

## SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)  
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SEPTEMBER 2022

# THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

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



## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Like many of you, I was finally able to catch up with family since the pandemic began. I spent a few days in Minneapolis with my three sisters in mid-August. One of the things I wanted to have happen was for us to pay our respects at the George Floyd Memorial at the intersection of Chicago Avenue and 38th Street. I am still trying to process the visit.



George Floyd Memorial at the intersection of Chicago Avenue and 38th Street.

It definitely is a makeshift memorial. Barriers block the actual spot where George Floyd said, "I can't breathe." There is a painting of blue sky and clouds protected by the barriers. It is eerily quiet, although the cars pass by and there is music constantly playing and people are in and out of the Cup Market. Yes. It is eerily quiet. On one wall is a mural of George Floyd with the words I can't breathe. Children have left notes although too young to really know what happened. Some people had interactions with each other and some people hugged. It still was eerily quiet.

Visiting the memorial is not for everyone. It was important to me. It is important to remember the injustices in the world. It is important to love the world as Christ loved us. That means everyone. Otherwise the world is eerily quiet.

## NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR JOIN THE MOVEMENT AIMS TO RAISE \$8 MILLION



The United Church of Christ hopes to raise \$8 million for racial justice over the next three years.

The Movement Makers capital campaign doesn't officially kick off until mid-September – but

the fundraising effort has already begun.

The Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown has already invested to end racism. And she is encouraging others to join her in the effort to fund the Join the Movement initiative.

"I have a real passion about this," she said. "God has created one world, one planet, one existence, one family." I am very passionate about love and justice for all, working toward a beloved community for all people." **Read more: [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)**

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) BACK TO SCHOOL MEANS BACK TO MISSIONS



It's the most wonderful time of the year – no, not Christmas, although it wouldn't be surprising if jolly elves and holiday trees were already on retail shelves mingling with Halloween merchandise.

It's back to school time, and for parents that means helping

children sharpen their pencils and charge their laptops in preparation for the first day. For children it means adapting to new morning routines and getting back to a studying and test-taking rhythm. And for pastors, it's that wonderful time of year to bless school backpacks.

The Blessing of the Backpacks has been a popular service for many churches, especially those with older congregations filled with empty nesters, as it gives them an opportunity to show children and their families that they care. Blessing backpacks is also meaningful to anxious parents, as sending children to school these days is not without worry. **Read more: [presbyterianmission.org](http://presbyterianmission.org)**



### FALL KICK OFF Sunday, September 11

Some churches call it Homecoming Weekend, others Sunday School start. Here it's called the Fall Kick Off Sunday which is September 11. It is time to get back into the groove. Summer has gone and it's time to get back into our routines. I am politely telling you, time for Church! Join us September 11!

### ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC

What does a drone, a horse, and a singing quartet have in common? Our church picnic, that's what! This photo shows everyone out at Anna Page Park on Sunday, August 21, enjoying some time with each other. The photo was taken by Greg Makulec's drone camera. John DeWaters brought his horse, Max, for everyone to see. And we were blessed by the tunes of our own UpNorth 4, which is always fun! The Deacons/Fellowship Team really enjoyed putting on this event for the church!

*See more pictures from our Annual Church Picnic inside on page 5.*

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE MODERATOR

By Phil Davidson

Wait a minute, didn't summer just begin? Someone once said, "Summer is like ice cream. Enjoy it before it melts!" And, according to Lea Malot, "September is a thirty-days-long goodbye to summer, to the season that left everybody both happy and weary of the warm, humid weather and the exhausting but thrilling adventures." I don't know about you, but come January's sleet and cold, I will long for some heat and humidity!

This is a busy time of the year in our personal and church lives and a time of transition. The kids are back in school with the homework and after-school activities ramping up. College is a new adventure for many recent high school graduates. Property taxes are due. September often is a time to get back into the day-to-day routine that may have slid a bit in the summer and also a time to reset, to get those chores and projects done that just did not happen during the summer fun and games.

