

## SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)  
318 N. Church Street, Rockford IL 61101  
(815)963-8431  
www.secondfirst.org  
www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch/

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

MAY 2019

# THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

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



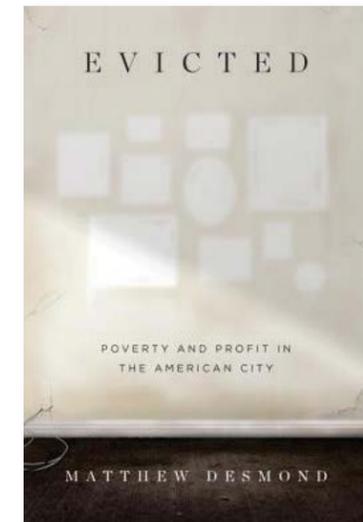
### A WORD FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Hello Church!

We have a great opportunity to participate in one of our denominations... in a couple ways! The United Church of Christ General Synod (bi-annual national gathering) is meeting in Milwaukee June 21-25, 2019. There is a bit of business, but more important than that there will be celebration, worship and learning

together in the company of our like-minded and like-hearted contemporaries in ministry. We'll take the church bus for a day trip, so call the church office if you are interested.

For those of us not able to get to Milwaukee, we can still participate! There is an All-Church Read of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond, who is the keynote speaker at General Synod on Saturday. The book chronicles eight families in Milwaukee as they navigate life on the edge. Let's join together to discuss this eye opening and compassionate book: Thursday, May 23 at noon or Tuesday, May 28 at 7:00 PM.



Of course you can also join me at the UCC Illinois Conference in Elmhurst June 7-8 if that fits your schedule better. It is also a fun and rewarding celebration.

As for our Presbyterian side, we look forward to hosting the Blackhawk Presbytery in November. I have enjoyed watching you get to know one another's denomination through these events. We are blessed to participate in two strong national church bodies.

Peace to you!  
Rebecca

## alternative WORSHIP

SECOND SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH

SUNDAY, MAY 12  
4:00 PM IN THE REARRANGED CHAPEL

This is a laid back gathering with fun spirit-filled music, storytelling and food. Curious? Come! There will be storytelling and mission making. There will be communion wandering and prayer stations. There will be jeans and coffee drinking. Everything revolves around the Table, now in the center of the room. There is no "up front." All people participate in making worship.

## NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST GENERAL SYNOD, JUNE 21-25, MILWAUKEE



You're invited to the United Church of Christ's Thirty-Second General Synod! The Moderator, Mr. Norman Williams, the Assistant Moderator, the Rev. Penny

Lowes, the United Church of Christ Board of Directors, the Officers of the Church, and the members of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ invites you to attend the Thirty-second General Synod that will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 21-25, 2019! The theme for the 32nd General Synod is based on the scripture Matthew 5:16 "In the same way let your light shine before others..."

"When we light just one candle in the darkness, it illuminates dimly, but when many candles are lit, and all let their lights shine, together we can bring brightness to the world." The Rev. Franz Rigert, Wisconsin Conference Minister. *Learn more online:* <https://live.eventtia.com/en/uccsynod2019/Home/>

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) MATTHEW 25 INVITES THE PC(USA) TO BOLDLY LIVE OUT CHRIST'S CALL



*Vision unites all Presbyterians and makes us relevant*

A wondrous change is taking place — a movement of the Spirit. Presbyterian congregations are reprioritizing the work of the Church, taking it from an institution of survival to a way of getting actively engaged in the community and making the world a better place.

