What is a Sabbatical and Why On Earth Does Caela Need One?

A sabbatical is a pause, a time for rest and renewal. The word comes from the Hebrew word *shabbat* (i.e., Sabbath). In Latin, the word is *sabbaticus*. In Greek, *sabbatikos* (literally, a “ceasing”) is a rest from work, or a break. The concept of sabbatical has a source in *shmita*, described in several places in the Bible.

So now I have answered the first part of the question, what is a sabbatical? It seems pretty straightforward. Let me try to answer the second part, why on Earth does Caela need one? In early April, you will receive a separate mailing from our Moderator, Kerri Keller. This mailing will include an explanation of how all pastoral tasks will be covered during Caela’s sabbatical. When you make it all the way through the list, you may be tired just thinking about all of the things that need to be covered while Caela is gone. I know I was! This business of being the church is a ginormous, beautiful, exhausting, exhilarating, critical charge. [continued pg. 2]
Caela frequently reminds us that, “Sabbath isn’t a suggestion, it’s a commandment.” It can seem counterintuitive to take a step back from work, especially when things are going well. Sometimes we may fear that taking a break will make us less effective in our ministries. Yet Sabbath is a funny thing. It turns out that intentional, mandated time for rest and renewal makes time feel more expansive. Sabbath is an experience of clarification and a time of receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit as She breathes new life into the space we inhabit together.

Caela became a pastor in 2007 while she was still in seminary. She was eligible for a sabbatical in 2014, yet at that time she was called to our congregation. Now, after 12 years of pastoral ministry without a significant period of rest and renewal, we recognize that she is overdue for a sabbatical. We anticipate her 2019 sabbatical with joy!

Over the past five years our congregation has seen steady growth in membership, attendance, community connections, social justice advocacy, and discipleship. It has been exhilarating! And it has also sometimes been a challenge to keep up with all that God is doing in and through our congregation. The time is right for Sabbath, rest, renewal, and time apart. It is the right time to celebrate who we have been in our first five years of ministry together and to dream with God about our shared future. We look forward to an opportunity to rediscover our identities apart from one another as we tend to our foundations as individuals. We are excited to re-engage with each other from the renewed strength of our own rootedness. What a privilege and a joy it is to be on this journey together as our church family.

Sue Gerth, Moderator-Elect

(With gratitude to Dale Stearns and Andrea Chamberlain. The final three paragraphs in this article were borrowed from the work they did in 2018 when we applied for a sabbatical grant.)

E-MAIL PRAYER CHAIN – If you wish to be added to the First Congregational e-mail prayer chain, please contact the church office. It is a quick and easy way to stay up to date with your church family.
Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns

- Please contact the church office for more information.

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.

Free Money!

Do you participate in our Dillons fundraiser? Link your shopper card at dillons.com. If you need help, contact the church office. (Our organization number is # QQ452.) Check your enrollment by checking the very bottom of your Dillons receipt. You should see “...donating to First Congregational UCC.”

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.
Ministry of the Decorative Scissors
The Ministry of the Decorative Scissors meets April 11-13. 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.
This month there will be a Pride Poster Party on Thursday at 7:00pm to create posters for the Pride Parade.

Lunch Bunch April 3
We join together in an opportunity to get to know one another, Wednesday, April 3 at Baan Thai (17th & Ft. Riley Blvd). Everyone is welcome to join us for lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Living Room Worship Night
Sunday, April 28, 6:30 - 8:30 pm, 6900 Briar Circle
Living Room Worship is 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! Questions? Contact Kerry Priest.

Covenant Celebration – We Welcome New Members
We will welcome new members to our congregation during worship on Sunday, April 28th. We welcome members and non-members to be a part of our ministry here at First Congregational. At some point in your journey, you may discover that you are feeling a pull to deepen your commitment to our faith community. If that sounds like something you've been considering or something you'd like to learn more about, please reach out to Pastor Caela (pastor@uccmanhattan.org) or leave a note in the sign in pad so we can visit together and answer your questions.
Your Feedback for First Congregational

Dear Friends--

It’s hard to believe that it’s been 5 years since calling Caela as our pastor and that it’s already time for her sabbatical. Over the next few weeks, you will hear more about her plans for this summer. As your church leadership has discussed sabbatical plans with Caela, it has made us think back to our aspirations for a pastor.

