

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church
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THE TOWER

Second Congregational UCC / First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace.

JANUARY 2018

A WORD FROM REVEREND REBECCA

Church, we have been federated for five years! Wow. When I was in initial talks with the search committee, they talked about the joining of the congregations like it was yesterday. At that time, it hadn't been that long. But now it has been five years! and we are still talking about it like it was yesterday. We tend to do that in life when things are really meaningful. We want to hold those times dear.

I hear about the actual Sunday when the two churches came together. I hear about that cold morning in late December 2012, when the two churches started their separate worship services. First Pres walked out of their sanctuary and Second Con came out to meet them, while Emmanuel Episcopal cheered from next door. I hear about the tears of joy and great anticipation of what was to come. I hear about how the choirs had on their own robes, and then took those off to reveal the new robes which made them one choir.

That was a great day! But what I hear doesn't stop there. I continue to hear about how grateful folks are to be together. How much more energy everyone has after the federation. I hear that federating was one of the best decisions either church ever made. Of course, as with any good work, the joining of the churches was not without hard work and painful decisions. But the result is a vibrant faithful congregation that is poised to energize downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace.

I hope you will join us as you are able on Sunday, January 21 to celebrate our five years together and our exciting future as a church.

Peace to you,
 Rebecca



Front page of the Rockford Register Star
 December 2012

Christmas Eve service



Join us for a special service of worship as we celebrate our two churches becoming one! Our new baptismal font will be unveiled and our new hymnals will be in the pews. Come for worship, special music, and birthday cake.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2018
 CELEBRATION BEGINS AT 10:00AM

5th Anniversary Celebration Sunday, January 21

As a part of the 5th anniversary celebration of our churches' federation, we invite you to share what the joining of our two churches means to you. You could share a favorite memory, tradition, or simply your thoughts for the future. You can mail this in to the office or drop it in the offering plate any of the next several Sundays. Questions? Contact: Kathi Ferrero kferrero55@hotmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER & DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

Primetime resumes on Wednesday, January 10!

“Inn of the Sixth Happiness” - January 10, 17, and 24

Join host Becky Erbe for the three part showing of the “Inn of the Sixth Happiness,” starring Ingrid Bergman. The movie tells the tale of Gladys Aylward, English parlor maid turned missionary to China. Based on the novel the “The Small Woman” about the true-life story of Gladys Aylward, this powerfully poignant film is inspiring entertainment from beginning to end. Show starts at 6:30 pm.

Wee Worship Resumes - January 14

Wee Worship will resume on Sunday, January 14 at 9:20 am. We will meet in Backstage Bethlehem located on the 3rd floor.

After Church Fun and Games - January 28

Join us on Sunday, January 28 after church for fun and games. Games are for all ages and skill levels. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Debbie in the office by Wednesday, January 24 if you plan on attending. We are also in need of helpers to assist with the games. Please contact Dyan if you are able to help. Any questions, please contact Dyan Lofgren at dyan.lofgren@secondfirst.org.



ENVELOPE GIVING FOR TRANSIT YOUTH BEGINNING JANUARY 7

Transit Youth Ministry will begin an envelope fund-raising project. There will be envelopes placed in the South Narthex with a dollar amount on it. Members of our congregation can make a donation by placing their name on the envelope and dollars in the envelope according to the amount indicated. Members will have an opportunity to donate every Sunday in January, as well as the first Sunday in February. Please place your envelope in the offering plate or place it in Courtney's mailbox in the office. All proceeds will benefit the Transit Mission Trip and special outings. Cash or checks will be accepted. Checks can be made out to SecondFirst Church. Questions? Contact courtney.jonsson@secondfirst.org.

CHRISTMAS FUND/CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING THANKS

On behalf of retired clergy and other church workers, thank your support of these offerings. The final amount raised is not in yet, but will be split proportionally between the UCC and PCUSA out of the gratitude for the efforts of those who have nurtured our faith over the past years. If you would still like to contribute, write a check and put “Christmas/Joy” in the memo line.

