

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

OCTOBER 2019

THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace



THE WAY OF STEWARDSHIP BY DAVID JONES

As one congregation SecondFirst Church is a part of two Reformed traditions. As members of the Illinois' Northern Conference of the United Church of Christ and Blackhawk Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church USA we celebrate over 300 years of ministry to the residents of Rockford. Try to imagine the stories our

19th century mothers and fathers could tell. They are likely to be as many and varied as the stories of our 20th century forebears. As 21st century inheritors of two rich traditions we celebrate past ministries and anticipate future ones as sisters and brothers in Christ. British naturalist Robert McFarlane reports that in the 19th century small sickles were hung on stiles or posts where paths connecting communities began. Walkers would pick up the sickle or hook to lop off branches as they walked. They would then leave the 'hook' on the stile or post at the end of the path so a walker going in the opposite direction could do the same. This shared care taking of the path benefitted each individual walker but also the larger community.

They were stewards of a shared path and a shared way of life. Our 2019 Stewardship season begins October 27. We will be reminded that stewardship is less about sharpening our pencils and more about sharpening our tools for trail maintenance and trail blazing, equipping ourselves to be caretakers of the path connecting us to our Creator and guiding our steps along the way. The early Christian movement was known as the way (Acts 9). The lives of faithful Christians are a way of being human, a way of interpreting, a way of practicing, a way of living as our fellow human being, Jesus, interpreted, practiced and lived to bring about the kingdom of God on earth. As we journey towards the reign of God, we are following in the tracks of others, ways walked by Jesus himself, paths as ancient as Abraham and Sarah. Today we are not just signposts pointing the way but the caretakers, the stewards of that way. Come and join in the way.



Left: Lots of smiles from the kids in our Sunday School class.

Right: Our church lending library is always a great option for finding a good story to read.



SAVE THE DATES

- November 2: Jubilee Soup Kitchen
- November 2: Jeremiah Cares Health Fair
- November 3: Remembering Loved Ones
- November 10: New Member Class
- November 10: Alternative Worship
- November 12: Presbytery at SecondFirst
- November 13: New Member Dinner
- November 22: Youth "Friendsgiving" and Chopped Event
- November 24: New Members Received
- November 24: Pilgrim Potluck



HAITI SCHOOL PROJECT

Here's the latest news! As of September 23rd we sent a total of \$9,000 to send kids to school in Saut-d'Eau. This includes individual gifts from the congregation, \$1,250 from our Mission Ministry Team, and a gift of \$2,000 from an anonymous donor from the congregation. James and Odette Casimir are still in Haiti and will update us on the school project when they return.

We are so happy to keep these kids in school. Education is their path to the future. Thanks to everyone as We Share God's Grace in Downtown Rockford and Beyond.

Watch for an announcement of our next Haiti Interest Group meeting and join us for more information and planning. Questions to Roger Greenlaw 815-262-1776 and Carolyn Greenlaw 815-978-0723.

NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST 22 CONFERENCE MINISTERS CONVERGING IN DC TO DEMAND HUMANE US IMMIGRATION POLICIES



Twenty-two United Church of Christ Conference Ministers are converging in Washington, D.C., this week, uniting for collective action on immigration. The regional leaders, intentionally mobilizing as the Council of Conference Ministers (CCM), will lift a single prophetic voice for the first time in recent memory by advocating directly with members of Congress and speaking outside the U.S. Capitol.

"I think there's a consensus that immigration justice is a critical issue in this moment of our nation's history that has deep moral implications. It is also an issue that our sacred texts have a lot to say about, and thus we as Church must be bold enough to step into the public square and speak clearly with one voice," said the Rev. Shari Prestemon one of the effort's organizers.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) ALMOST ALL PRESBYTERIANS PRAY AT LEAST SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK, SURVEY SUGGESTS



Nearly all (90%) of Presbyterians pray at least several times a week and nearly half (42%) read the Bible on their own at least several times a week. Middle-aged and older Presbyterians engage in these spiritual disciplines more frequently than younger Presbyterians do. This information comes from responses from some of the first participants in the new Person in the Pew survey format, a project of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Research Services. Person in the Pew Surveys are open to all Presbyterians. Opportunities for participation will be listed in future news articles and will be posted on research-services.pcusa.org.

COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT

Update: With the help of our community, we have raised one-third of our goal (half the total Kickstarter goal of \$30,000)! \$15,000 will be matched by an anonymous sponsor, so we are two-thirds away from matching that half!



Tia Richardson and friends before their canvassing adventure!

