

## SecondFirst Church

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

APRIL 2020

# THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

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



## A WORD FROM PASTOR REBECCA

Hey Church!

Remember me? I hope so. The week the virus disrupted our lives, I was supposed to tip toe back into the church and take on just a bit of my weekly routine. Ha! I have heard people say that God laughs at our plans. We were even going to try to hire someone to fill in for the part of my brain that is still struggling (the organizing and

time focused side!). But alas, nothing is as any of us planned a month ago!

After enduring my 8th concussion, I was out of commission for six months. It is hard for me to believe that it was that long (again, the part of my brain that keeps time is the part that went down), but I know for many of you, that was a long time!

I am forever grateful for Pastor Becky for stepping in for me in ways I will never know; for Jim Delmore, who practically moved into the church; and for the entire staff and lay leaders, who filled in, made do, and figured out how to love one another and seek Jesus anyway. Church, you opened and successfully ran an overnight café, one that I had promised community support for, without me. I have always known that you all are a bunch of rock stars, but wow! Nice work!

I look forward to catching up on all that I have missed: birthdays, anniversaries, other milestones, highs and lows. It would really make my year if you would reach out and tell me what I missed. I really was at home under a rock (okay it was a blanket), so fill me in! I am grateful to be your pastor. And grateful to God for my health and the ability to back in this role.

Peace to you,  
Rebecca

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

### NEW PRAYER TEAM WARRIORS FORMING

Would you like to volunteer for a good cause without leaving your house? Join the Prayer Team. At least once a week through email we will pray for people and concerns. If you would like to join give me a call. If you were on the prayer team previously, we would love to have you stay on. Give me a call! Becky Erbe 815-222-4905

### QUARANTINED AND CAN'T GET OUT?

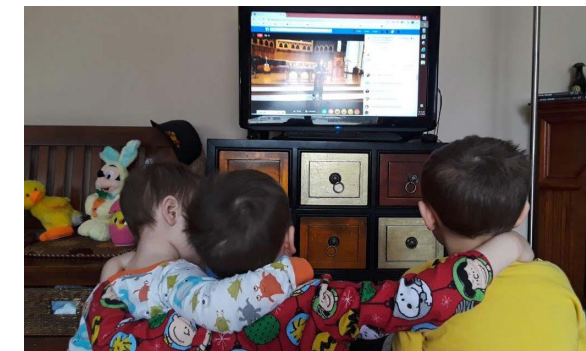
Are you at high risk? Let us help! On Wednesdays from 12:00 pm-2:00 pm Jeff Byrne and I will pick up prescriptions or food staples if need be. Give me a call if you need help! Pastor Becky Erbe 815-222-4905

### DIGITAL WORSHIP CONTINUES

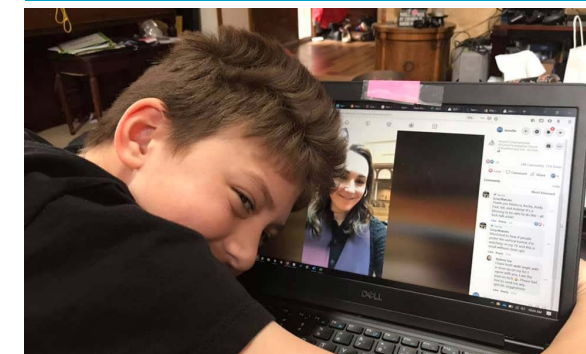
Sundays at 10am on Facebook Live. [www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch](http://www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch)

## SAVE THE DATES

- May 2: Prairie Assn. Meeting Big Rock
- May 10: Muffins for Mom
- May 16: Pilgrim Park Clean Up
- May 31: Pentecost



The Lindblade boys stick together and adapt to this new way of life. Here they are participating in the new digital worship service.



Nicholas Archer took Rev. Rebecca's 'hug at the door' as literally as he could.



Church member, Karen Hill, is using her sewing skills to make face masks for workers on the front lines of this pandemic. (featured on Channel 13 News)

## NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MOVING WORSHIP ONLINE DURING PANDEMIC, UCC CHURCHES OFFER PASTORAL TOUCHES, PROPHETIC VOICES



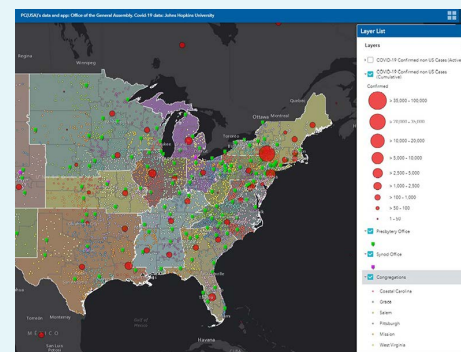
They may have closed their buildings in response to the global coronavirus pandemic, but many United Church of Christ congregations

still offered the comfort of music and prayer as they moved worship services to the internet.

