



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 64 Number 7

July 2020

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

telephone 785-537-7006

www.uccmanhattan.org

Big Rocks, Part 2

As the COVID-19 pandemic reached us back in March, I wrote a newsletter article about the importance of paying attention to our “big rocks” - the things that carry the most weight in our collective and individual lives. The things that we must tend to first if we have any hope of fitting the smaller rocks, pebbles, sand into our daily lives.

Here we are four months later. I’ve heard from a lot of people that they are settling into a “new normal” and struggling to learn how to live with the pandemic. It seems we are all seeking balance in so many aspects of our lives. We are seeking ways to sustain ourselves and our communities in the midst of multiple societal crises that are all marathons, not sprints. Each day we are faced with choices about how to live our lives. Some are big: can I take that trip? Some are smaller: do I put on a mask when I go into the store? We are realizing more than ever, I hope, how our daily choices impact other people. *[continued pg. 2]*



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Many of us are also doing the hard work of self-examination and societal-examination about the role of white supremacy in our nation. As we listen, learn, reflect, act we are reminded that our daily choices impact so many others. And we remember that the work of dismantling racism is demanding. And it, too, is a marathon, not a sprint.

I want to invite each of us during this mid-point of a year that seems like it's already been 3,974 years long to pause and reconnect with those big rocks again. What are the non-negotiables in your life? In our shared ministry as a congregation? What are the things that are so important to us that they are a part of our very essence? And how can we ensure that we reserve our limited energy to make space for them each day?

In these past four months I have been so honored to watch our congregation focus on those essential parts of our ministry together. We have continued the important work of feeding our neighbors and working for justice. We have found ways to connect and create community even in online settings. We have allowed the gift of worship and prayer to sustain us and challenge us to continue to seek the mind of Christ. We have been intentional about the ways we make decisions, love one another, and continue to invite others to be a part of what God is doing in our midst. We've not done any of this perfectly, of course, but that's never the goal. Instead, I think the goal is to do these things faithfully. To know God accompanies us in our work of Being the Church. To know that when we don't get it right we will continue to try again. To do it all with a spirit of love and grace, confident that God's concern embraces the whole world...and that includes us.

Thanks be to God.

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 Concerns

- For more information, please contact the church office.

Important Reminders about the U.S. Mail

Yes, we are still able to receive mail at the church's address! Mail is being rerouted, so we ask that you send things to 700 Poyntz, just as you normally would. Please don't drop items off through the mail slot at the church, as it is not being monitored regularly. Please ensure that you write a return name and address on any correspondence you send. We do not open mail that is missing a return address and we want to make sure your letter reaches its intended recipient.

Staff Vacations

Pastor Caela will be on vacation from Monday, July 6 through Sunday, July 12. During this time she will not be checking e-mail, text messages, or voicemail. If you have a pastoral care need during this time, please contact one of our Ministers of Care, the church office, or Pastor Sue for assistance.

Sandy will be on vacation July 13 through July 17.

Update from Your Church Leadership

As we continue to navigate our way through these trying times, your leadership team is working to address the congregation's needs while making sure we do all we can to keep everyone safe and well.

Although our communities and counties have steadily loosened restrictions associated with COVID-19, the moderators in consultation with the cabinet will keep our position of taking things very slowly. We will continue as we have been and limit access to the building and continue on-line worship for the near future. The moderators and Pastor Caela are in regular communication via email, phone, and zoom meeting and we are all praying for the wisdom and the courage to make the right decisions about re-opening to protect all parishioners and visitors to our church.

It has been so encouraging to watch members of the congregation do so much to make sure worship remains powerful, that the needs of the church and the community beyond our doors are met, and that we continue to be such a blessing and strong force in confronting the very real societal issues we face today. The moderators are so thankful we get to work with all of you during this time.

To prepare for the eventual relaxing of our building restrictions, the Covid-19 Task Force made up of the moderators, the pastor and others who may be consulted are currently working on policies and procedures for staff use of the building, for small groups and organizations, and for any visitors entering our church. These policies and procedures will be critical for a safe and controlled re-opening. The Cabinet will approve these actions as they are developed.

