

SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
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Rockford, Illinois

SecondFirst Merchandise

Plan for your summertime activities wardrobe now.

Order your shirts, hats and water bottles now so you have them for 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



September 2024

THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's Grace



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

The golden-rod is yellow; The corn is turning brown; The trees in apple orchards with fruit are bending down.

Helen Hunt Jackson, 'September'.

I am asked quite often, "What is the busiest time for you at the church?"

People will assume I answer Christmas or Easter, but in fact the busiest time is the fall.

In the fall we welcome members back to church after the carefree days of summer and time spent away. We welcome back the choir to worship and our handbells choirs extraordinaire are returning to rehearse. Jubilee Soup Kitchen happens on September 7, Children and Youth Sunday is September 8. Our Program Year kick off is September 15. Blackhawk Presbytery meets September 17 and the Prairie Association Fall meeting is September 28. On September 29 we will begin our Stewardship Campaign.

You can see there is a lot going on, but wait until you see October's schedule. Where is church on your schedule? Can you pencil us in on one, two or three Sundays a month? Come back to where you have a home. Come back to where you belong. Come back to where God is calling you.

We are here waiting for you!
Becky E



Musings From the Moderator

Life has an ebb and flow, sometimes things are easy and fun, other times it feels difficult and definitely not fun. My prayer life also experiences ebb and flow. In the times of drought, when the road to the creation God intended seems overgrown with weeds and full of boulders blocking the way, even baby steps forward seem to be more than is possible, and in fact, the steps feel as though they are only heading backward.

In times like this, I find it helpful to read prayers that other people have written. One great resource on-line is at ucc.org (Prayers of the People for Peace).

Here is one of my favorites:

O Holy One, war and conflict grip so many places in our world. Violence and injustice surround us, leaving wounds that run deep. Grant to us your peace that passes all understanding. But don't just grant it without our own investment in the peace we desire. Call us to join you as collaborators in the steady work of building peace. Call us to be present with those besieged by war and consumed by conflict. Call us to model in our own lives the things that make for peace. Bestow upon us, we humbly pray, your ancient blessing, "blessed are the peacemakers", as we walk this precious path.

Amen.

Marge Maynard



Summer Church Picnic 2024



Blessing of the Backpacks 2024



Pastor Search Committee Update

by Jay Baker

"The summer months have been busy for your Search Committee! Besides reviewing and discussing both UCC and Presbyterian candidate profiles, we have had promising conversations with several of the candidates. Your prayers for our success in this task are always appreciated."

Jay Baker, Co-Chair
Greg Makulec, Co-Chair
Sarah Reinold, Co-Secretary
Darlene Riddle, Co-Secretary

Phil Davidson
Mary Spindler
Madeline Archer
Marge Maynard

Mission Ministry Team UPDATE!

Kudos to all who have donated peanut butter, canned foods, and toothbrushes to the Rock River Valley Pantry this summer!! With the shift to fall RRVP is asking for donations of breakfast cereals!! Let's see how many boxes we can collect!!

Rock River Valley Pantry needs --- Boxes of cereal, pasta, cans/jars of spaghetti sauce, and/or canned vegetables and fruits.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Helen Keller

Thanks!
Karen Hill

For more information about Rock River Valley Pantry, visit online at <https://www.rrvp.org>

From their website:

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

A donation of \$20 will buy a 12-pack of 18-ounce jars of peanut butter!

And, if you'd like to host a PB&J Drive, please contact us for a collection barrel. We will drop off a barrel and when the drive is finished, collect it. We can even let you borrow our peanut butter jar costume to help kick off your drive!

Contact us at 815-965-2466. Thank you!

BACK TO SCHOOL CEREAL DRIVE

Help a child start their school day off right! Each year in mid-August through September, the pantry, along with several community supporters, collect boxes of cereal for youth who visit the pantry.

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Opportunities include, but aren't limited to:

- **Rescue:** Assist staff in the procurement of donated goods.
- **Warehouse:** Sort, inspect, package, restock shelves.
- **Registration:** Greeters, registrars, shopping list reviewers.
- **Distribution:** Shoppers, food stations, assisting clients with groceries.
- **Special Projects:** Includes various duties, such as landscaping projects, painting, prize solicitation, raffle and auction assistance, event greeters.

NEEDED ITEMS

Canned Fruit
Peanut Butter
Applesauce
100% Juice
Canned Vegetables
Pasta and Rice
Canned Beans
Cereal
Tuna
Soup

CAPITAL NEEDS

Skilled trades for remodeling projects including:

- Carpenter
- Electrician
- HVAC
- Plumber



Save The Date

Jubilee Center Soup Kitchen Date: Sept 7

Labor Day will have come and gone, schools will be back in session, and it just might feel as if Fall is beginning. We will serve lunch on the 1st Saturday of September at the Jubilee Center and would love to have YOU on the team. This is a one-and-done commitment; meet at 10 am, done by 1 pm having fed 75-100 neighborhood guests. Interested? Call or email or talk to Marge

Tuesdays in September: Thrift Shop

The Church Thrift Shop will be open from 9:00 AM until 1:00 PM on the following dates:

Sept 3, 10, 17, 24, 31.