At the start of what one pastor called a "season of being together while we are apart," the online experience was not the same as gathering in familiar sanctuaries. But for many UCC members connecting by phone or computer, it was interactive. **Read more:** [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) OGA RELEASES NEW WEB MAPPING TOOL TO SHOW COVID-19 CONFIRMED CASES

The Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has unveiled a new web mapping tool that shows confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus in proximity of mid councils and congregations.



"The OGA has developed this application in order to spread accurate information among its members and constituents, in an effort to help Presbyterians be a connectional church and find one another in the midst of this crisis," said Vicente Guna, manager of technologies. **Read more:** [www.presbyterianmission.org](http://www.presbyterianmission.org)

## OUR BELLS HAVE GONE SILENT...FOR NOW

By Julie Cook Ramirez, Director of Handbell Ministries

If you've ever witnessed one of our rehearsals, you'll know it takes a lot to silence a room full of handbell ringers. However, COVID-19 has done it. As the CDC, State of Illinois, and Winnebago County Health Department all spoke about the importance of social distancing and issued guidelines on the number of people who could safely congregate, it became painfully evident all church activities must be halted - including Handbell Ministries. Weekly rehearsals, Bell Sundays, and the annual Ring in Spring concert have all been put on hold. However, rest assured we will return to share the wonderful music sitting in our folders, to bring a smile to your faces, and to raise funds for organizations and people who desperately need our help. In the meantime, stay safe, be well, and we'll see you soon.

### THE BRIDGE CLINIC UPDATE WITH NICKY BENNETT, APRN

Over the past few weeks there have been many discussions about whether to keep the Bridge Clinic open during the Covid-19 virus pandemic. My 'Interview' below with the Manager and Nurse Practitioner Nicky Bennett is a composite of information from recent discussions and emails with Clinic staff, Mercy Health and our Church leaders.

Roger Greenlaw, Chair of Trustees 815-262-1776

#### Roger G: Remind Us of Your Back story?

Nicky B: 11 years ago, Dr John Rudzinski, Dr Annette Olin and myself with the support of then Rockford Memorial Hospital established the 'Bridge' clinic, a medical clinic for the uninsured members of our community. First Presbyterian Church offered space and helped to staff the clinic. Bob Langford then led representatives of the church in this process and the move to Second Congregational Church 6 years later when your churches merged.

#### Roger G: What role has evolved for the Clinic?

Nicky B: The Bridge clinic is a very real though small medical office. Recently we hospitalized two patients just two weeks ago, who, without our care, could have had a poor outcome. We have become vital to the wellbeing of many, especially in our shared neighborhoods. In this time of a viral pandemic, we will help keep our patients out of critical space such as ERs, hospitals and other clinics. We will also continue to take the time to find free medications and supplies that the uninsured in our community desperately need.

#### Roger G: How will you protect yourselves, and our donated space during Covid-19 pandemic?

Nicky B: We have had supplies in place at the clinic for many years in preparation for such an event, as it was inevitable at some time that we would need them. I also have trained as noted below and will be personally training each and every volunteer. At this time:

- Volunteers are limited to myself, a single practitioner, and a young volunteer who speaks Spanish. No one else. We will remain 6 feet apart.
- We have PPE (personal protective equipment) in stock including gloves, masks (surgical and N95), splash guards, gowns and goggles.
- Chairs are 6 feet apart with vinyl protective slipcovers that can be wiped down.
- We will clean bathrooms, door handles in entry and halls and elevator buttons every hour, after every patient, and at the end of the day.
- The front door has a sign instructing all patients to call before entering the building, at which time they will be screened before allowed to come up to the clinic.
- Website and Facebook page notes ask folks to call before coming in so as to treat simple needs over the phone, and do refills by phone and via iPrescribe.
- We do refills by phone and via iPrescribe.
- Patients are rescreened and their temperatures taken once they get up to the clinic. We follow Mercy Health's clinic protocols and patient questionnaires. If there is a concern that they may have Covid-19, they are isolated, then sent to Mercy Perryville to be tested, or the ER if they are sick. Protocols determine how that happens.

