

SecondFirst Church

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JANUARY 2022

THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace



FROM REV. REBECCA WHITE NEWGREN

Hello Church!

Happy New Year! Maybe? I hope? Questions abound as we head into this new year. What will it look like? What will Covid-19 do? How will we have to respond? I don't know about you, but I don't like uncertainty. Our study of the Gospel of John on Sundays in worship (and Tuesday noon Bible studies) comes at the right time. From the sermon on Sunday, December 19:

We have been walking through the Old Testament this Fall, and recently through the prophets. We get a sense that the family faith (and by extension us) are just not getting the right picture; just not quite understanding what God is wanting us to do. There is violence and war and exile, and promise and hope, and uncertainty and doubt, and love and fear. It's all getting a bit complicated. The Gospel of John speaks right to the heart of that complicated, overwhelmed feeling, that feeling that can make us feel dumb at times because we just can't quite grasp the way God wants us to be, know and act. The Gospel of John starts over using the words of Genesis. In the beginning. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. A new start. A fresh beginning. One that has grace upon grace.

May we take God up on the grace of a new start, a fresh beginning this year. We may not know what the year will look like, but we know that God is with us and that we can do this year together as church.

Peace to you,
Rebecca



OVERNIGHT CAFÉ NEWS

We will open January 4 and will run through March 13. If you would like to help out in any way consider donating a meal or sleeping bags, socks, underwear all sizes. Just adding milk or water to Breakfast bowls is great also, so our guests can have a warm meal as they go out each morning.

Another great way to support this program is to give us your prayers. Pray for the staff working with the guests and the guests themselves. Each one has a story that makes them unique. Contact Pastor Becky for more information.

www.secondfirst.org



Festival of Lights outing bonfire.



Baking Christmas cookies.



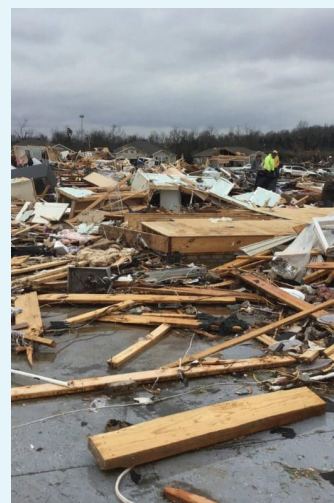
Memorial for the homeless.



Boots for Haskell School

NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST UCC SEVERE STORMS 2021 APPEAL TO AID DECEMBER TORNADO VICTIMS

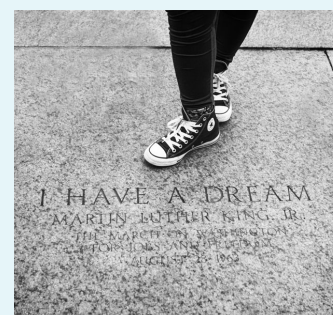


In the days since a series of deadly tornadoes swept across six states on Dec. 10, people of the United Church of Christ have reached out to respond.

Donations are being directed to the church's Severe Storms 2021 appeal, as Disaster Ministries works with Conference disaster coordinators to assess the damages and discern how best to help.

At least 90 people died in the destructive Friday-night storms, 80 of them in Kentucky. In Edwardsville, Ill., six people were killed when a tornado knocked down the walls and took the roof off an Amazon warehouse. Four people in Tennessee were killed, as well as two in Arkansas and two in Missouri. **Read more:** www.ucc.org

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) SHARING THE DREAM - CHURCHES ENGAGE IN MLK DAY OF SERVICE



"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" said Charlotte Hall. It's a question the elder and chair of the outreach committee of Swarthmore Presbyterian Church doesn't ask alone. Located in a suburb outside of Philadelphia, the 675-member church is constantly seeking ways to engage with its community. Among those ways is taking seriously the call to serve that marks the national celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929. In 1983, legislation was signed to make his birthday a federal holiday. Three years later, in January 1986, Americans first observed what would become known as "MLK Day." Then, in 1994, Congress designated the federal holiday as a national Day of Service and charged AmeriCorps, a national nonprofit that sends volunteers to areas of need, with leading this effort. **Read more:** presbyterianmission.org

REFLECTIONS FROM THE MODERATOR

Donna Schaad introduced the idea of "Dinner for 9" to our church. It was a successful program in her previous church. An intentional uneven number of people are invited in order that those of us who are not part of a couple feel welcome. Ron and Donna hosted a dinner for 8 recently. There were three couples and two of us singles there. We enjoyed a delicious potluck and delightful conversation.



