

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church  
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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.

MAY 2018

Hello Church,

I want you to see this list I pulled for our annual report!

I can't possibly mention all the amazing things our church is and does, as so much of what we do and the way we experience God's love and grace is in the minute details and the everyday/week routine. But here are a few highlights:

- Transit Youth Ministry served at Broad Street Ministry in Philadelphia, PA
- Julie Cook Ramirez assumed the permanent position of Director of Handbell Ministries and shaped two mission-focused concerts
- Rockford Park District hosted their summer Therapeutic Recreation Teen Camp for students with disabilities (and blessings!) in our gym.
- Becky Erbe became Pastor Becky when she was installed by the Prairie Association of the UCC as our Assistant Pastor on August 13, 2017
- The Mission Ministry Team took on KFACT as a new mission partner. KFACT mentors 250 girls labeled "at risk" by their 7th grade guidance counselors through their post-secondary choices. They have 100% graduation rate from high school and for the first time, they will graduate 25 girls from college this Spring.
- The church welcomed Just Breathe 815 as a mission partner, who out of our building serves homeless teens with clothes, toiletries, warm meals, life skills and more. Once a month they have a big clothing give away (fills the gym!) and they have a teen resource center on Sunday and Thursday nights.
- We opened our gym for noontime walkers on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the winter months.
- Governing Council created the Creation Justice Coalition to work on all issues of environmental sustainability thanks to the leadership of Linda Mohaupt.
- The Bridge Clinic celebrated their 10th year of providing free medical care to adults and have served over 4,000 people.
- Along with Matthew Johnson of the Unitarian Church, Andy and I co-lead a four-session seminar called Faithful Desegregation intended to train church leaders to enter the conversation of healing racism. Over 100 people and 14 faith communities and many community leaders participated.
- We hosted the end of the Rockford Women's March and our gym was buzzing as we stayed just under capacity.
- We celebrated the fifth anniversary of our federation with a big celebration January 25th and by making our two baptismal fonts into one and replacing our two old hymnals sets with new ones.
- Our Wednesday night Lenten worship experience revolved around *The Book of Joy* featuring the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Plus Jeanne Vargas of the Mindfulness Institute of Northwestern Illinois lead mindfulness sessions on Thursdays at noon during Lent.
- In recent weeks, a new group has sprouted to help member James Casmir serve his hometown of Saut-d'Eau, Haiti. They are raising funds to empower the residents to farm their land by purchasing seeds and farming tools.



SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC / FIRST PRESBYTERIAN PCUSA

# Ring in Spring

A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR KFACT

## Sunday, May 6 3:00pm

Featuring the Martin Ringers, Carillons, Bellcanto Ringers, Tower Ringers, and Peanut Ringers, along with vocalist, Vanessa Nieva, and speaker, Shamika Williams, executive director, KFACT.

After the concert, we will gather in the dining room for a time of fellowship, as we enjoy a delicious dessert buffet with our friends and neighbors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (815) 963-8431 OR EMAIL [JULIE.COOKRAMIREZ@SECONDFIRST.ORG](mailto:JULIE.COOKRAMIREZ@SECONDFIRST.ORG)

Admission is free. Donations will be accepted to benefit KFACT, which specializes in providing an array of holistic comprehensive services: school-based prevention education groups, intervention services, youth development programs, youth advocacy, college and career mentorship, transitional assistance from high school to post-secondary education and ongoing support through E-mentoring.

Today's youth are growing up in turbulent times. From school shootings and widespread poverty to protest marches and a massive political divide, there's no shortage of uncertainty.

In Rockford, one amazing organization is helping our community's girls rise above the tumult and make their dreams a reality.

Join us as we shine the light of love and hope as we celebrate the arrival of spring and honor the remarkable young women of KFACT.



Those are only the new things! That doesn't include the amazing ministry we do on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. God is so good to us and you all are so good to love one another and serve our neighbors.

Many thanks to our Moderator, Sarah Reinold, who has been a rock that enabled, connected and spearheaded so much faithful ministry. At one time in her life she taught first graders how to glue, this year she has been the glue that held our teams and ministries together. Plus, she is a master at the one-hour Governing Council meeting that is packed with important information and decisions. Many thanks to Sarah for everything, including pulling together the Strategic Plan and setting us on a positive course that we will appreciate for years to come.

