

## SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)  
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Non Profit  
Organization US  
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Rockford, Illinois

JANUARY 2020

# THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

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



## SAVE THE DATES

February 11: Presbytery Dekalb

February 16: Bell Sunday

February 26: Ash Wednesday



### *A New Year Prayer... The Year Ahead*

In the year ahead, Lord of New Beginnings, stretch our souls and move us into new awareness of the human family, their needs and their longings.

Make these into our needs, our longings so we move more confidently from our small selves to a deeper sense of community where our resolutions reflect interdependence.

Help us recognize the possibilities you have offered to us as a people, so we can commit to practice the Hope that happens when we gather gratefully in your Name, and we hold up to you this fragile, precious world.

Grant us all the grace in this year ahead to sow the seeds of justice and to gather peace in our day. Amen.

*Written by Jane Deren, posted on the Education for Justice website.*

### **Best Wishes for the New Year!**

*The Staff from SecondFirst Church*



## NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST UCC NOMINEES AMONG SEMIFINALISTS FOR 2020 CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AWARDS



A United Church of Christ minister, a UCC-related seminary's earth center, and an ecumenical activist group with UCC leaders are among 34 semifinalists for the 2020 American Climate Leadership Awards.

EcoAmerica, a nonprofit whose mission is to build "institutional leadership, public support, and political will for climate solutions in the United States," named the semifinalists Dec. 9. They include the Rev. Jim Antal, retired Conference Minister of the Massachusetts Conference; the Center for Earth Ethics at Union Theological Seminary; and Interfaith Power & Light's chapter in Maryland, northern Virginia and the District of Columbia. **Read more:** [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) DETROIT YOUTH LEADERSHIP GROUP AMONG FOUR SDOP FUNDED PROJECTS



Teenagers often find winter weather a great excuse to stay home. But an early-season snowfall didn't deter the Youth Advisory Board of Detroit's Urban Neighborhood Initiatives (UNI) from their regularly scheduled Tuesday evening meeting in Mid-November.

Gathered around long tables in the basement of the Southwest Detroit organization's headquarters in a former church building, the students discussed a wide-range of topics from recapping a recent visit to the state capital in Lansing to meet with legislators, planning for an upcoming event, focusing their leadership skills, and unpacking a recent cyberbullying incident at one of their schools. **Read more:** [www.presbyterianmission.org](http://www.presbyterianmission.org)



## JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT 2019 BY THE NUMBERS

by Sue Kanthak, Executive Director

### LOVE Rockford

- 406 attended
- 659 impacted
- Over 850 pieces of educational literature handed out
- Over 750 face to face contacts with representatives from over 30 providers
- Food, clothing, bike repair, hair-cuts, and education through Narcan trainings and immigration rights trainings happened continuously throughout the day

### Jeremiah Cares

- 308 attended
- 466 impacted
- Over 1,300 pieces of educational literature handed out
- Over 900 face to face contacts with representatives from over 20 providers
- 200 turkeys and boxes of vegetables handed out
- Flu shots, massages, and health screenings throughout the day

### Neighborhood Programs

- 300 lbs. of fresh vegetables harvested from the garden for those in need
- 15 properties improved in collaboration with the City of Rockford

### Neighborhood Programs (cont'd)

- 250 newsletters delivered door to door each month to communicate with residents of the CHN
- 100 bags of popcorn handed out at Movie in the Park night
- 50 people enjoying Haskell Park on a Saturday evening after dark
- 20 people learning how to keep themselves and their property safe at Safe Neighborhood meeting

### Connections

- Haskell School – Jeremiah was instrumental in connecting Haskell School and the Kjelstrom Foundation to fund and build a new musical playground
- Wheelchair elevator – Jeremiah contacted Emmanuel Episcopal church to help a resident get their wheelchair elevator repaired so they could leave the house
- Home repair – Jeremiah connected an elderly homeowner with a retired electrician to repair wiring to enable her to have workable outside lights.