Speak with Alice Uphouse for further information.

Sundays in September: Fair Trade Store

The Church Fair Trade Store will be open at 11:00 AM on the following dates:

Sept 8, 15, 22, 29

Speak with Peg Joachim and Eleanor Babel for further information.

Saturdays 14 and 28th: Bridge Clinic

The Bridge Clinic will be open at 9:00 AM on the following dates:

Sept 3, 10, 17, 24, 31.

Free Medical Care for Un-insured/Under-insured Adults
Walk-Ins Only, No Appointment Needed.

For full details visit <https://www.thebridgeclinicrockford.com/>

Save The Date

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September Music Notes
by Valerie Blair

As we come into September, and the return of choir and bells and “regular” worship, I want to thank all the summer music volunteers: Jim Burrigh, Marge Maynard, John Maynard, Julie Cook Ramirez (twice!), Donna Schaad, Jan Novak, Linda Johnson, Doug Phillips and Mark Stratemeyer with Up North Four, Rich Olson, and Madeline Archer, as well as our guest professionals, Dorothy Paige-Turner and Hayley Gotzsche. Your willingness to share your gifts greatly enriches our summer worship.

I learned so much at the handbell workshop at Immanuel Lutheran in Madison, WI at the beginning of August, and am excited to share some things with Bellcantos and Martin Ringers as we resume rehearsals on September 11th and 12th.

As of this writing, we are in the process of finding a choir director, and will hopefully have that decided by the first rehearsal on September 5th. If you have any interest in singing with choir or ringing with bells, you are welcome to join us.

Email me, valerie.blair@secondfirst.org, for more information.

- Upcoming music:
- Sept 1 Hymn sing
 - Sept 8 Children’s service
 - Sept 15 Choir
 - Sept 22 Choir
 - Sept 29 Carillons

Blessings and peace,

Valerie



SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday, September 1

- No communion
- 10:00 AM – Worship Service
- 10:20 AM – Sunday School
- 11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, September 2

- Labor Day—Office closed

Tuesday, September 3

- 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
- 9:00 AM- Thrift Shop

Wednesday, September 4

- 10:00 AM- Staff Meeting
- 6:00 PM- Trustees

Thursday, September 5

- 9:30 AM- Carillons
- 7:00 PM- Choir

Friday, September 6

- Office is Closed

Saturday, September 7

- 10: 00 AM- Jubilee Soup Kitchen

Sunday, September 8

- Communion Baptism
- 10:00 AM – Worship Service
- 10:20 AM – Sunday School
- 11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, September 9

- 11:30 AM- Serious Soup

Tuesday, September 10

- 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
- 9:00 AM- Thrift Shop

Wednesday, September 11

- 10:00 AM- Staff meeting
- 6:00 PM- Martin Ringers

Thursday, September 12

- 9:30 AM- Carillons
- 6:00 PM- Bellcantos
- 7:00 PM- Choir

Friday, September 13

- Office is Closed

Saturday, September 14

- 9:00 AM- Bridge Clinic
- 10 AM- Nancy Gallegos visitation
- 11 AM- Nancy Gallegos funeral

Sunday, September 15

- 10:00 AM – Worship Service
- 10:20 AM – Sunday School
- 11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, September 16

- No Scheduled Activities

Tuesday, September 17

- 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
- 9:00 AM- Thrift Shop
- 9:30 AM- Presbytery Stronghold

Wednesday, September 18

- 10:00 AM- Staff meeting
- 6:00 PM- Martin Ringers

Thursday, September 19

- 9:30 AM- Carillons
- 7:00 PM- Choir

Friday, September 20

- Office is Closed

Saturday, September 21

- No scheduled activities

Sunday, September 22

- 10:00 AM – Worship Service
- 10:20 AM – Sunday School
- 11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, September 23

- 11:30 AM- Serious Soup

Tuesday, September 24

- 7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
- 9:00 AM- Thrift Shop

Wednesday, September 25

- 10:00 AM- Staff meeting
- 6:00 PM- Martin Ringers

Thursday, September 26

- 9:30 AM- Carillons
- 7:00 PM- Choir

Friday, September 27

- Office is Closed

Saturday, September 28

- 9:00 AM- Bridge Clinic

Sunday, September 29

- 10:00 AM – Worship Service
- 10:20 AM – Sunday School
- 11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

Monday, September 30

- 11:30 AM- Serious Soup

Tuesday, September 31

- 9:00 AM- Thrift Shop