

SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
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Non Profit
Organization US
Postage PAID
Permit No. 3734
Rockford, Illinois

NOVEMBER 2020

THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace



FROM REV. REBECCA WHITE NEWGREN

Hey Church,

What a month, what a year! It is my deep hope and desire that you are taking 2020 by the reins and finding new ways of connecting and creating meaning in your daily life. As we continue to recreate what it means to be church in this Covid era, please share any good ideas you have.

I was hoping to write right here a concrete plan for worship in November. But now more than ever God laughs at our plans. With the high Covid numbers in our area, we will most likely have to flex weekly following the guidance of the health department.

The good news is your Covid team, Deacons, Trustees, staff and others are hard at work figuring out plans A, B, C, and D! Because you all have expressed different desires in the ways you want to worship, we are trying to put together a hybrid of possibilities. Our main form of worship will remain virtual until it is safe to be together in large groups. We are also putting together a plan to allow people to worship in their cars using an FM radio while watching a live and crazy preacher in the cold. At the same time we want to offer an inside Sanctuary worship experience for a very limited, distanced and masked group. Watch our publications for details.

I miss you all...(which is good news for my brain injury because I have begun to realize time is passing.). Reach out any time. My cell phone is in the directory or call the church office.

Peace to you, all!
Rebecca

CROP HUNGER WALK RECAP

Thousands of people in our community who struggle to get groceries for their families will be able put food on their tables thanks to a walk that benefits area pantries. The Rockford Area CROP Hunger Walk is typically an almost 5 mile walk starting at the Riverfront Museum Park. But because of the pandemic this years event was virtual. Walkers signed up online and participated by doing their own walk. Jennifer Archer's families has participated for 15 year and she wouldn't let the coronavirus stop her from helping those in need.



"When you worry about where your next meal is coming from you can't think about how you achieve in school or work or anything of the other things that make you a success in life if you can't even feed yourself and your family," Archer aid. Lasts years walk raised nearly \$34,000 this year the goal was to have 250 walkers and raise \$35,000. **View the complete news coverage:** <https://www.wifr.com/2020/10/19/rockford-area-crop-hunger-walk-goes-virtual/>



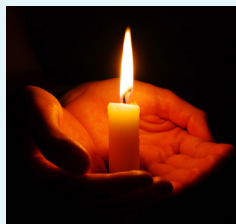
**PILGRIM POTLUCK
BECOMES A PUMPKIN BAR
DRIVE-THROUGH!
Sunday, November 22, 2020**

Come for a pumpkin bar and celebrate our collective stewardship. More details coming soon...



NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST UCC COLLECTING NAMES OF LOST LOVED ONES FOR NOV. 1 ALL SAINTS VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE



The United Church of Christ is holding a virtual All Saints Day worship service on Sunday, Nov. 1, to acknowledge the loss, the grief and pain of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some 215,000 people in the United States have died from the virus, and Local Church Ministries leaders want to honor those lives by inviting the wider church to collectively lament that great loss.

"All Saints' Day is a very old observance of Christian Churches. In the Northern Hemisphere, it falls exactly midway between the Autumn Equinox and the Winter Solstice; the growing season has ended, the earth is turning away from the sun and entering a period of deep winter night. Losses of the past year—especially loved family and friends—are often felt keenly, as creation enters an empty, yet hopefully fallow, period," said the Rev. Sue Blain, minister of worship and gospel arts. **Read more:** www.ucc.org

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) CHRISTIAN LOVE IS ALL ABOUT ACTION



During the holidays, we find ourselves wrapping the babe born in Bethlehem in a thick blanket woven with the threads of sentimental

love. We sing hymns about how love came down from heaven. We light the fourth candle around the Advent wreath — referred to as the "love" candle in most wreath-lighting liturgies — and bask in its warm glow. It's all very comforting. Yet the love God gave to the world in the way of Jesus is not about feelings. It's about action. It was seen in Mary's "yes" to be the Christotokos, the "Christ-bearer." It was illustrated by Joseph taking Mary as his wife, even though she was carrying a child that was not his. It rang through the night skies as angels sang of salvation to the shepherds. **Read more:** www.presbyterianmission.org

GIVING: 2020-2021 PRESBYTERIAN GIVING CATALOG

We are so blessed to live where we do and to have what we have. It doesn't matter who you are or where you live. You have so much more than so many. You can make a difference in someone's life for just a few dollars. I can't think of a nicer gift than the gift of hope.