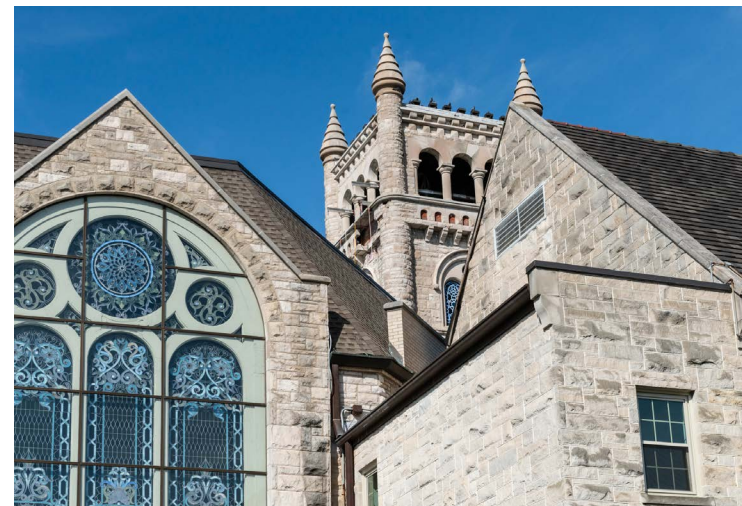


#### Roger G: What training and experience have you had to prepare for this situation?

Nicky B: I started life out as a paramedic, then became an ER nurse and now an (APRN) nurse practitioner. As an ER nurse I personally dealt with viral epidemics (H1N1 & SARS) and other infectious diseases. As a member of IMERT (Illinois Medical Emergency Response team) since 2005, I have received hands-on training with the Military, Homeland Security, Emergency Medical Systems and IDPH (IL Dept Public Health), including HAZMAT PPE with/without respirators.

#### Roger G: Finally, who are your backup support people and systems?

Nicky B: Our processes are reviewed by Dr Jason Bredenkamp (Mercy Hospital ER Director), Dr John Dorsey (Chief Medical Officer Mercy Health), and Sara Stille RN (Staff Lead for Covid-19 at Mercy Health) who keep me and Annette Olin apprised of changes. They all have offered their support to keep Bridge Clinic open. I have their personal cell phone numbers and permission to call anytime. They keep me and Dr Annette Olin updated on recommendations that change almost daily. Our physician and practitioner volunteers include Drs Dorsey, Polizzotto (SwedishAmerican Chief Medical Officer), Helen Laib, Koepsell, Annette Olin and NPs Crawford, Hormig, among others. Our role in the community will be needed even more as people lose benefits and access to affordable healthcare. Nicky Bennett APRN Cell 815-494-1594, thebridgeclinic@outlook.com



### AN UPDATE FROM THE MODERATOR

By Jim Delmore

Looking back to last winter the church reminded me of a poem that I memorized when I was a child: "I sought to hear the voice of God I climbed the top most steeple but God said go down again I dwell among the people," the author was Cardinal John Henry Newman he lived from 1801 to 1890.

Our church not only supplied refuge on a cold winter night, our members and the community prepared food and donated money to help the cause. I heard people say that it would be good for everyone to come and help just once so they could feel the pride and happiness that is felt when helping other people. Each night and morning you would hear thank you and God Bless you. Just like anywhere the cross-section of people was interesting most were very grateful and expressed it, others were focused on simply surviving. Over 250 people were helped from January to March the average attendance for the evening was around 40 people a few nights it was much higher. Everything is cleaned up and the blankets are being washed and put into storage. Discussion is underway to make next year even better. It is through the love and desire of so many to help that made the overnight café possible and I would like to thank everyone that gave time, talent and money to make the overnight café success. I don't know what the future will hold for us I know our church will be there to help.

Our church is close to protect us from the Coronavirus (COVID-19), last Sunday the first live service was broadcasted on Facebook, quick action and good planning was done by our church staff to make it happen. Please plan to watch the service on Sunday at 10:00 am. All of the ministry teams will have to meet via phone conference in the future. I encourage you not to go to church for any reason. However, you are welcome to call, Debbie will be answering the phone. I expect that her hours will be shortened. The number of people needed for Serious Soup will be cutback. Only sack lunches to go will be provided. The men's Prayer Breakfast and Thrift Shop are closed until further notice. Remember to stay home as much as you can if you need help call the church office and we will try to get help to you and if you have any questions please call me or the church.

Regards,  
Jim Delmore  
815-222-5534

## FEBRUARY GOVERNING COUNCIL MONTHLY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS Report of the Church: January 23 to February 21, 2020

### Deaths

Chester T. Roe  
Ruth E. Ax  
Linda B. Burright  
Constance Brown

### Staff Reports

Becky Erbe reported that the Overnight Café is almost over and all of the possessions that have been stored in the south narthex will be removed and a cleaning crew is coming in to wash blankets for next year. Lent is underway.

Reverend Rebecca shared that there was a very good response from the parents of the kids who were here with Dorothy Paige Turner's choir.

### Treasurer Report

Congregant giving is short as it often is early in the year. Jay reported that we are tracking in line with last year.

### Trustees Financial Comments & Report on Building Use

Roger Greenlaw reported bids have been accepted and money paid for remaining remodeling projects which include the Bell room painting. Painting will be completed after bells complete their program year in April. Office renovations went a little over budget. A Building Audit committee will evaluate the building, so we know next priorities including updated Kitchen. This audit will include décor and functionality for building spaces as well as sustainability.

