



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
NEWSLETTER**

Volume 61 Number 1

January 2017

Sunday School at 9:30 A.M. (when school is in session)
 Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M. 700 Poyntz Avenue
 Second Helping Dinner at 6:00 P.M. Manhattan, Kansas 66502
 Thursday Evening Taizé at 7:00 P.M. telephone 785-537-7006
www.uccmanhattan.org

New Year Recommitments

Flipping over the page on the calendar each year often causes us to think about the 12 months that lie ahead. I always find myself humming “Seasons of Love” from the musical *Rent* in January:

*Five hundred twenty-five thousand
 Six hundred minutes
 How do you measure - measure a year?
 In daylights - in sunsets
 In midnights - in cups of coffee
 In inches - in miles
 In laughter - in strife*

One way or another the 525,600 minutes of 2017 will tick by. Jonathan Larson, the composer and lyricist, suggests we should consider measuring our years in LOVE.

There are so many ways to Love Loudly, and no doubt in my mind that it’s what the world needs right now to conquer fear and anxiety. First Congregational UCC strives to be a place where you can measure your life in love....through small and [continued pg. 2]

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big acts of charity, justice, kindness, and bravery. It's who Jesus calls us to be.

One of the ongoing opportunities we have to Love Loudly - week after week after week - is through The Second Helping. This community meal has been open to anyone who desires warm food and fellowship every single Sunday night since 1998. We're going on 20 years (and almost 1,000 meals) of this critical ministry. If you've never been to Second Helping, perhaps you'd like to start by coming as a guest. That's what I did several years ago now when I first traveled to Manhattan to meet with the Pastor Search Committee. I was so impressed with the warmth of spirit found around those tables. The volunteers knew many of the guests by name and were careful to make eye contact, smile, and offer simple kindnesses. In a world where people are often rushing around from place to place, these connections matter.

I was also struck by how amazing it was that a congregation this size was able to stick with this major ministry. It's no small thing to provide dinner and a sack lunch week after week. We rely on those at the core of this ministry - Dale Stearns and Sue Zschoche who procure the supplies, Mary Ellen Barkley (recently assisted by Ann Smit and Gretchen Lewis) who schedules volunteers, and our team of talented Head Cooks. We are also thankful for our partners at the Mennonite congregation, First Christian Church, the ESA Sorority, and HandsOn K-State.

But even with all these helpers, there's still room for YOU. We are always in need of volunteers to come and cook, serve, provide dessert, or serve as Church Host. If you can sign up for a recurring slot, that's even better. It makes it simpler for our volunteer recruiters because they can plug you in each month.

If you'd like to become a volunteer, please contact Ann Smit or the church office and we'll get you set up. Thanks for the ways you use your 525,600 minutes to make the world a better place in 2017.

Pastor Caela

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.



Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concern

For more information please contact the church office.

Congratulations

- **Rachel Hunt** graduated in December from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Arts with an emphasis in music and a Minor in Women's Studies.

Helping

- **Need a ride to church?** Contact one of our transportation volunteers: Jim/Carolyn Hodgson, Bill Pallett, 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.

Pastor Caela Traveling

January 3-10, Pastor Caela will be traveling to Arizona for the January session of the NGLI (Next Generation Leadership Initiative). She'll be in class all week learning about adaptive leadership. While Caela is gone, the Rev. Melanie Martin of FUMC will be on call for any pastoral care needs that arise. Contact Sandy during the business day at 537-7006 or Stacy Shaffer (P.O. of Deacons) after hours if you need to be connected with Rev. Martin.

Thanks to the church community for the recognition Sunday morning in December. I was given a stunning framed photo of the church and a decorated cake for Fellowship Hour.

I have just completed 17 years as the Financial Secretary. And previous to that served as Treasurer for 23 years. I actually like record keeping so it was truly a "joy" to serve the church in this way.

