

SecondFirst Church

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

Hello October!

This month we will be wrapping up the continuing story of Abraham's descendants. Moses is our hero (with God's help) as he

leads the Israelites into the wilderness. As you read further on you will see that our Family Christian Education is also studying the same stories and themes. This is a great opportunity for family discussions around the dinner table or car ride home. The programming staff meets to discuss the hymns and music so they fit the liturgy and sermon themes. A well-oiled machine my friends!

October brings the changing leaves and another season of life. As God was with Moses and the Israelites, so God is with us guiding us through our seasons of life. Let us be thankful to God for the beauty of all we know.

For summer's passing
and harvest home
We thank you.
For October's splendor
and the fall's chill
We thank you.
For seed that has fallen
the promise of spring
We thank you.

Written by John Birch on the Faith and Worship website

Peace to you!
Pastor Becky



Dinner for Nine

Dinner for 9 group enjoying a fantastic meal followed by a rousing game of tic.



Search Committee Update

During the past month, the Senior Pastor Search Committee has worked hard to gather input from the congregation about what qualities they would like to see in our next senior pastor. Committee chairs worked together to come up with a list of desirable attributes at the Governing Council retreat.



Over laughter and conversation, the congregation also worked to compile a list of traits they would like to see in our next senior pastor during September's Town Hall meeting. Interestingly, the two sessions produced similar results and it is clear that our congregation would like to see a pastor who is passionate about worship services, pastoral care, and community engagement and has proven management skills.

If you were not able to attend the Town Hall meeting or you have additional thoughts, please feel free to email them to the search committee at 2nd1stSearch@gmail.com.

The search committee also wants to share that we have started receiving profiles from pastors interested in our church. We are excited that these profiles have come from people with diverse backgrounds. It's a credit to our church that people with divergent backgrounds can all see a potential home at SecondFirst Church!

Jay Baker

Darlene Riddle

Phil Davidson

Madeline Archer

Greg Makulec

Sarah Reinold

Mary Spindler

Steve Muntz

Reflections From the Moderator

Hello Church!

By the time you read this the new programming year should be well underway. The Adult Ed. class is back in full swing, the choir will have performed, and the bell choirs are practicing regularly. The Carillons and Peanut Bells will perform on September 24th during the service.

Thank you to everyone that attended the Town Hall and gave thoughtful input regarding your hopes for our new pastor. We were very pleased with the turnout; we truly want to find a pastor that fits as much of the criteria as possible.

We have a lot to look forward to in October! The kids will perform with the choir again on 10/15 and Bell Sunday is 10/22. The annual Neighbors in Need offering will take place October 1st. One third of the offering supports the Council for American Indian Ministry, and the remainder designated for Justice and Witness Ministries – this year focusing on environmental justice. We will also hear from our Stewardship Committee on how especially important your pledges are this year as we look for ways to stretch our budget to pay for a senior pastor.

As Mitzi requested after the Town Hall, keep the search committee in your prayers. The committee working on the Overnight Café could use some as well. They are in the planning stages for this winter. Please start collecting warm gloves, snow and/or work boots, hoodies and winter coats.

If you've been off most of the summer, I hope you plan to come back regularly and hope you've missed us as much as we've missed you.

Peace and love,
Darlene.



Children's Fishing Excursion

September 24, 2023

A huge THANK YOU to these gentlemen, Peter and Tim, for setting up all the poles and giving our kids a fishing lesson!

A great time was had by all!

(More pics to come...some will even have fish in them!)

By Jess Andruch-Lindblade

Opportunities to Volunteer and Support



On **Sunday October 1**, Members of SecondFirst are invited to join our neighbors in ministry, Court Street Methodist Church for a **Domestic Violence Walk**. Court Street will meet us in our parking lot at 11:30 after church. We will join with them in a walk of solidarity to the Family Peace center on Main Street, then to the Jeremiah Development Office on Church Street and Mulberry for refreshments and discussion. They walk will only equal a few blocks.

Domestic violence and the growing presence of commercial human trafficking are threats to public safety and quality of life in our community. The statistics paint a grim picture: On average, domestic violence accounts for nearly 30 percent of Rockford's violent crime.

In 2016, Illinois ranked eighth in the United States for reported human trafficking cases. The City of Rockford Human Services Department reports that an average of 25 percent of our homeless population were without a residence as a result of domestic violence. **Hope to see you walking on October 1!**

Crop Hunger Walk - Walk with Stanley to Fight Hunger



Join the Walk Sunday, October 15. Stanley Campbell will be honored for his dedication to the CROP Hunger Walk while director of Rockford Urban Ministries. He has just retired after almost 40 years of service to his hometown which included introducing Rockford to this national fight against hunger - one step at a time. Reach out to others seeking their support. Walk With Stanley to Fight Hunger! Registration 1:00 PM Start Time 2:00 PM. Please celebrate with him by contributing to this annual event he began 38 years ago. Help him aid local pantries and

fight hunger around the world.

