

SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
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Permit No. 3734
Rockford, Illinois

APRIL 2022

THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace



DEAR STAFF AND CONGREGATION

Every Sunday, as part of the church announcements, I mention that it is my honor and privilege to serve our church as moderator. I truly mean this. It has been my honor and privilege to attend staff meetings and to get to know the staff better and to appreciate all the work they do. It has also been my honor and privilege to attend ministry team meetings, Foundation meetings, Executive Committee meetings, and Covid Committee

meetings and to see how hard our outstanding lay leaders work. Our lay leaders give freely of their time and talent. We could never afford to pay for the work and expertise that comes from our lay leaders.

So as my term as moderator comes to an end, thank you to both our church staff and lay leaders. It has been my honor and privilege to work with you.

Gratefully,
Katy Paterson



Not only can Linda Johnson and Jan Novak play a piano duet for worship, they can lead a Lenten session on belonging! Thank you, Jan and Linda, for sharing your gifts.



Dorothy Paige-Turner practices with the choir before worship on Sunday, February 27. She led us in "Lift Every Voice and Sing", the Black National Anthem.



Sarah Hallberg and Karen Hill drum up contestants for the all church Chopped Competition. Stay tuned for the new date!

NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST UCC OFFICERS URGE CONFIRMATION OF JUDGE KETANJI BROWN JACKSON TO SUPREME COURT



Supreme Court Justices hold vast power and enormous responsibility to be faithful arbiters of the consequential legal questions of the day. Their opinions once handed down hold the ability to shape generations in all matters of our common lives including, voting, marriage equality, health care access, the rights of unions to organize and criminal justice among many

others. Their decisions have far-reaching ramifications, most especially for vulnerable populations whose civil and human rights are often in the balance.

What is critical to note is that this assembly of legal minds whose decisions have enormous consequence for the future of individuals, communities and our nation currently falls far short of reflecting the demographic composition of the country. **Read more:** www.ucc.org

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) HOW IS PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE HELPING IN UKRAINE?



Since Russia invaded Ukraine late last month, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has committed rapid response solidarity grants to five ecumenical partners in Eastern and Central Europe addressing the humanitarian crisis created by the unprovoked attack.

Recipients include the Friends of Community of Sant'Egidio, who are still in Ukraine, and Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, which is essentially the PDA of the Hungarian Reformed Church, said Susan Krehbiel, PDA's Associate for Refugees & Asylum. "We are part of a church," Krehbiel said. "And so, we have church relationships, and that gives us a different way of entering into this work that is special. It means we're grounded in those relationships and people that have relationships in the community." **Read more:** presbyterianmission.org

JOIN US FOR HOLY WEEK

Palm/Passion Sunday Sunday, April 10

Join us for worship at 10:00am. We will begin by waving palms as we honor Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As the worship continues, we turn to the Passion story of the last days of Christ. After worship, take some Lemon Bars home with you. If you worship online, we will offer a drive thru Palms and Lemon bars from 11:30 am-12:00 pm.

Holy Week Prayer Stations Monday, April 11 - Wednesday, April 13

Please call Debbie in the office to arrange a time to come in and seek the Living Christ in the solace of our Sanctuary.

Maundy Thursday Worship Thursday, April 14 at 6:30 pm

Please join us for this meaningful worship. The Choir will be singing and Communion will be served.

Easter Sunday Sunday, April 17 at 10:00 am

This is the most important day of the year for Christians as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Join us for beautiful music, brass and a garden of flowers.

PALM SUNDAY LEMON BARS

Sunday, April 10

Although we're no longer able to have potlucks due to Covid, our wonderful Deacons/Fellowship team has been providing us with delicious treats for each season. We enjoyed pumpkin bars, Christmas cookies, and fudge. Lemon bars are slated for Palm Sunday. They will be passed out to people in church in person after church. Drive-by pick will start after church and continue until 11:30 am. You may not realize it, but members of the team also deliver treats to shut-ins and people in nursing homes.

JUBILEE SOUP KITCHEN

Saturday, April 23 10:00 AM

Are you busy on this date? Marge and Jean could use your help. We expect to be back to serving a more normal lunch thanks to reducing Covid cases in our area. The exact nature of this is not decided yet – but probably won't include the serving line we had in the past, but we hope to have indoor seating at spaced tables. It's an exciting step forward and your presence would be a great present! Contact: Marge Maynard or Jean Herro if you are interested or have questions. Thanks.

