

SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
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Rockford, Illinois

APRIL 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

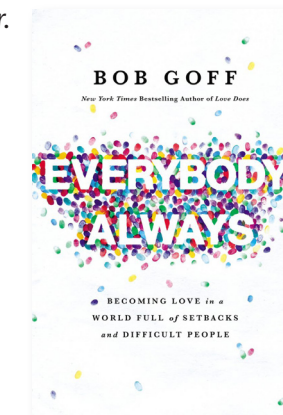
Hi Church,

It is so great to see those of you in worship who were either iced in or visiting warmer climates! We are stronger when we are together. Lent offers us many opportunities to reflect and be together. I won't mention them all here, but we are blessed.

On Wednesday nights, Bob Goff, author of *Everybody Always*, is challenging us to love more

widely and to be more intentional about the ways we love one another. I retold one of his stories in worship:

Bob tells the story of selling his house and moving next door. He got to choose who would become his neighbor. And he didn't choose someone like him. He didn't choose someone whose family make-up and life stage reflected his own. He chose Carol. She was a single women with no extended family and from a different ethnic background, and Bob chose her to share life's journey. She was open to this idea. As they got to know one another, they spent birthdays and Christmas' together. She became a part of their family, and Bob checked in with her every day. When Carol became sick, Bob went out and bought walkie talkies for the two of them in a childlike way, so that she would never feel alone. And who doesn't want to play on a walkie talkie... "Come in Carol. Over and out." What could have been for Carol, a terribly lonely time was changed because Bob Goff intentionally choose to widen his circle of friends and people that he did life with.



There are so many ways we can reach a little farther and include more people in our circle of love. This Lent as we follow Jesus to the cross and resurrection, may we extend our love as individuals and as a church just a bit farther. God is so good to show us the way.

Peace be with you,
Rebecca

ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our very first Alternative Worship service! This is a come as you are service. Everyone is welcome! **Join us for the next service: Sunday, April 14th at 4:00pm.**

Left to right: The worship band enjoying the last song. Children danced in the aisles during worship. Here the dancing continued after the service. One of our neighbors grabs a much needed slice of pizza from the communion table after worship. Fellowship in Jesus' name.



NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST SMALL CONNECTICUT CHURCH CONSISTENTLY TOPS OGHs GIVING LIST



How can a church that didn't become part of the UCC until 1989 celebrate being a major donor to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering for 67 years? For Union Memorial Church of Stamford, Connecticut, it's about 'learning, celebrating and sharing Christ's love.'

"We take seriously our responsibility to share. We were founded in 1896 as a

non-denominational community church, a 'union' of Protestant Christians in this district of Stamford," said the Rev. Blaine Edele, pastor. He noted since its inception, Union Memorial Church has been the beneficiary of several significant bequests. That drives the congregation to help others. "We sense that we are indebted to others and have a responsibility to pass along to others our many blessings. One member put it this way: 'Found money is to be shared.'" *Read more online: www.ucc.org*

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) 'JUST ROW'



CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Thirteen hundred people are gathered in this Eastern Iowa community through Saturday for the 20th White Privilege Conference. Attendees were treated Thursday to a pair of thoughtful keynote addresses and the first of what will be their choice of more than 100 workshops.

Relationships — "imbued with love and accountability" — are at the heart of racial justice work,

said morning keynoter Dr. Heather Hackman, who consults nationally on issues of equity and social justice. *Read the full article online: www.presbyterianmission.org*

SPOTLIGHT ON TRUSTEES MINISTRY TEAM AND THE PREPARATION FOR KFACT

Your Trustees have responsibility for buildings and grounds, finances, and general supervision of the business affairs of the church.

Our Discernment and Vision Team, Governing Council, Trustees and the Congregation have given their enthusiastic support for welcoming KFACT into our Emerson Hall area of the building. As you know, preparations have triggered a domino effect of changes. The 3rd floor Kidzone is now home to all things kids. Renovations include a new floor throughout (come up and see what you think), fresh paint and soon to be new countertops and sinks. Furnishings, carpets and art work surely will follow. Our Bells have moved into their new home on the 4th floor. Adult Ed will soon move into the former nursery that will serve as a second multipurpose area along with our Library/Heritage room.

