEF & CABBAGE DINNER

Saturday, March 23, 5:30 p.m.

Join us in the Church Dining Room for a traditional Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner. Beverages will be provided. The meat preference is corned beef, chicken, or vegan. The dinner is \$8.00 for adults, collected at the door. Children under 12 eat for free and hot dogs will be available, if requested. Please bring a dish to pass or dessert for the buffet table. Entertainment will be provided by the Church Street String Band. We ask that everyone RSVP to the church office 815-963-8431 or [debbie.wise@secondfirst.org](mailto:debbie.wise@secondfirst.org) by March 14.



## JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT FUNDRAISER

Saturday, March 30, 4:30 p.m.

Join us for the 1st Annual Night In Italy dinner Fundraiser with Jeremiah Development! All proceeds will go to the Jeremiah Development to help with neighborhood programming, events, and more. Tickets on sale now! Buy online: <https://jeremiahdevelopment.org/2019/02/11/a-night-in-italy-dinner-fundraiser/> Buy in-person: SecondFirst Church, 318 N. Church St. 1 Ticket: \$45 • 2 Tickets: \$80 • Table (8 Tickets): \$300 Interested in donating? Contact Danica Gray (Fundraising Chair) at [danicamarigray@gmail.com](mailto:danicamarigray@gmail.com) or Sue Kanthak (Executive Director) at [sue@jeremiahdevelopment.org](mailto:sue@jeremiahdevelopment.org)

## OPPORTUNITY FOR GIVING: OGHs

Sunday, March 31

On March 31st we will accept an offering to support One Great Hour of Sharing, commonly called OGHs. The funds raised support activities in disaster relief and refugee relief, both in the US and around the world. How to give: use the special envelope, or make a check out to the church and write OGHs in the memo line: *The world thanks you!*

**One Great HOUR OF SHARING**

## SAVE THE DATE: LOVE ROCKFORD

Saturday, May 11, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



With a \$10,000 grant from the Northern Illinois Community Foundation, it will be bigger and better than ever...able to serve and LOVE more of our neighbors in need. Check out the website for information and to be an early volunteer: [www.loverockfordil.org](http://www.loverockfordil.org)



## DATES FOR LENT

### ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Wednesday, March 6, 6:30 p.m.

### LENTEN SUPPER WITH WORSHIP LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Wednesdays, March 13 - April 10, 6:00 p.m.

### MINDFULNESS WITH SANDY WILLIAMS

Thursdays, March 14 - April 11, 12:10 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.

### PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday, April 14, 10:00 a.m.

### MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP

Thursday, April 18, 6:30 p.m.

### GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP

Friday, April 19, 12:10 p.m.

### EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday, April 21, 10:00 a.m.



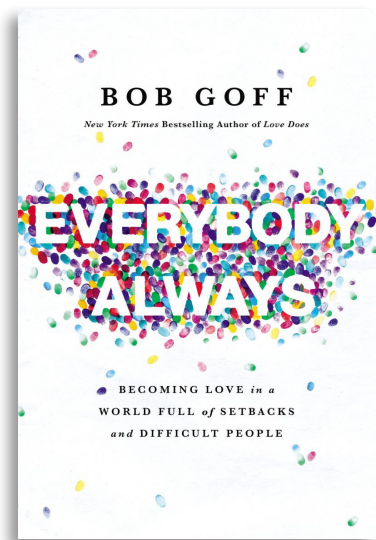
## GIVING OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU: ROCKFORD PROMISE

Sunday, March 10

We will have a mission moment with Elaine Breck from the Rockford Promise program. This is a local scholarship program that partners with Rock Valley College and Rockford University to provide full-tuition scholarships to Rockford Public School grads so they can attend college. The program aims to increase the percentage of low-income students and students of color who finish high school and then start and complete a post-secondary education. This will be an opportunity for you to give to a great organization.

## LENTEN SUPPER AND WORSHIP LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Wednesdays, March 13-April 10, 6:00 p.m.



When Jesus said love your neighbor, he meant only the nice pretty ones, right? Wrong! Join us as we learn with author Bob Goff through Everybody Always: Becoming Love in a World Full of Setbacks and Difficult People. We'll break bread together with a simple soup supper, sing, worship and learn together. Together is the best way to be. (Feel free to buy the book and read along or just come for the session content). Questions? Contact Rebecca: rebecca.whitnewgren@secondfirst.org or 815.963.8431.

