

SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
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Organization US
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Rockford, Illinois

MARCH 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!

Where does the time go? Lent is right around the corner, the season of the year when we spend reflecting and praying about who and whose we are. We prepare ourselves for the death and resurrection of Jesus and new life in Christ.

Given that we as a society have spent the last two years reflecting and pondering in much Covid solitude, we will use this Lent to reconsider the basic building blocks of our belonging to God, to the Church and to one another.

Here within you will read a great report from DVT from the member surveys on belonging. Thank you to all who did in the interviews and all who responded. We will be a better church when we connect the dots of your answers. Thank you to Karen Olson for organizing this endeavor!

My hope and prayer is that these COVID numbers continue to drop and more and more of us can spend time together. It is true what they say, we are better together.

Peace to you all,
Rebecca

MARCH worship schedule

MARCH 6: JESUS RAISES LAZARUS

John 10: 1-18
Preacher Rebecca White Newgren

MARCH 13: JESUS WASHES FEET

John 13:1-17
Preacher Rebecca White Newgren

MARCH 20: PETER'S DENIAL

John 18:12-27
Preacher Father Beauvais

MARCH 27: JESUS AND PILATE

John 18:28-40
Preacher Molly Carlson, IL Conf.

NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

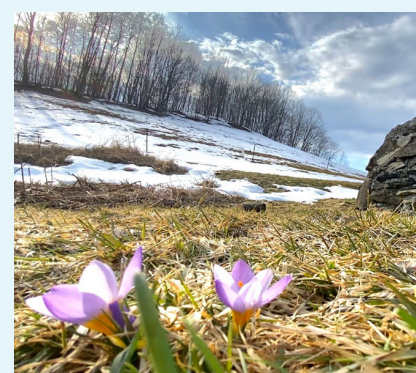
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST UCC OFFICERS SHARE PRAYER FOR UKRAINE



"There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers." Proverbs 6:16-19

As the attention of the world turns to the ignored cries for peace from the people of Ukraine, we the officers of the United Church of Christ join our prayers with those of churches and people of faith all over the globe that the attack against Ukraine will cease. As a Just Peace Church, the United Church of Christ calls for the de-escalation of violence and a return to diplomatic negotiations, the only true way conflict ever ceases. We urge our members to pray throughout the day for peace and protection against the evils of war for the people whose lives and wellbeing are in danger, and to make this Sunday a day of collective prayer and fasting for a peace that only God can bring. **Read more: www.ucc.org**

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) SEEING WITH OUR HEARTS: EASTER'S NEW POSSIBILITIES AWAIT



One early spring morning, in the season of Easter, I gazed upon my property that I had lovingly named "Old Stone Well Farm." It was far from being a farm, but in my heart, I treasured its potential and held tightly to what I have come to call its "still-to-comes."

I could see the yet-to-be planted fruit trees surrounding the gnarly old apple tree. I could see that much-needed barn finally standing at the base of the hill. I could see the goat pen arriving and placed near the chicken coop. (I will give a prize to the Presbyterians Today reader who counts the number of times I have mentioned my desire for raising goats!) As the sun rose, with it rose my hope that those "still-to-comes" were not just wistful dreaming. Despite plans being put on hold for one reason or another, I could see with my heart what was not visible to the eyes. **Read more: presbyterianmission.org**



ALL CHURCH CHOPPED COOKING CHALLENGE Sunday March 13 after church

We are hosting the (now) Annual Chopped Challenge on Sunday March 13th after church! This year it will be in person in the church kitchen. This event is open to ALL ages and we would love to be able to pair youth with adults for our teams. What culinary delight will you create with a table full of surprise ingredients? Sign up or email Rachel Huffman (rachel.huffman@second-first.org) to sign up.

February was a busy month!

Top Row: One of our 'Dinners for Seven' groups made and delivered food for the Overnight Café; Delicious fudge was made for Valentine's Day; Meals served at the Overnight Café.

