

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church
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www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch

Non Profit
Organization US
Postage PAID
Permit No. 3734
Rockford, Illinois



THE TOWER

Second Congregational UCC / First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace.

MARCH 2018

A WORD FROM REVEREND REBECCA

Church,

I'm excited to be studying The Book of Joy with the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu in different ways. Here is a snippet from the Sermon on the first Sunday in Lent about the root of fear:

...the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu explain that the separation we put between ourselves and others is the root of fear, stress and anxiety. Because we have lost the sense of connection with our neighbors and the rest of the world, we feel stressed and fearful. In their week-long conversation on joy, the Dalai Lama mentioned a couple times about how as a young man he would get very nervous to speak to groups of people. ...because he did not see himself as the same as the people in the audience. ... Now he knows and believes that everyone is a human being just like him. That they are the same, he is not special, just another person like everyone else.

The Archbishop, who created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that brought peace and healing to all of South Africa after Apartheid, chimed in to agree, "It does help quite a lot to see yourself as a part of a greater whole."

And the Jewish interviewer and author summarized: "Once again, the path of joy was connection and the path of sorrow was separation. When we see others as separate, they become a threat. When we see others as part of us, as connected, as interdependent, then there is no challenge we cannot face—together."

May we see the humanity of everyone around us first and recognize that we are all on this journey of life together. Please join us for Wednesday worship and study experience or Thursday mindfulness meditations.

Peace,

Rebecca



Setting the cross for Lent during Ash Wednesday worship.



Your pastors took ashes to the streets.



MINDFULNESS MEDITATIONS THURSDAYS

Jeanne Vargas of NW Illinois Center for Mindfulness will lead us in midday calming and introspective exercises. While Mindfulness is a non-religious tool, it helps us quiet our minds and open our hearts so that we can hear God's still, small voice. Join us in the sanctuary at 12:10 pm on Thursdays.



WEDNESDAY WORSHIP AND STUDY EXPERIENCE

Join together for Wednesday night worship and study with The Book of Joy with the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. These two spiritual greats share their joy and how we can have it, too. Sing. Listen. Discuss. Meditate. Pray. If you would like to follow along in the book, please find it at our favorite local bookseller. No need to read the book in order to enjoy the experience. Wednesdays in Lent 6:30 pm. Simple soup dinner at 5:30 pm with our members and neighborhood guests.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER & DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

Soup Kitchen Opportunity - March 10

Our next opportunity to serve lunch at the Jubilee Center is coming up on Saturday March 10. If you can be part of the team, let Marge Maynard know. Those who will help prepare the food will meet at 10 am, those who will serve and cleanup will meet at 11:30 am. We have been informed that the Health Department is going to strictly enforce the requirement to have a Certified Food Service Manager on-site for the time we are working. Each team will be responsible for providing their person. We are fortunate that Katy Paterson is certified and willing to help. Marge is planning to take the training in May (2 days), but the more the merrier, if you would be interested in this area of ministry, let Marge or Jean know.

Opportunity for Giving: OGHS - March 11

On March 11, we will accept an offering to support One Great Hour of Sharing, commonly called OGHS. The funds raised support activities in disaster relief and refugee relief, both in the US and around the world. How to give: use the special envelope, or make a check out to the church and write OGHS in the memo line, or donate securely online at ucc.org or pcusa.org. The world thanks you!

Green Team Meeting - March 20

The next meeting of the Green Team is Tuesday, March 20 at 7:00 pm in the Heritage Room. We are exploring ways for SecondFirst to be more sustainable and environmentally friendly. Questions? Contact: Linda Mohaupt 815-509-5853 or mommoh54@gmail.com

Annual Program Meeting - April 29

Our annual program meeting will be Sunday, April 29 after the worship service. Annual reports from our ministry teams and committees are due on Wednesday, April 4.



On Sunday, January 28th, we hosted an all church game afternoon. There was a variety of family board games as well as several minute-to-win-it type games. New friendships were made and some even learned to waltz.

CORNERED BEEF AND CABBAGE DINNER SATURDAY MARCH 17 AT 5:30 PM

Join us in the Church Dining Room for a traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner. Beverages will be provided. The meat preference is corned beef, chicken, or vegan. The dinner is \$8.00 for adults, collected at the door. Children under 12 eat for free and hot dogs will be available, if requested. Please bring a dish to pass or dessert for the buffet table. Entertainment will be provided by the Church Street String Band. We ask that everyone RSVP to the church office 815-963-8431 or debbie.wise@secondfirst.org by Thursday, March 15.

