

SecondFirst Church

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

It's November!

November has as many days as half of the months, but it seems so much shorter. Maybe it is because it is such a busy month. November is a month of blessings and thanksgivings. November 6 is the day many churches celebrate All Saints Day. We are thankful for all our saints that have left us this

past year. We honor them in our Remembering Our Loved Ones Service.

Stewardship Sunday is November 13. In some congregations they call it 'Consecration Sunday.' It is the day we celebrate the financial commitments our members make for the financial securities, care, and missions of the church for the upcoming year.

The Season of Advent begins November 27th. Advent is the time of preparation for the coming birth of Jesus.

Last but not least, on November 20 we celebrate 'Pilgrim Sunday,' which is unique to both Presbyterian and UCC church history. We are all expecting turkeys, fancy stuffings, potatoes, yams, green beans and pies. The Pilgrims enjoyed shellfish including lobster because of the abundance. It was not unusual for lobster or crab, and shrimp to be served as many as three times a week. Join us for worship on November 20. We will have coffee hour after service. No lobster, but great pumpkin bars and fellowship.

See you all in church!
Pastor Becky

STEWARDSHIP SEASON

October 3, 2022

Letter to the Congregation from the Stewardship Committee

Dear Members in Christ,

How many invitations have you received over the years? Do you remember? Do they include those from church welcoming you to Sunday School, confirmation, and weekly Worship?

As a part of this congregation you have also heard invitations to serve on a Ministry Team, to teach Sunday school, to help with Serious Soup or yard work. And most importantly you have been invited to Christ's Table where we celebrate his death and resurrection.

Read more about Stewardship Sunday and how you can contribute on page 2.

NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

GIVING TUESDAY 2022 TO DEEPEN COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE JUSTICE THROUGH FELLOWSHIPS



Creation care and environmental justice will once again be the focus of Giving Tuesday, Nov. 29 – a commitment that builds on the United Church of Christ's historic prophetic leadership and continues to address

a priority that will be underscored for several years to come. "This Giving Tuesday designation in consecutive years signals that the UCC national setting is deepening its commitment to environmental justice, to fund the work into the future," said the Rev. Kent Siladi, director of philanthropy. In 2021, the church raised \$80,000 on Giving Tuesday to support climate care and creation justice. The majority of the gifts, \$56,000, were sent to Honor the Earth, an indigenous organization working to save our planet. The remaining 30 percent of the funds were earmarked for five grants awarded by the UCC Council for Climate Justice to support advocacy and education efforts this year. [Read more: www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

NEW PRESBYTERIAN DOCUMENTARY WILL ADDRESS THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL RACISM



Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's Story Productions, which has presented award-winning documentaries such as "Flint: The Poisoning of an American City" and "Trigger: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence," is at work on a new film looking at the

impacts of industrial pollution and environmental racism. This is the 10th documentary from director David Barnhart and director of photography Scott Lansing. "This new film came about because these communities, who have been fighting industrial pollution in their own neighborhoods for years, saw the 'Flint' film and reached out to us because they saw their story in 'Flint,'" Barnhart said. In all, the production expects to visit eight or more communities to tell this story. Johnetta Roberts of Louisville's Molo Village talks to filmmaker David Barnhart. [Read more: presbyterianmission.org](http://presbyterianmission.org)



Cider & Donuts was a wonderful time. See more photos inside on page 5.



REFLECTIONS FROM THE MODERATOR

By Phil Davidson

It is so easy to wax nostalgic this time of year with thoughts of Thanksgivings of old...fresh turkeys from nearby farms, yams grown right in your own garden, cranberry sauce prepared in the kitchen from fresh cranberries, and the fragrance of cooling pumpkin pies wafting throughout the house. Of course, we now live in the era of frozen Butterball turkeys, yams from the grocery, canned cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pies prepared by Marie Callender!

Speaking of frozen turkeys, I am reminded of the lady who was picking through the frozen turkey section at the grocery store but couldn't find one big enough for her family. She asked the stock boy, "Do these turkeys get any bigger?" The stock boy answered, "No, ma'am, they're dead."

And, have you ever read the Ode to Thanksgiving by Anonymous (could not find the author's name)? Well, here it is:

*To our national birds
The American Eagle
The Thanksgiving Turkey
May one give us peace in all our states
And the other a piece for all our plates*

But, as we enter the month of Thanksgiving, let us remember all those who do not have a "piece on their plate." – not only at Thanksgiving, but also throughout the year. Hunger is an ever-growing crisis throughout the world and right here in our community. The Rock River Valley Pantry has experienced an astounding 99% increase of individuals served over last year!