Bottom Row: Ralph and Peter, "the dynamic duo" completed this kitchen renovation; Good ole' family fun at Alpine Hills Tubing!

LENT

ASH WEDNESDAY SOUP AND SERVICE

Wednesday, March 2: Soup 6:00 pm and Service 6:30 pm

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, March 2. Join us at 6:00 for soup and fellowship. (COVID precautions will be followed.) The service will be hybrid virtual and in person beginning at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. Participate in person or through Facebook Live.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SOUP DINNERS ARE BACK!

Starting Wednesday, March 9 at 6:00 pm

Join us on Wednesdays in Lent for Soup, Worship, and Study - beginning Wednesday, March 9 at 6:00 pm. Study topics include returning to community, the nature of belonging, and spiritual practices...all prepared for you by your own members. Options: Come only for Worship and Study at 6:30 pm, or join together on Zoom. We hope to see you!

THURSDAY NOON MEDITATIONS WITH SANDY WILLIAMS

Thursdays, March 10 - April 7: 12:05 pm - 12:50 pm on Zoom

Join together with Sandy for a quiet and encouraging lunch break. Breathe deeply in the Spirit of God and let go of all that doesn't serve you. Let the healing continue.

COFFEE CLASS LENTEN SERIES

Starting Sunday, March 6

The interaction between religion and science is one often staged as conflict, but there are various ways the disciples interact in constructive ways as well as greet each other with indifference. This Lenten series will explore the overall relationship between Christianity and science from both a broad view as well as specific issues where they complement and further our understanding. We will also be using the devotional Lent is Not Rocket Science to connect this to our individual spiritual development. Look for more information to come or Contact andy.newgren@secondfirst.org for the zoom link.

A little bit from Pastor Becky E.

Years and years ago the Reverend Dean Dalrymple served our Second Cong side of our family. He always used a familiar phrase when signing off, three simple words; "Be the Church!"

Dean said those words in a different time and our churches both UCC and Presbyterian were in different places. We had lots of children. We had plenty of choir members filling our lofts. We would need to set up chairs in the back of the Sanctuary for the extra Easter visitors. Both our churches had more than one service on Christmas Eve. Things look different now. What does it mean to Be the Church?

The church is more than it's staff. The church is more than it's outreach or mission work. It is more than who has the best choir. To "Be the Church" means it's people.

We are developing a strong member led environment here at SecondFirst and I am glad. Lay leaders are taking over the Call to Care program. Lay leaders are discerning what it means to Belong. Lay leaders and members alike are showing what it means to be the church. Being the church also means to step out of our walls to show the community the church by our actions. We love those who are unlovable. We are the church to those in front of us and we are church with people at Walmart.

I am proud of what the future holds and remember Be The Church!



SAVE THE DATES HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP

April 10, 10:00 am

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 14, 6:30 pm

GOOD FRIDAY

April 15, 12:00 pm

EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP

April 17, 10:00 am



EASTER SUNDAY FLOWERS

We will again have colorful pots of Spring flowers for the Chancel area of the Sanctuary, to celebrate Easter morning.

- » Tulips in yellow, pink or purple are \$11.00
- » White Easter Lilies are \$17.50
- » Azaleas in deep pink are \$17.25

Flower orders are due by **Tuesday, March 15**, if you want a specific color. After that date, we can't guarantee the color. If you would like to order a blooming plant call or stop by the office and let us know what kind and what color you want. If you would like to acknowledge a loved one please provide that information at the time you order. You can call the office to place your order (815) 963-8431.

KFACT UPDATE

The KFACT staff have been meeting with middle school counselors this month to address programming needs, additional academic & social emotional support needed for mentees. These semester meetings are a great way to learn more about the girls, the level of family support they have and academic challenges they face and to provide more holistic programming tailored to girls' specific needs.