Many storage areas around the church needed to be emptied, with items sorted and sold, given away, recycled or discarded. Thanks to you who purchased treasures at the recent silent auction or participated in the workday, with a special thanks to Alice Uphouse, Mary Spindler, Jeff Byrne and Peter Joachim for working long hours to get it all done!

We are near completion of a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with KFACT's Board and executive director Shamika Williams. Thanks to Pastors Rebecca and Becky, Bob Langford, Jim Delmore and Bob Canfield for helping us get it right. We have agreed on renovations and upgrades that are needed in Emerson Hall to make it suitable for mentoring over 200 young women who range from 6th grade through college. The Rockford trade unions are in the process of outlining what they are able to contribute to the renovation process. We are seeking bargains and donations from area businesses to make it a beautiful functional home for KFACT.

Your Trustees welcome your questions, suggestions or concerns about this process.

Roger Greenlaw
Chairperson of Trustees Ministry Team



Jim Delmore shows the trades around Emerson Hall in hopes they may participate in making it a great space for KFACT.

KID'S "AFTERNOON OUT"

Saturday, April 6, 2:00 to 4:00 pm

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 "Afternoon Out" on Saturday April 6th from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. **(PLEASE NOTE THE TIME CHANGE FROM THE ORIGINAL ANNOUNCEMENT)** We will watch a movie, have something to eat, and other activities. Wear your comfortable clothes so that you can relax with your friends. This activity is designed for Kindergarten through 5th grade children. This is a great opportunity to bring a friend to church with you. Parents, you are welcome to drop your kids off at 2 and then return at 4 to pick them up. Family CE will provide all the adult supervision. Please sign up with Dyan, dyan.lofgren@secondfirst.org or with Debbie, debbie.wise@secondfirst.org.

3RD FLOOR KIDZONE UPDATE

By Dyan Lofgren, Family Ministry Coordinator

The painting of the walls is complete, the flooring is done... Countertops and painting the bathroom stalls are in process. Then we will move the toys from our current location to their new space. We hope to be in our new space by Easter.



PILGRIM PARK SPRING CLEAN-UP

Saturday, May 4, 8:00 am-5:00 pm

The UCC Youth and Adult Camp is located in Princeton, IL. The SecondFirst Clean-Up Crew will work with another church crew and the staff to enhance the grounds for the year. The crew will leave Rockford at 8:00 am and return by 5:00 pm. Please Contact: David Noel at 815-398-6518 regarding lunch and carpooling arrangements.

PALM SUNDAY POTLUCK

Sunday, April 14, Following Service

Join the Fellowship Ministry team in sharing a meal together as a church family to celebrate Palm Sunday right after church. We will provide ham and au gratin potatoes. Please bring one of your favorite dishes to share with your friends! Beverages, plates and tableware will be provided.

EASTER SUNDAY FLOWERS

We will again have colorful pots of Spring flowers for the Chancel area of the Sanctuary, to celebrate Easter morning. Tulips in yellow, pink or purple will cost \$11.00. White Easter Lilies cost \$16.50, and Azaleas in deep pink cost \$16.50. Orders are due by April 9 if you want a specific color. Thank you to Mary Spindler for arranging this beautiful expression of Easter. Contact: debbie.wise@secondfirst.org

APRIL KOFFEE KLASS

Lenten Series: April 7, 14

Pilgrimage: Journeys of life and faith

The final two sessions of this Lenten series turn the focus toward Jesus looking at his life and death as pilgrimages.

April 21st: Open mic day. Gather with coffee and conversation before church on a topic that will organically arise from those gathered.

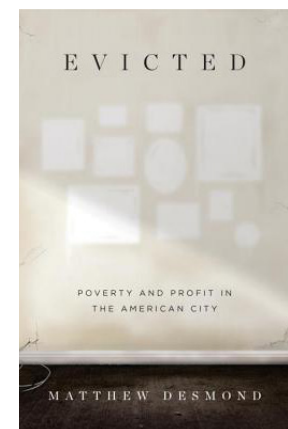
April 28th: Coming from the Earth Care Committee, Ray Empereur, a Climate Reality Leader trained by Al Gore, will talk about the climate crisis and the impact of climate change and what we can do to support the shift to clean renewable energy. This session builds on previous adult education sessions looking at faithful stewardship of the environment and promises to be informative and helpful.