Muralist Tia Richardson went canvassing around Rockford to the downtown business community near the church to raise awareness about the mural project. They received enthusiastic responses from everyone including employees and many business owners themselves.

In all they reached more than 30 businesses and organizations, collected contact info and have a growing list of more than 50 people who want to support or participate.

With our fundraising deadline quickly approaching, we are following up with those who still haven't pledged, and have set additional meetings over the next week in Rockford to expand outreach.

>> All donations are tax-deductible. Backers will receive a receipt from SecondFirst Church.
>> Business sponsors will be listed on posters during all of our mural's public events.

In order to make this mural a reality we need the support of our community!

Follow this link to make a donation:
<http://kck.st/2P6mAKf>

Help us reach our goal!

CIDER AND DONUTS FELLOWSHIP HOUR

October 6, after church

Towards the beginning of October, the temperatures cool off and we start to think about fall. Enjoy the sweet taste of apple donuts and cider with your church friends during the Fellowship Hour after church. Contact: Linda Mohaupt

SPECIAL UCC AND PCUSA OFFERING

Sunday, October 6

Opportunity for Giving: Neighbors in Need/Peace and Global Witness Offering. This month we receive a denominational support offering for both the UCC and the PCUSA. Neighbors in Need (NIN) supports UCC ministries of justice and compassion throughout our country: the Council for American Indian Ministry, and Justice and Witness Ministries. NIN funds projects that address systemic injustice. Peace and Global Witness (PGW) supports PCUSA programs in justice and reconciliation in cultures of violence, both locally and world-wide. Your support for this vital work is greatly appreciated.

PIPESPECTACULAR 2019

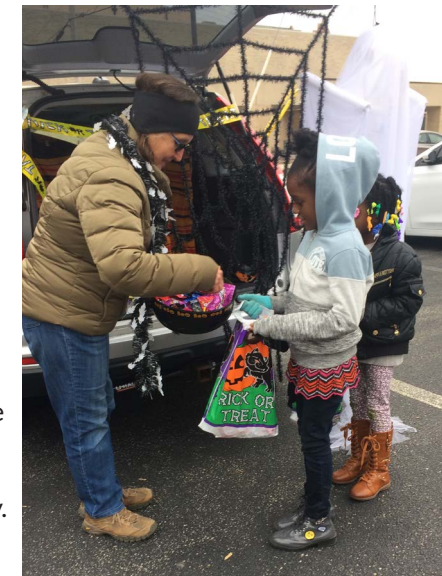
Sunday, October 20, 3:00 pm

Join us for a free organ concert of young organists here in our church. Performers will be the 2019 scholarship recipients of the Rockford Chapter of the AGO (American Guild of Organists). Come hear the many things that the organ at SecondFirst can do; it is one of the best orchestral organs in the city, and these students (some are PhD candidates) will show it off well. Freewill offering goes to support the scholarship fund, and there are always refreshments at AGO events. Music and cookies, how can you go wrong? Contact: Valerie Blair valerie.blair@secondfirst.org

TRUNK OR TREAT

Sunday, October 27
4:00pm - 5:30pm

Trunk or Treat will happen on Sunday October 27th hosted in the parking lot of Second First starting at 4:00pm and will run until all the candy is gone. There will be hot dogs and water served for community members and neighborhood children. We are looking both for candy donations and volunteer cars. Please contact aubrey.barnett@secondfirst.org if you plan to bring a car.



OLD TIME MOVIE

Wednesday, October 30 • 6:00pm Youth Space - 3rd Floor

On Wednesday October 30th the youth ages 13 and older are invited to bring their friends to watch The Wolfman, a classic 1941 black and white monster movie. Movie starts at 6:00pm in the new youth space on the 3rd floor. Popcorn will be provided. RSVP to Aubrey Barnett at aubrey.barnett@secondfirst.org.

KFACT OPEN-HOUSE IN EMERSON HALL

Sunday October 27, after church
11:15am-12:30pm

The Executive Director of KFACT, Shamika Williams, and staff are inviting our SecondFirst Church family to their Open House! Sunday October 27, after worship, our Coffee Hour will be moved to Emerson Hall, the new home for KFACT. You are encouraged to come and see the renovations, including new windows, and upgrades to electrical and plumbing. The office areas have new flooring, paint and lighting.

After Church take the elevator to the 3rd floor, exit right and cross through the hallway to Emerson Hall. Or, take the stairs behind the Sanctuary (or the stairs near the office) to the 3rd floor entrance to Emerson Hall.

