



First Congregational United Church of Christ  
Manhattan, Kansas

*where God is still speaking.*

Birthing  
a Promise



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

700 Poyntz Avenue

Manhattan, Kansas 66502

The Rev. Caela Simmons Wood, Pastor

Julie Hunt, Moderator

Tai Amri Spann-Wilson, Youth Ministry

Andria Anderson, Director of Children's Ministries

Sue Zschoche, Pastoral Associate

Sandy Nelson, Administrative Assistant

telephone 785-537-7006

[www.uccmanhattan.org](http://www.uccmanhattan.org)

Gretchen Lewis, Choir Director

Robert Edwards, Mary Ellen Sutton, Organists

The Rev. Christian Watkins, Campus Pastor

Dave Smit, Treasurer

Jeff Keller, Financial Secretary

Nancy Holmes, Custodian

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 24, 2017, AT 10:45 A.M.

**Welcome!** If you are worshipping with us for the first time, we hope that you will find God's presence among us. Your presence with us enriches our vision of the Body of Christ, and we give thanks that you have joined us today. We hope you will sign the register pad when it is passed. Immediately following worship, refreshments are served at **Fellowship Hour** in Pioneer and Blachly Halls. Just exit the doors to the left of the pulpit and follow the crowd. Enjoy a cup of fair trade coffee. We look forward to greeting you there. If you have questions, please ask.

**If you have special needs**, please let one of the ushers know. Hearing assist devices, wheelchairs, and walkers are available. The elevator provides access to all three floors of the building. Restrooms are located on each floor. Our lower level has wheelchair accessible, all gender restrooms.

**Children** are welcome in worship (and we know they may need to wiggle!). If you'd prefer, we do offer activities upstairs. Children ages 3 and under are welcome in the Nursery at any time, however, today the Nursery is closed. After the Word for Children, children 3 and up are invited to join us in the theater for Kids Worship - a worship service that mirrors our service in the Sanctuary. Please check out our website for information about Sunday School for children and adults at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays during the school year.

### ---- *Assisting in Today's Worship* ----

**Word for Children:** Andria Anderson

**Sanctuary Flowers:** poinsettias

**Fellowship Hour:** Jonathan Mertz

**Greeter:** Brent Maner

**Reading Scripture:** Choir

**Grounds Care:** TBA

**WORDS OF WELCOME**

**PRELUDE**

"Greensleeves"

Mary Ellen Sutton, organ  
Vaughan Williams

**LITANY OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

*One:* love

*Many:* **in a young girl's song; fearful,  
determined,  
hopeful,  
bursting.**

*One:* love

*Many:* **in a mother's song; tender,  
embracing,  
challenging,  
stern.**

*One:* love

*Many:* **is god's song;  
curious yet timid,  
playful and wondering, coming among us again.  
we light a candle for love.**

*"love and other foolishness" by Katherine Hawker*

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath and Reflection**

Tod, Jackie, David, and Jordan Kerstetter

**Congregational Choral Response**

*(Sung to the tune of "We Three Kings")*

Gospel news we gladly tell: God-With-Us Emmanuel.  
Praises sounding, grace abounding, Love comes to earth to dwell.  
O come, rejoice, prepare a way! Christ is coming, watch and pray!  
Candles burning, spirits yearning: Love embraces us today.

*Text: Adapted from Sara Olson Dean, 2014*

*Tune: KINGS OF ORIENT, John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1857*

## Advent Prayer of Beginning (Unison)

Holy One,  
As our Advent pilgrimage draws to completion,  
grant us the courage to share your love.  
Love for the unexpected challenge,  
Love for the vulnerable one.  
Love for the presence of God.  
Amen.

*Katherine Hawker*

## ✦ **HYMN 126** (*The New Century Hymnal located in pew backs.*) “Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

*Regent Square*

✦ *Indicates all who are able, please stand.*

## **EXCHANGING THE PEACE**

*One:* The peace of Christ be with you.

*Many:* **And also with you.**

*As a sign of our reconciliation, please greet those around you  
with words such as: “Peace be with you. / And also with you.”*

## ✦ **ACT OF PRAISE** *(all join in singing Hymn #85)* “I Woke Up This Morning”

I woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus,  
Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus,  
Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus,  
Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah.  
Singing and praying with my mind stayed on Jesus,  
Singing and praying with my mind stayed on Jesus,  
Singing and praying with my mind stayed on Jesus,  
Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah.