NARRATIVE LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY

RETURNS IN APRIL

Tuesday, April 30, Noon-1:00 pm

No experience necessary, we walk together through upcoming Sunday text. Rev. Rebecca brings historical context and we all bring our life experience as we discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to us through God's Holy Word.



UCC "ALL CHURCH READ"

In preparation for the national UCC General Synod being held in Milwaukee June 21-25, let's join in reading the "All Church Read" book: *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond. Desmond, a professor at Princeton University, will be the keynote speaker for the event, which you are encouraged to attend. Find a copy of the book and begin journeying with eight families in Milwaukee as they try to make ends meet. We will discuss the book over lunch/coffee/tea/other in the coming months! Contact: Rev. Rebecca White Newgren. http://www.ucc.org/news_introducing_general_synod_32_keynote_speaker_all_church_read_author_03192019



LET'S WALK TOGETHER THROUGH HOLY WEEK...

4.14.2019

PALM SUNDAY 10:00 AM

We'll begin waving palms and singing All Glory Laud and Honor and end remembering that Jesus had to experience execution. (Potluck After Worship!)



4.18.2019

MAUNDY THURSDAY 6:30 PM

In a new worship experience this year, Dorothy Paige-Turner will perform her "Woman with an Alabaster Jar" in the midst of song and the Gospel of Matthew's last Supper. We will share communion together.



4.19.2019

GOOD FRIDAY 12:10 PM

Come reflect on how only the brokenness of this day could make way for the Resurrection. Dorothy Paige-Turner will perform "Pilate's Wife."

4.21.2019

EASTER SUNDAY!

10:00 AM

Invite your friends... the instruments are warming up, Paul Laprade is writing the parts, the choir is readying their voices, the kids are getting ready to celebrate and we will praise God!



AN AFTERNOON OF MUSIC AND MISSION

By Julie Cook Ramirez, Director of Handbell Ministries



It's that time of year again! Winter has loosened its icy grasp, and green grass and chirping birds abound. That means our Ring in Spring concert is just around the corner. Please join us on Sunday, April 28th at 3:00 pm, as all five of our handbell and handchime ensembles present a fun concert of music. This is the time when we let our hair down and share selections not often heard on handbells. This year will be no exception, with an array of pop/rock hits and movie/TV favorites, along with traditional sacred and secular pieces. We'll even have a special guest performance by vocalist Vanessa Nieva, accompanied by Valerie Blair, Doug Phillips, and me!

As always, we seek to use our time and talents to bring about good in the world. This year, we are focusing our efforts on the "beyond" part of our mission statement, benefitting the Al Otro Lado Border Rights Project, which provides legal assistance to asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border. Local attorney Linda Zuba will tell us more about this important endeavor in a special video shot on location in Tijuana. So save the date NOW to enjoy an afternoon of music and mission – and don't forget our dessert buffet after the concert!

SUNDAY WORSHIP MUSIC IN APRIL

By Paul Laprade, music director

The forty days of Lent leads to Easter music in April, which will be joyous! Here is an outline of what we can look forward to in this month:

- » **Wed, April 3:** Valerie Blair will lead music in our Lenten Wednesday series (6:00 pm)
- » **Sun, April 7:** The Final Sunday before Holy Week features the Sanctuary Choir. The Choir will present a new and striking version of "Wondrous Love", a tune originally found in the 19th-century American hymnal, "Southern Harmony". Perhaps one of the most beautiful and soulful spirituals I know, "The Time for Praying" will be presented as our Choral Offertory, with Elizabeth LaGrande O'Leary, soloist.
- » **Wed, April 10:** Paul Laprade will lead music in our final Lenten Wednesday series (6:00 pm)
- » **Sun, April 14: Palm Sunday.** We will process as a congregation, as is our tradition, to "All Glory, Laud, and Honor", and join together in singing "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna" for our common hymn. Marsha Martin returns as soloist in our choral performance of "Ride On, King Jesus", as our service moves from light and joy to the final performance of "They Crucified My Lord (and I Never Heard a Mumblin' Word)".
- » **Thurs, April 18: Maundy Thursday** presents a moving service with our choir (7:00 pm)
- » **Fri, April 19: Good Friday.** Our noontime Good Friday service presents music of the Crucifixion with Valerie Blair and Paul Laprade
- » **Sun, April 21: Easter Sunday!** The SecondFirst Brass and String Ensemble will join the Sanctuary Choir and Terry Mohaupt (percussion) in presenting moving music for this, the central Holy Day of Christendom. Music by Handel, Stopford, and others will make this service joyful! The service ends with the inimitable and joyous organ stylings of Valerie Kay Blair.
- » **Sun, April 28:** The wonderful Dorothy Paige-Turner returns to our church to sing works related to evangelism, this Sunday's lectionary topic. We hope you will look forward to this music as much as we do, all in support of the Good News!