### Future

- Light the Night – install solar motion detector lights on homes in “hotspot” crime areas
- Jeremiah DOES – small motor repair classes and small business mentoring

## A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS AND CARLY

By Julie Cook Ramirez, Director of Handbell Ministries

The weather outside wasn't particularly frightful, but the sounds inside the sanctuary were delightful, as our handbell choirs presented “A Very Carly Christmas” on Saturday, December 14. The Bellcantos opened the concert with three selections – “Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!” “For Unto Us A Child Is Born” and “In the Bleak Midwinter.” As always, the Peanuts were adorable as they rang “Away in a Manger” and “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” Vocalist Vanessa Nieva joined Joyce and Bill Zartman and Linda Johnson for a beautiful rendition of “Silver Bells,” after which the Carillons impressed the crowd with their two selections, “Let Heaven and Earth Sing Gloria” and “Lost in the Night,” featuring Molly Doolittle on flute and Valerie Blair on our newly-refurbished celeste.



The audience listened with rapt attention, as our guest of honor, Carly Rice, shared her heart-breaking story and how she broke free from a life of drug addiction and prostitution to become a friend to those living on the margins, serving Rockford's needy population with joy and love. She brought along two friends, Glory and Robert, to give their perspectives on volunteering and being helped by Miss Carly's.

The Martin Ringers closed the show with a four-song set including “The Snow Lay on the Ground,” “God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen,” the 16th century Spanish Christmas carol, “Riu, Riu, Chiu,” featuring Valerie Blair on the djembe, and the Band-Aid classic, “Do They Know It's Christmas?” featuring Vanessa Nieva and Aubrey Barnett singing new lyrics written specifically for Rockford's homeless

population (“And the snow will fall on Rockford streets this Christmastime. A chilly night will take on a new life. The wind chill dips down low, as the cold and hunger grow. Do they know it's Christmastime at all?”) and closing with the fitting refrain, “We love Miss Carly's.” Watch the Eword for the announcement of how much money was raised to support Miss Carly's important mission.



## OVERNIGHT CAFÉ RETURNS

Our Overnight Café is opening Monday, January 6.

**Here's how you can help!**

### A. Volunteer hours

One volunteer to work from 9:00 pm until 12:00 am.

One volunteer to work from 4:00 am until 7:00 am.

Pick your own days you would like to work.

### B. Make soup or sandwiches, donate snacks, water, coffee or hot chocolate.

### C. Pray for staff and guests

The Overnight Café will run every night from January 6 through March 1, 2020. Contact: [becky.erbe@secondfirst.org](mailto:becky.erbe@secondfirst.org) for more information.

## JUBILEE SOUP KITCHEN

Saturday, January 18

You are invited to join Marge Maynard and be part of the team preparing and serving lunch on Jan 18: our first Soup Kitchen date of 2020! They say hindsight is 20-20. Don't let the year go by without offering your hands, hearts, and smiles as part of this ministry team. We will gather at 10 am and plan to be finished by 1:30 pm. As usual you can come for part or the whole time. Contact Marge with questions or to commit: 815-980-5304, or [mtm.home@me.com](mailto:mtm.home@me.com). Thanks!

## FROM THE MODERATOR

By Jim Delmore

The Building and Grounds Committee needs your help in keeping our grounds and building looking beautiful, healthy and clean. When you see something that is amiss whether it is a light that is not working or paper on the floor, please take the time to let someone know. The best way is to write it down and give to the church secretary. An easier way would be to use a pew card and put in the offering plate. Either way it will be written down and not forgotten.

