

## SecondFirst Church

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AUGUST 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

It's August!

We have two new staff members to introduce!



Charles Fernandez is our new Media/Graphic Artist. He lives in Oregon, Illinois and will be working remotely. His responsibilities will be the monthly newsletter, webpage and Facebook management and social media. Charles will work 7-10 hours a week or as needed. He will be learning how to run sound.

Jackie Bradford is our new secretary. She will be the voice you hear when you call the church office. Jackie's responsibilities will be managing the office, calendar, zoom meetings, mailings, bulletins and other things that come along. Her hours will be 9am until 1pm Monday through Thursday.

Let us welcome them into our church family!

August will be busy. Besides our normal weekly meetings and routines, August brings love Rockford on August 17, the church Picnic on August 18 and Blessings of the Backpacks on August 25. Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Let us come together in faith and hope in all the possibilities we can do together as a church!



## August music notes from Valerie Blair

Upcoming Sunday Worship special music:

11th Madeline Archer

18th Julie Cook Ramirez

25th Up North Four barbershop quartet



I will be attending a short handbell workshop in Madison, WI on July 31, August 2 and August 3. There is an informal concert at the end if anyone is interested. Hope to see you there!

Immanuel Lutheran Church  
Friday August 3 at 3:30 p.m.  
1021 Spaight Street  
Madison, WI 53703

## 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](https://stores.inksoft.com/second_first)



## Musings From the Moderator

It's August and some of you are feeling "already???", while others are on the "finally!!!" end of the spectrum. These same feelings would be felt in the church if I were to say "It's Stewardship Season!" You know what that means---it's pledge time. In a sense I'm jumping the gun on the more traditional Fall Stewardship Season. However, there are two perspectives I'd like you to consider.

First, yes, Stewardship is about money. Money that is used to support the building, staff and ministries of our church; the good work we do for each other and for our community. Second, Stewardship is not a season but a year-long, daily activity.

Stewardship is what we do with our money, and time, and talents, but also so much more. Every person, no matter their age, employment, education, physical ability or whatever category we include...EVERY person is a steward of their prayers, smiles, encouraging words, and little and big acts of kindness, all of which can be shared on a daily basis to spread God's grace to every corner of the world their lives touch. And don't forget stewardship of the environment, too, following in the task assigned to Adam and Eve in the nurturing of the Garden of Eden, concerns for what we feed ourselves and others, how we deal with the waste we inevitably produce, how we obtain energy, how we travel, how we plan for healthy outdoor places for all to share.

So it becomes easier to see that each of us is involved in Stewardship ALL YEAR. While we make financial commitments yearly, each day we decide what else being a good steward looks like. The bottom line is this: it looks like love. Love for self, for each other, for the people and the world around us. As Paul says in 1 Cor 13, even if we give away all our possessions, without love we gain nothing. May our hearts overflow with love during the entire year of Stewardship!

Marge Maynard



## Ice Cream Social Pics



## Pool Party Pics



**Church Picnic  
August 18th  
11:30 AM**

Please join fellow members at the annual church picnic, following worship on Sunday August 18th at the Anna Page Park shelter.

Tim Riddle will offer the bus service for those who do not wish to drive there. The Deacons/ Fellowship Team will be cooking up brats and hot dogs, both meat and plant-based, and will provide buns and condiments, beverages and table service (plates, cups, cutlery).

You can provide your favorite potluck dish and your sparkling conversation.

We look forward to seeing you there, and showing up in the 2024 drone picture!



**Pastor Search Committee Update**  
by Darlene Riddle

"Since the last article in the July Tower, we will have had an additional interview with a candidate and have sorted through several new candidates matched by the Presbytery. We remain cautiously optimistic, but know we have a ways to go before we can share any good news with you. We appreciate your prayers of support as we continue on this journey of discernment for a called pastor."

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

Phil Davidson  
Mary Spindler  
Madeline Archer  
Marge Maynard

**Save The Date**

**Movie Night - August 8th 5:30 PM**

Movie Night!  
Thursday August 8th will be a Disney movie night for the kiddos. Bring a blanket or a pillow and head up to the 3rd floor for a viewing party! We will be doing pizza, candy salad, a popcorn bar, and having giggles as we enjoy the last days of summer. No RSVP needed, bring a friend too if you like! 5:30-7:30pm.  
Aubrey Barnett

**Euchre Night - August 14th 6:30 PM**

Do you like to play Euchre but can't find anyone to join you for a game? We always have a good time playing here at the church in the dining room! Great snacks and great company.  
Contact Katy Paterson or Linda Johnson if you are interested or have questions.