We are also forming a Technology Task Force to begin planning for an expected need for innovative technology to be used in the sanctuary and elsewhere and to supply the guidance needed to incorporate that technology. This will be critical to keep our on-line presence when we begin to offer on-site worship at some point. The on-line services have gone so well and have provided a powerful source of strength and inspiration for the congregation

and for many outside our area who have been able to connect with us. When the time comes when we may again use the sanctuary it is our hope to incorporate technology so we can continue to have on-line worship to supplement in-person services. We want to continue to spread our message beyond our community and church walls.

Although there is no plan to resume any building use at present, by working on these items we can assure you we will be ready when that time comes.

We will continue to move slowly towards any re-opening and will keep everyone in the loop (so to speak) as your church leadership makes decisions about eventual re-opening.

For the present, we will continue to pray for the safety and health of all and for continued blessings for our parish. Peace and safety to everyone.

The Moderator Team

Sue Gerth, Moderator

Jeff Watson, Moderator-elect

Kerri Keller, Past-Moderator

Building Updates

Our staff members continue to work from home, but the office phone is being rerouted during office hours so please use the church phone number for questions (785-537-7006). Office mail is also being rerouted so donations may be mailed to the church at 700 Poyntz Avenue, Manhattan KS 66502.

The only things happening in the building right now are Second Helping preparations and the 12-step recovery groups that meet in our building are beginning to meet again in person with safety precautions. We also have two church leaders who walk through the building each week to make sure everything is in order. As the COVID task force continues to make decisions about reopening our building we will keep everyone informed using the church e-mail list.

Welcoming New Members

We will welcome new members to our congregation during worship on Sunday, July 26th. 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 contact the church office or simply fill out the online form for new members at www.uccmanhattan.org/become-a-member.html and we will be in touch.



Please indicate your interest in learning more about joining this group of new members by Wednesday, July 8th.

Virtual Offering Plate

While we may not be together on Sunday, the work and mission of First Congregational UCC continues. Please continue to financially support the church as we offer sanctuary and support to each other and the wider community.

Options for giving:

- 1) Mail your contribution to 700 Poyntz Ave., Manhattan, KS 66502.
- 2) Donate online via PayPal (no login required). Go to uccmanhattan.org and scroll down to the DONATE button.
- 3) Setting up a recurring online gift is a convenient way to provide consistent financial support to the church. Your bank may be able to do this for you OR you may contact the church office for a copy of our authorization form and we can set it up for you.



Thank you for your continued support and please contact the office if you have questions.

Did You Miss Worship? Worshiping Online Not Your Thing?

Every Monday we post the previous days' service on our website at <http://www.uccmanhattan.org/news-and-updates/category/worship>. You can view the live worship from Sunday, listen to the audio-only version, or even access a written manuscript which you can use to have your own self-guided worship at home. Please also remember that you can always CALL IN for audio-only on Sunday mornings at 10:45 a.m. If none of these options are meeting your needs or you need help accessing them, please don't hesitate to reach out to Pastor Caela so we can find out what might work better for you

Yard Signs: Our Gift to You!

Want to share the First Congregational UCC love? Miss your church fam? We would like to give you a gift to help us all feel connected AND let other people in the community know about our congregation. Yard signs are available and we will deliver them to your house (contactless, of course). They are 18x24 corrugated plastic with a metal stand. Locally printed by Thomas Sign



**You be you.
I'll be me.
We'll be the Church.**

Together.

Love unconditionally. Challenge Spiritually. Minister Forrently. With us.

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Company. These signs are two-sided, so you can display your favorite message or set up the sign so that both sides can be seen. We hope to have them by the end of May, so just let us know if you'd like one delivered. You can contact your Neighborhood Captain or simply e-mail Sandy (office@uccmanhattan.org).