## **LISTENING**

*for our Still-speaking God*

## **WORD FOR CHILDREN**

*Andria Anderson*

*If your child is going to Kids' Worship for the first time today, please fill out a Child Information Card (located in the back of the pew) and deliver it to one of our staff members upstairs.*

## **ADVENT WAITING**

We wait in silence and prepare our hearts to receive the gifts God offers to us  
this day.

### **THE FIRST LESSON**

John 1:1-14

David Wood

### **CAROL**

“Hymn of the Nativity”

The Choir  
Richard Crashaw, John Purifoy

### **THE SECOND LESSON**

Luke 1:26-38

Dona Sidorfsky

### **CAROL**

“Gabriel's Message”

The Choir  
*Basque carol*, arr. David Willcocks

### **THE THIRD LESSON**

Luke 2:1-7

Craig Weston

### **CAROL**

“Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head”

The Choir  
*Appalachian carol*, arr. Arthur Warrell

### **HYMN 133** (*The New Century Hymnal located in pew backs*)

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

*St. Louis*

### **THE FOURTH LESSON**

Luke 2:8-20

Sharon Keane

### **CAROL**

“O Magnum Mysterium”

The Choir  
Tomas Luis de Victoria

### **THE FIFTH LESSON**

Isaiah 35:1-10

Jim Lewis

### **CAROL**

“Carol of the Bells”

The Choir  
*Ukrainian carol*, arr. Peter Wilhousky

**OFFERTORY SENTENCE**

*Prefer to make an electronic contribution? Visit the Giving Station located in the back of the Sanctuary to make a credit or debit card gift or set up recurring contributions from your bank account.*

**MUSIC AT THE OFFERTORY**

“Fum, Fum Fum”

Tod Kerstetter, clarinet  
arr. Philip Kern

✦ **DOXOLOGY** (*Hymn 128 "In the Bleak Midwinter" v. 4*)

**What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
But what can I offer: all my heart.**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**THE SIXTH LESSON**

Revelation 22:1-7

Rachel Hunt

**CAROL**

“Jesus Christ the Apple Tree”

The Choir  
Elizabeth Poston

**PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

*You are invited to share your prayer aloud. If you would prefer to have your prayer read by the worship leader, please fill out a blue card located in the pew back and place it in the offering plate.*

*We respond: Merciful God....**hear our prayer.***

**PRAYER OF JESUS** (*said in unison*)

*“Our Father” is the traditional way this prayer begins. For many, however, the traditional language is a hindrance to the intimacy of their relationship with God. You are invited to use whatever name for God you find most meaningful (Mother, Father, Creator, God, Friend, etc.). Together, our names for God will create a beautiful chorus reaching out to the Holy.*

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.

## **GOING FORTH**

*to Be the Church*

✦ **HYMN 165** (*The New Century Hymnal located in pew backs.*)  
"Love Came Down at Christmas"

*Whitney*

**SHARING OPPORTUNITIES TO LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY.  
CHALLENGE SPIRITUALLY. MINISTER FERVENTLY.**

### **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

*One:* Be people of love.

*Many:* **Let love live in your heart and share the love of Christ with all you meet.**

*One:* Share love by loving those you see regularly. Start by loving your community.

*Many:* **Share love by loving those you do not know. How do your actions affect the rest of God's creation?**

*One:* Share love by praying for our world.

*Many:* **In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share love.**

*One:* As we go out into the wonder of God's creation, let us share love, joy, peace, and hope with those we meet.

*Many:* **Amen.**

*From LiturgyLink.net*

## ✦ CONGREGATIONAL CHORAL BENEDICTION

"All Earth is Waiting" (*Hymn 121 v. 1 and 3*)

All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,  
and open furrows, the sowing of our God.  
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;  
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain;  
open new highways, new highways for our God,  
Who is now coming closer, so come all and see,  
and open the door ways as wide as wide can be.



### TAKE TIME FOR TAIZÉ

Join us on Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. for Taizé Worship. Taizé is a 30 minute service of singing, scripture, prayer and silence based on the pattern of worship in use at the ecumenical community at Taizé, France.