PALM SUNDAY POTLUCK MARCH 25 AFTER SERVICE

Please join the congregation for dinner Sunday, March 25 immediately after the Palm Sunday service. Ham, potatoes and beverages will be provided by the church. If you are willing and able, please bring a dish or dessert for the buffet table. Celebrate and enjoy the Lenten season with the congregation at the church service and meal.



WEE WORSHIP AND CHILDREN IN WORSHIP ON EASTER

Don't forget about Wee Worship. Wee Worship takes place the second Sunday of the month at 9:20 am in Backstage Bethlehem (3rd Floor).

Looking ahead: Children will remain in worship on Easter Sunday, April 1st. The nursery will be available for child ages 5 and under.

FROM THE MODERATOR, SARAH REINOLD

I am starting to get anxious for the season of spring. I am waiting for the first tulips to stick up from the snowy ground. I am looking for the first buds to form on the empty tree branches. I am excited about the daylight that stays around just a bit longer each day.

I am also excited about the season that the ministry teams at our church are beginning. In addition to all the fantastic work already happening, we have also embarked on a lofty initiative—long-term strategic planning. At the end of January, the ministry teams all met together to work on strategic planning. They considered the strategies that we as a church want to accomplish (cultivating the time, talent, and treasure of our congregation; broadening diversity; delving into community partnerships; and focusing on caring for church members). They then spent time dreaming up new, exciting, and innovative ways to help the church accomplish these strategies during the next three to five years. Now the real work starts as we turn those dreams into reality! Just like spring, we will soon start seeing pieces of these amazing ideas start to pop up from our ministry teams. We will see innovative plans coming forward and watch as they transform into action. News about these activities will spring forth.

We are also entering into the season of nominating. During the nominating process, we prayerfully work to match the passions, interests, and talents of members of our congregation with the work of the ministry teams. As we enter into this season of nominating, consider planting yourself in a new ministry team. You can reach out to Steve Showers, chair of the Nominating Ministry team, if you are interested. With your talents, new and beautiful things are sure to grow and our strategic plan will flourish.



EASTER SUNDAY FLOWERS

We will again have colorful pots of Spring flowers for the Chancel area of the Sanctuary, to celebrate Easter morning. Tulips in yellow, pink or purple will cost \$10.00. White Easter Lilies cost \$15.00, and Azaleas in deep pink cost \$16.00. Orders are due by **March 4** if you want a specific color. (We will accept orders through **March 11** if you will allow us to substitute with whatever colors are still available at that time from the grower). If you would like to order a blooming plant call or stop by the office and let us know what kind and what color you want. If you would like to acknowledge a loved one please provide that information at the time you order. If you prefer to mail your order in, please use this form or just send a note telling us what you would like.



Your name	
Name of loved ones	
Type of flower and color	
No of plants	
\$ Amount enclosed	

MARCH CALENDAR

Thursday, March 1

9:30 AM - Carillons
9:30 AM - Deaconesses
9:30 AM - Free Showers
11:00 AM - Spanish Class
11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
12:10 PM - Mindfulness Meditations
4:30 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center
5:30 PM - JD Board Meeting
6:00 PM - Bellcantos
7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, March 2

No scheduled activities

Saturday, March 3

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

Sunday, March 4

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
3:00 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center

Monday, March 5

9:30 AM - Free Showers
5:30 PM - Love Rockford Meeting

Tuesday, March 6

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, March 7

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
5:30 PM - Fellowship and Coffee
5:30 PM - Tower Ringers
6:00 PM - Soup Dinner
6:30 PM - Lenten Worship experience

Thursday, March 8, 2018

9:30 PM - Carillons
9:30 AM - Free Showers
11:00 AM - Spanish Class
11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
12:10 PM - Mindfulness Meditations
4:30 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center
6:00 PM - Bellcanto
7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, March 9

1:00 PM - Horizons Bible Study

Saturday, March 10

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

Sunday, March 11

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

Monday, March 12

9:30 AM - Free Showers
No Deacons Ministry Team
6:00 PM - Adult Christian Ed

Tuesday, March 13

8:00 AM - Men's Fellowship
9:00 AM - Thrift Shop
11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
1:00 PM - Executive Committee
6:00 PM - DVT

