

## SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)  
318 N. Church Street, Rockford IL 61101  
(815)963-8431  
www.secondfirst.org  
www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch/

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

FEBRUARY 2020

# THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

*Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace*



*A Little Bit from Becky E.*

### STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING Robert Frost (1874-1963)

*Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.*

*My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.*

*He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.*

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.*

Robert Frost's poem, 'Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening,' paints a picture of how beautiful snowy evenings and the winter season can be, even if you are only enjoying the views from the comforts of your own living room. Snowy days can turn into grace days. Grace days are those days when you have big plans, but the plans get changed, for the better, by the weather. Instead of rushing somewhere, the snow storm allows you to have that extra cup of coffee or read another three chapters of the book you are reading. Perhaps you can sit by the fire and watch the snow come down or play some board games with your family. Grace days can turn into any pleasure you want. Grace days are a reminder from God to slow down and enjoy what is in front of you.

For those of you who are thinking bah humbug to winter no matter what, think of this...  
Pitchers and Catchers report to Spring training on February 17!!

### OUR OVERNIGHT CAFÉ CONTINUES...

At the Overnight Café, unhoused guests (and others needing warmth) are met with food, clean and warm clothing, and shower and laundry facilities.

Guests are treated with respect throughout their stay in an effort to restore their dignity and build rapport. The Overnight Café will run every night until March 1, 2020 from 9:00 pm to 7:00 am.

www.secondfirst.org

## NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST UCC ABOLISHES \$12.9 MILLION IN MEDICAL DEBT IN ST. LOUIS, CONTINUING NATIONAL INITIATIVE



More than 11,000 families in St. Louis will soon be learning that their outstanding medical debt has been forgiven through donations from the United Church of Christ.

Contributions from local churches,

regional bodies, the national office and inspired individuals, matched in part by a generous investment from the Deaconess Foundation, have wiped out almost \$13 million in debt for low-income households in the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County.

**Read more:** [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) YOUNG PILGRIMS JOURNEY TO MALAWI



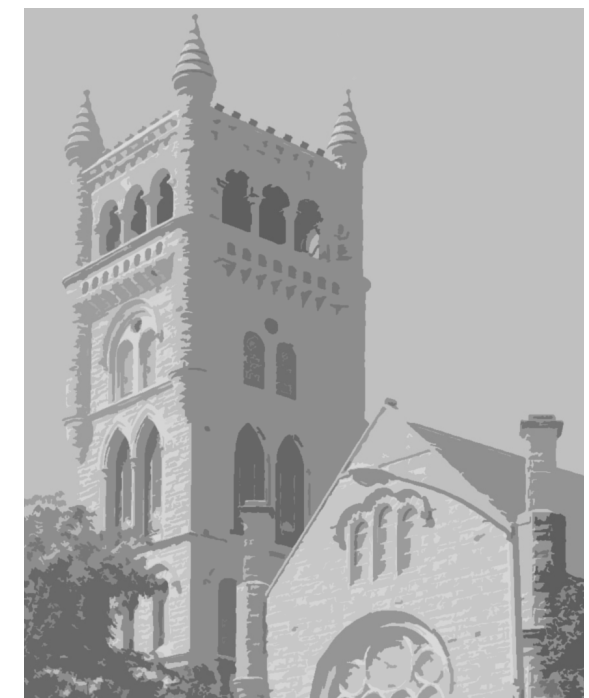
When Pittsburgh Presbytery's International Partnership Ministry Team began thinking about a way to create space for young Malawians and young Pittsburghers to meet together for mutual enrichment, encouragement and growth, the idea for a youth pilgrimage to Malawi was born.

As moderator of the International Partnership Ministry, I led a 16-day youth pilgrimage to Malawi last July. The group included nine young people and five adults, representing five Pittsburgh congregations.