May God bless you this Spring,

Rebecca



## UPCOMING EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER & DONATION OPPORTUNITIES

### Pilgrim Park Campground Cleanup May 19

The annual Pilgrim Park work day is scheduled on May 19. Join church members and campground maintenance staff by enhancing the campground for the 2018 season. Spend a day doing building and ground maintenance tasks, lunch in the cafeteria and outdoor fun. Contact: David Noel at 815-398-6518 for carpool arrangements or any questions on the activity.

### Pentecost/Strengthen the Church Offering May 20

SecondFirst Church, as part of both the UCC and Presbyterian denominations, participates in 4 special offerings during the calendar year. On May 20 we will receive the Pentecost/Strengthen the Church offering. The money we collect supports youth, among other areas, and helps them form a foundation of faith. 40% of the offering supports programs in local communities. Please be generous with your gift. You can use the special envelopes or indicate this offering in the note section of your check. Thank you!

### TRANSIT SAVE THE DATES

June 10 – Youth Car Wash

June 17 - Transit Mission Trip to Kenosha, WI

June 24 – Youth Sunday

July 29– Slip and Slide Kickball

### Opportunity for Giving: Peanut Butter!

May is Peanut Butter Month! How many pounds of PB can we collect for the Food Pantry? 100? 200? 500?! Bring in jars of any size, deposit it into the crate at the back of the sanctuary, and we will let you know each week where we stand. How high can we go? Contact: Marge Maynard [mtm.home@me.com](mailto:mtm.home@me.com).

### Next Soup Kitchen May 26

Our next opportunity to serve lunch will be May 26. This is a great chance to do some hands-on ministry, preparing and serving and cleaning up a tasty meal to our neighbors. We will begin at 10 am and finish around 1 pm. You can help for the entire time or just part. Let Marge Maynard know (815-980-5304) if you'd like to be part of the team this month.



Easter 2018

### POP UP DINNER MAY 17



have invited our friends from The Arc, an organization who serves intellectually and developmentally disabled kids and adults and their families. Looking for radiant joy? Come be present for dinner.

More about The Arc - [www.arcwbo.org](http://www.arcwbo.org)

### Thursday, May 17 at 6:00 pm in the church parking lot

Let's join for dinner in the parking lot of SecondFirst Church, on that visible corner of Church and Jefferson streets. In the face of violence in our city, we will gather in hope. As an affront to those who have left the Downtown/West side as forsaken, we will show the city is worth our effort. Just dinner. We will pull out the nice tablecloths and real plates. Let's gather for peace and claim our city for good and fun.

Tickets are \$10, purchase at <https://secondfirstchurchpopup.eventbrite.com>

Meet a new friend from The Arc. For this pop-up dinner, we

## FROM THE MODERATOR, SARAH REINOLD

April 29th was our Annual Program Meeting. We had the chance to come together to celebrate all that our ministry teams accomplished in the last year and to see what they are planning for the future through our church's Strategic Plan. At the conclusion of the meeting, there was a delicious "Appetizer Cook off" fundraiser to benefit our youth.

April 29th also marked my last day as moderator as I retired to the "past moderator" category. (Carolyn Greenlaw and I decided we didn't like the term "old moderator"! ) I am amazed at the journey the position of moderator has taken me on this last year. I have had the chance to weigh in on decisions in the church ranging from the budget to programming. I have gotten to know the talented members of our congregation even more. I have loved working with the amazing people both on the staff and in the lay leadership positions of the church. Thank you to all for supporting me during my year as moderator!

April 29th was also the first day for our new moderator, Steve Showers. This is the second time Steve has served as moderator. His first moderator role came right after the church's fire. Steve worked diligently on the rebuilding of the church after the congregation decided to stay in its downtown location. In the last two years I have worked with Steve, I have been impressed with his willingness to quietly jump in and help wherever he is needed. Steve also brings the ability with him to listen and consider all the different viewpoints on an issue. I'm looking forward to watching him bring these skills to his job as moderator.

Jim Delmore will be filling the role of vice moderator. Jim brings his analytical mindset to decisions and approaches them in an organized manner (he creates amazing spreadsheets!). Jim listens intently to everyone's opinions before he expresses his own and always has insight to add. Jim also has a great handle on all things building-related. He has worked for the last several years on changing our lighting fixtures and bulbs to energy-efficient versions. I'm excited to see how Jim will apply these strengths in the following year.

I have enjoyed working with both Steve and Jim over the last several years and I'm anxious to see how the church will continue to develop and expand!