SecondFirst was honored to host the UCC Prairie Association on Saturday, March 23. We worshiped together, ate lunch together and learned together.



Mindfulness Meditation with Sandy Williams continues Thursday, April 4 & 11 at 12:10pm



Many SecondFirst members attended a prayer vigil at the mosque after the horrific shooting



Ash Wednesday fun. After we remember we are dust, baptized dust, the warm communion bread creates fellowship.

A LITTLE BIT FROM BECKY E.

The Season of Lent is upon us and here are some of the basics; Lent is the season of the Christian liturgical calendar beginning on Ash Wednesday and leading up to Easter. Lent lasts approximately 6 weeks. The season is 40 days long, but it's celebrated over 46 days. This is because each Sunday of Lent is considered a 'mini Easter' and is not counted as part of the 40 day Lent observance.

This year as part of the Confession liturgy, we will be having a candle extinguishing moment. Think reverse Advent Candle Lighting. When we are in Advent, lighting the candle signifies the light that is coming into the world. In Lent, we will be extinguishing a little bit of the light that came into the world as we prepare for Holy Week and Christ's death on the cross.

Just as our sins are forgiven with Christ's journey to the cross, our sins are forgiven when we confess each week. So, it is only fitting to have the candle light extinguishing as part of the Confession and Assurance of Pardon. I hope it is a moment in worship for prayer and reflection.

Peace, Becky



SECONDFIRST CHURCH SUPPORTS SAUT-D'EAU, HAITI

By Carolyn Greenlaw

A recent update of the news in Haiti reports that civil unrest has seized the country. Grievances of the people range from the skyrocketing costs of food and gas to the ongoing crippling austerity with needed services rarely reaching the outlying mountainous areas. Haiti remains the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere despite its rich natural resources and beauty.

Church members James and Odette Casimir moved from Saut-d'Eau, Haiti to Rockford 26 years ago. While raising and educating their family, the Casimir family has continued to send supplies and money back to Haiti and to spend one month of every year going home to Saut-d'Eau to give as much assistance as they can.



In 2016 the "Haiti Interest Group" of SecondFirst Church was formed to learn more about Haiti and to assist the Casimir's in their ongoing efforts. Our spring project for Haiti is to again provide more tools and heritage seeds for the Saut-d'Eau community. Last year our spring tool and seed drive donated \$7,812 to assist in the planting and farming. Nearly 300 people of Haiti received 1,100 hand tools and heritage seeds for spring planting, helping families become food secure. This year we continue to send hope, prayers and assistance in our 2019 Spring Tool and Seed Drive.

James and Odette oversee this project and continue to thank SecondFirst Church for the generosity to the people of their hometown, Saut d'Eau, Haiti. See the South Entrance Bulletin Board for a pictorial review of our project in Saut-d'Eau, Haiti and the response of the people.

To contribute to our 2019 Tool and Seed Drive you may send a check to SecondFirst Church with Haiti Tools & Seeds 2019 in the memo line. For questions or more information please contact Carolyn or Roger Greenlaw or members of the Haiti Interest Group at SecondFirst Church.



SAVE THE DATE

COMMUNITY CONCERT WITH J DONALD DUMPSON

Friday May 17 and Saturday May 18

When the Pope came to the US in 2015, J. Donald Dumpson arranged and directed the choir. A friend and colleague of Rev. Rebecca, Dr. Dumpson will come to Rockford to draw together singers from across this great city. Singers save both dates. Concert goes save Saturday afternoon. Contact: Paul Laprade paul.laprade@secondfirst.org

APRIL CALENDAR

Monday, April 1
 11:30 AM – Serious Soup
 5:00 PM – Love Rockford

Tuesday, April 2
 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 – Adult Education Ministry Team