#### *First Congregational UCC, Manhattan—an Open and Affirming Congregation*

In the spirit of love, openness, and inclusiveness we welcome persons of every race, culture, nationality, age, family configuration, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, and socio-economic status to participate fully in all aspects of our church's life and ministry. —from *Open and Affirming Statement* adopted May 11, 2003

*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 statement.*



## **THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE**

### ***THIS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 – LESSONS AND CAROLS***

- 8:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 10:45 a.m. Service of the Word  
Nursery Closed
- 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Hour
- 6:00 p.m. Second Helping
- 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Gathering Music
- 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

### ***MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 – OFFICE CLOSED***

- 7:30 p.m. MOA Narcotics Anonymous meeting, Conference Room

### ***TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26 – OFFICE CLOSED***

### ***WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27 – OFFICE CLOSED***

- 7:00 p.m. Turning Point AA meeting, Andover Hall

### ***THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28 – OFFICE CLOSED***

- 7:00 p.m. Taizé Service, Pioneer Hall
- 8:00 p.m. MOA Narcotics Anonymous meeting, Conference Room

### ***FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29 – OFFICE CLOSED***

- 5:00 p.m. January Newsletter deadline
- 7:30 p.m. MOA Narcotics Anonymous meeting, Conference Room

### ***NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 – POETRY AND PAJAMAS***

- 10:45 a.m. Service of the Word
- 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Hour
- 6:00 p.m. Second Helping

### ***MONDAY, JANUARY 1: OFFICE CLOSED***



*Join us on Facebook at  
[facebook.com/uccmanhattanks](https://www.facebook.com/uccmanhattanks)*

Ecumenical Campus Ministry at Kansas State University is a cooperative ministry supported by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). For more information on ECM's activities and schedules, please visit us on Facebook (ECM at K-State) or at [www.ksu.edu/ecm](http://www.ksu.edu/ecm).



**Christmas Eve** is a time for singing carols by candlelight and remembering the gift that came to us in a tiny town all those years ago. Join us at 7:00 p.m. on December 24th as we celebrate the birth of Christ by hearing the story once again and sharing Communion at Christ's table (open to all!). People of all ages are welcome at this service. Pre service music will begin at 6:45pm.

**Poetry and Pajamas** - Christmas Sunday is Dec. 31st. The service will be centered around an offering of Christmas Poetry. Children are invited to come to worship in their pajamas on this low-key, comfy morning.

**The Chrismon Tree** – The tree in Pioneer Hall is decorated with ornaments called Chrismons that were created by Women's Fellowship in 1996. A Lutheran Church in Virginia copyrighted the word "Chrismon" as a combination of "Christ" and "monogram". The lights are white and the ornaments are white and gold to symbolize the holiness of Christ and gold for the royalty of Christ. How many different symbols can you count?

**Leadership Kick-Off for 2018 Board/Committee Members** - Mark your calendars for the January Leadership Kickoff Dinner on Wednesday, January 10 at 6:00 pm. Caela will provide committee informational materials and words of support. Following the dinner groups will meet for their regularly scheduled January meeting. We will be serving soup, bread, salad and dessert. If you would like to help provide a soup, salad or dessert, contact Julie Hunt

**The nursery is closed on Dec. 24th during both services.**

Children of all ages are welcome in worship and let's all be on the lookout for caregivers who might need a helping hand or encouraging smile today. KidsWorship is still offered this morning.

**Office Closed Dec. 25-Jan. 1 / January Newsletter** – With the office closed between Christmas and New Year's, the January newsletter will be mailed a week later than usual. The deadline for submissions is Friday, Dec. 29.

## Notes on the Music

Although we usually associate the word “carol” with a traditional, anonymously-written folk song, the first dictionary definition is simply “a song of praise or joy, often associated with Christmas,” and all of the music I’ve chosen this morning certainly fits that definition. Two of the songs, *The Angel Gabriel* and *Fum, Fum, Fum* are clearly in the folk tradition; the first is a traditional Basque carol, and the second comes from Catalonia. The Ukrainian Carol of the Bells has a more complex derivation: it is a composition by an American composer of Ukrainian descent, Peter Willhousky, who lived from 1902 - 1978. He composed the now-famous “carol” in 1936, using a popular Ukrainian song by the composer Mykola Leontovych. The Appalachian carol *Jesus, Jesus Rest Your Head* is described as being “collected” by John Jacob Niles, and first published in 1935; however, many scholars believe that Niles actually composed many of the songs he “collected”. The three remaining carols are definitely composed pieces. *The Hymn of the Nativity*, first published in 2011, uses a poem by the seventeenth century Metaphysical English poet Richard Crashaw. Like many of the other poets of this group, he was an Anglican cleric, whose poems are filled with vivid religious imagery delighting in the idea of paradox. The twentieth-century English composer Elizabeth Poston (1905 - 1987) was a well-respected composer and academic who was a contemporary and friend of the more well-known British composers Peter Warlock and Ralph Vaughan Williams. She was especially known for her songs, none more lovely than *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*, which sets an anonymous text from a much earlier era. The oldest musical setting you will hear this morning is the sixteenth-century motet *O Magnum Mysterium*, by the Spanish composer Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548 - 1611). Victoria is known as one of the greatest composers of the Counter Reformation; this lovely piece was originally composed to celebrate the Feast of the Incarnation, but its beautiful contemplation of the mystery of Jesus’s birth is perfectly appropriate for our Christmas celebration as well.