We are happy to announce that we have resumed in person groups at West Middle School this month! KFACT has also committed to returning to Kennedy Middle School. The district and building

staff at KMS have asked KFACT to add their school due to the high needs of the girls. Due to scheduling and capacity we did not this would happen this school year. After meeting with the counselors and administration, KFACT staff had made some changes to ensure ALL RPS205 girls will receive mentoring this year! We have had a long standing relationship at Kennedy, which serves as a pipeline to Auburn High School. This will create a solid foundation for girls as they begin their high school career next year!

KFACT hosted a self-love event for the month of February at the Girls Space (located inside SecondFirst Church). This was such a fun and empowering event for everyone. Coming in March we

will begin a cooking series with the girls, this should be a well-attended series.

KFACT is currently in need of additional snacks and drinks (individually packaged) to provide for girls at the building for events and in the middle schools during their weekly groups. Due to the amount of learning loss from Covid, we now must meet during lunch periods instead of a class period.

If you are interested in sponsoring lunch or snacks for a middle school group (20 students per school), or dinner for KFACT girls at the Girls Space: please email Rachel Robinson at rachelrobinson@k-fact.org for more information.

RING, RING... WHO'S THERE? NOM..... NOM WHO? NOMINATING MINISTRY TEAM!

*Phil Davidson, Holly, Hegge,
Diane Pippel, Doug Phillips, Jean
Herro, Arlene Noel, Ann Stites,
Katy Paterson, Darlene Riddle*

Adult Christian Education Ministry Team promotes spiritual growth, development and community service through various educational activities: Bible studies, mission studies, movie reviews, guest lectures and more. Contact: adultchristianed@secondfirst.org

Deacons and Fellowship Ministry Team shepherds new members into the life of the church. The deacons seek to identify and support the needs of members with homebound communion and lay visiting programs. They also promote fellowship among current and prospective church members through social events, special interest groups, service projects and other activities mostly revolving around breaking bread together. Contact: deacons@secondfirst.org

Discernment and Vision Team works as a long-range planning team and as an Incubator Group for new ideas. DVT helps develop the idea relative to core values, supports a pilot project, and links it to existing groups and funding sources. Contact: discernmentvision@secondfirst.org

Family Christian Education Ministry Team works to energize the lives of our youth and their families through education, mentorship, fellowship and mission so that they may grow to love, know and worship God. We help our youth discover that God is present in our everyday lives. We strive to help them develop the wisdom that will help them develop their own belief system and choices in life. Contact: christianed@secondfirst.org

The Nominating Ministry Team is hard at work filling our church ministry team rosters. We are so appreciative of those who have stepped forward to serve; however, we are looking for additional enthusiastic people who will share their gifts and talents... particularly on the Discernment and Vision Ministry, Family Christian Education Ministry, and Mission Ministry Teams. Church membership is not required.

Team membership builds lasting friendships, provides a stronger sense of belonging, and gives the feeling of accomplishment.

Up to now, the Nominating Team has been doing all the calling, and now we would like to hear from you. Join a team or suggest someone who would be a good addition to our teams by contacting any of the Nominating Ministry Team members listed below or call the office at 815-963-8431.

Hospitality Ministry Team provides hospitality, compassion, and caring to our church members and visitors by offering fellowship following Sunday worship, funeral services and special events. Contact: deaconesses@secondfirst.org

Mission Ministry Team strives to build a great city for all people through Christian activism that fosters personal transformation through Christ, community formation, social justice and cultural renewal to the city of Rockford and through us, to the greater world. Contact: missions@secondfirst.org

Trustee Ministry Team is responsible for overseeing the financial and business affairs of the church as well as managing the church's property. In addition, the Trustees handle scholarship and memorial monies. Contact: trustees@secondfirst.org

Worship, Music and the Arts Ministry Team empowers our congregation to worship through a diverse variety of word, song, art and enhancements. The team supports worship from envisioning to details. Contact: music@secondfirst.org

If you're interested in getting involved, please contact the ministry team's chair.