**Save The Date**

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**Blessing of the Backpacks— August 25th**

Blessing of the Backpacks  
Sunday August 25th will be our first kick off children and youth event with the annual blessing of the backpacks. There is a new element this year, and some people in the coming weeks will be contacted about being "cheerleaders" for individual children. We don't want to spoil the surprise, but we are as excited as ever to welcome a new school year and celebrate what is to come. Aubrey Barnett

## Mission Update

Thanks to all who have been contributing food items for the Rock River Food Pantry!! Keep up the good work! Food security continues to be a concern for many in our community.

What else are we, as a church, doing to help in our community? We're glad you asked! We will be fixing sack lunches and delivering them to the work crews at a Habitat for Humanity site on August 10 and 24!

SecondFirst Church will be hosting a movie "Join or Die" in partnership with Rockford Urban Ministries, tentatively set for Aug 25, time TBD. Watch for posters!!

Join or Die is an important documentary on America's social fabric. It was enthusiastically received at its world premiere at the SXSW Film Festival. It takes the theories of Professor Bob Putnam, author of 'Bowling Alone', and presents them in a highly accessible way. Putnam's argument is essentially that Americans divisions today are rooted in the decline of our social capital as fewer Americans join clubs and organizations.

While some disagree with his thesis fearing he may be mixing cause and effect, it is an important debate and one with which the American public should be more engaged. The documentary is well worth watching. The film makers have done an excellent job of taking a complex academic debate and making it accessible and available.

Karen Hill

## K—Fact FIT Girls

KFACT just finished FIT Girls, A Path to Renewal in partnership with Anderson Gardens a summer series for coping and overcoming childhood trauma. Each week the girls discovered inner beauty and how nature is connected to self care, depression etc. The girls enjoyed yoga!

KFACT was also awarded a grant of \$2500 from JL Clark Foundation and they stopped by the gardens to say hi!

We will be launching our fall and school based programming in August. We are waiting on funding from the state of Illinois for after School Grant we were awarded of \$80,000!



## AUGUST CALENDAR

### Thursday, August 1

8:00 AM – Park District Camp

### Friday, August 2

8:00 AM – Park District Camp  
Office Closed

### Saturday, August 3

No Scheduled Activities

### Sunday, August 4 Communion

#### Jim Ozee

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

### Monday, August 5

8:00 AM – Park District Camp  
11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
1:00 PM – Hospitality Team

### Tuesday, August 6

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
8:00 AM – Park District Camp  
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop

### Wednesday, August 7

8:00 AM – Park District Camp  
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

### Thursday, August 8

8:00 AM – Park District Camp  
5:30 PM – Kids Movie Night

### Friday, August 9

8:00 AM – Park District Camp  
No Scheduled Activities  
Office Closed

### Saturday August 10

No Scheduled Activities

### Sunday August 11

#### Madeline Archer

8:30 AM – Adult Ed  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

### Monday, August 12

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

### Tuesday, August 13

7:00 AM – Men's Prayer Breakfast  
4:30 PM – Adult Ed

### Wednesday, August 14

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

### Thursday August 15

5:30 PM – Governing Council

### Friday, August 16

No Scheduled Activities  
Office Closed

### Saturday, August 17

Love Rockford

### Sunday, August 18

#### Julie Cook Ramirez

8:30 AM – Adult Ed  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store  
11:30 AM – Church Picnic

### Monday, August 19

11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
5:30 PM – Missions Hybrid

### Tuesday, August 20

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

### Wednesday, August 21

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

### Thursday, August 22

No Scheduled Activities

### Friday, August 23

No Scheduled Activities  
Office Closed

### Saturday, August 24

No Scheduled Activities

### Sunday, August 25

#### Norm Shirk

#### Blessing of the Backpacks

8:30 AM – Adult Ed  
10:00 AM – Worship Service  
10:20 AM – Sunday School  
11:00 AM – Fair Trade Store

### Monday, August 26

11:30 AM – Serious Soup  
6:30 PM – Worship/Music

### Tuesday, August 27

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

### Wednesday, August 28

10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

### Thursday, August 29

No Scheduled Activities

### Friday, August 30

No Scheduled Activities  
Office Closed

### Saturday, August 31

No Scheduled Activities

## Upcoming 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 Maynard or one of the "regulars" (Holly Berman, Phil Davidson, Darlene Riddle, Jay Baker).