Thanks for the privilege to hold these jobs and for your confidence in my ability. – *Joy Schell*



Thanks from the Manhattan Mennonite church to all the First Congregational Church volunteers who helped at the 30th Annual Community Meal Fundraiser on November 13. Ann Smit, Dave Smit, and Pastor Caela helped on Friday evening with the vegetable chopping and Patti Ballowe, Tom Ballowe, Kathy Blean, Millie Schroeder, Donna Keyser, Gretchen Lewis, and Jim Lewis all came and helped buss tables and keep the beverage cups full of liquid. To all of you who volunteered and came out to eat we say a big "thank you" for your kindness and help.

– *Rod Franz, co-chair Mennonite Church Fundraiser*

Annual Reports due Wednesday, Jan. 4

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 4, 2017** in order to be included in the Annual Report Book.

Annual Meeting & Recognition of Church Officers Sunday, January 22

We hope you will join us on Sunday, January 22 as we begin our new church year. First, during the worship service there will be a special blessing of outgoing and incoming church officers. Then following worship we will hold our annual meeting. At that time, we will briefly review the annual report, and our 2017 budget.

Welcome Sean Weston

We are delighted to welcome Sean Weston as a part of our staff. Sean will be completing an internship with us during the Spring 2017 semester. He is currently pursuing a Master's of Divinity degree at Central Baptist Theological Seminary and this internship is a required part of his coursework. Sean will graduate from Central in December 2017 and is pursuing ordination in the UCC.

Many of you know Sean because he grew up in our congregation and we've been honored to have him preach here several times. Sean most recently served as a pastor of First Congregational UCC in Onaga, KS. He also works at Ecumenical Campus Ministry. He is excited to have an opportunity to reconnect with First Congregational and explore our shared ministry.

During his internship with us Sean will be working 8-10 hours a week. You can expect to see him in worship, classes, and at meetings. He will also be asking to get together for one-on-one or small group meetings with many of you, just to learn more about you and how you experience life-in-community at First Congregational. We hope you'll be able to respond to his requests to get together, as talking with many people in our congregation will both help Sean prepare for his own future ministry AND help our own church leaders learn more about where to focus on energy and resources. As the semester progresses, Sean may also pick up a few special projects, likely in the areas of adult faith formation and administration.

Sean's contact information is in the church directory and we hope you'll help us welcome him. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask. We are looking forward to shared ministry with Sean this upcoming semester.

Julie Hunt, Moderator and Caela Simmons Wood, Pastor

To My Fellow Members of First Congregational Church:

As Pastor Caela has explained, I am seeking the congregation's support of my request to serve as a licensed minister within our church in the role of "Pastoral Associate." I wish here to offer my explanation for why I feel so powerfully drawn to this role.

My desire to pursue licensed ministry is relatively recent, something that has increasingly drawn me over the last five years or so. Indeed, in the last few years, I have felt so drawn to this pursuit that it determined my decision to retire from Kansas State. Further, I can honestly say that this "call" is inextricably connected to my involvement in this church because it is here that I have learned a new way of practicing Christianity.

Though I grew up in a religious household and attended parochial school, I had, by mid-life, drifted away from the church of my childhood, no longer able to accept what I perceived as its indifference to questions of social justice. After years of drifting, I found this church. This church offered my three enormous gifts. The first was that it was, and is, such an open and welcoming community, one in which I could simply be myself.

Secondly, and owing to the wonderful preaching I have heard here, I realized that I was hearing all the familiar stories of my childhood, but hearing them again for the first time. I could finally hear the breathtaking possibilities of those ancient stories, the way that they still may inform our lives in the here and now. It was one of the most profound revelations of my life.

