

Our **Second Mile** offering for the month of February has supported the Overnight Café at Second Congregational/ First Presbyterian Church in Rockford. The following article from MyStateline.com explains how the café serves the homeless.

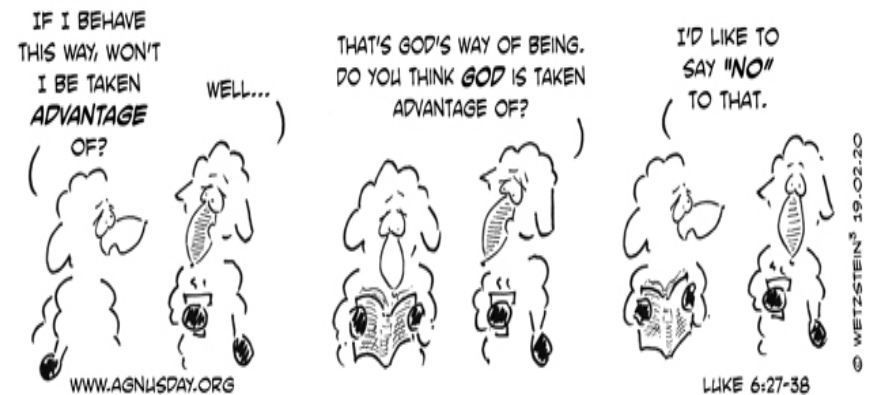
For Rockford's homeless population, winter weather can be dangerous. Pastor Becky Erbe, of Second Congregational/ First Presbyterian Church, at 318 N Church Street, says her church is set to host an "Overnight Cafe" to help. "You are surprised at how quickly somebody can just fall asleep and never wake up because they're frozen to death. So it's really nice to give people a place to stay where they're safe and it's warm and they can have a blanket and a hot meal," Erbe said. From January to early March, Second First's gym will be filled with cots and warm blankets for those seeking shelter from the cold. "They can connect with services that come in through the evening. We serve a meal and they can get clean socks, clean underwear, things that can take them on to the next day," Erbe said. She added that the church serves about 175 homeless in the Overnight Cafe's operating months. "We travel to the parking ramps to encourage people to come to us. Some preferred the parking ramps and being alone and others jumped at the chance to come in someplace warm," Erbe said.

Erbe said she believes the church should help Rockford's homeless population.

"We are lucky and, just the basis of where we're located, that we're by the bus. It's an easy place for people who travel, who walk every day all over the city, that this is a centrally located place that they can come and stay," she said. "We want to be able to do whatever we can to make sure people are safe and fed and feel like they are welcomed." The café is open until March 10th.

<https://www.mystateline.com/news/local-news/church-opens-overnight-cafe-to-shelter-rockford-homeless/>

Welcome to Worship February 23, 2025



<https://www.agnusday.org/comics/854/luke-06-27-38-2019>

A Good Measure: Service Prayers for the Seventh Sunday after Epiphany Year C was written by the Rev. Dr. David Long-Higgins, Conference Minister of the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ.

St. John's United Church of Christ

P.O. Box 794, 401 N Main Street, Belvidere, IL 61008

Sunday Christian Education 9am Worship 10:30
Office Hours: Tues – Thurs, 9am-Noon stjohs401.org
(815)544-2977 stjohsucc401@gmail.com

Pastor: Rev. Muriel Morley Jahn 815-544-2977
 murielmorley@gmail.com
Pastoral Associate: Beth Carson 815-979-0473
Minister of Music: Mary Albrecht 815-547-7503
Choir Director: Jeanne Anderson 815-985-2652

WELCOME VISITORS! Thank you for coming! Please sign a pew card to place in the offering plate.

WORSHIP: When reading this bulletin Leader Speaks Plain Font, **Everyone Speak Bold Font**
Everyone is invited to join us in Communion.

Nursery: Children are welcome in all aspects of worship. The nursery provides an alternative space so kids and parents can both get what they need from worship. Children are encouraged to check in with their adult before going downstairs with the nursery attendant.

You Are Not Alone

The following support groups meet regularly at St. John's

- The Belvidere Group (AA) meets at everyday at 7pm.
Women's Group meets Mondays 5:30pm
- T.O.P.S. Mondays 11am



Delicious Fundraiser



Amazon List



T-Shirts

Announcements

- ✚ **Every 3rd Sunday of the month**, St. John's leads services at **Heritage Woods** at 3 pm. Join after their service for time to socialize with the residents and meet some great people.
- ✚ **Community Meal** every third Wednesday of the month from 5p-6pm.
- ✚ Ash Wednesday Worship March 5th at 7pm.
- ✚ Church Council March 13th at 6pm.
- ✚ **Blessing Box** The weather has turned cold, so we must fill our box accordingly. No canned foods or anything that may contain water. Containers can freeze and explode or worse freeze and thaw without anyone knowing and go bad. These can make people sick. **Cans will be thrown away.** Let's work together to make sure only safe food goes to our neighbors. If you want to make canned donations, you can bring things **INSIDE** the church and we will get them to Food pantries or people in need.
- ✚ **Paper Angel Closet** needs toilet paper, paper towels, Kleenex, toothpaste, bleach, shampoo, and dish soap.
- ✚ **Menards Ministry:** If you have unused Menards rebates, or even receipts. We use these rebates for projects around the church.
- ✚ **Open Door Fundraiser:** We are still collecting money to upgrade our parking lot doors. Our goal is to collect enough money to automate the doors and make it a double entry to hold the temperature in the office area.



