



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 68 Number 4

April 2024

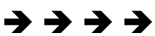
**Sunday School at 9:30 A.M.** (when school is in session)  
**Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M.**      **700 Poyntz Avenue**  
**Second Helping Dinner at 6:00 P.M.**      **Manhattan, Kansas 66502**  
**Third Thursday Prayers at 7:00 P.M.**      **telephone 785-537-7006**  
[www.uccmanhattan.org](http://www.uccmanhattan.org)

## 2024 Pastoral Sabbatical

It's hard to believe that 2019 (yes, it's been five years already!) was when Pastor Caela's last sabbatical took place. There were three things Pastor Caela focused on during the summer of 2019: rest, adventure, and reintegration—ending in a spiritual retreat. We are thankful that Pastor Caela took the time to achieve her sabbatical goals and return refreshed. Little did we know what the next few years would hold, and we hope that the time Pastor Caela spent during her time away helped prepare her for pastoring our Church during a very stressful couple of years. Since 2019, the way we worship and meet together has expanded in many ways and our congregation has been incredibly blessed to have a Pastor who is compassionate, forward-thinking, and tech-savvy, and thus able to find creative ways to prepare for and lead Zoom and in-person church services.

Now, five years later, Pastor Caela will be on a well-earned sabbatical from May 1 through August 17, 2024. Her focus for this sabbatical will be rest, rejuvenation, and rejoicing.

*(continued pg 2)*



### Inside this Newsletter



Sharing & Caring.....	3	Christian Education.....	8
Stay Green!.....	5	Interfaith Earth Day Service.....	10
One Great Hour of Sharing.....	6	Second Helping.....	11

A pastoral sabbatical is unlike an academic sabbatical where a tangible outcome is expected, such as a research article, book, art project, or composition. It is a time for Sabbath—rest and worship.

During Caela’s Sabbath, the Sabbatical Committee encourages the congregation to take time to do the following:

1. Assess Pastor Caela’s duties and unburden her of things that others can do: As time evolves, (yes, Pastor Caela has been with us for 10 years!) Pastors often assume roles or responsibilities that someone else should be doing.
2. Reflect and Discern: It is a time when our congregation may want to reflect on where our church has been; where we are; and determine where we want to go. Our church strives for peace, justice, and inclusivity. The work is exhausting and can become overwhelming. A time of discernment, to affirm or re-establish our purpose may be a good way for our church to welcome back Pastor Caela at the end of the summer.

Let’s help our congregation become a stronger, more unified church, which will help us to continue building a loving community for all as we advocate for peace and justice.

You will be receiving additional information from Paul Hunt, Moderator, that will include information on worship, pastoral care, leadership, and communications. If you are interested in helping in any way during this time, please contact the church office.

2024 Sabbatical Committee,  
*Jennifer Edwards, Janet George, and Tracey Weston*

## **Save the Date for Special Services This Summer**

**May 12:** Worship in the Park and Blessing of the Animals

**May 19:** Pentecost & Christian Education Recognition

**May 26:** Shared Summer Worship at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (with our Mennonite and UU friends)

**June 30:** Shared Summer Worship at First Congregational

**July 28:** Shared Summer Worship at Manhattan Mennonite

## Sharing and Caring

### *Prayer Requests*

For more information, please contact the church office.

### *Helping*

- **Need a ride to church?** Contact one of our transportation volunteers: Jim/Carolyn Hodgson, Bill Pallett, or Jeff Keller.
- **Home Communion Visits** If you would like to receive Communion at home, please reach out to Pastor Caela or a Deacon to make arrangements.

***E-MAIL PRAYER CHAIN*** – If you wish to be added to the First Congregational e-mail prayer chain, please contact the church office. It is a quick and easy way to stay up to date with your church family.



### **TAKE TIME FOR TAIZÉ**

Join us on third Thursdays 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.



## Lunch Bunch: April 3 @ Rockin' K's

We join together in an opportunity to get to know one another, Wednesday, April 3 at Rockin' K's (1880 Kimball Ave., Ste. 100). Everyone is welcome to join us for lunch at 11:30 a.m.



## Fill the Breadbasket

On the first Sunday of each month we "fill the breadbasket" for The Second Helping. You can view a list of the needs on our website here (<https://www.uccmanhattan.org/the-second-helping.html>). If you'd like to make a special contribution to help us purchase food and supplies for the Second Helping, you can do so at any time at [uccmanhattan.org/giving](http://uccmanhattan.org/giving) (no login required) or by mailing at check to 700 Poyntz, Manhattan, KS 66502.

## Graduate Recognition

The Graduation season has arrived! 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 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](mailto:office@uccmanhattan.org).



## Did you miss worship?

If you missed worshipping with us, we offer several opportunities for catching part of what you missed. First, you can always reach out to the office if you'd like a link to the recording of worship. We do not share this publicly due to privacy concerns but will share it with members and friends upon request. Second, you can watch, listen, or read recent sermons on our website at [uccmanhattan.org/sermons](http://uccmanhattan.org/sermons). You can also subscribe to the sermon podcast which will keep you up-to-speed with new sermons as they're shared.