And thirdly, this church gave me the gift of asking me to preach an occasional sermon. Within the gentle context of this congregation's support, I have found a real and abiding passion for exploring the texts of the lectionary, of trying to pry meaning from them, of attempting to craft a message that explained how those texts spoke to me, and, I hoped, to others. That passion for discovering meaning from these ancient texts has become a major vocation for me over the last five years, one that inspires me each and every day. Most recently, I have learned the inspiration afforded by communal study of the Bible. The Disciples class has truly been an unexpected miracle to me; within this group, the

sharing of the meanings that each of us have found separately as we read has created a synergy that is so remarkable that I find that I cannot find words to describe it – except to say that we have found constant meaning, and we have found each other.

All of these experiences have led me to believe that this position is something that I feel truly called to do. I want so much to participate as a worship leader, to give sermons, to become more deeply involved in adult education.

I do, however, want to make it clear that I see definite limits to this role. I am a member of this congregation; Pastor Caela is my pastor as she is to all other members of this congregation. I do not, in any way whatsoever, want to interfere with her pastoral role with anyone in this congregation, including myself. Accordingly, I will not engage in pastoral counseling. My only wish here is to take a much more active role in adult education, and to be qualified to take a leadership role in worship, alongside Pastor Caela, and particularly in her absence.

Finally, there is this: over the years, my involvement in this congregation has led me far from the understandings of my youth, and yet, I also feel profoundly that I have finally come home. Faith, it now seems to me, is not automatic adherence to a fixed set of doctrines, but rather, an ongoing, and often messy, practice of putting belief into action, an ongoing improvisation with our still speaking God. I believe that whatever gifts I may possess may best be put into action by pursuing the licensed ministry and serving within this church.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your willingness to consider my request.

Peace,
Sue Zschoche

IMPORTANT DATES

Jan. 8: Opportunity to hear Sue preach during worship

Jan. 22: Regularly-scheduled Congregational Meeting where a vote will be taken on whether to call Sue as our Pastoral Associate

Christian Education

Adult Education

SPRING ADULT EDUCATION PREVIEW

January 15 through February 26 (seven weeks)

We will use the new curriculum from the United Church of Christ for this seven-week class on *Understanding White Identity: A Transformational Dialogue*. Five people in our congregation were recently trained to implement this course, which will give participants opportunities to

- explore what it means to be White
- learn about White identity through the testimonies from five authors of various races, and
- move towards understanding their own lives through the lens of race.

This class is designed for people of all races and will be facilitated by Kerri Keller and Andrew Wymer. Unlike other "drop in" classes, we do ask that those who participate make a good faith effort to attend each class session, as this work requires a covenant relationship and each session builds on the previous sessions. We understand you may need to travel or become ill and have to miss a session. The goal, however, is to have as much consistency as possible from week to week. If you'd like to preview the curriculum, it is available online for free (uccmanhattan.org/adult-ed). We will be using Section One: Spiritual Autobiography through the Lens of Race. If you'd like a printed copy, please contact the church office by Monday, Jan. 9th.

March 5 through April 2 (five weeks)

Join us for our Lenten Study of *Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People* by Nadia Bolz-Weber. Craig Weston will lead us in an exploration of this New York Times bestselling author's newest book, where she invites readers to accompany her on what she calls her "religious but not-so-spiritual" life. From the publisher: "Tattooed, angry, and profane, this former standup comic turned pastor stubbornly, sometimes hilariously, resists the God she feels called to serve. But God keeps showing up in the least likely of people—a church-loving agnostic, a drag queen, a

felonious Bishop, and a gun-toting member of the NRA." You can learn more about Bolz-Weber and her ministry here (<http://www.nadiabolzweber.com/>). If you'd like the church office to order you a copy of the book, please let us know by Monday, Feb. 27th.

April 9 - no class, Palm Sunday parade with other downtown churches

April 16 - no class, Easter morning Potluck breakfast

April 23 through May 21 (five weeks)
Topic TBD.

