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---- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ----

Common Table Garden Ready for Harvest

New Community Garden Provides Fresh Produce for Community Meals in Manhattan



MANHATTAN, KANSAS - July 8, 2015 – Tucked between two homes in the 700-block of Humboldt Street, a small plot of land is nurturing a big vision for a new non-profit agency. Volunteers from local faith communities, students from Kansas State University, and other concerned citizens are working together to cultivate a vegetable garden. The produce will be used at The Second Helping at First Congregational United Church of Christ, one of the seven Common Table meals that take place at five sites each week.

Each week, seven community meals are served in area churches, often feeding 40-60 people at each meal. Many of these community meals have been offered for years, but the Common Table organization is new. Caela Simmons Wood, pastor of First Congregational United Church of Christ, explains the formation of Common Table, “About a year ago, we gathered together representatives from all the organizations who host meals, along with a few other community members who are passionate about feeding

people, to talk about creating an umbrella organization. We meet at least monthly to share ideas and are working towards an eventual goal of creating a free-standing community kitchen in Manhattan that will serve meals seven days a week.”

The Common Table Garden is new this year and over 15 volunteers have been working with Garden Coordinator Matt DeCapo over the past few months to tend the garden. Within the next week or two, the food will begin to be harvested for use at Common Table meals. DeCapo says, “We think it’s important for people to learn more about where their food is coming from and have the knowledge to grow their own food. Teaching people small tricks about gardening can address many issues of food insecurity at once.”

Common Table meals are provided year-round and are free and open to the public. Volunteers are always welcome. A listing of the meals is available at <http://www.fumcmanhattan.com/#/serve/community-resources>. **The mission of Common Table is to support existing ministries which provide community meals in Manhattan, Kansas, and to work towards expanding these meals to seven days a week and providing educational programs.** The group is made up of representatives from Ecumenical Campus Ministry at K-State, First Christian Church, First Congregational United Church of Christ, First Lutheran Church, First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist Church, Manhattan Mennonite Church, and St. Paul Episcopal Church, and the community at large.



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