## A SPACE FOR MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

Thursdays, March 14, 21, 28, April 4, 11: 12:10 -12:40 p.m.

Want or need a place to get away from the day's or week's stress? Want an opportunity to get re-centered and calmed? Come participate in a half hour of mindfulness and guided meditation. People of all faiths or no faith are invited to participate. No pretzel positions needed. No prior experience necessary. Come try something new or come to a new place to do a wonderful practice. Hope to see you! This Meditation will be held in the Sanctuary. Led by Sandy Williams, a local licensed clinical social worker and CranioSacral therapist, who focuses on holistic health.

## ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

Wednesday, March 6, 6:00 p.m.

As the beginning of the journey of Lent, we will come together to be reminded of the fragility of our lives and the promise that God claims us as God's own. The sign of ash and the waters of baptism will balance the ash of our lives with God's love. Lent prepares us to receive the good news of resurrection at Easter. Let us journey together. Find a Lenten Devotional by NT Wright with daily readings in the Gospel of Matthew here: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/83-lent-for-everyone/day/1>

## SECONDFIRST TO HOST THE SPRING PRAIRIE ASSOCIATION MEETING

Saturday, March 23, 8:30 a.m.

Churches from around the UCC Prairie Association will gather at our church. Come participate, come serve, come enjoy.

## THERAPEUTIC TEEN PROGRAM

Monday through Friday, March 25-29

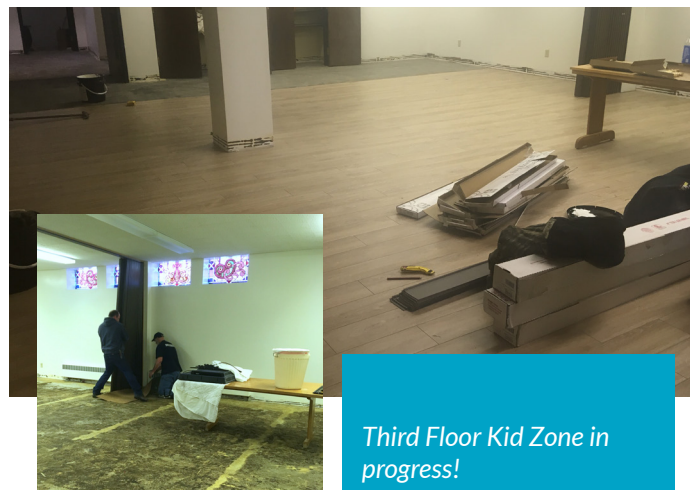
We welcome back the Therapeutic Park District Teen Program. The Therapeutic Recreation team of the Rockford Park District is committed to providing community based recreation to promote the development, maintenance, and expression of a meaningful leisure lifestyle to people with disabilities.



Rev Rebecca and Joshua Patterson preparing for the Alternative Worship service



The Up North Four blessed us during worship.



Third Floor Kid Zone in progress!



Meeting of the minds for the church wide clean out! Many thanks to all who have helped clean and sort. The building is looking cleaner and lighter!

## NOMINATING MINISTRY TEAM

It is that time of year again when we are asking you to share your gifts and talents. The Church Ministry Teams are seeking enthusiastic people to be part of their team. There is something for every interest. Team membership builds lasting friendships, provides a stronger sense of belonging and gives the feeling of accomplishment. Do you want to know more about Second First Church? Join a Ministry Team. You don't have to be a member to join, however, I am certain that if you join a Ministry Team you will want to be a member of the church also. You are welcome to contact any of the Nominating Ministry Team members listed below or call the office at 815-963-8431.

Kim Craft  
Jim Delmore

Holly Hegge  
Jean Herro

Tyler Noel  
Diane Pippel

Sarah Reinold  
Darlene Riddle

Steve Showers  
Ann Stites

## FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

The Fellowship Ministry Team shall promote fellowship among the Church members and prospective members through social events.

## DEACON MINISTRY TEAM

The Deacon Ministry Team shall support the pastors and other leaders in promoting the spiritual welfare of the Church.

## MEMBERSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

The Membership Ministry Team shall live out the mission of SecondFirst Church by welcoming visitors and leading the congregation in creative ways to engage with the community.

## DEACONESS MINISTRY TEAM

The Deaconess Ministry Team shall be available to host, or assist with, special events, identify and assign people to host receptions following funerals and memorial services and provide an opportunity for members of the congregation and visitors to gather following worship.

## ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM

The Adult Christian Education Ministry Team shall select topics and curriculum, recruit and assist program leaders, and organize various educational activities with support from staff.

## DISCERNMENT AND VISION MINISTRY TEAM

The Discernment and Vision Ministry Team shall be to assist the work of the Governing Council by proposing ideas and plans to benefit the Church in the mid-term and long-term (two (2) to ten (10) years).

## FAMILY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY TEAM

The Family Christian Education Ministry Team shall oversee the preschool, elementary school, middle school, confirmation, and high school programs.

## MISSION MINISTRY TEAM

The Mission Ministry Team shall be responsible for the mission program within the Church; support of local civic welfare agencies, the mission programs of the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and additional like projects in and outside of the United States; and the administration of funds designated for any of the above functions.

## MUSIC MINISTRY TEAM

The Music Ministry Team shall develop, organize, and evaluate a comprehensive program of music designed to provide an integral contribution to the overall mission of the Church.

## NOMINATING MINISTRY TEAM

The Nominating Ministry Team shall prepare the slate of nominees for all elected Officers.

## TRUSTEE MINISTRY TEAM

The Trustee Ministry Team: shall be responsible for the general supervision of the financial and business affairs of the Church; (ii) shall have the care, custody, and control of the real and personal property of the Church. They must be a member of the church.

# MARCH CALENDAR

## Friday, March 1

No scheduled activities

## Saturday, March 2

10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

## Sunday, March 3

8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:15 AM – Family Christian Education Team  
11:15 AM – Peanuts  
11:15 AM – Tower Ringers  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

## Monday, March 4

11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
12:00 PM – Adult Education Ministry Team  
5:00 PM – Love Rockford

## Tuesday, March 5

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
11:00 AM – Gym Walking  
12:00 PM – Bible Study

## Ash Wednesday, March 6

9:00 AM – Deaconesses  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
5:30 PM – Membership Ministry Team  
6:30 PM – Ash Wednesday Service  
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

## Thursday, March 7

9:30 AM – Carillons  
9:30 AM – Free showers  
11:00 AM – Gym Walking  
5:30 PM – JD Board Meeting  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

## Friday, March 8

1:00 PM – Horizons Bible Study

## Saturday, March 9

10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

## Sunday, March 10

8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:15 AM – Peanuts  
11:15 AM – Tower Ringers  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop  
4:00 PM – Alternative Worship

## Monday, March 11

11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
5:00 PM – Deacons Ministry Team

## Tuesday, March 12

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
11:00 AM – Gym Walking  
6:00 PM – DVT

## Wednesday, March 13

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
5:00 PM – Trustees  
6:00 PM – Soup Dinner  
6:30 PM – Lenten Worship Experience  
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

## Thursday, March 14

9:30 AM – Carillons  
9:30 AM – Free showers  
11:00 AM – Gym Walking  
12:10 PM – Mindfulness Meditation  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

## Friday, March 15

No scheduled activities

## Saturday, March 16

10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

## Sunday, March 17

8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:15 AM – Confirmation Class  
11:15 AM – Music Ministry Team  
11:15 AM – Fellowship Ministry Team  
11:15 AM – Tower Ringers  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

## Monday, March 18

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

## Tuesday, March 19

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
11:00 AM – Gym Walking  
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry

## Wednesday, March 20

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:00 PM – Soup Dinner  
6:30 PM – Lenten Worship Experience  
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

## Thursday, March 21

9:30 AM – Carillons  
9:30 AM – Free showers  
11:00 AM – Gym Walking  
12:10 PM – Mindfulness Meditation  
6:00 PM – ARC Rec Night  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

## Friday, March 22

No scheduled activities

## Saturday, March 23

8:00 AM – Prairie Assn. Meeting  
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic  
5:30 PM – Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner

## Sunday, March 24

8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
8:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:15 AM – Tower Ringers  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

## Monday, March 25

8:00 AM – Park District  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

## Tuesday, March 26

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
8:00 AM – Park District  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
11:00 AM – Gym Walking  
6:00 PM – Earth Care Committee

## Wednesday, March 27

8:00 AM – Park District  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:00 PM – Soup Dinner  
6:30 PM – Lenten Worship Experience  
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

## Thursday, March 28

8:00 AM – Park District  
9:30 AM – Carillons  
9:30 AM – Free showers  
11:00 AM – Gym Walking  
12:10 PM – Mindfulness Meditation  
5:30 PM – Governing Council  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

