



# STEEPLE SQUARE NEWS

FALL 2020

## President's Update : Steeple Square Efforts During COVID-19



**John Schmidt**, Steeple Square Board President and Chief Financial Officer, A.Y. McDonald Mfg. Co.

It has been a year since our last newsletter, and we have wonderful campus updates for you in this newsletter, including the naming of our iconic steeple. But first I want to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the Steeple Square campus and mission.

As you can imagine, the current health pandemic has caused a financial loss for Honkamp Hall, which hosts events that produce income for Steeple Square. We

use funds from campus events to operate and deliver on our mission of repurposing our renovated campus to help our community.

Yet we remain very encouraged, as bookings are increasing for 2021, and, despite the challenges imposed on us by COVID-19, we continue to experience a reasonable amount of bookings this fall. Still, as you might expect our board of directors have been busy asking our supporters for donation commitments and renewals to help us bridge the

gap. If you are interested in giving to Steeple Square or extending your pledge during this time, please contact our board treasurer, Judy Wolf, at 563-599-1479 or [jewolf@mchsi.com](mailto:jewolf@mchsi.com). I would like to call out our campus manager, Melanie Bressler for helping us navigate these uncharted waters.

Even more encouraging, the Marita Theisen Childcare Center has remained open during the pandemic, even though it was our first year of operations. We are proud to have been there for our families and students and applaud our director and teachers for their loving, safe care during this difficult time. With many families choosing to keep their children at home right now, we have openings at the childcare center from infant to preschool. If you are interested in our childcare center, contact our director, Angela Schrodt at [childcare@steeple-square.com](mailto:childcare@steeple-square.com) or 563-587-8830.

The board of directors is fully committed and energized to see our campus operations through this crisis and appreciate the support from our community, volunteers and donors. Please enjoy the Fall 2020 edition of our newsletter.

## Iconic Steeple Named as R.D. McDonald Steeple

On August 20, 2020, Steeple Square unveiled the sign confirming the former St. Mary's Church iconic steeple as the R.D. McDonald Steeple. Driven in large part by a generous donation from the R.D. McDonald Charitable Trust, it is a fitting honor for R.D. McDonald, a former parishioner of St. Mary's Church and a very well known local businessman.

During the naming ceremony, children Jean, Trish, Maria and Rob (Sharon was unable to attend) shared childhood memories of their dad, including attending mass - sitting in the same pew every Sunday and oftentimes arriving during the Second Reading. The Steeple Square board of directors is extremely appreciative of this gift and other gifts, grants and tax credits, which allowed us to restore the steeple to new glory for the next one hundred years.



# Marita Theisen Childcare Center Happenings



**Judy Wolf**, Marita Theisen Childcare Center Board President

Thanks to the generosity of several grants and donations, and the dedication of our director, teachers and board of directors, we are proud that the Marita Theisen Childcare Center is maintaining operations

during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful to our families who have continued to entrust their children to us during this time and look forward to serving them into the future.

In August, we celebrated not only our one-year anniversary, but also the opening of the free statewide four-year old preschool program. We welcomed licensed preschool teacher, Kim Rawson, to our team and look forward to offering this value-added programming for our four-year old students.



**Kim Rawson**



As John Schmidt mentioned in his letter, we currently have a few openings at the childcare center. If you or someone you know is interested in a private tour of the center, contact our childcare director, Angela Schrodt, at [childcare@steeple-square.com](mailto:childcare@steeple-square.com) or 563.587.8830.

Finally, we are honored to be the recipient of the Dubuque Main Street Best Adaptive Re-Use Award for restoring the former St. Mary's church rectory into the Marita Theisen Childcare Center. Thank you to Dan Lobianco and the Annual Awards Committee for this distinctive honor, and congratulations to our construction partners, Jeffrey Morton Architects, Gronen and Heritage Works for their world-class work on this project.



**MARITA THEISEN  
CHILDCARE CENTER**  
STEEPLE SQUARE

## OPENINGS AVAILABLE!

**Children 6 weeks to Pre-K**

**FREE 4-YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL NOW AVAILABLE!**

- A safe, beautiful, home-like environment
- Caring, dependable teachers
- Central location on 16th & White Streets

**Schedule your personal tour today!**

EMAIL [childcare@steeple-square.com](mailto:childcare@steeple-square.com) CALL 563.587.8830  
[steeple-square.com/childcare](http://steeple-square.com/childcare)



## Campus Clean Up Day

On a beautiful October Sunday, several board and committee members and volunteers tackled some outdoor clean up and winter prep projects around the Steeple Square campus. Thanks to all who participated in beautifying our outdoor space, and to campus manager, Melanie Bressler for leading the project!

If you have interest in volunteering at our campus for event setup/takedown, cleaning or other hands-on work, contact campus manager, Melanie Bressler, at [mbressler@steeple-square.com](mailto:mbressler@steeple-square.com) or 563.235.3584.