These are congregations that take to heart the words of Matthew 25. They not only feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the sick and imprisoned. They are also getting to the root causes that create an unjust world. *Read more online:* <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/pt-0519-matt25/>

## YOUTH HIGHLIGHTS

### CONFIRMATION CLASS

As the month of May rolls in we have some exciting news about our teens! We will spend the month of May working with our mentors from church as our children prepare for Confirmation Sunday on June 9. We invite you to join our young people as they confirm their faith, move forward in their journey and their relationship with God, and hopefully make their way as disciples in this world. Our wonderful confirmands this year are Madeline Archer, Meeghan Archer, Jonathan Laprade, Roman Ramirez, Kate Youman, Nicholas Youman, Keigan Noel, and Conner Hallberg. They will share be sharing their statements of faith, and we as a community will celebrate their full acceptance into the body of Christ.

### YOUTH FUNDRAISER

We are so excited to get our fundraising for our youth mission trip kicked into high gear during the month of May! Pick up an envelope from the back of the sanctuary and fill it with the donation listed on the envelope. There are a variety of donation options from \$1 to \$75. Every small donation is helping not only our youth make an amazing memory, but it's a gift that is multiplied by the good works that will be done for those in need. We will travel to Nashville to participate in Youth Works missions program for a week in June. Envelopes may be placed in offertory plate or sent to Debbie in the office. Thank you in advance for helping our youth practice being Love to others.

### ARE YOU GRADUATING?

We will be celebrating our graduates this year on Sunday May 19. If you are graduating from High School or Secondary Ed please send us a brief bio as to your future plans. Email bios to [debbie.wise@secondfirst.org](mailto:debbie.wise@secondfirst.org)



### KID'S NIGHT OUT

We had a great time at our Kids Night Out. The popcorn bar was a huge hit! Thanks to Family CE for sponsoring this event!



### KIDZONE CELEBRATION!

Sunday, Mother's Day, May 12 during Fellowship Hour

Please join Family CE as we show off our newly remodeled KidZone on the 3rd floor. Stop by to check out our new space and enjoy a muffin with mom.



### 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.



### ENVIRONMENTAL FAIR

Sunday, May 5 during Fellowship Hour

The Earth Care Committee is sponsoring an Environmental Fair on May 5th after church in the dining room. Learn about sustainability, zero waste living, recycling, fair trade, local foods, and more! Contact: Linda Mohaupt [mommoh54@comcast.net](mailto:mommoh54@comcast.net)

## ARTIFACTS OF KFACT

Annual Fundraiser Thursday, June 6, 6:00 pm

Come learn about KFACT and enjoy time on the banks of the river in the beautiful Burpee Museum. Fashion Party. Appetizers. Entertainment. Dancing. Special celebration of the women graduating from college. For tickets and information:



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/artifacts-of-kfact-2019-tickets-55356966176> OR to get lost watching their amazing videos at [k-fact.org](http://k-fact.org) and then click "events".



### OPENINGS FOR SUMMER STAFF AT STRONGHOLD CAMP & RETREAT CENTER

This summer do something important that will last a lifetime! Join Stronghold Center staff and have a huge impact on a kid's life. You'll have the opportunity to live and work with people from around the world, gain great leadership experience, and become a kid's hero. It won't always be easy, but it will be worth it. You'll get paid to spend your summer having fun, gaining valuable experience as an instructor, and have a summer filled with s'mores, games, late night adventures, worship, and an incredible supportive community. Openings for Camp Counselors, Health Administrator (camp nurse), Travelling Camp Assistant, Assistant Summer Camp Director, Challenge Course Director. Contact Ryan Anderson, Summer Camp Director, at [ryan@strongholdcenter.org](mailto:ryan@strongholdcenter.org) for more info or apply online at [www.strongholdcenter.org](http://www.strongholdcenter.org)

### IT'S A PEANUT BUTTER RALLY FOR THE MONTH OF MAY!

Bring in your jars of PB for the Rock River Valley Pantry! During May we will be collecting little jars, big jars, and biggest jars of both PB and other nut butters

to stock the Pantry for the summer months, when children do not get meals at school. We will be keeping track of how many pounds we collect. They need 20,000 jars!!! Help us make this our best food drive ever! Your donations can be placed in the wooden crate at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you in advance for your your help with this collection! Questions? Contact: Marge Maynard [mtm.home@me.com](mailto:mtm.home@me.com)



