



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 65 Number 5

May 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

Worship Via Zoom Beginning May 2nd

Beginning May 2, we will begin using Zoom every week for worship. Pastor Caela will be joined in the sanctuary by other worship leaders and a tech crew....and, eventually, by all of us once we regather in our building. How exciting! You can read updates about our regathering plans on our website at uccmanhattan.org/covid.

After May 2, our worship services will NOT be on Facebook or YouTube. We will continue to use the same link each week for worship and you'll find that at uccmanhattan.org/online. If you are unable to access Zoom, please contact the church office so we can help make alternative arrangements. It's important to us that we find a way for you to attend worship.

[continued pg. 2]

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ➔ ➔ ➔ ➔ | Inside this Newsletter | ← ← ← ← |
| Sharing & Caring | 3 | Welcome New Members |
| News and Events | 5 | Spring & Summer Fun |
| Regathering Updates | 6 | Cobb Corner |
| | | 14 |

Why Have We Chosen Zoom for Worship?

We've made the decision to use Zoom as our platform moving forward because we believe it provides the best opportunity for us to help those worshipping at home feel more like a part of our worship service each week. Those who worship at a distance will be able to see other faces, interact with people in the chat, and stay for Fellowship Hour. Eventually, we hope to have the technology that will make it possible for people at home to read scripture, share their prayers aloud, and more.

Being together on Zoom also means greater ease in our weekly worship creation workflow as we won't be pre-recording elements of the service and paying a video editor to piece it all together for us. We want to say a HUGE thank you to Companion Projects Media, who have been working with us for almost a year now and have been indispensable partners for our staff and volunteers. Worshipping together "in real time" also means we can ensure our service meets the moment, rather than being recorded earlier in the week.

Why Aren't We Using Facebook or YouTube Any More?

You may be wondering why the service isn't simultaneously live-streamed to other platforms like YouTube or Facebook. While it's true this can be done, we've decided not to do so (at least for now) for two primary reasons: 1) copyright differences with streaming vs Zoom, and 2) privacy. When we worship on Zoom we are not streaming the service and, therefore, have more options for using music/words in our service without worrying about copyright concerns that come up when broadcasting our service. When we lift our prayers or invite the children forward for the Word for Children, we can do so in our Zoom room much like we did in the Sanctuary. It's still a public place, of course, but it's not live-streamed to the internet, which gives us a better balance of privacy and outreach. We are learning-as-we-go and we will have flexibility in the future if we do decide we want to stream our Zoom service to other platforms in the future.

Why is the Zoom Service being Recorded?

We currently have a couple of folks who have difficulty accessing Zoom and are preparing DVDs for them. In the future, we may make recordings available to those who were unable to

attend worship. The recordings show the “speaker view,” not the “gallery view.” Each week's sermon will continue to be uploaded to our YouTube and Facebook pages for those who would like to view or share them.

How Can I Help During this Time of Transition?

Thanks for asking! There are several things you can do:

1. First, we will need Zoom Greeters every week. You can do this job at home and it probably is easier on a computer. We hope you'll sign up for one or more weeks for this easy task at uccmanhattan.org/sign-ups.
2. Next, we welcome donations to help fund the technology and safety upgrades we are making to our building as we prepare to regather here. You can learn more about the upgrades we're making to our technology and HVAC systems on our website. If you'd like to donate to support these upgrades, you can do so any time by marking your gift “regathering upgrades.”
3. Finally, we welcome your prayers, grace, and patience. We know that as we learn more we will continue to make adjustments and changes to the way we worship together. We move forward with care and intention asking ourselves questions about what is essential and how we can ensure there is space for everyone at the table. And we give thanks that God goes with us every step of the way as we adjust to new ways of being together.

We are still very much in a "liminal space" of experimentation and we anticipate that our online worship will continue to evolve and shift over the coming months. The staff and Deacons welcome your input on how things are going and what new things we might try as we learn and grow together.

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.

Connecting with Pastor Caela

Caela keeps her own calendar, so if you'd like to connect, 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.

Important Information about Staff Availability

Sandy will be on vacation May 13-26. Office phone and email messages will be monitored, but responses may be delayed.

