

SecondFirst Church

Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
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www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch/

Non Profit
Organization US
Postage PAID
Permit No. 3734
Rockford, Illinois

April 2025



The Tower

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)
Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's Grace



A Little Background on Our New Pastor: Reverend Martha Langford

Rev. Martha graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. After serving in the Army and working as an Electrical Design Draftsman, Rev. Martha completed her Master of Divinity at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Rev. Martha notes, "I've served in urban and rural settings, in congregations small and large; led in progressive and conservative churches, worked on a Presbytery staff. In each community, I've found both the deep faithfulness and human frailty that characterize the church while developing deep love and respect for God's people." As a minister ordained by the PC(USA), Rev. Martha will work to complete requirements to achieve dual standing in the UCC upon starting her position at our church.

Rev. Martha has demonstrated experience across all areas needed to successfully serve as our Senior Pastor. Administratively, Rev. Martha is organized and likes to work in a collaborative style. She believes in forthright communication and transparent decision-making. As a spiritual leader, she says, "At the heart of ministry, preaching and teaching are bedrock skills that draw upon my passion for clarity and deep engagement with the biblical text. I bring a pastor's heart which holds it a privilege to journey with the community through the heights and depths of life together." Rev. Martha credits a three-year program in Spiritual Direction in augmenting her skills in helping churches to discern new ventures and create strategic plans. In addition, this training has helped her to work with people who are experiencing grief.

Finally, Rev. Martha says, "I believe in God's call to be the church. With Jesus at its head, and the Holy Spirit at its heart, God equips the church to be the Body of Christ in the world. The church is a community of worship and care, a house of prayer for all peoples, a laboratory for discipleship, a herald voice for the gospel, and an ardent voice for the oppressed. The church proclaims godly hope to a broken and fearful world."



SecondFirst Merchandise

Plan for your 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



Welcome To SecondFirst Church!

Musings From The Moderator

As I sit here writing in mid-March, the temperature outside is expected to reach the mid-70s on Friday. What a change over the past couple weeks! Such is life in the Midwest in spring.

It's a cliché to say that "change happens" because we have all experienced it and know in our very being that it's true. Change happens in us and to us; caused by us and imposed on us; no matter if it is something we've longed for, or dreaded, or monumental, or trivial.

There's no denying that we are in the middle of big changes right now, and that's without mentioning the political upheaval. At SecondFirst we are eagerly awaiting the arrival of Pastor Martha and less than eagerly planning our goodbye to Pastor Becky. This is also the time of year for changes in our church lay leadership.

At the Annual

Program Meeting on April 27 a new team will be elected to put their hands on the rudder and steer us through the waters ahead. Together we will surely face both moments of choppy waters and days of smooth sailing.

While the trip can be challenging and uncomfortable (as Jesus' disciples experienced in the storm) we can also be confident that Jesus' life, death and resurrection will guide us as a North Star, and that the steadfast Word and Love of God will be a light for our path. We know that change can be good, and for good, and that Love has the last word.

Let us commit to continue to make it so.

Marge Maynard



Jubilee Center Soup Kitchen

Didn't we just serve here? Yes, we did! And we will again before taking a bit of a break.

**Our upcoming date is:
Saturday, April 5**

Regular hours of 10 am to 1 pm, and as usual if you can be part of the team only for some of the hours, that's fine.

Let Marge Maynard know to expect you.

It's a fun time in an important hands on ministry to the world outside the walls of the church.

Family Christian Education



Family Christian Ed invites everyone to a casual movie matinee gathering at Classic Cinemas Beloit, on Saturday, April 12 for a 2:20 PM showing of The King of Kings.

It is an animated story of Jesus Christ told by Charles Dickens and seen through the eyes of a child. Tickets can be purchased online or at the theater.


<https://www.classiccinemas.com>

We hope you can join us!

This Lent, our children are coming together to weave not just repurposed threads, but a beautiful tapestry of love, faith, and unity. Through a special weaving project, they are learning the value of collaboration and patience as they create something meaningful together.



Things, Stuff, Randomness...

 **Alice Uphouse**
22h · 🌐

This is the second display finished today featuring the Ukrainian decorated eggs that Jessica Lindblade is sharing for all of us to enjoy. Her son Ben finished the one on the top left. The beautiful flower plate is also from Jess.

The three decorated eggs are ones I purchased many years ago from Mayflower Circle, they were for my girls, Rebecca, Sarah and Mary Beth. The Steif stuffed chicken is from Germany a gift from Uncle Norman while in the Army.

The glass chickens are family pieces one from my Grandmother, the wicker chicken on the right came from China. The metal eggs came from Sarah. The white egg, bottom center is a gift from a very special DAR friend.

I'm very grateful to Jess for giving each of us an opportunity to see some of her family traditions. Come visit our church.