ECM Notebook

Ecumenical Campus Ministry is a cooperative ministry at K-State supported by the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). www.ksu.edu/ecm

The fall semester has come and gone at K-State, but not without “A Pastry and a Prayer” at ECM during finals week! This ministry of support and encouragement was developed by ECM Intern, Melissa Atchison, a longtime resident of Manhattan, and distance student at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, IN. From 7:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. each day during finals, Melissa opened up the ECM building for students to come by for a homemade pastry and a prayer on their way to finals. This expression of ministry grew out of Melissa’s belief in the importance of walking alongside young adults as they struggle to find their way in the world. As finals week progressed more and more students came, and stayed to study together. And there in the midst of them was Melissa Atchison, honoring her call to a ministry of presence.



Cobb Corner — Going Green

“The world is too much with us...getting and spending we lay waste to our powers..” William Wordsworth (1770-1850) p. 1-106 of *The Green Bible*.

Perhaps these planet-friendly New Year’s resolutions of mine will spark your own :

1. Eat lower on the food chain. In the early 1900s Americans ate an average of 122 lbs of meat a year. By 2007 that figure was 222 lbs. We’d gone from 40 lbs of sugar a year to 147! And we’ve gone from 294 lbs of dairy products to 605 lbs!! Anyone for vegan Wednesday? *Forks Over Knives*, foreword, 2011.

Of course we live longer on average today, but I suspect vaccines and antibiotics have more to do with that than ice cream!

2. Buy no bottled water!!! Take a stainless steel bottle with tap water. Save money and litter.
3. Reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle, and rot (compost).
4. Explore on one of Mike Henry’s green bicycles. Walk one mile daily picking up trash. Carpool.
5. Share the yard, balcony, deck or patio. Plant for people, bees, birds, and other wildlife.
6. Become an anti-pesticide zealot! Tell Ace and True Value you don’t appreciate their selling Roundup – a product banned in Europe and a known carcinogen. The EPA is unlikely to take on this crusade the next 4 years!
7. Volunteer with time, money or both to help 2 local environmental groups.
8. Spend at least most of one day a month outside – in the yard, the Flint Hills, the Zoo, or on a trail.
9. Try to cut electricity, water and gas use 10 percent in 2017. We succeeded in 2016 by having a programmable thermostat, turning down the gas water heater when out of town, utilizing rain barrels...Global warming also helped!
10. Waste less food and buy more locally.

What will you do to make 2017 better for our world? Happy New Year!

— *Linda Richter*

P.S. Marcia McFarland shared two excellent books you may want to read: *Forks over Knives*, edited by Gene Stone and also available as an excellent film. The second is T. Colin Campbell and Thomas M. Campbell’s *The China Study*, 2005.

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 Gretchen Lewis at office@uccmanhattan.org or (785) 537-7006.

January 1, 2017 **Chief Cook:** Linda Thurston
Dessert: Mike & Rita Henry **Church Host:** Pastor Caela
Volunteers: Jane Marshall, Mary Ash, Mostafa Taghvaei, Kathy Blead

January 8, 2017 **Chief Cook:** Gretchen Lewis
Dessert: Stephanie Reeck **Church Host:** Jim Lewis
Volunteers: Krista Caffey, Trish Dolan, Charlotte McFarland, Eric Roberts

January 15, 2017 **Chief Cook:** Sharon Purvis
Dessert: Krista Danielson **Church Host:** Mary Ellen Barkley
Volunteers: First Christian Church

January 22, 2017 **Chief Cook:** Brent Maner
Dessert: Mary Ellen Titus **Church Host:** *volunteer needed*
Volunteers: ESA Sorority

January 29, 2017 **Chief Cook:** Linda Thurston
Dessert: Kerri Keller **Church Host:** *volunteer needed*
Volunteers: Jane Marshall, Mary Ash, *2 volunteers needed*

Volunteer by going to
uccmanhattan.org/sign-ups

Worship & Volunteers

January 1, 2017

Greeters..... *volunteers needed*
Scripture Reader Jess Girdler
Communion Servers . Paul Hunt, *2 volunteers needed*
Fellowship Hour Mechelle Martinez & Rachel Whetstone
Flowers Poinsettias

