



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 54 Number 12

July 14, 2010

Sunday School at 9:30 A.M.	700 Poyntz Avenue
Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M.	Manhattan, Kansas 66502
Second Helping Dinner at 5:15 P.M.	telephone 785-537-7006
Thursday Evening Taizé at 7:00 P.M.	www.uccmanhattan.org

On not believing in God...

In Sunday’s sermon I mentioned that my curiosity about what I would find there led me to google “How to find God.” I was surprised to find some rather helpful suggestions at the wikiHow.com website. Among them, “Be ready to discard existing notions you may have about God.”

That can be good advice for anyone, whether our notions of God come from popular culture or from growing up in the faith. Plenty of us formed childish notions of God in our younger days. Sometimes we forget to put away childish things.

I may have been taught that I can pray to God about anything, but sometimes my prayers sound so childish. I don’t believe in God as my divine butler/concierge/Santa Claus, yet I can offer God a laundry list of things I think God should do. To do so is to assume I know best—for God and everybody else. I also give thanks that God has not granted all my prayers, because sometimes they are hopelessly self-centered and needy. *[continued page 2]*

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The God I have come to believe in cannot be manipulated or fooled. The God I believe in is one whose loving-kindness is found in part through the mindfulness of the “More” that prayer represents. I don’t have to have an “answer” to be strengthened and nurtured by that mindfulness.

I don’t believe in a God who is more attentive to legality than justice. Organized religion gets such a bad rap because of childish notions of a God who is busy assigning punishments for sins. I don’t believe in a God as divine police cop with a quota of “smotes” to be reported each week. I do believe in a God who is angered by injustice, and I believe that injustice has its consequences. We live in a web of moral relationships. Justice is our calling because it is God’s intention.

I don’t believe in a God who does not know our pain. I know, when we are at a loss for words we can say dumb things, but when I hear a comment like “God must have needed another angel in heaven” spoken to a person whose child or spouse or parent has died, I cringe. The God I believe in understands what a breaking heart feels like. The God I believe in hurts when we hurt. Some things we learn as children are right on the mark. (Remember, the wisdom of wikiHow.com is “*Be ready* to discard existing notions you may have about God.” It says be ready; it doesn’t say do it indiscriminately.) The first memory verse I learned in Sunday School is a profound affirmation about God: “Jesus wept.”

The God I don’t believe in is a God I can understand. That is an idol, and we have plenty of those. The God I believe in can be known—in transforming beauty, profound truth, and warm flesh—but that knowledge is always partial. The God I believe in is also incomprehensible, mysterious, and infinite. “Close to us as breathing and distant as the farthest star” is how one prayer in the *Book of Worship* puts it. That’s why I have to keep seeking—not because God is hard to find but because there are hungers in this world only God can fill.

Grace and Peace,

Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns – please call the church office at 537-7006 for information.

E-MAIL PRAYER CHAIN

If you wish to be added to the First Congregational e-mail prayer chain, please contact officie@uccmanhattan.org.



Regular Office Hours Resume

The Administrative office has returned to regular hours. **The office will normally be open from 9:00 A.M. to Noon and from 1:00 to 3:00 in the afternoon.** You can always leave a message on the answering machine at other times or send an e-mail. Because some larger projects have been on hold during the recent months of transition, we will be making every effort to “catch up” during the summer with projects like the annual directory of members and friends. Please bear with us.

Welcome to New Administrative Assistant Sandy Nelson

Sandy Nelson has been hired as our new Administrative Assistant. If you drop by the church during the week, please stop in the office and introduce yourself.

Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, Sandy has been living in Manhattan for about 30 years. Prior to coming to First Congregational UCC, she was the Administrative Assistant and Publications Director for the International Association for Jazz Education. She has a degree in Anthropology from K-State and enjoys interacting with people from all walks of life. Sandy and her husband Dave Colburn have three daughters.

In her spare time, Sandy enjoys paper art – card making, stamping, scrapbooking, and more. Frankly, she also enjoys putting her feet up and becoming a couch potato.

Giving Reports

Second Quarter individual giving reports are now being distributed. If you like to keep a record of weekly details, please save this report as reports have weekly details only for the current quarter. All reports include a summary of the yearly total to date. Please promptly review your report and leave a message at the church office should you have a question about accuracy.

Recycling at Church!

In a “stewardship of the earth” effort to reduce our carbon footprint, the Cobb Challenge group is now offering a recycling collection place at the church.



You may find it easy to bring your recyclable items with you to church and leave them at the collection point in the eastern passage between the Sanctuary and Blachly Hall. You can either bring your things through the Hall or enter through the east door, which will be unlocked on Sunday mornings.