Weekly Connection Points

Practice Physical Distancing....not Social or Spiritual Distancing. Join us online! If you have trouble accessing any of these resources, please contact the church office so we can assist.

Sundays: Worship at 10:45 a.m. via Facebook Live or call 1-669-900-6833 (toll call) and dial meeting ID 921-954-012# at the prompt for audio only. Meeting password is 66502. To find us on Facebook: go to our Facebook Page at 10:45 a.m. and scroll down until you see the most recent post. Look for the read box that says "Live" or "Premiere."

Fellowship Hour immediately following worship via Zoom | visit uccmanhattan.org/online for the Zoom link

Mondays: Monday night fellowship from 6:30-8:00 led by Deane Lehmann. Stop in and say hi or stay the whole time, show us your projects, color with us, hang out. | visit uccmanhattan.org/online for the Zoom link

Tuesdays: Tuesday Book Group from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. via Zoom | visit uccmanhattan.org/online for the Zoom link

Wednesdays: Youth Group for middle and high school youth from 7:00-8:30 p.m. via Zoom | visit uccmanhattan.org/online for the Zoom link

Thursdays: Prayers & Fellowship at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom | visit uccmanhattan.org/online for the Zoom link

Kids are also meeting (but not weekly) and Brandy sends out e-mail to families to share resources. If you're not receiving those updates, please email brandy@uccmanhattan.org.



Summer Prayers @ 700 Poyntz

As we continue to worship online, we've learned in tangible ways that "real good church" can happen anywhere. Many have told us they kind of like worshipping in their PJs or cuddled up with family and pets on the couch! We also know that many of us miss the connection with have with our church building. It is a sacred space and something about being there opens our hearts to the movement of the Spirit in real ways.

If you are missing that connection with our church building or simply need a "set aside" place to pray, we invite you to spend some time in prayer outside our church building at 700 Poyntz. You could bring a picnic blanket and sit on the



lawn or bring a lawn chair from home. You might want to gaze up at the cloud floating overhead beyond our limestone walls or watch people pass by on Juliette or Poyntz. The front steps of the church, the big limestone sign, and the space outside the Juliette entrance are all nice places to find some quiet. As you come to the property to pray, we ask that you do not congregate with other people. If you notice someone else is praying, please come back at a later time.

We encourage you to snap a photo and/or write down your prayer to share via social media. You might even want to record a video of your prayer time. You can share these in the Facebook group or upload on our website at uccmanhattan.org/photo-video-portal. Please note if you do NOT want your post shared publicly via our Facebook page. Think about how neat it would be to see a prayer from one of our members every day this summer. Even though we can't be together in the sanctuary right now, we are still united through the Spirit.

Staying In Touch

“The church not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place....the church is the PEOPLE!” As we seek to continue to Be the Church we will continue to pass the peace in new ways. This week, think about the people who sit beside, behind, and in front of you in church. Connect with them by phone, email, or text to pass the peace of Christ and offer support and encouragement. Many people in our congregation are still mostly physically isolated, so checking in with one another to say hello is so important these days.

If you are not already up-to-speed on how to use our online church directory, please see the instructions on our website (link: <http://www.uccmanhattan.org/church-directory.html>) and contact the church office for the password. You can also contact the church office to have a paper copy mailed to you.

Book Group Forming: The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

You are invited to join a conversation to inform action around race and mass incarceration in America. A new book study of The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander is beginning July 1st via Zoom. This group will meet every other week on Wednesdays at 7 pm. The study will be facilitated by Cassidy Moreau and will be open to the community. The group will involve reading the book, discussing questions, and action steps to help us all--together--chip away at the systematic racism in our country. The book can be found digitally through Kindle, and similar apps. It is also available via Hoopla through the public library. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Cassidy.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71411719856?pwd=QWRTZTEwbE16MldwTElORGVoM1NzQT09>

Meeting ID: 714 1171 9856

Password: 66502

Christian Education

Please contact Brandy McDonald (brandy@uccmanhattan.org) or Brittani Frost-Shank (brittani@uccmanhattan.org) for more information about options for children and youth.