For Steeple Square updates, visit our website:  
[steeple-square.com/news](http://steeple-square.com/news)  
or follow us on Facebook: [@steeple-square](https://www.facebook.com/steeple-square)

LET'S HEAR IT FROM THE BOARD

## Let's Make Real Change

Over the last few months I have seen our country become so divided, so angry and so mean toward one another. Instead of seeing more love in the world, we are seeing hate.



**Anderson Sainci,**  
Steeple Square  
Board Member and  
Resource Management  
Coordinator, City of  
Dubuque

As a Christian and African American leader in the Dubuque community, I struggle seeing the division, angry and hate. I struggle observing Black and Brown communities deal with structural racism. Like many, I am tired, and I want to see real change.

So where will that change come from? What does real change look like? What can others do to help make our community better for all, especially those who do not look like them?

The change first starts with the person in the mirror. The person in the mirror needs to make a long-term commitment to check for any hidden bias or hate they may have toward others. Yes, bias and hate are real. And in order to no longer have these feelings we must first acknowledge that it exists; then we must look for useful tools to abolish those old feelings/behaviors.

Real change is every individual using their political voice or social influence to change past or current policies/practices that have intentionally or unintentionally impacted our most vulnerable population. In many cases, they are Black and Brown communities.

What can others do to help make their communities better? Find an organization that is seeking to make the community better and get actively involved. Steeple Square is one of many organizations seeking to be an agent for positive change and a catalyst for restoring lives, neighborhood empowerment and community vibrancy.

Let's not leave this world worse off for our children and their children. Let's do better.

## Renovations Continue at Honkamp Hall

Even though foot traffic at the Steeple Square campus has been limited since March, hard work continues on utilizing our generous grants, donations and tax credits to restore and renovate Honkamp Hall. Updates include:

- **Carpeting.** As much as we loved our distinctive red carpeting, anyone who looked closely at it could not deny it needed to be replaced. Now Honkamp Hall boasts a beautiful tan/green carpeting perfectly supplementing the magnificent center, without taking away from its historic beauty and art.
- **Bathrooms.** If you remember, the main floor was limited to two unisex bathrooms in the west chapel of the main hall. Now, on each of the chapel sides on the main floor, separate men and women's bathrooms exist. Each contain three stalls and easy accessibility. Needless to say our guests have greatly enjoyed the additional restrooms during larger events.
- **Stained-glass windows.** Adam Schwendinger & Tim Olson continue to apply their talents and vocational training to restore the stained-glass windows to their beloved glory. The focus has been on the last four large windows in the back of Honkamp Hall. Each window undergoes several steps, including the removal and cleaning of the stained glass, replacement of the storm window, addition of new wood trim, and painting with historically accurate color scheme.
- **Narthex.** During construction, crews discovered some historic and architectural features of the main foyer to the former St. Mary's church. With that, to showcase the building's interesting history, grant and donation dollars were applied to restore some of the beautiful features of the narthex. This includes the replication of historic stenciling and the restoration of the two former doorways that existed prior to the addition of the vestibules.



# HONKAMP HALL & CAMPUS HAPPENINGS

Honkamp Hall was proud to offer the below events in the past year. The size of the hall and flexibility of the space allowed for social distancing so those who still wished to host their event could do so in our beautiful space:

- Wake services & dinners
  - Wedding dress rehearsal dinners
  - Wedding ceremonies
  - Wedding receptions
  - Church service rentals
  - Bridal showers
  - Music/arts
  - Progressive dinners
  - Nonprofit events
- Steeple Square events:**
- Wedding Show
  - St. Mary's Reunion
  - Bells of St. Mary's
  - Dancing in December
  - Movie Night
  - Organ Showcase

## 10 Tips to Plan a Safer Event

Certainly the COVID-19 pandemic has made hosting an in-person event very challenging. With some careful planning and creativity, mixed with following current local health ordinances, events can still occur. Here are 10 tips to help you plan a safer indoor event.



Melanie Bressler,  
Steeple Square  
Campus Manager

- 1 Make a table chart.** A table chart will assist with putting your guests near members of their household. Be sure to display the chart at the entrance of your event so guests can see it right away.
- 2 Add a virtual option.** Live stream your event or make certain aspects of your event virtual to cut down on the number of people at your event. For example, play a pre-recorded acceptance speech for an award you are giving at your event so they don't have to attend in person.
- 3 Select a large venue.** Select a venue that is twice the size (or larger) of your guest count. This will make your guest more comfortable and allow for social distancing.
- 4 Provide extra seating.** Provide extra tables and chairs for your guests to spread out during your event. Also consider providing fewer chairs at each table to spread your guests out even more.
- 5 Host multiple smaller events vs. one large event.** Break up your guest list into smaller lists and plan several small events. This will help keep guests socially distant and feel more comfortable at your event.

