



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 58 Number 12

December 2014

Sunday School at 9:30 A.M.
Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M.
Second Helping Dinner at 5:15 P.M.
Thursday Evening Taizé at 7:00 P.M.

700 Poyntz Avenue
Manhattan, Kansas 66502
telephone 785-537-7006
www.uccmanhattan.org

The Advent of Love Incarnate

“Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine; Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.” So begins the 19th century hymn by Christina Rossetti, who is also known for writing that more-familiar hymn “In the Bleak Midwinter. I’ve been humming the tune this past week. Turning it over and thinking about it.

Christmas is kind of an odd thing, isn’t it? I’ve come to believe there are two distinctly different (though tangentially related) holidays that happen in December: One is the Christmas of Santa Claus and reindeer, kisses under the mistletoe, Bing Crosby on the speakers, frantic last-minute trips to the mall. The other is the Christmas of angels, shepherds, the birth of Jesus, the recognition of God incarnate in our midst. I am fairly comfortable living in the tensions of both, I suppose, and I count on my church to keep me grounded in the original Christmas.....the focus on Christ and the power of those nativity stories to turn our world upside down.

[continued pg. 2]



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There are so many parts of that Christmas story to grab onto and ponder anew. What will it be for you this year? I always find myself catching my breath as I realize God has chosen Mary to be the bearer of this amazing gift – Mary, who is too-young, too-unwed, but willing. Willing to take on this enormous task. Willing to play her part in this grand drama. Willing to pull forward the Song of Hannah and sing it again in a new time and place. Willing to proclaim God’s Reign on Earth where the rich are sent away empty and the poor are filled with good things.

And I contemplate with centuries of Christians what it means to name this tiny baby Emmanuel – God with us. What does it mean to say that God is present in human form? What does it mean to say Love Incarnate is here to stay? And how can I live my life so that I don’t miss Love Incarnate in all those I encounter? I don’t know about you, but I find that I need an annual reminder (at the very least) of God’s real, flesh-and-blood presence with us – here and now.

“Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine; Love to God and neighbor, love for plea and gift and sign.” It is my sincere hope and prayer that Love will come and bless you and yours this Christmas season. May the time of waiting be blessed. May your dreams of new life be blessed. May our eyes be open to see the coming of Christ in our midst and may our hearts be ready to grow as we experience that transforming Love.

Pastor Caela



Annual Reports due Monday, Jan. 5

Please have your annual reports to the office as early as possible. We encourage you to turn in your report before the end of the year if at all possible. All reports should be received by **January 5, 2015** in order to be included in the Annual Report Book.

✦
Wishing you a blessed Christmas and
peace and joy in the New Year.

Pastor Caela

May Ellen
Bol -

Dickie Lewis

Tracy

Nancy

Balett

Sandy

from the staff of

First Congregational

United Church of Christ

Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns

- For more information, please contact the church office.

Thanks

- On behalf of all the ECM directors, staff, and students, I want to thank you for your contribution of \$425 to the campus ministry at K-State in September. We really appreciate your support and want you to know that we could not continue in ministry to K-State students, and the larger university community, without the support of partners like you. A building update: The building has progressed quickly in the last couple of weeks. The main level floor and framing have been installed and we will have a roof by Thanksgiving break; we are so excited to see progress. We should have a complete and finished building by February 26, 2015!

– *Kristina Auch, ECM Office Administrator*

Helping

- **Need a ride to church?** Contact one of our transportation volunteers: Jim & Carolyn Hodgson, Bill Pallett, Mike & Martha Miller, or Jeff Keller.
- **Home Communion Visits** The Deacons can bring communion to your home on the first Sunday of the month. Visits at other times can be arranged with the pastor.

Financial Reminders

In order to make a timely Annual Report, the final deposits for this year will include monies received in the morning offering, Sunday, December 28, and any monies received in the church office **by noon** on Wednesday, December 31st. Monies received after that time will be welcomed and included in the 2015 reports.