Wednesday, March 14

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
5:00 PM - Trustees
5:30 PM - Fellowship and Coffee
5:30 PM - Tower Ringers
6:00 PM - Soup Dinner
6:30 PM - Lenten Worship experience

Thursday, March 15,

9:30 AM - Carillons
9:30 AM - Free Showers
11:00 AM - Spanish Class
11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
12:10 PM - Mindfulness Meditations
4:30 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center
6:00 PM - Bellcanto
7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, March 16

No scheduled activities

Saturday, March 17

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic
5:30 PM - Corned Beef Dinner

Sunday, March 18

9:00 AM - Koffee Klass

11:15 AM - Music Ministry

11:15 AM - Fair For All Shop

3:00 PM - 815 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

Monday, March 19

9:30 AM - Free Showers

Tuesday, March 20

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

Wednesday, March 21

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
5:30 PM - Fellowship and Coffee
5:30 PM - Tower Ringers
6:00 PM - Soup Dinner
6:30 PM - Lenten Worship experience

Thursday, March 22,

9:30 AM - Free showers
9:30 AM - Carillons
11:00 AM - Spanish Class
11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
12:10 PM - Mindfulness Meditations
4:30 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center
5:30 PM - Governing Council
6:00 PM - Bellcanto
7:00 PM - Choir

Friday, March 23

No scheduled activities

Saturday, March 24

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic
10:00 AM - Rockford Melffest

11:00 AM - Just Breathe 815

Teen Closet

Palm Sunday, March 25

9:00 AM - Koffee Klass
10:00 AM - Worship Service
10:20 AM - Sunday School
11:00 AM - Palm Sunday Potluck
11:15 AM - Fair For All Shop
3:00 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center

Monday, March 26

9:00 AM - Park District Camp
9:30 AM - Free Showers

Tuesday March 27

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

Wednesday, March 28

9:00 AM - Park District Camp
10:00 AM - Staff Meeting
No Prime Time

Maundy Thursday, March 29

9:00 AM - Park District Camp
9:30 AM - Free showers
9:30 AM - Carillons
11:00 AM - Spanish Class
11:30 AM - Walkers in gym
4:30 PM - Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center
6:30 PM - Maundy Thursday Service

Good Friday, March 30

12:15 PM - Good Friday Service

Saturday, March 31

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

MARCHING TOWARD EASTER

by Paul Laprade, Music Director

Easter arrives relatively early this year; among the earliest Easter celebrations this congregation would remember was the Easter celebration on March 23rd, 2008; Easter 2018 occurs barely a week later! Our April 1st celebration of the Resurrection is preceded by many different types of music, reflecting Pastor Rebecca's intent of both celebrating joy during Lent, as well as the reflection of the Lenten gospel selections.

The diversity of our upcoming music begins with help from our new hymnal, a wonderful resource for Lenten hymns. A new hymn to us "Here on Jesus Christ I Will Stand" will be introduced by the Sanctuary Choir on February 18th. On the 25th, "Bell Sunday" returns under the leadership of Julie Cook Ramirez, but with a special visitor: Diana Fry will return to sing "How Great Thou Art". The Sanctuary Choir will sing the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams on March 4th, along with moving new anthems for this Sunday and the 11th: Caleb French's setting of "Psalm 100", and "Who But the Lord?", from the Capitol University series. The classic African American setting of "Soon Ah Will Be Done" by William Dawson will prepare us for the transition from "Glory and Laud" to "Crucifixion" that is our Palm Sunday service. The joy of an early Easter is coming soon!

HYMNALS DONATION UPDATE

Our hymnals are currently on the mind of the leaderships of both the PC(USA) and of the UCC. They have been contacted directly to help us identify any churches who may be in need of these fine worship resources. The initial churches we had identified as possible recipients have all thankfully received replacements for hymnals through insurance claims or through the Presbyterian disaster relief fund. After we are satisfied that the needs of churches in our denominations have been met, we will reach out to other denominations to find appropriate homes for our wonderful musical resources.

AN EXCITING SEASON FOR HANDBELLS

By Julie Cook Ramirez, Director of Handbell Ministries

The SecondFirst Handbell Ministries program is bursting forth with amazing news! If you haven't heard, Home for Christmas: A Concert for Carpenter's Place raised \$1,489, which was doubled due to the generosity of some CP benefactors, making our total impact nearly \$3,000. Thanks to the ringers, to Sarah and Joyce, and to all the audience members who came out, listened to our music and CP's stories, and helped support their critical mission. Following the concert, we enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by our own Deaconesses. Thank you, ladies!