Neighborhood  
Numbers (as of 4-23-18)

12 showers

1 package of diapers

4 clothing needs

2 housing needs



## NOTES FROM THE MARCH 22, 2018 GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING

The March Governing Council meeting began with a prayer from Reverend Rebecca. Next, the Assistant Treasurer reported that expenses were over budget due to some unexpected building expenses.

In new business, a discussion about Wednesday night programming began. More discussion will take place on this subject at the April meeting. Also, \$500 from new initiative money was requested by the Creation Justice Committee (formerly The Green Team) to use as the new team starts some projects. The request for the money was approved.

In unfinished business, the Vice Moderator talked about the nominating process. Governing Council spent time reviewing the Strategic Plan document. Ministry team chairs had the chance to review their teams' goals and to clarify or add necessary information. The next meeting of Governing Council will be Thursday, May 24 at 5:30 in the 4th floor meeting room. Everyone is welcome to attend.

## THE CREATION JUSTICE COALITION

We are looking for ways to help our church be more environmentally sustainable. Here's some things to do this month: leave your bulletin by the door when you leave church. Some of the inserts are reused. Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful (KNIB) is having their clothing drive May 12 from 9:00 am to-noon. The Rockford Recycle Center is located at 4665 Hydraulic Road and the Roscoe Recycle Center is located at 13125 N. Second St. Clean, dry items, wearable or not, should be placed in plastic bags and securely tied. Check [www.KNIB.org](http://www.KNIB.org) if you have any questions.





## MAY CALENDAR

### Tuesday, May 1

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM - Free Showers  
6:00 PM – Membership Ministry Team

### Wednesday, May 2

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

### Thursday, May 3

9:30 AM - Deaconesses  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
4:30 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center  
5:30 PM – JD Board Meeting  
7:00 PM – Choir

### Friday, May 4

11:00 AM – John Widergren Memorial Service

### Saturday, May 5

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

### Sunday, May 6

9:00 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:15 AM – New Members Class  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop  
3:00 PM – Ring in Spring Bell Concert  
4:30 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center

### Monday, May 7

No scheduled activities

### Tuesday, May 8

8:00 AM – Men's Fellowship  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM - Free Showers  
12:00 PM - Adult Christian Education Ministry Team  
6:00 PM –DVT

### Wednesday, May 9

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting  
5:00 PM – Trustees  
6:00 PM – New Members Class

### Thursday, May 10

4:30 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center  
7:00 PM - Choir

### Friday, May 11

No Scheduled Activities

### Saturday, May 12

10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

### Sunday, May 13

Mother's Day  
9:00 AM – Koffee Klass  
No Wee Worship  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM - Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop  
4:30 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center

### Monday, May 14

5:00 PM – Deacons

### Tuesday, May 15

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Free Showers  
1:00 PM – Executive Committee  
5:30 PM - Missions Ministry Team  
7:00 PM – Creation Justice Coalition

### Wednesday, May 16

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting  
3:00 PM – Sound Training  
5:00 PM – Foundation Meeting

### Thursday, May 17

9:30 AM - Free showers  
6:00 PM – Pop Up Dinner  
6:00 PM – ARC Rec Night  
7:00 PM - Choir

### Friday, May 18

No Scheduled Activities

### Saturday, May 19

8:00 AM – Pilgrim Park Cleanup  
10:00 AM - Bridge Clinic

### Sunday, May 20

Pentecost  
8:30 AM – New Member Class  
9:00 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – New Members Reception  
11:15 AM – Fellowship Ministry Team  
11:15 AM – Music Ministry  
11:15 AM - Family Christian Education Ministry Team  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop  
4:30 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center

### Monday, May 21

No scheduled activities

### Tuesday May 22

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop (last one)  
9:30 AM – Free Showers

### Wednesday, May 23

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting

### Thursday, May 24

9:30 AM - Free showers  
4:30 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center  
5:30 PM – Governing Council

### Friday, May 25

No Scheduled Activities

### Saturday, May 26

No Bridge Clinic  
10:30 AM – Soup Kitchen

### Sunday, May 27

9:00 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
No Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:35 AM – Fair For All Shop  
4:30 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center

### Monday, 28,

Memorial Day  
Office Closed

### Tuesday May 29

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
9:30 AM – Free Showers

### Wednesday, May 30

10:00 AM - Staff Meeting

### Thursday, May 31

9:30 AM - Free showers  
4:30 PM – Just Breathe 815 Teen Drop In Center

## SUMMERTIME AND THE PRELUDES EASY

Would you or a member of your family like to share musical gifts with our congregation? Perhaps you have a short piano work, a lied by Mozart or song by Sandi Patti, or a mother-daughter piece you would like to present at church! Summer services at SecondFirst hold many opportunities for special music. Does this interest you? You don't have to be an expert: beginners and intermediate performers are welcome because we value your gifts at any level. Please Contact: paul.laprade@secondfirst.org to explore what might work for you. God's gifts are truly realized when given to others!