The Building and Grounds Committee has two chairs:

**Building Committee Members:** Jim Delmore (chair)

Dick Larson, Richard Lierman, Peter Joachim,

Dick Larson, and Alice Uphouse, Staff: Jeff Byrne

**Grounds Committee Members:** Ron Schaad (chair)

Dave Noel, Zan Picchioni, Liz Dickinson, Mary Spindler, and

Sally Baker, Staff: Jeff Byrne

The Building and Grounds Committee also has one and done members that help with special projects but are not expected to attend meetings. Please remember to report anything that needs to be looked at. If you put your name on the request a reply will be provided.

## YOUTH CORNER

### PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

The first intergenerational photo scavenger hunt around the church was a great success! Members of all ages from our community raced around the church to snap photos of themselves, both serious and silly. Some of the prompts were: open the the hymnals to each of your favorite hymns, take a photo outside your favorite entrance, and take a fun picture in the thrift shop (thanks Alice for coming especially to open)! Fun was had by all including those who stayed back and waited for the racers. There was some contention over who won, but all teams made it back within one minute of each other which is pretty talented. Please consider joining us for all upcoming Family CE sponsored intergenerational events. We look forward to seeing you there.



### CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

2019 marked the second pop up Christmas pageant, and this year our own Jennifer Archer tweaked the script herself and the whole thing was in rhyme! With angels and shepherds and stars abounding, we rang in the birth of Christ by telling that well-loved story. We will continue to enjoy the evolving traditions that seek more inclusivity and greater participation of our community in faith.

### PAM OSBORNE FROM KNIB SPEAKS ON 'CURRENT TRENDS IN RECYCLING'

Sunday, January 26, 11:15 am during coffee hour in the Dining Room

Most of us are used to recycling. Paper, glass, aluminum cans, batteries, even wine corks. Lately we've been hearing that China won't take our trash. What does that mean to us? Should we continue to recycle? The Earth Care Committee invited Pam Osborne from KNIB (Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful) to answer our questions. Contact Linda Mohaupt for questions.





### COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT

A community mural like this wouldn't be possible without the community! Several Rockford area artists have been helping add touch-ups. The mural is 20ft tall by 85ft long! Its come a long way in a short time. Since November 11th more than 200 people from toddlers to age 88 have helped bring this art to life. More pictures at [facebook.com/secondfirstchurch](https://www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch)



Our congregants had a nice time of food and fellowship at our Thanksgiving Pilgrim potluck.



The festive group of Christmas Carolers from SecondFirst sang classic songs like "Silent Night" to senior citizens in our community.



### 284!!

That's the number of boots that were purchased, sorted, tagged, bagged and delivered to Haskell School. 284!!! That's the number of Haskell School children that will have warm feet and be able to participate in outdoor recess year-round this year, and all thanks to you, this congregation that energizes downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace. The process starts at Haskell School with the teachers measuring their student's feet to determine shoe size. The numbers are collated and the boot purchasing begins. Well, in actuality, the boot purchasing began last February to take advantage of clearance sales, but the final purchases are made in early November. Gift name tags are made by Holly Beeman and crew. Early Saturday morning, the sanctuary is filled with boots. A team of 4-year old's to adults sort by size and gender, and then match each pair of boots to a student. The boots are then grouped by classroom and delivered to Haskell School.

Monday, December 9, was "Boot Day" at Haskell. A day when every child got a new pair of boots. Principal Loree Leathers and students say that is their favorite day of the year. Thanks to the generosity of this Congregation, this project is possible. If you have donated, THANK YOU! If you haven't yet donated but would like to, the Mission Ministry Team is still accepting donations to cover the cost of this project. Loree Leathers sends a special thank you from all the children at Haskell School.



## TRUSTEES' FALL UPDATE FOCUSES ON OUR BUILDING MANAGER, JEFF BYRNE AND OFFICE MANAGER DEBBIE WISE

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP JEFF AND DEBBIE HAVE A GREAT WEEK? What Can We Do to Help?