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

Graduate Recognition

The Graduation season is upon us, and we would like to recognize all our graduates. If you are graduating or have a family member who is soon to be a graduate—high school, college, technical college, graduate school, or any other—please let the office know soon so that we may properly honor our 2021 graduates. We would like to feature the accomplishments of our graduates in the June church newsletter. Drop off information at the church office or e-mail it to office@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.

Regathering Updates from Cabinet

Our leadership continues to work steadily and faithfully to make plans for us to share in-person connections. Since things are changing rapidly, we encourage you to be sure you're signed up for our church e-mail list (contact office@uccmanhattan.org if you need help with that!). We will also post current updates on our website at uccmanhattan.org/covid.

Our hand sanitizer stations have arrived and the thermostats in our building have been replaced so air circulates and is filtered more often. Airscrubbers, which help clean the air when it circulates, have also been ordered and we hope to have those installed soon. We are so grateful for the hard work our Board of Facilities has done with these upgrades.

Beginning May 2nd, we will have our small crew of worship leaders present in the sanctuary to lead worship and we want to thank the Accessibility & Technology Task Force for their hard work in making this happen (Nell King, Anne Fredrickson, Jim Mock, Carol Sevin, and Craig Weston). On Sunday mornings, worship leaders will be following our COVID requirements, which you'll find at uccmanhattan.org/covid. Because of the high-risk of COVID spread with singing and wind instruments, we will continue to take steps to reduce the risk of infection with these activities. For example, singers will be limited to fewer than four at a time and must remain masked. When you join us for worship you'll notice that some worship leaders choose to unmask when speaking, in order to help those listeners who find it much easier to hear when they can read lips as well. If you have any questions about our COVID requirements, please don't hesitate to check in with a member of the COVID task force (Jeff Watson, Sue Gerth, Craig Weston).

In early May we also plan to reopen the office during the week. We know you'll be excited to see Sandy and Caela as you come through to drop off items for the Blessing Box, make lunches for Second Helping, and more. Please do remember that everyone is expected to follow our health requirements when entering the building (or attending any outdoor gatherings with our congregation):

1. Everyone will wash or sanitize hands immediately upon entering our building or participating in a church event.
2. Everyone, regardless of vaccination status, will wear a mask covering their nose and mouth when in our building or participating in a church event. Masks are optional for children under the age of six.

Exceptions:

- Staff members may remove masks only when alone in their own office with the door closed.
 - Those who are leading worship may remove masks when speaking in the chancel and more than six feet away from people outside their household.
3. Everyone will stay more than six feet apart from anyone they do not live with. Caregivers may need to assist younger children in being aware of these boundaries.
 4. Those who are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, are awaiting a test result for COVID-19, have been exposed to anyone who has COVID-19 or is awaiting a COVID-19 test result, or fall into any other category that should be quarantined according to our health department may not participate or enter our building.

The only groups currently allowed to gather inside the building are still our 12-step groups, Second Helping volunteers, and those who need to be on site for worship leading or building maintenance. Groups are welcome to gather outdoors, following the guidelines above and we continue to offer many ways to connect with others in the congregation via outdoor meet-up groups, youth and children's activities, Zoom classes and prayer gatherings, and more.

Thank you for your prayers and support as we continue to Be the Church together in new ways in 2021!

Building and Staffing Reminders

Beginning May 1, the office will be open Monday through Friday from 9:00am-Noon and 1:00-3:00p.m. If you need access to the building during the week, please buzz at the office door and we will let you in. Please visit the welcome table in the lobby to sanitize your hands and grab a mask if you need one. You'll probably find that Sandy has her door closed, but please just knock if you need to speak with her. If you need to talk with staff, they might suggest that you visit in a larger space than their offices to ensure six feet of distance can be maintained.

We are still receiving mail at 700 Poyntz. 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.

You can find the most recent COVID-related updates and policies at uccmanhattan.org/COVID.

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.

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 Zoom | visit uccmanhattan.org/online for the Zoom link

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

Kids Gatherings for kids aged 3 through 6th grade via Zoom at 4:00 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

For more information about kids and youth activities, contact Brandy@uccmanhattan.org (age 3 through 6th grade) or Brittani@uccmanhattan.org (6th-12th grades).

