

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church
318 N. Church Street, Rockford IL
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www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch

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Permit No. 3734
Rockford, Illinois



THE TOWER

Second Congregational UCC / First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace.

JUNE 2017

A WORD FROM REVEREND REBECCA

Hello Church!

The first two Sundays in June will be important in the life of our church! In addition to being Pentecost, the day we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, on June 4 we will receive new members. We have over ten people in our new members class (I don't want to tell you the exact number, because we offer the opportunity to join the church after the classes.) Check out this line-up we shared for our Wednesday evening dinner:

PCUSA history and theology: Andy Newgren

UCC history and theology: Fred Krauss

Story of First Pres: Greg Makulec

Story of Second Con: Bob Canfield

Story of the Federation: Sally Hoff

We had a great conversation about the theology of the Church, where our two denominations fit in and how the individuals from a range of denominations can add to our story. This class of new members is quite a blessing. They come from a various background and religious traditions and will add a lot to our family of faith.

On June 11, for those already participating and leading in the life of church, we will pray for God's blessing and guidance always and especially when we lay hands on them in worship. We, as a church, are the collection of our individual stories and a gathering of our efforts of worship and service. Thanks be to God that we get to come together to be and do church!

Please join me in welcoming our new members and praying for our leaders.

Peace,

Rebecca



Laying hands on Becky Erbe as we mark her 20th anniversary with the church



Annual program meeting



Red noses during Early Word



Reverend Rebecca giving the Communion prayer

UPCOMING EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER & DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

Soup Kitchen - June 3

Mark your calendar for our next Soup Kitchen at the Jubilee Center. If you can work from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm or any part of that, Jean would love to have you as part of the team. First-timers and seasoned volunteers are welcome. Contact: Jean Herro at 815-399-7213.

Youth Car Wash - June 11

After church, a car wash will be held by the students attending this year's Mission Trip in order to raise the remaining funds. A free will offering will be taken at this time. If you would like to volunteer to help at this event, please contact Courtney Jonsson at courtney.jonsson@secondfirst.org.

Take Me Out to the Ballgame - June 14

Join in the fun as we celebrate SecondFirst Night at the Rockford Rivets baseball game on Wednesday, June 14. The cost is \$5.00 per person, which includes your infield seat, along with all-you-can-eat burgers, brats, hot dogs, chips, and soft drinks. Dinner will be served starting at 5:35 pm and the game will start at 6:35pm. ALL ARE WELCOME! Questions, please contact Dyan Lofgren dyan.lofgren@secondfirst.org

Dinner and Fireworks - June 24

Celebrate the Fourth of July a little early by joining us at Dick and Donna Larson's house, 4971 Dunbarton Parkway, Rockford, IL for a potluck dinner on Saturday, June 24 at 6:30 pm. After dinner we will enjoy the amazing Tullock's Woods Fireworks Show. This is a fun, family-friendly event! Please bring a dish to pass, table service, and a lawn chair for viewing the fireworks. Questions? Call the Larson's 815-654-8183.

Save the date: The Church Picnic will be Sunday, August 20 after Church in Anna Page Park.

SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS AND LOANS AVAILABLE

If you are a post high school graduate, planning on furthering your education by attending college, vocational school, or graduate school this coming academic year (2017-18) and are a SecondFirst Member, you are eligible to inquire about the First Presbyterian Scholarship Fund or the Weingartner Student Loan Fund. Please call Debbie at the church office for an application 815-963-8431. For additional information: Presbyterian members, call Joyce Pogue 815-874-7646 by July 12, 2017. United Church of Christ members, call Jeff Jacobs 815-398-4366.

PRAYER REQUESTS

We offer prayers, sympathy and support for the friends and family of Barbara Gambino, who passed away on Thursday, May 11.

Continue prayers for Linda Roy, Linda Burrignt, Lola Church, Scott Anderson, and Philip & Shirley Davidson.

And we pray for all those at home and in long-term care facilities, who are not able to be in worship regularly, but who remain part of our family of faith: Thomas Hill (Bob Saunder's uncle), Jim & Nora Jean Rollins, Miriam Richardson, Wayne Nicholson, Nancy Bert, Jan Elliott, Elsie Kayser, Marge Kildow, Ruthann Lenard, Beverly Lindsey, Marilyn Thayer, Ruth Todd, Ward Wallace, and Willene Ziebell.

