

SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
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OCTOBER 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

*October is the month of harvest
We pray and hope for the largest
We give thanks to God above
A time of year to feel His love.*

– Catherine Pulsifer, © 2020

October. For some, this is a favorite month. The leaves are changing, the air is crisp, and everything is pumpkin spice.

October brings our Stewardship campaign. Stewardship is an important part of every ministry. We will have several opportunities to hear from Ministry Teams and members about the needs going forward for the future of our church.

Also this month we will celebrate World Wide Communion Sunday. We will host a Cider and Donut event, Crop Walk, the Apple Orchard visit, Nerf Wars for the youth group, and the Neighborhood Trunk or Treat.

So you can see, there are many things going on in October for you to be part of this wonderful community!

Hope to see you in Church!



Donna Schaad directing the Choir.

SAVE THE DATES

- OCTOBER 2: World Communion Sunday
- OCTOBER 6: Cider and Donuts
- OCTOBER 9: Stewardship Kickoff
- OCTOBER 15: Nerf Battle Event
- OCTOBER 16: Crop Walk
- OCTOBER 27: ARC Party
- OCTOBER 29: Jubilee Soup Kitchen
- OCTOBER 30: Trunk or Treat



Gathering of 9 » A lovely time of fellowship, food, and friendship.

NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

RELIGIOUS LEADERS WANT CONGRESS TO VOTE BEFORE MIDTERMS ON VOTING RIGHTS, WAGES, POVERTY



A diverse group of faith leaders has called for Congress to vote — up or down, before the November midterm elections — on living wages, voting rights and federal

policies that “can immediately lift millions of families out of poverty.” The call came at a Sept. 22 press briefing and news conference in Washington, D.C., led by the Poor People’s Campaign. Several members of Congress stopped by the event in the Russell Senate Office Building to hear pleas from Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders. The Rev. William Barber III, Poor People’s Campaign co-chair and leader of the Capitol Hill gathering, called the current situation a “moral emergency.” He said floor votes before November would put senators and representatives on public record, so voters “can see where people stand.” **Read more: www.ucc.org**

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY TO HOST SERIES ON THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY



In a moment defined by cascading crises, many people across the nation are wondering about the future of American democracy. In the months ahead, Princeton Theological Seminary will confront this uncertainty head-on, convening a series of conversations with leaders poised to shape the future. The kickoff conversation — on the challenge of hyper-

polarization and how this phenomenon affects Christian communities, our ability to sustain government of and by the people, and the course of everyday life — takes place from 4:30 p.m. through 6 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, Oct. 13, on the Atrium of the Wright Library, 64 Mercer Street in Princeton, New Jersey. The free event will also be livestreamed. Registration is required **Read more: presbyterianmission.org**

FROM BREAD AND CUP TO FAITH AND GIVING

By David Jones



During this stewardship season you are asked to consider the variety of invitations you receive and how they spur your faith development. For Jesus’ followers none is more inspiring than the invitation to his sacred table. Jesus calls us to be agents of God’s grace. On October 9 we begin a reflection titled From Bread and Cup to Faith and Giving. This time of personal evaluation will culminate on November 13, Commitment Sunday. We hope you will be inspired to respond positively to this important invitation.

Jesus invites us to bring all that we are and all that we have when we accept the costs and joys of discipleship. When we accept Jesus’ invitation we become transformed into agents of God in the broken and hurting world. We share in God’s work for wholeness in all the fractured places.

Thank you for accepting this invitation to grow as stewards, agents of God’s grace in downtown Rockford and beyond.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE MODERATOR

By Phil Davidson

I just may be getting into a pattern. In the last several newsletters, my article has been about the month into which we are entering. Far be it for me to destroy a perfectly reasonable pattern, so let's think about October. After all it is quite a month in our life and our church.

Think about it, in October, we get to rake leaves and more leaves and more leaves, something I would rank right there with getting teeth drilled without Novocaine! But, really, October features a Technicolor display of vibrant colors, as the tree leaves perform their usual magic. Because of changes in the length of daylight and temperature, the leaves stop their food-making process. The chlorophyll breaks down, the green color disappears, and the yellow to orange colors become visible. It truly is God's handiwork and is all so amazing.

The month begins with a special UCC and PCUSA offering on Sunday, October 2. The UCC Neighbors in Need/Peace and PCUSA Global Witness Offering. Neighbors in Need supports UCC ministries of justice and compassion throughout our country. Peace and Global Witness supports PCUSA programs in justice and reconciliation in cultures of violence, both locally and world-wide.

And, in October, we kick off our annual Stewardship Campaign. Stewardship is defined as the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property. With your generous giving, we are able to do just that. When you receive your Stewardship letter, please prayerfully consider how you may be able to support our church family in the coming year. Thank you.