ANNUAL MEETING

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

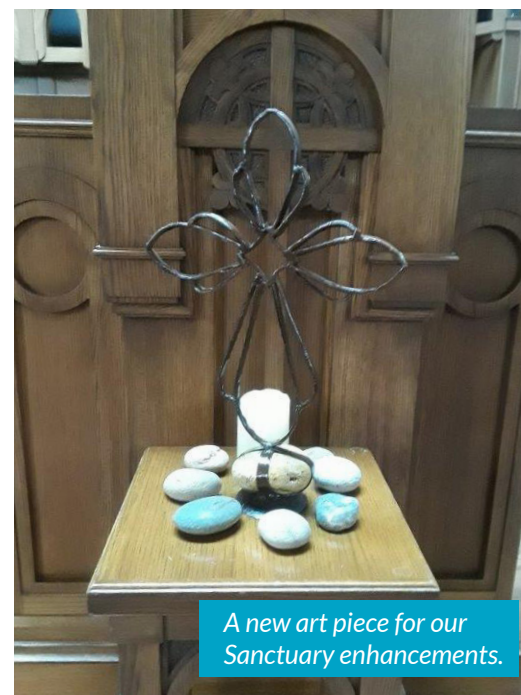
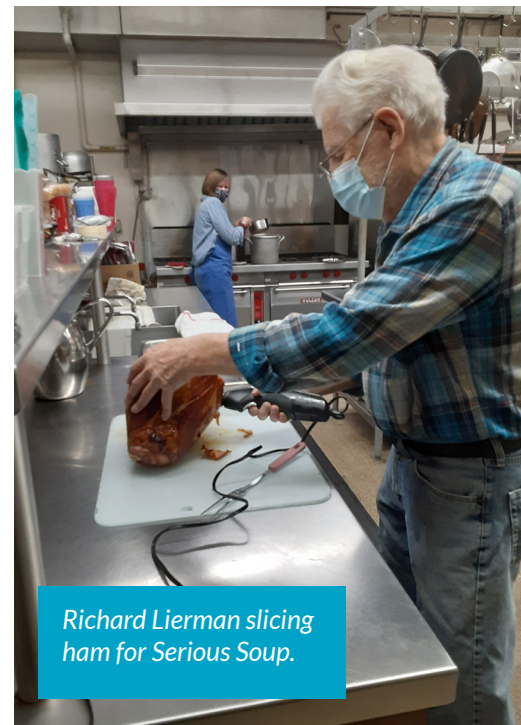
A little bit from Pastor Becky E.

On March 27, we had the pleasure of having the Rev. Molly Carlson join us in worship. Molly is the new Illinois Conference Minister for the UCC. Her sermon gave us an insight to who she is and her history that led her into ministry. After worship she led us in a great discussion about church leadership and polity.

One point she brought up has made my brain go into overload. Molly said (something to the effect) of looking at church attendance and activities in a different light. How many people do we reach during the week not counting a Sunday? How many girls come in our building for KFACT? They may never attend our worship, but they are empowered by something happening within our walls. Let's say 30 girls come in at least once a week. Men's fellowship averages about 12 people on Tuesday mornings. We are averaging 40 people who come to Serious Soup. We have 15 volunteers serving, preparing and running lunches out to the door. During spring break the Therapeutic Rec program of the Park District came and spent the week with us. Add another 25 people. 15 people come to a Bible study on Tuesday nights. On average 7 people will stop by the church in need of something during the week. On April 5, we will be starting the small engine repair for teens through Jeremiah Development that Jeff and volunteers of the church will be running at 15 people, teens and volunteers. I am terrible at math but that brings up our total to 149. We have other activities like choir and bells. We have other volunteers who stop by during the week for Sanctuary Enhancements or the thrift shop that are not added to the number. Add the 100 or so people attending worship and the 30 online. We are to 279 plus people that benefit from the church in one capacity or another. In today's standards, 279 is a lot. I didn't even add anyone from the Overnight Café. The café saw 174 different people we could add to the number. 453 people per week. Wow!