We all wore a hat that meant something to us. During dinner we each talked about our hats. After dinner we each talked about the career that we'd had. We all happened to be retired. It was most interesting to learn about how people had earned a living.

I've been thinking ever since about how few people in church that I associate with a career. At church we tend to think about what our volunteers do. We may be gardeners, cooks, decorators, fix-it people, musicians, shop keepers, etc. Some of us volunteer using education and experience gained from careers. Others volunteer doing things we enjoy and have an interest in.

For those of you who haven't signed up to be part of a Dinner for 9, it's not too late. Contact Debbie in the office to be part of a new group. Each group will meet four times a year. The group is free to plan activities. This is a delightful way to get to know other church members.

Gratefully,
Katy Paterson

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Dear Church friends,

What a fine turn out of pledges you provided again last year to guide our Governing Council as it directs ministry that will continue Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace. Many of you have gotten in touch with your roots recalling times that help explain why your faith in Christ brings you to church each week.

Thank you once again for your financial support that helps continue a ministry that is nearing the two century mark. While there are many ways to support the congregation, your annual pledge allows our church to continue and even increase our vital mission at this critical time in our lives.

If you have not yet pledged we urge you to do so now. It will add to the confidence our Governing Council feels as it plans worship, Christian education, fellowship and support of our two parent denominations. Your generosity will make a real difference.

With gratitude,
Your Trustees Stewardship subcommittee,
Phil Davidson, Karen Hill, David Jones, David Noel, Katy Paterson, Darlene Riddle, Ann Stites



JANUARY worship schedule

JANUARY 2: JESUS SAYS COME AND SEE

Preacher Becky Erbe
Music: Hayley Gotszche

JANUARY 9: WEDDING AT CANA

Preacher Andy Newgren
Music: Nicolai Janitzky

JANUARY 16: JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

Preacher Rebecca White Newgren
Music: Synchronia / Sanctuary Choir

JANUARY 23: NICODEMUS

Preacher Rebecca White Newgren
Music: Carillons

JANUARY 30: THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

Preacher Rebecca White Newgren
Music: Church Street String Band



Read a personal Stewardship Statement from John DeWaters on page 5. To view all the statements submitted during Stewardship Season, visit: www.secondfirst.org/stewardship-season/

GOVERNING COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

December 7, 2021

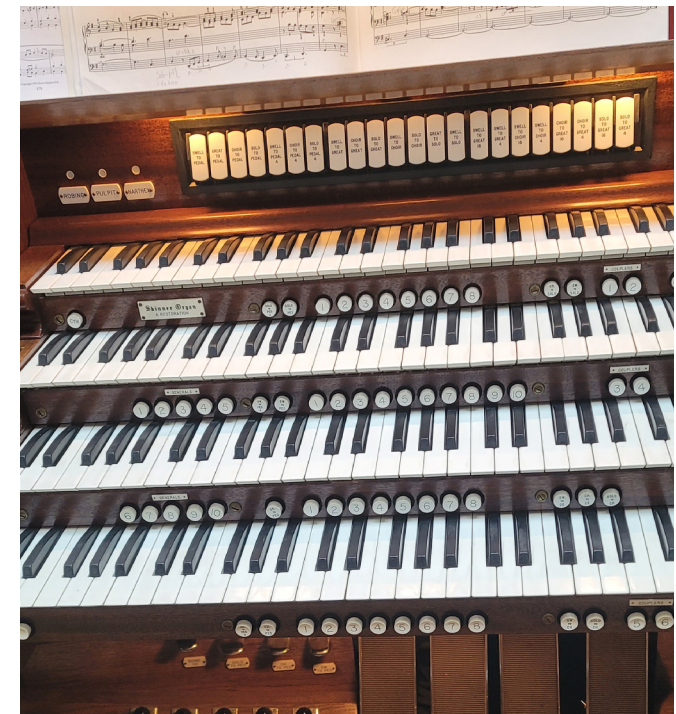
- » Pastor Becky reminded us about Remembrance Sunday on December 12th. The Festival of Lights outing went well. Prayer Stations will start Christmas week. Serious Soup has restarted.
- » Reverend Rebecca is busy with Advent. She has been visiting care facilities. She is grateful for staff, lay leaders and volunteers.
- » Treasurer John DeWaters reported that we will probably end the year with a black number, primarily due to credits from the Presbytery for Rebecca's injury. The number of people pledging this year is down. The Stewardship Committee will be making phone calls. The Budget Committee will be meeting. John suggested we develop a 5-10-year plan to prepare for the continued decline that is affecting all mainline churches.
- » Trustees Financial Comments and Report on Building Use.
- » Trustees Chair Jim Delmore asked for a blessing to all those who have money to the Foundation. We have used Foundation money to pay for several unplanned expenses. The water leak problems have been resolved and damage done by the problems have been fixed or will be fixed soon. Other items that need repairing include the heat exchange HVAC and a valve in the water system boiler. The mural has been fixed. A new water heater in Emerson has been installed. We need to replace the water softener for the kitchen.

