



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 65 Number 1

January 2021

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 Prayers at 7:00 P.M. telephone 785-537-7006
www.uccmanhattan.org

“In the land of the living...”

Recently I was doing my morning scripture reading and these words from Psalm 116 shimmered for me: “Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you. For you, Lord, have delivered me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living.” They reminded me of a Taizé song that I love, but haven’t sung in a while: “I am sure I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Yes, I shall see the goodness of our God, hold firm, trust in the Lord.”

Hold firm. Trust in God.

These short words are easier said than done. It can be easy to say, “Each day we wake up is a gift. There is goodness to be found even in the midst of pain.” Those statements are true AND we can all still find we have days when the bottom drops out and we can’t find even a speck of joy. Both things are true. We humans are incredibly complex creatures, aren’t we? *[continued pg. 2]*



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Hold firm. Trust in God.

These were like mantras for me in 2020, and I know the same is true for many of you. While our souls long to turn over the calendar to 2021 and get a fresh start, we know that 2021 will bring even more change. When the pandemic began, I got on my knees many nights and visualized a research scientist working alone in her lab, working on vaccines or treatments that we so desperately need. Each night I would visualize a different person working, working and I would pray for them. Now we have vaccines and we know so much more about COVID...but there is no switch to flip that will send things “back to normal.” Instead, the future will unfold slowly, day by day.

As 2021 unfolds, I find myself exceedingly grateful that we will be living into that unfolding together. For all the change that we’ve seen in the past year, many things remain steadfast and true: like First Congregational’s incredible witness to the community and world. When I look at all of you, I truly “see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” Amidst all the chaos of 2020, this congregation continued to Be the Church for one another and for the wider community. We made difficult sacrifices for the health of our whole community. We reimagined cherished rituals. We showed up for one another in prayer and in service. We continued to work for justice and feed the hungry in our community. We made difficult decisions prayerfully and with humility, trusting in the Spirit to lead us. When I look at you, I see Love Incarnate. I see the goodness of God here, in the land of the living.

And so, another year begins. And we walk in the land of the living together. We continue to Love Unconditionally, Challenge Spiritually, Minister Fervently. We may not be exactly sure what this will look like in 2021, but we trust that God will guide us - comforting us when we hurt, giving us grace when we stumble, bubbling up with joy when we need it most.

Hold firm. Trust in God.

This is still the promise and invitation in 2021. We live into it together.

Pastor Caela

Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns

- For more information, please contact the church office

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.



A Special Birthday!

Margery Bayer is turning 96 on January 7th. We invite you to shower Margery with cards and notes in the mail.

Connecting with Pastor Caela

Pastor Caela IS available to meet with you outdoors, masked, and socially distanced. She is also available on the phone or Zoom, of course. Caela keeps her own calendar, so if you'd like to talk the simplest thing is to e-mail, call, or text to set up a time. Mondays through Wednesdays are typically best for routine meetings, as Thursdays are used for sermon and worship preparation and Friday-Saturday are her days off. Caela tries to honor work-life balance by responding to non-urgent text and voicemail messages only during regular work hours. Please note that if you ever have an emergency between the hours of 10pm-7am you will need to CALL Pastor Caela, not rely on text messages, as she does not receive them overnight.

First Congregational on YouTube

We are now posting our weekly worship videos to our YouTube channel to make them easier for people to find. We would like to get a "custom URL" for our YouTube page but need 100+ subscribers to be eligible. Would you pop by our YouTube channel and subscribe to help us out? Thanks! Visit uccmanhattan.org/youtube to find the link to our channel and subscribe.

Sacred Music on Demand

Looking for some sacred music to get you through your day? We have a page on our website that features a selection of offerings from recent worship services. It also has a link to our YouTube channel where you'll find more music: www.uccmanhattan.org/music.html

Reminder:
Annual Congregational Meeting
January 24th at 11:45 a.m. via Zoom

Informational Session
January 17th at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom

Zoom links for both meetings at uccmanhattan.org/online or you can call 1-669-900-6833 and dial the correct meeting at the prompt (listening session: 152 486 671#, congregational meeting: meeting ID [849 7636 0960](#)#). Meeting password is 66502 for both meetings. Note: long-distance charges may apply if you use the call-in option.