Midweek Bible Book Club

Tuesdays 11:30 to 1:00: “The Meaning of Mary Magdalene”

Please consider joining us for the midweek ZOOM class. We are reading Cynthia Bourgeault’s book *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene*. Mary Magdalene is probably the most famous character in the Bible about whom the least is known. Bourgeault’s book seeks to address that, starting by look at what the Bible does say about her and how church tradition, art, and legend have added – and frequently distorted - the picture we have of Mary. In addition, Bourgeault introduces her readers to *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* and other lost gospels and demonstrates how these lost writings have altered our perspective of her. What has emerged in recent years is a serious re-evaluation of Mary Magdalene’s place among Christ’s followers and Bourgeault thoroughly examines that new perspective.

The book is available at Amazon in either paperback or Kindle form. If you have trouble obtaining a book, please text or call Pastor Sue (508-364-9636). Please join 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.

Cobb Corner — Going Green

“There is no Second Nature.” – The Nature Conservancy

Are you exhausted, numb and angry after the last four months? You are not alone. But this month the focus will be mostly on good news.

Great news for our civil rights environment! Monday, June 15, the Supreme Court in a 6-3 decision held that the 1964 Civil Rights Act applied to LGBTQ individuals as well as others who had been discriminated against in employment matters on the basis of their sex! This ruling was handed down by Trump appointee, Justice Neil Gorsuch. The decision means among other things that the President’s earlier decision to ban such individuals from serving in the military is now null and void.

On other environmental fronts: The Riley County Humane Society has started a food pantry for pets! On the first and third Saturdays each month you can bring Purina products to donate starting at 8:30 a.m. From 9 to 10 you can also apply for free food for your pet. No one should have to surrender or abandon a beloved pet due to financial pressures. The pantry is located in the south part of First Methodist parking lot. This might be a good opportunity to model charity in which your children could participate.

More welcome news: The zoo is open to the general public! If you go, be sure to say “hi” to Susie, the oldest chimp in captivity in the world. She’s 65. You can recognize her by her gray muzzle and one bad eye. She made headlines about 10 years ago when she had a baby! Her daughter “Siri” is currently at the Oklahoma City Zoo.

Are you becoming buried in plastic grocery bags? Aldi continues to encourage you to bring your own totes. Aisles are one-way to facilitate distancing.

Consider registering for the free 15th annual Dialog on Sustainability taking place on July 18 via Zoom. This year’s shortened event will be 9:00-11:00 and focus on rural sustainability. Just send name, affiliation, phone number and email to Sheree Walsh chsr@ksu.edu.

Now for a change of pace: President Trump has rolled back over 100 environmental laws including the National Environmental Policy Act. The EPA also suspended March 26, all penalties against pollution violators! For more details see *Green American*, Summer 2020, pp. 18-19.

While you shelter-in-place I encourage you to view “Dark Waters,” an excellent film based on a true story of a lawyer going up against a lethal pollution problem created by Dupont Chemical. A book I find interesting is *Visit Sunny Chernobyl*, by Andrew Blackwell. It is a tour of the most polluted and dangerous sites in the world. You will be amazed by the author’s journey and more than content to hang around Manhattan! Contact me if you’d like to borrow it. Also, let us know if you’d like any of a variety of day lilies. No more than 100 per person! – *Linda Richter*

Share ideas for future Cobb columns with Linda Richter

Need Help?

Please reach out to the church office or Pastor Caela if you are in need. We have volunteers to help pick up groceries and medication or help you learn how to order online for delivery/pick up. If you are being adversely affected by loss of income, please let us know. If you are ill or need prayer, please let us know. Sandy and Caela continue to check e-mail on their days in the office and can also be reached by phone (please use Caela’s cell phone).

If you're having trouble accessing worship or any of our online activities, please contact the church office.

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!