Old Business

- » A letter explaining Becoming a Mathew 25 Congregation will be sent to the congregation.

New Business

- » Ministry Team chairs are asked to ask eligible people on their teams if they are willing to continue and submit any ideas for new people to the nominating team.
- » The Executive Committee has created the new position of Church Administrator. It is a 11-12 hour per week unpaid position for 6 months. It will be re-evaluated in 6 months. It will provide administrative support. Bob Langford has volunteered to take on this position. He will be sitting in on staff meetings, Governing Council, Executive Committee, Trustees and any other teams as needed. He suggested inviting all past moderators to a meal to share the history of the church.
- » 1 Minute Ministry Team Highlights
- » Deacons - Pumpkin bars were well received. They will hand out Christmas cookies December 19 and are helping Mary Spindler decorate the Sanctuary.
- » Worship Music and Arts - they are reading Next Worship about how to increase diversity in worship. They are discussing the Director of Music position and what it will entail.
- » DVT - they have finished Belonging interviews and are looking at data and next steps.
- » Church Administrator - Bob Langford shared that he should be treated as a staff member.
- » Missions - the boots have been delivered to Haskell.
- » The next Governing Council meeting will be January 27, 2022 via Zoom.



FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

By Valerie Blair

Picking up from the introduction to the SecondFirst pipe organ, this will be a series going through the various parts of the organ. Organs are made up of 4 basic components: the console, pipes, wind generator, and action. Consoles generally have between two to five manuals (keyboards), with ours having four. The pipes are classified as either flues or reeds, and range in size from a few inches to 32 feet high. Flues are hollow pipes with an opening in the side that makes the sound, and reeds have a piece of metal attached to the pipe that vibrates to create the sound. The action connects all the parts and makes the organ work; it is mechanical, pneumatic, electric, or electropneumatic. The wind generator blows pressurized air into the instrument, so that when a stop is pulled at the console, air is allowed into those pipes, and will sound when I press a key on that manual. That is the basic functioning of the instrument. More to come in the next newsletter.

The music this month will include Carillons and the return of the "Church Street String Band." At the time of writing this, I am hopeful that Synchronia will be playing on the 16th. This is the violin duo scheduled in October, but had to postpone due to a broken arm. Nicolai Janitzky, a baritone who sings in the Lyric Opera Chorus has agreed to sing and hopes travel remains open from Germany. So the plan as it looks now, but may change:

January 2022

- » 2nd: Hayley Gotszche
- » 9th: Nicolai Janitzky
- » 16th: Synchronia / Sanctuary Choir
- » 23rd: Carillons
- » 30th: String Band

We will also be learning about and singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing".

JANUARY CALENDAR

* held via zoom

Saturday, Jan. 1
No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, Jan 2 Communion
8:30 AM – Coffee Class*
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School

Monday, Jan 3 Office Closed
No Serious Soup

Tuesday, Jan 4 Overnight Café begins
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study*
5:30 PM – DVT

Wednesday, Jan 5
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – Covid Committee*
4:00 PM – Executive Committee Meeting
No Martin Ringers

Thursday, Jan 6
9:30 AM – Carillons
4:00 PM – Hospitality Team*
No Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Jan 7
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Jan 8
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, Jan 9
8:30 AM – Coffee Class*
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School

Monday, Jan 10
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
5:00 PM – Deacons Ministry*