Wednesday, April 3
 9:00 AM - Deaconesses
 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
 6:00 PM – Lenten Supper with Worship Learning Experience
 6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, April 4
 9:30 AM – Carillons
 9:30 AM – Free showers
 11:00 AM – Gym Walking
 12:15 PM – Mindfulness Meditation
 5:30 PM – JD Board Meeting
 6:00 PM – Bellcantos
 7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, April 5
 No scheduled activities

Saturday, April 6
 10:30 AM – Loren Maynard Memorial Service
 10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic
 2:00 PM – Kid’s Night Out

Sunday, April 7 Communion
 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

Monday, April 8
 11:30 AM – Serious Soup
 5:00 PM – Deacons

Tuesday, April 9
 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
 9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
 9:30 AM – Presbytery Morris
 9:30 AM – Free Showers
 11:00 AM – Gym Walking
 5:00 PM – Membership Ministry Team
 6:00 PM – DVT
 7:30 PM – Executive Committee

Wednesday, April 10
 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
 5:00 PM – Trustees
 6:00 PM – Lenten Supper with Worship Learning Experience
 6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, April 11
 9:30 AM – Carillons
 9:30 AM – Free showers
 11:00 AM – Gym Walking
 12:15 PM – Mindfulness Meditation
 6:00 PM – Bellcantos
 7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, April 12
 No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, April 13
 10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, April 14 Palm Sunday
 8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
 10:00 AM – Worship Service
 10:20 AM – Sunday School
 11:00 AM – Palm Sunday Potluck
 11:15 AM – Tower Ringers
 11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop
 4:00 PM – Alternative Worship

Monday, April 15
 11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, April 16
 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 – Mission Ministry

Wednesday, April 17
 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
 6:00 PM – Lenten Supper with Worship Learning Experience
 6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Maundy Thursday, April 18
 9:30 AM – Carillons
 9:30 AM – Free showers
 11:00 AM – Gym Walking
 6:30 PM – Maundy Thursday Service

Good Friday, April 19
 12:10 – Good Friday Service

Saturday, April 20
 10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Easter Sunday, April 21
 8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
 10:00 AM – Worship Service
 Children in Worship
 11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
 11:15 AM – Tower Ringers
 11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

Monday, April 22
 Office Closed
 11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, April 23
 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 – Earth Care Committee

Wednesday, April 24
 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
 6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, April 25
 9:30 AM – Carillons
 9:30 AM – Free showers
 11:00 AM – Gym Walking
 5:30 PM – Governing Council
 6:00 PM – Bellcantos
 7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, April 26
 No scheduled activities

Saturday, April 27
 10:00 AM – Jubilee Soup Kitchen
 10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, April 28 Annual Program Meeting
 8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
 10:00 AM – Worship Service
 10:20 AM – Sunday School
 11:00 AM – Annual Program Meeting
 11:15 AM – Tower Ringers
 11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop
 3:00 PM – Ring in Spring Concert

Monday, April 29
 11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, April 30
 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
 12:00 PM – Bible Study

SERIOUS SOUP by the numbers

48 Average Number of Guests Served Weekly



February 18 = 44 guests
 February 25 = 47 guests
 March 4 = 48 guests
 March 11 = 52 guests

NEIGHBORHOOD NUMBERS > Showers = 5 • Food help = 2 • Houseware help = 2

JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT

February was a month of research bringing the path towards implementing our programs into sharper focus.

- The Kjellstrom Family Foundation Funds have been completely expended and the report was sent to them on March 1st. These funds allowed us to purchase needed fundraising equipment, graphic design services and printing of our new tri-fold brochure. As a result of using Astute Web Group for the brochures, they offered to sponsor the place settings for our A Night in Italy, leveraging the original Kjellstrom funds to assist with those costs.
- The Neighborhood Committee continues to explore hosting “Movies in the Park,” once a month during the summer. However, we learned it will cost between \$300-\$500 per showing for the license. I’m looking for sponsors for the events. They will be looking into putting up signage to brand the neighborhood.
- Our “A Night In Italy” fundraiser on March 30th is coming along. We are still trying to get sponsors for a few unmet needs.
- The laundromat continues to be a priority for Jeremiah Development. We are putting together a committee to get this project off the ground and running
- JD Garden will be growing soon. Stay tuned for the garden opening date

As Jeremiah continues to grow and add programs, the need for volunteers gets greater. If you would like to volunteer for any of the above programs, please let Sue know either by email at sue@jeremiahdevelopment.org or leaving a note with the church office.



