



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 62 Number 1

January 2018

Sunday School at 9:30 A.M. (when school is in session)

Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M.

Second Helping Dinner at 6:00 P.M.

Thursday Evening Taizé at 7:00 P.M.

700 Poyntz Avenue

Manhattan, Kansas 66502

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www.uccmanhattan.org

Keeping Sabbath: Looking Ahead to a 2019 Pastoral Sabbatical

When I began serving as your pastor in the summer of 2014, we entered into a covenant of shared ministry together. Together, we agreed on guiding principles for my service alongside you as your pastor. One of the items outlined in my Call Agreement is that I will be on leave for a three-month paid sabbatical after every five years of ministry at First Congregational UCC. My first sabbatical will be in the summer of 2019.

My sabbatical will be an important time for me to practice what I preach: that Sabbath is a commandment, not a suggestion. On a regular basis, I do my level best to hold myself accountable before God and you in terms of keeping Sabbath. I try not to respond to messages after hours unless they are urgent. I switch my phone to “do not disturb” after 10pm so that I won’t be awoken by the buzz of text messages (don’t worry, if you have a true emergency you can call me and I’ll still hear it). I work very hard when I am in the office so that I might be able to find time for rest, *[continued pg. 2]*



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family, and recreation when I am at home. I give thanks that you support an environment that makes this possible.

A pastor's sabbatical is meant to be a time of intentional rest from the labors of day-to-day ministry in a congregation, as well as a time of intentional renewal and reflection. Additionally, pastoral sabbaticals are a gift to the congregation because they provide much-needed space for the congregation to re-solidify its identity apart from the current pastor. A well-planned sabbatical can opportunities for lay leaders and other staff to step into new roles and try out new forms of ministry. Sabbaticals are good for the pastor and the congregation.

The past few months, I have been thankful to be in conversation with our Pastoral Relations Committee and Cabinet about the possibility of applying for a grant through the National Clergy Renewal Program, funded by the Lilly Endowment. This program seeks to support congregations and pastors during sabbatical periods, providing funding of up to \$50,000 to be used to fund activities for the pastor and congregation – mutually enriching us during our time apart and helping us all renew our passion for ministry.

You are invited to join the committee that is working on the grant proposal (Dale Stearns, Andrea Chamberlain, and myself) for a Listening Session in January (see invitation box on the next page). At these sessions we hope to share more details about the grant and hear your ideas, too. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to be in conversation with any of us or with our incoming Moderator Dave Smit if you have any questions.

Pastor Caela

Pastor Caela Traveling for Continuing Education

January 3-9, Pastor Caela will be traveling to Arizona for the January session of the NGLI (Next Generation Leadership Initiative). This year's class is "Team Building — Turning To One Another as Essential Leaders in Faith Communities" led by Quanita Roberson and Tenneson Woolf. While Caela is gone, our Pastoral Associate Sue Zschoche will be on call for any pastoral care needs that arise.

Listening Sessions for the National Clergy Renewal Program for Pastor Caela's 2019 Sabbatical

Sunday, January 14th at 9:30am

Sunday, January 21st immediately after the Congregational Meeting

Please attend either meeting to learn more about the Lilly Endowment's National Clergy Renewal Program and share your ideas.

The Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program at Christian Theological Seminary (CTS) seeks to strengthen Christian congregations by providing opportunities for pastors to step away briefly from the persistent obligations of daily parish life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. Renewal periods are not vacations, but times for intentional exploration and reflection, for regaining the enthusiasm and creativity for ministry, for discovering what will make the pastor's heart sing.

Pastors serve a variety of roles in their privileged position at the center of congregational life: preacher, teacher, spiritual guide, pastoral visitor, friend, confidant. The responsibilities are continual, and the pace and demands of parish life can be relentless, often leaving even the most dedicated pastors recognizing the need to replenish their own spiritual reservoirs to regain energy and strength for their ministry.

Life-giving experiences—strengthening relationships, renewing a sense of call, meeting and serving the neighbor in a new way, finding joy and purpose in a simplified life, traveling to new lands and unfamiliar territories, creating opportunities where members of the congregation can exercise their gifts for ministry—are common themes of these renewal times. Profound discoveries that pastors and their congregations describe as “life-changing events” occur as they participate in this program.

The Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program at Christian Theological Seminary will provide *[continued pg. 4]*

grants of up to \$50,000 each directly to congregations for the support of a renewal program for their pastor. The costs associated with family members who accompany a pastor may be included in the amount requested for the pastor. Up to \$15,000 of the grant may be used to help the congregation fulfill pastoral duties during the pastor's absence and/or to support activities that enable the congregation as a whole to be renewed in its ministry.