But, what happens in September at SecondFirst Church? Plenty! On September 8, we host a Neighborhood Ice Cream Social from 6 to 7. This is an opportunity for us to meet our new neighbors in the lofts and apartment buildings around our church. And, it is an example of cooperation between ministry teams. DVT came up with the idea, and Deacons/Fellowship is implementing it. Then, on September 24, the Neighborhood Pig Roast returns. Please contact Steve and Mitzi Muntz if you would like to help. There is Serious Soup every Monday; and, of course, the Jubilee Soup Kitchen. Love Rockford hosts its quarterly event September 10, at Court Street Methodist, and your gently used clothing items will be greatly appreciated. Just drop them off at Court Street or in our office.

So, September is busy at SecondFirst Church. However, we are a busy church every month of the year, as we energize downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace. In September, we say goodbye to summer but not to the caring spirit that is present in every season.



### HYMN SING Sunday, September 4

Hymn Sing Coming Sunday, September 4. Think Lessons and hymns at the end of the summer style. We will hear scripture and sing the oldie but goodie hymns we love.

### RETURN OF CONFIRMATION! Begins September 18 at 9:00 am

We will be having a Confirmation Class this year for students 6th grade and up for our youth. We will be using a curriculum called Confirm Not Conform. Classes will be led by Rachel Huffman and Pastor Becky. Confirmation begins September 18 at 9:00 am. More info to follow.

### BIBLE STUDY Tuesday, September 20 from noon until 1:00 pm

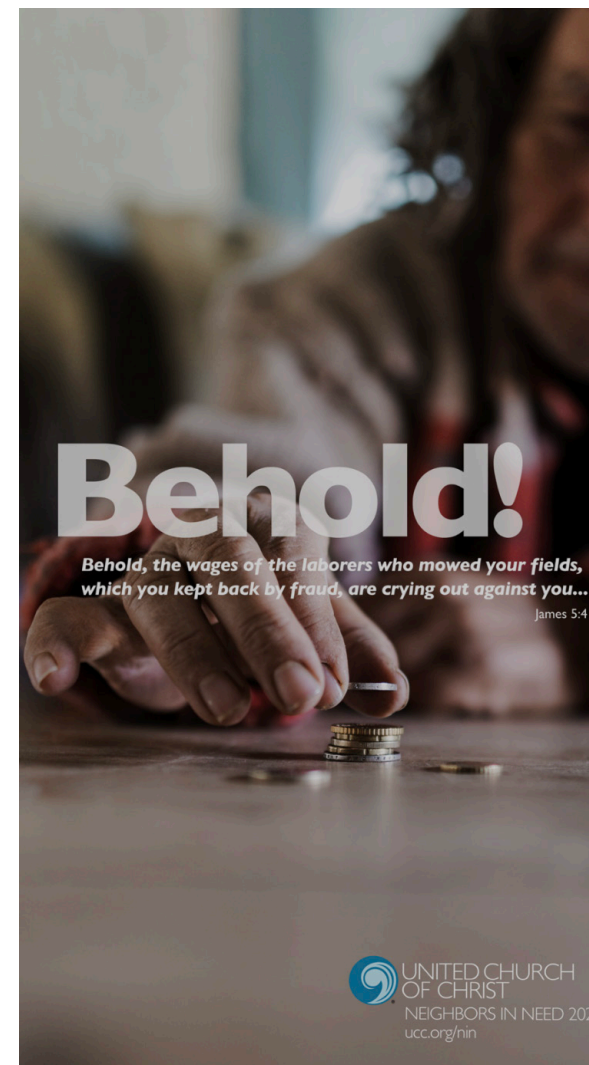
Our weekly Bible study begins again on Tuesday, September 20 from noon until 1:00 pm. We will be using the Revised Common Lectionary Bible Study. Dust your Bibles off and join Pastor Becky on Zoom. Call Debbie in the office if you are interested and she will send you the zoom link.