The visioning we did in 2012 and 2013 helped to clarify who we wanted to be as a church so we could call a pastor who shared a similar vision. In some ways, we’ve come quite close to becoming the church we envisioned more than 5 years ago. Who do we want to be in the next 5-10 years?

Fortunately, Pastor Caela remains on this journey with us but we now have our own sabbath opportunity to look back on our progress and think about where we go next as a faith community. In order to gather a variety of perspectives and input, we are replicating a survey that was administered to the congregation in 2012-13.

We hope you will take 10-15 minutes to complete the survey. We are seeking responses from anyone who considers First Congregational UCC their church home – official member or not. The survey will only be available through April 15 so we hope you will complete it at your earliest opportunity. We also have printed copies of the survey that can be requested from Sandy in the office.

Thank you for sharing your input as we consider how First Congregational UCC will be the church in 2020 and beyond. Here's the link to the take the survey—
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FirstConUCC

Kerri Keller, Moderator
Lent, Holy Week, and Easter 2019

Lent continues through the month of April. The Art+Reflection station will continue to be available through Holy Week in Pioneer Hall. Taizé worship continues weekly on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm and Pastor Caela is leading one final Visio Divina (visual meditation) on Thursday, April 4th right after Taizé.

Holy Week Opportunities:

Palm Sunday, April 14
- Palm Processional on Poyntz (City Park) 9:15am

Maundy Thursday, April 18
- Maundy Thursday Meal & Worship 6:00pm

Good Friday, April 19
- Lunch & Learn with Pastor Sue 12:10pm

Holy Saturday, April 20
- Paschal Fire 8:08pm

Easter Sunday, April 21
- Potluck Breakfast 9:30am
- Festival Worship 10:45am
- Egg Hunt for Children Noon

Palm Sunday Processional, April 14 at 9:15 a.m.
Gather with community members from the other downtown churches at 9:15 a.m. in City Park (near the shelter on Poyntz). We will share conversation and warm drinks at 9:15am, followed by music and a brief liturgy right at 9:30am. Then we begin the processional towards our churches! At each stop along the way, we’ll share a blessing for the people of that congregation as they peel off to go to their own worship services.

Bikes, wheelchairs, wagons, strollers, scooters are all welcome in the parade! If walking down Poyntz isn’t a good option for you, please know that you’re very welcome to join us for fellowship at City Park and then drive back to your own place of worship instead of processing with us.

There will be no Sunday School or nursery care during the 9:30 hour on Palm Sunday. Our regular worship service will include a palm processional for our children at 10:45 a.m. Our partners for this event are First Lutheran Church, Manhattan Mennonite Church, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, and First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
Maundy Thursday Meal and Liturgy, April 18 at 6:00 p.m.
“Maundy” comes from the same root as “mandate” and this holy day is the day we remember Jesus’s commandment to love and serve one another. We gather for a simple meal provided by the Deacons at 6:00 p.m. After we eat, we share prayer and singing together and remember Jesus’s last supper with his friends through the sharing of Holy Communion.

Good Friday Lunch & Learn, April 19 at 12:10pm
Bring a bag, sack, snack, or pick something up on your way here and join us for lunch on Good Friday. We will gather with Pastor Sue over the noon hour to discuss the Big Question: “why did Jesus die?” Together we will examine Good Friday through the lens of Liberation Theology.

Holy Saturday Paschal Fire, April 20 at Sunset
The Easter Vigil is an ancient Christian tradition to gather in the darkness of night, light a new fire, and prepare for the morning to come. We will be doing our own (much shorter) take on Holy Saturday at sunset 8:08 pm). Join us as we share in a simple liturgy together, kindle a Paschal Fire in front of the church, and then bring the light into our Sanctuary. We thank the Ministry of the Decorative Scissors for making our Paschal Candle, which will be re-lit throughout the coming year at baptisms and funerals as we remember the promise of God’s unending Easter love.

Easter Sunday, April 21
We gather for a potluck breakfast at 9:30 a.m. That's right. Potluck breakfast. YUM. Bring your favorite quiche, those decadent cinnamon rolls, fruit, or just pick up some bagels or donuts. We do need some helpers for the clean up crew, so please contact the church office if you are willing to help serve on the clean up crew. It is also especially helpful if you can bring your own place-settings to this meal as that significantly lightens the load for those who run the dishwasher.