Learn more at <http://www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal>

Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns

- For more information, please contact the church office.

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.

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.



Annual Meeting and Recognition of Church Officers Sunday, January 21

Please join us on Sunday, January 21 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, vote on an amendment to the bylaws, and vote on the budget for 2018. The bylaws amendment and 2018 budget will be available on January 7.

Heartfelt Thanks

I would like to send my heartfelt thanks to everyone who led or served on a committee, helped at an event, showed support for our church or became part of our church family. It has truly been an honor and a pleasure to serve as your moderator this past year.

Warm wishes,
Julie Hunt

Board Orientation Jan. 10th

A reminder that all new and returning board and committee members have Board Orientation on Wednesday, Jan. 10th from 6-8pm. Dinner will be provided. If you've not already RSVPed to Julie Hunt, please do so. We look forward to sharing an evening of fellowship and learning more about being leaders in our congregation.

Lunch Bunch January 3

We join together in an opportunity to get to know one another. Wednesday, January 3 at **Denny's (204 Tuttle Creek Blvd)**. 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 clicking on Community Life/Events Calendar on the church website at www.uccmanhattan.com.)



Mrunch

The Mrunch group is not meeting in December or January. We'll get back together in February 2018. Mrunch is a time for mothers of elementary aged kids and younger (even if you are just expecting) to come and enjoy a peaceful supportive environment with other mothers in the same season of life. If you have questions, contact Andrea.

Ministry of the Decorative Scissors

The Ministry of the Decorative Scissors meets January 4-6. 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.



Living Room Worship Night

Sunday, January 21, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

A casual evening of acoustic guitar, singing, prayer, and fellowship.

If you are hungry to deepen your connection to God and each other, join us in the living room!

Kansas People's Agenda 2018 State of the State Rally



Wednesday, Jan. 10,
Topeka Statehouse 11:30am-1pm

[#KSPeoplesAgenda](#) Rally

(2nd Floor Rotunda) The Capitol Opens at 8:00am,
Lobby Training 9:30-11am

PLEASE REGISTER ONLINE: KansasPeoplesAgenda.org

MAPJ Bus available from Manhattan to Topeka: see link at uccmanhattan.org

This is an inclusive event and agenda planned by many Kansas organizations and hundreds of folk from every region and walk of life.

The rally will feature speakers sharing personal stories related to the issues, music and performance art. We believe that standing together to represent a broad fusion of concerns and demands from the people of Kansas is a way to build power and to be heard. We believe that art and music are part of our story as people. We will also be joined by many groups, faith traditions, organizations, and intersections, who stand as a moral witness to our movement and to our struggles and suffering. We represent people from all over the state in addition to many different experiences in Kansas.

Christian Education

Spring 2018: Sunday School Opportunities for Adults and Youth

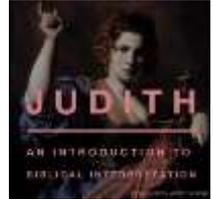
All classes are at 9:30a.m. The nursery is open for babies and toddlers. Sunday School classes for preschoolers and elementary-schoolers take place on the second floor. Middle-schoolers and high-schoolers are invited to the classes below or may be interested in helping teach younger children. Please contact Andria Anderson (children@uccmanhattan.org) or Tai Amri Spann-Wilson (youth@uccmanhattan.org) for more information about options for children and youth.

Jan. 21 - Feb. 11 (four weeks)

Judith: An Introduction to Biblical Interpretation

Led by Pastor Caela

Do you ever wish you could sit down and read the Bible but find it more confusing than Shakespeare? Do you feel like you have a handle on the classic Bible stories but wish that you could work through some of your own ideas about them? This class on the apocryphal book Judith may be just the thing you need. After finishing the course you will be able to use your newly-learned skills to understand and interpret other parts of the Bible. Participants are invited to read Judith chapters 1-7 before the first class (either in a Bible with the Apocrypha included or in a free online Bible such as oremus.bible.com).



Feb. 18 through Mar. 18 (five weeks)

Christianity and Anti-Semitism: A Troubling History

Led by Brent Maner

During the season of Lent--a time set aside for reflection, prayer, and penitence--this Sunday School class will examine the horrible place of anti-Jewish violence in Christian history. We will use the insights of historians and theologians to unpack the descriptions of Jews in the New Testament and in early Christianity that became features of Western anti-Semitism from the Middle Ages to the present day. We will also strengthen our own commitment to justice and our belief in God's universal love by considering the efforts by religious leaders to overcome this troubling history through prayer, atonement, and interfaith dialogue.