We are in good shape my friends. 453 people being blessed by SecondFirst Church. It is not the ministers or staff who are making things happen, it is you. You who give of your time, talents and gifts. Let us forge together to continue the work already set forth.

God Bless!



ORGAN INSTALLMENT #3

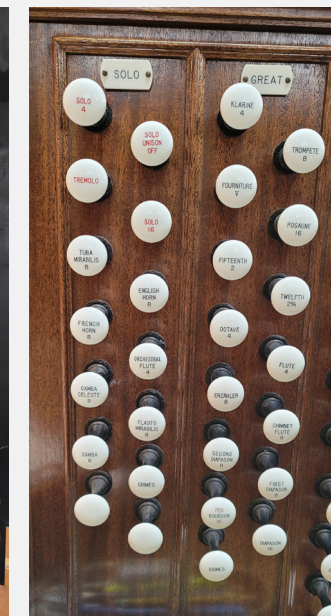
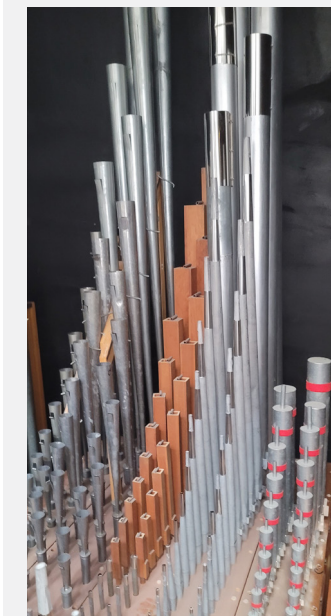
By Valerie Blair, Music Director

The Great is the next higher manual on the console, (the Choir being the bottom manual-forgot to mention that last month). The Great is where some of the loudest stops are found; probably 80% of the hymn playing is done on this manual, with the Swell and Choir used generally for quieter verses, although that isn't an absolute. When an organist "couples" manuals, it means that

the sounds of one division are added to another, and this most often involves coupling sounds from the other 3 divisions to the Great. In the before-times, when we were singing 4 verses of a hymn, it might start on the Great with the Swell coupled, for v. 1, go to another manual for a quieter verse 2, then back to the Great for v. 3, then a big finish for v. 4, on the Great, with the loudest stops from the Swell added (reeds, or the ones that sound like brass). There are reeds on the Great, too, but they are very brassy and I don't use them as often as the mellower, rounder reeds of the Swell.

Picture 1: A very few pipes of the Great division: "8 ERZ" written on the wood stands for the Erzähler stop, which you can see on the knobs. It is a combination string and flute stop. Notice the variety of pipe shapes and materials: wood and metal, some square, others cylindrical or conical, and some covered (stopped), and others open at the tops. And this is just a tiny portion of all of the pipes that make up the sounds you hear from your organ.

Picture 2: The stops for the Great (knobs pulled to get the different sounds)



Picture 1

Picture 2

KFACT UPDATE

KFACT and the Girls Space have been busy this month. We held our first cooking session with over 40 girls in the church's dining room. We would like to give a HUGE thank you to Ms. Arlene. She was so helpful and ensured that the staff, instructors, and girls knew their way around the kitchen and had everything they needed. The girls made homemade pizzas (yes, homemade crusts and all!). Our instructor Ms. Tisha, shared how she took her hobby and love of cooking for family and launched her new business. The girls learned so much at this event and the pizzas were delicious. The middle school girls have been coming to the Girls Space to get tutoring help, work on personal development and healthy habits. We have been able to resume some of our volunteering in the community and the girls were very excited. KFACT volunteered at Burpee Museum's PaleoFest and it was a wonderful learning experience.