Register and Donate on line at CROPHungerWalk.org/rockfordil

UCC and PCUSA Special Offerings

Our two denominations ask our gifts to their October 1st Special Offerings. Watch for more information as we approach World Communion Sunday.



Exposing the Upheaval of Climate Change

Maina Talia, a former International Peacemaker for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, works to address the effects of climate change for families on the South Pacific island of Tuvalu, who have been displaced by the devastating series of cyclones.



Shadow Rock UCC offers Sanctuary

A United Church of Christ sanctuary church offering immigrants refuge in the Arizona borderlands will soon be offering a place of hospitality, support and hope on the Mexican side of the border for people who find themselves deported from the United States. The Shadow Rock UCC Sanctuary Action Team and the Rev. Ken Heintzelman, in an extension of the spirit and intent of their ministry of sanctuary in Phoenix, are in the process of establishing Hope Station Nogales, in Sonora, Mexico.

Stronghold Camp and Retreat Center

Invites you to join our
Royal Jubilee 50th Year Celebration



Stronghold Camp and Retreat Center

October 7th and 8th, 2023

1922 North IL RT 2

Oregon, IL

Family Christian Ed Ministry Team Update

Dia de Los Muertos

There will not be a trunk or treat this year, but that has given me time, as the children's leader, to think about the message of Halloween. It is an excellent chance to pause and remember that the complex holiday, a mishmash of commercialized joy and gore, could be replaced in our culture with the far more meaningful day of Dia de Los Muertos. The hegemony of Christianity in America can sometimes seep into even progressive minds, and we don't go far enough to consider incorporating other culture's beliefs into our own. Where is Christ on Halloween- in the joy of childhood, indeed, perhaps too, gore of his death? But we believe God is everywhere, and Jesus came for all. In that case, Christ would point us toward the truth underneath the obsession with spirits and Halloween- a knowledge deep inside our psyche: life lives on when love is present. So this Halloween, if you are reading this, don't ONLY pull out Hocus Pocus 2; instead, watch CoCo, Book of Life, and Day of the Dead: A Celebration of Life. Embrace other languages and cultures, and steep yourself in messages of love and strength, even when giving into secular fun is tempting. While many Christian communities in our country continue to find ways to divide us, sadly, we must follow the parable Christ would call us into. So, we must embrace others and find ways to value God in marginalized places. Happy Dia de Los Muertos!



October Theme in GROW

Study of Moses in Exodus Continued

This month, the theme is "Are We There Yet?" what parent has not heard that question? It makes me empathetic to the mothers in Exodus, wandering with small ones who do not have the patience to tolerate the walking anymore and keep asking the same questions repeatedly. But this month is all about reminding ourselves that we can survive those moments of being lost and that God is not with us. The lessons will follow until the death of Moses and help the children learn:

- We Can Be Thankful
- We Can Love God and Others
- We can Turn to God When We're Lost
- We Can Go to God When We Need Rest
- We Can Remember God's Promise



KFACT's Summer Summary

We've done so much over the summer and we wouldn't have been able to do it without the support of our community! KFACT is excited to share all the amazing activities our mentees were able to enjoy this summer!

- *FIT Girls at Anderson Gardens
- *Ending with a Celebration at JMK
- *Brat Days with Alpine Kiwanis
- *Luau Pool Party at Sand Park Pool
- *Girls Glamping at Atwood
- *Field Day at Dahlquist Park



Coronado - Haskell Neighborhood 2023 Pig Roast

We are an amazing church!

Members turned out in droves to volunteer and welcome our neighbors to the Pig Roast.

Approximately 200 Neighbors were served!

God was present in the light, such a beautiful day.

God was present in the laughing and lauding, such brilliant smiles and wonderful blessings.

God was present in the lush, such delicious food and desserts. God was present in the love, our members were warm, loving, welcoming, kind and generous!

God and SecondFirst showed up!

Thank you to all who provided cornbread and cookies: Archers, Olsons, Muntzs, Pando, M. Hartzog, Stratemeyers, Williams, K.Hill, Katy, Jan N. S. Cowman, J.Herro, Phillips K.

Join Pastor Becky for Lunch and a Bible

Bible study beginning Tuesday October 3, from 12:00pm until 1:00 pm.

We will study the given Lectionary text for the week using the Lectio Divina method. Lectio Divina is a slow, rhythmic reading and praying of a Scripture passage.

Grab your lunch and join us on Zoom. Call the office if you are interested and we will send you the zoom link.

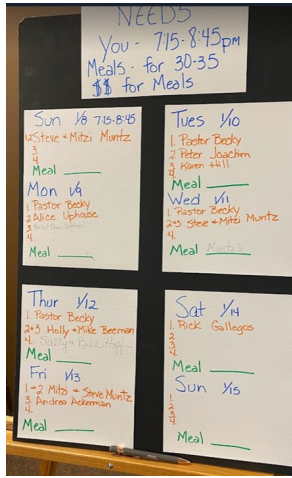


Dick, Ramon, Peter, Steve, Becky, Jeff, Andrea, Rich, Mitzi, Peg, Mary, Kristina, Jan, Dave, Audrey, Karen, Marilyn, Michael, Marah.