New Volunteers Needed

I am seeking to find volunteers for the Sunday evening 2nd Helping dinners. Traditionally, many of our volunteers are more mature congregants or college students from K-State. Given the physical closure of the University and the high-risk factors associated with the Coronavirus, we are finding ourselves short on volunteers, therefore I am reaching out to ask each of you to consider your willingness to volunteer at 2nd Helping.

Currently, the meals are prepared in the church, but are distributed outside of the church in to-go containers to help minimize the risk to our outside volunteers and neighbors. There are also a number of other protocols being put into place for the purpose of safeguarding all involved with 2nd Helping.

Further, while we value anyone who is willing to volunteer, for the safety of all we ask you not to volunteer if you are exhibiting any symptoms of COVID meet any of the quarantine criteria below. We also strongly recommend that those in the high-risk category not volunteer as well.

If you are unable to volunteer at Second Helping, we still welcome your support. Monetary donations can be made via PayPal on the website or mailed to the church (First Congregational UCC, 700 Poyntz Ave., Manhattan, KS 66502). Thank you for your support of this important ministry,

Di Hinrichs-Toburen, Ph.D.
Second Helping Volunteer Coordinator
diane.hinrichs@pawnee.org

Community News

The Board of Justice and Witness is supporting organizations that are promoting justice by keeping up on meetings and activities.

Manhattan Alliance for Peace and Justice (MAPJ) conduct its Annual Meeting July 25 online from 3 - 5 PM. All are invited to attend. As time nears we will have specific information about access to the meeting.

The Keynote Speaker for MAPJ's Annual Meeting will be Tara Raghuvver who is the founding director of KC Tenants. She is also the Homes Guarantee Campaign Director at People's Action, a national network of grassroots organizations committed to racial, economic, gender, and climate justice. Tara is an Australian-born, Indian-American immigrant who came to the US with her family in 1995 and grew up in Kansas City.



What: Manhattan Alliance for Peace and Justice Annual Meeting

When: July 25th, 2020, 3pm-5pm

Where: Online Zoom (link coming soon)

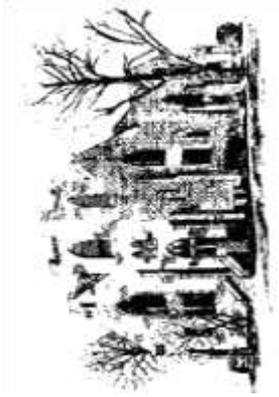
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| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| <h1>July 2020</h1> | | | 1 11:00 Lunch Bunch 5:15 Deacons 7:00 Youth Group 7:00 Book Group 7:00 AA Meeting | 2 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA mtg | 3 Independence Day Holiday Office Closed 7:30 NA mtg | 4  |
| 5 10:45 Worship and Communion online 6:00 Second Helping | 6 6:30 Fellowship 7:30 NA mtg | 7 11:30 Book Study | 8 5:30 Mission, CE 6:30 Justice & Witness 7:00 Facilities 7:00 AA Meeting | 9 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA mtg | 10 7:30 NA mtg | 11 |
| ----- Caela vacation ----- | | | | | | |
| 12 10:45 Worship online 6:00 Second Helping | 13 6:30 Fellowship 7:30 NA mtg | 14 11:30 Book Study | 15 7:00 Cabinet mtg 7:00 AA Meeting | 16 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA mtg | 17 7:30 NA mtg | 18 |
| ----- Sandy vacation ----- | | | | | | |
| 19 10:45 Worship online 6:00 Second Helping | 20 6:30 Fellowship 7:30 NA mtg | 21 11:30 Book Study | 22 7:00 AA Meeting | 23 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA mtg | 24 5:00 Newsletter Deadline 7:30 NA mtg | 25 |
| 26 10:45 Worship online Welcome New Members 6:00 Second Helping | 27 6:30 Fellowship 7:30 NA mtg | 28 11:30 Book Study | 29 7:00 AA Meeting | 30 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA mtg | 31 7:30 NA mtg | |