

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

November 2025



The Tower

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's Grace



Sure As The Sunrise...



The Lord's unfailing love and mercy never cease, fresh as the morning and sure as the sunrise..." (Lamentations 3:22-23)

This paraphrase from Lamentations begins a liturgy for Morning Prayer in the Book of Common Worship. It speaks poetically to the faithfulness of God who makes covenant with us as we seek to be God's people. provides a meal, and offers clothing, fellowship, and much more.

I'm always a little surprised that a book called "Lamentations" includes such an expression of trust in God's hesed, that is God's unswerving love and kindness and grace and welcome. Of all the gifts that we receive from God, the constancy of divine goodness and justice and mercy is irreplaceable with the things of this world. Nothing less than celestial mechanics comes close to describing how much we may trust God to be present with us—in this and every season.

Thomas Chisholm captured this so well in the hymn, Great Is Thy Faithfulness. Among his affirmations: "all I have needed [God's] hand has provided..." and God gives "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow..."

If you ask me, God's faithfulness is the yeast to my dreams—making them rise. I can dream dreams of a life

that grows ever deeper toward God, toward the community of God's people, and toward this fractured and fearful world that needs words and deeds of compassionate hope. I can dream dreams of peace, of mutuality, of authentic welcome. I can dream dreams of love made tangible by the work of our hands. I can dream dreams of belonging among a people who shine with the light of Christ; who love because they are loved; who put their future in God's hands because God is faithful and so are we.

And so I pray, Dear God, give us strength for today and bright hope for this and every tomorrow.

Amen.

Blessings, *Martha*

Sundays in November		
Nov 2	So You May Know	Ephesians 1:11-23
Nov 9	Climb a Tree	Luke 19:1-10
Nov 16	A Time to Testify	Luke 21:5-19
Nov 23	Guest Pastor	Colossians 1:11-20
Nov 30	Tamar: foremother in faith	Matthew 1:1-16



Open and Affirming (Voted October 26th)

We DID it!! Our church has adopted a new Welcoming Covenant!! While many of you thought we did this years ago, it's now official with the UCC!! This vote initiates a new chapter in the life of our church. We welcome your input in how we celebrate and let our neighbors know!

A HUGE THANKS to the members of the ONA Task Force for educating us and seeing through this process - Marge Maynard, Jennifer Oshita, Sally Etheridge, Holly Hegge, Phil Davidson, Bob Bates, Sarah Reinold, Lindsey Lancaster, and Karen Hill.

www.secondfirst.org

A little Missive From Your Moderator

November has traditionally been Stewardship Month, our congregation’s opportunity to pledge financial resources to aid the Finance Committee in budgeting expenses for the coming year. Taking the lead from the UCC campaign *Dreaming God’s Dream*, Stewardship chair Marge Maynard has projected four weeks exploring various aspects of that dream. By the time you read this, the campaign will be well underway.

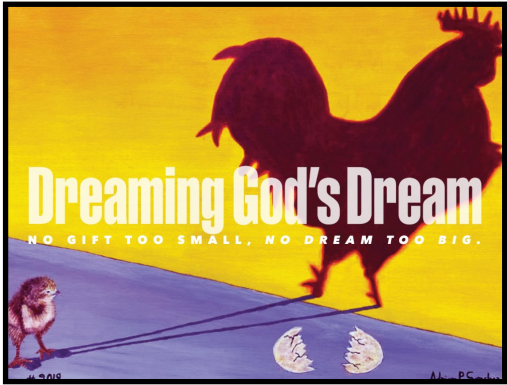
The Stewardship letter, mailed the week of October 20th , set forth the overall plan for the program. October 26 th launched the first of the four pulpit presentations focusing on *Dreaming God’s Dream for our World*.

On November 2nd we will explore *Dreaming God’s Dream for our Nation*, followed on November 9 th by *Dreaming God’s Dream for our City/Community*. Each will feature

reflections from our own members leading to Pledge Sunday November 16 th when we will be *Dreaming God’s Dream for our Church* including responses from the congregation.