Members of the Cabinet will answer questions and address any concerns about the budget that has been approved by the cabinet at the listening session on Jan. 17th. If you have not received the proposed budget by January 17, please contact Sandy.

Leadership Kick Off

All members of our boards and committees are invited to attend the 2021 Leadership Kick Off on Wednesday, Jan. 13th at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. We will gather as a full group to share some tips and wisdom for the upcoming year and then break into individual boards/committees for meetings. For most boards and committees this will replace your regular January meeting. We look forward to gathering with you and if you have any questions, please reach out to Jeff Watson, 2021 Moderator, or the church office.

Zoom information: Meeting ID is 881 5142 0923. Enter the meeting ID and password (66502) to log in. Or dial 1-669-900-6833 and dial meeting ID 881 5142 0923# at the prompt. Meeting password is 66502. Note: long-distance charges may apply if you use the call-in option.

January Worship Preview: God is Holding Your Life

A reminder that we will be on Zoom ONLY for worship on January 3rd. You'll find the Zoom link at uccmanhattan.org/online. On Jan. 10th we return to our regular Facebook Live worship at 10:45 a.m.

“The works of God’s hands are faithful and just.” - Psalm 111

Our theme for worship in this season of Ordinary Time is **God is Holding Your Life**. Life is a series of exclamations from “O No!” to “Help!” to “Oh Yeah!” We can swing between disappointment, helplessness, and gratitude on a daily basis. There are also seasons of our lives when we feel inundated with more of one than the others. As we enter the new year, we had hoped we would be past the “O No!” of the last several months. Instead we find ourselves with ongoing prayers for “Help!” The Book of Psalms knows all about this. Written over a span of time from exile and isolation to the rebuilding of the community, the poetry of the Psalms will accompany us in this series, reminding us that through it all, we can trust and even give our thankful “Oh Yeah!” because God is, indeed, holding our lives.

Options for Giving

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.

Communion Options for January 3

We invite you to join us for Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month. Weather permitting, we will have two opportunities for receiving the elements:

1. **Communion at Home @ 10:45 a.m.:** we will offer Communion during our Sunday morning online worship service and you can bring your own elements to eat and drink.
2. **Drive Through Communion from 12:15-12:45 p.m.:** drive through the alley behind the church building to receive prepackaged Communion elements (no sign up needed). In case of inclement weather, an announcement will be made on our website, e-mail list, and social media on Sunday morning.

We invite you to Fill the Breadbasket by dropping off donations for the Second Helping when you arrive for Drive Through or Communion on the Lawn. Full details and sign up available at uccmanhattan.org/communion or call the church office.



Building and Staffing Reminders

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). U.S. Mail is being picked up several times a week, so you can send correspondence to 700 Poyntz Avenue, Manhattan KS 66502. 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.

Second Helping preparations and the 12-step recovery groups that meet in our building continue to be the only events happening in our building. We also have two church leaders who walk through the building each week to make sure everything is in order. You can find the most recent COVID-related updates and policies at uccmanhattan.org/COVID.

Seeking new (and returning!) faces for offering, benediction, and scripture readings!

We have gotten to receive the gifts of many congregation members and friends sharing with us during the Sunday services. I know that one of my favorite parts of the service is getting to see these faces I miss so much. We would love to continue seeing the faces we have and add on new faces to our rotation!

Recording a video for worship is easy. You can use a computer, camera, or even phone to record your contribution, no high tech skills required. If you prefer to simply read something scripted, scripture reading or offering is a perfect fit for you! If you'd prefer to share something that you find, we are happy to provide resources for benediction (or you can share something that holds meaning for you!)

If you are interested in being put on the list for offering or benediction, please contact Brandy at brandy@uccmanhattan.org. Sign up for scripture reading can be found at <http://www.uccmanhattan.org/sign-ups.html>

If you think you might be interested but are feeling unsure, we are here to help! Contact Brandy and she can walk you through what you would need to do. Remember that no one is looking for perfection; we are just looking to see your face and hear your voice!



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: Adult Sunday School via Zoom at 9:30 a.m. | visit uccmanhattan.org/online for the Zoom link.

