

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church
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Organization US
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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.

FEBRUARY 2018

A WORD FROM REVEREND REBECCA

Church, we have so much to celebrate! On January 13, close to 100 people from 14 churches and organizations (including the mayor, Tom McNamara and Transform Rockford, Mike Schablaske) filled our dining room for Faithful Desegregation, a four-part series on race and integrating Rockford led by yours truly, Andy Newgren and Rev. Matthew Johnson of the Unitarian Church.

On January 20, we hosted the end of the women's march where hundreds of men, women and children packed the gym after marching from City Market across the river. We heard speeches from a newly naturalized citizen, a teacher and her young daughter, a sexual assault survivor, a transgendered women, a woman advocating for the environment and other community leaders. People were impressed with our facilities and our hospitality...enough that we saw a few in worship the next day.

On January 21, the celebration of the 5th anniversary of the SecondFirst federation was alive and exciting. We had balloons, the histories of our congregations, thank-you notes from the kids at Haskell school for the boots, special music, new name tags, commemorative pins, and of course cake! We dedicated our new hymnals and our new baptismal font. It was a great celebration.

I am grateful for all the people who pulled off these big events. Good work, church! We are glorifying God with our time, talents and treasures...and having a good time while doing it.

Peace to you!

Rebecca

OUR LENTEN THEME IS...JOY UNCOVERED

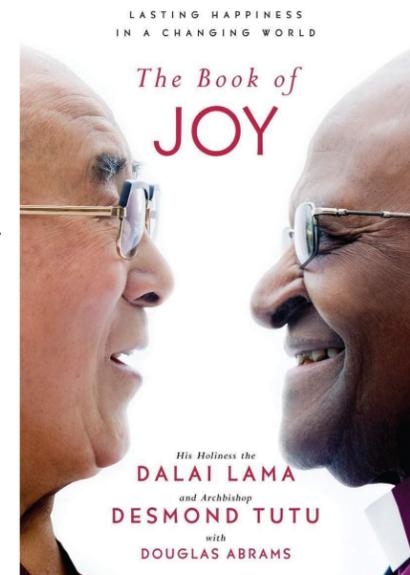
Traditionally Lent is a time of introspection and somber reflection on the death of Jesus. That introspection is important and leads to crucial repentance and a turning toward God. BUT it does not have to be somber! When we peel off the layers of stress and worry, we reveal God-given joy in our lives and in our communities. Join us for our Lenten practice this year and find the joy that God provides. Our Wednesday evening worship experience will focus on *The Book of Joy* featuring the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Soup dinner 6:00 pm in the Dining Room (doors open 5:30 pm)

Worship Learning Experience 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

SECONDFIRST CHURCH HOSTS END OF WOMEN'S MARCH & FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

SecondFirst Church was honored to host the end of the Women's March on January 20 and the Fifth Anniversary celebration of the joining of our two churches on January 21. Check out our Facebook page to see the media coverage of the events.



Snow Camp 2018



UPCOMING EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER & DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

Knockerball at SecondFirst Friday, February 16, 6:30 pm

Second Annual Knockerball Battle continues. Come to the gym to enjoy dinner before clobbering your peers. Dinner will be served at 6:00 pm and Knockerball will be played from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm. Friends are encouraged to join us! Note: A waiver MUST be filled out in order to participate in this event. Waivers can be found in Courtney's mailbox in the church office. Or you can go to <http://tinyurl.com/kbonline> to fill it out electronically. RSVP to Courtney by Wednesday, February 14. Questions? Contact courtney.jonsson@secondfirst.org

All Church Bowling Sunday, February 25

Join us for a fun filled afternoon of bowling at Don Carter Lanes. Check-in starts at 12:30 pm and bowling starts at 1:00 pm. Cost is \$5.00 per bowler and includes 2 hours of bowling and shoe rental. Please RSVP to Debbie by Wednesday, February 21st (after February 21st the price increases to \$11.00 per bowler). Questions? Contact: Dyan Lofgren dyan.lofgren@secondfirst.org.

Our Old Hymnals

If you are interested in taking a copy of one of our old hymnals that has a dedication meaningful to you, the deadline to get the hymnal is February 11. You can find the hymnals in the old coat closet near the back of the Sanctuary. Please take only the hymnal that is meaningful to you.