Your items do not need to be sorted. However, *they must be clean so they do not create odors or attract pests*. Plastic jugs, bottles, and metal cans must be rinsed clean. (This may take two or three rinses; an occasional greasy can or jug may better be thrown away than cleaned.)

If you have questions, ask, call, or email one of us. And feel free to look in on the collection point. Of course, anyone wanting to get involved with the Cobb Challenge effort would be welcomed with open arms!

The Cobb Challenge Group
Sean Weston, Jerry Hanna & Jim Mock

Women of the Church

Lunch Bunch August 4

Women of the Church will host Lunch Bunch at CoCo BoLos (in Aggieville) on Wednesday, August 4. Everyone is welcome to join us for lunch and fellowship at 11:30 A.M.

It's still summer, but plans are underway for the annual fall kick-off of church activities.

Mark your calendars for



FEAST & FESTIVAL

SUNDAY

AUGUST 29

DINNER AT 5:00

FUN FOLLOWS!

- ✦ Tickets will go on sale on Sunday, August 8. Youth and adults are \$6 each, children ages 5-12 are \$4 each, and children under 5 are free.
- ✦ Invite a friend to “meet your church.” Complimentary tickets are available for guests.

Thursday Evening BIBLE STUDY: Acts

The Thursday Evening Bible Study is currently taking up the Acts of the Apostles—Luke’s sequel to his gospel. Some call it the “Gospel of the Holy Spirit,” others “the history of the early church.” Acts is filled with people and places and stories of how the Jesus movement spread and grew. We meet Thursdays at 5:30 P.M. in Blachly Hall. Feel free to bring a brown bag supper or snacks. Child care is available in the Nursery. We conclude by 6:45 P.M. so that you can attend the Taizé service if you wish

Have you remembered the church in your will?

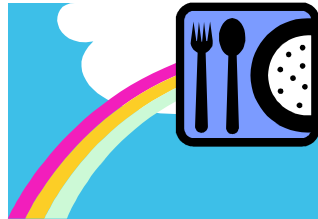
*Fundraising —
as simple as purchasing*
**\$hop \$mart
Grocery Certificates**

It's the easy way to make a donation to the Church. Purchase your certificates after worship to use when you buy groceries. Buy the coupons at face value, spend them like cash, and the church receives a donation. Certificates are now available for HyVee, Dillon's, and Ray's Apple Market.



**July 24 Rainbow Table
Wine & Cheese Party**

An opportunity for those at First Congregational UCC who consider themselves part of the LGBT community to socialize and get to know one another better.



Host: Don Cannon
Place: The Tree House
Time: 6:00 P.M.
Date: Saturday July 24th.
What to bring: Please bring a bottle of your favorite wine (or non alcoholic drink) and your favorite cheese.

For more information, contact the church office at 537-7006 or office@uccmanhattan.org.

Mission & Outreach

Opportunities to Serve The Board of Mission and Outreach continues to seek persons who would be interested in supporting our efforts by serving organizations which we as a congregation support. These include:

Shepherd's Crossing Representative — We are looking for a person who could attend third Monday noon meetings, and represent our church in this ecumenical helping ministry. The office has more information of this opportunity.

ECM Campus Ministry Board Member — ECM Board members attend monthly second Thursday evening meetings of our cooperative campus ministry. Judy Willingham can tell you about this opportunity—she is one of the persons who represent us on the board. Jerry Hanna will begin serving as a second representative this summer. We are still looking for a third person who feels called to serve in this way.

If you have interest or questions about these opportunities, please contact the pastor or Mission and Outreach presiding officer Victor Force.

Christian Education

Sunday School Kick-Off August 29

Sunday School classes for all ages—children, youth, and adults—will kick off a new year of learning and growth on Sunday, August 29, at 9:30 A.M. The Kick-off Sunday will feature an intergenerational gathering of fun and learning. Invite a friend!



Community News



Riley County Relay for Life

On August 6th and 7th, several member of our church will be participating in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. Church members walking this year include Ann Gleason, Bill

Richter, and Linda Richter. We are raising money in advance of the Relay, so visit with us at church and we will be glad to receive your gifts. Checks should be made out to the "American Cancer Society."

For every contribution of \$10 you may designate a luminary (some decorated by Katya Richter) in memory of or in honor of a person who has had cancer. These will be placed around the KSU Stadium and participants will walk all night by their light. Please help us fight this disease that has taken such a toll on our world.

— *Linda Richter*

Thanks for keeping your financial
commitment current throughout the
busy summer months.

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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