Join the SecondFirst Green Team

SecondFirst is starting a green team to become an Earth Care Congregation (a program of the PCUSA). We will work together to help our congregation be more green, living into how God calls us to love creation. If you are interested in joining the team or want more information. Contact: Linda Mohaupt at 815-509-5853 or mommoh54@gmail.com.

Snow Camp 2018

We will be trekking up to Silver Birch Ranch on January 5-7. We are so blessed that Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church will be joining us for the second year in a row! If your child is in fourth grade through twelfth grade, they are more than welcome to join us. The cost is \$125 per student. Please register by December 10th. Please contact Courtney for more information at courtney.jonsson@secondfirst.org.



Mark your calendars: Soup Kitchen 2018 Dates

We have our dates for serving lunch at the Jubilee Center during the upcoming year. They are: January 13, March 10, May 26, July 7, September 15, and November 3. We will be hoping to put together a team of about 10 persons for each date. You can be a part of the group one time or every time or any number of times in between. Jean Herro is organizing the January date, so let her know if you can work with her to provide a hot lunch on what will surely be a cold Saturday. Contact: Marge Maynard mtm.home@me.com



FROM THE MODERATOR, SARAH REINOLD

As we approach the 5th Anniversary of the federation of Second Congregational Church and First Presbyterian Church, I think back to that January morning when the two congregations met at the corner of Church and Park streets. If you were a member of either church five years ago, I suspect you have your own memories of the event—maybe the tears, perhaps the hugs, possibly the cold. As I think back to that day, I remember how I got the directions wrong. Instead of meeting at the crossroads during the middle of the church services, I thought we were all supposed to meet at First Presbyterian and walk together to Second Congregation. However, when I walked in to First Pres, I did not see any of my familiar Second Con friends. It was then I thought I might have made a mistake. My fears were confirmed when I talked to usher Rick Gallegos. But it was what Rick said next that I will remember most from that day. Instead of saying goodbye after discovering my mistake, Rick graciously welcomed me and invited me to stay and join in First Presbyterian’s worship service. In the last five years, I have become friends with many more of the First Presbyterian members, I have seen members of our federated churches work together, and I have been proud of what we have accomplished together. I am excited to celebrate our five year anniversary in church on Sunday, January 21st and hope to see you there!

NOTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 16 GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING

The November meeting began by approving the October minutes and presenting the church report. The treasurer stated that although contributions are coming in, we are still over budget primarily due to unforeseen building expenses. Additional revenue is starting to come in from parking lot spots that are being rented by local businesses.

In new business, the Music Ministry Team recommended purchasing new hymnals for our sanctuary. Visitors (especially during funerals) are confused by the two hymnals in the pews. Governing Council approved the purchase of 320 hymnals at \$20 each. Various funding sources will be researched. Next, Governing Council also approved a motion to allot \$200 from Governing Council’s New Initiative Fund to fund a dinner that will be offered in conjunction with the Christmas bell concert. Funds raised during the concert and dinner will benefit Carpenter’s Place. Finally, Governing Council discussed our Building Manager position. Our current building manager will retire on December 1 after seven years of service. His retirement will be recognized on Sunday, December 3. We will post the position and rehire.

In unfinished business, the 5th Anniversary of the federation of Second Congregational Church and First Presbyterian Church will be recognized in January. A planning committee has been established to decide how best to celebrate the anniversary. Then Governing Council members broke into small groups to discuss the four strategies in our 3-5 year strategic plan. These strategies were also discussed with the congregation on November 5 and 12. Members from all Ministry Teams will be invited to fill in the goals for the strategies in January. Finally, Governing Council received an update on the Stewardship Campaign. The next meeting of Governing Council will be Thursday, January 25 at 5:30 in the 4th floor meeting room. We will talk about the budget. Everyone is welcome to attend.