EARTH CARE COMMITTEE



We have found a source to recycle batteries. If you are in the neighborhood of Zanocco’s Ace Hardware, they are taking batteries at the service counter. Otherwise we have a collection spot at the church, across from the office, to bring your batteries and we will take them to Zanocco’s for you! Cover the end of each used battery with a piece of tape before putting in the recycling bucket.



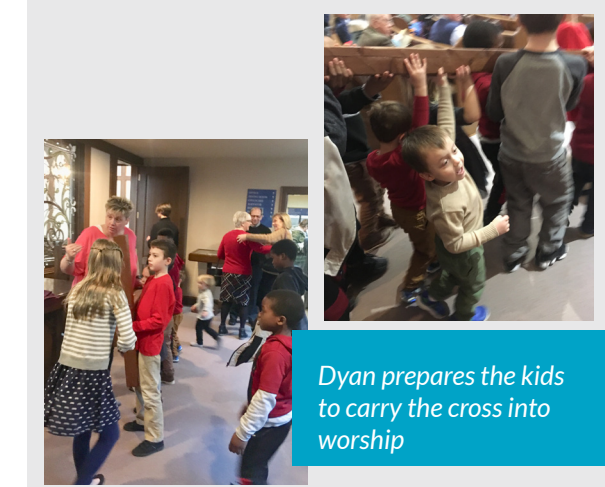
The Fair Trade Store is now collecting the real corks from wine bottles (not the plastic ones) to give to ReCORK, North America’s largest natural wine cork recyclers. Bring your corks to the collection area across from the office and we will take them to the Fair Trade Store.

To celebrate Earth Day and spring we are having an Environmental Fair after church on May 5, 2019 in the dining room. Learn about more recycling options, local foods, fair trade and more!

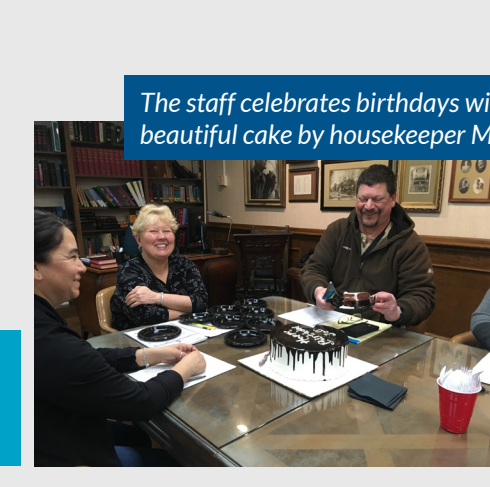
JUBILEE SOUP KITCHEN

Saturday, April 27, 10:30 am

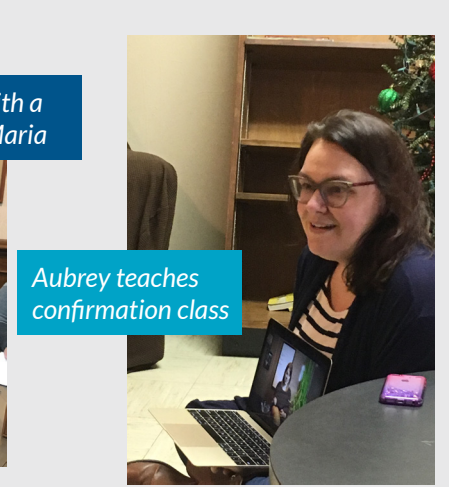
Team members are needed for the April 27 (note the date change) Soup Kitchen. Can you join the group? Cooking starts at 10:30 am, serving begins at noon. Clean-up ends around 1:30 pm. We are looking for volunteers and welcome your help. New helpers, including children over the age of 8 will be appreciated. We count on the experience of all of the regular helpers. Please wear some kind of head covering, like a baseball cap. Contact: Jean Herro 815-399-7213 if you can help with all or part of the time. Thank you.



Dyan prepares the kids to carry the cross into worship



The staff celebrates birthdays with a beautiful cake by housekeeper Maria



Aubrey teaches confirmation class