MOVING AHEAD WITH OUR SCHOOL CHILDREN IN HAITI

By Roger Greenlaw

The news reports tell us that there is increased turmoil in Haiti with demonstrations and unrest anew because of recent fuel price increases. Haiti remains the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. We are reminded of the quote from James Farmer and FR Gustavo Gutierrez: "In the Company of the Poor," page 196:

We are connected, tied and bound together. We need to walk together, learn together and maybe together, we can envision and create better, more equitable tomorrows, both for the big issues "over there" and also in our daily lives, loving our neighbors - and that is everyone, as we love ourselves.

The Odette and James Casimir family are members of SecondFirst Church and have led our church in addressing the issues of poverty in their hometown of Saut-d'Eau, Haiti.

For five years SecondFirst Church has provided education money for 54 children to attend school in Saut-d'Eau, Haiti. Many parents in Haiti cannot afford the \$250 tuition for their children. There is no free public school and those who cannot pay do not attend any school. This price pays for tuition, a meal, a backpack, a uniform, books, and supplies. Our goal for this fall is to provide continued school attendance for 54 students with our donations.

Mother Teresa cautioned us to not draw the circle of our family too small, with our mission work in Rockford and in Haiti we are making our family circle larger.

We hope to continue this work of providing education for children of Saut-d'Eau, Haiti. If you would like to join in this effort you may send a donation to SecondFirst Church with the name of Haiti Education Fund in the memo line.

If you would like more information on the Haiti Project of SecondFirst Church please contact: Roger and Carolyn Greenlaw (815-262-1776), (815-978-0723) James and Odette Casimir (815-319-0741).



JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

By Sue Kanthak, Executive Director

Our 3rd LOVE Rockford event, The Veterans Celebration Health Fair, was a big success. There were over 100 attendees. 12 attendees received haircuts. There were plenty of giveaways, free clothes and 200 produce boxes were distributed. Produce boxes were donated by Blue Cross Blue Shield. The BBQ from Famous Dave's went quick.

Save the date for the last LOVE Rockford event of the year, Children's Health Fair: December 3, from 10 am - 2 pm at SecondFirst Church. We hope to see you there!

What is going on with those white things in the garden? We ran into some snags installing our accessible decking. It seems the soil around the garden is too good, so the stakes intended to hold the decks in place are not long enough to hold them securely in such loose soil. We are trying a couple of alternatives and hopefully will be back to the installation process soon. We will be closing the garden down soon. Keep checking our Facebook page for the workday date.

Movie in the Park was so much fun! There were lots of activities before the movie. The police and fire department were there so the kids got to climb on a fire truck and spend time with a community resource officer. With the help of The Bike Elves and Goodwill Industries, we were able to give out 30 used but in great condition bikes to kids from 2 yrs. old to 14 yrs. old. Each person receiving a bike, received a helmet, also. I Bike Rockford was on-site fitting the bikes with front and rear lights. Our new popcorn popper was a big hit. Thank you to the neighbors who manned the popcorn popper, brought extra bikes, helped with the raffle, and helped with the movie. A BIG thank you to our neighbor, Don, who saved the entire night! After several confirmations with the Park District that there would be electricity available, there was no electricity available. Don, a neighbor, plugged an extension cord into his home and allowed us to use his power for the entire evening. So - 4 extension cords later, we had the popcorn popper popping, the sound system going, and a movie running!

Our final Movie in the Park is October 15th! After that we switch to Game Days at the office.

Be sure to get a team together for our 2nd Annual Moveable Trivia Contest! \$35 for teams up to 5. Wear a team costume and you might win a prize for the most creative costume!

The Neighborhood Leadership Group is a group of 10 residents of the neighborhood that have joined together with a wish to make tangible improvements in the neighborhood. After our first meeting, we decided to meet with the park district to find out about making improvements to Haskell Park. We met with four representatives of the park district to exchange ideas on how the neighbors would like to use the park. We came up with a few things the park district can do right now, trim trees and bushes, empty trash receptacles, talk to ComEd about better lighting, etc. and a wish list for future projects. Some of these improvements have already begun!



Our neighborhood Pig Roast took place on Saturday, September 24. We had 135 guests join us for great food and fellowship. We extend a big THANK YOU to everyone who played a role in making this event a great success - from planning to cooking, serving to clean up.