St. John's Calendar

you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High." Friends, by this, joy is given space to rise. May we discover it growing in us as we bring our gifts to God.



General Giving

Moment for Mission Overnight Cafe

Musical Offering

Doxology

**Praise God, through whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God, above ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication– unison

Generous God, thank you for pressing Your holy love into the lap of our lives. Bless these gifts we bring that they may be multiplied into a good larger than we can imagine. Also, bless us, that we might live our lives in gratitude, sharing freely without expectation of return. Through this way of Jesus, stretch our hearts, minds, and lives into channels of Your Holy grace. Amen.

Hymn #475– His Eye is on the Sparrow

Benediction

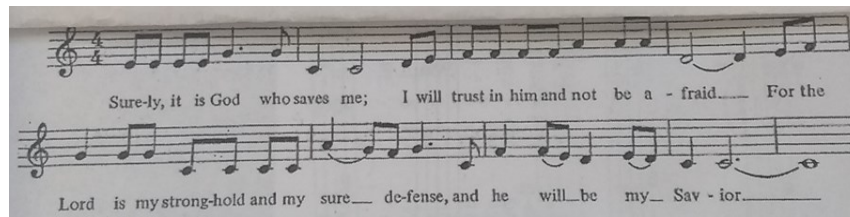
May you be blessed with the courage to interrupt revenge with love.
May you be strengthened with a gratitude that freely shares with others.
May you discover again and again the merciful embrace of the Holy One.
And may the love of God, empower you to help change the world with forgiveness.

Prelude

Announcements

Choral Introit– Surely It Is God Who Saves Me

**Surely it is God who saves me; I will trust in Him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and He will be my Savior.**



Responsive Welcome Statement

At St. John's United Church of Christ, we are Living Outwardly & Valuing Everyone!

We live and work amid God's love!

In that spirit, we extend love to all who come into our midst, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, nationality, skin color, culture, differing abilities, age or political affiliations, to participate fully in all aspects of church.

Our ministry is to bring the Good News of Christ's love to all.

We work in God's name to tear down walls and build community,

to walk with each other through all of life's circumstances,

to provide for those in need,

to offer comfort to the hurting and the sick,

and to uplift the brokenhearted.

Where we fail, we ask for God's forgiveness.

May the Holy Spirit and our siblings continue to challenge us to do better.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

Call to Worship-based on Psalm 37

Come, Beloved, and release your frenzied fear.

We come, trusting the enduring promises of the Holy One.

Let meekness rise as strength of soul.

May our promised inheritance of love shine brightly all around.

May it strengthen us in our waiting and our working.

May all that is evil wither, and all that is good grow to fullness.

May the grace of God rest on us all as we gather.

Invocation– unison

Holy Love, bear in us a new beginning. Soften our hearts and still our minds into Your gracious embrace. Hold the worries and wanderings of our lives. Gift us with the renewing energy of Your Holy Spirit. Let it meet our fatigue and form in us a deepened commitment to your vision of the beloved community. Yes, mold us with Christ-love into agents of Your blessing, for the good of the world. May the cup of our lives run over with this of Your desire. In Your Holy name, we pray. Amen.

Hymn #417– This is a Day of New Beginnings

The Apostles' Creed: an alternative version #882

Children's Time**Pastoral Prayer – The Lord's Prayer****Hymn #433– In the Bulb There is a Promise****Prayer for Transformation and New Life- unison**

God of the grand reversal, we confess our easy attachment to revenge in its many forms. Instead of interrupting violence, it has been easy to practice it in word and deed. It has been easy to wor-

ship the lie of scarcity instead of trusting your promise of abundance. By this, the way of the world has worked into our hearts and minds. Forgive us and free us from ourselves. Equip us anew with an outpouring of Your love. By this of You, form us into channels of grace. Deepen our love, expand our generosity, and mold us and the world with Your abundant mercy. Let the heart and mind of Christ take up residence in us anew. Amen.

Words of Grace– Leader

I have good news! The Holy One, Love Almighty, interrupts our missteps and misdeeds, our distractions and our detours. In Christ Jesus, God has shown us what forgiving love has already done and continues to do. It heals, it mends, and makes a new chapter possible. This is the forgiving power of God that embraces you and me, here and now. It is the good news! You can trust it with your life. Thanks be to God!

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture

Genesis 45: 3-11, 15

Luke 6: 27-38

Sermon “Not Puppets”**Invitation to Generosity– Leader**

Jesus reminds us that God works by a different economy. He tells us, “If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to