## MAY KOFFEE KLAS

### MAY 5: THEOLOGY 101

Theology 101: The most basic definition of theology is "god talk," meaning that anytime we talk, write, or even think about God we are engaged in theological practice. This new and recurring series will explore various elements of theology from formative theologians (past and present), doctrines like the Lord's Supper, and historical events from church history. Whether you have a PhD in theology or run for the exit and sound of the word "theology," your presence is welcomed and valued. Contact Andy Newgren with comments or questions.

### MAY 12: DOUBT AND QUESTIONS ON FAITH

Sandy Williams will facilitate an exploration of how doubts and questions affect faith and faith relationships. Discussion will focus on how these might strengthen our faith. Excerpts from videos of Rachel Held Evans will enhance our contemplation of the topic. Contact Sandy Williams with comments or questions.

### MAY 19: "MAMA, WE GOT A PROBLEM!"

Janet Moore will be presenting a program titled "Mama, We Got a Problem!" discussing the transgender movement in the US and other countries, based on her family's experiences raising one of her grandchildren who has identified as transgender or gender fluid since the age of 17 months. The Moore family believes one of the most effective ways to help their granddaughter is to share her story in order to educate the public about transgender people. Join us for this powerful and informative session.

### MAY 26: OPEN MIC

Memorial Day weekend. Come and shape the conversation.

All session will meet in the new multipurpose room (the old nursery)

8:30 AM - Coffee & gathering  
8:45 AM - Session begins

STAY UP TO DATE ON CURRENT NEWS & EVENTS. FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

 [facebook.com/SecondFirstChurch](https://facebook.com/SecondFirstChurch)

 [twitter.com/second1stchurch](https://twitter.com/second1stchurch)

## A NOTE FROM THE OUTGOING MODERATOR STEVE SHOWERS

As mentioned in the announcements a few weeks ago, the Overnight Café may have saved a life. The longer story, as promised, follows.

After church service and a meeting, a member was walking to her car. She saw three men conversing about the church and the cold. She invited them to participate with the Overnight Café that night.

Fast forward to Sunday 9:00 pm. One of the men arrived at the Overnight Café. He was cold and hungry and very weak. He had something warm to eat and a safe and warm place to rest for the night.

Fast forward to Wednesday 6:00 am. We were in the process of shutting down the Overnight Café, as we were just running a trial to see what “bugs” needed to be worked out. Antwon, Gerry, and I were discussing ideas for improving the services that was offered among other things. When we were just about done, Antwon and Gerry both talked about the man that came in on Sunday night, tired, hungry and cold, they agreed that “we may have saved a life”. This was fitting, as this is who we are.

## GOVERNING COUNCIL

The March Governing Council discussed the progress of the changes that has been done to use our space to better meet the missions of SecondFirst Church. Also, the using the resources of both of our denominations to help us to meet our goals will be discussed and updated so all of mission teams can be “on board” and we can act as one.

When you read this message, we will be electing and selecting the mission team members that will lead us for the next year and help to create the vision of the church. Remember, you are the church. I hope that you have the commitment and energy to see what a ‘downtown’ and ‘mainline’ church can and will do for the community.



## A NOTE FROM THE NEW MODERATOR JIM DELMORE

Well it has begun; my term as Moderator of SecondFirst church. Sally Hoff asked if I would consider being Moderator nine years ago and I declined the request. Sarah Reinold asked again two years ago and I thought that having been asked two times that I should accept. In actuality I felt bad saying no to Sally and subconsciously wanted to be moderator when Kris retired and we returned to SecondFirst Church.