### SAVE THE DATES

- SEPTEMBER 4: Hymn Sing
- SEPTEMBER 8: Ice Cream Social
- SEPTEMBER 10: Love Rockford Event
- SEPTEMBER 11: Fall Kick Off
- SEPTEMBER 18: Confirmation Kick Off
- SEPTEMBER 20: Bible Study Returns
- SEPTEMBER 24: Pig Roast
- SEPTEMBER 25: Carillons



The UW Health van came to Serious Soup to offer Blood Pressure checks for our guests.



## SPECIAL UCC AND PCUSA OFFERING Sunday, October 2

Our opportunity for Giving: Neighbors in Need/Peace and Global Witness Offering. This month we receive a denominational support offering for both the UCC and the PCUSA. Neighbors in Need (NIN) supports UCC ministries of justice and compassion throughout our country: the Council for American Indian Ministry, and Justice and Witness Ministries. NIN funds projects that address systemic injustice. Peace and Global Witness (PGW) supports PCUSA programs in justice and reconciliation in cultures of violence, both locally and world-wide. Your support for this vital work is greatly appreciated. Checks can be sent to the church with notation.

# Peace

is doing, not waiting.  
Peace begins  
with each of us.

Through the Peace & Global Witness Offering, we connect with each other to confront systems of injustice and promote reconciliation in places around the world — and right here at home.

25%

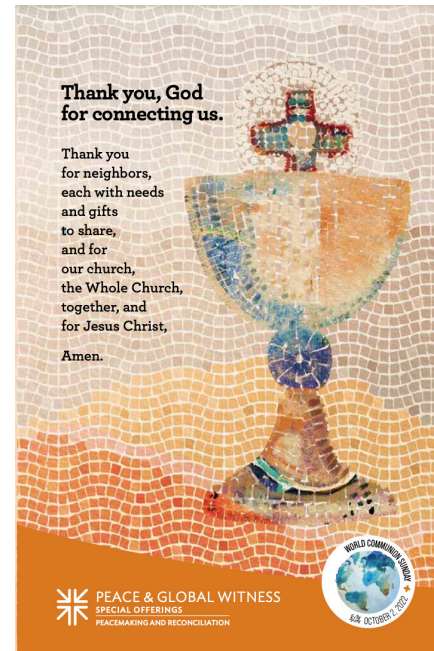
of this Offering stays with our congregation to support peacemaking and reconciliation in our own community.

25%

of this Offering goes to our mid council to join with other congregation gifts to support peacemaking work in our region.

50%

of this Offering supports the work for peace and reconciliation being done by Presbyterians across the globe.



A group from SecondFirst enjoyed a lovely summer evening at the Sinnissippi Band Shell for the Rockford Concert Band.



Music adds a special touch to Sunday worship. Thank you for sharing your talents with our church.

# SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

**Thursday, Sept. 1**  
9:30 AM – Carillons  
No Hospitality Team  
5:30 PM – JD Board Meeting  
7:00 PM – Choir Fun Night

**Friday, Sept. 2**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, Sept. 3**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Sunday, Sept. 4 Hymn Sing Communion**  
8:30 AM – Coffee Class  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

**Monday, Sept. 5 Labor Day**  
Office Closed

**Tuesday, Sept. 6**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
6:00 PM – DVT

**Wednesday, Sept. 7**  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

**Thursday, Sept. 8**  
6:00 PM – Ice Cream Social  
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

**Friday, Sept. 9**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, Sept. 10**  
9:00 AM – Love Rockford Event Court Street

**Sunday, Sept. 11 Fall Kickoff Dorothy Paige-Turner**  
8:30 AM – Coffee Class  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store  
11:15 AM – Town Hall Meeting

**Monday, Sept. 12**  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
5:00 PM – Deacons/Fellowship

**Tuesday, Sept. 13**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
9:30 AM – Presbytery  
5:00 PM – Adult Ed Team

**Wednesday, Sept. 14**  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

**Thursday, Sept. 15**  
9:30 AM – Carillons  
5:00 PM – Executive Committee  
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