COOKIE WALK THANK YOU!

by Mary Young

Congratulations, Church on a successful Cookie Walk. Many of you helped us set up, baked cookies, made peanut brittle, casseroles, music, sold cookies, opened doors, danced to the tunes, and washed dishes.

Everyone appeared to be having a good time. There were folks sharing fellowship over a big lunch and those who dashed in on a lunch break for a plate of cookies. Come come in to say “thank you” SecondFirst for the help you’ve given people in downtown Rockford.

Thanks Church for doing such a great job.



PRAIRIE ASSOCIATION OF THE ILLINOIS CONFERENCE UCC FALL MEETING RECAP

The Prairie Association of the Illinois Conference United Church Of Christ fall meeting, November 4th at Rollo Congregational Church UCC, Earlville, was the first in a series of 4 sessions on the Four Fold Path for Nurturing, Flourishing Communities. Leadership is from Advocate Health Care, Chicago. Attending the meeting were Pastor Rebecca, Audrey & Linda Miller and Bob & Sue Saunders. The next Prairie Association IL Conf. of the UCC will be Saturday, April 28, 2018.

JANUARY CALENDAR

Monday, January 1, 2018

New Year's Day Office closed

Tuesday, January 2, 2018

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
No Thrift Shop
11:30 AM – Walkers in gym

Wednesday, January 3, 2018

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
No Membership Ministry
No Prime Time

Thursday, January 4, 2018

9:30 AM - Carillons
9:30 AM - Deaconesses
9:30 AM- Free Showers
11:30 AM – Walkers in gym
12:00 PM – Spanish Class
No Bellcantos
No Choir

Friday, January 5, 2018

Transit departs for Snow Camp

Saturday, January 6, 2018

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, January 7, 2018

Communion
9:00 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
2:00 PM - Transit returns from Snow Camp
3:00 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen
Drop In center

Monday, January 8, 2018

9:30 AM – Free Showers
5:00 PM – Deacons Ministry Team
6:00 PM- Adult Education Ministry Team

Tuesday January 9, 2018

8:00 AM – Men's Fellowship
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
11:30 AM – Walkers in gym
6:00 PM – DVT

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Prime Time Returns
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
5:00 PM - Trustees
5:30 PM – Prime time
6:30 PM – Movie

Thursday, January 11, 2018

9:30 PM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free Showers

11:30 AM – Walkers in gym
12:00 PM - Spanish Class
3:00 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen
Drop In center
6:00 PM - Bellcanto
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, January 12, 2018

1:00 PM – Horizons Bible Study

Saturday, January 13, 2018

9:00 AM – Faithful Desegregation Meeting
10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic
10:30 AM – Soup Kitchen
12:00 PM – 100 men basketball

Sunday, January 14, 2018

9:00 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
9:20 AM - Wee Worship
9:20 AM - Teen Worship
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
No Family Christian Education
Ministry Team
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop
3:00 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen
Drop In center

Monday, January 15, 2018

9:30 AM – Free Showers

Tuesday January 16, 2018

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
11:30 AM – Walkers in gym
5:30 PM – Missions Ministry

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
1:00 PM – Executive Committee
5:30 PM – Prime Time

Thursday, January 18, 2018

9:30 AM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free Showers
11:30 AM – Walkers in gym
12:00 PM – Spanish Class
3:00 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen
Drop In center

Friday, January 19, 2018

6:00 PM – Bellcanto
6:15 PM – ARC Rec Night
7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, January 19, 2018

No scheduled activities

Saturday, January 20, 2018

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, January 21, 2018

5th Anniversary Celebration
9:00 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
11:15 AM – Fellowship
Ministry Team
11:15 AM – Music Ministry
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

Monday, January 22, 2018

9:30 AM – Free Showers
5:00 PM – Love Rockford
Meeting

Tuesday, January 23, 2018

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer
Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
11:30 AM – Walkers in gym

Wednesday, January 24, 2018

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
5:30 PM – Prime Time

Thursday, January 25, 2018

9:30 AM - Free showers
9:30 AM - Carillons
11:30 AM – Walkers in gym
12:00 PM – Spanish Class