OCTOBER CALENDAR

Saturday, Oct. 1

9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic
11:00 AM – Audrey Miller
Celebration of Life

Sunday, Oct. 2

World Wide Communion

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

Monday, Oct. 3

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, Oct. 4

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Stories of the Bible
6:00 PM – DVT

Wednesday, Oct. 5

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, Oct. 6

9:30AM – Carillons
5:00 PM – JD Board Meeting
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
6:00 PM – Cider and Donuts
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Oct. 7

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Oct. 8

No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, Oct. 9

Stewardship Kickoff

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

Monday, Oct. 10

11:30 AM – Serious Soup
5:00 PM – Deacons/Fellowship

Tuesday, Oct. 11

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Stories of the Bible
5:00 PM – Adult Ed Team

Wednesday, Oct. 12

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, Oct. 13

9:30 AM – Carillons
5:00 PM – Executive Committee
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Oct. 14

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Oct. 15

9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic
4:00 PM – Nerf Battle Event

Sunday, Oct. 16

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
1:00 PM – CROP Walk

Monday, Oct. 17

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, Oct. 18

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry

Wednesday, Oct. 19

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
5:30 PM – Trustees Ministry
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, Oct. 20

9:30 AM – Carillons
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal
6:00 PM – Bellcantos

Friday Oct. 21

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Oct. 22

No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, Oct. 23 Bells

8:30 AM – Coffee Class
9:30 AM – Peanuts rehearse
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, Oct. 24

11:30 AM – Serious Soup
6:30 PM – Worship Ministry Team

Tuesday, Oct. 25

7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study

Wednesday, Oct. 26

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – JD Executive
6:00 PM – ARC Party
6:00 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, Oct. 27

9:30 AM – Carillons
1:00 PM – Edwards Apple Orchard
5:30 PM – Governing Council
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Oct. 28

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Oct. 29

8:00 AM – Fall Cleanup
10:00 AM – Jubilee Soup Kitchen

Sunday, Oct. 30

8:30 AM – Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
3:00 PM – Trunk or Treat

Monday, Oct. 31

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

SPECIAL UCC AND PCUSA OFFERING

Sunday, October 2

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.

NEIGHBORHOOD CIDER AND DONUTS

Thursday, October 6, 6:00 - 7:00 pm

Sponsored by the Deacons/Fellowship Team

We had a wonderful turnout of church members for the neighborhood ice cream social held on September 8 at the church. We weren’t sure if we would have any neighbors come by, but we were ready for them and it was a fun time, for sure!

We are inviting our neighbors again in the church parking lot (inside the church building if the weather is bad), for cider and donuts from Curran’s, along with music from our own Church Street String Band. What we need is our church family, 4 legged friends included, to join us for the evening. Please come to visit, enjoy good music and have a taste of the fall season. We look forward to seeing you!

NERF BATTLE

Saturday, October 15, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Calling all youth and their friends! Join us for a fun time of Nerf battle games and pizza on Saturday, October 15th from 4:00-6:00 PM here at church. Contact Rachel Huffman (rachel.huffman@secondfirst.org) to RSVP.

TRIP TO EDWARDS APPLE ORCHARD EAST

Thursday, October 27, 1:00 pm

The Deacons/Fellowship team is going to the Edwards Apple Orchard East and we’d like you to join us. We are going to leave the church at 1:00 pm, or meet us there around 1:30 pm. Please contact Debbie in the office to let her know you are coming.

JUBILEE SOUP KITCHEN

Saturday, October 29, 1:00 pm

First off, thanks to all who helped in August to make goodies to complement the Little Caesar’s Pizza Truck! It was such an honor to have the Jubilee Neighborhood Soup Kitchen be selected for this outreach.

Onto the next event: October 29, just before Halloween! Can you join in the spooky fun? While we work from 10 am to about 1 pm, you can participate for any or all of that time. We are flexible. If you can be part of the October team, let Marge Maynard or Jean Herro know. Thanks for your help and prayers and support in the church budget!



NEW DATE! TRUNK OR TREAT SATURDAY

Sunday, October 30, 3:00 - 4:00 pm

Do you have a car? Does it have a trunk? Then we need you! Join us for our annual Trunk or Treat event on Sunday, October 30th in our SecondFirst parking lot. We are hoping to have 30 cars to help us pass out candy. We plan to start setting up at 2:00 pm and will begin handing out candy from 3:00 pm until the candy runs out. Please contact the church office at (815)963-8431 if you can attend. We are also in need of candy donations which can be dropped off at church.

FALL CLEANUP

Saturday, October 29, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Now that we have had the summer to enjoy the flowers it is time to do a fall cleanup. It looks like Oct. 22 is a good day to enjoy the fall weather as we work. Please set aside that day to join others for some fellowship and work. Please bring gloves, tools you like to use, water and your smiling face. If you bring a shovel, ask Phil Davidson for proper size and use. See you there.