SAVE THE DATE: TRANSIT SUMMER EVENTS

June 4 - Picnic in the Park with Wiffleball 11:30 - 1:30 pm

June 11 - Transit Car Wash Following Worship

June 17 - Transit leaves for Philadelphia

June 24 - Transit returns from Philadelphia

July 2 - Youth Sunday

July 16 - Slip and Slide Kickball 11:30-1:30 pm

August 13 - Rec Afternoon Following Worship

SAVE THE DATE: FAMILY CHRISTIAN ED SUMMER EVENTS

June 4 - No Sunday School

June 11 - Summer Sunday School Kick-off

June 14 - SecondFirst Night at the Rockford Rivets. More details to follow.

July 9 - No Sunday School

August 4 - End of the Summer Family Movie Night. More details to follow. (Yikes! We know summer has not started but we want you to save the date on your calendar!)

Soup Kitchen Opportunity - July 22

Our next lunch at the Soup Kitchen will be Saturday, July 22. We work from 10:00 am to about 1:30 pm, and you can be there for all or part of the time. Lunch is prepared and served at the Jubilee Center. We love having new people join us, but love our seasoned volunteers, too! If you are interested or have questions, contact: Marge Maynard mtmhome@me.com

COMMUNITY LITURGY PROJECT JUNE 4

by Andy Newgren

Community Liturgy Project June 4, 11:15 Informational Gathering Heritage Room

Calling all established and aspiring writers, poets, seekers, people of faith and doubt, and travelers. Liturgy is our public worship. The collective voice offered each week in the form of various prayers grounds our worshiping life, centers our souls on God, and seeks to propel us forward into the world. We are looking for YOU to help shape these practices. Our worship promises to be richer when arising from the context of a specific community. If you've ever wanted to write worship elements (Call to Worship and Prayer of Confession) or are looking for a way to enrich your own spiritual practices this group is for you. Join us for an informational gathering June 4 following worship to explore how you might lend your talents to enrich our community life. Reach out to Andy Newgren andy.newgren@secondfirst.org for more information.

KOFFEE KLASS: PRAYING THE PSALMS

June 4, 11, & 18 9:00 am, 4th floor Chapel

The Psalms are poetry; the Psalms are prayer. Praise and lament appear regularly in the Psalms, and we continue to use these ancient texts in our individual and collective practices today. This series will explore the character of the Psalms, the role they played in their original communities, how the Psalms restore community life, and finally how you might pray the Psalms to enhance your own spiritual formation. While the series is three weeks, each week will be a standalone session. Questions? Contact: Andy Newgren at andy.newgren@secondfirst.org

DIALOG: CONVERSATIONS ON CURRENT TOPICS

Join Koffee Klass the last Sunday of each month as we explore current topics and discuss how our Christian faith impacts (or doesn't) our understanding and approach. This series, formerly called The Wired Word, is being renamed to better reflect the series' approach and topics. June 25th: Marge Maynard will lead.

AROUND OUR CHURCH NEWS...

We have a new summer program this year in our gym. The Rockford Park District Therapeutic Recreation Teen Camp for teens with disabilities will begin June 12 and run through August 4 from 9-5 each weekday. This is a different venture than we have had in the gym in past years, but we are looking forward to this new great relationship with the teen camp.

We have four out-of-state workcamps staying with us this summer:

June 11 - June 17: Dublin Community Church, Dublin Ohio - 30 people

June 18 - June 24: St. Paul UMC Allison Park, Pennsylvania - 40 People

June 25 - July 1: Wood's Chapel, Lee's Summit, Missouri - 90 people (yes, that's right - 90!)

July 9 - July 15: Lenexa UMC, Lenexa Kansas - 36 people

For more information or questions, contact Becky Erbe.

Neighborhood Numbers by Becky Erbe

Showers-9

Bus Tokens- 7

Clothing- 6

Diapers-1

Food-3

Housing help- 4

Hair cut for graduation- 1

JUNE CALENDAR

Thursday, June 1, 2017

9:30 AM – Free Showers
11:00 AM – Deaconesses Luncheon/staff invited
5:30 PM – 100 Men Mentoring
6:00 PM – Pop Up Dinner in Parking Lot
7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, June 2, 2017

5:30 PM – Governing Council Retreat
5:30 PM - NW Basketball Tournament

Saturday, June 3, 2017

8:30 AM – Governing Council Retreat
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic
10:00 AM – Soup Kitchen
11:00 AM – Barbara Gambino Funeral
2:00 PM - NW Basketball Tournament

Sunday, June 4, 2017

8:30 AM - New Member Class
9:00 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
No Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

Monday, June 5, 2017

9:30 AM – Free Showers
6:00 PM – Adult Ed Comm.