Second Congregational/First Presbyterian Church
(Second First) 318 North Church Street



Handmade Wood Cross from 1958

We the children of Reverend Ralph L Fry in memory of our father, are giving the Walnut Cross he made in 1958 to

Second Congregational/First Presbyterian Church.

Dad served briefly as pastoral care Minister, he was a Carpenter, Teacher and enjoyed woodworking. He built clocks, tables, lamps, cradles and gifted people with mangers at Christmas.

The cross hung in the sanctuary at Pecatonica Congregational Church, then Riverside Congregational Church. When Dad retired the cross hung in his study.

Norman, Charles, Evan, James Lowell and myself are pleased to share with you this part of our Dad.



What's Happening This Month? (Save the Date!)

Tuesday Mornings at 7:00 AM - Men's Prayer Breakfast: Dining Room in the Church. This month that'll be on the 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, and the 29th.

Tuesdays in March at 9:00 AM - Thrift Shop: Also in the Dining Room but after the boys have their breakfast club. Same dates as above.

Sunday, April 13: 11:00 AM Palm Sunday/ Coffee Hour- There will be a "coffee hour" after service... in the parking lot. Just kidding! It's gonna be in the Dining Room as well.

Thursday, April 17th: 6:30 PM Maundy Thursday- Special Worship (Details To Be Announced/Determined)

Friday, April 18th: 5:30 PM Good Friday- Special Worship (Details To Be Announced)

Sunday, April 20th: 10:00 AM Easter- Happy Easter!

Note: Although rare, dates and times are subject to change here and on the monthly calendar.



The Thrift Shop @
SecondFirst Church
PRICES BETWEEN
\$1 AND \$10
CASH ONLY!
318 N CHURCH ST.
ROCKFORD IL

OPEN
TUESDAYS
9:00AM TO
1:00PM

SecondFirst
CHURCH

WWW.SECONDFIRST.ORG

Missions Ministry Team- A Message to All Who Helped:

A HUGE THANKS to all who helped make the Overnight Cafe a SUCCESS!! This ministry is life-giving to both our guests and to us who make it happen!! Our 398 different guests were so appreciative of having a meal and a safe, warm space to stay for the night.

Thanks for volunteering, bringing food or a meal, donating hygiene items, clothing, and more. Financial donations are still being collected to help cover our staff expenses!

Here's your chance to help wrap up the Cafe's 2025 season!


And again, THANK YOU!!



ONA (Open and Affirming)

We are looking forward to continuing LGBTQ+ educational sessions in April. Sunday, April 6, following worship, Marge Maynard will be sharing more information on the biology of sex and gender. Are they the same?? How are they different? Bring your questions! Our end goal is to create a covenant and take a congregational vote on being an ONA church! How can we be supporting the LGBTQ+ community as their rights are being taken away? Be a part of learning more with us!



Please Note: 
Changes to times and cancellations can happen with short notice due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

Please check with the church office to confirm if meetings/activities are still happening according to the calendar!

April Calendar

Tuesday, April 1

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

Wednesday, April 2

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

Thursday, April 3

9:30 AM – Carillons
7:00 PM - Choir
7:30 PM - El Shaddai (Library)

Friday, April 4

Office is Closed

Saturday, April 5

10:00 AM- Jubilee Soup Kitchen

Sunday, April 6

10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School

Monday, April 7

11:30 AM - Serious Soup
12:30 AM - Hospitality

Tuesday, April 8

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

Wednesday, April 9

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

Thursday, April 10

9:30 AM – Carillons
7:00 PM - Choir
7:30 PM - El Shaddai (Library)

Friday, April 11

Office is Closed

Saturday, April 12

No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, April 13

Palm Sunday
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School

Monday, April 14

11:30 AM - Serious Soup
5:30 PM - Deacons/
Fellowship

Tuesday, April 15

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

Wednesday, April 16

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

Thursday, April 17

9:30 AM – Carillons
6:30 PM - Maundy Thursday
7:30 PM - Choir
7:30 PM - El Shaddai
(Library)

Friday, April 18

5:30 PM - Good Friday

Saturday, April 19

No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, April 20

***Easter**

10:00 AM –Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School

Monday, April 21

Office is Closed

Tuesday, April 22

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

Wednesday, April 23

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

Thursday, April 24

9:30 AM – Carillons
5:30 PM - DVT
7:00 PM - Choir

7:30 PM - El Shaddai (Library)

Friday, April 25

Office is Closed

Saturday, April 26

No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, April 27

10:00 AM –Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM - Annual Meeting
3:00 PM - Ring in Spring

Monday, April 28

11:30 AM - Serious Soup
6:30 AM - Worship/Music

Tuesday, April 29

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

Wednesday, April 30

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