UNDERSTANDING HAITI: LOOKING AT HAITI THROUGH FILM

Wednesday, February 7, 6:30 pm
4th Floor Chapel

The process to fully understand Haiti may be a long one but that is all the more reason to dig in. From the Western hemisphere's first free black nation and first to abolish slavery to becoming the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, this is a place that warrants our attention. Building on the fall series that investigated poverty including insight from the Casimir family, this evening will pull clips from a variety of films to better shape our understanding and inform our questions. Questions? Contact: Carolyn Greenlaw csgreen52@aol.com

BUDGET AND FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 11

This year we will hold the Foundation meeting on the same day as the annual budget meeting, so we can get a full financial picture on the same day. Please join together to approve the 2018 budget and hear updates from the Foundation.

Soup is on for Wednesday Nights

Beginning Wednesday February 14, and all through Lent, we will be serving homemade soups and breads for Wednesday evening meals. We are looking for people that would be willing to make soups. If you are interested call Arlene Noel at 815-398-6518.

Governing Council February 22

Governing Council did not meet in December. We will be meeting February 22 at 5:30 pm on the fourth floor at our church. All are welcome!

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 are hoping to put together teams of about 10 people 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

This winter I had the chance to be part of the team that delivered 250 pairs of boots organized and ready for distribution to Haskell Academy. Before we even arrived at church on that December morning, countless hours had gone into communicating with the teachers at Haskell to have an accurate size and boot count, buying the boots, and collecting donations for the project.

When I arrived, the boot sorting process was underway. We pulled the boots out of the boxes they came in, took the plastic bags off each pair, and sorted them into groups by size. Soon, a pile of discarded boxes and bags piled up and began to impede the process. Almost as quickly, someone took out a box cutter and began breaking down and clearing the cardboard for recycling. Then as we were looking at the growing amount of plastic, another person volunteered to bring the bags to the grocery store for recycling. The packaging taken care of, we continued to sort the boots by size and gender.

After the boots were sorted, we began to pair the boots with their new owners. While one helper called out the size of the boots needed, another person retrieved the boots, and a third person tied a tag with the new owner's name around the pair of boots with a ribbon. After a little while of doing this, a backlog of boots formed on the table. The problem? It took longer to cut the ribbon and tie the tag than to fetch the boots. Another person soon took it upon herself to fix this problem; she cut lengths of ribbon and supplied them to the sorting tables. The problem was solved, and the backlog dissipated. Quickly the boots were bagged up and ready to be delivered to Haskell.

When I later reflected on the day, I was proud not only that we were able to get the boots to Haskell School, but that we accomplished it in such a cooperative manner. While the task would have been overwhelming for a single person, it went quickly and enjoyably with a larger team. There were jobs for each of us to do that fit our skills and interests. Together these individual jobs accomplished the project. SecondFirst Church also functions this way. Each person is able to combine his or her skills with those of the other members. With this approach, it is amazing what we have been able to accomplish both inside and outside of our church walls.



FEEL THE RHYTHM, FEEL THE RHYME

Our annual trek to Silver Birch Ranch for Snow Camp was a success! We took Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church with us for the second year in a row. The focus of Snow Camp was "Embracing the Difference." The Disney movie "Cool Runnings" is about a bobsled team out of Jamaica that wants to become an Olympic team. Quickly, the team figures out that they have a disadvantage and that the other Olympians are not their friends. Clips from the movie were used to display different values to the students. We learned about self-perception, diversity, privilege, and empathy. Each student found something in the lessons that struck a chord with them, which makes the trip worthwhile. Of course we went tubing, cross country skied and even took the leap of faith. Thank you to all of the parents for allowing your student to step out of their comfort zone in order to attend Snow Camp. Thank you to the congregation for all of your prayers and kind words as we embarked on this journey for another year. This is always an amazing experience and we are blessed to be able to do this for our students.

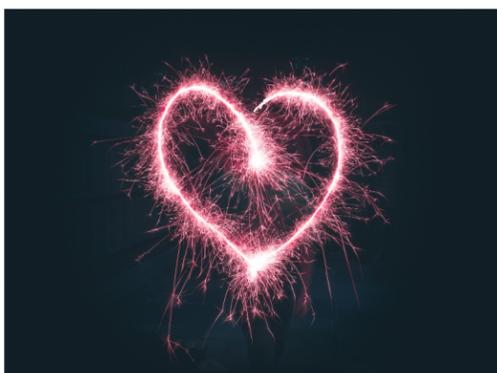


DEAR FRIENDS OF ROCKFORD'S CROP HUNGER WALK

The Greater Rock Valley Pantry Coalition was presented a check today for \$6,445.09. This is 25% of the funds you helped raise last October during the CROP Hunger Walk. Ten pantries that currently make up the Coalition will receive an equal portion of the check.

Please accept their thanks for the job you and your Walkers did last fall and pass this on to them. Remind them their help is needed again in the 2018 Hunger Walk which is Sunday, October 21.