WEEKLY CONNECTION POINTS

Sundays: Adult Sunday School, Worship & Fellowship Hour
Kids Gathering via Zoom

Tuesdays: Bible Book Club via Zoom

Thursdays: Prayers & Fellowship via Zoom

UCCMANHATTAN.ORG/ONLINE

First Congregational to Participate in Leadership Transformation Program with KO Conference

The Kansas-Oklahoma Conference of the UCC is honored to be one of the recipients of a 2021 Leadership Transformation Grant from the Kansas Leadership Center. The KLC is a non-profit founded by the Kansas Health Foundation. KLC provides training to foster leadership for stronger, healthier and more prosperous Kansas communities. Through the Leadership Transformation Grant, KLC partners with organizations to help them create a culture of leadership that embraces change, tackles problems and seizes opportunities.

As a part of this grant, the KO Conference is sending 50 participants to participate in a two-day training with KLC. Our congregation was invited to put together our own delegation and we welcome your prayers as we prepare to learn and grow this summer. Janet George and Cassidy Moreau will participate in the KLC leadership training on May 5-6. Deane Lehmann, Jeff Waston, Craig Weston, and Pastor Caela will be attending the same training on June 2-3.

You can learn more about the training at <https://kansasleadershipcenter.org/yourleadershipedge>.

Welcome New Members

Eleanor McCormick & Stefan Schütz

Jo & Jason Maseberg-Tomlinson

For more information, please contact the church office.

Spring & Summer Fun with First Congregational: Text us for more info about Meet Ups

Get outdoors this spring and summer and enjoy making new friends or visiting with longtime friends you haven't seen in a while! Text your name and the name(s) of the group(s) you're interested in to 785-380-7772. We'll sign you up for a GroupMe and the group organizer will text you updates and when/where to meet up. You do not have to have the GroupMe app to participate, just a phone that can text. If you don't have the ability to text, please contact the church office so we can make other arrangements.

All groups take place outdoors and participants agree to follow our congregation's COVID safety measures. You can read full details at uccmanhattan.org/covid. The highlights are: don't come if you're sick/quarantined, wear a mask, maintain at least six feet distance from those outside your household, keep track of who attends in case we need to complete contact tracing.

Easy Riders - Join us for easy bike rides in and around town. (And if you want to coordinate some more challenging rides, that's okay, too). This group is facilitated by Chad Moreau and Brent Maner.

Playground Meet Ups - Meet up at local playgrounds and the kids can play while the adults visit on the sidelines. You don't have to be a parent/guardian to join the group. You can also just come and visit with others in a comfy seat. BYOC (bring your own chair - and mask, of course). This group is facilitated by Brandy McDonald.

Craft & Chat (or just chat!) - You don't have to be a crafter to join. That's just a fun name. If you have any craft projects you like to do with your hands OR you just want to enjoy a comfy seat while visiting with friends, join us. BYOC (bring your own chair - and mask, of course). This group is facilitated by Deane Lehmann.

Walk & Talk - Stroll with friends and enjoy conversation while you walk. We will meet up at City Park or other easy-to-walk places with sidewalks (i.e. not strenuous hikes). This group is facilitated by Greg Eiselein.

Have an idea for another group? Great! Please let Pastor Caela know.

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)

Watch for updated information in the weekly, Friday emails as well as online at www.uccmanhattan.org.

Fruits of the Spirit, part two.

May 2: Gentleness/meekness. Led by Jennifer Edwards

May 9: Self-control/Temperance. Led by Jeff Keller



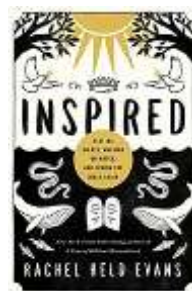
Midweek Bible Book Study

Tuesdays from 11:30am-1pm via Zoom

Inspired by Rachel Held Evans

Led by Sue Zschoche

Inspired is a thoughtful commentary on the Bible: how we Christians understand it (or don't understand it), how we sometimes struggle with it, how it still can still speak to us. We hope that you will join us.



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

Cobb Corner — Going Green

“How we treat the earth and all of creation defines the relationship that each of us has with God....To commit a crime against the natural world is a sin....”

– Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
at the Religion, Science and the Environment Symposium,
in *The Green Bible*, Intro. P. 113.