After a year of discussion and negotiations, SecondFirst Church signed a 5 year lease with KFACT for use of Emerson Hall for their program of mentoring girls from 6th grade through college. After 10 years of work, they have guided 250 girls in achieving graduation rates of 95-100%!

Many programs at FirstChurch moved to new locations to make room for KFACT. Our Bell Choirs to the 4th floor chapel, our Kid's Zone to 3rd floor, Adult Education & Brides Room to former nursery and multiple storage areas have found new homes in our building. We are still planning 'finishing touches' for these repurposed areas. Thank you to all who made changes and helped make these accommodations possible!

Please direct any questions to Roger Greenlaw, Chair Trustees: 815-262-1776



PIG ROAST RECAP

We had 135 people in attendance for our third annual Pig Roast on September 21, even in the rain! It was a wonderful time of food, friends, and fellowship.

SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE

The students have been studying the psalms, making music, and understanding the different parts to a performance. Here are some photos of our space upstairs. Keep an eye for new additions each week!



YOUTH UPDATES

The youth continue to enjoy their new space before worship each week. From 9am until worship service they gather to talk about their week, how school is going, what plans they have for the upcoming week, and what is happening in the world. We love it when parents stop by for a visit and encourage both the youth and young at heart to join us for some more conversations any Sunday on the 3rd floor.



WHAT IS JOYFEST?

by Paul Laprade, Music Director

JoyFest is coming to our church on October 4 and 5! It is an event where singing, food, and conversation form the basis for what we hope is a closer community. Through your own generosity and a grant from the Illinois Chapter of the ACDA (American Choral Directors' Association), we have advertised and invited choirs from several churches and schools in our area (as well as a general invitation to others from throughout our state) to experience one another and find common musical ground under the leadership of Dr. Donald Dumpson of Philadelphia. Dr. Dumpson is experienced in combining ministry and education in his quest to address social justice, preserve a meaningful understanding of the legacy and history of African-American music. If you wish to take part as a singer, you can join us for a meal and a rehearsal on Friday, October 4 (6-9 pm), and rehearsals and a rehearsal (with meal) experience on Saturday, October 5 (9am-4 pm). Simply contact Debbie Wise, our secretary, if you intend to sing and join in our meals, as we need a headcount soon. If you would simply like to attend the concert, please join us at 4 pm. We will celebrate our community and honor two wonderful musicians, Bonnie Spurling and Betty Pumphrey, who have created strong communities in Rockford through their work in music.



JUBILEE CENTER SOUP KITCHEN

Saturday, November 2

This is the final 2019 date for our congregation to serve lunch at the Jubilee Center across Park St. Thanksgiving is approaching and our lunch guests are very thankful for the meal we serve. You can't imagine how many times I've heard 'thank you' and 'God bless you' as I've served chips or stew or bananas or dessert. The meal we provide may not change the course of someone's life, but it provides nourishment and strength for the day. That is no small thing. If you can be part of the team, please contact Jean Herro at 815-289-7341. And we will let everyone know when the 2020 dates are known. Thank you for your support of this important ministry.

NEW MEMBER CLASS

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, November 10 after worship with light refreshments

SHARING OUR COLLECTIVE STORY OF FAITH

Wednesday, November 13, 5:30-6:30 pm for dinner

LIVING INTO OUR FAITH

Sunday, November 24 meet at 9:00 am in the dining room then received into membership during worship

To register: Debbie Wise 815-963-8431 or debbie.wise@secondfirst.org



Rockford Finishing Company did a beautiful job refinishing our communion table.



Our garden provided color and beauty on the grounds of the church all summer long.



Good work continues on repairing the stone of the Tower!



A smaller group braved the heat and humidity at Tower Hill this year. A total of 12 people enjoyed the cooling benefits of Lake Michigan.



An outing at the pizza joint (with an ice cream stop on the way home) and a potluck cookout in the rain (actually, the pavilion came to the rescue)!



The Summit of Hope was held in our gym on Tuesday, August 27. We were honored to support our community in this way.

SUNDAE SUNDAY

by Jim Delmore

Wow, what a fantastic time we had!! We had toppings at each Ministry Team table. There was everything you could think of. Fresh fruit (bananas, strawberries, blueberries), chocolate and caramel sauce as well as sprinkles, M&Ms, nuts, cherries and whipped cream.

I would like to thank everyone that helped and all that attended. I liked the table configuration. It was set up like a "C" with the ice cream in the center. The Ministry Team posters were fun and informative to look at. We also had a special guest. KFACT had a table with lots of information. The church's Earth Care Committee had a table also. The tables to set at had a flower arrangement made from Carnations that looked like ice cream with a cherry on top. They were delightful. I enjoyed myself so much that I forgot to take any pictures. If you took some pictures, please share them with me.