Looking forward, there will be numerous opportunities to hear our ensembles in worship. Please watch The Tower for specific dates. Also, the Carillons will be presenting a concert at the Villa PA Peterson on Sunday, March 11 at 3:30 pm. The public is welcome. All the SecondFirst bell groups will perform at the annual Ring in Spring on Sunday, May 6 at 3 pm. The concert will benefit KFACT, so please mark your calendars for this fun and meaningful event. The traditional dessert buffet will follow in the dining room.

You will definitely want to be here on Tuesday, June 12, as we host the Wesley Bell Ringers, one of America's premiere youth handbell ensembles. Based out of Christ United Methodist Church in Salt Lake City, this amazing group consists of 15 high school students and college freshmen. The concert is free, with the group collecting a love offering to help offset their costs. As with other visiting music groups, we have been asked to provide home stays for their members and chaperones. Please contact me if you can extend some hospitality to these fine young musicians.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that our Bell Refurbishment Task Force has been soliciting bids and making critical decisions, as we seek to have our world record-holding "Second Con" Whitechapel handbells refurbished. This is a necessary maintenance that hasn't been done since 2001 and is sorely needed. We have many bells that buzz, rattle, double-ring, or won't ring at all. (The Carillons bells were refurbished in 2008 and are not yet in need of any additional TLC.) Once we are done using them for the program year, they will be transported to Jeffers Handbell Supply in Irmo, SC, where they will spend several weeks receiving the "service plus" treatment. They will be back in plenty of time for the 2018-19 bell season and will sound and look better than they have in nearly two decades. We can't wait!



SAVE THE DATES

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

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING TRANSIT'S MISSION TRIP

Last Sunday, February 18, we gathered in the dining room for a spaghetti lunch fundraiser. All of the proceeds will benefit the Transit Youth Mission Trip to Kenosha, Wisconsin this summer. The youth will spend one week loving on a community and learning how God can touch the lives of many. It is the hope of the church that the students will come back refreshed and ready to continue making a difference in the world around them. Because of you, the students have raised \$350 toward the trip! Thank you for your support!

PARK DISTRICT RETURNING THIS SUMMER

The Park District's Therapeutic Recreational Summer program will return again this summer. The Park District was thrilled with our facility and loved the friendliness and support of our staff. The program will be here for Spring Break and will begin the Summer program on June 5 and will run through August.

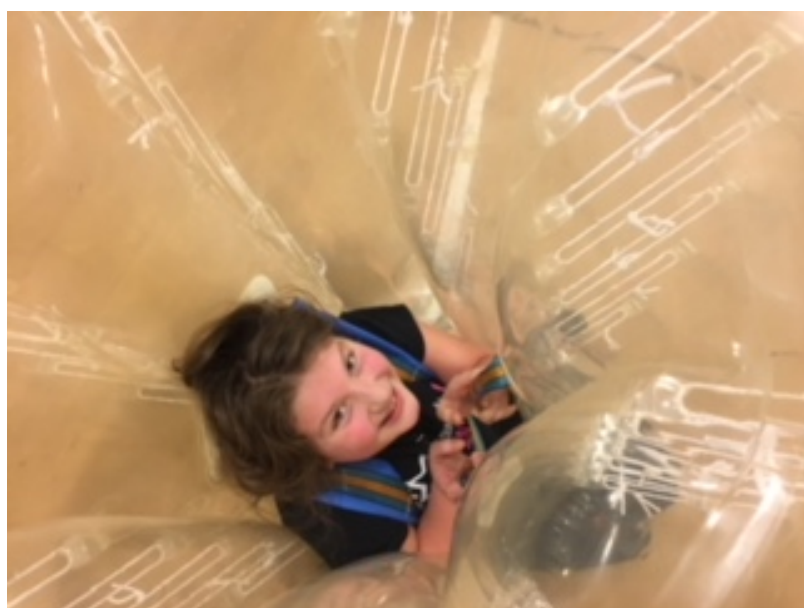
LOVE ROCKFORD 2018

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 Food bank truck please contact Becky Erbe @ 815-963- 8431. If you would like to volunteer in general contact Melissa Ridgeway @ 224-715- 5602.



