

## SecondFirst Church

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# THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

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



## FROM THE MODERATOR

Pastor Becky is doing a wonderful job serving our church as Acting Senior Pastor. However, we must keep in mind that she is currently covering the duties of two full time pastors, a nearly impossible situation at times. For that reason and for the church's benefit to continue our meaningful programs and service, the Executive Ministry Team is discussing options with her and with the Governing Council. Our hope is to have staffing settled this Fall.

Traditionally, an Interim Pastor would be hired. However, there are two things we are keeping in mind. First, the current pool on interim candidates is very small. Second, we have learned of a UCC pastoral classification that we think may be helpful in our situation: Designated Pastor. It is a UCC pastoral classification that has recently come to the attention of the Moderator Team. A Designated Pastor can be named when an Interim Pastor is not always available or appropriate for the needs of the congregation, for example, coping following a major conflict or trauma. It is also a more flexible position. An Interim Pastor cannot be considered as a candidate for Called Pastor. However, a Designated Pastor is contracted for a specified term, usually 2-3 years. At the end of the term, if the congregation is happy with the Designated Pastor, then he or she can be offered the position of Called Pastor.

As we go through this process, we will keep you informed of our progress. If you have questions, please contact any member of the Executive Council. They are Phil Davidson, Darlene Riddle, Marge Maynard, Katy Paterson, Bob Canfield, Ron Schaad, Kristina Pando, Bob Langford (ad hoc member), and John DeWaters (ad hoc member).

- Phil Davidson



The Church Street Band performed during worship.



We Baptized Paul MacDonald on Sunday, June 12.



Serious Soup continues to feed those in need. Thank you to everyone who contributes to this program.

## NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

#### 'WE WILL STAND WITH YOU IN PROTEST': NATIONAL OFFICERS SPEAK OUT AFTER SC OVERTURNS ROE V. WADE



Long before the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, the United Church of Christ, by action of the General Synod, affirmed the right of every individual to follow their personal religious and moral convictions regarding their reproductive healthcare.

We continue to stand by this conviction today. This religious and moral agency includes the autonomy of birthing people to decide whether to complete or terminate a pregnancy. Our Synod resolutions, which represent the will of the church in light of scripture, highlight the importance of ensuring access to the full range of reproductive health care regardless of race, religion, or economic status. We do not take this stand in spite of faith, but rather because of it. Throughout sacred text humankind is tasked with care of self and others. Bodily autonomy is a human right given by God. **Read more: [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)**

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

#### COMMITTEE SAYS NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHOULD BE HYBRID



The Ministry Coordination Committee voted Friday to recommend that the next General Assembly be conducted in a hybrid format with online committee meetings and in-person plenaries. The 21-16 vote on the 226th General Assembly in Salt Lake City took place after

the committee split into groups to study four possible formats and give presentations to the full committee on their assigned options. The format of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s biennial gathering has been the topic of much discussion since the arrival of Covid, which resulted in a completely online Assembly in 2020, with a greatly scaled-back agenda, and this year's first-ever hybrid Assembly, a three-week affair with in-person committees in Louisville and online plenaries. **Read more: [presbyterianmission.org](http://presbyterianmission.org)**



Children gather around Rachel Huffman for the Early Word. We are grateful for this special weekly time to engage with our youngest church members.

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE MODERATOR

by Phil Davidson

When you think about the Fourth of July, what comes to mind? The Declaration of Independence? Picnics? Parades? Bug spray? Did I mention...fireworks? Every July 4, people gather along the Rock River, in their boats, at Davis Park, and other locations to experience Rockford's fantastic fireworks display. And, of course, it also happens in big cities and small towns all across the country.

So, when did this noisy and colorful tradition begin in our country? The first-ever recorded July 4th party was held in Philadelphia on July 4, 1777. It featured a 13-gun salute to honor each of the thirteen colonies, followed by thirteen firework rockets set off in the town square. This tradition soon spread to Boston and other communities. And, as the country expanded west, so did the fireworks, eventually arriving in Rockford.

Beyond the pyrotechnics in the sky, let us remember that July 4th Independence Day is a celebration of everything that America is—independence, families, service, and freedom, including the freedom to worship. We gather together as a family of faith without fear of repression because of the sacrifices and dedication of our forefathers. Thomas Jefferson said, "Let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these rights, and an undiminished devotion to them."