The 2020 - 2021 Presbyterian Giving Catalog is out. Have you received yours yet? If not, go to presbyteriangifts.pcusa.org. You don't have to be a Presbyterian to use the catalog. If you have a cause that is close to your heart, you can find a way to help in the Giving Catalog. Gifts start at \$10.00.

This is how it works: Select gifts that mean something to you. The gifts are joined with others increasing your gifts capacity to bring hope to communities around the world. I would like to share with you the gifts that I selected:

- » Supplies for Displaced Students - The way to a better life is through education
- » Sewing Machine - A business can be started which will be a steady source of income
- » Fishing Net - The fishing net will allow the catching of fish for food and income
- » Farming tools - This gift of proper tools will help with the growing of crops

The gifts are given in memory of my mother, father and father-in-law. I encourage you to take the time to look at the catalog and choose something that is important to you. There were so many other items that I would like to purchase. A copy of the catalog is at church.

-Jim Delmore



JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT

We had one last visitor to the garden as we began to put it to bed for the winter - a beautiful monarch butterfly. As we go into the winter months, the garden takes a pause to rest from a busy summer and replenish the soil nutrients. It is still alive and busy; we just don't see it.

Like the garden, Jeremiah Development will be busy planning for 2021 over the next few months. After an active summer, we have a chance to take a pause and begin working on different ways to provide the very much needed services of LOVE Rockford and Jeremiah CARES at a time when we won't know where we are in the cycle of this unpredictable pandemic. Much of the work we have to do over the next few months will not be flashy or newsworthy, but is needed to prepare for a strong, flexible, pandemic-proof 2021. One issue that has become clear during this year is how important it is that we bridge the digital divide that exists within the neighborhood. We need to be able to gather with neighbors differently so our programming can continue to be led by the residents of the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood.

We will be delivering the newsletter throughout the winter months. This has been an especially important tool to get into the neighborhood and have meaningful conversations with our neighbors. Our goal has always been to have the residents or those who work in the CHN take leadership roles in all we do, and the newsletter is no different. It is written and designed by one of the people who work in the CHN with guest articles provided by agencies who serve the area! A big thank you to our Boylan High School volunteers who will be helping deliver the newsletters throughout the winter. We would not be able to do it without them. Our 'Light the Night' program is going well with about two thirds of the lights installed as of the writing of this article. We are providing peace of mind while making it difficult for criminals to use the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood as a place of business.

We are currently looking for a volunteer who is familiar with WordPress to help us keep our website up to date. It will be about 20 hours a month and requires good writing skills. If you would like to help us keep the community aware of the wonderful things Jeremiah is doing through our website and Facebook page, please email me at sue@jeremiahdevelopment.org.

Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving, and remember to wear your mask and wash your hands!



PAUL'S HYMN STORIES (#3)

Have you ever heard a poem that simply begs to be set to music? This is certainly the case for Holy Holy Holy! Lord God Almighty! the first hymn in our Glory to God hymnal. It began its life publicly as part of the influential English publication of A Selection of Psalms and Hymns for the Parish Church of Banbury (3rd ed., 1826). Bishop Reginald Heber (1783-1826), the author crafted these works as a way for the congregation to sing words that would amplify and prepare the congregation for what was to be the day's liturgical topic; all texts in this collection of hymn texts were intended to be sung between the Nicene Creed and sermon. In this case, the Bible text to be expounded upon was likely to be Revelation 4:2-11, which itself was likely modeled upon Isaiah 6:1-5. Heber wrote these words for use on Trinity Sunday. Heber, to be clear, was a preacher and steward of the church, but not a composer. (In fact, he would often choose old English ballad tunes to provide music for his hymns. This type of substitution was common, and is even the manner in which our National Anthem was penned to an old English drinking song.

