

## SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)  
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Non Profit  
Organization US  
Postage PAID  
Permit No. 3734  
Rockford, Illinois

AUGUST 2023

# THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

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



## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Happy August Dear Ones,

Once again, I am amazed at how fast time flies. Here it is August! I like August.



I like the fairs that pop up. I like the summer's end harvest of vegetables. I love seeing the notebooks, pens, paper and of course pencils that come with the Back to School. I love the feeling of knowing come September there will be a more regimented feel to life.

August brings the Church Picnic. On August 20 after worship, we will gather at Paige Park for our annual tradition. This year we will bring back the potluck at the picnic, a sign of things getting back to normal. Normal is good.

August brings the Blessing of the Back Packs, another tradition we love. It is a nice way of showing our church children that God is with them and the church loves them. We will have two Pulpit Talks this month. Richard Stiltner is on the schedule for August 6 and Liz Dickinson for August 13. August is really a great month with something for everyone.

Come to Church. Come to where you belong. Come to where you are loved.

Peace to you!  
Pastor Becky

## The SecondFirst Merchandise Store

**It's here! The SecondFirst Merchandise store is open!**

We know you want shirts and hats to wear to church events, fellowship and volunteering and we now have many options for you to choose from. You can get the church logo on the upper right chest, the church logo full front OR you can choose the church logo on the upper right chest and a custom Word Cloud on the back

(Make sure to choose a shirt with "Word Cloud" in the description).

You can pick them up from "Embroid This" on North Second or choose to have them picked up at Church. If you have any questions, please reach out to Jennifer Archer.

[https://stores.inksoft.com/second\\_first](https://stores.inksoft.com/second_first)



We finished our Kids Love Camp week today! Wow, what a fun week we had!  
We averaged 15 kids per day. Some church families and some new families joined us.

A special THANK YOU to Ms. Aubrey for planning, prepping, and leading such an awesome camp! Thank you also to Ms. TT & Mr. John for their helping hands this week. They were definitely appreciated!

Ms. Val also came to do music with our group each day - which was a favorite part for many kids!



## Reflections From the Moderator

Hello Church,

Boy, is your summer flying by as fast as mine? I'm guessing so. Before we lament about that, there is still so much to look forward to until the fall kick-off. We have the Jubilee Soup Kitchen July 29<sup>th</sup>, Governing Council retreat August 18<sup>th</sup>, the church picnic (look for news about that) on August 20<sup>th</sup>, and new t-shirts to order to wear to some of those events. We also have several more Sundays to enjoy popcorn during the morning service. As a bonus, Marge Maynard and Donna Schaad are performing this Sunday and on July 23<sup>rd</sup> we'll be blessed by the Church Street String Band. You don't want to miss any of that!

The Senior Pastor Search Committee will be meeting via Zoom on July 18th with Rev. Shernell Edney Stilley, the new Associate Conference Minister for Pastoral Transitions. She is brand new in this position and fresh from attending the General Synod in Indianapolis. All applicants, both UCC and Presbyterian, will funnel through her. The committee will learn more from this meeting and will look forward to reviewing profiles shortly after.

Love and peace,  
Darlene Riddle

## Search Committee Update

Update from the Search Committee:

Our July 18th introductory meeting with Reverend Shernell Edney Stilley was both informative and productive. Reverend Shernell is the new Associate Conference Minister for Pastoral Transitions. She will be forwarding ministerial profiles for us to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider and will act as an advisor when needed.

A lot of behind the scenes work has already gone into our search. Our church profile was created, sent to and approved by Reverend Shernell. Now we look forward to receiving ministerial profiles that we hope will lead us to a deeper engagement with the candidates. By Jay Baker

Jay Baker

Greg Makulec

Darlene Riddle

Sarah Reinold

Phil Davidson

Mary Spindler

Madeline Archer

Steve Muntz



## Opportunities to Volunteer and Support



KFACT's signature fundraiser, **Artifacts of KFACT** has returned!

The fundraiser will be held **Tuesday, August 15, 2023** at Burpee Museum.

**5:00—6:00 pm** VIP Meet and Greet  
**6:00 pm**—General Admission

The event will feature modeling, dancing and historical presentations with the mentees!

### Love Rockford Children Health Fair

Come join Jeremiah Development for some fun in the sun, at the **LOVE Rockford Children Health Fair!**

There will be plenty of resources to build stronger families; food, haircuts, giveaways and much more!