### Ongoing Business

Roger Greenlaw gave a status update on the disability request we're filing with our insurance through the Presbytery. Roger will give an update to the church on Sunday.

### Nominating Committee

Please send recommendations to Ann or Jim.

### Mural

The panels are in storage until Spring. We have held \$1500 from Tia until the installation is done.

### Ministry Team Highlights

- Fellowship had a successful gathering for the Wind Ensemble.
- Earth care had an excellent turnout for the Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful speaker.
- Terry Mohaupt attended the February 11 Presbytery Meeting in Dekalb where they honored John John Rickard's service.
- Stronghold is in the process of becoming a 501c3 subsidiary of the Presbytery. Terry will serve as chair of their Board of Directors and liaison to Blackhawk Presbytery Council.

*The complete February Governing Council Monthly Meeting Minutes are on file in the church office.*

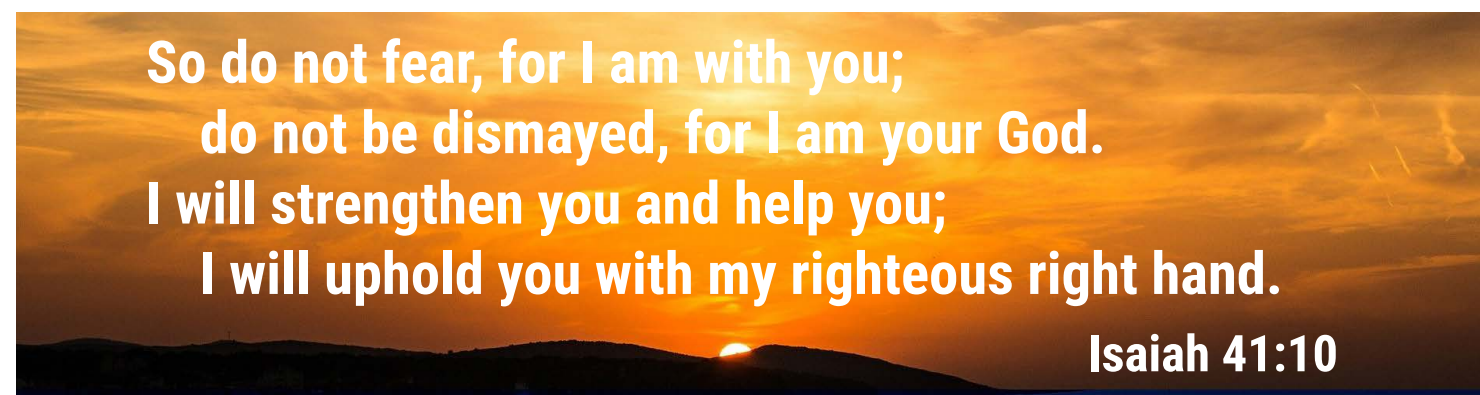
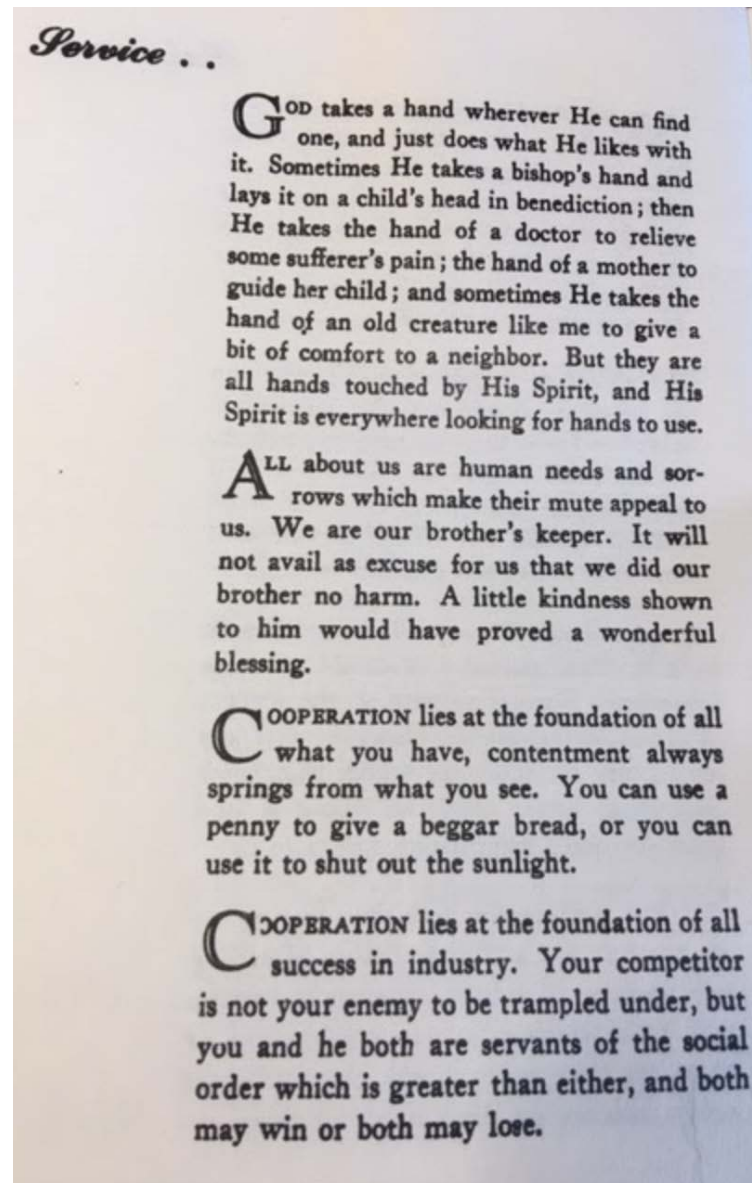
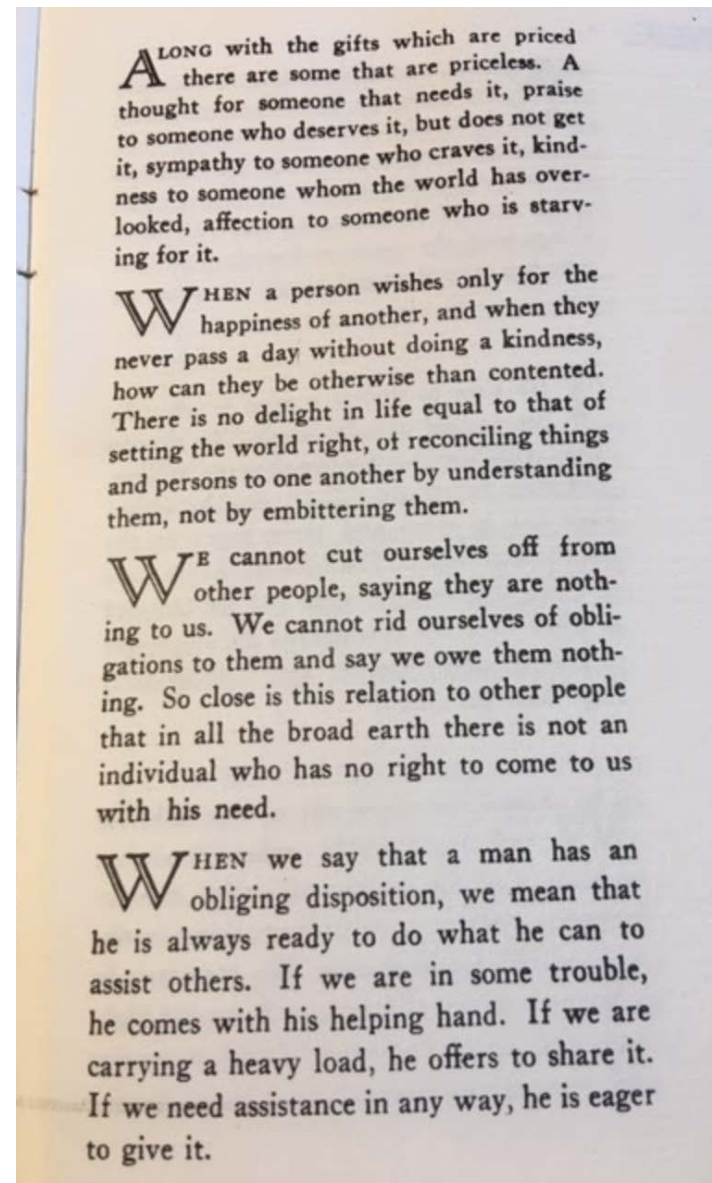
## FROM YOUR CHURCH HISTORIAN