COFFEE CLASS

Sundays, 8:30-9:30 am

Hybrid Adult Education Sunday School (otherwise known as Coffee Class) meets in the Gathering Place and on Zoom from 8:30-9:30am every week. Here is the planned schedule for the upcoming weeks:

- » **October 2, 9, 16:** Six video/discussion sessions from the “Surprised by Hope” series by N.T. Wright, one of the leading theologians of our time.
- » **October 23:** First of a series study on the Parables.
- » **October 30:** Second of a series study on the Parables.
- » **November 6, 13, 20:** Exciting three week study of Paul Tillich, renowned 20th century theologian, led by our own Bob Bates. Join us in The Gathering Place or on line to attend this special offering. For the zoom link please contact John DeWaters at john.r.dewaters@gmail.com. Coffee Class welcomes you!



UPCOMING worship schedule

OCTOBER 2: Becky Erbe

OCTOBER 9: Becky Erbe

OCTOBER 16: Jim Ozee, Pulpit Talk

OCTOBER 23: Becky Erbe

OCTOBER 30: Becky Erbe

OCTOBER Music Schedule

OCTOBER 2: Choir

OCTOBER 9: TBA

OCTOBER 16: Choir

OCTOBER 23: Martin Ringers,
Bellcantos, Peanut Bells

A NOTE FROM OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILY COORDINATOR

By Aubrey Barnett

As we get back into the swing of school, Sunday School has also been gearing up, and each week the children have made an art project, acted out a play, or played the "New Testament Hopscotch"! We have made the switch to follow the same liturgical calendar as the church once again, and most lessons have been pulled from the Book of Luke. Each week getting to discuss with our youngest group the stories of how Jesus was when he was on Earth, and helping the children make meaning of that for today, is a true blessing.

We are also using the Children's Illustrated Ministry curriculum, which infuses artwork into each lesson, with beautiful scripture lessons. The children are practicing memorizing the Lord's Prayer, so that they can more fully participate in our monthly communions. We look forward to Trunk or Treat, and continuing to celebrate the gift of being back to school with what feels like the first normal year for a while! Praise God!

FCE is looking forward to hosting a small celebration in our third floor space, and we are proud of the new signs we designed and placed in the worship space to help new families know where to go. Look for more updates for more information on that date. When you come to the space, you will find the 10,000 Blessings Wall we created. We are asking members to write on a small slip of paper blessings they have, we are counting and keeping them until we reach 1,000! Can we do it before Christmas? Let's give God thanks for the blessings in our lives! Ask Aubrey for slips of paper or if you have blessings ready to hang!

Speaking of Christmas, although these holidays feel far off, we are also planning on hosting a fun intergenerational event to be revealed in the November newsletter! Hint: something fun in the kitchen for sure!



The kiddos used their creativity to learn about how we are all set free and given wholeness, purpose, and promise through Jesus Christ.



JUBILEE SOUP KITCHEN: A big crowd for Little Caesars Pizza
By Jean Herro

We had an extra-large crowd at our Soup Kitchen at the Jubilee Center. It was mainly due the presence of an extra-large semi truck in the parking lot of the Jubilee Center. The Little Caesars Co. provided free pizza for our patrons. We were lucky enough to be on their charitable run across the USA. All 92 patrons received 2 or more slices of pizza plus the usual accompaniments, garlic bread, chips, cookies, fruit and water. There was enough pizza left to serve 60 Patrons at our own Serious Soup on Monday. Kudos to Little Caesars!

KFACT UPDATE

KFACT staff and Mentees have been spending quality time connecting with one another that summer throughout the Rockford community! The girls have enjoyed going to Starbucks and we are truly thankful to the SecondFirst Mission Team for the generosity of the Starbucks gift cards!

This summer the girls had the opportunity to participate in a critical self-defense training at Rockford Boxing Club.

KFACT'S programming will officially launch September 24th by playing kickball with KFACT at Dahlquist Park.

We are in need of in-person math tutoring on Tuesday or Thursday evenings that fall! Please email us at info@k-fact.org to be a volunteer with KFACT or visit www.k-fact.org to learn more!



CROP HUNGER WALK AT MUSEUM PARK

Sunday, October 16, 1:00 pm

The Rockford area CROP Hunger Walk is Sunday, October 16 — a 4K stroll that begins at 1:00 pm. It returns to the Riverfront Museum Park, 711 N. Main St. to address an ever growing food crisis around the world.

The Rock River Valley Pantry has experienced an astounding 99% increase of individuals served over last year. Worldwide Hunger is growing at the same rate. The war in Ukraine and post-Covid inflation have dramatically increased food costs threatening other nations with actual famine.

Come join others October 16, after reaching out to family and friends in person or online, crophungerwalk.org/rockfordil, asking them to support your fight against hunger in Rockford and beyond.

Thursday, September 8th, was a beautiful day for our Neighborhood Ice Cream Social. A fun time was had by everyone in attendance, including a number of our sociable four-legged friends! Big thanks to the Deacons-Fellowship Team for planning and executing this great community event.