— Joy Schell, Financial Secretary

A note from the Bookkeeper

The end of the year is fast approaching, and I need to close the financial records on December 31. If you have receipts for budgeted or approved expenses, and you'd like to be reimbursed, please have your receipts to me as soon as possible -- no later than December 30. Thanks for your help.

— Sandy Nelson, Bookkeeper

E-MAIL PRAYER CHAIN



If you wish to be added to the First Congregational e-mail prayer chain, please contact office@uccmanhattan.org. It is a quick and easy way to stay up to date with your church family.

Lunch Bunch December 3

Join the Women of the Church for Lunch Bunch on Wednesday, December 3 at the Happy Valley Chinese (Bluehills Shopping Center). It's not for women only—everyone is welcome to join us for lunch at 11:30 A.M.



Special Thanks

Thank you for your support and helping me go to Disney with the MHS choir. The talent show was a fun fundraiser event--thanks for the donations! I am so excited to sing at Disney and watch the marching band march in the Disney parade. Thank you so much!!!
– *Sina Hanna*

I'd like to thank the church for giving me the opportunity of singing to the congregation. I'm so thankful for the support and love I have received from everyone at the Church. It makes me glad that I will continue performing in front of my friends and family. The Church has done so much for me and I will be forever grateful. – *Ben Clark*

A big, wonderful thank you to everyone who donated towards our trip to Disney. It was so much fun performing for you in the talent show, and I'm sure we'll have a great time performing in Florida. Thank you for helping us out as we go on this once in a lifetime trip. – *Marisa Lang*

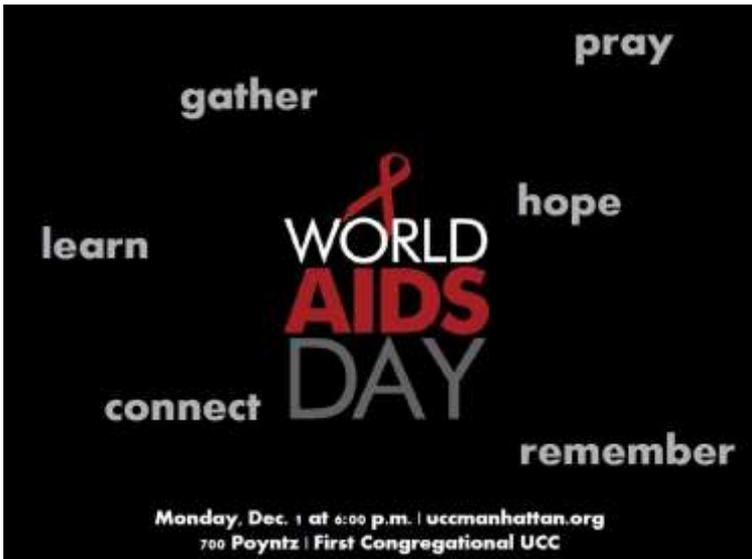
I greatly appreciate your donations and had loads of fun playing my saxophone at the talent show. I am looking forward to spending time with my friends in sunny and warm Florida. Thanks again. – *Nick Clark*

Dear First Congregational: For years I've heard about the famed choir Disney World trip every two years. When I learned that the band and choir years overlapped so freshmen would have the opportunity to go, I was ecstatic! I'm incredibly excited that I get the privilege of going on this trip, and so thankful that First Congregational helped me get there. Thank you, everyone! –
Meredith Stone

A huge thanks to everyone for supporting us on our trip to Disney. This trip will be amazing and you've helped make it possible. Thank you for all your support! – *Kyle Weston*

Adult Sunday School

ADVENT CONSPIRACY – “Advent Conspiracy is an international movement restoring the scandal of Christmas by substituting compassion for consumption.” Go ahead, read it again. That’s right, they said “the scandal of Christmas.” If you struggle with feeling exhausted by the time you get to Christmas. If you long to reconnect more deeply to the story of Christ’s birth. If you just feel like Christmas is somehow “off” and wish you could get back on track. If you grow weary of feeling like Christmas is a burden rather than a gift....this class is for you. Join us for the four Sundays of Advent at 9:30 a.m. (Nov. 30 – Dec. 21). There is a book that goes with the course, but you don’t have to read it to participate. We will purchase some copies via Amazon before the class begins, so please notify the office by Nov. 19 if you’d like us to order one for you. You can learn more about the movement at adventconspiracy.org.