**Read more:** [www.presbyterianmission.org](http://www.presbyterianmission.org)

## SAVE THE DATES

- March 4: Lenten Worship and supper
- March 5: Mindfulness Meditation
- March 11: Greenville Choir
- March 12: Lenten Worship and supper
- March 14: Jubilee Soup Kitchen
- March 14: Corned Beef Dinner
- March 18: Lenten Worship and Supper
- March 19: Mindfulness Meditation
- March 25: Lenten Worship and supper
- March 26: Mindfulness Meditation
- March 29: Bell Sunday





## HANDBELL MINISTRIES NEARS MAJOR MILESTONE

by Julie Cook Ramirez, Director of Handbell Ministries

The belief in the power of music to bring about change – within individuals, communities, and throughout the world – is what inspires and motivates us in Handbell Ministries. Recently, I had the honor of presenting Carly Rice with the proceeds from “A Very Carly Christmas,” which took place on December 14. The donations totaled just over \$1,700. Thank you to all the ringers, directors, and audience members who helped us raise such a significant amount, which will be put to very good use, helping Rockford’s underserved population.



The question was recently posed as to how many benefit concerts we have presented since our rebirth as Handbell Ministries in the Fall of 2016. In compiling the list, I included the total raised at each concert, rounded to the nearest \$100:

- December 2016 – VIBRATIONS AGAINST VIOLENCE (benefit for RECAP, anti-gun violence night walks) \$500
- April 2017 – RING IN SPRING (benefit for Haskell School) \$300
- December 2017 – HOME FOR CHRISTMAS (benefit for Carpenter’s Place) \$1,500 which became \$3,000 thanks to their December matching program
- May 2018 – RING IN SPRING (benefit for KFACT) \$900
- December 2018 – A FURRY FAMILY CHRISTMAS (benefit for CARE for PETS) \$1,400
- April 2019 – RING IN SPRING (benefit for the Al Otro Lado Border Rights Project) \$1,700
- December 2019 – A VERY CARLY CHRISTMAS (benefit for Miss Carly’s) \$1,700

As you can see, we are approaching a total of \$10,000 raised to help those who need it the most. As local attorney Linda Zuba graciously wrote to me following last year’s Ring in Spring, our concerts are literally “saving lives.” I am humbled to know our music is making such a difference in the world.

## THE GREENVILLE UNIVERSITY CHOIR IS COMING! WOULD YOU HELP US HOST?

March 11, 7:00 pm

SecondFirst Church will be hosting the Greenville University Choir for a stellar performance of sacred works. Under the direction of Dr. Jeffery Wilson, the 26-member Greenville University Choir and Chamber Singers will be presenting “Let Us Love and Sing and Wonder”, a program in four parts, following four proscriptions outlined in Acts 10:4-32. The choir will come to SecondFirst in the afternoon of the 11 and enjoy a dinner before performing. They are asking us to provide homestays for their members (and breakfast) before they continue to additional stops on their tour. Would you have room for these fine singers? We need to house all 26 members, who are roughly equally split in terms of gender. If interested, please leave your name with the office, your preference (if any, for men or women to stay), and any common issues such as pets that may be of concern to singers with allergies. Questions? Contact: paul.laprade@secondfirst.org

Please bring your friends and neighbors to this wonderful event, here at SecondFirst.

Your Music Director, Paul

## MUSICAL UPDATE

By Paul Laprade, Music Director

Thank you, dear congregation, for all the lovely comments we have received for the music provided on our Christmas Eve service. It is always a labor of love, and it can never achieve the heights it does without the involvement of so many devoted people, especially the inimitable Valerie Blair on organ and piano, and the intrepid SecondFirst Sanctuary Choir. Of course, the pastoral leadership in planning and in offering the Word is always at the heart of the planning for this and every liturgy at SecondFirst, and we are grateful any time that such clarity initiates the planning for our music.