Our Festival Worship is at 10:45 a.m. and will include inspiring music and an opportunity to hear and recommit to living out the good news of a God who is too big to fail. Come early to grab a seat and enjoy special music from our brass ensemble at 10:30. Immediately following worship we'll head outside to the front lawn so the kids can hunt Easter eggs.
**Christian Education**

**Sunday School Opportunities for Adults and Youth**
All classes are at 9:30 a.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 adult classes or may be interested in helping teach younger children. Please contact Brandy McDonald (brandy@uccmanhattan.org) or Brittani Shank (brittani@uccmanhattan.org) for more information about options for children and youth.

**April Children's Ministries activities**
Easter makes for a lot of changes to our Easter schedule, here is an update to let you know what to expect!

**April 7th** - Yoga (we are in the last two before summer, so don't miss it!)

**April 14th** - Palm Sunday, no Sunday School or nursery during the Sunday School hour, please join us for the Palm Sunday Processional from City Park (more information about this with the rest of the Lent activities on page 6). Nursery will be available during worship.

**April 21st** - Easter Sunday, no Sunday School or nursery during the Sunday School hour. Please join us for the Easter breakfast potluck! Nursery will be available during worship time.

**April 28th** - Children's Choir, join us during the Sunday school hour to learn the song with Andria and then share it with parents during worship!
Spring 2019: Sunday School Opportunities for Adults

April 14 - NO CLASS, Palm Sunday Parade from City Park
April 21 - NO CLASS, Easter Potluck Breakfast

April 28 - May 19 / Fierce Women of the Bible: Part 2
Led by Sara K Kearns
We didn't get a chance to discuss this book as thoroughly as we wanted to in the fall semester, so we're bringing it back! From the publisher: "Women in the Bible - some of their names we know, others we've only heard, and others are tragically unnamed." Pastor and provocateur Alice Connor introduces these women and invites us to see them not as players in a man's story - as victims or tempters - nor as morality archetypes, teaching us to be better wives and mothers, but as fierce foremothers of the faith. These women's stories are messy, challenging, and beautiful. When we read their stories, we can see not only their particular, fearsome lives but also our own." Please contact the church office by April 22 if you'd like us to order you a copy of the book.

Mid-Week Bible Study / “Who Do You Say I Am?,” Part 2
Tuesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with Pastor Sue
The mid-week Bible Study explores the historical Jesus. Our subject is the still unresolved question of who the historical Jesus was and how he was understood in his own time. Did his listeners see him primarily as a miracle worker? As a teacher of Wisdom? Was he a prophet of the end times? Or was his message perceived as more political? Was he seen as someone seeking to overthrow the Roman Empire? Bible scholars continue to debate this question and our study will attempt to unravel the question.

We are reading Marcus Borg’s book, Jesus: The Life, Teaching, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary. Please know that attendance at Part 1 this past fall is NOT a requirement for participation in this class.

The class meets on Tuesdays from 11:30 to 1:00 and will continue for as long as it takes to get through the book. I hope that you will consider joining what has proven to be a lively discussion. Bring your lunch if you like, and we promise that coffee, tea, and lots of chocolate will be provided. — Sue Zschoche
Connect with us during the week!

Did you know our church has a vital presence on social media? We currently have over 600 people following our church’s facebook page for updates about what’s happening in our community. Follow us at 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.

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.

Volunteer by going to uccmanhattan.org/sign-ups
Cobb Corner — Going Green

“Every man feels instinctively that all the beautiful sentiments in the world weigh less than a single lovely action”
– James Russell Lowell