Friday, January 26, 2018

3:00 PM – Just Breathe 815
Teen Drop In center
6:00 PM- Strategic Planning

Saturday, January 27, 2018

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, January 28, 2018

Carillons
9:00 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
11:30AM – Family Fun and Games

Monday, January 29, 2018

9:30 AM – Free Showers

Tuesday January 30, 2018

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer
Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
11:30 AM – Walkers in gym
6:00 PM – Membership
Ministry Team

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
5:30 PM – Prime Time

Ministry Teams Mtg

6:00 PM - Bellcanto

7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, January 26, 2018

No scheduled activities

Saturday, January 27, 2018

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, January 28, 2018

Carillons
9:00 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
11:30AM – Family Fun and Games

Monday, January 29, 2018

9:30 AM – Free Showers

Tuesday January 30, 2018

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer
Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
11:30 AM – Walkers in gym
6:00 PM – Membership
Ministry Team

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
5:30 PM – Prime Time

SAVE THE DATES

Feb 11 Budget and Foundation Meeting

Feb 14 Ash Wednesday

Feb 25 Family Bowling

March 10 Corned Beef Dinner

March 25 Palm Sunday

March 29 Maundy Thursday

March 30 Good Friday

April 1 Easter

April 28 Love Rockford

April 29 Annual Program Meeting

May 6 Ring in Spring

May 6 New Member Class

May 19 Pilgrim Park Cleanup

June 1 Governing Council Retreat

June 3 Commissioning of Leaders

June 8 UCC Conference Annual Celebration

June 30 Potluck and Fireworks at Larsons

YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS MUSIC AFTER CHRISTMAS!

by Paul Laprade, Director of Music

After hearing guitar, harp, strings, percussion, choirs, and piano on Christmas Eve, one might wonder what else is musically in store for services at SecondFirst church. The end of December brings Julie Ramirez Cook (guitar), Vanessa Nieva (soprano), and Valerie Blair in a New Year's Eve service of new music for the season. Epiphany Jazz returns on January 7 with the SecondFirst Incidental Jazz Band, featuring Ken and Tom Stein on sax and piano, Guy Fiorenza on bass, and Paul on jazz guitar! The Woodwork Choir returns on January 14, and is joined by Elizabeth Leary and Bill Zartman, performing music by Brahms. On the 21, we will celebrate the anniversary of our Confederation by singing hymns that are dear to us, and introducing our new hymnals! The Carillons bring ringing joy back on the 29 of January, and February resounds with new and wonderful works presented by the Sanctuary Choir. Why do we have such diverse music? We are a cloud of witnesses, a gathering of many people, many parts, (many musical preferences and experiences), and one body.

ABOUT HYMNALS - ANSWERS TO A FEW QUESTIONS

by Paul Laprade, Director of Music

Our confederation's fifth year together will be celebrated on January 21. Many of us may recall that on the day we joined together, the members of the choirs of our churches dressed in their traditional UCC and Presbyterian robes, shedding these as soon as we sang together in the choir loft, and revealing our new (and current) red choir robes. As part of this celebration, we will 'switch out' our individual blue Presbyterian and blue UCC hymnals in a similar fashion; we will shed the old blue and embrace new red hymnals.

Since the day the music ministry team selected and supported the choice of a new hymnal, several congregants have had questions about what effect this may have on our music. I would like to offer the following answers to some of the most commonly voiced questions we have received:

Q: Will we lose our favorite hymns?

No. This hymnal shares over 50% of its content with both of our current hymnals. Although this does not mean that all our favorite hymns are found in it, we have (since 2012) paid for a licensing agreement which provides for legal copying of music for use in services. (Choir and bell music copying are not covered under the contract.) No hymnal is perfect, and we will gradually compile a list of those works we miss and wish to sing and perform more regularly so as to maintain the canon of works that define us musically.

Q: Isn't the new hymnal a Presbyterian hymnal?