As we seek to live in greater harmony with the earth, it is important that we consider a range of strategies. *What Can I Do?* (by Jane Fonda, 2017) has numerous suggestions, as I’ve noted before, but perhaps one of the simplest is disinvestment in fossil-fuels such as coal, natural gas and oil. Since 2010 such investments have lost value relative to renewables.

Petro-states like Russia and Saudi Arabia, as well as some fossil-fuel companies, have been scrambling to keep afloat in the increasingly hostile political and economic environment. President Biden, for example, has proposed to ban gas and oil exploration on public lands. *Blowout* by Rachel Maddow explores in detail corruption and environmental damage fossil-fuel development has wrought.

For the individual who decides fossil-fuel investment is counter-productive, disinvestment in such stocks is simple. More demanding is voicing opposition to such investments in the companies we patronize. Expressing support for a ban on the enormous fossil-fuel subsidies of our government is another avenue that could eventually liberate huge sums for more positive and equitable programs.

Using investments to pressure for justice worked in South Africa to end apartheid as universities, banks and governments sought to isolate the repressive regime. Nelson Mandela’s release from jail was also part of the eventual victory over apartheid.

At the community level we can all attempt to lessen our use of fossil fuels by car pooling and replacing cars and lawn mowers with electric counterparts. Sound too tough? Denver is on course to be 100% renewable electricity by 2030 while Copenhagen expects to be the world’s first carbon-neutral capital by 2025! (*National Geographic*, February, 2021, p. 18.) Can Manhattan, Kansas, compete?!

— Linda Richter

Share ideas for future Cobb columns with Linda Richter.

Community News

Spring Cleaning? Home Project? - Consider Habitat for Humanity ReStore

Our community is fortunate to have a thriving Manhattan Area Habitat for Humanity which not only builds affordable and secure homes but also repairs homes, offer aging in place and veterans programs, and much more as described at <https://mahfh.org>.

One way they support programs is through ReStore, located at 514 Pillsbury Drive, just across the Kansas River bridge east of the Manhattan City Center. ReStore accepts donations of items that can be repurposed- that are ready for immediate re-sell, including a variety of new and reclaimed building materials, furniture, and appliances in good working condition. Or as a customer, you can save money and divert usable items out of the waste-stream, the ultimate form of recycling/repurposing.

ReStore hours are Thursday to Saturday, 10am-4pm.

For more information or inquire about pick-up, call the ReStore at (785) 537-7545 or email them office@mahfh.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!

Currently we are hoping to add some more volunteers to our list of "regulars." If you are interested in learning more about either of these positions, or volunteering in other ways, please contact:

Jean Steiner

Second Helping Volunteer Coordinator



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
700 Poyntz Avenue
Manhattan, KS 66502
(785) 537-7006
uccmanhattan.org

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U S POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 478
MANHATTAN, KS 66502

Return Service Requested



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper
made of 100% post-consumer content.



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|-----------|--|--|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 9:30 Adult Sunday School 10:45 Worship and Communion via Zoom 12:15 Lawn/Drive-thru Communion <i>Fill the breadbasket</i> 4:00 Children's Sunday School 6:00 Second Helping | 3 Offices reopen 7:30 NA mtg | 4 | 5 5:15 Deacons 7:00 AA Meeting | 6 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA Meeting | 7 | 8 |
| 9 9:30 Adult Sunday School 10:45 Worship via Zoom 4:00 Children's Sunday School 6:00 Second Helping | 10 7:30 NA mtg | 11 | 12 5:30 Christian Ed 6:30 Justice & Witness, Mission 7:00 Facilities 7:00 AA Meeting | 13 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA Meeting ----- Sandy vacation ----- | 14 | 15 |
| 16 10:45 Worship via Zoom 6:00 Second Helping | 17 7:30 NA mtg | 18 | 19 7:00 Cabinet mtg 7:00 AA Meeting ----- Sandy vacation ----- | 20 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA Meeting | 21 Newsletter deadline | 22 |
| 23 10:45 Worship via Zoom 6:00 Second Helping | 24 7:30 NA mtg | 25 | 26 7:00 AA Meeting | 27 7:00 Prayers & Fellowship 7:30 NA Meeting | 28 | 29 |
| 30 10:45 Worship via Zoom 6:00 Second Helping | 31 Memorial Day offices closed 7:30 NA mtg | | | May 2021 | | |