As I think about the loud booms and splashes of color in the sky, I am struck by the fact that this loving body of believers called Second First Church through its service to others creates fireworks all year long with God's grace! Are there not fireworks when we give shelter to those who are cold, when we serve over 60 people at Serious Soup, or provide boots for Haskell School? And within our congregation, there are fireworks when we give comfort to someone who is lonely or needs transportation.

Our Ministry teams and those who assist those teams show God's love through their dedication, service, and by creating fireworks every day.

Thank you.

## From the Pastor's Desk

Every year I buy 4 identical hanging flower baskets for the front of my house. The baskets consist of light purple and dark purple Petunias and yellow Black-Eyed Susan's. If you have ever had petunias in a basket, you know they can be a lot of work. I water mine 1-2 times daily and feed twice weekly. By August the baskets are huge and healthy.

Our faith can be like petunia baskets. Our faith needs to be nurtured, watered and fed. So how do we do that? There are many different ways. You might try reading a chapter or two each night from the Bible. Increase your prayers. Find a routine time to pray. Come to church either in person or watch online.

With love and care may we all find our faith growing huge and healthy in a short while. Blessings to you all as we continue this journey together.

*The Labyrinth walk at Women's Space on the Summer Solstice was a delightful experience, with lovely weather and congenial company.*



## GOVERNING COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

### Staff Reports

- » Pastor Becky reported that Valerie Blair's interim contract has expired. She has agreed to continue.

### Treasurer's Report

- » Ron Schaad shared that we are under budget in giving but at a better place than we were last year.

### Trustees Financial Comments & Reports on Building Use

- » The pews in Gordon Chapel are currently not safe for use. Repair work needs to be done.

### Ongoing Business

- » Covid Committee—We will continue to wear masks in church and will re-evaluate in mid-June.
- » Music Director Search—The position has been advertised. There was one phone call of interest but no applicants yet.

### New Business

- » Bob Langford will extend his position for three months to assist Becky. Becky will take over as supervisor of staff.

### One Minute Ministry Team Highlights

- » **Adult Ed** – Lenore reported that Dorothy Paige-Turner will lead a Coffee Class on June 19 for Juneteenth.
- » **Mission** – Mitzi reported that Soup Kitchen helpers are needed for 6/18, and we are also preparing Habitat for Humanity lunches for 7/9.
- » **DVT** – Karen reminded the ministry teams to send their minutes to Debbie. Based on a recommendation from Bob Canfield, the minutes should not be sent until the team has approved them.
- » **Worship/Music** – Donna reported they continue to work on finding a Choir Director.
- » **Presbytery** – Terry passed along information from the April 5 assembly meeting, where it was recommended that the Commission on Ministry structure be revamped.
- » **FCE** – Jennifer reported that they are working in recognizing graduates, mission trip plans, confirmation classes for fall and sunflowers for the empty lot.
- » **Trustees** – Researching possibilities for removing electronic sign that was damaged in the car accident.
- » Bob Langford reminded us that though transitions and change are hard, we have built a unified congregation without division between UCC and Presbyterians and hopes we can all get back to that. We have unity of purpose serving God and our community.

## Photos from worship during June...



# JULY CALENDAR \*via Zoom

**Friday, July 1**  
Park District Here through Aug. 19

**Saturday, July 2**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Sunday, July 3 Communion**  
Pulpit Talk Jim Ozee  
8:30 AM – Coffee Class  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

**Monday, July 4**  
Office Closed  
No Serious Soup

**Tuesday, July 5**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
6:00 PM – DVT

**Wednesday, July 6**  
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

**Thursday, July 7**  
No Hospitality Team  
5:00 PM – JD Board Meeting

**Friday, July 8**  
Office Closed

**Saturday, July 9**  
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

**Sunday, July 10 Bob Bates**  
8:30 AM – Coffee Class  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

**Monday, July 11**  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
5:00 PM – Deacons/Fellowship

**Tuesday, July 12**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
5:00 PM – Adult ED Team

**Wednesday, July 13**  
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

**Thursday, July 14**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Friday, July 15**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, July 16**  
9:00 AM Bridge Clinic

**Sunday, July 17**  
8:30 AM – Coffee Class  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store  
11:15 AM – Family CE