Tuesday June 6, 2017

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
1:00 PM – JD Executive Meeting

Wednesday, June 7, 2017

9:00 AM- NICNE Training
10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – JD NIC
5:00 PM – Membership Ministry Team

Thursday, June 8, 2017

9:00 AM – NICNE Training
9:30 AM – Free Showers
5:30 PM – JD Board Meeting
5:30 PM – 100 Men Mentoring

Friday, June 9, 2017

UCC IL Conference Annual Celebration

Saturday, June 10, 2017

UCC IL Conference Annual Celebration
10:00 PM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, June 11, 2017

9:00 AM – Koffee Klass
9:20 AM – Wee Worship
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
11:15 AM – Family Christian Education Ministry
11:30 AM – Fair For All Shop
Work campers arrive from Dublin, OH

Monday, June 12, 2017

9:00 AM - Summer Camp Monday-Friday
9:30 AM – Free Showers
5:00 PM – Deacons Ministry Team

Tuesday June 13, 2017

8:00 AM – Men's Fellowship
9:30 AM – Presbytery Willow Creek
6:00 PM – Discernment & Vision

Wednesday, June 14, 2017

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
5:00 PM – Trustees
5:30 PM – Church Night
Rockford Rivets Baseball

Thursday, June 15, 2017

9:30 AM – Free Showers
5:30 PM – 100 Men Mentoring

Friday, June 16, 2017

5:00 PM – Wedding Rehearsal

Saturday, June 17, 2017

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic
1:00 PM – Wedding

Sunday, June 18, 2017

Father's Day
9:00 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
Donuts for Dad
11:15 AM – Fellowship Ministry
11:15 AM – Music Ministry
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop
Work Campers arrive from Allison Park, PA

Monday, June 19, 2017

9:00 AM - Summer Camp Monday-Friday
9:30 AM – Free Showers

Tuesday June 20, 2017

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
1:00 PM - Executive Committee
5:30 PM - Mission Ministry Team

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting

Thursday, June 22, 2017

9:30 AM - Free Showers
5:30 PM – Governing Council
5:30 PM – 100 Men Mentoring

Friday, June 23, 2017

No scheduled activities

Saturday, June 24, 2017

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic
6:30 PM – Fireworks at Larsons

Sunday, June 25, 2017

9:00 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
11:30 AM – Fair For All Shop

Work campers arrive from Lee's Summit, MO

Monday, June 26, 2017

9:30 AM – Free Showers

Tuesday June 27, 2017

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast

Wednesday, June 28, 2017

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – Transit Service Day

Thursday, June 29, 2017

9:30 AM - Free Showers
5:30 PM – 100 Men Mentoring

Friday, June 30, 2017

No scheduled activities

ANNOUNCING OUR NEW BELL DIRECTOR

by Paul Laprade

I take great pleasure in announcing that Julie Cook Ramirez will join the staff of SecondFirst Church as Director of Handbell Ministries. Julie was recently told of the Search Committee's decision, was offered the position, and accepted. Other candidates paled in comparison to Julie—she is the obvious and best person for this position.

This offer and acceptance comes on the heels of a wonderful Ring in Spring, which confirmed many of the qualities we see in her: a desire to lead imaginative programming; the ability to work with other directors, musicians, and handbell ringers; the skill at arranging for the different forces that our ensembles do and will have; and a thoughtful approach to holding bell performances that connect with local needs, concerns, and people. I speak for Pastor Becky and myself in saying that we are overjoyed to have received her acceptance of this important position in our church. It will be exciting to see her work in the coming years, as the church will be blessed in the future just as we have in this year by her leadership.

Thanks to everyone on the search committee for their hard work and patience: Jennifer Archer (chair), Bill Baskin, Sarah Hallberg, Marilyn Hartzog, Jan Novak, Doug Phillips, Carol Picchioni, and Joyce Zartman. I know we all share great excitement regarding Julie's appointment!