Tuesday, Jan 11
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study*

Wednesday, Jan 12
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – Covid Committee
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, Jan 13
9:30 AM – Carillons
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Jan 14
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Jan 15
No scheduled activities

Sunday, Jan 16
8:30 AM – Coffee Class*
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:15 AM – Family CE

Monday, Jan 17
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, Jan 18
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study*
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry*

Wednesday, Jan 19
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
5:00 PM – Trustees*
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, Jan 20
9:30 AM – Carillons
6:00 PM v Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Jan 21
No scheduled activities

Saturday, Jan 22
No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, Jan 23
8:30 AM – Coffee Class*
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School

Monday, Jan 24
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
6:30 PM – Worship/Fellowship Team

Tuesday, Jan 25
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study*

Wednesday, Jan 26
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – JD Executive meeting
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, Jan 27
9:30 AM – Carillons
12:00 PM – JD Executive
5:30 PM – Governing Council*
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Jan 28
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Jan 29
No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, Jan 30
8:30 AM – Coffee Class*
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School

Monday, Jan 31
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

CROP HUNGER WALK REACHES \$41,000

Last year’s CROP Hunger Walk reached another successful conclusion. Over \$41,000 was raised by congregations and corporate sponsors. Our church alone raised over \$13,000. This means the Greater Rockford Pantry Coalition will receive over \$10,000 thanks to the generosity of people like us. The rest will address hunger around the world where Church World Service works with indigenous organizations. Rockford’s Hunger Walk Committee thanks everyone who contributed.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY UPDATE

by Rachel Huffman

“By the time you read this it will be 2022! Happy new year! I have been with the church now for over a year and I don’t know where the time has gone. The children continue to teach me as much as I hope that I am teaching them. While this past year has been yet another year that strayed from what we once called “normal” we have been able to do so many wonderful things from a trip to the zoo to another fun pop up pageant and there have been times when things feel so much more hopeful than they were last year. Every week it seems we talk about what the kids hope for, whether just day by day or for the coming months and years. This coming year I know that they want to do more activities together and I too hope that we can do some more service projects and fun outings while being aware that the pandemic is still not over and exercising appropriate cautions. Our youths have huge hearts and I am really encouraged by all of the great ideas that they have to help those in need in our community. If the weather cooperates there has been talk of going on another tubing outing like we did last year: it was an absolute blast! I am glad to be able to help with the building of new events and traditions for the youth of SecondFirst that they can cherish for the rest of their lives the way I have with all of the memories from my SecondCon youth days. Here’s to 2022 being a year of service, love, and fellowship.”

NARRATIVE LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY WITH REV. REBECCA

Beginning again on January 11, we will gather on Zoom weekly on Tuesdays at noon. Accessible to those with great and little Bible knowledge, we will walk through the Gospel of John from Christmas to Easter. Come learn the stories of the Bible and share the stories of your faith (or just listen)... all are welcome. Contact Debbie in the office for the Zoom link.

COFFEE CLASS

Coffee Class continues in the new year 8:30am Sunday mornings. Upcoming topics include Stories of Faith featuring our own Second First members, women in ministry, baptism, and much more. Contact Andy Newgren (andy.newgren@secondfirst.org) for the Zoom link and to get on the distribution list, with ideas for what you would like to see discussed, and if you have a session you would like to lead or facilitate.

This untitled poem by L.R. Knost was offered at Rev. Fred Krauss’ Celebration of Life in Aurora on Saturday, December 11 at Nancy Krauss’ request.

*Life is amazing.
And then it's awful
And then it's amazing again.*

*In between the amazing and the awful
It is ordinary and mundane and routine.*

*Breathe in the amazing
Hold on through the awful
And relax and exhale during the ordinary.*

*That's just living
Heartbreaking, soul-healing, amazing, awful, ordinary life
And it's breathtakingly beautiful.*

DECEMBER UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES by Jim Delmore, Chair

Last month we mentioned the mechanical room leak on the third floor that destroyed some ceiling panels in the Gathering Place Room. The ceiling panels have been replaced and a cover has been installed over some exposed plumbing. Leak detectors for all the mechanical rooms are still being evaluated.

The carpet has been installed in the old office and the Historian’s Room/ first floor Brides Room. If you are willing to help Alice Uphouse put things back, please call Alice or the office and request that your name be put on a

list to call when it is time to return the items.