**Monday, July 18**  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

**Tuesday, July 19**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry

**Wednesday, July 20**  
12:00 PM – JD Executive  
5:30 PM – Trustees Ministry  
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

**Thursday, July 21**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Friday July 22**  
3:00 PM – Roma Dalrymple Memorial Service

**Saturday, July 23**  
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

**Sunday, July 24 Martin Ringers**  
8:30 AM – Coffee Class  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

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

**Tuesday, July 26**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

**Wednesday, July 27**  
12:00 PM – JD Executive

**Thursday, July 28**  
5:30 PM – Governing Council

**Friday, July 29**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, July 30**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Sunday, July 31**  
Preacher Eric Heinekamp  
8:30 AM – Coffee Class  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

**NEW OFFICE HOURS:** Please note the new office hours are Monday-Friday from 8:00 am - 3:30 pm.



## UPCOMING worship schedule

*July 3:* Pulpit Talk Jim Ozee

*July 10:* Becky Erbe

*July 17:* Pulpit Talk Greg Makulec

*July 24:* Becky Erbe/Martin Ringers

*July 31:* Eric Heinekamp



*Communion Table flowers.*

### SAVE THE DATES

**JULY 7-10**  
» Tower Hill

**July 22**  
» Memorial Service:  
Roma Dalrymple at 3:00

**August 14**  
» Pulpit Talk Jim Ozee

**August 21**  
» Church Picnic

**August 27**  
» Jubilee Soup Kitchen

**August 28**  
» Kris Delmore Preach

## I KNOW IT’S SOUP...BUT IS IT REALLY SERIOUS?

by Karen Olson

“Serious Soup”. We’ve all heard announcements about this event that happens at our church most Mondays. But other than there is soup involved and they need crackers, what’s really happening. Is this really just a fun name for a soup kitchen?

I decided to stop by one Monday morning and check it out. The first thing I noticed was a kitchen and dining room full of talk and laughter. Is this really serious? People are busy in the kitchen making fresh salad and fresh fruit cups. Yes fresh, some of which was just picked from the gardens on the church property that morning so it doesn’t get much fresher than that. Soup has been prepared and is heating up to be served hot. The volunteers all have their jobs in hand, are working cooperatively with each other and still laughing and talking. On the floor is a bucket with food scraps, hmmm. I find out that they are composting waste to use on those same gardens as fertilizer.

Once the soup, salad and fruit cups are prepared, the next step is preparation of sandwiches. Yes sandwiches are in order for today but other days a hot entree will be included with the meal.

In the dining room another group of workers prepare the to-go bags. Containers of fresh fruit, fresh salad, dessert and those always needed crackers along with eating utensils are being prepped and placed in the bags. Hot soup and the sandwich or entree will be added later so that when the bag is handed to a neighbor, the soup will still be hot. Depending on what is available, a surprise treat may also be included. Cold water bottles are handed out as people wait for their meal, an extra water is also available as this is a humid June morning.

When does this get serious? When the guests arrive and are handed the to-go bags. Prior to COVID, food was served in the dining room but now the to-go bags are necessary. But for most of the guests, they don’t go much beyond the front lawn. Tables are set up in the shade like an outdoor cafe. The guests mingle and talk with each other. But what is most impressive is that the guests are greeted by name by Pastor Becky and the others who are serving. They are truly known and welcomed. Their stories are known. Each and every one of the 40 to 60 people who show up are treated with dignity.



We are surrounded by a neighborhood that has a great deal of food insecurity. Other organizations also provide some meals but some of these come with requirements that not all people can meet. Fresh food is not always available. The salad and fruit is truly enjoyed by our guests. They have their favorite soups and word spreads fast when it is being served. Some people will finish their entire to-go bag right there on the church lawn, others will take the sandwich or hot entree with them to have later. The guests look out for each other. Pastor Becky and the volunteers look out for the guests. This is truly a neighborhood. Yes it is soup, and it really is serious. And in addition to those always needed crackers, donations of homemade soup or any dessert are also needed and welcomed.



### SERIOUS SOUP MILESTONE

On June 13, we hit a new high – 62 lunches were served. It was all-hands-on-deck for rice and beans, taco meat in tortillas, a side of refried beans, sour cream, salsa, fruit cups, salads, and cake., Behind the masks are Jean Herro, Ann Boline, Karen Phillips, and Anne Stratemeyer. Oh yes, and there was also soup!