Although the Presbyterian Church initiated the creation of the "Glory to God" hymnal, the version we have purchased is the "Ecumenical" version. It selects music from a very wide base of musical traditions.

Q: What advantages does a new hymnal present?

First, we are using one, not two hymnals; some visitors have been confused about which hymnals we are using despite the fact that we have consistently copied hymns from the Presbyterian hymnal (due to the number of hymnals we have: 115) and used the Chalice Hymnal as a default due to the number of copies we have (243). Second, the type is clearer, due to the development and use of a new music font. Third, we will have LARGE PRINT editions available (I purchased ten!) Fourth, new hymnals have new supporting documents which are not available for older editions (accompaniment books, CDs, projection resources when needed, etc.) Although many other points could be offered, is it good to point out that this hymnal has been very highly praised both within the liturgical community and among professional musical circles.

Q: What will happen to the old hymnals?

We can offer copies to our church members. Several will be kept as reference copies and as musical resources. Yet, one of the most exciting opportunities come from the many churches in the South who have lost their choral and hymn libraries due to hurricanes in the past year; these churches are looking for resources, and we can offer them a way to bring hymnody back into their worship (the professional choral community has been very active in keeping track of these needs). I will request an updated list of such churches when we are ready to mail our own hymnals to them.

Selecting a unified hymnal was one of the goals I always held for my tenure at SecondFirst. Our previous hymnals are over 35 years old, and while they are wonderful in their own right, renewal is also important. On behalf of the music ministry committee, I wish to thank you for your continued support as we move forward and onward.

SPOTLIGHT: TRUSTEES

The Trustee Ministry team is responsible for the financial and business affairs of the church. Trustees are also responsible for the maintenance of the physical building and the contents of the building. The Trustee Team reports to governing council. The Trustee Team also has responsibility for developing the annual budget and presenting the budget to the congregation for approval.

During the past year the church has experienced two unexpected expenses. The air conditioning for the sanctuary needed extensive repairs and the alarm system was damaged during a spring storm. Due to these expenses the trustees have postponed some minor repair issues to next fiscal year. This is a busy time of year for the trustees as we close out one fiscal year and budget for the next.

SPOTLIGHT: MUSIC MINISTRY



The Music Ministry Team has had a busy year, with several exciting projects still on the horizon. This past spring, we hosted the fabulous Westminster Bell choir, housing all their students. We also assisted in hosting some of the students from Bradley University choir, who performed at Court Street Methodist. Thanks to generous support from the Memorials Team, as well as MMT consolidating several small old funds, we now have raised nearly \$7,000.00 toward a major refurbishing of the famous 2nd Congregational White Chapel Hand bells, hopefully to be done over next summer, and ready for the fall 2018 season. Speaking of Bells, all the bell groups presented a concert in December which was followed by a dinner made by the Deaconesses. The event honored Carpenter's place. Finally, the Music Team recommended a new hymnal, approved by Governing Council, to celebrate the 5 year Federation anniversary. Parishioners had the chance to donate hymnals in honor of loved ones.

SECONDFIRST MISSION WORK MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by Karen Olson

As an employee of the Rockford Public Schools, I am fortunate to have opportunities to see some of our mission programs at work. I've had the privilege of handing an apple to a hungry child at Haskell who had missed breakfast. I've gotten to see (and hear) those same students wearing their boots at recess. Recently I've been working at Kennedy Middle School. One student, who was not feeling well, was waiting in the nurse's office for her ride home. She was wearing a Stroll on State stocking cap and I asked her if she had gone. She mentioned that she was a volunteer who had worked as Santa's elf. I questioned how she became a volunteer, was it for school or her church? "No, I'm in a group called KFact." "Oh, I love KFact" I responded. She was amazed that I knew about the group. I told her I attended SecondFirst and that their group had helped us out with the "Thriller" dance at the Trunk or Treat. I told her how Ms. Williams had come to speak to us and how proud we were of KFact's accomplishments. I mentioned that the church had sponsored a bus so the girls could attend a college fair in Chicago. Her eyes lit up, she had gone on this trip and found out about colleges that she had never heard of. "I have a list of ten colleges at home that want me. Can you believe that, they WANT ME!" A smile came across her face and you could just feel the pride in her voice. Indeed, our mission ministry makes a difference.