HELP US BUILD A TOWER OF PEANUT BUTTER

Every year, the Rock River Valley Pantry conducts a peanut butter drive to make sure kids have adequate nutrition over the summer months. This year, SecondFirst will be making a tower out of all the 1 lb. jars of Peanut Butter that are placed in the wooden crate at the back of the sanctuary. How high will it go? Will we need to make multiple towers? You can drop off jars between now and June 4. Thank you! Contact: Marge Maynard mtmhome@me.com

LOADED BRUSH LUMINARIES ON JUNE 15

Loaded Brush Luminaries, Jeremiah Development's annual fundraiser, is back June 15 at 6 pm. Join the fun, as 20 Rockford Luminaries create paintings while instructed by the artists of 317 Gallery. Pastor Becky will be painting again this year. If you haven't yet gotten one of her paintings, this will be your chance to win the live auction. As always, there will be munchies, a cash bar, and our jazz band.

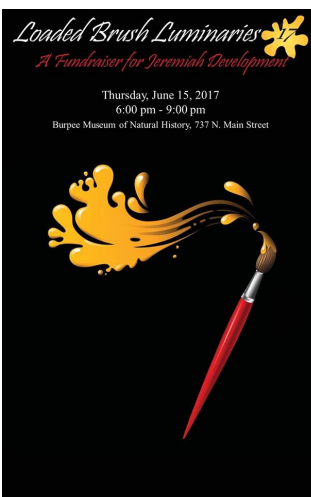
WHEN: June 15 from 6:00 – 9:00 pm

WHERE: Burpee Museum of Natural History

TICKETS: \$30 on Eventbrite or in the Church office on May 30.

TOWER HILL JULY 7 -10

Join us for a weekend of fellowship enjoyed at the beach, around the campfire, and in the dining hall for board games when the weather dictates. Tower Hill retreat center is in Sawyer, Michigan (some campers are going Thursday for extra time). Camping reservations are due by June 2. A couple A-frame cottages are available. Cost is \$7.00 per person per night. Breakfast 7.50, Lunch 9.00, Dinner 10.00, under age 5 is free. Contact: debbie.wise@secondfirst.org or 815-963-8431.



MISSION TRIP OVERVIEW

On June 18, Transit Youth Ministry will begin their Missions Trip with Broad Street Ministry in Philadelphia, PA. For one week they will be serving with 6 different organizations in the city. The organizations include: New Jerusalem Now (a residential addiction community), MANNA (a food program that brings meals to ill neighbors), Circle Thrift (a thrift store run by a local church called Circle of Hope), Mill Creek Farm (an urban farm that provides fresh produce at a low cost to surrounding neighbors), Guild House Urban Farm Hub (a farm located in an apartment complex for low-income seniors), and Beacon (a neighborhood faith community.) It is our sincere hope that Transit will come back inspired to put the skills they have learned on this trip into practice within our community. Please pray for a safe journey to Philadelphia, for the Holy Spirit to be present during on stay, and for our hearts to grow larger for the ones we will serve. We cannot thank all of you enough for your support of Transit Youth Ministry and we are beyond blessed to be called elsewhere to do God's work! We look forward to sharing our experience with you during Youth Sunday on July 2.

MAC AND CHEESE COOK-OFF RESULTS



Thank you to all who cooked and consumed Mac and Cheese after our Annual Meeting. We raised \$335 for the Missions Trip! Dyan Lofgren took home first place with her 5 cheese Mac and Cheese. Janet Jacobs came in second with her Ham Macaroni and Cheese recipe.



TRANSIT SERVICE DAY

Our first project with The Literacy Council took place on April 8. The Literacy Council has asked to have them back! On Wednesday June 28, Transit Youth Ministry will be teaming up with The Literacy Council to prepare backpacks for the I READ volunteers. I READ is an early childhood reading program in the Rockford, Harlem, Meridian, and Oregon school districts. The students will be split into teams and compete against each other. The team who packs the most backpacks the fastest will win a prize. We will be serving at The Literacy Council from 12-4 pm. If you have any questions. Please contact: Courtney Jonsson courtney.jonsson@secondfirst.org.

CONGRATS BOB!

Congratulation to Rev. Bob Saunders (and Sue, too!). June 11 is the 50th anniversary of his ordination in the United Church of Christ. We will celebrate in coffee hour on Sunday, August 6 when Bob and Sue are able to join us for worship. Thank you, Bob, for your years of service and dedication to the Church!



BRIDGE CLINIC VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

The Bridge Clinic is looking for a few volunteers to man the reception desk.

Requirements: A welcoming smile for our patients as they enter the clinic; A caring spirit for those in need of medical care; No medical experience necessary.

Rewards: More than you can imagine; Smiles, hugs and sharing; Knowing our patient has received quality healthcare from a qualified, caring staff.

Time Commitment: That is up to you.