## REPAIRS FOR ORGAN

by Valerie Blair

In addition to the usual two tunings of the organ, for Christmas 2017 and Easter 2018, two repairs have been done recently, and an upgrade to the Steinway was recently added.

A humidifier was added to the piano, which helps maintain the condition of the wood, and thereby the tuning and overall sound of the piano. For those of you who don't know, the piano was donated by the Nelson family in 1998, in memory of his mother. Please come up some time and read the donation plate on the piano. We are so fortunate to have this amazing instrument in our church. It is a joy to play.

The first of the recent repairs on the organ was completed in 2017, and consisted of five Tremolo units being replaced. These units have not functioned for several years, and are now in working order. Funds were provided by the Presbyterian Endowment Fund.

The second was just completed this past week, when Fabry found and fixed multiple problems. There were several dead notes in various stops and manuals, many of them in standard stops that any organist would use on a weekly basis when providing service music. Funds were provided from the Memorials Fund, specifically the Barb Gambino account.

The organ company, Fabry, who has been maintaining the organ for several years, has three other recommended repairs or upgrades, which we will continue to pursue in the coming years.

The organ is currently in fair working order. I am grateful for the ongoing financial commitment of this church to the maintenance of this wonderful instrument, and the appreciation of its contributions to weekly worship, which congregants express on a near weekly basis. Appraised at over 1 million dollars, it is truly a treasure for this church to have.

## FAITHFUL DESEGREGATION

Over one hundred people from 14 faith communities and many community leaders gathered to learn about healing racism in our community. Faithful Desegregation was taught by Rev. Matthew Johnson, Andy Newgren and Rev. Rebecca. In the last of the four-part session, we focused on three areas with panelists: Three panelists will focus on current opportunities: Rev. K. Edward Copeland (criminal justice system), Rev. Matthew Johnson (education) and Mike Schablaske (economic advancement). Large groups of people formed to make a difference in each of these areas. If you are interested in participating, please reach out to Rev. Rebecca.

## MAY KOFFEE KLASS: UNSUNG (ANTI) HEROES OF SCRIPTURE

You know the bigwigs: Adam and Eve, Moses, David, and Paul. What about those Biblical figures who fill minor parts? Join us for three weeks as we examine those with smaller roles and their significance, story, and lessons learned (if any). Bob Bates, Becky Erbe, and Andy Newgren will each cover one of their favorite lesser known figures to begin exploring these questions.

May 6th: Andy Newgren, Rahab

May 13: Bob Bates, Joseph of Arimathea

May 20th: Becky Erbe, Lydia

All sessions will take place at 9am in the fourth floor chapel. Contact: andy.newgren@secondfirst.org



**SAVE THE DATES**

**May 6: Ring in Spring**

**May 6: New Member Class**

**May 19: Pilgrim Park Cleanup**

**June 1: Governing Council Retreat**

**June 8: UCC Conference Annual Celebration**

**June 10: Youth Car Wash**

**June 12: Wesley Bell Ringers**

**June 17: Transit Mission Trip to Kenosha, WI**

**June 24: Youth Sunday**

**June 30: Potluck and Fireworks at Larsons**

**July 5: Tower Hill**

**July 29: Slip and Slide Kickball**

**August 19: All Church Picnic**

**August 28: Joint Service**





## JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

by Sue Kanthak, Executive Director

March was a very busy month. Michelle's official last day was March 8, though she remained available for any questions I had. We wish her well as she enters a new chapter in her life. Burpee Museum and Jeremiah Development partnered to provide scholarships and pizza to 20 children to attend Burpee's Spring Break Camp. There were live animals including a 180 lb tortoise that walked around with the children all day on one day, and a giant pelican that kept them company on another. A grant for \$2,500 was submitted to the Community Foundation for an Evening at the Museum. This will be a partnership with The Discovery Center, Burpee Museum of Natural History, the Coronado/Haskell Neighborhood and Jeremiah Development. If we receive this grant we will need volunteers to help meet with the neighbors and "sell" the event. I'll keep you posted!