The following is the plan for music at SecondFirst. Please note that Lent begins early this year! We are also blessed to have returning visitors: the Greenville College Choir. They will need a few volunteers to feed them breakfast and provide homestays on March 11. Could you consider supporting them in this way? Church members who have done this in the past find this experience to be enriching; we appreciate your support. Please contact the office, to be on the list of homestay homes (just specify how many students you can host, the gender you prefer if any, and if you have pets in case, we have students with allergies). Thanks!

- February 2: Choir
- February 9: Choir
- February 16: Bell Sunday
- February 23: Choir
- February 26: Ash Wednesday
- March 1: Choir
- March 7: Carillons
- March 11: Greenville College Choir Concert



## ROCKFORD WIND ENSEMBLE

Sunday, February 23, 3:00 pm

Join church members and friends for a Sunday afternoon of great music at the Nordlof Center. We are meeting at 2:30 pm at the church narthex for appetizers before walking over to the Nordlof Center at 118 N. Main Street. Rides from the church will be available. If needed, please contact the church office by February 20. Tickets can be purchased at the door: \$10 Adults, \$5 Seniors and Students. Questions? dav\_noel@comcast.net

## ANNUAL BUDGET AND FOUNDATION MEETING

Sunday, February 9

Please plan to stay after worship on Sunday, February 9, 2020 for the Annual Budget and Foundation Meeting. Budget packets will be available February 2.



## SERIOUS SOUP

Mondays, 11:30-12:30 pm

Remember Serious Soup can always use your help and support. If you are willing to make dessert or soup, we have the items necessary. All you have to do is prepare it. We are welcoming guests each Monday for Serious Soup. We would love people to stop by, either to help, bring soup or just to see what it is like and to meet some of our neighbors. Join us Mondays!! If you want to help another way, we are collecting saltine crackers, salsa, BBQ sauce, and salad dressings. (Ranch, Italian, Thousand Island, and French). Remember the change you put in the Offering plate goes to support Serious Soup. Contact: becky.erbe@secondfirst.org



## FEBRUARY KOFFEE KLASS SCHEDULE

8:30 Coffee; 8:45 Session begins in the Gathering Room

February 2 & 9: Implicit Bias: What we don’t think we think. Adapted from the General Commission on Religion and Race from the United Methodist Church this two-part series will delve into the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Moderated by Andy Newgren.

## YOUTH CORNER

### SNOW CAMP

This year’s Snow Camp attendees were a small but mighty bunch. The theme, Gen-Z Spirituality, was based around our new youth inspired word “Imaginating”, developed by Nicholas Archer. During our sessions together the teens built their own worship service. This meant that we ended our evening time, after a day of playing joyfully in the snow, worshipping God with the words they had crafted earlier in the day. The weather was beautiful and God kept us safe on the travel there and back. It was a transformative experience as ever, and the group came back from the wilderness happy to have had the journey.



## ROCKFORD OVERNIGHT CAFÉ

With a little over a month to go, we want to say thanks to all those from church and community who have donated time, supplies and meals. The Overnight Cafe so far has been a great experience and a learning experience as well. As the Café starts winding down, we will be sharing statistics and stories with you. Thank you for your support. Contact: becky.erbe@secondfirst.org







The mural is COMPLETE! All 55 mural panels were safely put into storage until a date is set for installation.



Members of the church helped move the mural panels into storage.



The youth from our congregation served a spaghetti dinner.



A collection of photos from our second annual pop-up pageant.



## GOD'S KINGDOM THANKS GIVERS

Dave Jones, Stewardship Chair

Worship each Sunday includes the Lord's Prayer. While its request for daily bread, forgiveness, resistance to temptation and deliverance from evil are pleas for our personal well-being, one request is for all humankind. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." Contributions of our time, talent and treasure to Second First Church make possible efforts to do God's will so that God's kingdom may emerge. Your time and talent continue to make possible such missions as Serious Soup, Bridge Clinic, the Thrift Shop, the Fair Trade Store, KFACT, overnight winter shelter and the Haiti Pouky project. Your financial contributions, which have reached \$334,603, provide support for the worldwide ministries of the Presbyterian Church USA and the United Church of Christ as well as staff and facilities for traditional ministries of worship, Christian education and pastoral care for members and friends. Thanks to givers like you weekly prayers for God's will and kingdom find fulfillment in downtown Rockford and beyond.