Advent Events at First Congregational

Nov. 9 – Dec. 14 – Children rehearse for pageant at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday

Sunday, Dec. 7 – Brass join us for worship

Sunday, Dec. 14 – Children’s Christmas pageant “Star of Wonder” in worship

Sunday, Dec. 14 at 8:00 p.m. – Blue Christmas service, including Worldwide Compassionate Friends Candlelighting Service for those who have lost children

Sunday, Dec. 21 – Lessons and Carols during worship

Sunday, Dec. 24 at 7:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve worship

What is Blue Christmas? Christmas is not a happy time for everyone. A Blue Christmas worship service is a more subdued service designed for those who experience the Christmas season as painful, sad, or difficult. We will also be participating in the Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle lighting during our Blue Christmas worship. This international movement is a time for parents who have lost children to light a candle and receive the support of the gathered community.



Christian Education

Christmas Pageant

This year the kids (Pre-k through 6th grades) will be presenting the musical, *Star of Wonder*. In the play you'll meet such bright luminaries as Superstar, Shooting Star, Lucky Star, Falling Star, Rock Star, the North Star and a constellation full of stars as they anxiously wait for the big announcement—the birth of Jesus! We will be rehearsing the play during Sunday School beginning Sunday, November 9th. The Christmas pageant will be performed during the 10:45 service on Sunday, December 14th. If your child has an interest in being a part of the show please make sure that they are in Sunday school during November and December! Any questions? Contact Barrett Scroggs at CEDirector@uccmanhattan.org.

– Barrett Scroggs



Toy Donations for the Nursery

Do you have any gently-used children's toys around your house that you need to get rid of? The Nursery at First Congregational is a great place to donate those! We are looking for toys that would be appropriate for a childcare setting (no plush toys, no violent toys, no toys with swallowable parts, etc.). Please bring any toys for donation and leave them in the box underneath the coat rack by the Front office. Questions? Contact Barrett Scroggs. Thank you for your donation!

Youth Group

Youth Group Schedule

Dec 7	3:30 – 2nd Helping
Dec 14	7:00 – Christmas Party/White Elephant Gift Exchange
Dec 21	No Youth Group
Dec 28	No Youth Group

A poster for a movie night event. The background is a red theater curtain. In the center, the words "MOVIE NIGHT" are written in a large, white, stylized font. Below that, the date and time "Friday, December 19 7:30 p.m." are written in a bold, white font. Underneath, a paragraph of text in white font reads: "Popcorn, drinks, other snacks and more will be provided. Drop off your kids and their friends for a fun evening. Hope to see you!". At the bottom left, the location and website are listed: "First Congregational UCC | 700 Poyntz Manhattan, KS uccmanhattan.org". On the right side, there is a large, overflowing basket of yellow popcorn with red and white stripes.

Second Helping Gift Bags

Each year on the Sunday before Christmas our congregation provides gift bags for our 2nd Helping guests. We are planning to do that again this year, and thanks to Pastor Caela's outreach, we are receiving help from several other churches in this effort (First United Methodist, First Presbyterian and First Christian). Each church has been given an "assignment" of items to provide. Our assignment this year is to provide toiletries. Here are our specific needs:

Lotion, shampoo and body wash (liquid). 45 bottles of each. Hotel size are too small, but 3-8 oz. size are ideal (travel section of stores is a good place to find these items).

Please contact Mary Ellen Barkley or the church office if you would like to contribute, just to be sure we still need that specific item; and bring items to the church by Friday, Dec. 12th. Bags will be assembled on Dec. 14th after church.

Thanks in advance for your help. These gift bags are always appreciated by our guests!



UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns

The UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns is seeking personal stories about lives transformed (and sometimes saved) because of the affirmation LGBT people experience in Open and Affirming churches. Your stories will help us make the case for funding the UCC's national ONA program. If you'd like to share your story, please email to ed@ucccoalition.org with your photo. Let us know if we have permission to post it on www.openandaffirming.org.

– Jerry Hanna, Deacon for ONA Concerns

Ministry of the Decorative Scissors

The next retreat of the Ministry of the Decorative Scissors will be held from 6 p.m. on Friday, December 5, until 7 p.m. on Saturday, December 6, in Andover Hall. We'll break at midnight on Friday to go home and get a good night's rest but start up again Saturday morning at 7:00 a.m. We welcome everyone to come and experience a joy-filled time for crafting, eating, and laughing. Bring your UFOs (UnFinished Objects) and work on them in an atmosphere of fellowship. We do not guarantee that you will complete any projects, but you will have fun and meet delightful people. Come for an hour or for all 25! Feel free to bring a snack to share. For more information, contact Sue Gerth.



Make your own Reusable Fabric Gift Bags

Think about how nice it would be to never have to buy or use wrapping paper again! You are invited to join Pastor Caela for a lesson in making your own reusable fabric gift bags at the upcoming gathering of the Ministry of the Decorative Scissors. We will gather in Andover Hall at 7:00pm on Friday, Dec. 5th and you can keep working on your bags Friday night through Saturday. If you have a sewing mating you'd be willing to lend us for the weekend, please let Sue Gerth know. Those who wish to make bags should bring along fabric, thread, and cloth ribbons. Pillowcases also work great.

The Christmas Fund Offering

Every Christmas Eve, we take an offering to support the “Christmas Fund,” an effort by the UCC to supplement the needs of retired clergy and church workers who are trying to live on tiny or non-existent pensions. Through the Christmas Fund, the UCC’s Pension Board offers supplements for monthly pensions, helps to supplement health care premiums, offers emergency grants for unexpected living expenses, and provides Christmas “thank you” checks to over 500 retired clergy and lay workers. This gift, in other words, goes to the very basic needs of hundreds of those who, during their working lives, provided guidance, support, and leadership to communities of faith. Won’t you be generous in your support of this important mission? It’s our turn to support these fine people who have spent their lives working in the Lord’s vineyard.



Poinsettias

The Advent season brings the opportunity for you to provide poinsettias in memory of or in honor of someone important to you as we decorate the church for Advent and Christmas. The cost to donate Poinsettias is \$10.00 per plant. Please complete the enclosed form and return it to the church office with your check made out to “First Congregational UCC.”



Cobb Corner — Going Green

“If we do not feel grateful for what we already have, what makes us think we’d be happy with more?” – Unknown

As Christmas approaches, there are many opportunities to make it greener and more meaningful. Here are two tips from readers of *Real Simple*: (1) Wrap gifts from largest to smallest. Use leftover pieces for smaller ones. (I avoid most paper by wrapping in holiday tea towels and using reuseable bags or comics for packaging.)

2) Start a holiday tradition of volunteering as a family. (Hint: The animal shelter needs adopters, Purina Chow and volunteers to bring bedding, toys, cages. There may be neighbors who need help with snow or getting groceries. Just the process of talking over community needs with the family helps to shift the holiday focus from consumption to collaboration).

Pastor Caela had a great suggestion: Bring mason jars or other standardized containers for foods and buy in bulk! Recycling is great, but better still is reducing waste packaging in the first place! Such jars can also be given with treats perhaps launching the recipient on their own bulk buying!

Don’t forget books! Rosie’s Corner at the Manhattan Library and the Dusty Bookshelf are two of many places to buy recycled selections that will be enjoyed and shared long after the latest electronic gadgets are dumped as hazardous waste!

Most importantly, let’s remember “the reason for the season” – Jesus and his message of inclusive love.

Merry Christmas!

— *Linda Richter*

Share ideas for future Cobb columns with Linda Richter.