This wonderful SecondFirst Church body of believers will continue to address hunger through our service at the Jubilee Soup Kitchen, Serious Soup, donations of goods and financial support to food pantries, and more. Let us strive to think about other ways we can show God's love through our efforts to stem hunger in light of post-COVID inflation and supply chain issues.

Thanksgiving is a time to count God's blessings. But, as Robert Caspar Lintner says, "Thanksgiving was never meant to be shut up in a single day." Thank God every day, all year long. And, may we thank others for no particular reason, just for being here.

Stewardship Sunday

November 13, 2022

This month we ask you to consider your response as you hear Pastor Becky's invitation to share the bread and the cup, the gifts of God for the people of God. In particular we ask you to focus on how they strengthen you to serve others as God serves you. Jesus makes us into his own image through the disciplines of study, worship, prayer, service, and generosity. We become ever more powerful agents of God in our world that is broken and hurting as we say yes to God's invitation, God's call to work with Jesus for wholeness in its many fractured places.

On November 13, we invite you to come to the communion table with your financial commitment to another year of mission and ministry that declares God's Realm is among us. From Bread and Cup to Faith and Giving has asked you to consider the variety of invitations you receive. Its completion is Commitment Sunday when we hope you feel inspired to respond positively to this important invitation.



JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

By Sue Kanthak, Executive Director

LOVE Rockford

Our hope when we changed the format of LOVE Rockford was that more people would get help more often throughout the year. With 3 LOVE Rockford events done and one more to go, our numbers show we will easily meet if not surpass the 400 attendees of past LOVE Rockfords. Our next event will be On December 3rd from 10am – 2pm. Thank you to SecondFirst Church for opening their gymnasium. This final event for 2022 will have services that focus on children's social, emotional, and physical well-being. There will be games and crafts for the kids and a special visit from someone who lives in the North Pole! If you would like to help, we could really use donations of labeled & wrapped children's gifts, gently used winter outerwear for children, and candy canes for our North Pole visitor to hand out. To volunteer or donate, please contact Nitro at nitro@jeremiahdevelopment.org or call our office at (815) 627-0001.

Movie In the Park/Game Day

Our final movie will be Pixar's Soul and all children attending will receive a recorder (instrument)! Thank you to Jack Armstrong of Court St United Methodist Church for volunteering to teach the children how to play a song on their new recorder and Krysta Tilges, also of Court St, for being our sound person and all-around tech person for our movies! Thanks to Goodwill, we will have Halloween costumes for the children, also! Beginning in November we transition to Neighborhood Game Day once a month. Game Day is a time neighbors can come together to play board games or do crafts. Conversations begin and solutions to community challenges are discussed. Jeremiah provides the space for neighbors to come together to support each other and discuss mutual concerns. These events generally happen the 4th Saturday afternoon of each month from 2-4 pm. Feel free to come and join us!

HELP – small engine repair classes

We have our first full class for our small engine program. We limited our pilot class last spring to 5 students. We had 100% retention with those students! All students passed the class, and one student received his Briggs & Stratton certification. This fall we have 10 students coming from the neighborhood,

the community, and from Youthbuild. The classes are 90 minutes long with 30 minutes after class for community building and a hot, healthy meal. Thank you to SecondFirst Church for hosting the classes in their garage and providing meals for 2 weeks. Thank you to Court Street United Methodist Church, Resurrection Church, and Spring Creek UCC for also providing meals for 2 weeks each. This is truly a village helping feed these students. We get to provide meals for these students for 9 weeks/3 days a week, so if you would like to join in, let us know at admin@jeremiahdevelopment.org or (815) 627-0001.

The Garden

The garden was be put to bed for the winter on October 22. It's been an interesting summer. Hunger has been high, and the garden has increased in use. This has made it more challenging to keep the garden producing enough to meet the need. Our gardeners have replanted beds several times to keep them producing enough for the need. They have volunteered 172 documented hours in the garden, but I know there are many hours they volunteer that they don't report. Thank you to Ron Schaad & Judith Wyatt of SecondFirst Church and Millie Zimmerman, Nancy Smith, and Kevin Gayden of Emmanuel Episcopal Church for being so dedicated to feeding those who are the most at risk in our community.