**August 19, 2023**

Emmanuel Episcopal Church,  
412 N. Church St.  
Rockford IL.61103

**10 am- 2pm**

**Call Nitro Today to volunteer!**  
**815-627-001**



### Mothers and Fathers Know



The Wild Chicory, the Queen Anne's Lace, and the Black Eyed Susans are all blooming now under blue skies and puffy white clouds, it is the middle of delicious summer in Rockford, Illinois. Yet all Mothers and Fathers are aware that all too soon days will become chilly and it will be time for children to return to school. Will we all be ready?

The Mothers and Fathers of the children in Haiti are also aware of the needs of their children as they prepare for returning to school. We remember that there is no free public education in Haiti and each child must pay \$250 for the school year tuition, uniforms, books, back packs and a daily meal. If the family cannot pay, the child cannot attend school. Many families in Haiti do not have the money to send their children to school.

Our Second First Church led by James and Odette Casimir, has a partnership with the Town of Saut-d'Eau, Haiti in assisting 54 children with the cost of their \$250 per child tuition for the school year. Last year four of our sponsored children graduated from school which made room for 4 new students to begin their studies. Congratulation students!

Our church Mission Team has offered to donate \$1,250 towards the total cost of \$13,500. tuition for our 54 students. If you would like to contribute to this project, you may make a donation to SecondFirst Church with **Haiti Education Fund in the memo line**. This project sends a message of peace, justice and joy to children who live far away but are in our thoughts and deeds.

If you have questions, suggestions or would like to join the Haiti Interest Group at SecondFirst Church, please contact Carolyn and Roger Greenlaw at [csgreen52@aol.com](mailto:csgreen52@aol.com), [rgreen97@aol.com](mailto:rgreen97@aol.com) or James and Odette Casimir at [Casiir0401@gmail.com](mailto:Casiir0401@gmail.com). By Carolyn Greenlaw

## Tower Hill Camp 2023



Sandy beach, fresh lake water, and lasting friendships.

This years Tower Hill Camp was full of fabulous weather and marvelous beach time. A GREAT time was had by all!

Do you see yourself in these photos? No?

How do we change that?

Here is How!

Make Tower Hill Camp your go to Destination in 2024.

Happy August Church Family!!

**Annual Picnic  
Paige Park Pavilion  
Sunday, August 20  
11:30 am**

Deacons Fellowship are excited to announce the return of the “potluck” portion of the church picnic. Dig out your go to “dish to pass” recipes and join us August 20th after church.

We will be returning to Anna Paige Park for our annual church picnic! The bus will be running and we will be offering snacks to those waiting for festivities to begin. We are so excited to see everyone and go back to a great time of fellowship and gathering.

**Deacons Fellowship will be providing:  
Brats, Hot Dogs, and Vegan Hot Dogs  
Water and Lemonade**

Your go to Dishes to Pass will provide the Desserts, salads, and other favorite dishes!

We will be having some children’s activities led by our Christian Education Ministry team.



We ask you stay for our new annual drone picture.

Sincerely  
Your Deacons Fellowship Team

## Music Notes

Thank you to Up North Four, Jim Burrect, Donna Schaad, String Band and Dorothy Paige-Turner for the wonderful music in July. We are so fortunate to have so many members willing to share their gifts, and also to have Dorothy and Up North Four as guests.

In August we will hear Jennifer, Maily and Jan sing as a trio, Julie on guitar, Joyce on bell tree (how does she DO that?) AND a men’s group the last Sunday.

September 3<sup>rd</sup> (Labor Day weekend) we will do a Hymn sing. Then the 10<sup>th</sup> will be our kick-off Sunday with choir and fancy organ and piano prelude/postlude.

I’m looking forward to the Fall, with Richard directing the choir, and the return of the bell groups. It’s going to be a good year!

Blessings,  
Valerie

## Adult Ed

Adult Education Coffee Class will resume on Sunday, 9/10/23. In order to avoid technical difficulties, as well as make the classes more engaging, we will be meeting in-person only in the Gathering Place every Sunday from 8:30 am to 9:30 am. Our topics will vary from week to week, and all are welcome to attend! Our fall season will kick off with a re-visit of Pastor Matt’s sermon on the Song of Solomon.

If you have specific topics you would like covered, or if you are interested in presenting a topic, please contact any member of the Adult Education Committee. By Jim Ozeee

## SAVE THE DATE

**August 13:** Bell Tree Joyce Hartman  
**August 15:** KFACT Fundraiser  
**August 19:** Love Rockford  
**August 20:** Church Picnic  
**August 27:** Blessing of the Backpacks  
**August 31:** Carillons Return

## Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity



July 22, 2023 Mission Ministry prepared and delivered lunches for the Habitat for Humanity workers. By Mitzi Muntz

## Annual Church/Neighborhood Pig Roast

Mark your calendars for Sept. 16!!