SecondFirst Church seeks to love, know and worship God by welcoming all people, serving our neighbors and sharing God's grace.

MARCH CALENDAR

Tuesday, Mar 1
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study
6:00 PM – DVT

Wednesday, Mar 2 Ash Wednesday
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
4:00 PM – Executive Committee
6:00 PM – Soup Dinner
6:30 PM – Ash Wednesday Service

Thursday, Mar 3
9:30 AM – Carillons
No Hospitality Team
5:30 PM – JD Board Meeting
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Mar 4
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Mar 5
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, Mar 6 Communion
8:30 AM – Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, Mar 7
11:30 AM - Serious Soup

Tuesday, Mar 8
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
10:00 AM – RPS 205 Music Day
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study

Wednesday, Mar 9
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – Covid Committee
6:00 PM – Soup Dinner
6:30 PM – Lenten Worship Experience

Thursday, Mar 10
9:30 AM – Carillons
12:00 PM – Noon Meditation
4:30 PM – Music Director Search Committee
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Mar 11
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Mar 12
No Scheduled Activities
No Bridge Clinic

Sunday, Mar 13
8:30 AM – Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:15 AM – Chopped Cooking Challenge

Monday, Mar 14
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
5:00 PM – Deacons/Fellowship

Tuesday, Mar 15
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry

Wednesday, Mar 16
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
5:00 PM – Trustees Ministry
6:00 PM – Soup Dinner
6:30 PM – Lenten Worship Experience

Thursday, Mar 17
9:30 AM – Carillons
12:00 PM – Noon Meditation
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Mar 18
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Mar 19
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, Mar 20 Father Beauvais Preach
8:30 AM – Coffee Class
9:30 AM – Pop Up Peanut Bells rehearse
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:15 AM – Family CE Ministry Team

Monday, Mar 21
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, Mar 22
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study

Wednesday, Mar 23
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Soup Dinner
6:30 PM – Lenten Worship Experience

Thursday, Mar 24
9:30 AM – Carillons
12:00 PM – JD Executive
12:00 PM – Noon Meditation
5:30 PM – Governing Council
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday Mar 25
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Mar 26
10:00 AM – Carillons Rehearse

Sunday, Mar 27 tMolly Carlson Preach Carillons
8:30 AM – Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:00 AM – Church Governance with Rev. Molly Carlson

Monday, Mar 28
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
6:30 PM – Worship Ministry Team

Tuesday, Mar 29
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study

Wednesday, Mar 30
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Soup Dinner
6:30 PM – Lenten Worship Experience

Thursday, Mar 31
9:30 AM – Carillons
12:00 PM – Noon Meditation
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

OVERNIGHT CAFÉ UPDATE

The Rockford Overnight Café has been amazing this year, offering shelter to our most vulnerable citizens on bitter cold nights. We have encouraged people to begin again and supported them in their time of weakness.

Consistent with everything in our COVID-traumatized society, our guests this year have been more difficult to handle. We hear the same stories from social service agencies in town.

We believe the Café needs to have greater organizational structure with a more professionally-trained staff. Therefore, your Executive Committee made the difficult but necessary decision to close the Café, a couple weeks early.

We accomplished our objective of providing people with warmth and shelter on the coldest nights. Thank you so much for the myriad of ways you have supported the Café. We have much work and discerning to do in the off season with the hope that the Café will be back next year better than ever.

Peace to you,
Rev. Rebecca White Newgren, Pastor Becky Erbe,
Moderator Katy Paterson and the Executive Committee

SAVE THE DATES FOR ALL-CONGREGATION TALKS ON CONNECTIVITY AND GROWTH

- » Sunday, March 27 after worship: **Church Governance with Rev. Molly Carlson**
- » Sunday, April 3 after worship: **Brainstorming on Connectivity and Growth**

First the Interviews . . . now the start of some exciting opportunities (Save the Dates!)