David Jones & Stanley Campbell



Join us for a special Ash Wednesday Service on Valentine's Day

Soup dinner 6:00 pm (doors open at 5:30)

Worship 6:30 pm

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Thursday, February 1, 2018

9:30 AM - Carillons
 9:30 AM - Deaconesses
 9:30 AM - Free Showers
 11:15 AM - Peanut Bells
 11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
 12:00 PM - Spanish Class
 4:30 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In center
 6:00 PM - Bellcantos
 7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, February 2, 2018

No scheduled activities

Saturday, February 3, 2018

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, February 4, 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 - Peanut Bells
 11:15 AM - Fair For All Shop
 3:00 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In center

Monday, February 5, 2018

9:30 AM - Free Showers
 5:30 - Love Rockford meeting

Tuesday February 6, 2018

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

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
 6:30 PM - Looking at Haiti Through Film
 No Prime Time

Thursday, February 8, 2018

9:30 PM - Carillons
 9:30 AM - Free Showers
 11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
 12:00 PM - Spanish Class
 4:30 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In center
 5:30 PM - JD Board Meeting
 6:00 PM - Bellcanto
 7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, February 9, 2018

1:00 PM - Horizons Bible Study

Saturday, February 10, 2018

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic
 10:30 AM - Soup Kitchen

Sunday, February 11, 2018

Budget and Foundation Meeting
 9:00 AM - Koffee Klass
 No Wee Worship
 No Teen Worship
 9:30 AM - Peanut Bells
 10:00 AM - Worship Service
 10:20 AM - Sunday School
 11:30 AM - Pasta Luncheon
 11:30 AM - Christian Education Ministry Team
 11:15 AM - Fair For All Shop
 3:00 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In center

Monday, February 12, 2018

9:30 AM - Free Showers
 5:00 PM - Deacons
 6:00 PM - Adult Christian Ed

Tuesday February 13, 2018

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

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
 5:00 PM - Trustees
 5:30 PM - Coffee and Fellowship
 5:30 PM - Tower Ringers
 6:00 PM - Soup Dinner
 6:30 PM - Ash Wednesday Service

Thursday, February 15, 2018

9:30 AM - Carillons
 9:30 AM - Free Showers
 11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
 12:00 PM - Spanish Class
 6:00 PM - Bellcanto
 6:00 - ARC Open Gym
 7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, February 16, 2018

6:00 PM - Knockerball Rec Night

Saturday, February 17,

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, February 18, 2018

9:00 AM - Koffee Klass
 9:30 AM - Mission Trip Parents Meeting
 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
 3:00 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In center

Monday, February 19, 2018

9:30 AM - Free Showers

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

7:00 AM - Men's Prayer Breakfast
 9:00 AM - Thrift Shop
 11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
 1:00 PM - Executive Committee
 5:30 PM - Missions Ministry Team
 7:00 PM - Creation Justice Team

Wednesday, February 21,

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

Thursday, February 22

9:30 AM - Free showers
 9:30 AM - Carillons
 11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
 12:00 PM - Spanish Class
 4:30 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In center

5:30 PM - Governing Council
 6:00 PM - Bellcanto
 7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, February 23, 2018

No scheduled activities

Saturday, February 24

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, February 25, 2018

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
 12:30 PM - All Church Bowling at Don Carter Lanes
 3:00 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In center

Monday, February 26, 2018

9:30 AM - Free Showers

Tuesday February 27, 2018

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

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

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

MUSICALLY MOVING INTO LENT

by Paul Laprade, Director of Music

January featured the inimitable piano and organ stylings of Valerie Blair, moved to a Jazz Epiphany, held a moment with the Woodwork Choir, heard stunning solos from Dorothy Paige Turner and Elizabeth LeGrande O'Leary, and celebrated the return of the Sanctuary Choir and the Carillons. And now, we musically continue the celebration of the fifth year of our confederation with a new hymnal to support our congregational singing. It has been an eventful month!

February begins the move toward Lenten music with the Sanctuary Choir. Craig Courtney's "Who But the Lord?" is one of the most stirring of the new compositions premiered last year at choral reading sessions. Two classics, "How Amiable" by Vaughan Williams, and "The Last Words of David" by Randall Thompson will also grace our ears. Bell Sunday returns this month, and we will all enjoy a special appearance by Diana Fry, who will sing a solo with the Sanctuary Choir!

Music is an important part of our spiritual experience at SecondFirst. Expressing praise to the Lord through music--whether it is playing an instrument, singing, or listening thoughtfully--is yet another way we may connect to the Creator, for it is through God's hand that our heads, voices, and ears join to create a joyful noise.