Sharing financial resources may be at the heart of Stewardship, but it isn’t the whole story. The offering of our time and talents, ideas and prayers is also a part of supporting *God’s Dream*. The message of the campaign “No gift too small, no dream too big” encourages all of us to be involved in whatever way we can. The Stewardship Team asks for your thoughtful consideration of this year’s pledge in order to match our dreams for the world, the nation, the community, and the church to God’s own, bringing those dreams into reality.

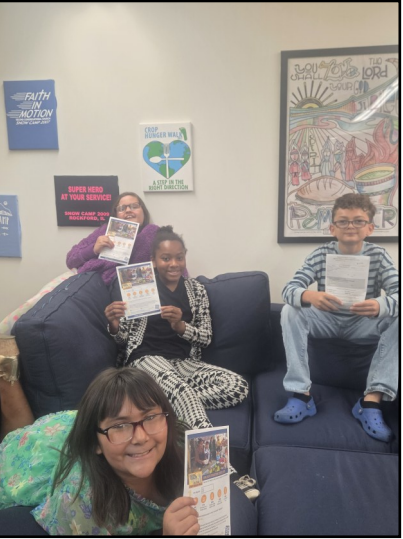
Yours,
Linda Oshita



Youth Artwork Gets a Glow-Up!

Our beloved youth cross art just got a beautiful refresh! Several years ago, our young people created a melted crayon cross as a symbol of creativity and faith. Over time, it had faded—but thanks to our resident artist and children’s Sunday School teacher, **Ms. Sarah**, it’s been lovingly restored and reimaged.

During Sunday School today, students added **new words of faith and hope** to the piece before we rehung it in its place of honor. The cross now stands as a vivid reminder of our community’s enduring love and commitment—to this space, to one another, and to following the One who rose from the cross.



SecondFirst Conversations Podcast #4 (On YouTube)

In this episode, Phil talks to Katy and Arlene about Serious Soup and the other many services that our Hospitality Team puts so much work and care into as they serve those in our downtown community.

Listen/view here...

<https://www.youtube.com/@SecondFirstRockford/podcasts>



CHRISTMAS

Gifts For Girls

PAJAMA DRIVE

COLLECTING SIZES: XS – SMALL NOVEMBER 1ST TO NOVEMBER 30TH

KFACT : Keeping Families And Communities Together is celebrating each of their girls with their annual Christmas Holiday Party December 13th.

Each KFACT mentee will receive pajamas and fuzzy socks this holiday. To help, please bring new adult-size Small or X-Small pajamas and one-size fuzzy socks to the church office by December 7. Do not wrap the items, but label the bag “For KFACT.” The girls are ages 12–18.

All donations are greatly appreciated! Help make spirits bright for KFACT girls! With grateful thanks for your kindness and consideration,
Mission Ministry Team

The Tower
The monthly publication of
**SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)**
Rockford, Illinois

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Federated Church 101: Brown Bag Study (Continued Into November)

We will continue our get-togethers over a brown-bag lunch (B. Y. O. lunch) at 11:30am in the Gathering Place adjacent to the church office. Pastor Martha will lead an exploration of our separate denominational histories, our shared theological heritage, and our distinct ways of governing this federated congregation.

Keep in mind, these dates changed since last month’s newsletter! Make sure you have them updated in your Calendar:

The Haskell Boot Project

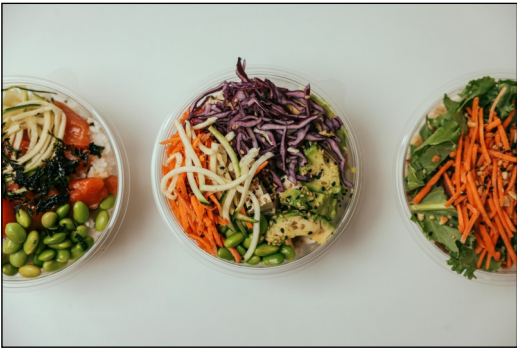
With fall temperatures creating cooler mornings and evenings, our minds tend to instinctively wander toward winter. We seek to prepare ourselves for freezing temperatures, and an inevitable increase of snow and ice. One of the items that is sure to be on our lists is boots. When we think of winter, we think of boots.