January 8, 2017

Greeters..... Bill & Linda Richter
Scripture Reader *volunteer needed*
Fellowship Hour *volunteer needed*
Flowers *volunteer needed*
Snow Lottery *volunteer needed (Jan 2-8)*

January 15, 2017

Greeters..... *volunteers needed*
Scripture Reader *volunteer needed*
Fellowship Hour *volunteer needed*
Flowers *volunteer needed*
Snow Lottery *volunteer needed (Jan 9-15)*

January 22, 2017

Greeters..... *volunteers needed*
Scripture Reader *volunteer needed*
Fellowship Hour *volunteer needed*
Flowers *volunteer needed*
Snow Lottery *volunteer needed (Jan 16-22)*

January 29, 2017

Greeters..... *volunteers needed*
Scripture Reader *volunteer needed*
Fellowship Hour *volunteer needed*
Flowers *volunteer needed*
Snow Lottery Leo Schell (*Jan 23-29*)

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

\$hop \$mart Grocery Cards

If you ever shop at HyVee, the church can gain support through your use of pre-purchased gift cards from the church (which buys them at a 6% discount). Please contact Dave Manning and let him know of your interest. If enough people are interested in these cards, we will continue to have them available.



Connect with us during the week!

- Follow us at [facebook.com/uccmanhattanks](https://www.facebook.com/uccmanhattanks). You can find the same content on Twitter @UCCManhattan.
- Sign up for Friday e-updates. Visit uccmanhattan.org/newsletters or send your e-mail address to Sandy at office@uccmanhattan.org.
- Miss a sermon? Pastor Caela's sermon manuscripts are posted online each week by Monday on her personal sermon blog (revcaela.blogspot.com) or you can watch for them on our Facebook page. The audio of the sermon is also posted on our website at a later date once it's processed.

Lunch Bunch January 4

We join together with Bethel AME Church in an opportunity for members of our two congregations to get to know one another. Wednesday, January 4 at **Mr K's at 3901 Vanesta Drive**. It's not for women only—everyone is welcome to join us for lunch at 11:30 a.m. (Find monthly Lunch Bunch locations by going to the church website at www.uccmanhattan.org and then clicking on Community Life/Events Calendar.)



Ministry of the Decorative Scissors

The next retreat of the Ministry of the Decorative Scissors is from 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 1 until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 3 in Andover Hall. Everyone is welcome. There are no guarantees that you will complete any projects, but you will have fun and meet delightful people. Come for an hour or for the whole time! Feel free to bring a snack to share. For more information, contact Sue Gerth.



Welcome New Members

Gayle Doll

I grew up in the Church of the Brethren which has a history of peace ministry. The UCC church makes me feel at home again. I am the director of the Center on Aging at K-State. I do research on the delivery of person-centered care in nursing homes. I love teaching. On the side I enjoy gardening, painting, exercise, kayaking and things that get me outdoors. Rick and I have three grown sons, two daughters-in-law and a grandson, Simon, 16months old.

Rick Doll

I was raised in the Catholic Church and have been a journey to find an alternative for several years. I attended the Plymouth Church in Lawrence off and on for 7 years. I am the director of the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute at KSU and I teach in the graduate program. I had been a school superintendent for 25 years prior to coming to KSU. I enjoy outdoor activities. I was attracted to the Church because of the accepting attitude.

More new member bios to follow in the months to come.

Community News

Kansas People's Agenda Rally January 11

Imagine 1,000+ people in our State Capitol on January, 11, 2017, all together setting the agenda for the 2017 Legislative session! The issues that are part of the agenda are: racial & indigenous justice, economic justice, religious freedom, environmental stewardship and sustainable agriculture, LGBT rights, voting rights, and adequate & equitable public education. Please consider joining the rally.