Jeff's week is scheduled full of tasks and responsibilities keeping our building and grounds safe, functioning, and attractive. Debbie keeps communications, schedules and programs on track. We are likely unaware of how we can be helpful to them. We can decrease their interruptions by telling them when anyone is being scheduled to come to our building: A consultant, delivery person, guest, salesperson, repair person, etc. How can we best do our part?

Email or text (or call) Jeff (with a copy to Debbie) whenever we:

- Schedule a sales person for an estimate (ex: Lonnie's Carpet Max)
- Schedule a delivery of and order (ex: Stove & Refrigerator for KFACT)
- Schedule pick-up of an item for repair (ex: Communion table for repair)
- Schedule use of our building (ex: Group meeting in the Heritage Room)
- When anything or anybody is being scheduled to enter the building that is not routinely expected or scheduled through the office

Jeff Byrne: phone or text 815-222-5051 Debbie Wise: phone 815-963-8431

Thank You for your participation.  
Roger Greenlaw 815-262-1776

### TRUSTEES UPDATE: EMERSON HALL, GORDON CHAPEL, THE BELLS' CHAPEL AND THE GATHERING PLACE

During January 2020 we can all take a look back on the wonderful changes that have been made in our building this past year, and the programs we can now support.

When you exit the elevator on the 3rd floor, turn right and you will cross through the hallway behind the sanctuary balcony, that leads to Emerson Hall where KFACT is now "At Home". This hallway has new flooring that is an extension of the new flooring in the 3rd floor Kids zone. (pictured right)



When you go down the stairs from Emerson Hall to the Gordon Chapel you will see new windows and renovated bathrooms. (a few windows are on back order). The 4th floor 'Bells' Chapel (rehearsal area) is being painted, and some accessories (white and cork boards, lateral files), and new carpet in the near future. Also, the old nursery area just left of the church office is now The Gathering Place, with new furniture in the bride's area and new flooring in the Adult Education class area. This area is getting new countertops and check out the new 'Koffee Bar' for Koffee Klass! Notice the small conference table (from First Presbyterian) that provides an additional space for small group meetings.

All these changes have been financed with a grant from the Church Foundation. Thanks to the tireless efforts of so many of us: Our trustees, church members and staff that have made all these changes happen.

As we close out this project if the next few months, if you are aware of additional work that remains to be done please let us know.... for example we have several areas for storage that still need to be created or renovated.

Roger Greenlaw (rgreen97@aol.com, cell 815-262-1776)

### A STEWARDSHIP THANK YOU

By David Jones

Our 2019 Stewardship Sunday completed a month of messages from members and mission partners. Carolyn Greenlaw, Karen Hill and John Lindblade shared what our church means to them. Katy Paterson and Nicky Bennett described our ministries called Serious Soup and Bridge Clinic. Your response was renewed commitment of your time, talent and treasure to the congregation we call our home church.

Your Stewardship Committee thanks all who have pledged or who will do so in the coming weeks. Your decision to support our church mission assures another year of joy-filled service in Christ's precious name.

### NOMINATING MINISTRY

By Jim Delmore

The Nominating Ministry Team will soon be meeting to fill positions on our church Ministry Teams. Steve Showers once said that "The Nominating Ministry Team works to match the skills and passion of our church family with the appropriate ministry team". This is exactly what we try to do, but to do this we will need your help. Do you have an interest in a particular ministry team or know someone that does? If so please contact Ann Stites at [annstites@hotmail.com](mailto:annstites@hotmail.com) the Nominating Ministry Team members listed below will be happy to answer any questions that you might have. You don't have to be a member of the church to join a team except for the Trustee Ministry Team.