Spring is here! April is always a very busy month, but I wanted to call your attention to some special events beyond, of course, Palm Sunday and Easter:
1. The day after Easter on April 22 is Earth Day. Started in 1970, it has grown into a major event world-wide, involving concern for the fate of our planet. Also on that day, Manhattan will be celebrating Grow Green Match Day! This day-long event held at Colony Square has become a major source of funds for over 50 local non-profits, including our church! On that day, Manhattan benefactor Phil Howe gives a 50% match to all donations per individual of $25 to $1000 per organization! You can make your donation at Colony Square where you can also enter drawings for prizes for your favorite non-profit. Someone from our church won money for the church last year. You can also go on-line and make donations. Last year in its 6th year of existence, $763,231 was raised by the generosity of Phil Howe and 880 additional donors!!!
2. “Party for the Planet” is on April 27 from 12:00 to 4:30 at Sunset Zoo. This is a super opportunity for the whole family to enjoy dozens of “green” exhibits and activities around the zoo. It’s also a chance to meet the red panda babies, the one-year old gibbon and all the other inhabitants of our great zoo.
3. Finally, it’s a good month for renewing any lapsed environmental habits: Keep up and expand the recycling. If you are at Howie’s, please don’t throw books in the telephone directory bin! Thousands ended up there last year. Take those books to the library for the annual book sale. Remember, hazardous waste is collected on the second Saturday of the month, 8-12. Check for landfill and compost hours.
4. If you have no adequate green space for gardening, consider renting a plot in the community garden.
5. As you start yard projects, please avoid products like Round-Up, banned in Europe as a carcinogen but available locally! Other products to beware of: Acetamiprid, [continued next page]
Clothianidin, Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid or Thiamethoxam. They kill bees and butterflies. Bee-friendly flowers are numerous and include: Asters, Black-eyed Susan, Coneflowers, Goldenrod, Sunflowers and Rhododendron. Monarchs need milkweed this time of year.

6. Don’t forget to practice peaceful co-existence with wildlife. Deer can be dissuaded from eating your hostas and tulips with expired spices, especially red pepper.

7. Finally, don’t forget to plant Easter lilies after they’ve finished blooming. They will be the very definition of resurrection starting in June, 2020!

—Linda Richter

Share ideas for future Cobb columns with Linda Richter.

Help Wanted: Volunteer Coordinator for Second Helping

Have you wanted to be a part of our Second Helping ministry, but find that other obligations make it impossible to commit to Sunday afternoons? The Second Helping depends on volunteers of all sorts: cooks, servers, hosts, and people to recruit others to do this meaningful and fulfilling work. After nine years on the job, our Second Helping Volunteer Coordinator Mary Ellen Barkley is stepping down, and we need someone to take her place as Volunteer Coordinator, beginning May 1st. If this sounds too daunting, rest assured that many of the volunteers for the month of May are already in place; we have two head cooks who volunteer each month, plus church members and outside groups who volunteer on a regular basis. Mary Ellen has indicated that she will be happy to work with a new Coordinator, sharing contacts and ideas for volunteer recruiting.

If you would like more information, or if you know you would like to help out in this vital ministry in our church, please speak to anyone on the Board of Missions: Gretchen Lewis, Ann Smit, Jackie Kerstetter, Olivia Collins, or Martha Mather, or indicate your interest to Pastors Caela and Sue. Thank you!
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 30-40 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.

April 7, 2019
Chief Cook: Jeff Keller
Dessert: Carol Sevin
Church Host: Susanne Gilmore
Volunteers: KSU Veterinary Business Mgt. Assoc.

April 14, 2019
Chief Cook: Andy Barkley
Dessert: Gayle Doll
Church Host: Mary Ellen Barkley
Volunteers: Paige Livingston and friend, 3 volunteers needed

April 21, 2019 (Easter)
Chief Cook: Linda Thursday
Dessert: volunteer needed
Church Host: Kathy Bleam
Volunteers: Martha Mather, 4 volunteers needed

April 28, 2019
Chief Cook: Gretchen Lewis
Dessert: Kerri Keller
Church Host: Jim Lewis
Volunteers: ESA Sorority

Second Helping served 153 guests in February 2019. Because we provide lunch sacks for the next day, this means we provided at least 306 meals. And this doesn’t count the To Go boxes we provide when we have extra food. In 2018, we served 106 guests in February, and in 2017 we served 127 guests. Thanks to all the great volunteers! And remember: we need volunteers to sign up to bring dessert (for 45) for Sunday suppers, as well as the ongoing need for cereal bars, instant oatmeal packets, and snack crackers. Hello all!
As I noticed time was getting away from me, I realized that I never gave any type of report on my wonderful trip to Boston at the beginning of February. I was so grateful to be able to have the experience I did, and I still can’t believe it was all real.

My day started bright and early on February 1st as I left for the airport at 2:30am for my 6:30am flight. Parking at MCI is apparently a nightmare when you choose to park economy, so it was an adventure in and of itself just finding the parking lot and getting the bus to my terminal! All flights went well, and I landed in Boston right around 2:30 and got a Lyft to The Walker Center, which is where my training was held. Needless to say, I was the person who traveled the farthest, and I was definitely exhausted after a long day.