By Alice Fry Uphouse

The Rev. John Gordon D.D. minister of Second Congregational Church "Meditations" appeared in the Rockford newspaper as Thoughts for Every Day Living. Originally, they were compiled and printed in small book form by Mrs. Arthur M. Fischer. The RADAR high school youth group of Second Congregational Church sponsored this reprinting of your inspiration and enjoyment. December 1984.

If you look in the Lenten Display Case at church you will see this little book and have several to share. Here are the titles in alphabetical order. Appreciation, Beauty, Character, Courage, Discouragement, Faith, Faults Friendship, Giving, Happiness, Home, Honor, Joy, Life, Love, Memory, Patience, Service, Sorrow, Truth, Work, Worry.

I selected "Service" as we are in God's Service: For further reading, ISAIAH 41:10



### HUMAN LIBRARY EVENT

Our Human Library event scheduled for April 28 has been postponed, as have all Human Library offerings this Spring. We expect to reschedule when the Health Department indicates it is safe to do so.

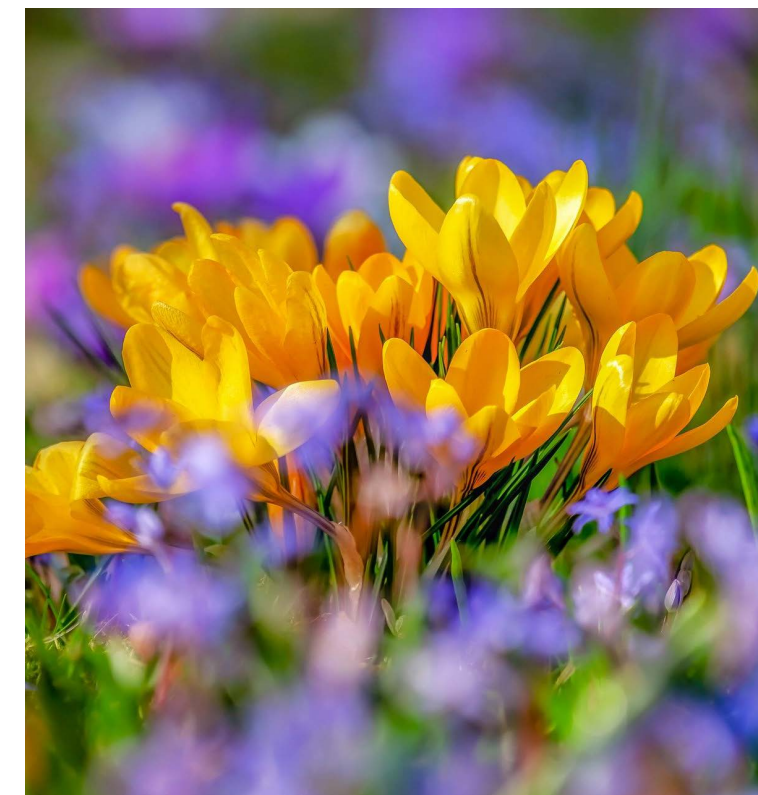
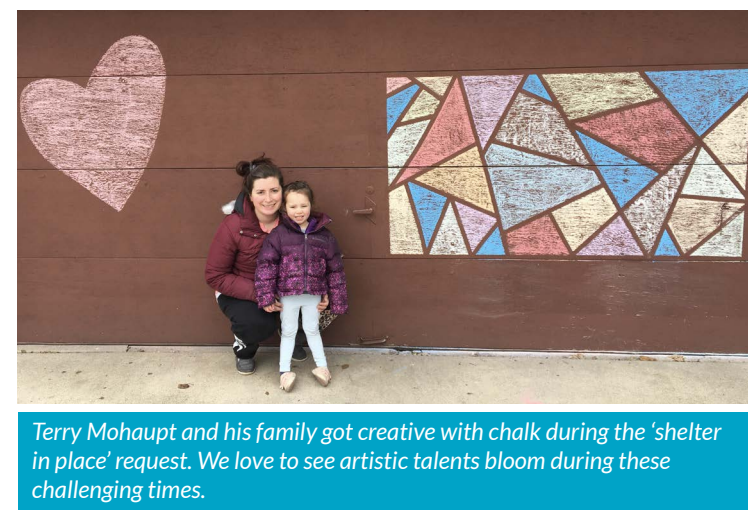
In the meantime, you may wish to learn more about this remarkable International project which:

- Provides a Chance to Unjudge Someone
- Publishes People as Open Books
- Establishes a Safe Space for Dialogue
- Offers a Place to Ask Questions About Difficult Issues
- Creates the Opportunity to Challenge Stereotypes

The Human Library website is <https://humanlibrary.org/> where you can read about the HLO's history, outreach, and impact. Do you have a story to share? Once a new date is set, a training session will be held for new "books." If you would be interested in completing an application, please contact Linda Oshita.

### COFFEE CLASS MEETING REMOTELY

Coffee Class will continue to meet using Zoom, a video conferencing software. While physically apart, it allows us a chance to invite those who live far away to join us as we seek to deepen our connections to each other and God. Look for updates on special guests and other formats that seek to take advantage of the technology. Specifics are still being arranged. Reach out to Andy Newgren to get on the weekly Coffee Class email list or to find out how to connect using a computer, smart phone, or even a telephone.



### FROM THE TRUSTEES MINISTRY TEAM

By Roger Greenlaw, Chair Trustees

As Spring 2020 arrives we are all about the COVID-19 virus. Trustees, ministry teams, staff and members are all trying to be safe, keep our building, meetings and church services safe, while looking out for each other with phone calls, audio/video meetings and development of personal safety skills. Peace be with you.