Apr. 8 through May 13 (six weeks)

We Sing Freedom!

Led by Tai Amri Spann-Wilson, Richard Pitts, and David Wood

Movements of liberation and resistance have always been built upon the mind-body-spirit connection of music. In this six-week class we will honor the sacred song of silence, explore the history of freedom songs, and leave plenty of room for making music together as Tai Amri and David teach us songs from various freedom movements. Our special guest Richard Pitts will be with us on Apr. 22 to share about the new living history project he is launching as a part of his work with the Underground Railroad tours in our community.



Ordination of Sean Weston

The Kansas-Oklahoma Conference and First Congregational United Church of Christ invite you to the Ordination of Sean Weston to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

January 28, 2017 at 2:30pm

First Congregational United Church of Christ

All authorized ministers are invited to robe with red stoles for the procession. Please arrive by 2:00pm to gather in Andover Hall (the church basement). A reception will follow the service.



Cobb Corner — Going Green

“I believe in my heart that faith in Jesus Christ can and will lead us beyond an exclusive concern for the well-being of other human beings to a broader concern for the well-being of the birds in our backyard, the fish in our rivers and every living creature on the face of the earth.” – John Wesley (1701-91).
The Green Bible, I-105.

Happy New Year! Thanks to all who helped make this Christmas a beautiful experience. The church looked beautiful, the music splendid, Jonathan’s cookie exchange an enormous success and the messages of Advent and Christmas ever fresh and meaningful.

But you did more: Over 100 pounds of cat and dog food, dog biscuits, towels, small rugs, and a generous check were collected for our Russell Reitz Animal Shelter and for the neglected animals in Pottawatomie County that Julie Appino has been monitoring.

Bill and I dropped off items for the shelter to the delighted staff there. Some of you may have dropped by there in person with donations or to get a new member of your family. Best news: All kittens had been adopted! Six older cats and a giant bunny were making serious efforts at being adorable so they may soon have homes.

One young tearful girl with her father was relinquishing a beloved cat. One lost dog was being brought in by a good Samaritan. I can’t imagine the joy and heartbreak the staff must cope with daily. I was too overwhelmed to visit the dogs’ quarters.

Some of you may have donated time and money to animal causes here and abroad. You may be filling bird feeders and hanging suet for the birds during this bitter cold. Others are tossing scraps into their yard or compost piles to nourish our wild critters.

John Wesley was correct, I believe, that at some core of our being we are acknowledging that this planet must be protected and shared if we are to be worthy of God’s compassion. Let’s make 2018 our personal best in terms of caring for our environment and all who live here. – *Linda Richter*

Share ideas for future Cobb columns with Linda Richter.

Name Tags = Hospitality

As we prepare to welcome newcomers in the new year, a quick reminder to please wear your name tag each Sunday during worship. Name tags help new people learn our names and faces quickly. They also make it easier for you to identify a new person when they are attending



worship - and welcome them warmly! If you do not have a permanent name tag, please contact the church office to ask for one. When new name tags are made, they "debut" on the name tag board near the stairs in the lobby so you can find them easily. If you see a new person, please ask them if they'd like a name tag and let them know they can simply make a note of it in the attendance pad on Sunday morning. Another way you can greet our visitors warmly is to offer them a bag of popcorn and thank them for "popping in." The popcorn is located in the small table in the narthex (the entry off Poyntz). If you see families with young children, be sure to help them by showing them the pew cards with information about our children's ministries. And, as always, it's always lovely to offer to walk someone into coffee hour after worship, visit for a few minutes, and then introduce them to someone new. Thanks for making First Congregational UCC a warm and welcoming place for newcomers.

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.

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 Mary Ellen Barkley through the church office.

January 7, 2017

Dessert: HyVee
Volunteers: Target Team

Chief Cook: Gretchen Lewis
Church Host: Jim Lewis

January 14, 2017

Dessert: HyVee
Volunteers: Manhattan Mennonite Church

Chief Cook: Karen Franz
Church Host: Pastor Caela

January 21, 2017

Dessert: HyVee
Volunteers: Mary Ash, First Christian Church

Chief Cook: Sharon Purvis
Church Host: Susanne Gilmore

January 28, 2017

Dessert: HyVee
Volunteers: ESA Sorority

Chief Cook: Linda Thurston
Church Host: Mary Ellen Barkley

Volunteer by going to
uccmanhattan.org/sign-ups

Community News

Book Discussion

Indivisible ManhattanKS invites the members of First Congregational UCC to join us for a book discussion of Nancy Isenberg's "White Trash: The 400-year Untold History of Class in America" on Tuesday, January 23, starting at 6:30pm, Manhattan Public Library Auditorium.