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 red box that says "Live" or "Premiere." The worship service is also posted to the church's YouTube account each Sunday morning. Visit uccmanhattan.org/youtube for the link.

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

Mondays: "Monday School" for kids aged 3 through 6th grade at 6:00 p.m. Contact Brandy@uccmanhattan.org for the link.

Tuesdays: Tuesday Book Group from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 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). Contact Brandy@uccmanhattan.org (age 3 through 6th grade) or Brittani@uccmanhattan.org (6th-12th grades) for more info.

Adult Sunday School,
Sundays: Worship & Fellowship Hour

Mondays: "Monday School" for Kids via Zoom

Tuesdays: Bible Book Club via Zoom

Thursdays: Prayers & Fellowship via Zoom

UCCMANHATTAN.ORG / ONLINE

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.

Adult Sunday School Class

9:30 a.m. via Zoom (link available at uccmanhattan.org/online)

On break until January 24, 2021

Sunday School classes are on break until January 24, 2021. Watch for updated information in the weekly, Friday emails as well as online at www.uccmanhattan.org.

January 24-February 14: Galatians 5:22-23. Fruits of the Spirit, part one.

February 21-March 28: Short Stories by Jesus, Amy-Jill Levine.

April 11-May 9: Fruits of the Spirit, part two.

Midweek Bible Book Study

Tuesdays from 11:30am-1pm via Zoom

New book coming January 26!

Led by Sue Zschoche



Contact Pastor Sue with any questions at sue@uccmanhattan.org.

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.

Introducing: Marlin Watson of Companion Projects Media

After the pandemic thrust us into the world of online worship, our staff and volunteers made countless adjustments to the way they prepare for worship each week. In July, we began partnering with Marlin Watson of Companion Projects Media to provide weekly video editing services for us. Each week, Marlin takes the various videos created by us and edits them together into the worship service we participate in each Sunday morning. Pastor Caela works with him every weekend to make final revisions and then the service is uploaded to Facebook Live and YouTube so we can all worship together. We also provide DVDs of the services to a couple of members in our congregation who don't have internet access.



Since Marlin has been a part of our team for almost six months now we realized it's past time to introduce him to you! Marlin is a freelance photographer and videographer here in Manhattan. He grew up mostly in Germany where he met his future wife, Sharice, in patch barracks, an American Base in Stuttgart. The two stayed in touch over the years and eventually made Manhattan their home.

Marlin says the vision for CPM is simple: "From the very beginning when we were taking small jobs from friends and family, we strived for a seamless relationship with them. They had the visions and we worked hand-in-hand to bring them to life. Now that we've grown, we don't want to stray from that mindset. The name Companion Projects stems from the idea that the creative process is a partnership." Marlin has been an absolute delight to work with and we are so grateful for our partnership with him.

Cobb Corner — Going Green

“This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

This sage advice came in a Christmas card from John and Judy Siddoway in Utah who invited Bill and me several years ago to an unforgettable experience – visiting the Mormon Tabernacle while the world-famous choir was rehearsing a splendid performance. It was serendipitous: They were neighbors of son Rob and his family. We try to remind ourselves to be open to such unplanned moments which so enrich our over-scheduled lives. No problem with that **THIS YEAR!**

In 2020 many of us have saved money on gas, enjoyed cleaner air, but worried about covid and finances. January 10 is Cut Your Energy Costs Day! For tips, go to Energy.gov. Other suggestions that can save hundreds in the future and give the planet a little more time: First, compost your garbage. Contact Carol Sevin for advice if using worms or just create a compost pile in your backyard. Your garbage disposal will last forever and you’ll never buy fertilizer again!

Secondly, cut trash service to once or twice a month. By going to Howie’s with your recyclables you may also find oodles of books in the telephone book bin. We’ve found thousands these last two years for ourselves, friends, and libraries in the area. In the process you may find you only need trash service occasionally. Three, replace incandescent bulbs and CFLs with LEDs that can last 10,000 hours! Use up old bulbs in closets or places where they are handy but only used briefly.