The tune for this hymn was written by John Dykes (1823-1876). Heber's text had been floating about for quite some time before Dykes has set his eyes upon it. It was set to several melodies, yet the poetic pattern of A (Holy, Holy...) B A (Holy Holy again) C was challenging for composers during a time when melodic composition preferred longer phrases and more expansive designs. Dykes' setting followed this poetic pattern successfully and quickly became permanently associated with the text. In my opinion, the previous musical settings are unremarkable. This hymn is among my favorites, and it was performed at my wedding. One of the aspects that means most to me is the manner in which it opens (DO DO MI MI SOL SOL) and then moves to LA on "Lord". My reaction to this pattern and its use in this hymn is similar to that I experience when observing a beautiful sunrise. DO MI SOL is a simple chord, what we call a 'triad'. To me, the use of three iterations of "Holy" on the three pitches of the triad its itself trinitarian, and beautifully expresses the Trinitarian hymn text. It is a reflection of the Sanctus that is to be heard later in the liturgy, and a true celebration of the great mystery. It is the perfect choice to open our hymnal.

Paul Laprade, your music director

Holy, Holy, Holy! LORD GOD ALMIGHTY!



STORIES OF THE BIBLE AND THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES Tuesdays at 12:00 noon

Led by Rev. Rebecca on Zoom
The stories of the Bible are full of pain and joy, suffering and triumph. In some ways they mirror our own stories and in other ways they seem distant and far away. Using the Narrative Lectionary text for the coming Sunday, we will study the passage and use it to reflect on our own lives. All are welcome. No Bible experience necessary.

Register with Debbie in the office by calling 815-963-8431 to receive the Zoom link.

EXCITING NEWS FROM KFACT!

KFACT was the grant winner for The FHLB Targeted Impact Fund Grant Program applied for by Blackhawk Bank. The service organizations that are receiving grant funds met the criteria established for the grant application, including those addressing the ongoing needs of populations hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis (ex-organizations promoting a more fair and inclusive society for underserved demographics, supporting career development and job training, equity and racial justice, elderly and vulnerable populations, and fair housing and counseling services).

COVID-19 has shaken the lives of many families, communities, businesses and organizations on a global level and KFACT is no exception. Thank you Blackhawk Bank for remembering the mission of KFACT and the girls we serve in Rockford!

The program staff continue to meet with girls one-on-one and in small groups. We are hoping to start traditional programming after winter break. Our annual pajama party is scheduled for Saturday, December 19, 2020, which may be a virtual PJ Party. Either way we are asking all KFACT friend's to donate a new pair of pajamas and slippers socks by December 1st. You can drop off pajamas and socks Tuesday-Friday 10:00 am-3:00 pm. If you need a Saturday drop option, off please call us! KFACT office number is (815) 708-8430.



SAVE THE DATE! December 1, 2020 for KFACT's annual Giving Tuesday Friendraiser at Forest Hills Country Club!

Thanks!
Shamika Williams, Executive Director

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Our council meeting included lots of discussion about issues we need to address, but nothing was voted on. Some of the items that we worked on included the Christmas Eve service, the YMCA usage of our building for school activities, converting the Music Ministry Team to a worship team, Boots for Haskell, and team priorities.

What will the Christmas Eve service look like? Right now, we don't know, but we are discussing it. Mary Spindler has promised that the sanctuary will be decorated, so we know that it will be beautiful and will glorify God. Other details will be dependent on what phase we are in during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The YMCA agreement has been reviewed and looks good. SecondFirst Church is listed on their insurance so that helps protect us. There are signs that we need to place in and around the building and of course, we need state approval for use of the building. More to come at a later date.

The Music Ministry Team is working with Deacons and DVT to determine how to discuss all of worship in one place. It will be a change and will be done deliberately and with careful thought.

Boots for Haskell will look different this year. The sorting process needs to change so that everyone is protected. Karen Olson is working on a plan and we know that it will be a good plan!

Grace and peace,
Ann Stites

DONATIONS NEEDED: BOOTS FOR HASKELL

As has been our tradition for many years now, and we are providing snow boots to the students at Haskell School again this year. These boots allow the students to enjoy the outside during recess year-round. While outside play is always important, the social distancing required in the classrooms this year makes it even more important that the kids get to play outside and interact with their peers. The mission ministry team is accepting donations to help defray the costs of the boots. Please consider a donation to this wonderful cause. Checks can be mailed to the church with the memo line reading Haskell boots. Please feel free to contact Karen Olson with any questions.



MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

By Ann Stites

For many years, I consulted with non-profits and churches that were either struggling or wanted to move to the next step in their organizational growth. Of course, that meant that they needed to lean into change and change is a four letter word to many people. It is uncomfortable, it means doing good work in a new way, and it means a lot of soul searching.