The overall training was an experience that I wouldn’t trade for anything. I had wonderful trainers, energetic and compassionate co-trainees, and an experience that I wouldn’t trade for anything. We learned about things from consent to STIs, and were given the tips and tools which would help us along the way to becoming OWL facilitators. They helped us find ways to do things from connecting with the youth to being able to talk parents/guardians through the various things we’d be experiencing together.

Overall, I couldn’t have asked for a better opportunity to be able to embrace the things we’re all often uncomfortable being a part of, and finding ways to make it relatable and informative for youth who, more than likely, already have the questions we as facilitators work so hard to have the answers for.

I’m thankful to have been given the support and encouragement from First Congregational to take part in this trip, and I’m extremely excited to be able to use the knowledge I’ve gained to help teach and grow the youth in our congregation, hopefully in years to come. I’m excited to be able to partner with the UU congregation in order to better serve our combined youth and hopefully the youth of Manhattan as a whole with our efforts.

Thank you all again for all of your love and support along the way.

-Brittani, Director of Youth Ministries
Lenten Lunch Series at 1st Presbyterian Church
The Lenten lunches are each week at 11:45 a.m. with lunch followed by a 30-minute presentation to conclude between 12:45-1:00 p.m. The suggested donation is $8 per person. Lunches are held in the gym – Presby Place, 801 Leavenworth Street.

April 3 - Sarah Duggan (Meadowlark Community Relations Dir.
April 10 – Bruce Weber (K-State Men’s Basketball Coach)

Little Apple Pride Parade and Festival
Saturday, April 13 • Parade starts at noon on Poyntz!
Come one, come all and let's celebrate 10 years of Little Apple Pride to honor the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Inn Riots. This year's Pride Committee is pulling out all the stops: booking local bands, drag performers and many other entertainers! This year's pride takes place at Manhattan City Park under the Larry Norvell Band Shell.
First Congregational is walking in the parade and has an information table at the park. Please sign up on the kitchen lobby bulletin board to help staff the table and walk in the parade.

Easter Lilies
Honor family or friends by purchasing a lily for the Easter Day worship service on April 21. The lilies are $10.00 each. Please send your check and this completed form to the church office or place it in the offering plate on any Sunday.

When the Easter lilies arrive, the Deacons carefully remove the pollen-bearing stamen.

In memory of: ____________________________________________________________

In honor of: ______________________________________________________________

In appreciation of: _________________________________________________________

Given by: ___________________________________________________________________
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| **7 5th Sunday of Lent** | 8:30 Choir rehearsal 9:30 Yoga & Donuts 10:45 Worship and Communion  
*Fill the Breadbasket* 6:00 Second Helping | 8 | 6:45 A Cappella 7:30 NA mtg | 9 | 10:00 NCA clergy | 10 | 5:30 CE Board 5:30 Mission Board 6:30 Vitality 7:00 Trustees Board 7:00 AA meeting | 11 | 5:00 Community Acupuncture 7:00 Taizé 7:30 NA mtg | 12 | 7:30 NA mtg | 13 | Pride Parade & Festival |
| **14 Palm Sunday** | 8:30 Choir rehearsal 9:15 Palm Processional 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship 6:00 Second Helping | 15 | 5:15 Yoga 6:45 A Cappella 7:30 NA mtg | 16 | 10:00 NCA clergy | 17 | 6:00 Renters MHK 7:00 Cabinet mtg 7:00 AA meeting | 18 Maundy Thursday 5:00 Community Acupuncture 6:00 Meal & Worship 7:00 MLK mtg 7:30 NA mtg | 19 Good Friday 12:10 Lunch & Learn 5:00 Newsletter Deadline 7:30 NA mtg | 20 Holy Saturday 8:08 Paschal Fire |
| **21 Easter** | 8:30 Choir rehearsal 9:30 Easter Brunch 10:45 Worship 12:00 Easter Egg Hunt 6:00 Second Helping | 22 | 5:15 Yoga 6:45 A Cappella 7:30 NA mtg | 23 | 24 | 7:00 AA meeting | 25 | 5:00 Community Acupuncture 7:00 Taizé 7:30 NA mtg | 26 | 7:30 NA mtg | 27 |
| **28** | 8:30 Choir rehearsal 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 Worship 6:00 Second Helping 6:30 Living Room Worship | 29 | 5:15 Yoga 6:45 A Cappella 7:30 NA mtg | 30 | April 2019 |