## SAVE THE DATES FOR LENT

February 26, 6:30 pm  
Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesdays, March 4, 18, 25, and April 1  
Lenten Supper with Worship Learning Experience  
Dinner 5:30 pm, Worship 6:30 pm

Thursdays, March 5 - April 2, 12:10 pm - 12:50 pm  
Mindfulness with Sandy Williams

Wednesday, March 11, 7:00 pm  
Greenville University Choir Concert

Sunday, April 5, 10:00 am  
Palm Sunday Worship and Potluck

April 9, 6:30 pm  
Maundy Thursday Worship

April 12, 10:00 am  
Easter Sunday

## FROM THE MODERATOR

WOW, the busyness of the holidays is over, gone are the Christmas lights and running from store to store to buy the perfect gift. It now is a bittersweet time of drab winter with Christmas behind and the somber happiness of Easter not quite in our site. For me the thought of Easter brings Happiness and Joy without the expectation and pressure that comes with Christmas. I long for a time of gathering with friends and family just to share a meal and visit. I hope you too can find happiness and joy in the days to come.

## FROM CO-CHAIR OF BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Jim Delmore

We need your help. If you see something that needs attention, please take the time to fill out the Building & Grounds Concerns form and return it to the office. The form will allow us to track the request and notify you when the concern has been addressed. The forms are located on the table in the back of the sanctuary and in the office.

## MINISTRY TEAMS UPDATE

The Nominating Ministry Team will soon be meeting to fill positions on our church Ministry Teams. Steve Showers once said that "The Nominating Ministry Team works to match the skills and passion of our church family with the appropriate ministry team". This is exactly what we try to do, but to do this we will need your help. Do you have an interest in a particular ministry team or know someone that does? If so, please contact Ann Stites at [annstites@hotmail.com](mailto:annstites@hotmail.com). The Nominating Ministry Team members listed below will be happy to answer any questions that you might have. You don't have to be a member of the church to join a team except for the Trustee Ministry Team.

The members of the Team are; Jim Delmore, Holly Hegge, Jean Herro, Tyler Noel, Katy Paterson, Doug Phillips, Diane Pippel, Darlene Riddle and Ann Stites (Chair).

## WINTER SHOWER HOURS

For the winter season we will be open on Mondays from 10:00 am - 11:00 am for showers. Showers will be offered twice weekly again when the Overnight Café is over. For more information, contact: [becky.erbe@secondfirst.org](mailto:becky.erbe@secondfirst.org)



Our faithful and hardworking Jubilee Soup Kitchen volunteers.



# FEBRUARY CALENDAR

**Saturday, February 1**  
Bridge Clinic

**Communion Sunday, February 2**  
Gary Stillwell Preach  
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:15 AM – Peanuts  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

**Monday, February 3**  
10:00 AM – Free Showers  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

**Tuesday, February 4**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop

**Wednesday, February 5**  
9:30 AM – Hospitality Team  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

**Thursday, February 6**  
9:30 AM – Carillons  
5:30 PM – JD Board  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

**Friday, February 7**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, February 8**  
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

**Sunday, February 9**  
Rev. Rebecca Preach  
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Budget and Foundation Meeting  
11:15 AM – Peanuts  
No Fair For All Shop

**Monday, February 10**  
10:00 AM – Free Showers  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
5:00 PM – Deacons

**Tuesday, February 11**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Presbytery Dekalb  
5:00 PM – Foundation  
6:00 PM – DVT

**Wednesday, February 12**  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
5:00 PM – Trustees  
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

**Thursday, February 13**  
9:30 AM – Carillons  
12:00 PM – Adult Ed  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