The two most common sentences I heard in that job were: "We've always done it this way" and "We tried that and it didn't work". There are plenty of examples of the first comment. My favorite is a short story about a husband asking his wife why she always cut off the end of a roast and put it next to the rest of the roast in the pan. She replied that her mother taught her to do that. So, being a person who wanted answers, the husband asked his mother-in-law why she did this. And, no surprise, she did it because that was how her mother cooked her roasts. Off to grandmother he went because he was now on a mission to find out why the end of the roast was cut off and placed next to the rest of the roast in the pan. Grandmother told him that when her children were young, she didn't have a pan big enough for a roast and couldn't afford one. Therefore, she cut off the end so that the roast would fit in the pan that she owned. Did she still do it that way, he asked. Of course not, she replied. I now have a pan that a whole roast fits in. So, two generations of women cut off the end of the roast unnecessarily because "we've always done it this way" even though the need to do that didn't exist anymore.

The other comment: "We tried that and it didn't work", drove me crazy. I'd ask why didn't it work and frequently the answers I received were pretty vague. Often it boiled down to not wanting to make the change so they didn't try to make it work, or they didn't evaluate what was good about the change and what needed to be adjusted.

Change is necessary to survive and to thrive. I'm always amazed at how well this congregation works to change and assesses how that change is working or not working. In this era of pandemic, we've had to make a lot of changes and people have worked diligently to make these changes work, with lots of adjustments along the way. Good job, fellow servants of Christ!

"But the Lord
stood with me and
gave me strength."

2 TIMOTHY 4:17

COFFEE CLASS

Coffee Class continues to gather each Sunday at 8:30 am with a wide range of topics. Exact sessions are still being finalized, but this is a wonderful opportunity to connect with others. Contact Andy Newgren to receive the Zoom invite or be added to the email distribution list.

FILM SERIES ON RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

So many of us are trying to better understand the complex racial dynamics and history in our country. This ongoing series will use film as the medium to guide small group conversations. In November we will watch Lee Daniels' *The Butler*, based on the life of Eugene Allen. Participants will watch the film individually and join a discussion on Zoom. Dates are to be determined. Keep an eye on the E-Word for more information or contact Andy Newgren for the latest.



FALL CHURCH LANDSCAPE CLEANUP

Saturday, November 7, from 8:00 am to noon

The Building and Grounds committee is going to have a fall cleanup. Bring your gloves and any favorite tool you might need. Let's beautify our church grounds. Contact: Ron Schaad

JUBILEE SOUP KITCHEN

Saturday, November 21, 10:00 am

Marge Maynard will coordinate and we need 2 people to help at 10:00 am and 2 people to help at 10:30 am. We will be preparing To-Go lunches that will center on beef stew. Contact Marge with questions.

A NOTE FROM THE CARILLONS

Bell groups are eager to ring, but we cannot get together at this time. We need a safe way to do so. However, the Carillons receive a "weekly musical message" from Joyce Zartman. They have received 30 so far. Each message includes a new handbell piece for listening pleasure. When we are able to have services in the sanctuary again, the Carillons look forward to presenting some of these pieces. Sending love to all! We miss you.
- Joyce Zartman and the Carillons



PLEASE JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Every Sunday at 10:00am on Facebook Live

We will continue to broadcast our worship service through a Facebook Livestream. Please help us spread the word. While physically apart, this is an opportunity to come together!

You can find the Worship Order for each week through the weekly Facebook event page, or on our website: www.secondfirst.org/what-to-expect

HAPPY HOUR UPDATE

Thursday, November 5th at 6:30 pm

Seven people enjoyed beverages and conversation at the October Happy Hour. We would love to have you join us next time on the first Thursday, November 5th at 6:30 pm. Please let Debbie or Becky know if you would like the Zoom link to be included. If 6:30 is too early, please let us know. We are not locked into that time. Hoping to see you on the 5th!



FAIR TRADE SHOP

You can shop online by letting Debbie in the office know or Eleanor Babel if there is something that interests you. Shown is some of our usual stock plus we will have some pictures of nativity gourds in the future.

OUR THRIFT SHOP IS NOW OPEN!

Hours: Tuesdays from 10:00 am - Noon

Due to Covid-19 things have changed a bit. We are limiting the amount of donations for now. Please call the church before donating.



Andy Newgren with kids during the early word on Sunday, October 18.



SecondFirst Church responded to tragedy in our neighborhood with donuts and prayers.



Pizza and movie night with the middle and high school students was enjoyed by all who attended.