Good news: Next fall USD 383 will get 100% of its energy from renewables! KSU and Washburn are also involved. Green, clean energy and significant savings are win-win! Solar and wind are already providing many times as many jobs globally as fossil fuels while avoiding the disastrous impacts of coal, oil and gas. (McKibben, 2020).

Finally, I want to suggest two books available at our library. The first I mentioned last month before I read it: *Falter*, by Bill McKibben. *The Washington Post* has named it among the top 10 books of the year! I totally agree. It is simply amazing. McKibben,

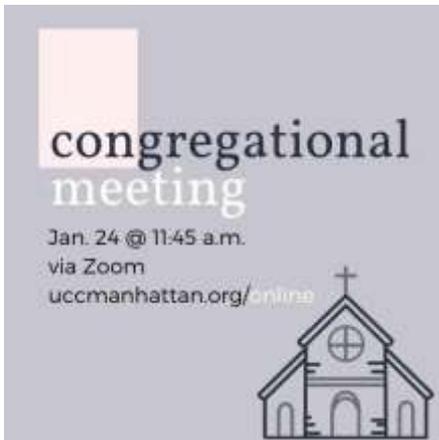
noted for his works on climate change, includes both harrowing and heartening information on this topic. But he goes well beyond this to consider the pros and cons of artificial intelligence and gene editing – both of which force us to consider what it means to be human.

Jane Fonda’s latest book, *What Can I Do?*, was recommended to me by Gayle Doll. Fonda has been an activist on climate issues for some time, but now shows the general public how they can make a difference.

Now you have two more reasons to stay at home and socially distance!

– *Linda Richter*

Share ideas for future Cobb columns with Linda Richter.



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.

Manhattan Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Committee Announces 2021 Events

Saturday, Saturday, January 16, 2021, 4:00 pm

MLK Jr. Community Celebration

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/MLKManhattanCommittee> for the community celebration. Hear and see the creative work of the finalists from the MLK Jr. Art and Writing contest. Share in the words and music of the Civil Rights movement.

Speaker: Prisca Barnes, of the Humanities Kansas Speakers Bureau

Sunday, January 17, 2020

Faith services

Monday, January 18, 2020 8:00 AM

Prayer Breakfast

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/MLKManhattanCommittee> for the online Prayer Breakfast.

Speaker: JahVelle Rhone, Assoc. Pastor at Manhattan Christian Fellowship Church

Martin Luther King Jr. Week of Service

Feb. 1 (pick-up) - Feb. 8 (drop-off)

Honor Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy by serving at home! HandsOn K-State is providing "DIY" service kits for students and community members to benefit local agencies. Pick up and drop off locations are at the Staley School of Leadership Studies and the Manhattan Public Library. Examples of service kits: animal treats and toys, fleece blankets, and care kits for senior citizens. Contact handson@ksu.edu for questions about the initiative.

Complete information at <http://www.mhk-mlk.org>

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 60-70 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 state 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

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
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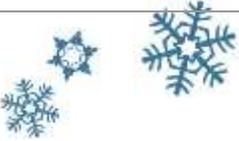
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Year's Day Offices Closed	2
3 10:45 Worship and Communion online 12:15 Drive-thru Communion <i>Fill the breadbasket</i> 6:00 Second Helping	4 7:30 NA mtg	5	6 Epiphany 7:00 AA Meeting	7 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA Meeting	8	9
10 10:45 Worship online 6:00 Second Helping	11 7:30 NA mtg	12	13 7:00 Leadership Kickoff 7:00 AA Meeting	14 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA Meeting	15	16
17 9:30 Info Session 10:45 Worship online 6:00 Second Helping	18 MLK Jr. Day Offices Closed 6:00 Children's "Monday" School 7:30 NA mtg	19	20 7:00 Cabinet mtg 7:00 AA Meeting	21 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA Meeting	22 Newsletter deadline	23
24 9:30 Adult Sunday School 10:45 Worship online 11:45 Annual Meeting 6:00 Second Helping	25 6:00 Children's "Monday" School 7:30 NA mtg	26 11:30 Book Study	27 7:00 AA Meeting	28 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA Meeting	29	30
31 9:30 Adult Sunday School 10:45 Worship online 6:00 Second Helping						