After the first year of being 2nd Vice Moderator I was convinced that there was no way I could be Moderator of this church. So many meetings with so many intelligent knowledgeable people were intimidating. During the second year I came to realize that we all have gifts and talents. It is the sharing of those gifts and talents that makes our church so special. I have also realized that the love of Jesus Christ and for this church will see me through this year and beyond. With your help I am looking forward to being Moderator this year.



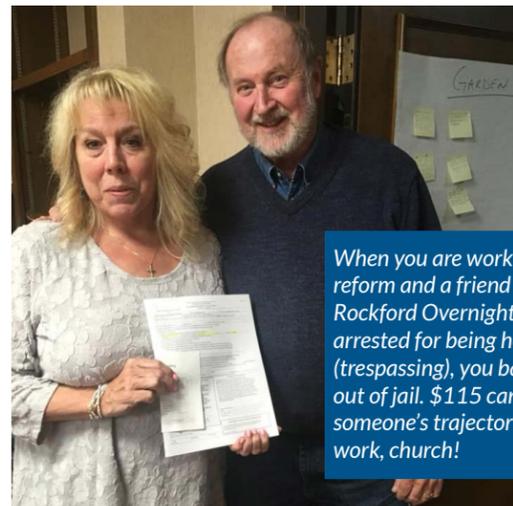
Tia Richardson talks about her murals at the new 317 Collective with other artists.



The Mission Ministry Team sent care packages to KFACT girls in college.



Fun was had by all who attended and experienced A Night in Italy Fundraiser hosted by Jeremiah Development.



When you are working on bail reform and a friend from the Rockford Overnight Cafe gets arrested for being homeless (trespassing), you bail him out of jail. \$115 can change someone's trajectory. Nice work, church!

## A LITTLE BIT FROM BECKY E.

I am very privileged not only to get to know members of our congregation, but also those we greet as our neighbors and travelers on the streets of Rockford. For the past year I have been watching a man who frequents the many park benches downtown. May be you have seen him. No matter the temperature, he wears a canvass snowsuit. I finally stopped to talk to him one day. His name is Chris. Chris is a veteran of the first Afghanistan conflict. It took a while, (he doesn't interact with people very well), but enough people from our congregation have been kind to him and he is beginning to come around. He stayed with us during the cold snap in our Overnight Café. He comes for showers. He comes to Serious Soup, and occasionally comes to church. I roll down my window when I see him about town and wave. I now get a big smile and a wave back. We are blessed by the people who are the travelers. We are blessed that they feel comfortable and welcomed here. Thank you for all who say words of welcome. This is a blessed church!

## SUMMER MUSIC AT SECONDFIRST CHURCH

We have all heard the sayings: “Early to bed, early to rise makes a person wealthy and wise.” “The early bird catches the worm.” “The early morning has gold in its mouth.” (OK, a few of these were new to me as well, but since Benjamin Franklin is the source of the last quote, it bears repeating.) Early planning in the music area helps us to keep our musical life strong and supportive of our church's liturgical and social lives.

It may seem too early to mention this, but summer music planning is already underway at SecondFirst Church! Late July, August, and early September are already planned.

HERE IS A PEEK AT WHAT WE CAN EXPECT:

- > **July 28th** - Julie Cook Ramirez leads the way with her beautiful guitar stylings.
- > **August 4th** - Can Debbie Wise (our church secretary) sing? Yes, she can, and she sings well-so well that some wonder if she applied for her current position by singing a soprano solo for the search committee! Her annual gift to our congregation opens music in August.
- > **August 11th** - Elizabeth LaGrande O'Leary's mellifluous alto voice presents classic works in our service.
- > **August 18th** - Joyce Zartman and friends bring bells back into our service after a three-month bell hiatus.
- > **August 25th** - Downtown Joint Worship Service
- > **September 1st** - Valerie Blair and Paul Laprade may make music on Labor Day weekend.
- > **September 8th** - A POP-UP choir bring choral music back to SecondFirst!
- > **September 15th** - The Sanctuary Choir returns to support our service.