The mural looks like new; the three damaged mural panels have been replaced. Extra bracing has been added. If you have not seen the mural lately it looks just as beautiful in the winter as in the summer.

Work will start on the installation of the new video system soon. The building diagrams have been looked at and a potential cable path has been found. The plan is not to have any exposed wires that will detract from beautiful

wood work in our sanctuary.

If you have noticed that the sanctuary is cooler than normal it is not because we are trying to save money. Which is a good idea; however that is not why it is cooler. The heat exchanger has had a weld go bad causing other problems with the furnace. We are waiting to find out when a new heat exchanger can be installed. Sadly the commercial Trane furnace had only a one year warranty.

Many other items have been repaired or replaced for a complete list of Trustees activities please look at the meeting minutes in the office.



A Little bit from Pastor Becky E...

Do you know how many people it takes to pull off the Advent and Christmas Season? We had many activities and services during this time. All of them would not happen without our great volunteers.

Thank you to Deacons and Fellowship for the fun evening of visiting the lights and bonfire. Thank you to Bill and Joyce Zartman, Jim Burright, Val Blair and Linda Johnson for the lovely music for our Remembrance service. Thanks to Wes and Holly Hegge for the sound!

Thank you to all who came out to the prayer stations. Thank you to all who decorated the trees. Thank you to Deacons/Fellowship/Hospitality and more who helped with baking cookies. Thank you all for participating in the Christmas Pageant.

Thank you for the beautiful music. Choir and Bells! Thank you Mary Spindler for the beautiful decorations and Poinsettias with Alice Uphouse helping arrange.

Thank you to you all, our beloved Congregation! Thank you for making beautiful and wonderful things happen. Happy blessed New Years to you all!

A NOTE FROM DVT (DISCERNMENT AND VISION TEAM)

Becoming a Matthew 25 Church

As chair of DVT, I am thrilled to lead our discussions on our two major themes for this year, Belonging and Diversity. We are now going through all the data (your thoughts and ideas) that was gathered during our congregational interviews. Thank you for your support for that project, your participation was at an incredible level.

As we began our research on diversity, materials were available to us from both UCC and the PC(USA). In particular, the PC(USA)'s Matthew 25 Church initiative drew our attention. What is a Matthew 25 church? Per the PC(USA)'s website "Matthew 25:31-46 calls us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities." But what exactly does that mean?

There are three pathways to become a Matthew 25 church.

1. The first is to "Building Congregational Vitality", to work on increasing spiritual strength and mission. For instance, Tuesday bible study with your senior pastor, adult educational programs, and obviously mission work. Another aspect of building congregational vitality is to be outward reaching, to follow Jesus' teaching to help the marginalized and suffering. Maybe, an overnight cafe to keep people alive during our cold winters, or some hot warm soup on a Monday afternoon.
2. The second pathway is "Dismantling Structural Racism," the unequal access to resources—such as money, education, food, housing—that affect people of color. Maybe, a Bridge Clinic that gives people access to health care, or a garden that provides fresh vegetables, or support of an organization such as Jeremiah Development, maybe, even something as small as boots for kids so they can go outside and play during their school day and be more open to learning.
3. "Eradicating Systemic Poverty" is the third pathway. Would that be support for an organization such as KFACT? Or even something as simple as a Thrift Store providing clothing for someone going on a job interview.

Our church is a member of the Presbytery of Blackhawk, which is a Matthew 25 Presbytery. To read more about what it means to be a Matthew 25 church, go to <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>

DVT determined that we are indeed a Matthew 25 church, at least in spirit. What did we need to do to formally become one? Simply register and state our intent to continue to work on these initiatives. It is not necessary for us to work on all three initiatives continually, but to declare an effort to continue to strive to reach the goals that Jesus challenged us with. PC(USA) would also like us to share our stories, to let them know what we are doing and what we hope to accomplish.

DVT unanimously voted to bring to the Governing Council a request to become a Matthew 25 church. After discussion at the Governing Council level, it was decided to initially educate the congregation about being a Matthew 25 church prior to this council vote so that you as members would have an understanding of the initiative and an opportunity to express your views or concerns. Please feel free to reach out to either myself or Katy Paterson, the Moderator, with your thoughts. Our contact information is in the church directory or you could email Debbie in the office and she will forward to us.