"We are grieving, we're praying, we're calling on God to bring peace and joy and healing and wholeness right here to this very block, right into the streets of Rockford." Rev. Rebecca White Newgren



The sun was shining on our Outdoor Worship Service on Sunday, October 4.



[Photography Credit: Susan Moran/Rockford Register Star]

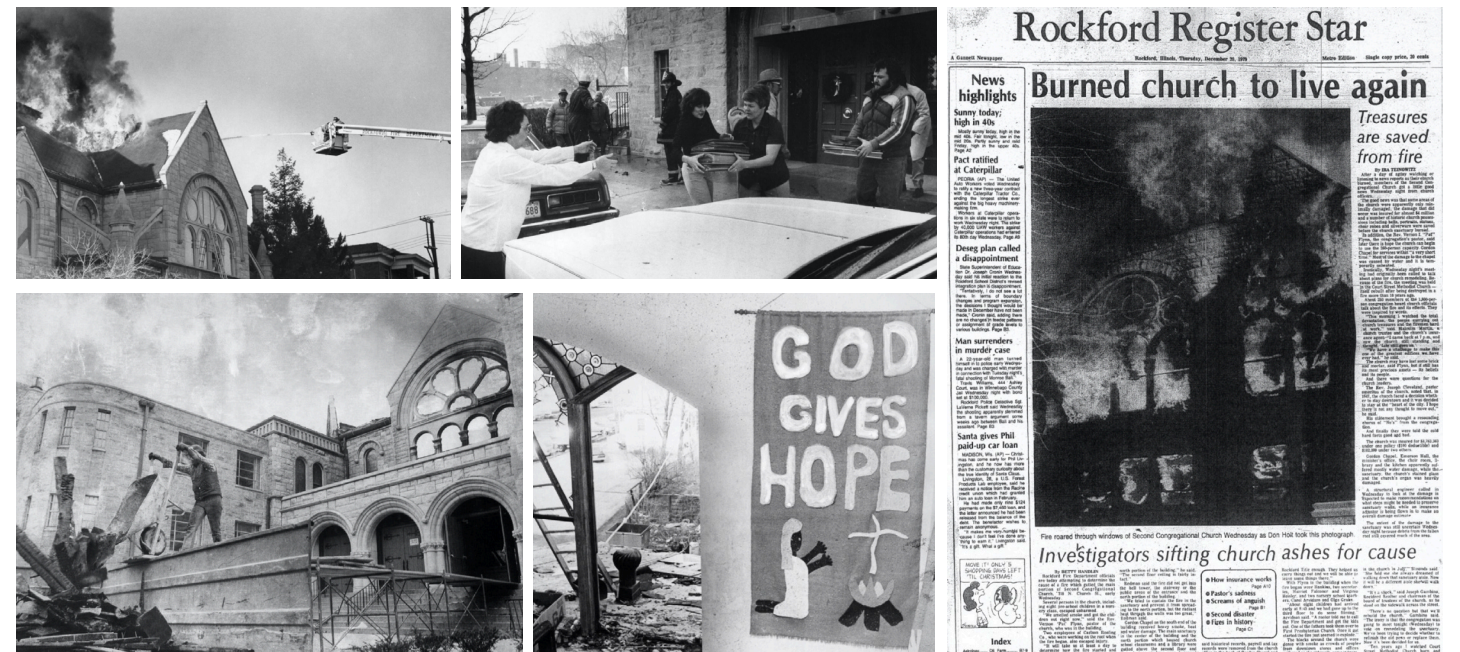
FROM OUR CHURCH HISTORIAN, ALICE UPHOUSE

To my Church Family: I'm sending this message as Church Historian. We will be together again, for "Worship" in our beautiful Sanctuary sometime. I remember a December day in 1979 when our Sanctuary burned. We were devastated. We the congregation rose up and re-built. Oh, how I have missed each of you, shaking hands and giving hugs. Now we face a different challenge — a deadly pandemic is alive and well in our community. As this church congregation did before we will stand tall again, just in a different way. I share a quote that's relevant today:

"Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith, and where there is despair, may we bring hope."

- Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister England 1925-2013

These stunning photos are from the *Rockford Register Star* archives. This story ran on Thursday, December 20, 1979.



Rockford Register Star

Burned church to live again

Treasures are saved from fire
Investigators sifting church ashes for cause