STEWARDSHIP 2018

As this New Year begins your Stewardship Committee thanks, once again, our members and friends who have made their financial commitment to the 2018 budget of our congregation. They have assured another year of joy-filled service in Christ's precious name to one another and the world around us. We invite you who have not yet pledged to join them as you are able in supporting our dedicated staff in their ministry to us and our neighbors.

HASKELL BOOTS PROGRAM UPDATE

The Mission Ministry Team provided over 250 pairs of boots for the children of Haskell Academy. Many thanks to those who volunteered their time unpacking, sorting and delivering the boots. Special thanks to Karen Olson for purchasing the boots and coordinating our efforts. While we raised sufficient funds to pay for all the boots this year, if you'd like to donate and help start the fund for next year, we will gratefully accept your gift!



WANTED: A PASSIONATE PERSON

The Mission Team is looking for 1-2 persons who are passionate about the Rock River Valley Food Pantry. Your area: delivering collected food to the pantry on an as-needed basis. Might this be you? Contact: Marge Maynard at mtm.home@me.com

OUR MISSION GIVING BLESSED MANY ONCE AGAIN

The Mission Ministry Team decided to distribute the remainder of our mission dollars to three deserving organizations:

KFACT: An organization mentoring girls from 6th grade through post-secondary option. With over 200 high-risk girls in the program, they have a 100% graduation rate from high school.

Just Breathe 815: A new organization bringing clothes and connections to homeless teens in Winnebago and Boone Counties. They recently opened a teen drop-in center in our building.

Remedies Renewing Lives: A shelter and support system for women, men and children suffering from domestic violence and abuse.

FAITH DESEGREGATION: TRAINING TO DISMANTLE WHITE SUPREMACY



Rev. Rebecca, Andy Newgren and Rev. Matthew Johnson of the Unitarian Universalist Church are joining with other faith leaders in the area to facilitate Faith Desegregation: Training to Dismantle White Supremacy. Intended for faith communities to begin to dialog about race and the system of white privilege, this is a series of four Saturdays mornings to engage our faith community to act toward justice.

What?

A four-session program for leaders and teams from congregations to develop their understanding and skills to do effective intercultural racial justice ministry in our metropolitan area. Participants will learn common language and concepts about racism, power, intercultural competence, equity, and solidarity so that their congregations can be more affective in building the beloved community in our world.

Who?

Please join for conversation and training with Father David Beauvais (Catholic Priest, Retired), Rev. Ken Board (Pilgrim Baptist), Pastor Tito Cevallos (Shalom Comunidad de Paz UCC), Rev. Edward Copeland (New Zion Baptist Church), Rev. Matthew Johnson (Unitarian Universalist Rockford, co-lead), Ann Rundall (Baha'is of Rockford), Rev. Gary Schwerin (Bridge Ministries) and Rev. Rebecca White Newgren and Andy Newgren (SecondFirst Church, co-leads). Teams from churches from around the region are forming to participate in this training, which begins Saturday, January 13.. If you are interested in being on SecondFirst's team, please contact Rev. Rebecca for more information.

HAPPY RETIREMENT KURT RIPLINGER!

On Sunday, December 3, our church sent Kurt Riplinger, our building manager, off into his retirement. Kurt has taken care of our church as a staff member for the last seven years, and as a volunteer for many years before that. He has seen to the maintenance of our big building, kept the yard tidy, and kept the sidewalks clear of snow. He also took our church's mission outside as he got to know the people who live in our neighborhood. His warm smile and joking nature have welcomed many of us as we arrived at church. We wish him lots of fun, relaxation, and fishing as he enters his retirement.