You are invited to enjoy pulled pork at our Annual Pig Roast!! The Mission Ministry Team is planning an awesome menu to share with our neighbors and hope you'll join in on the camaraderie! Serving time will be announced closer to the date. By Karen Hill



Some of our children planted a new crop of sunflowers on the corner.

## All Members of Governing Council Governing Council Retreat

Please "save the date" for a planning retreat the evening of Friday, August 18th. We will gather for dinner at 5:30 p.m. with the meeting from 6-9PM. Please RSVP to Debbie if you can attend.

We will be discussing the budget process which will be presented for a vote December 10th. This differs from the February vote in past years.

It will help with planning if we can have some idea of any increasing needs your team might have (this is not the time to automatically add a percentage increase), known building needs and staff projections. Nancy will be asked to forward the current budget status for your team. Stewardship and Membership will be part of this conversation.

There has been a downward trend in membership but an upward trend in member giving in the recent past. So that's a positive sign.

Please come to be involved in this important conversation that will impact 2024 and beyond.

Thank you  
Darlene



### Carillons Return

When do those rehearsals start?

Thursday, August 31, at 9:30 AM until 10:30 AM. We will rehearse every Thursday from then on, at the same time. I welcome new members, so please contact me if you are interested in ringing handbells. No previous experience necessary, because teaching is my passion.

When do the Carillons present music at SecondFirst?

Our first presentation is Sunday, September 24. The next one is Sunday, November 12.

What are you going to play? - I'm very excited about the music I have selected.



In September, we will present an arrangement called "Jesus and His Love" as well as an arrangement of "Jesus Is a Rock in a Weary Land". The first one is sort of tender and sentimental; the second one, jazzy and upbeat. Very fun to play and to hear!

In November, we will do an arrangement of "Down to the River to Pray" Also, we will present a piece called "American Medley" appropriate for Veterans Day weekend.

Looking forward to providing music at church!  
Joyce Zartman



## AUGUST CALENDAR

### Tuesday, Aug 1

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast

### Wednesday, Aug 2

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

### Thursday, Aug 3

### Friday, Aug 4

No Scheduled Activities

### Saturday, Aug 5

No Scheduled Activities

### Sunday, Aug 6

**Pulpit Talk Richard Stiltner**

10:00 AM – Worship Service

10:20 AM – Sunday School

11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

### Monday, Aug 7

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

1:00 PM – Hospitality Team

### Tuesday, Aug 8

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast

9:00 AM – Thrift Shop

### Wednesday, Aug 9

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

### Thursday, Aug 10

No Scheduled Activities

### Friday, Aug 11

No Scheduled Activities

### Saturday, Aug 12

No Scheduled Activities

### Sunday, Aug 13

**Pulpit Talk Liz Dickinson**

10:00 AM – Worship Service

10:20 AM – Sunday School

### Monday, Aug 14

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

5:00 PM – Deacons/Fellowship

### Tuesday, Aug 15

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast

5:30 PM – Missions

### Wednesday, Aug 16

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

5:30 PM – Trustees

### Thursday, Aug 17

No Scheduled Activities

### Friday, Aug 18

5:30 PM – Governing Council Retreat

### Saturday, Aug 19

9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

### Sunday, Aug 20 Church Picnic

10:00 AM – Worship Service

10:20 AM – Sunday School

### Monday, Aug 21

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

### Tuesday, Aug 22

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast

### Wednesday, Aug 23

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

### Thursday, Aug 24

5:30 PM – Governing Council

### Friday Aug 25

No Scheduled Activities

### Saturday, Aug 26

No Scheduled Activities

### Sunday, Aug 27

10:00 AM – Worship Service

**Blessing of the Backpacks**

10:20 AM – Sunday School

### Monday, Aug 28

11:30 AM – Serious Soup

6:30 PM – Worship/Music

### Tuesday, Aug 29

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast

### Wednesday, Aug 30

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

### Thursday, Aug 31

9:30 AM – Carillons



## Donations Making A Difference!

A Shout-Out to all of you who have donated food items to the Pantry box!!  
Steve Showers has kindly delivered them to the Rock River Valley Food Pantry,

**all 148 pounds!!!**

It's amazing what all our little gifts can add up to, together!! So, you know what this means --- the Pantry cart is empty and has plenty of room for more donations!! Keep them coming!!

Blessings to all from our Mission Ministry Team