APRIL CALENDAR

Friday, April 1
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, April 2
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, April 3
Communion/Bell Tree, Violin, Piano
8:30 AM – Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Brainstorming on Connectivity and Growth
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, April 4
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, April 5
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Mexican Consulate
9:30 AM – Presbytery
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study
6:00 PM – DVT

Wednesday, April 6
9:00 AM – Mexican Consulate
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – Covid Committee
4:00 PM – Executive Committee
6:00 PM – Soup Dinner
6:30 PM – Lenten Worship Experience

Thursday, April 7
9:00 AM – Mexican Consulate
9:30 AM – Carillons
12:00 PM – Noon Meditation
4:00 PM – Hospitality Team

Friday, April 8
9:00 AM – Mexican Consulate

Saturday, April 9
9:00 AM – Mexican Consulate
No Bridge Clinic

Sunday, April 10 Palm Sunday Lemon Bars
8:30 AM – Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:00 AM – Lemon Bars

Monday, April 11
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
5:00 PM – Deacons/Fellowship Prayer Stations

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

Wednesday, April 13
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – Covid Committee Prayer Stations
6:00 PM – ARC

Maundy Thursday, April 14
9:30 AM – Carillons
6:30 PM – Maundy Thursday Service

Good Friday, April 15
Office Closed

Saturday, April 16
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Easter Sunday, April 17
Choir, Quintet
8:30 AM – Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, April 18
No Serious Soup

Tuesday, April 19
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry

Wednesday, April 20
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – JD Executive
5:00 PM – Trustees Ministry

Thursday, April 21
9:30 AM – Carillons
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday April 22
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, April 23
10:00 AM – Jubilee Soup Kitchen
10:00 AM – Carillons Rehearse

Sunday, April 24 Annual Program
Carillons/Peanuts
8:30 AM – Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Annual Program
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, April 25
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
6:30 PM – Worship Ministry Team

Tuesday, April 26
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
12:00 PM – Narrative Bible Study

Wednesday, April 27
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

Thursday, April 28
9:30 AM – Carillons
5:30 PM – Governing Council
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday April 29
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, April 30
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT UPDATE



LOVE ROCKFORD

Jeremiah Development brought social service agencies and mental/physical health services that focused on Grandparents raising grandchildren on March 5th. There were services for everyone! “Love Rockford was a tool to the healing process for those attending,” said Nitro Starling, the Outreach Specialist for Jeremiah Development. This event not only helped connect people with social services and health services, there was Free Hair cuts, boxes filled with food, light backpacks filled with supplies, Covid packages, free books, and raffle prizes! There were 15 vendors with lots of information on different services and lots of free give-aways!

Our next Love Rockford event is on June 4, from 10:00am - 2:00pm. Services will focus on Adult Health, but anyone is welcome. We hope to see you there!!!

PERSONAL SAFETY TRAINING

Join us on April 12, 2022 from 4-7pm for Personal Safety Training. We will be serving food as well as distributing Personal Safety Screamer after the event for those who attend. Assistant Deputy Chief Givens is looking forward to meeting each and every one of you. “We truly care and have a desire to serve each and every citizen of Rockford, and believe it is of the utmost importance to come together to discuss the issues and get solutions as a team.” Said A.D.C. Givens.

Community Service Officer Branden Burke will be giving a presentation on property safety - a how-to on improving the safety of your home or business through strategic landscaping and security improvements. There will also be an opportunity to sign up for an Officer to come to your home or business to do an on-site safety inspection of your residence.

BINGO

Come play BINGO with us! Monday, April 18 from 1:00pm - 2:30 pm at 132 N Church St. Rockford, IL. Sponsored by Oak Street Health

CORONADO-HASKELL COMPUTER CENTER & TAKE A BOOK LIBRARY

Tuesdays & Thursdays 10am-2pm
Come use computers for free: Check emails, Free WIFI, Take classes on-line, Print a document, FREE classes on Microsoft Office. The Take-a-Book Library has many books for all ages. Everyone is welcome to take as many books as they like to keep!! Sponsored by Goodwill



Creator: ALEXANDROS AVRAMIDIS Credit: REUTERS

A Note from our Children and Families Coordinator, Rachel Huffman

This Lenten season we certainly have a lot of things to reflect on and pray over. Just as we have been cautiously taking steps into a world that feels somewhat normal, another monumental crisis has presented itself. It is so easy to be stressed and worried about the current events and even to fall into hopelessness. It is especially important to focus on our youth at this time. They may or may not have a good idea of what exactly is happening right now and between social media and their peers at school, the narrative could vary depending on its source.