Do you wish to contribute to summer music? Your talents are always welcomed, in any style, just as you are. Please contact me at [paul.laprade@secondfirst.org](mailto:paul.laprade@secondfirst.org).

**NOTE: SingFest previously scheduled for May 17 & 18 has been postponed in order to gather more churches and choirs.**



Ray Empeur, a Climate Reality Leader trained by Al Gore, led an informative session discussing the the climate crisis, the impact of climate change and what we can do to support the shift to clean renewable energy; 27 people attended the session.



## NEW MEMBER CLASS

Sunday, May 5 after Worship

If you would like to be received into membership at SecondFirst Church or would just like to learn more about us please join us for the dates and times listed below:

Sharing Our Stories of Faith:  
**Sunday, May 5** after worship with light refreshments.

Sharing Our Collective Story of Faith:  
**Wednesday, May 8** from 6:00-8:00 pm for dinner.

Living Into Our Faith:  
**Sunday, May 19** meet at 8:30 am in the dining room then received into membership during worship.

To sign up, contact Debbie Wise at 815-963-8431 or [debbie.wise@secondfirst.org](mailto:debbie.wise@secondfirst.org).

# MAY CALENDAR

**Wednesday, May 1**  
 9:00 AM – Deaconesses  
 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
 5:30 PM – Membership Ministry Team

**Thursday, May 2**  
 9:30 AM – Carillons  
 9:30 AM – Free showers  
 No JD Board Meeting  
 7:00 PM – Choir

**Friday, May 3**  
 No scheduled activities

**Saturday, May 4**  
 8:00 AM – Pilgrim Park Clean Up  
 10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic  
 11:00 AM – Katherine Row Memorial

**Sunday, May 5**  
**Communion and Baptism**  
 8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
 10:00 AM – Worship Service  
 Children in Worship  
 11:00 AM – Environmental Fair  
 11:15 AM – New Member Class  
 11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

**Monday, May 6**  
 11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
 12:00 PM – Adult Education Ministry Team  
 5:00 PM – Love Rockford

**Tuesday, May 7**  
 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
 9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
 9:30 AM – Free Showers  
 12:00 PM – Bible Study

**Wednesday, May 8**  
 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
 5:00 PM – Trustees  
 6:00 PM – New Member Class

**Thursday, May 9**  
 9:30 AM – Carillons  
 9:30 AM – Free showers  
 7:00 PM – Choir

**Friday, May 10**  
 No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, May 11**  
 9:00 AM – Love Rockford registration  
 10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

**Sunday, May 12**  
 8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
 10:00 AM – Worship Service  
 10:20 AM – Sunday School  
 11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
 11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop  
 4:00 PM – Alternative Worship

**Monday, May 13**  
 11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
 5:00 PM – Deacons

**Tuesday, May 14**  
 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
 9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
 9:30 AM – Free Showers  
 12:00 PM – Bible Study  
 5:00 PM – Foundation  
 6:00 PM – DVT

**Wednesday, May 15**  
 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

**Thursday, May 16**  
 9:30 AM – Carillons  
 9:30 AM – Free showers  
 6:00 PM – ARC  
 7:00 PM – Choir

**Friday, May 17**  
 No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, May 18**  
**Community Concert postponed**  
 10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

**Sunday, May 19**  
**New Members Received**  
**Graduation Sunday**  
 8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
 8:30 AM – New Member Class  
 10:00 AM – Worship Service  
 10:20 AM – Sunday School  
 11:15 AM – Family CE Ministry Team  
 11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
 11:15 AM – Fellowship Ministry Team  
 11:15 AM – Music Ministry Tam  
 11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

**Monday, May 20**  
 11:30 AM – Serious Soup

**Tuesday, May 21**  
 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
 9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
 9:30 AM – Free Showers