As outlined in Karen’s article in this Tower, the Discernment and Vision Team (DVT) has begun the process of determining themes from your responses to our interviews and our response to them. A major theme that emerged is that we are connected to the church, most often by our personal contacts/activities with other members. There was some concern about the effects of COVID on this connectedness. Secondly, we saw the need for growth in membership, and particularly with younger members. These themes are equally important and we think that the answer to the concerns may be related. If we increased opportunities for members to be connected, might we also use these same opportunities to increase growth? After worship on Sunday April 3, DVT will host a brainstorming group in the dining room to develop ideas for activities that promote both connectedness and growth.

While we felt connected through our Ministry Team activities, the positions on those teams have become more difficult to fill and there is concern about burnout of the members who have filled these positions for many years. On Sunday March 27, Rev. Molly Carlson, the conference minister of the Illinois Conference of the UCC will be delivering our sermon. Immediately after worship, she will lead us in a discussion about different ways to structure the church hierarchy which may help to reduce this burnout and increase our efficiency. DVT invites all who are interested in these topics to these meetings to learn and grow together.

By Karen Olson

In October the Discernment and Vision Team launched an ambitious effort to interview as many of the congregation as possible on the topic of Belonging. The survey consisted of three inquiries:

- » Tell us about a time when you felt connected to the church.
- » What hopes do you have for our future?
- » What concerns do you have that may be in our way?

In addition, respondents were asked to share any thoughts they had that were not touched upon by the three.

The response far surpassed the team’s expectations; 75% of SecondFirst members participated in an interview. The following is a summary of those responses, which will be grouped in themes that emerged from analysis – Connecting through Activities, Mission/Service, Growth/Finances, Leadership.

To the first prompt, many members felt strong connections through activities (serving on committees, the music program, coffee class, all-church picnic) and missions (Serious Soup, Jeremiah Development, Fair Trade). For some it was the joining of First Presbyterian with Second Congregational and the mutual commitment through the Federation that made them feel most connected. For others it was a lifelong connection growing up in the church family.

In describing hopes for the future, a number of responses related to the current Covid crisis and its impact on growth in membership. Specific needs included invitations to youth and younger members, as well as a continuing emphasis on the church’s outreach in the community.

When responding to the question regarding concerns that might impede our progress, “lack of growth” was the most frequent response. Members readily shared their concerns ranging from our worship service (seen as traditional and needing diversity in worship leaders) to our location and building use to nurturing relationships in which opinions and ideas are given a greater voice. Others expressed concern over the number of people involved in the work of the church and the need to broaden that base so as not to cause “burn-out” in our hardworking congregants. Covid was a persistent issue as was a reluctance to change.

Responders were able to add personal thoughts in a final prompt about their expectations when they received the interview request. Many had no additional thoughts but were pleased to have been asked. Other responses centered on service concerns (outdoor and online services, sermon content, music) as well as membership concerns (need for more activities, meeting spiritual needs, attracting new members). Membership concerns led to concerns regarding the financial impact of fewer members.

As DVT moves forward celebrating the strengths highlighted in the interviews and addressing the challenges facing SecondFirst, the sincerity and candor of our respondents will provide the foundation for our next steps and is gratefully appreciated.

OPPORTUNITY FOR GIVING: OGHs

Sunday, March 27

We will be accepting an offering to support One Great Hour of Sharing, commonly called OGHs. The funds raised support activities in disaster relief and refugee relief, both in the US and around the world. How to give: use the special envelope or make a check out to the church and write OGHs in the memo line. The world thanks you!

ANNUAL PROGRAM MEETING

Our Annual Program Meeting of Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church will be held Sunday, April 24, 11:00 am via Zoom Hybrid.