### JUBILEE SOUP KITCHEN: THE EPILOGUE BY MARGE MAYNARD

It is typical to show the smiling faces of the team, but here’s a shot of the aftermath: the bins and aprons and unused supplies that will be waiting until they are next needed. Thank you for the support of this mission to the community.

### NEW CO-USHERS

Karen Hill and Greg Makulec have graciously agreed to be Co-Head Ushers. On any given Sunday one of them will be serving as Head Usher. They will be recruiting others to help them. If you are interested in helping to usher, please contact one of them.

## FAMILY CHRISTIAN ED UPDATE

By Rachel Huffman

This summer is sure to splash up some fun! We Family Christian Ed will be supporting Summerfield Zoo again this year and going on a trip to visit the animals, we will be having our pool party, and we have an exciting Serious Soup “micro mission” trip coming up they is designed to involve youth of all ages! We have planted our sunflowers and they are thriving; if you swing by to admire them, we invite you to water them if the sun seems to have wilted them. We are excited to begin working in our outdoor spaces around the church to brighten and beautify them. Together, we are making our neighborhood a beautiful, welcoming place.



## KFACT UPDATE

This is an exciting time of the year for KFACT. The end of the school year is a great time to reflect on the efforts and impact we have as an organization. Celebrating our high school graduates and preparing them for post-secondary education has been the focus this past month. The class of 2022 overcame so much, completing high school, surviving remote learning and so much more. This year's graduates have been in KFACT since middle school, so this was extra special to see them cross the stage and prepare for their next journey. Every year we provide each girl with a personalized dorm basket to ensure they have everything they need to be college ready. If you would like to donate or support our mentees in the transition to college, please contact Rachel Robinson via email [rachelrobinson@k-fact.org](mailto:rachelrobinson@k-fact.org)



## JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT

By Sue Kanthak

Jeremiah has been busy making a huge difference in the lives of those in and around the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood. None of this would be possible without the time and talents of the volunteers from the churches. Thank you all so much!

- » **Neighborhood Improvement Initiative** – we have partnered with the City of Rockford to bring services to targeted areas of the neighborhood. This initiative has opened lines of communication with neighbors we had not had the chance to connect with. We are looking at the needs of the neighborhood as stated by those who live here and will be developing programming to meet those needs. Stay tuned for exciting updates!
- » **Neighborhood Safety Nights** – Neighbors received training on personal safety from the Rockford Police Department and received personal safety “screamers” at our first event. Rockford Fire Department trained neighbors in fire safety and fire extinguisher usage. Neighbors received smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and a carbon monoxide detector. The next two events will be later in the year and will focus on Environmental Safety & Home Maintenance.
- » **Neighborhood Garden** – There are big changes coming to the garden! We recently received a \$13,200 grant to make our garden accessible to those with mobility challenges. We have purchased access decking to install between the garden beds and we will be adding boards to raise the garden height to level that would allow gardening from a wheelchair or walker.
- » **LOVE Rockford** – Our second LOVE Rockford was a great success. With over 100 people in attendance and 15 vendors, we were able to get services to many adults. Our next LOVE Rockford will be September 10th and the focus will be services to our Veterans. If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Nitro at (815) 627-0001 or [nitro@jeremiahdevelopment.org](mailto:nitro@jeremiahdevelopment.org).
- » **Neighborhood Movie Nights** – Movie nights are back for the summer. Our first movie night will be July 23rd. More information to follow!
- » **HELP – Small Engine Repair Program** – We graduated our first class of students!!! With 100% retention and attendance high by students, I am happy to say this program was a huge success. Summer lawnmower maintenance and community service begins Monday, June 20th from 6 pm -8 pm. This is an open shop for youth aged 14-18 years. Adult family members are encouraged to participate, also. Follow the Jeremiah Development Facebook page or contact Jeff Byrne (see info below) for additional open shop dates. Next HELP-small engine repair session starts in September! Contact Jeff Byrne at [jeff@jeremiahdevelopment.org](mailto:jeff@jeremiahdevelopment.org) or (815) 222-5051 for registration deadlines and class schedules.

We are always looking for volunteers to help. Please contact Jeremiah Development if you'd like to help with any or all of these programs.