Jim Delmore, Holly Hegge, Jean Herro, Tyler Noel, Katy Paterson, Doug Phillips, Diane Pippel, Darlene Riddle, Ann Stites (Chair)



# JANUARY CALENDAR

## Wednesday, January 1

Office Closed

## Thursday, January 2

9:30 AM – Free showers  
5:30 PM – JD Meeting

## Friday, January 3

4:30 PM – Snow Camp

## Saturday, January 4

No Bridge Clinic

## Sunday, January 5

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

## Monday, January 6

No Serious Soup  
9:00 PM – Overnight Cafe' Starts

## Tuesday, January 7

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
6:00 PM – DVT

## Wednesday, January 8

9:00 AM – Hospitality Team  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

## Thursday, January 9

9:30 AM – Carillons  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

## Friday, January 10

No Scheduled Activities

## Saturday, January 11

10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

## Sunday, January 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

## Monday, January 13

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

## Tuesday, January 14

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
12:00 PM – Adult Ed  
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry  
6:00 PM – Executive Committee

## Wednesday, January 15

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers  
5:00 PM – Trustees

## Thursday, January 16

9:30 AM – Carillons  
9:30 AM – Free showers  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

## Friday, January 17

No Scheduled Activities

## Saturday, January 18

10:00 AM – Jubilee Soup Kitchen  
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

## Sunday, January 19

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

## Monday, January 20

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

## Tuesday, January 21

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Free Showers

## Wednesday, January 22

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

## Thursday, January 23

9:30 AM – Carillons  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
5:30 PM – Governing Council  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
6:00 PM – ARC  
7:00 PM – Choir

## Friday, January 24

No Scheduled Activities

## Saturday, January 25

10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

## Sunday, January 26

Becky Erbe Preach  
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour KNIB  
11:15 AM – Peanuts  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

## Monday, January 27

11:30 Serious Soup

## Tuesday, January 28

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Free Showers

## Wednesday, January 29

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

## Thursday, January 30

9:30 AM – Carillons  
9:30 AM – Free showers  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

## Friday, January 31

No Scheduled Activities

## NEIGHBORHOOD NUMBERS

*Serious Soup:*  
December 1: 91  
December 9: 93  
December 16: 95

*Diapers: 2*  
*Showers: 8*  
*Assistance: 6*

## CHOIR MEMBERS WANTED - WITH REWARD!

by Paul Laparde

### POSITIONS OPEN:

Soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, bass. No others need apply. If you aren't sure in what category your voice fits, we have a way to find out!

### PHYSICAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Must be able to carry light musical notes part way across the church. Must have sufficient vision to see the Director 20 feet away.

### UNIFORM:

Our organization supplies your uniform free of charge. You can wear anything under the uniform--some people claim this is a very valuable perk of being in choir...you have no idea.

### EXPERIENCE:

We are waiving applications if your experience includes singing in the shower, humming, or singing along with the radio.

### WAGES:

Satisfaction and joy in God's service, and joy in music making.

### FRINGE BENEFITS:

- 1 - Social security that even Congress and the President can't alter. We promise you the security of social fellowship with some of the finest people you will get to know.
- 2 - Research indicates that singing in a choir increases the likelihood of sustained good health (physically, emotional, and intellectual), and of a great time.
- 3 - What happens in choir stays in choir.
- 4 - You get to see what the back of the preacher's head looks like.
- 5 - Even on days when you don't think you look or feel well, our robes make you look like a million bucks.
- 6 - If you want to play cowbell, you get first shot at it.
- 7 - See "uniform", in a previous section.
- 8 - Many more, but read #3 above.

### HOURS:

Sunday mornings, Thursday nights at 7:00 pm. Some important holidays. Opportunities for overtime at above-mentioned wages.

### VACATION:

Missed rehearsals and worship services are primarily a matter of conscience and the ability to return the stares and pointed remarks of the director. We do give summers off!

### RETIREMENT PLAN:

No particular age, but it's generally determined by prayers, printed notes getting too small, robe too heavy, notes too high, sanctuary too hot or too cold), or organist (Val Blair or Bob Bates) unable to play notes you sing.

Our choir is a wonderfully open and embracing community of people who sing in praise of God and the Word. Your place with us is waiting, and we hope this message will encourage someone to visit and try us out.