You may opt for once a month or maybe twice a year. Bridge Clinic is open every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It is located on the 4th floor of SecondFirst Church. Focus is healthcare for adults without health insurance. Well over 1000 people have been served since the clinic opened. No payment or identification is required. If you are interested please contact Holly Beeman 815-964-7239.

FROM THE MODERATOR, SARAH REINOLD

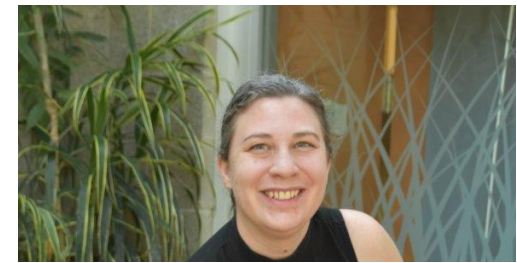
At our Annual Program Meeting in May, we voted in 41 people to work on the ministry teams and the governing system of our church. Some of these people have served in different capacities in the church for many years, while others accepted their very first position this spring. Some are from the Second Congregational side, some are from the First Presbyterian side, and some are truly SecondFirst members - people that joined after our churches united. This group of 41 combined with over 80 people that already served on ministry teams. What an exciting group of lay leaders we have to do God's work!

As I reflect on our new group of leaders, I think back on my own journey to the moderator position. It started two years ago when Bob Langford asked if I would consider serving in the three-year moderator track position. Although I didn't share it at the time, my first thought was, "It's nice to be asked... but NO WAY!" Instead, I promised Bob I would think it over. I spent a lot of time considering the offer. I talked to my family, solicited advice from past moderators, and prayed. I was touched (and relieved) by all the people who pledged to help me during my moderator journey, and I started to think, "MAYBE I can do this." Later, as I stood in the sanctuary as we voted for Pastor Becky to be our first called minister, I was excited about the future of our church. As the balloons dropped from the balcony, I thought, "I WANT to do this." So, here I am two years later. I have completed my on-job training and I'm ready to begin! I'm excited about this upcoming year and all of the possibilities that lie in front of us! If there is something you would like to discuss at any time during this year, please reach out to me. I'm available at 815-979-2190 or moderator@secondfirst.org.

LOVE ROCKFORD WRAP-UP

As you all know, April 29 was Love Rockford Day. We, the churches of Jeremiah Development, reached out to our neighbors near and far, providing love and services for those in need. The event went off without a hitch and was a huge success with over 400 hundred families served. People from all over Rockford obtained food, clothing and haircuts, connected with resources, and had a good time in the fellowship of others. SecondFirst was an integral part of the event, as food and clothing distribution and lunch happened right here. It was a hub of activity.

From the moment the idea of Love Rockford was presented to the Governing Council of SecondFirst until the last bag of leftover clothing was packed, this wonderful congregation was supportive in so many ways. Some offered their prayers, some donated financially and others worked till they were exhausted - each was integral to this mission. Thank you to the leaders, volunteers, donors, residents, church administrative councils, pastors, church staff, and to all who prayed for the success of Love Rockford.



Thank you to Holly Beeman (SecondFirst) and Jeannine Wang (Court Street) for leading the event.

NOTES FROM THE GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING OF APRIL 27

by Carolyn Greenlaw

Treasurer's Report revealed that both expenses and income are under budget. Income from Library Parking Lot project will begin in 2018. New projects being evaluated by Trustees are the Alarm system and the air-conditioning. Becky Erbe reported that the church has been approached by the Rockford Park District about housing the Therapeutic Teen Camp, serving youth ages 13-21. The program will run from June 12 to August 4 all day and includes lunch. Also, 3 work camps are scheduled for the summer. Pastor Rebecca reported that new folks are using our parking lot and making a donation for 10-12 car spaces. She also met at length with Sheriff Caruana about the proposed use of jail space for ICE. She has received quotes for incorporating our two existing baptismal fonts into one new font representing both of our churches. Marge Maynard moved that we approve the idea and refer to Trustees to investigate funding to move forward. Holly Hegge seconded, it was approved.

Sarah Reinold reported on the Nominating Team work. Each Chair was asked to reach out to ministry team members and inform them of time, date and location of first meeting. Holly Beeman reported on Love Rockford to take place April 29 to serve guests in need. Mission Team agreed to support Rockford Promise with a special offering on third Sunday in May. Bob Canfield reviewed By Law Changes.

Governing Council took part in a Leadership Exercise. Adjourned with prayer at 6:47. Full Minutes are available to be read in the church office.