## Friday, March 29

8:00 AM – Park District

## Saturday, March 30

10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic  
4:30 PM – Jeremiah Dev. Fundraiser

## Sunday, March 31

8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:15 AM – Tower Ringers  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

## A NOTE FROM THE MODERATOR

By Steve Showers

As I waited for the Overnight Café to come to a reality, I thought of all of the people that we could help with a warm place to spend the cold night. It did come to a reality during the sub-zero days and nights in the last week of January. Reverend Rebecca addressed in her sermon on February 10, the guests that were allowed to be in a much warmer place. I was really impressed by the community that helped on those cold nights. When the word was in the community that SecondFirst was opening the Overnight Café, the community stepped up to help. We took a chance, got it started, and the community responded with support of all kinds. My thought was “Thanks to all of us”, as we took the chance to do the right thing at the right time. My highlight was from a former student that was carrying in supplies, stopped, greeted me, and we had a good discussion, catching up with life, and thanking each other for what was happening here at SecondFirst.

## GOVERNING COUNCIL

By Steve Showers

The January Governing Council was quick, to the point, and filled with many successes. The usual updates, staff reports, and comments went quickly. We shared the progress on projects that the church is working on, and then we asked for each ministry team leader to highlight an activity or projects that ministry team had recently done or would have coming up in the next few months. The next four months will be filled with events to engage everyone. Not that all will attend all events, but that all can feel the effects of the work of the ministry teams. Please participate as you are able so that the work of the ministry teams can feel success and continue their good work here at SecondFirst. Until next month, keep warm, keep attending church services, and keep participating in the activities of the church.

## A MUSIC FORECAST

By Paul Laprade, Music Director

While we cannot seem to forecast the weather with much reliability, we will try to be a bit more accurate with our music forecast for the next few weeks. Here is what is ‘coming up’ (musically) in the next few weeks at SecondFirst church:

Harlan Jefferson, a well-known member of the Rockford music scene, is making his sax debut at SecondFirst on February 24th. (Harlan’s version of “Amazing Grace” will thrill you!) Although the unexpected weather delayed their appearance in our services, the Sanctuary Choir returns on March 3rd, with an Anthem by Vivaldi and a beautiful offertory by William Kaufmann. Weather also delayed the appearance of our beloved bell choirs (Martins, and more), who will now appear on March 10th. The choir returns on March 17th, with a special choir member singing his first solo in years. The Carillons follow their wildly successful January appearance with two great selections: “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” and “Before the Throne of God Above.” March 31st concludes the month with a “March Music Potpourri”. Julie Cook Ramirez brings her wonderful guitar stylings to a beautiful solo Anthem. Julie will also join Paul and Merritt Matheson (and others) in presenting the hymn “When the Poor Ones” with multiple guitars. The Offertory will be enhanced by percussion and with Bill Zartman’s wonderful violin in a new rendition of the Lenten favorite, “When I Survey the Mighty Cross.” As always, we are blessed to be listening to music accompanied and performed with the inimitable skill and musicality brought to us by Valerie Blair.

## BEING FLEXI-BELL

By Julie Cook Ramirez, Director of Handbell Ministries

Apparently, Mother Nature isn’t a big fan of handbell music or perhaps she just has a really annoying sense of humor. Either way, she did a number on our rehearsal schedule this winter. Between the Polar Vortex and the frequent snow and ice storms, we were forced to cancel multiple rehearsals. Granted, we’ll do our best to reschedule them, but in the meantime, such cancellations make it difficult to prepare for upcoming Bell Sundays. Fortunately, Paul worked with me, Sarah, and Joyce to restructure the music schedule to accommodate our nature-induced lack of readiness. You will now find Bell Sunday (Martins, Bellcantos, Tower, and Peanuts) on March 10th and the Carillons on March 24th. Also, please mark your calendar for our annual Ring in Spring concert on Sunday, April 28th at 3 pm. That’s when we typically let our hair down and share some musical selections you don’t ordinarily expect to hear on handbells. This year will be no exception, with some really cool pieces making their SecondFirst debut. As always, the concert will benefit a local non-profit working to help Rockford’s under-served population. Stay tuned for more details.



Hey that looks like more than just soup! Serious Soup on Mondays is serving a hot meal and great fellowship to more than fifty people.



The church bowling outing was a hit!