KFACT was fully settled into Emerson Hall. Programs were up and running with Wednesday night personal safety classes for the girls taught by the Rockford Police Department. Thursday nights were math tutoring provided by high school students. Saturday mornings featured dance classes. The days for staff were filled with their usual mentoring, college prep discussions, graduation planning and the many support services like transportation to events. NOW, all is partially on hold. This is especially difficult for the girls who have many personal situations to learn to handle, before learning to deal with The Virus. Executive Director Shamika Williams reports that they are keeping their staff and flock of girls together with work from home, connection through social media, and staying in touch with each girl who is in their care. We remain ready to support them in any way we can!

BRIDGE CLINIC has become part of the healthcare fabric of our community, especially our downtown neighborhood. Many people have come to depend on these services. After discussion with Bob Langford, Bob Canfield, Jim Delmore, Pastor Rebecca, Pastor Erbe and staff, and Dr John Dorsey. Trustees and Governing Council believe it is reasonably safe for Bridge Clinic to continue to operate in our building. Head Nurse (Nurse Practitioner) Nicky Bennett has the qualifications, training and experience to lead the program through this time. She is backed up by the clinic's volunteer physicians, and the Chief Medical Officer at Mercy Hospital, Dr John Dorsey. Mercy Hospital is the main sponsor of the Bridge Clinic.

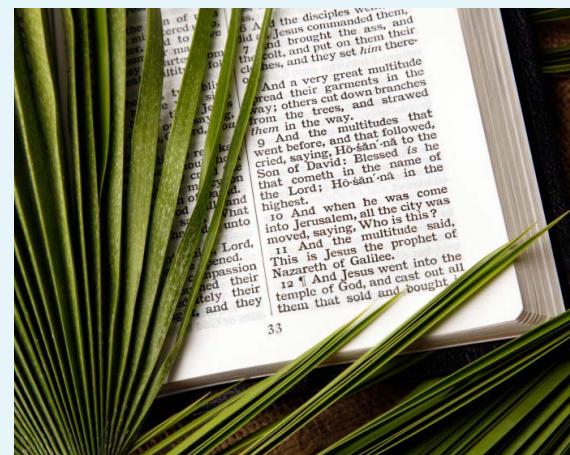
# APRIL CALENDAR

All meetings are digital for April. Team charis will be in touch with contact details. We will continue to keep the congregation updated throughout the month on our social media channels. Please follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SecondFirstChurch](http://www.facebook.com/SecondFirstChurch) or on Twitter at @Second1stChurch for the most up-to-date information.

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|--|--|
| <b>Wednesday, April 1</b><br>9:30 AM – Deaconess<br>6:30 PM – Lenten Worship                                   | <b>Easter Sunday, April 12</b><br>8:30 AM – Coffee Class<br>10:00 AM – Worship Service   |
| <b>Thursday, April 2</b><br>9:30 AM – Free Showers<br>12:10 PM – Mindfulness Meditation                        | <b>Monday, April 13</b><br>11:30 AM – Serious Soup<br>5:30 PM – Deacons  |
| <b>Friday, April 3</b><br>No Scheduled Activities  | <b>Tuesday, April 14</b><br>9:30 am – Presbytery (Digital)<br>9:30 AM – Free Showers<br>6:00 PM – DVT  |
| <b>Saturday, April 4</b><br>9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic  | <b>Wednesday, April 15</b><br>No Scheduled Activities  |
| <b>Palm Sunday, April 5</b><br>8:30 AM – Coffee Class<br>10:00 AM – Worship Service                            | <b>Thursday, April 16</b><br>9:30 AM – Free Showers  |
| <b>Monday, April 6</b><br>11:30 AM - Serious Soup  | <b>Friday, April 17</b><br>No Scheduled Activities   |
| <b>Tuesday, April 7</b><br>7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast<br>9:00 AM – Thrift Shop<br>9:30 AM – Free Showers | <b>Saturday, April 18</b><br>9:00 AM - Bridge Clinic   |
| <b>Wednesday, April 8</b><br>6:00 PM – Martin Ringers  | <b>Sunday, April 19</b><br>8:30 AM – Coffee Class<br>10:00 AM – Worship Service<br>11:15 AM – Music Ministry Team<br>11:15 AM – Fellowship Ministry Team<br>11:15 AM – Family CE |
| <b>Maundy Thursday, April 9</b><br>9:30 AM – Free Showers<br>6:30 PM – Worship Service                         | <b>Monday, April 20</b><br>11:30 AM - Serious Soup   |
| <b>Friday, April 10</b><br>12:10 PM – Worship Service  | <b>Tuesday, April 21</b><br>7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast<br>9:30 AM – Free Showers<br>5:00 PM – Mission Team   |
| <b>Saturday, April 11</b><br>9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic   |  |

## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

- April 5, 2020  
**PALM SUNDAY**  
Join us on Facebook LIVE at 10:00 AM. If you are unable to join us via computer, join using your phone by calling into the conference call line.
- April 9, 2020  
**MAUNDY THURSDAY**  
Join us on Facebook LIVE at 6:30 PM. If you are unable to join us via computer, join using your phone by calling into the conference call line.
- April 12, 2020  
**EASTER SUNDAY**  
Join us on Facebook LIVE at 10:00 AM. If you are unable to join us via computer, join using your phone by calling into the conference call line.



## JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Despite canceling several upcoming events, Jeremiah is asking the community to sign up and stay involved. Light the Night, Jeremiah CARES, and the April in Paris fundraiser are all on hold for now. The community connections fostered by JD activities will be needed more than ever once the most serious period of risk and uncertainty has passed. To stay up-to-date while we wait together, please visit the website, [www.jeremiahdevelopment.org](http://www.jeremiahdevelopment.org). Go to the “contact us” section and send us your email address to receive newsletters, and information about fun contests we are planning to help pass the time, and stay connected, until we can be together again. Prizes MAY be involved!



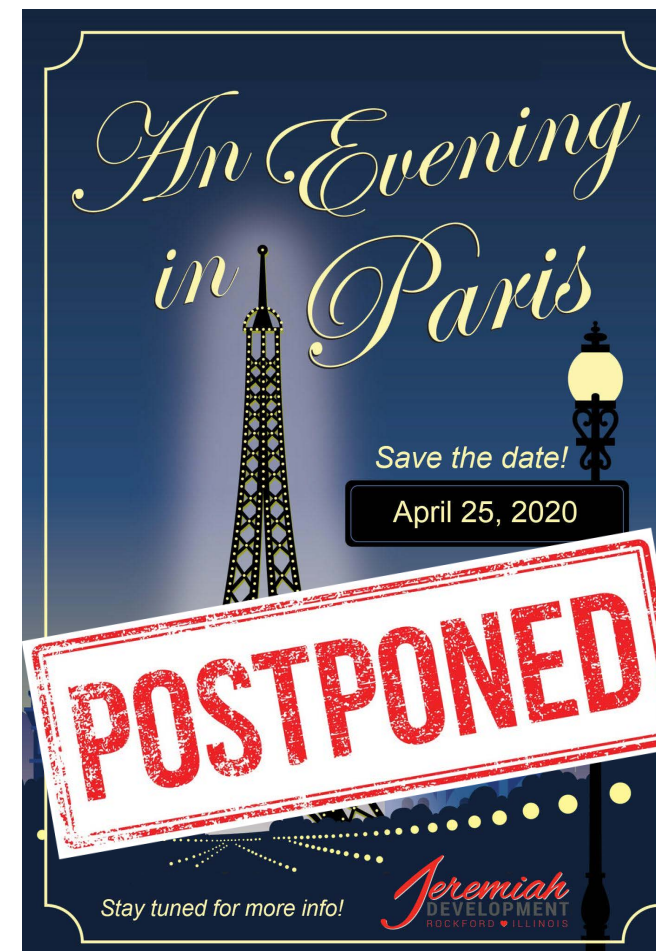
Left to Right: Gwen Lashock – Jeremiah CARES project manager, Sue Kanthak – Executive Director, Jeanine Wang – Neighborhood Development Coordinator, John Bates – President, Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, Kris Harden – Jeremiah Development assistant and supporter, Greg Cox – Board President, Rev Calvin Culpepper – Pastor, CSUMC, Tyler Hillman – Board Member, and Joan Tunnell – Board Vice President.

Please read about our safety efforts, in partnership with the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood Association and the Community Action Agency of Boone and Winnebago County, the wonderful article in the Rockford Register Star at <https://www.rrstar.com/news/20200314/rockford-residents-will-light-night-to-drive-out-crime>. We will reschedule this event as soon as we are able to have large gatherings again! Stay tuned for volunteer opportunities to register applicants for the program and installing (no wiring) 125 solar powered, motion detector, exterior lights.

## JEREMIAH IN THE NEWS

Jeremiah Development recently held our first press conference which was covered by all 3 television channels! We announced our new offices in the Mendelssohn Performing Arts Center, had a check presentation from the Community Foundation of Illinois - Armer F Ashland fund, explained the new direction JD has been taking in the last 2 years. As we focus more on developing a safe, inviting community of leaders in the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood and less of developing property, our programs have grown and we are getting recognized as leaders in this.

Please read about our safety efforts, in partnership with the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood Association and the Community Action Agency of Boone and Winnebago County, the wonderful article in the Rockford Register Star at <https://www.rrstar.com/news/20200314/rockford-residents-will-light-night-to-drive-out-crime>. We will reschedule this event as soon as we are able to have large



## YOUTH AND FAMILY BOWLING

By Aubrey Barnett

Before social distancing was mandated in the state of Illinois, several families of our church had a wonderful afternoon bowling at Don Carter Lanes. It was a lovely sunny day in early March. Food, spares, strikes, and some laughs were enjoyed by all. Make sure you come out and join us next year, and for any and all family events!