Not Pictured but not forgotten; Katy, Doug, Arlene, Tim, Sue, Linda, George, Anne, Bob, Joyce, and Bill.

Overnight Café Story Highlighted in Grant Report



As September begins, we are busy thinking about end-of-summer activities, start of school procedures, and the beautiful autumn days that will soon be here! However, there are also many people in the church who are busy thinking about sub-zero winter temperatures and the people that will come into our church building to seek shelter during this winter's Overnight Cafe. While some are writing grants seeking funding (me!), others are planning for the logistics of the program (Pastor Becky), and others are thinking of ways that they can help make the Overnight Cafe successful (you?).

I wanted to share a special story that was recently highlighted in a grant report for the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (an organization that has helped to financially support the Overnight Cafe through their Community Grants Program for a number of years):

It has been wonderful to watch our community rally in support of the Overnight Cafe. The food budget remains surprisingly low because of all the people who have donated food. Three specific examples show this generosity. First, one guest at the Overnight Cafe received VA housing during the program. He was so grateful for the time he had spent at the Overnight Cafe that he decided to sponsor an evening meal as a way of giving back. Next, the Overnight Cafe held a Superbowl party for the guests. The guests were looking forward to the party, and one guest even decided that he would like to pay for the pop at the party. The guests ended up having a great time at this Superbowl party and several were still talking about it the next day at Carpenter's Place. One visiting volunteer nurse later commented to Pastor Becky, "Fun and shelters don't always mix." Finally, a ten-year-old girl from the community decided that she wanted to forgo presents for her birthday, and she instead donated a meal to the Overnight Cafe. The generosity of the congregation, community members, and the guests themselves is remarkable!



These three scenarios represent only a portion of the positive experiences that take place at the Overnight Cafe every year. I can't wait for the amazing stories that will emerge from the 2024 Overnight Cafe!

Jubilee Soup Kitchen SecondFirst Church Volunteers

Holly, Donna, Liz, Marge, Dylan, Tim, Richard, Karen, Jean and Sue prepared a delicious beef stew lunch for 100.

It is a blessing to be part of a decades-long effort to serve lunches to the neighborhood.

While Emmanuel Episcopal organizes the program, groups from all across the region participate.

SecondFirst is one of the stalwarts and we serve 6 times a year.

Our next opportunity is the Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 25th.



Not Pictured Jean and Sue.

Sunday, Oct. 1 Jim Ozee
World Wide Communion
10:00 AM – Worship Service,
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:00 AM – Kid Choir
11:30 AM – Domestic Violence walk with Court Street United Methodist

Monday, Oct. 2
11:30 AM—Serious Soup

Tuesday, Oct. 3
7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study
6:00 PM – DVT

Wednesday, Oct. 4
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Martins

Thursday, Oct. 5
9:30 AM – Carillon
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, Oct. 6
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Oct. 7
No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, Oct. 8
8:30 AM – Adult Ed
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:00 AM – Kid Choir

Monday, Oct. 9
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
5:00 PM – Deacons/Fellowship

Tuesday, Oct. 10
7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study
5:00 PM – Adult Ed

Wednesday, Oct. 11
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Martins

Thursday, Oct. 12
9:30 AM – Carillons
1:00 PM – Edwards Apple Orchard
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, Sept, Oct. 13
Office Closed

Saturday, Oct. 14
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, Oct. 15 CROP WALK
8:30 AM – Adult Ed
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:00 AM – Kid Choir
1:00 PM – CROP WALK

Monday, Oct. 16
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
1:00 PM – Hospitality

Tuesday, Oct 17
7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study
5 :30PM – Missions Ministry

Wednesday, Oct. 18
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
5:30 PM – Trustees
6:00 PM – Martins

Thursday, Oct. 19
9:30 AM – Carillons
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, Oct. 20
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Oct. 21
8:00 AM – Final Church Landscape Cleanup

Sunday, Oct. 22 Bells and Peanuts
8:30 AM – Adult Ed
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Coffee Cider and Pumpkin Bars
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:00 AM – Kid Choir

Monday, Oct. 23
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
6:30 PM – Worship/Music

Tuesday, Oct. 24
7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Store
12:00 PM – Bible Study

Wednesday, Oct. 25
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Martins

Thursday, Oct. 26
9:30 AM – Carillons
5:30 PM – Governing Council
6:00 PM – ARC
6:00 PM – Bells
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, Oct. 27
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, Oct. 28
9:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, Oct. 29 Bob Bates
8:30 AM – Adult Ed
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store
11:00 AM – Kid Choir
3:00 PM – AGO Halloween

Monday, Oct. 30
11.:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, Oct. 31
7 :00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
12:00 PM – Bible Study

Annual Edwards Apple Orchard Trip

Thursday, October 12, 2023

Rain or Shine



Back by popular demand we will be taking a trip to Edwards Apple Orchard East. We will be taking the church bus for those who need a ride. If riding the bus, meet at church by 12:30. If you are driving meet us at the Apple Orchard at 1:00 pm. Cider and Doughnuts are on us!