Fill the Breadbasket for Second Helping

The Second Helping is funded through our operating budget and special gifts to this ministry. On the first Sunday of each month we "Fill the Breadbasket" during worship. You are invited to bring a cash donation or items for our lunch sacks, such as individual flavored oatmeal packets, granola bars, or individually wrapped snack crackers (such as cheese or peanut butter).

Connect with us during the week!

Did you know our church has a vital presence on social media? We currently have over 500 people following our church's facebook page for updates about what's happening in our community. Follow us at

<http://facebook.com/uccmanhattanks>. You can find the same content on Twitter @UCCManhattan.



Additionally, if you are a regular attender or member, you're invited to join our closed Facebook group - a place for dialogue and conversation with people you know. Search for "First Congregational UCC Members and Friends" or ask a friend who is in the group to add you.



We also send out updates every Friday with helpful information about what's coming up in our congregation. If you don't already receive those updates, please send your e-mail address to Sandy at office@uccmanhattan.org or visit <http://www.uccmanhattan.org/news-and-updates> to sign up.

Did you 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.

Welcome New Members

Watch for more new member bios in the coming months.

Ministry Opportunities *(January edition)*



Second Helping is in need of additional church hosts. The church host greets the guests, makes sure people have what they need, and generally monitors the progress of the meal. Volunteers will be paired with an experienced host until they feel comfortable with the position. The church hosts often get to know the guests over time, which is a privilege of the host position. If you would like to serve in this important role, please indicate your name and contact information on the line.

Grounds care in spring, summer, and fall requires mowing the church lawn, in addition to the church garden lot adjacent to the alley, prior to Sunday's worship (Thursday, Friday, or Saturday). In the winter it's a little different. Sign up for a whole week – Monday-Sunday – and if it snows, you "win" what is affectionately called the snow lottery. You've got to clear the walkways with the church snow blower.

Worship volunteers have many Sunday morning tasks. They greet at the door, read scripture, host fellowship hour, usher, contribute flowers, and offer the Word for Children. Sign up is easy!

Want to be a part of the ministry opportunities? Circle the paragraph that interests you and drop this paper in the collection plate with your name and contact information.

Name: _____

Phone number(s): _____

Email: _____

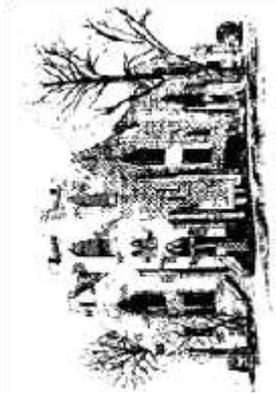
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day Offices Closed 7:30 NA mtg	2	3 11:30 Lunch Bunch 6:00 Deacons 7:00 AA meeting	4 7:00 Taizé 7:00 MLK mtg 8:00 NA mtg	5 7:30 NA mtg --- Ministry of the Decorative Scissors --- ----- Pastor Caela at NGLI -----	6 Epiphany
7 Baptism of Christ 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Worship & Communion <i>Fill the Breadbasket</i> 6:00 Second Helping	8 5:15 Yoga 7:30 NA mtg ----- Pastor Caela at NGLI -----	9	10 6:00 Leadership Kickoff 7:00 Board meetings 7:00 AA meeting	11 7:00 Taizé 7:00 MLK mtg 8:00 NA mtg	12 7:30 NA mtg	13
14 2nd after Epiphany 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sabbatical Grant Listening Session 10:45 Worship 12:00 ESA Meeting 6:00 Second Helping	15 MLK Day Offices Closed 5:15 Yoga 7:30 NA mtg	16 10:00 NCA Clergy mtg	17 7:00 Cabinet 7:00 AA meeting	18 7:00 Taizé 7:00 MLK mtg 8:00 NA mtg	19 7:30 NA mtg	20
21 3rd after Epiphany 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship 12:00 Congregational Meeting 12:30 Sabbatical Grant Listening Session 6:00 Second Helping 6:30 Living Room Worship	22 5:15 Yoga 6:45 A Cappella 7:30 NA mtg	23	24 7:00 AA meeting	25 7:00 Taizé 8:00 NA mtg	26 5:00 Newsletter Deadline 7:30 NA mtg	27
28 4th after Epiphany 8:30 Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship 2:30 Sean Weston Ordination 6:00 Second Helping	29 5:15 Yoga 6:45 A Cappella 7:30 NA mtg	30	31 7:00 AA meeting			