**Friday, February 14**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, February 15**  
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

**Bell Sunday, February 16**  
Rev. Rebecca Preach  
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass  
9:20 AM – Peanuts  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour  
11:15 AM – Music Ministry Team  
11:15 AM – Fellowship Ministry Team  
11:15 AM – Family CE  
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

**Monday, February 17**  
10:00 AM – Free Showers  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

**Tuesday, February 18**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
5:00 PM – Missions  
6:00 PM – Executive Committee

**Wednesday, February 19**  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

**Thursday, February 20**  
9:30 AM – Carillons  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

**Friday, February 21**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, February 22**  
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

**Sunday, February 23**  
Becky Erbe Preach  
8:30 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 – Wind Ensemble Nordlof

**Monday, February 24**  
10:00 AM – Free Showers  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

**Tuesday, February 25**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
6:00 PM – Earth Care

**Ash Wednesday, February 26**  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers  
6:30 PM – Ash Wednesday Service

**Thursday, February 27**  
9:30 AM – Carillons  
5:30 PM – Governing Council  
6:00 PM – Bellcantos  
7:00 PM – Choir

**Friday, February 28**  
Darry Widergren Memorial Service  
11:00 am

**Saturday, February 29**  
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic



There is a lot of smiling in the Fair Trade store because of the generosity of SecondFirst members. Fair Trade has been able to donate coffee to the Bridge Clinic, Overnight Café, Adult Ed Class, and SecondFirst Church Kitchen for all their activities. All of those extra 50 cents and \$1.00 added on to purchases, plus some generous donations, has made this possible.

The Fair for All Shop will be closed February 9, for the Annual Meeting.

# JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT: 2019 BY THE NUMBERS

## LOVE ROCKFORD

- 406 attended
- 659 impacted
- Over 850 pieces of educational literature handed out
- Over 750 face to face contacts linking with representatives from over 30 providers
- Food, clothing, bike repair, hair-cuts and education through Narcan trainings and immigration rights trainings happened continuously throughout the day

## JEREMIAH CARES

- 308 attended
- 466 impacted
- Over 1300 pieces of educational literature handed out
- Over 900 face to face contacts linking with representatives from over 20 providers
- 200 turkeys and boxes of vegetables handed out
- Flu shots, massages, and health screenings throughout the day

## NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAMS

- 300 lbs of fresh vegetables harvested from the garden for those in need
- 15 properties improved in collaboration with the City of Rockford
- 250 newsletters delivered door to door each month to communicate with residents of the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood
- 100 bags of popcorn handed out at Movie in the Park night
- 50 people safely enjoying a family friendly movie at Haskell Park after dark
- 20 people learning how to keep themselves and their property safe at Safe Neighborhood meeting

## CONNECTIONS

- Haskell School – Jeremiah was instrumental in connecting Haskell School and the Kjelstrom Foundation to fund and build a new musical playground
- Wheelchair elevator – Jeremiah contacted Emmanuel Episcopal church to help a resident get their wheelchair elevator repaired so they could leave the house
- Home repair – Jeremiah connected an elderly homeowner with a retired electrician to repair wiring to enable her to have workable outside lights

## FUTURE – all of the above plus ...

- Light the Night – install solar motion detector lights on homes in “hotspot” crime areas
- Jeremiah DOES – small motor repair classes and small business mentoring



Pam Osborne, from KNIB, Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful, came to speak at Coffee Hour on January 26. She stated that it is essential to recycle as much as possible to keep the amount going to the landfills at a minimum. Avoid getting plastic bags if possible, and they either have to go in the trash or to collection sites at most grocery stores. KNIB still collects plastic and is right now is storing it. She mentioned a local company that will be processing plastic back into diesel fuels for vehicles to use. Go to [www.KNIB.org](http://www.KNIB.org) for more information. REFUSE single use, REDUCE consumption, REUSE everything, RECYCLE as a last option. Thanks – Linda Mohaupt