NOTES FROM THE JANUARY 25, 2018 GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING

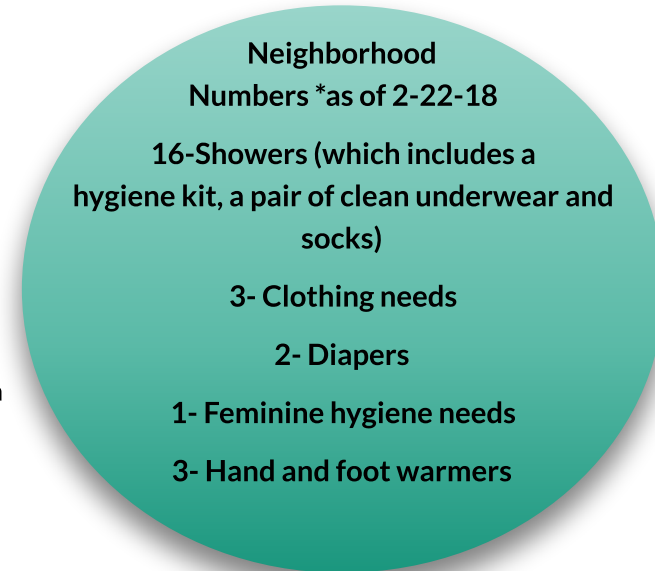
The January meeting began by approving the November minutes and presenting the church report. The meeting continued with a presentation of the proposed 2018 budget by Jay Baker, the church treasurer. After examining the budget proposal, the Governing Council unanimously voted to approve it. The budget will be presented at SecondFirst Church's Annual Budget Meeting on February 11 for approval of the congregation. The Governing Council meeting adjourned and the strategic planning meeting with the church's ministry teams began. The next meeting of Governing Council will be Thursday, March 22 at 5:30 in the 4th floor meeting room. Everyone is welcome to attend.



Transit Youth Group enjoying a game of Knockerball.

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

- We are looking for volunteers for this year's Meltfest at Prairie Street Brewing Company on March 24. All proceeds will go to KFact. Meltfest is looking for greeters and volunteers for the day-long event including the 5K race, craft bizarre, kids events and much more. Choose your time. Please call the office for more information.
- Do you like to cook old fashioned home-cooked meals? Just Breathe 815 is looking for volunteers from our church to prepare a meal for the first Sunday of every month. Call Becky Erbe 815-963-8431 for more information.
- Love Rockford is coming on April 28 from 9:30am until 2pm. We are looking for volunteers for all areas. Our church will be the site for the free lunch (dining room), the Food Truck (garage area), the food and clothing check room, and the Children's activities (both in the gym.) Call Becky Erbe 815-963-8431.



BUDGET MEETING SUMMARY BY SARAH REINOLD

The annual budget meeting for SecondFirst church took place on February 11 after church. Despite a snowy day, a quorum was present and Moderator Sarah Reinold called the meeting to order. Reverend Rebecca led an opening prayer. The 2017 budget meeting minutes were approved and then Jay Baker presented the treasurer's report. Jay mentioned that despite some unexpected building repair expenses, 2017 ended with a slight surplus. Jay also noted that the congregation did a great job fulfilling their pledges for the year.

Bob Langford, chair of Trustees continued by presenting a balanced 2018 budget. He noted that both the Trustees and Governing Council had previously approved the presented budget. He highlighted that the Second Congregational Foundation voted to increase its contribution to the church for the year by 0.75% and that revenue has begun to be collected from the library's usage of the parking lot. The budget was unanimously approved. The budget meeting was adjourned.

Bill Hoff, president of the Second Congregational Foundation then presented a brief report of the Foundation, although the annual meeting for the Foundation will still take place on April 29. Bill emphasized the importance of remembering the Foundation in estate planning. The meeting ended with a prayer by Reverend Rebecca.

Many thanks to the Church Clerk, Treasurer, Budget Committee, Foundation President, and Office Staff for working on all of the components necessary for the Budget Meeting!

WELCOME TO OUR NOONTIME WALKERS



Our mission explained states: "We desire for the walls of our church to be permeable to the neighborhood, where there is no external distinction between neighbor and member." With our Tuesday and Thursday walking program we are doing just that. There is a group coming from a local law office, an individual driving in the Winnebago, a couple from the neighborhood who are walking alongside a few of our members. If you want to be part of sharing our amazing space with community, please let Debbie know in the office.