NEW HYMNALS

In order to lessen the confusion of two blue hymnals from two different churches, we now have new hymnals! We are donating our old hymnals to churches in the South whose buildings were damaged by storms. If you would like to have a hymnal that was donated to or by your family, please call Debbie in the office by February 11.

OUR NEW BAPTISMAL FONT

Check out our new font! The base was created by Southern Wisconsin artist Will Schueler out of the wood from the old Second Con and First Pres fonts symbolizing our coming together as one church. The glass bowl was handcrafted by Higgins Glass in Riverside, Illinois to remind us of the water of our own baptisms. Thank you to the First Pres endowment for making this happen.



SAVE THE DATES

March 17 - 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

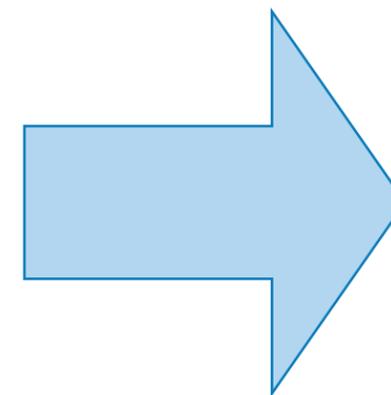
May 19 - Pilgrim Park Cleanup

June 1 - Governing Council Retreat

June 3 - Commissioning of Leaders

June 8 - UCC Conference Annual Celebration

June 30 - Potluck and Fireworks at Larsons



STEWARDSHIP CELEBRATES FIRST FIVE YEARS

On January 21st your Stewardship Committee joined members and friends of SecondFirst Church in celebrating the fifth anniversary of federation between two historic Rockford congregations. It was a joyful reminder of recent accomplishments that have continued a combined three hundred years of ministry in the name of Jesus. This long history is due to the faithful stewardship of time, talent and treasure by hundreds of its members and friends, past and present.



The Committee thanks you, once again, who made financial commitments to the 2018 budget. You 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. Please celebrate the fifth anniversary of SecondFirst Church with others who rejoice that God has blessed our federation. Join them in continued support with your time, talent and treasure.



JUST BREATHE815 NEWS

Just Breathe 815 next distribution event will be February 24, 2018 at Northwest Community Center. March 18 2018 we will have our first Volunteer appreciation Fiesta Luncheon in the dining room at the church.

MEMBERSHIP MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT

Ever wonder, "What does the Membership Ministry Team do?", "What are they about?" Well, our hope for you is that after reading this you are intrigued and would like to be a part of the Church in a new way or just be more familiar with the happenings here at SecondFirst Church.

- We welcome visitors and hold new member classes. We like to make sure they are led in the direction that will engage them within the community and our Church life.
- Marketing and Media relating to the Church is handled by our Team. For instance, we posted an ad about our Christmas Eve service in the Northwest Quarterly recently published. Yes! That was us. Welcome Walkers on Tuesdays in the winter – Yes! that was us. The new pew cards and tri-fold pamphlets about our Church are out and available for visitors. That was us also!
- Most recently you may have noticed the new interior signs and exterior signs with our new logo on them along with new name tags for all to wear with pride.

We do our best as a Team to be welcoming to all people and to share God's grace with our friends and neighbors.



Neighborhood Numbers (as of Jan. 24)

Showers-14

Clothing needs- 4

Diapers-3

Food help-2

Hand and foot warmers- too many to count

LOVE ROCKFORD 2018

Once again this year our church will be participating in Love Rockford on Saturday, April 28. There will be plenty of opportunities for you to help out. If you would like to volunteer for the Free lunch or Foodbank truck please contact Becky Erbe @ 815-963- 8431. If you would like to volunteer in general contact Melissa Ridgeway @ 224-715- 5602.

2018 KOFFEE KLASS LENTEN SERIES, LENT WITH JOHN

As the narrative lectionary leads us through the Gospel of John, Koffee Klass will closely examine those stories as a means to deepen our Lenten reflection. From the raising of Lazarus to the condemnation of Jesus by Pilot, this series will grant space to explore well known texts.

- February 18 - John 11:1-44 Raising Lazarus, Jesus as the resurrection and life.
- March 4 - John 18:12-27 Jesus' trial before Annas, Peter's denial.
- March 11 - John 18:28-40 My kingdom is not from this world.
- March 18 - John 19:1-16a Jesus is condemned, they have no king but Caesar.

All sessions meet in the fourth floor chapel at 9:00 am. Questions? Contact: andy.newgren@secondfirst.org

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



2018 WOMEN'S MARCH AT SECONDFIRST