Recycling at Church!

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. Please bring your things through Blachly Hall on Sunday mornings.

Please sort your items according to marked containers, paying special attention to numbered plastics. Also, all items should be rinsed *so they do not create odors or attract pests.*



The Second Helping

Our Second Helping ministry continues to be a wonderful way in which our church extends its mission to the community of Manhattan. We regularly serve 25-35 people each week. Many of you have helped with this mission in a variety of ways, and that is much appreciated!



Currently we are hoping to add some more volunteers to our list of "regulars." We are particularly in need of individuals who would be willing to serve as Head Cook and Church Host. If you are interested in learning more about either of these positions, or volunteering in other ways, please contact the church office at 537-7006 or office@uccmanhattan.org.

December 7, 2014

Dessert: Judy Willingham

Volunteers: First Congregational Youth Group, Tracey Weston, Anne Gleason

Chief Cook: Andy Barkley

Church Host: Mary Ellen Barkley

December 14, 2014

Dessert: The Kellers

Volunteers: First Christian Church Youth Group, Anne Gleason

Chief Cook: Brent Maner

Church Host: Myles Alexander

December 21, 2014

Dessert: Martha Miller

Volunteers: Anna Goins, Myles Alexander, Kathy Bleam

1 volunteer needed

Chief Cook: Gretchen Lewis

Church Host: Jim Lewis

December 28, 2014

Dessert: Ann Smit

Volunteers: ESA Sorority

Chief Cook: Jeff Keller

Church Host: Myles Alexander

Annual Meeting Notice

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Manhattan, Kansas, will be held on
Sunday January 25, 2015

Worship & Volunteers

December 7, 2014

Greeters	Angela Hubler, Dan Barnes
Scripture Reader	Angela Hubler
Word for Children .	Caela Simmons Wood
Fellowship Hour	Wade Honey, Dan Barnes
Flowers	Advent Poinsettias
Snow Removal	Brent Maner (<i>Dec 1-7</i>)

December 14, 2014

Greeters	Jenny Clarks, Ben Clark
Scripture Reader	Judy Willingham
Word for Children .	Kerri Keller
Fellowship Hour	Ann Smit
Flowers	Advent Poinsettias
Snow Removal	Dave Smit (<i>Dec 8-14</i>)

December 21, 2014

Greeters	Linda Richter, Bill Richter
Scripture Reader	Wade Honey
Word for Children .	Caela Simmons Wood
Fellowship Hour	<i>volunteer needed</i>
Flowers	Advent Poinsettias
Snow Removal	Knick Knicklebine (<i>Dec 15-21</i>)

December 28, 2014

Greeters	volunteers needed
Scripture Reader	Jonathan Mertz
Word for Children .	<i>volunteer needed</i>
Fellowship Hour	Kerri Keller
Flowers	Advent Poinsettias
Snow Removal	Jim Lewis (<i>Dec 22-28</i>)

To volunteer, please contact the church office at 537-7006 or office@uccmanhattan.org.

ALMOST EVERYTHING \$6.00 SALE

*Friday, Dec. 5: 10:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 6: 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
First Congregational Church*

GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND STOCKING STUFFERS!

*HCI Fundraising sale sponsored by
Gamma Omicron Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Alpha*

*Gamma Omicron has volunteered at Second Helping
one Sunday a month since Second Helping began
(15 years or so).*

*The money raised during this fundraiser will benefit the
philanthropic projects Gamma Omicron supports:*

*Second Helping
Big Lakes Developmental Center
Flint Hills Breadbasket
Heartspring in Wichita
Easter Seals
Goodwill
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
Junior and Senior High Outstanding Youth Scholarships*

Please come and shop to support these great causes!

Mayor's Holiday Food and Fund Drive

The Mayor's Christmas Holiday Food and Fund Drive is a community wide fundraiser that brings Manhattan together to help families in need. Hunger exists year round, however the need for food assistance is most intense in November and December because of the demand for additional necessities. The Mayor is asking area church members to make a special contribution of food and funds for the 2014 drive.