For many years now, Second Congregational / First Presbyterian church has worked alongside Haskell School to provide winter boots to students. The school has stated that “Boot Day” is one of the most anticipated days of the school year. As well as providing joy, the donation of boots provides students with access to recess year round, which is beneficial to students physical health, mental health, and academic performance.

Boots are such a small, yet impactful, way to assist even our smallest neighbors. This ministry of love can only remain successful with the continued support and generosity of our congregation. The boot sizes have been recorded, the boots have been purchased, but there is still work to be done. On Saturday, November 22nd, beginning at 8:30 am, we will be hosting our annual boot sorting event. During this event, we sort, and label all of the boots by name and classroom. By 10:30, we will load the van, and deliver the boots to Haskell for distribution.

November 2: A Look at Polity from Both Sides Now
November 9: A League of Its Own: Second First Church

Hope to see you there!



If you would like to help on this day, please contact Lindsey Lancaster, or call the church office to be added to the list to help.

The Mission Ministry Team is seeking donations to help offset the cost of this project. Any donation made in assistance of this project should include a memo of “Boots for Haskell”, and can be mailed to the church or placed in the offertory. Please contact Lindsey Lancaster or Karen Hill with any questions about donations.

Thank You in advance for all of your continued support of this ministry. May the love and community felt inside our church continue to expand to and reach all of our neighbors.



Save the Date!

Sundays Nov 2nd and Nov 9 Federated Church 101: Brown Bag Study @ 11:30 am after service

Curious about where our two denominations came from, how we make decisions, or what our ancient creed really means? Join Pastor Martha after Sunday Service on November 2nd and 9th for a relaxed, brown-bag lunch at 11:30 a.m. in the Gathering Place. We’ll explore our shared history, our theological roots, and how we work together as a federated congregation.

Youth Sunday, November 9th 10:00 am during Sunday Service

This year, we’re performing “My Favorite Things” carrying forward a tradition that has brought smiles to generations of students and worshippers alike.

Mission Team News

Our Mission Ministry Team has been up to good works with the funds you have entrusted us with!! We are providing financial support for people in Haiti, KFACT, Bridge Clinic, ShelterCare Ministries, and MORE. We also supported the 39th annual CROP Hunger Walk that raised funds for hunger and disaster relief through Church World Service! Thanks to our walkers and donors!

Crop Hunger Walk 2025

What started out as cloudy, became a beautiful day for the Crop Hunger Walk! We had one of the largest groups represented this year, a joyful crowd of walkers from 2ndFirst, young and old alike. Before setting out, we gathered to pray and make seed starters as a symbol of nourishment and growth (thanks to the Rockford Park District). Then we walked together in good company, remembering Jesus’ call to feed those in need.

Thank you to everyone who donated, walked, and supported this meaningful event. Together, we continue to plant seeds of compassion in our community.

Camerata Emanon Concert: Sunday, November 16th at 3:00 pm

SecondFirst Church will be hosting a concert by Camerata Emanon titled “Bountiful: An American Thanksgiving.” Tickets cost \$15 at the door, and \$5 for students. For further information or direct questions, please reach out by email to: camerataemanon@gmail.com

The Haskell Boot Project: Boot Sorting Event November 22nd 8:30 am.

During this event, we sort and label all of the boots by name and classroom. By 10:30, we will load the van, and deliver the boots to Haskell for distribution. If you would like to help on this day, please contact Lindsey Lancaster, or call the church office to be added to the list to help. (more on pg. 6)



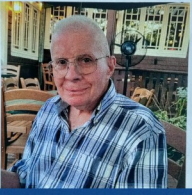
Greeters for November Sundays (at the time of publication)...