*Gretchen Lewis*

### **O Magnum Mysterium**

O magnum mysterium  
et admirabile sacramentum,  
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,  
jacentem in praesepe.  
O beata Virgo,  
cujus viscera meruerunt portare  
Dominum Jesum Christum.  
Alleluia.

O great mystery  
and wondrous sacrament,  
that the animals saw the birth of the Lord,  
lying in a manger.  
O blessed Virgin,  
whose flesh was deemed worthy to carry  
the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Alleluia.

## Ministry Opportunities

It's easy to get involved! Circle any of the below paragraphs, add your contact info, and drop into the collection plate. We'll be in touch soon to get you signed up or answer your questions. Thank you.

**Second Helping is in need of additional church hosts.** The church host greets the guests, makes sure people have what they need, and generally monitors the progress of the meal. Volunteers will be paired with an experienced host until they feel comfortable with the position. The church hosts often get to know the guests over time, which is a privilege of the host position. If you would like to serve in this important role, please indicate your name and contact information on the line.

**Ministers of Care.** Do you have a heart for listening and holding sacred space? The Ministers of Care provide care and encourage the wider congregation to provide care for those in our congregation who are unable to regularly make it to worship, are in need of additional connection and support, or are going through a major life transition.

**Grounds care** in spring, summer, and fall requires mowing the church lawn, in addition to the church garden lot adjacent to the alley, prior to Sunday's worship (Thursday, Friday, or Saturday). In the winter it's a little different. Sign up for a whole week - Monday-Sunday - and if it snows, you "win" what is affectionately called the snow lottery. You've got to clear the walkways with the church snow blower.

**Worship** volunteers have many Sunday morning tasks. They greet at the door, read scripture, host fellowship hour, usher, contribute flowers, and offer the Word for Children. Sign up is easy!

**Want to be a part of the ministry opportunities? Circle the paragraph that interests you and drop this paper in the collection plate with your name and contact information.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 24, 2017

Luke 1:26-38

### Birthing a Promise

Is nothing impossible? Clearly Christmas time calls forth flagrant impossibility! Virgins conceive, old ladies are pregnant, angels appear and disappear. Not to mention all those characters—shepherds, sheep, choirs of angels stamped into figurines. Though there probably won't be a cute porcelain reproduction of a pregnant Elizabeth under your tree. Where is Elizabeth anyway, whose pregnancy is also described as miraculous, in all our Advent and Christmas storytelling?

Elizabeth is described not only as “old” but also barren. It's in her body that God begins this rhapsody of excitement building to Mary's song. In her is planted the “seed” of the great announcer of the new age—that realm-of-God-guy, the caller forth of hope—John the Baptist. Does she have a role in our annual Christmas pageants? Probably not. Elizabeth is like many older women in our world. She is invisible and an emblem of decline.

When a congregation gets small enough, it is also sometimes described as “aging.” Did you ever think that older people, especially older women, offer more than a few important ingredients to your congregation? They have time. They have the energy. They have skills and are willing to teach them. They have great stories to tell. They knew everybody when they were twelve. Who else always shows up; and who will make sure the lights are on and the tables set? How many of our churches have a female Treasurer who used to be the finance person for the school board? Who are the retired teachers, nurses and doctors, lawyers and business owners sitting in our pews? Old ladies! None of them is likely to have a budding John the Baptist within them, but some of them may tell you quite plainly, if you are lucky, when the rough ways will be made smooth and the high brought low.

Murphys, California is a small town (population around 2000) in the foothills of the Sierra Mountains. It's a place people drive to for the weekend or the summer, full of interesting little towns, old Gold Rush stories and beautiful scenery. It also has a UCC church with a membership of under 200 and about 80 in worship. In a conservative part of the state they are open and affirming, progressive and host an LGBT youth group for the county. Its membership is “older” and active, welcoming to all. They make sure everyone who comes is fed. The town of Murphys has a median age near 60. This past summer they hosted a community potluck and discussion of white privilege. Sometimes aging doesn't mean lifeless. Sometimes it means new life, welcoming the birthday of joy!



8 1/2" x 14" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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