Every year, our local churches join with businesses, organizations, and big hearted individuals to collect food and funds to help less fortunate families in our area. Together we were able to help the Breadbasket provide over 25,000 individuals with food and other assistance last year.

You Can Help

Donate food or funds – Food is needed to stock the shelves at the Breadbasket to help fill hundreds of holiday food baskets and to ensure that struggling families will have enough to eat during the challenging winter months. Some much needed food items included canned meat, canned pumpkin, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, and canned fruit.

Cash donations are also encouraged as they allow the Breadbasket to purchase much needed perishable food items all year round. It costs approximately \$40 to provide a food basket for a family of four. If you would like to make a donation, please make checks payable to:

The Mayor's Christmas Holiday Food and Fund Drive
905 Yuma
Manhattan, KS 66502

Volunteer – Call the Breadbasket and find out how YOU can make a difference! Phone: 537-0730



Coping with Holidays & Special Days

Homecare & Hospice is offering a bereavement session titled "Coping with Holidays and Special Days" for anyone who is grieving the loss of a loved one and is finding the upcoming holidays difficult. This free educational and grief support group is open to all who want to receive support, tips, and learn coping skills.

You can choose ONE of the following session dates that is most convenient for you:

Tuesday	November 18, 2014	5:00-6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	November 19, 2014	12:00-1:30 p.m.
Tuesday	December 2, 2014	12:00-1:30 p.m.
Tuesday	December 16, 2014	5:00-6:30 p.m.

If you or someone you know would like to attend one of the group sessions, please contact Dan Clayton at 785-370-7912 or email at jmeccsari@hcandh.org or anyone at the Homecare & Hospice, Inc office. We have

Winter Coats Needed

The USD383 FIT (Families in Transition) Closet has a shortage of children's winter coats size 4T-Youth L (especially for girls). If you have any gently used children's coats in these sizes they would be thankful. Coats to donate can be brought to the church office.





Shop at Box Lab and support
The Second Helping

On Saturday December 6th Box Lab will donate 15% of sales to *The Second Helping*.
For creative toys and gifts shop local and support your community.



Open 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM • Downtown Manhattan at 407 Poyntz Avenue • www.boxlab.us

Mission Statement

The Mission of First Congregational United Church of Christ is

- To love and accept others unconditionally as God loves and accepts us, and by example, to encourage others to do the same.
- To challenge ourselves to grow spiritually through worship, education, nurture, reflection, discussion, fellowship, and outreach.
- To minister to others locally, nationally, and globally with the same fervor as we minister to ourselves, through the sharing of our talents, gifts, and resources.

We hold ourselves accountable before God for this mission statement.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

700 Poyntz Avenue
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uccmanhattan.org



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Return Service Requested

Calendar on following page

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 5:15 Yoga  6:00 World AIDS Day Service	2	3 11:30 Lunch Bunch 7:00 Board Meetings	4 7:00 Taizé	5 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">HCI Fundraiser</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Ministry of the Decorative Scissors</div>	6 Box Lab Fundraiser
7 Advent 1 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Church School 10:45 Worship & Communion <i>Fill the Breadbasket</i> 12:00 Fellowship Hour 5:15 Second Helping	8 5:15 Yoga	9	10 6:00 CE Board 7:00 Vitality & Outreach	11 7:00 Taizé	12 	13 
14 Advent 2 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Church School 10:45 Worship - Children's Pageant 12:00 Fellowship Hour 5:15 Second Helping 8:00 Blue Christmas Service	15 5:15 Yoga	16 7:00 PFLAG	17 7:00 Cabinet	18 7:00 Taizé	19 7:30 Movie Night	20
21 Advent 3 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship-Lessons & Carols 12:00 Fellowship Hour 5:15 Second Helping	22 5:15 Yoga	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 7:00	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26 12:00 Newsletter Deadline	27
28 Advent 4 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship 12:00 Fellowship Hour 5:15 Second Helping	29 5:15 Yoga	30	31 			