**Friday, Sept. 16**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, Sept. 17**  
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

**Sunday, Sept. 18 Jim Ozee Pulpit Talk Confirmation Kickoff**  
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, Sept. 19**  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

**Tuesday, Sept. 20**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
12:00 PM – Bible Study  
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry

**Wednesday, Sept. 21**  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
12:00 PM – JD Executive  
5:30 PM – Trustees Ministry

**Thursday, Sept. 22**  
9:30 AM – Carillons  
5:30 PM – Governing Council  
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

**Friday Sept. 23**  
No Scheduled Activities

**Saturday, Sept. 24**  
2:00 PM – Pig Roast

**Sunday, Sept. 25 Pulpit Talk Peter Joachim Carillons**  
8:30 AM – Coffee Class  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

**Monday, Sept. 26**  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
6:30 PM – Worship Ministry Team

**Tuesday, Sept. 27**  
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop  
12:00 PM – Bible Study

**Wednesday, Sept 28**  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting  
12:00 PM – JD Executive

**Thursday, Sept. 29**  
9:30 AM – Carillons  
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

**Friday, Sept. 30**  
No Scheduled Activities

## NEIGHBORHOOD ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Thursday, September 8, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

We have new neighbors in the lofts and apartment buildings around our church building.

The Discernment and Vision Team (DVT) came up with the idea to invite our neighbors for ice cream so that we could all meet each other and get to know each other better.

The Deacons/Fellowship Team is implementing this idea, and we have invited our new neighbors to have ice cream with us on Thursday, September 8, 6:00 pm-7:00 pm, in our parking lot. It’s important for our church members to be there, to share friendly faces and sociable conversation, and EAT ICE CREAM. 4 legged friends are welcome. See you there!

## NEIGHBORHOOD PIG ROAST

September 24, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

We’re bringing back the Neighborhood Pig Roast on Saturday, September 24 from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm.

Are you a planner? Do you love to cook? Are you an organizer? Do you love to meet and greet? Are you a talker? Do you like a fun gathering? Yes!! Then the Muntz’s are looking for you to help make our Pig Roast a glorious event? Contact Steve and Mitzi for more details. More info to come!

## DINNER FOR SEVEN

We are wrapping up the first year of this fun program. Two groups were formed last fall from interested members of the congregation. One ended up with eight members and the other with nine. The more the merrier!

The groups met in a variety of ways: in homes, parks, providing a meal at Overnight Café, at an Anderson Gardens concert, etc. Each group can choose the venue for each gathering, three/four times during the year. This has been a fun way to get to know our fellow SecondFirst people, so we are hoping more of you will sign up to form new groups this fall. Interested? Leave your name with Debbie in the office and polish up your party shoes!

## THE THRIFT SHOP IS OPEN!

Tuesdays from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

The shop has been part of our church mission, first by supporting our Pre-School, then our neighbors, contributing financially to the church and purchasing needed items for the kitchen and Serious Soup. Thanks to those of you that continue to support our mission. Jean Reese, Helen Morse, Ann Boline, Audrey Miller, Roxy and Alice Uphouse. Masks are required.

## GENTLY USED CLOTHING FOR LOVE ROCKFORD

The Love Rockford quarterly event will take place Saturday, September 10th at Court Street Methodist. There will be a clothing room component, so your gently used clothing is very much needed! You may either drop off clothing at Court Street or in our office at church with bags clearly marked for Love Rockford. Questions? Contact Darlene Riddle at [driddle88@gmail.com](mailto:driddle88@gmail.com) or 815-988-3573.



## ACTUAL HUNGER WALK RETURNS

Sunday, October 16

After two years without an actual CROP Hunger Walk Rockford it returns Sunday, October 16 – a 4K stroll that begins at 1:00 pm at the Riverfront Museum Part, 711 N. Main St. Past Rockford Walks have raised nearly one million dollars over 36 years. We can reach that landmark figure this year with your help. In 2022, we will continue to fight against disease, disaster, displacement and other challenges that leave people hungry. The war in Ukraine and post-Covid inflation have dramatically increased food costs here and threatens other nations with actual famine.