Over 100 people and many organizations from around the state began planning this fall to build a coalition of people to stand in the capital as a united front. This is an inclusive effort of Black, Brown, Muslim, Christian, LGBTQAI, Union, Democrat, Republican, Green, Teachers, Clergy, Students, and more...so much is at stake. Visit the FB event page "Kansas People's Agenda 2017" to learn more about the agenda there, order a t-shirt, and invite people: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1696874487309584>. Promo video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OheLf10UMY8>

The organizers would like to know who are coming and ask that you sign up to facilitate planning. The form is at: <https://goo.gl/forms/wAMj6KwJzuJsry092>

MAPJ is organizing a bus from Manhattan, leaving about 8:30 and returning around 3:00 or so. The Vitality and Outreach Committee will help fund the bus and there will be about 15 seats for UCC for the round trip with MAPJ and the local Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (what a powerful combo!). Linda Thurston is keeping the list of those who want a ride – let her know right away if you want a seat on the bus (lindathurston@att.net).

MLK Jr. Community Activities

Sat., Jan. 14: *MLK Jr. Community Celebration.* 2-4 p.m.,

Manhattan Fire Station. Hear and see the creative work of finalists in the MLK Jr. Art and Writing contest.

Mon., Jan. 16: *Prayer Breakfast.* 8 a.m., Four Points by Sheraton.

Dr. Gretchen Eick, keynote speaker.

MLK Jr. Day of Service. 9 a.m. – 12 noon, various locations.

Register at bit.ly/HOKS_signup

Fri., Jan. 27: *Laying of the Wreath.* 1:45 p.m., KSU Student Union.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

700 Poyntz Avenue
Manhattan, KS 66502
(785) 537-7006

uccmanhattan.org



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Return Service Requested

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship & Communion <i>Fill the Breadbasket</i> 12:00 Fellowship Hour 6:00 Second Helping	2 Office Closed 5:15 Yoga 7:30 NA mtg	3 6:00 Live Positive	4 11:30 Lunch Bunch 5:30 Mission 5:45 Deacons 7:00 AA meeting	5 7:00 MLK mtg 7:00 Taizé 8:00 NA mtg ----- Caela at NGLI -----	6 Epiphany <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;">Ministry of the Decorative Scissors</div>	7
8 Baptism of Christ 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Church School 10:45 Worship 12:00 Fellowship Hour 1:00 Disciples Study 6:00 Second Helping ----- Caela at NGLI -----	9 12:00 Leadership Lunch @KSU 5:15 Yoga 7:30 NA mtg	10	11 6:00-8:00 Board & Committee Orientation Christian Ed, Trustees, Vitality & Outreach 7:00 AA meeting	12 7:00 MLK mtg 7:00 Taizé 8:00 NA mtg	13 7:30 NA mtg	14
15 2nd after Epiphany 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Church School 10:45 Worship 12:00 Fellowship Hour 1:00 Disciples Study 6:00 Second Helping	16 MLK Day Offices Closed 5:15 Yoga 6:00 USD 383 mtg 7:30 NA mtg	17	18 7:00 Cabinet 7:00 AA meeting	19 7:00 MLK mtg 7:00 Taizé 8:00 NA mtg	20 12:00 Newsletter Deadline 7:30 NA mtg	21
22 3rd after Epiphany 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Church School 10:45 Worship 12:00 Fellowship Hour Annual Meeting 1:00 Disciples Study 6:00 Second Helping	23 5:15 Yoga 6:45 Timeless A Cappella 7:30 NA mtg	24	25 7:00 AA meeting	26 7:00 Taizé 8:00 NA mtg	27 7:30 NA mtg	28
29 4th after Epiphany 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Church School 10:45 Worship 12:00 Fellowship Hour 1:00 Disciples Study 6:00 Second Helping	30 5:15 Yoga 6:45 Timeless A Cappella 7:30 NA mtg	31				