Thanks,
Karen Olson, chairperson of DVT

MISSIONS MINISTRY TEAM

By Zan Picchioni

Your mission money was at work providing children at the Fairgrounds Boys & Girls Club a special Christmas party this past December. Your Mission Ministry Team donated \$500, which was used in the best way for the boys & girls, all ages. Each December, these young people are treated to a Christmas party complete with a meal and a stocking for each that includes a \$25 gift certificate and candy.

While we're not sure how far our donation went in providing stocking goodies, we were told because of our donation, all attending were treated to a special dinner rather than hot dogs which has always been the norm over the years.

In addition, our Mission Team agreed to be the food sponsor, \$400, for this past December's KFACT Christmas party. Approximately 60 girls attended, and each received a pair of pj's and fuzzy socks. Your Mission Team provided the pizza, lasagna, & salad etc., and many of you may have donated pj's & socks on their own. Holly Beeman & Anne Stratemeyer gave extra help putting this together.

Thank you, church, for your generosity in providing your Mission Ministry Team so many opportunities to give to others where the needs are great. Bless you.



Once again, the Haskell boots project was a great success!

KFACT UPDATE

KFACT had the pleasure of speaking to the congregation in November to share some exciting news. We have ramped up our in person programming and the staff and girls have had an amazing time engaging new and returning mentees. Weekly in person groups have resumed in the schools and the students and RPS 205 staff and administration have shared position feedback.

KFACT hosted Fall Fest in the SecondFirst gym on November 23rd from 6-10 pm. This event was to connect and reflect on what we were thankful for this year. The mentees had a blast playing games and socializing. Special thanks to Jeff and the church staff for assisting with gym set-up and door duty, we had over 30 girls in attendance, what a fun-filled event to kick off their holiday break!

KFACT is so excited to host our annual overnight holiday party, December 17th. We were unable to do this event in person last year due to Covid. This event is always well attended and beyond the holiday celebration, this event is important to KFACT to ensure each and every mentee receives a Christmas gift, as many do not. We are so thankful for our Second First supporters who provide donations of pajamas for this event. We are extremely blessed this year and want to thank the Second First Mission Team who will be providing the food for this event.



Rooted in Love

They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season.

Psalm 1:3a



STEWARDSHIP STATEMENT

By John DeWaters

Back in 2006 I was fleeing an episcopal denomination I had been a member of, off and on, my entire life. The break had come when the local church, for years a strong and faithful supporter of the denomination, had to reassess its ability to continue to support its hierarchy financially at the requested level. In a confrontation with their representative, we stated that far from continuing to support them, we now needed their assistance. We were flatly rejected.

Adding to my sense of alienation was my growing perception that from our Bishop on down to the retired pastors among us, there was a failure to see us, the parishioners, as the "church". Rather, I felt, there was a glass ceiling between us in the pews and the men and women who compromised the episcopal structure, who saw themselves as the embodiment and protectors of the "church". So, I went church shopping. When I came to (then) Second Congregational Church in 2006, I quickly had a couple of encounters with Carl Dickow that cemented my commitment here. First, he immediately introduced himself to me, and learned enough about me to establish a link (we're both CPAs). The next Sunday, when he saw me enter the sanctuary with the furtive glance of every visitor trying to avoid notice, he called out and patted the pew next to him, "here, come sit here with me". I was instantly transformed; I had a home here.

A couple of Sundays later, Bob Bates was playing one of his magnificent postludes. Carl said "come on, let's go up and watch him play". I was horrified - he was suggesting we go up on the raised dais, the lair of the lofty rulers of the church, that "priests only" place! As we approached the rail overlooking Bob, Carl said "don't worry. We own the church". Wow! Not the denomination itself, not the episcopate, not a local Bishop. Us. I was all in then and there.

I quickly found out that my sense of ownership came with concomitant responsibility. If we're going to own this church, we have to take care of it. We're a representative democracy, and most of us know how persuasive the Nominations Team can be. Sooner or later (but mostly sooner) we're going to be asked to serve it with our time, talent and treasure. And we really can't refuse: This is our church in a more profound way than any I have ever attended. So, I've accepted minor leadership responsibilities for most of the fifteen years I've called SecondFirst home.

And it's all Carl's fault.