Neighborhood Committee and Neighborhood Leadership Group

We currently have 2 groups of dedicated volunteers who are committed to the people living in the Coronado Haskell neighborhood.

Our Neighborhood Committee has been working hard for as long as Jeremiah has been around! They provide support to Jeremiah's neighborhood initiatives. They deliver our monthly newsletter year-round, they volunteer whenever there's need, and they give guidance and advice on our projects. The community resource officer attends these meetings to give us insight to the safety of the neighborhood and a run-down of recent criminal activity. This committee is a mix of members of the churches and neighbors. Thank you for your dedication, Jim Gibbons & Kaye Gallaway from Court St United Methodist

Church, Mary Johnson and Delbert Browne from Emmanuel Episcopal Church, and Mary Anderson and Joyce Krumm from the neighborhood.

A new group, the Neighborhood Leadership Group, has formed from neighbors who have a desire to make improvements in the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood. The group currently consists of 10 people who live in the neighborhood and have committed to meeting once a month to discuss successes, challenges, and vision for the future of the neighborhood.

Some of the projects that have taken root:

- » Haskell Park – we met with 4 people from the park district to discuss immediate issues at the park and a plan for future use of the park.
- » Traffic – we are working on the possibility of some type of traffic calming measures throughout the neighborhood
- » Welcome baskets – the group would like to put together welcome baskets for new neighbors to welcome them and tell them about the services provided in the area, and from Jeremiah.
- » Volunteers from this group provided pizza and hot cocoa during the last movie night as well as use of their vehicles to deliver bikes and trash cans to the neighbors! Thank you to Mary Anderson and Gil Rojas for helping deliver the bikes and trash cans!

Neighborhood Safety Event

Our final neighborhood safety event is Saturday, November 5th. This event will focus on home maintenance. Scott Garwick, the gentleman who installed our lights from Light the Night, will teach neighbors how to maintain a safe home. Each person in attendance will receive a tool kit with basic tools. Thank you to Scott for donating his time and talents and to neighbor Gil for organizing the event and securing the tool kits.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Tuesday, Nov 1

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study
6:00 PM – DVT

Wednesday, Nov 2

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

Thursday, Nov. 3

9:30 AM – Carillons
No Hospitality Team
5:30 PM – JD Board Meeting
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:30 PM – Choir Rehearsal

Friday, Nov. 4

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Nov. 5

8:00 AM – Fall Cleanup

Sunday, Nov. 6

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

Monday, Nov. 7

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, Nov. 8

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
9:20 AM – Presbytery
12:00 PM – Stories of the Bible
5:00 PM – Adult Ed Team
5:00 PM – Foundation

Wednesday, Nov. 9

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

Thursday, Nov. 10

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

Friday, Nov. 11

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Nov. 12

9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic
10:00 AM – Carillons Rehearse

Sunday, Nov. 13

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

Monday, Nov. 14

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

Tuesday, Nov. 15

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Stories of the Bible
5:30 PM – Mission Ministry

Wednesday, Nov. 16

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

Thursday, Nov. 17

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

Friday, Nov. 18

No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Nov. 19

8:30 AM – Boot Sorting

Sunday, Nov 20

8:30 AM – Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:15 AM – Coffee Hour-Pumpkin Bars
11:15 AM – Family CE

Monday, Nov. 21

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, Nov. 22

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

Wednesday, Nov. 23

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

Thursday, Nov. 24

Thanksgiving
Office Closed

Friday, Nov. 25

Office Closed

Saturday, Nov. 26

10:00 AM – Jubilee Soup Kitchen

Sunday, Nov. 27

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

Monday, Nov. 28

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

Tuesday, Nov. 29

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

Wednesday, Nov. 30

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



NEW DATE! FALL CLEANUP

Saturday, November 5, 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. 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. Contact: Ron Schaad

SOUP KITCHEN

Saturday, November 26, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Marge (and John) Maynard will be heading up this special post-Thanksgiving lunch at the Jubilee Center (the small building between Emmanuel Episcopal Church and Court St). If you and your special friends and family are able to help, that would be excellent! We will start at 10 am and be finished by 1 pm. Not sure yet what the menu will be, other than delicious! Contact Marge if you are interested or have questions. New teammates are always welcome.