FROM THE MODERATOR

by Jim Delmore

The building at 318 North Church Street is old and large. We call it our church; Second Congressional UCC / First Presbyterian PC USA together we are SecondFirst Church. Our church is a pillar of the downtown, hosting many small and large events. We provide showers, clothing, food and shelter when the wither is extremely cold. Our property has the Jeremiah Development garden that provides vegetables to many that may not have access to fresh vegetables. Our grounds are a place that people can sit and visit. Our gymnasium has been used for many events like the Summit of Hope and the Poverty Simulation. Both events had a very large attendance. The Park District uses the gym for their special needs program each summer. There is a group that practice drums in our gym. It is inspiring to see so many young kids being involved in learning to work together and be proud of what they are doing. Each day our church plays an important part in our community. I want to thank everyone that helps the church staff make all this possible. Be proud of the work that we do and the support that we provide to the community.

JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

By Sue Kanthak Executive Director of Jeremiah Development

What we've done so far this year:

1. In the garden 6-10 visitors are educated every Saturday on nutrition and how to use fresh vegetables, Jeff from SecondFirst Church reports seeing 8-10 visitors gathering food every week. The actual number of folks fed is unknown but produce is gone before it is fully ripened.
2. We helped two neighbors get badly needed home repairs (Wheelchair elevator to get out of their apartment and a ceiling fan/outdoor light put on different electrical lines)
3. The Neighborhood Committee and volunteers participated in the Great American clean-up
4. We reach 250 households every month through our neighborhood newsletter
 - a. While delivering the newsletter we walk with clipboards and identified and reported 16 properties for garbage, weeds and tall grass, 14 have been remedied so far.
 - b. This provides consistent communication with those living in the neighborhood and discussing their ideas on the needs of the area (need for a laundry mat and thrift store, appreciation for the contact #s on the back of the newsletter, concerns about drug deals)
5. Nearly 500 at LOVE Rockford touching almost 800 people with:
 - a. Food, clothes, bike repair, hair-cuts and education through Narcan trainings and immigration rights trainings
 - b. Goal was connection with services
 - i. Nearly 900 pieces of educational literature
 - ii. Over 750 face to face contacts with providers
6. September 14th was our first of what we hope will become a tradition Movie in the Park – baseball theme to coincide with Peaches and Hanks. Build community with fun.



Future for Jeremiah:

1. We will continue to do all we've been doing
2. Because of a discussion with providers at an evaluation after LOVE Rockford it became clear this type of access is needed more often. Once a year isn't enough. To address this Jeremiah Development will be launching Jeremiah CARES – community, access, resources, education and support 2-3 times/year in addition to LR
3. We are bringing a Community Health Fair Nov. 2nd as our 1st Jeremiah CARES event in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois

With a couple of grants, this work was completed with the financial help and volunteers from the three congregations that support Jeremiah Development: SecondFirst Church, Court Street United Methodist, and Emmanuel Episcopale.

Volunteer Value = \$23.45/hour			
Garden	6	12 hrs/person	72/month
Board	12	2 hrs/person	24/month
Love Rockford	126	126/once	504/year
Neighborhood Committee	10	20/month	200/year
Pastors	3	2 hrs/person	6/month
Total Volunteer Hours			1,720/year
Total Value			\$43,739.60

OCTOBER CALENDAR

Tuesday, October 1
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
8:30 AM – Chapel at Wesley Willows
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
9:30 AM – Free Showers

Wednesday, October 2
9:00 AM – Hospitality Team
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – Adult Ed
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, October 3
9:30 AM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free showers
5:30 PM – JD Meeting
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, October 4
6:00 PM – Community Concert Rehearsal

Saturday, October 5
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic
4:00 PM – JoyFest! Community Concert

Sunday, October 6
World Communion Sunday
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
9:20 AM – Peanuts
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Cider and Donuts
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

Monday, October 7
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, October 8
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
9:30 AM – Free Showers
6:00 PM – DVT

Wednesday, October 9
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
5:00 PM – Trustees
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, October 10
9:30 AM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free showers
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, October 11
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, October 12
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, October 13
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
9:20 AM – Peanuts
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, October 14
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
5:00 PM – Deacons
5:00 PM – JD Fundraiser Culvers
N. Main Riverside