The support Jeremiah Development receives from SecondFirst, Court Street United Methodist and Emmanuel Episcopal continues to help bring community events, the community garden, Love Rockford and beautification to the neighborhood. I'm looking forward to strengthening our relationships with Burpee and the Discovery Center. Our Jeremiah Kids will have opportunities throughout the year to develop a strong bond with them. Our goal is that the JD kids will feel these museums belong to them and will enjoy them as visitors and volunteers.

I would like to thank everyone who has been so patient with me as I learn the ropes. It's been a fun learning curve. Don't forget to volunteer as we need help to get the garden ready for growing season.

## LASER QUEST RECAP

We had a group of 23 join in on Laser Quest fun! We all had a great time! Thank you to Anthony Picchioni, Bill Hoff and Becky Erbe for being part of the fun.



## PRIMETIME RECAP

Another year has come and gone for our Primetime Wednesday night activities. The evening could not be possible without all the volunteers. Thank you to those who have worked in the kitchen or facilitated an Adult Ed class or movie! Thank you especially to Arlene Noel and Katy Paterson for planning and preparing the meals. Thank you to Carol and Anthony Picchioni who cared for our Youth Group each week. Thank you to the participants each week who attend classes, played bells or come to youth group. Thank you to those who not only came for meals, but welcomed in our guests from the neighborhood.



## THANK YOU FROM THE HAITI INTEREST GROUP

The Haiti Interest group at SecondFirst Church would like to thank our congregation for their generous response to our \$5,000.00 goal. To date we have raised \$4,483! With this gift, the people of Saut-d'Eau, Haiti, are purchasing hand tools and seeds for the work in their summer planting. The provision of tools and seeds will allow families to plant gardens on their own land or on land provided by the Casimir's. James Casimir and family will be traveling to Haiti in July and will continue to oversee our project. Stay tuned for updates on Project Haiti! For information or to join the Haiti Interest group please contact: Roger and Carolyn Greenlaw (rgreen97@aol.com, csgreen52@aol.com) James and Odette Casimir. (casimir0401@gmail.com).



## NEW MEMBER CLASSES

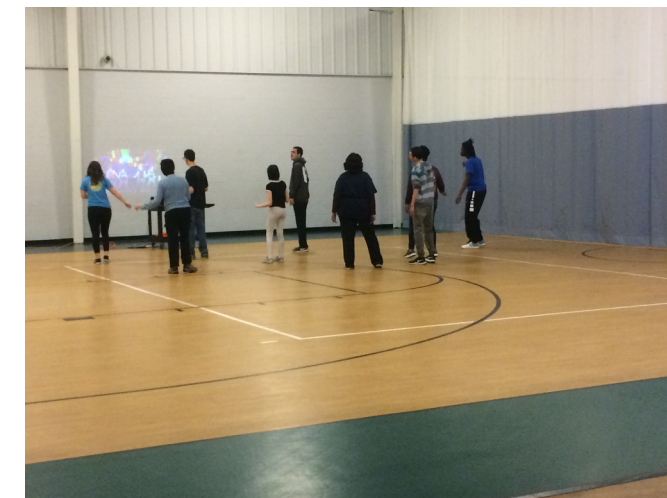
If you would like to be received into membership at SecondFirst Church or would just like to learn more about us, please join us for the dates and times listed below.

- Sharing Our Stories of Faith-Sunday, May 6 after worship with light refreshments.
- Sharing Our Collective Story of Faith-Wednesday, May 9, 6:00 - 8:00 pm for dinner.
- Living Into Our Faith-Sunday, May 20 meet at 8:30 am in the dining room then received into membership during worship.

Contact: Debbie Wise 815-963- 8431 or [debbie.wise@secondfirst.org](mailto:debbie.wise@secondfirst.org) to sign up.



OSF foot doctors follow Jesus' command to wash feet on Maundy Thursday at Carpenter's Place



Kids dance away in our gym during the Parks District Spring Break therapeutic recreation program for developmentally and intellectually disabled teens.



The Atlas Extreme youth baseball team helped serve pancakes at the Just Breathe 815 fundraiser