**Tuesday, May 21 (cont'd)**  
 12:00 PM – Bible Study  
 5:00 PM – Missions Ministry  
 6:00 PM – Executive Committee

**Wednesday, May 22**  
 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

**Thursday, May 23**  
 9:30 AM – Free showers  
 5:30 PM – Governing Council  
 7:00 PM – Choir

**Friday, May 24**  
 No scheduled activities

**Saturday, May 25**  
 10:00 AM – Visitation and 11:00 AM Memorial Service for Mary Beth DeWall  
 10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic  
 3:00 PM – Elizabeth Stites-deSteiguer Ordination

**Sunday, May 26**  
 8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
 10:00 AM – Worship Service  
 Children in Worship  
 11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
 11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

**Monday, May 27 Memorial Day**  
 Office Closed  
 No Serious Soup

**Tuesday, May 28**  
 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
 9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
 9:30 AM – Free Shower  
 12:00 PM – Bible Study  
 6:00 PM – Earth Care Committee  
 7:00 PM – Book Study

**Wednesday, May 29**  
 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

**Thursday, May 30**  
 9:30 AM – Carillons  
 9:30 AM – Free showers  
 7:00 PM – Choir

**Friday, May 31**  
 5:30 PM – Governing Council Retreat  
 6:00 PM – Wedding Rehearsal

# JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT

Happy Spring!! Jeremiah is in full activity mode. LOVE Rockford is May 11 and we anticipate serving 500-600 Rockford residents. Jeremiah’s Garden will be opening soon. We’ve had to push back the garden clean up day due to SNOW! Soon, we will be working in the garden every Saturday morning at 9:00 am. Come join us as we dig in the dirt. No experience necessary! We have resumed delivering the Neighborhood Newsletter. This project is to not only inform our neighbors of the marvelous things in the area and programs Jeremiah and the churches have but to reach beyond Court St and really find out the needs of those living in the neighborhood. If you would like to meet the people in own neighborhood and listen to their needs, if you would like to be a part of making life a little easier for someone else, please help with this very important ministry. We would really appreciate people to help deliver newsletters, to join the Neighborhood Committee or to help periodically with special projects. Help for an hour or commit to a monthly meeting!



## LOVE ROCKFORD

Jeremiah Development is doing something a little different this year! We are NOT asking you for money for LOVE Rockford! Instead, this is a heartfelt THANK YOU for supporting LOVE Rockford in all the ways you do. Through grants from The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois and The Methodist Foundation and large donors from the health care industries, LOVE Rockford is in good shape financially this year! We are hoping for many more volunteers for May 11th. It takes over 100 volunteers to make LR successful! If you can give any part of your time that day or If you would like to donate to LOVE Rockford so we can have some seed money for next year, please go to [loverockfordil.org](http://loverockfordil.org) and fill out the registration form under the Volunteer tab! Or see Becky Erbe.



### A LOOK BACK AT HOLY WEEK

*Dorothy Paige-Turner blessed us with renderings of two women who are mentioned but not en fleshed in the Bible. Our faith was enriched because of the experiences she shared.*

*Carpenter's Place hosted a footwashing for the homeless on Maundy Thursday. Each guest had their toenails cut and feet prepared by podiatry students and were given a new pair of socks and shoes. This is what Jesus meant when he told us to wash one another's feet.*

*Pastor K. Edward Copeland of New Zion Baptist Church introduces guests from the Chicago Bond Fund during Holy Week. Our Mission Ministry Team is working with New Zion on bail reform in Winnebago County and the State of Illinois. "90% of people incarcerated in Illinois' 92 jails have not been convicted of a crime." -- Chicago Bond Fund*

*Aubrey, Dave and Dyan read scripture for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday walking with Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.*

*Palm Sunday Potluck... delicious and engaging*

### COMMUNITY NUMBERS FROM APRIL >>

**SHOWERS >> 6 SERIOUS SOUP >>** April 1st: 34 people | April 8th: 55 people | April 15th: 58 people | April 22nd: 62 people