Tuesday, October 15
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
9:30 AM – Free Showers
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry Team
6:00 PM – Executive Committee

Wednesday, October 16
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, October 17
9:30 AM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free Showers
6:00 PM – Pop Up Dinner
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, October 18
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, October 19
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, October 20
Bell Sunday
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
11:15 AM – Music Ministry Team
11:15 AM – Fellowship Ministry Team
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop
1:00 PM – CROP Walk
2:00 PM – AGO Concert

Monday, October 21
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, October 22
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
9:30 AM – Free Showers
6:00 PM - Earth Care Committee

Wednesday, October 23
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, October 24
9:30 AM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free showers
5:30 PM – Governing Council
6:00 PM – ARC Rec Night
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, October 25
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, October 26
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, October 27
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – KFACT Fellowship Hour
11:15 AM – Family Christian
Education Team
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop
4:00 PM – Trunk or Treat

Monday, October 28
11:30 – Serious Soup

Tuesday, October 29
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
9:30 AM – Free Showers

Wednesday, October 30
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers
6:00 PM – Youth Old Time Movie

Thursday, October 31
9:30 AM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free showers
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir



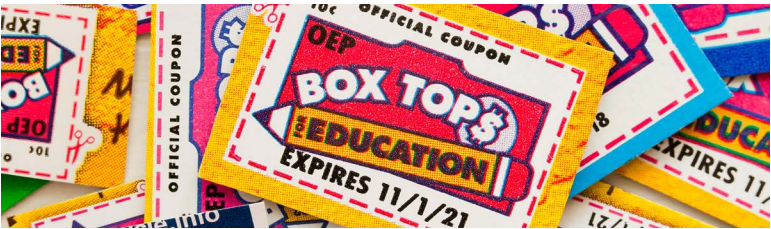
We have lots of dark and milk chocolate available at our Fair Trade Store!

alternative WORSHIP

SECOND SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13
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. Join us!



BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

Thank you for continuing to support Haskell School through the “Box Tops for Education” program! We will continue to collect Box Tops for the upcoming school year. A collection bin is located on the shelf directly across from the main church office. Please note: soup labels will no longer be collected as the program has ended. Questions? Contact: Holly Beeman at hbeeman@martinauto.com

SUPPORT HURRICANE VICTIMS

Hurricane Dorian slammed into the Bahamas with deadly force, leaving widespread devastation in its wake. Then it made landfall in North Carolina, causing flooding and knocking out power. Church World Service is responding in the Bahamas as part of an ACT Alliance Rapid Support Team. Alongside our ACT and other partners, CWS will focus particularly on long-term recovery.

Such efforts are made possible by CROP Hunger Walks. The Walk turns fifty this year. In the United States, CWS is shipping Emergency Cleanup Buckets, Blankets, Hygiene Kits and School Kits to North Carolina and will continue to respond to requests for supplies as part of immediate relief efforts. It is engaging with partners on the ground to help ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors have the care and support they will need to recover over the longer term. You can participate by raising funds as a 2nd 1st online Team member. Go to crophungerwalk.org/rockfordil/2nd1stChurch and click on the orange ‘JOIN OUR TEAM’ button to reach out to family and friends.



Those pictured above participated in Rockford’s 2010 CROP Hunger Walk. Were you a part of it? Make plans to join us this year!

CROP 50 YEARS OF WALKING.
50 YEARS OF ENDING HUNGER TOGETHER.
Sunday, October 20

You know what hunger looks like. You’ve seen it in on local news stations and in the faces of kids around the world. It is long-lasting, and it is everywhere. But, with your help, so is our response to it. For 50 years, average Americans have come together to fight hunger in exceptional ways through the CROP Hunger Walk. These aren’t politicians or celebrities - they’re passionate (and compassionate!) farmers, students, members of the faith communities, volunteers and more who care that the people they see on a daily basis are struggling. For five decades, they have walked to make a difference. Please join the effort either in person or in spirit. Request a Walk envelope or Walk On the Web. Contact Bob Saunders, 815-877-5008, for more information.



NEIGHBORHOOD NUMBERS
11 showers
2 diaper help
8 bus tokens

JEREMIAH GARDEN IS GETTING A FACELIFT!
Saturday, October 12, 8:00am-12:00pm

Volunteers needed to help remove bark from between vegetable beds. No experience necessary! Please bring a square head shovel if you have one. Contact: sue@jeremiahdevelopment.org



SERIOUS SOUP NUMBERS
Sept. 9: 74 people (rainy day)
Sept. 16: 91 people
Sept. 23: 86 people