To inquire about renting Steeple Square for your next event – including weddings, receptions, celebrations, business meetings, end-of-life services, concerts, art shows, and more – contact:

Melanie Bressler, Campus Manager  
563.235.3584 | [events@steeple-square.com](mailto:events@steeple-square.com)  
or visit us online: [steeple-square.com/rent](http://steeple-square.com/rent)



- 6 Rethink food service.** Serve food plated at the table or serve cafeteria style rather than self-serve buffet style so guests don't touch the same serving utensils. If you have a snack table, consider providing pre-packaged snacks guests can easily take back to their table. If possible, hold shorter events that take place before or after dinner so food doesn't need to be served. This will allow masks to be worn the entire event.
- 7 Stagger guest arrival.** If able, have your guests arrive at different times. Consider cocktail hour and appetizers with one set of guests and dinner and entertainment with another set of guests. Be sure to clean the space between guest arrival.
- 8 Ask guests about safety concerns.** Ask your guests questions about the size of group they are comfortable being around, whether they prefer indoor or outdoor settings, or whether they would feel comfortable eating and drinking during an event. Use this information to plan your event accordingly.
- 9 Provide extra hand sanitizer and masks.** Throughout your event space place extra hand sanitizer and masks for your guests to use frequently during the event. Be sure to remind your guest before arrival and upon arrival that masks are requested at your event and where they can be found.
- 10 Create a scheduled program.** Avoid entertainment that requires standing and walking in small spaces, such as a cocktail area. Provide entertainment such as a comedian, dueling pianos, hypnotist or a solo singer guests can enjoy from their seat.

OUR OUTDOOR EVENT SPACE WILL BE AVAILABLE STARTING SPRING 2021!

## Steeple Square Completes Second Grant Match from The Jeffris Family Foundation

Steeple Square completed its challenge grant match fundraising for a grant from The Jeffris Family Foundation. This is the second grant awarded by The Jeffris Family Foundation to Steeple Square since 2016. The funding is supporting restoration of Honkamp Hall at Steeple Square, including stained glass window restoration, completion of additional restrooms, and restoration of the narthex of the former church.

The \$221,231 grant required Steeple Square to raise a 2:1 match. The campaign leadership team cited strong relationships with friends and donors as a catalyst to quickly raising the match funding.

“Since the early planning phases of the Steeple Square revitalization, this project has been led by countless individuals, businesses and foundations who believed in a new life for the former St. Mary’s campus and supported the continued revitalization of the Washington and North-End neighborhoods. We are grateful to the Jeffris Family Foundation for believing so strongly in the Steeple Square vision of revitalization that they partnered with us on another phase of this project. We are humbled by, and grateful to, our friends and donors who remain by our side as we move closer to the finish line of this ambitious and unprecedented project” says John Schmidt, Steeple Square’s board president.

Steeple Square continues to work with partners including Four Mounds Foundation, NICC and Heritage Works to restore the stained-glass windows through a vocational training program in historic restoration. This program model pays local underemployed community members to learn new skills in a trade that is in high demand. It has been a successful component of the entire campus revitalization that builds local workforce and enhances the economic vibrancy.

Thomas Jeffris, president of the Jeffris Family Foundation, said they have been following the Steeple Square project with great interest. “It was a pleasure working with Steeple Square on another well-done preservation project in one of my favorite U.S. cities.”

Schmidt also noted that building a relationship with the Jeffris Family Foundation was an early catalyst for project and fundraising planning. The team forged a relationship with the foundation in 2013, and Jeffris’ strong interest in the project spurred the group on necessary planning and feasibility work for both operations and historic rehabilitation.

“Getting married during COVID-19 was an experience in itself, and no matter what change of plans happened, Steeple Square was there to support our changes, make suggestions, and made sure that everything was perfect!

**We highly recommend this venue!**

**You will not be disappointed!”**

— *Ronnie, 2020 bride*



### 20% OFF EVENT RENTALS

for Honkamp Hall at the Steeple Square Community Event Center

for events held November 2020 - April 2021

*(no other discounts apply)*

Capacity for up to 200 people with social distancing guidelines in place

**Contact campus manager Melanie Bressler at  
events@steeple-square.com  
or 563.235.3584**

### GRANTS & AWARDS RECEIVED

- City of Dubuque
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG Cares Act)
- Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Iowa Women’s Foundation
- Jeffris Family Foundation (see article)
- Mediacom
- McDonough Foundation
- United Way of Dubuque Area Tri-States

## Welcome to Steeple Square

Welcome new Steeple Square board members!

- Jim Herrig, Retired, HK Financial Services
- Wendy Mihm-Herold, Northeast Iowa Community College
- Sr. Priscilla Wood, Sinsinawa Dominican Congregation



Jim Herrig



Wendy Mihm-Herold

## Welcome to the Marita Theisen Childcare Center

In addition to the current Steeple Square board members of Judy Wolf, Terry Friedman, Rick Runde, Nancy Kann, Brendan Quann and Nicole Gantz, welcome to the following MTCC board members:

- Julie Griep
- Mary Jo Kenneally
- Dianne Roche
- Lori Stewart
- Kaylee Theisen

New staff member:

- Kim Rawson, Preschool Teacher



Sr. Priscilla Wood



Kim Rawson



The dedication of many community members make our efforts possible.

For a full list of board members, visit [steeplesquare.com/about](https://steeplesquare.com/about).