11/2 John and Marge Maynard

11/9 Holly and Wes Hegge



The 39th Annual Greater Rockford CROP Hunger Walk Honoring Bob Saunders

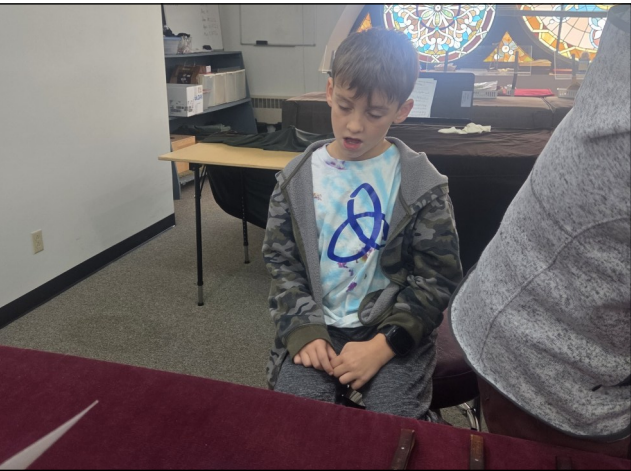


Music Notes by Valerie Blair

Music:
Nov 2 Sanctuary Choir
Nov 9 Children’s Handbells
Nov 16 Camerata Emanon
Nov 23 Sanctuary Choir
Nov 30 TBD (First Sunday of Advent, Sunday after Thanksgiving)

The organ has returned and I am learning how to drive it. Same organ, different OS, except they made one small change in a pedal pipe, so if you think you are hearing a beefier bass, you are. Here are the before and after pictures, and please come up after a service and ask any questions you'd like.

Peace be with you,
Valerie



November 2025 Calendar

Saturday, November 1
No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, November 2
Remembering Our Loved Ones
8:30 AM- Adult Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:30 AM- Brown Bag Study-
Federated Church 101
3:00 PM- Camerata Emanon
Board Meeting
4:00 PM- Camerata Emanon
Singers Rehearsals

Monday, November 3
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
12:30 AM- Hospitality

Tuesday, November 4
7:00 AM- Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop

Wednesday, November 5
10:00 AM- Staff Meeting
6:00 PM- Martin Ringers

Thursday, November 6
9:30 AM- Carillons
7:00 PM- Choir
7:30 PM- El Shaddai

Friday, November 7
Office is Closed

Saturday, November 8
9:00 AM Bridge Clinic

Sunday, November 9
Youth Sunday
8:30 AM- Adult Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:30 AM- Brown Bag Study-
Federated Church 101
4:00 PM- Camerata Emanon
Singers Rehearsals

Monday, November 10
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
4:30 PM- Overnight Café Meeting
5:30 PM- Deacons/Fellowship

Tuesday, November 11
7:00 AM- Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
4:30 PM- Adult Christian Ed
(zoom)

Wednesday, November 12
10:00 AM- Staff Meeting
6:00 PM- Martin Ringers

Thursday, November 13
9:30 AM- Carillons
7:00 PM- Choir
7:30 PM- El Shaddai

Friday, November 14
6:30 PM- Camerata Emanon
Singers Rehearsals

Saturday, November 15
No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, November 16
Pledge Sunday
8:30 AM- Adult Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:15 AM- FCE
3:00- Camerata Emanon Fall
Concert

Monday, November 17
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
5:30 PM- Missions

Tuesday, November 18
7:00 AM- Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop

Wednesday, November 19
10:00 AM- Staff Meeting
6:00 PM- Martin Ringers
6:00 PM- Trustees

Thursday, November 20
9:30 AM- Carillons
7:00 PM- Choir
7:30 PM- El Shaddai

Friday, November 21
Office is Closed

Saturday, November 22
9:00 AM- Bridge Clinic

Sunday, November 23
8:30 AM- Adult Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School

Monday, November 24
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
6:00 PM- Worship/Music

Tuesday, November 25
7:00 AM- Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop

Wednesday November 26
10:00 AM- Staff Meeting
6:00 PM- Martin Ringers

Thursday, November 27
9:30 AM- Carillons
5:30 PM- Governing Council
7:00 PM- Choir
7:30 PM- El Shaddai

Friday, November 28
Office is Closed

Saturday, November 29
No Scheduled Activities

Sunday, November 30
8:30 AM- Adult Coffee Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School

Times/Dates/Events subject to change