Talking about war with children of any age is a task no one wants to handle, but we can approach these conversations with honesty and compassion. It is important to keep the discussion age appropriate, but some children might already have some grasp on the situation. The best way to know what they may have heard is by asking them: what have you heard about this war? What are some things that worry you about it?

It can be helpful to show your child on a map where Russia and Ukraine are; this also helps to visually describe the conflict. If your child is scared, worried, or angry, that is okay. Don't discount their feelings about the situation, as emotions are a normal response and their thoughts are valid. Encourage your child to share their feelings with you and offer to help them pray for the people of Ukraine and for those in Russia who oppose the war, many of whom are also at risk.

Imaginative prayer is a really great way to get them thinking of what a world full of peace would look like. As you pray, guide and encourage them to close their eyes and describe a world either to themselves or out loud that is peaceful, full of grace and justice. You can also encourage your child to help donate to organizations such as UNICEF, Sunflower of Peace, Voices of Children, and the UN Refugee Agency, just for a few examples. We have compassionate, courageous youth among us and they are the ultimate force for good.

While we had to postpone our Chopped Challenge from March to May, we are still very excited and looking forward to another great event. Keep an eye out for more details as the date approaches.

APRIL worship schedule

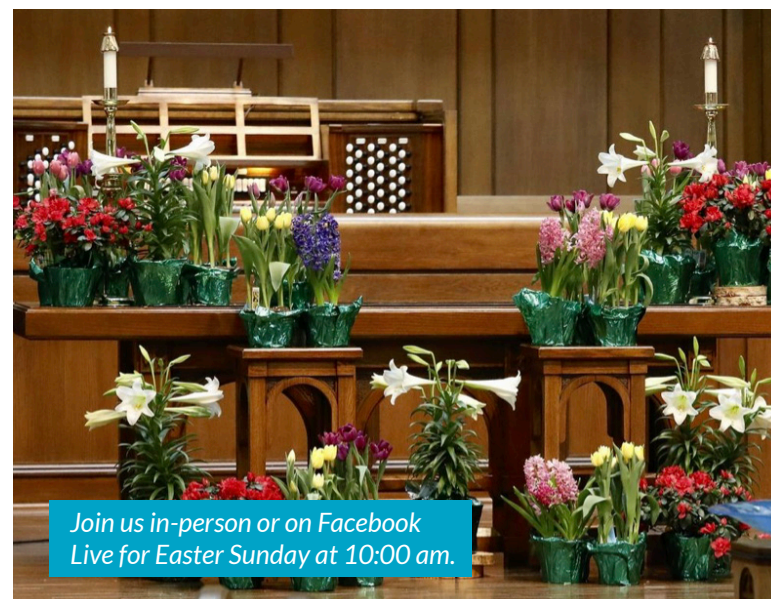
APRIL 3: JESUS CONDEMNED (John 19:1-16a)
Music: Bell Tree, Violin, Joyce and Bill Zartman

APRIL 10: PALM SUNDAY THE CRUCIFIED MESSIAH
(John 19:16b-22)
Music: Choir

APRIL 14: MAUNDY THURSDAY COMMUNION SERVICE
Music: Choir

APRIL 17: EASTER RESURRECTION (John 20:1-18)
Music: Choir and Brass Quintet

APRIL 24: THOMAS (John 20:19-31)
Music: Peanut Bells and Carillons



Join us in-person or on Facebook Live for Easter Sunday at 10:00 am.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE MODERATOR

by Katy Paterson

In my last newsletter article I asked for suggestions from the congregation about possible lay led interest groups. Several ideas for possible interest groups have evolved. Among these are a book group, a quilt/needlework group, and a group for people who have lost spouses. If you haven't contacted me about one of these groups or have an idea about another one, please call, email me, or catch me after church.

I currently play Hand and Foot (a popular version of Canasta) twice a month on Wednesday afternoons at church. If you're interested in joining us or playing another card game, let me know.

There are also several lay led groups of people who already meet and volunteer around the church. Amongst them are the gardening and landscaping volunteers, those of us who help in the kitchen every Monday morning for Serious Soup, Thrift Shop volunteers, Fair Trade Shop volunteers, church office volunteers, etc. If you have an interest in being part of any of those groups, please let the church office know.