SERIOUS SOUP

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers and donations from our Congregation and the Salvation Army, Serious Soup continues to flourish. We are serving an increasing number of patrons. Each Monday Morning we serve a meal which consists of a hot main dish, a side dish, bread or a sandwich, a vegetable salad, a fruit salad, homemade soup, dessert, and a bottle of water. Our biggest need at this point is monetary donations. We are also looking for people to contribute soup. We've had some delicious homemade soups. We also need soda crackers and desserts. Dessert can be homemade or packages of cookies, etc. purchased from the store. If you've never observed Serious Soup in action, stop by the Dining Room any Monday morning between 9:00 and 1:00. Questions? See Katy or Arlene.

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:

- » **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!



PILGRIM SUNDAY PUMPKIN BARS

Sunday, November 20

Welcome Thanksgiving by staying after church on Sunday, November 20 to enjoy pumpkin bars and coffee with your church friends.



The kiddos had a fun and active afternoon of Nerf battle games and pizza.



UPCOMING worship schedule

NOVEMBER 6: Becky Erbe
NOVEMBER 13: Becky Erbe
NOVEMBER 20: Becky Erbe
NOVEMBER 27: Jim Ozee

NOVEMBER MUSIC SCHEDULE

- » **Nov. 6:** All Saints Day, with a big first hymn arrangement, and a lovely anthem featuring Marge Maynard, soprano, and Madeline Archer and (hopefully), Abigail King on flutes.
- » **Nov. 13:** Carillons, with Dorothy Paige-Turner and choir, doing our own Bill Zartman's arrangement of "O Happy Day." It's a world premiere, and a first for Dorothy, to sing with handbells, I believe.
- » **Nov. 20:** Christ the King Sunday, and our Pilgrim celebration.
- » **Nov. 27:** First Sunday of Advent and available for anyone who would like to sing and/or play.

A NOTE FROM OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILY COORDINATOR

By Aubrey Barnett

The fall has brought some wonderful events for the children, and in Sunday School we continue to take a look at the stories of the gospel through the voice of Luke. We did take one week to read the Psalms, and made a googly eyed craft to remind us that God is always with and watching us, even when we don't think so or remember. Ben, one of our youngest in Kindergarten, has taken the clip around to friends and family to retell them the story that "God is always with us." This is why it is so important to support the children of our community, because their faith reminds us what devotion looks like. So be like Ben, and go out into the world, proclaiming to those who will listen, that you know God is working in your life.



On October 23rd the children will present, along with FCE, the ways that your contributions help to make the lives of our youngest better. That will include a short version of 'Be Thou My Vision' sung with motions. Think of it as liturgical dance lite! Teaching them has been a joy, and in my own household we have come to enjoy the "Maddie" version best. Our own Madeline Archer was recorded practicing and the video was put on our Family Facebook group so that kiddos at home can practice too. Carla and Tinsley have also been practicing singing along with the hymns each week!



On World Communion Sunday, October 2nd, the children passed out homemade bread to each family who attended church. It warmed hearts and tummies. Admittedly my bread made it to the car, and was immediately opened, and to say it was delicious was an understatement. It was a true gift and a reminder of just how good the bread of life is!

We look forward to a Family Christmas Themed Party in December. Please check the December newsletter for details!

BOOTS FOR HASKELL SCHOOL: BOOT SORTING

Saturday, November 19, 8:30 am in the Sanctuary

As has become our custom, SecondFirst Church will once again be purchasing boots for the Haskell School Students. These boots enable the students to go outside for recess year round, getting the necessary fresh air and exercise that is so important for physical health, mental health and improved ability to learn. The kids' feet have been sized, the boots have been purchased and now the fun begins. Boots will be tagged for each individual student and sorted by classroom. At 11:00 am we will drive the church van full of boots to Haskell for distribution. Please let Karen Olson, kolson128@gmail.com, know if you can help on this day. We also need your financial help with this project. Please consider making a donation to the mission ministry team to help fund this. Donations can be made to the church with the memo "Boots for Haskell" and placed in the offertory or mailed to the church. Contact Karen Olson with any questions. THANK YOU in advance for your support of this wonderful ministry.



On World Communion Sunday, October 2, we celebrated with breads and chalices from different countries to supplement our regular observance. World Communion is a day that Christian Churches all over the world share in the sacrament of Communion. To extend communion even more, each Household unit was given a loaf of bread to take home. Thank you so much to Katy Paterson and Alice Uphouse for making the bread possible.



It was a lovely fall day for Cider & Donuts! Thank you to the Deacons/ Fellowship Team for organizing this seasonally-themed time of fellowship.