Come join others in October after reaching out to family and friends personally or on line, [crophungerwalk.org/rockfordil](http://crophungerwalk.org/rockfordil), asking them to support your personal fight against hunger in Rockford and beyond.




## UPCOMING

*worship schedule*

SEPT. 4: Becky Erbe

SEPT. 11: Becky Erbe

SEPT. 18: Jim Ozee, Pulpit Talk

SEPT. 25: Peter Joachim, Pulpit Talk



Two thumbs up! Debbie finally received a new printer/copier.

## A NOTE FROM OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILY COORDINATOR

By Aubrey Barnett

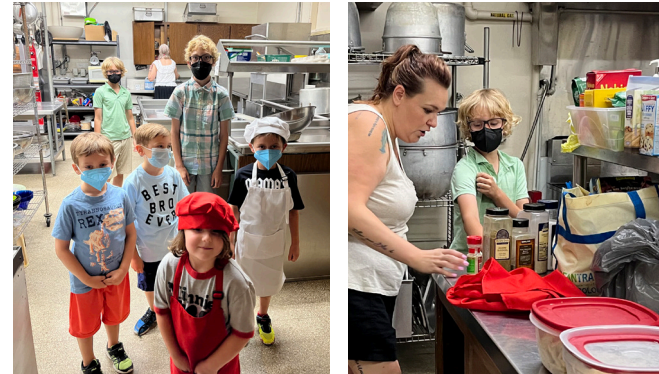
I am feeling incredibly grateful and excited to continue my work here at SecondFirst as the new Children's and Family Coordinator. I am an educator, counselor, lover of musical theater, mom of twin girls, and now a given year resident of #815. I fell in love with SecondFirst when I first moved to Rockford, and getting to rejoin the community again in service of its children is a true joy.

I am an 8th grade ELA teacher at Flinn Middle School. I have a master's degree in Pastoral Counseling from Loyola University Chicago, and have been a part of the UCC family since I was a teenager in Chicago. I look forward to continuing the wonderful traditions like dressing up for our Thanksgiving week service and Trunk or Treat, but I am also hoping to host some new events for the wider church community as well. I believe deeply in the value of intergenerational work and relationships, so look for events in which you might want to participate.

If you are ever in the mood for a deep reflective conversation about: where science and God meet, how indigenous voices can be interwoven with the Christ narrative, how meditation on God changes the brain, the potential of a multiverse, or anything regarding human rights, or Monty Python (wink to those who know!), then stop by Aubrey's office, drop her an email, or come find her before worship, I love a good chat! As the weeks unfold I hope that my role in the community can help strengthen God's firm foundation in joy, peace, and love.



Our annual Blessing of the Backpacks marked the beginning of a new school year. We bless all our students going back to school.



Round of applause for the kids who helped with Serious Soup preparations! Their one-of-a-kind brown bag art was a great touch.



## KFACT UPDATE

As summer draws to a close KFACT has been busy with our summer programming, volunteering, and college mentee departures. We recently completed a five week boxing series with Patriots and Sockwell Boxing Club. The girls enjoyed getting active, learning both the physical and mental discipline required in boxing. Each session they shared their personal challenges with bullying and learned about non-physical ways to advocate for themselves and others in situations at school and in life.

KFACT volunteered at Kiwanis Brat Days. This is one of our largest and most impactful volunteer activities, allowing us to give back to an organization that has supported KFACT and our college mentees for several years.

Our staff has worked tirelessly all summer connecting with mentees, hosting outings with the Rockford Park District from Atwood to Sand Park Pool. We have been blessed to accept several new girls in our program and look forward to getting to know them better as well head back to school this fall.



Delicious food, fellowship, and fresh air. Big thanks to everyone who helped make the Church Picnic a great success!