We also have times at church when we ask for volunteers for a specific project such as boots or apples for Haskell, help with the Jubilee Center lunch, help with the Overnight Café, help with funeral receptions, make soup, etc. When there are emergencies we need help immediately. Unfortunately several water leaks in the past year led to calls for volunteers.

Sunday services also need volunteers to usher, prepare communion, deliver communion to shut-ins, or help be part of the service by doing a reading. New choir members, bell players, and church bus drivers are always needed. For those of you who already volunteer at church, thank you. There is no way our church could operate without volunteers. I know some of you are at church volunteering on a very regular basis.

Being part of a group, whether it's joining people with like interests, for education, and/or enjoyment or to get some work done is good for our mental health. It furthers relationships. For volunteers, it gives us a sense of accomplishment. There are many ways to become involved other than the ones I've listed. I urge you to get involved with our church. Let's get to know each other.

GOVERNING COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

February 24, 2022

STAFF REPORTS

- » Reverend Rebecca announced that Wednesday night dinners and services will be held during lent. Reverend Molly Carlson from the Illinois UCC will preach on March 27th and lead a session on church governance after church.
- » Pastor Becky reported that the Overnight Café closed a little early but served more people than last year.

TRUSTEES FINANCIAL COMMENTS & REPORT ON BUILDING USE

- » Our building will be used by several outside groups in the upcoming months. A stove has been installed in the gym kitchen. The Trustees are looking at the boiler.

ONGOING BUSINESS

- » Covid Committee – We will continue to wear masks in church.
- » Nominating Ministry Team – Most positions on ministry teams are filled.
- » Music Director Search – A team has been formed with Jim Burright as the leader. Other members are Linda Johnson, Ann Stites, Katy Paterson, Donna Schaad, and Jan Novak.

NEW BUSINESS

- » Governing Council meetings will continue to be on Zoom.
- » Bob Langford reported that he is looking into insurance.

ONE MINUTE MINISTRY TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

- » DVT – Reverend Molly Carlson will lead a session after church on church hierarchy and structure on March 27th. A brain-storming session about promoting church growth will be held after church on April 3rd.
- » Family Christian Education – The tubing event at Alpine Hills was a great success.
- » Deacons/ Fellowship – Lemon bars will be passed out on Palm Sunday. The church picnic is August 21st.
- » Worship, Music, & Arts – They are studying diversity in worship



PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE. LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP.

In response to the devastating war in Ukraine, many people are wondering what they can do to assist. Fortunately, our very own PCUSA relief organization, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, is well placed with partners in the area to make a difference. With decades of experience and connections around the world, you can be assured that your donations will be given to a trusted organization reaching out in their name.

Please see the PDA webpage for more information on how to GIVE, ACT, and PRAY. You can find the latest updates and ways to give. <https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/ukraine/>



Church Governance discussion with Rev. Molly Carlson, the conference minister of the Illinois Conference of the UCC.



GORDON CHAPEL UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES

In 2018 Gordon Chapel was transformed into a non-traditional worship place. The pews were unbolted from the floor and arranged in a circle with a Communion table in the center, this was done for an Alternative or non-traditional service.

I remember we had meetings about arranging the pews. It was said "if we unbolt the pews they will fall over" and everyone agreed except Scott Hill who said "let's unbolt one and see how stable they will be." The pew did not fall over. Once we knew that the chapel could be reconfigured there was excitement and enthusiasm as the pews were unbolted and moved. Flyers were placed around the neighborhood and in store windows. However, only a few people attended the service. Pastor's health issues followed by Covid and Gordon Chapel sat unusable.

Please note that trying something new to attract people who are not interested in a traditional service was not a failure. It was a learning experience and maybe the timing was the only thing that was off.

During the time the Chapel sat in disarray. It was used for storage and items were moved from the rooms that were flooded. Most of the stored items have been removed and the pews are ready to be moved back to their original place. The windows have been updated and the curtains have been cleaned and are ready to be hung. Cleaning and polishing will need to be done also.

It is time to make Gordon Chapel usable again. To accomplish this task we will need volunteers to help. Please contact the church office and have your name added to the Gordon Chapel list. We are hoping to start within the next month. Let's make this wonderful Chapel beautiful and useful again.