FEBRUARY UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES

The main focus of the meeting was on the budget. John DeWaters our Treasure reported that financially we are stable and December has been a surprisingly good month and we ended the year in the black this is in part because we have received credit from the Board of Pensions for the disability payments made by the church. After the report we reviewed the proposed budget and voted to accept the budget as presented. Before the budget is presented to the congregation the Governing Council has to approve it. The budget process was not a week or two but months spent reviewing income and expenditures for the last five years. As you know the last two years have not been normal. The Finance Committee also provided guidance. Pledging is so important to the budgeting process. The work done by the Stewardship Committee was so important for the planning of the budget. The Budget Committee, Finance Committee and the Stewardship Committee spent many hours working to make certain that our church will be strong and vibrant for years to come. I would like to thank all three committees for their hard work.

STAFF REPORTS

- » Pastor Becky shared positive information about the Overnight Café. We've served more people than ever, and donations are coming in.
- » Reverend Rebecca praised our wonderful staff who continue to find creative ways to fix things and discover problems before they worsen. She is planning programs for Lent.
- » Treasurer John DeWaters shared budget information and answered questions. It was moved and seconded that the Budget be accepted. Motion carried.
- » Trustees Financial Comments and Report on Building Use – Chairperson Jim Delmore reported on repairs being made and repairs needed. They are surveying the building and making a prioritized list of building repairs needed. We will be leasing a new copier. The lease agreement will include supplies and repairs.

ONGOING BUSINESS

- » It was moved, seconded, and passed that we become a Matthew 25 congregation.
- » The Covid Committee reported that the Budget meeting will be in person and on Zoom. We will continue to ask people testing positive for Covid to quarantine for at least ten days.
- » The Nominating Committee reported that several teams are filling up, but members are still needed on DVT, Family Christian Education, and Missions.

NEW BUSINESS

- » The Budget meeting and Fudge Sunday will be February 13th.
- » It was moved, seconded, and passed that the Governing Council purchase the Courageous Economy webinar.
- » The Music Director Search Committee will be meeting soon. Valerie has agreed to stay on as interim for six months.
- » 1 Minute Ministry Team Highlights
- » Worship, Music, and Arts – Jim Burrigh reported they are discussing diversity in worship
- » Deacons – Linda Oshita reported Christmas cookies were well received and fudge will be handed out February 13th. The church picnic will be August 21st.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE MODERATOR

by Katy Paterson

A year and a half ago I was diagnosed with cancer. Fortunately my church family lifted my spirits as I came to terms with this horrible disease. I received cards, notes, emails, phone calls, flowers, gifts, visits, and most important prayers. I still have an overflowing basket of cards and notes which I keep on my dresser as a reminder of the kindness of our congregation.

After several months of treatment, which luckily had few side effects for me, I actually felt pretty good. I felt comfortable returning to helping with Serious Soup. Of course Serious Soup under the able leadership of Arlene Noel with a great bunch of volunteers had been going on just fine without me. As we chatted and worked at Serious Soup we realized how many of us had

been through cancer treatment. As we talked I found the support from these ladies so valuable. Several months later, when another church member, who had been sending me supportive emails, was also diagnosed with cancer, I urged her to come down on Monday mornings and talk with us. She came several times and recently told us how much talking to us had helped her.

Early in my term as moderator, I met with Rebecca and told her about our informal cancer support group on Monday mornings in the kitchen. She and I both thought lay led interest groups for church members would be a wonderful idea. I've found that being a moderator is a time-consuming but very rewarding job. I'm sorry to say I haven't acted on the idea.

At a DVT meeting recently I found out that there are several of us interested in a book club. Perhaps now is the time to start some groups. Groups would be made up of people with a common interest. The activities, time and place for meetings, meeting in person or by Zoom, how often to meet, would all be determined by the people in the group. These groups could be for support, education and/or socializing.

I'm anxious to hear your ideas for possible groups. If you have an idea, please let me or Reverend Rebecca know. We're in church every Sunday or email or phone us or email DVT. Their email is discernmentvision@secondfirst.org.

JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT

By Sue Kanthak, Executive Director

Jeremiah Development has fully moved into their new space and our schedule for the 2022 year is full! As always, we welcome any volunteers! These are the programs we are offering:

- » **Coronado Community Computer Center** – In February we will begin offering Microsoft Excel classes for beginners and another for intermediate skills. Since we opened in October our numbers have doubled each month. If you would like to teach a class or volunteer to read to a child while their parent is on the computer, let us know!
- » **Take A Book library** – Goodwill Industries keeps us supplied with books for all ages. This has become a very popular item in JD's new community space. Everyday we are open we get several people getting books throughout the day. Those who receive books are so grateful and are excited to come back for more. We have pallets we will be turning into bookshelves once we learn how.
- » **Bingo** – Oak Street Health is hosting a neighborhood bingo game once a month. This is a great opportunity for our seniors in the neighborhood to come together. The isolation from this pandemic has been hard on everyone and this gives them a chance to safely be together
- » **Neighborhood Events** – we are having four events for the neighborhood this year.
 - Personal safety – ADC Givens with the Rockford Police Department and Brandon Burke our community service officer will give a presentation of personal and property safety. Everyone attending will receive a "screamer" and learn how and when to use it.
 - Fire safety – The Rockford Fire Department will teach fire safety and those attending will receive a fire extinguisher, smoke detector, and carbon monoxide detector. They will learn how to use them and where to install them.
 - Home Improvement – Residents will learn basic home improvement. How to change fuses, where's the water shut off, and what to do when a circuit trips, among other things will be taught. Through discussions with the residents, we learned there is a need for outdoor trash cans with lids to help keep the neighborhood clean. We will distribute trash cans at this time
 - A neighborhood Christmas party
- » **Movies in the Park** – We will begin the popular movies in the park when the weather gets warmer
- » **LOVE Rockford** – due to Covid, this year we will be doing 4 smaller LOVE Rockford events each focusing on a specific area. March 5th is the first one and will focus on grandparents raising grandchildren.
- » **Jeremiah Helps** – small engine repair program – this new program begins April 4th! Youth ages 14-18 will learn how to tear down and rebuild a small engine. They will be diagnosing and repairing a piece of lawn equipment and will be able to own that equipment when they are done. We are going to need much help with this very important program. Mentors, volunteer coordinator, and meals are just some of the needs we have.
- » **Great American Clean-Up** – we will be walking the

neighborhood cleaning up trash from the neighborhood streets.

- » **The Garden** – every year, we feed the people of the neighborhood fresh produce during the growing season. This continues to be a safe place where community happens and friendships are built between the congregants of the JD churches and the neighbors. We have recently written a grant that will provide funds to make the garden more accessible to our senior neighbors and those with mobility challenges. Stay tuned!
 - » **Neighborhood Newsletter** – we continue to deliver a four-page newsletter to every door in the neighborhood once a month throughout the year. This has become an important way to communicate with the residents of the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood.
 - » **Transformation** – health focus groups – Jeremiah Development is partnering with the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Rockford to help people tell the story of the challenges they have faced accessing health care. These stories will be used to present a picture to our legislatures of the health care challenges in this area.
 - » **Connections** – We have amassed a collection of literature from area social service agencies and have created a library for residents to come, learn what is available for assistance, and get connected.
 - » **Family Fun Night** – JD is hosting monthly game nights for families in the neighborhood. Building strong families is the cornerstone to building a strong community. We hope this will provide opportunities for families to spend time together and build lasting memories.
- Jeremiah has been blessed to be the recipient of much support throughout the community. Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois is supporting our movie in the park nights, the take a book library, and providing games for our family fun nights, Oak Street Health sponsors our newsletter as well as treats for those who deliver the newsletter, we received a \$20,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois for our new Jeremiah Helps program, and a \$50,000 grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois to support our neighborhood events and LOVE Rockford.