# Stay Green!

We recently learned that churches will no longer be included in the Grow Green fundraising event sponsored by the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation. This event, which takes place each year in April, had become a major source of support for our Church, as gifts totaling over \$20,000 were given in both 2023 and 2022. We are so grateful for the many donors who have given to the Church and for the matching donation that was made to our account at GMCF.



stay green

We encourage everyone to donate to the many great community agencies that are still part of Grow Green, and we hope you will continue to support First Congregational by making a gift directly to the Church in April. This is so important because we adopted a budget for 2024 that anticipated \$15,000 in support generated by the Grow Green campaign. You can designate your gift by noting “Stay Green” in the memo line of your check or payment.

If you have any questions, you can reach out to Brent Maner, Treasurer; or Rick Doll, Millie Schroeder, or Susanne Gilmore as members of the Gifts, Endowments, and Investments Committee.

## Connection Points

**Sundays:** Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. for adults (hybrid) and children (in-person only) | visit [uccmanhattan.org/online](https://uccmanhattan.org/online) for the Zoom link. (*When school is in session.*)

Worship at 10:45 a.m. in our Sanctuary or via Zoom | visit [uccmanhattan.org/online](https://uccmanhattan.org/online) for the Zoom link.

Fellowship Hour immediately following worship in-person or via Zoom | visit [uccmanhattan.org/online](https://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](https://uccmanhattan.org/online) for the Zoom link

**Third Thursdays:** Taizé at 7:00 p.m. in-person

For more information about kids and youth activities, contact [Brandy@uccmanhattan.org](mailto:Brandy@uccmanhattan.org) (age 3 through 5th grade) or [Pastor@uccmanhattan.org](mailto:Pastor@uccmanhattan.org) (6th-12th grades).

# One Great Hour of Sharing Offering:

## April 14

One Great Hour of Sharing is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC.



We support life-giving recovery efforts when disasters devastate communities and lives. We empower partners worldwide in their labors to build sustainable futures. We plant seeds of peace where war has multiplied despair and destruction.

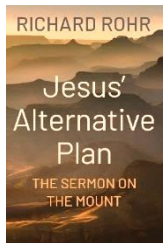
Our communities and world need these blessings so very much right now. Our role as faithful light-bearers carries a witness of love and hope and persevering possibility that counteracts the cynicism, hatred, and hopelessness that are all too prevalent in this moment.

Thank you for ‘bringing out the God-colors in the world’ by generously sharing your OGHS gifts when we receive the offering on April 14. This is why we are here: to be shining witnesses of uncommon love and enduring hope and to be generous with our lives.

Thank you from the Board of Mission.

## Tuesday Book Study

The Tuesday Book Club is reading Father Richard Rohr’s book on the Sermon on the Mount. Titled *Jesus’ Alternative Plan*, Father Rohr argues that in this famous sermon, Jesus offered a blueprint for a new way of being in the world: a way that overturns conventional wisdom and challenges all the power structures that seek to control human life. The Way of Jesus is the way of justice and mercy, and, a profound transformation in what we humans think of as “the good life.”



The Tuesday Book Club meets every Tuesday from 11:30 to 1:00 via Zoom. It’s not too late to join as we discuss this book. Our weekly conversations are always marked by lively questions and deep contemplation of what we have all read. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Pastor Sue.

## Safety Reminders

**AED:** The AED is located in the lobby next to the coat closet. An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a portable electronic device that automatically diagnoses life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias and is able to treat them through defibrillation, the application of electricity which stops the arrhythmia, allowing the heart to reestablish an effective rhythm.

Our AED is fully automated and requires no training or special skills to use. Our AED includes advanced features to help guide the treatment of sudden cardiac arrest and will verbally guide you through the AED and CPR process. Questions? Reach out to Anne Fredrickson, Board of Facilities.

**CPR Masks:** These kits include masks for adults, children and infants and allow mouth to mouth to be given in a way that protects both the rescuer and the person needing help. There is a mask on each level of the church: one in the nursery restroom, one in a kitchen drawer to the left of the fridge, and one in a drawer in the basement kitchen.

**First Aid Kits:** Located in the marked drawer in the kitchen.

**Narcan (naloxone) for suspected opioid overdose:** Located in the marked drawer in the kitchen. Narcan is designed to be used by any bystander without any training. The box has instructions on it.

**Building awareness:** Please take time to read the laminated cards in the sanctuary that detail how to exit the sanctuary if needed. You are also encouraged to look around the building for emergency exit routes and fire extinguishers when you are here.

## Options for Giving

We are grateful for your financial support as we continue to Love Unconditionally, Challenge Spiritually, and Minister Fervently together.

### Options for giving:

- 1) Place in the plate on Sunday morning or mail your contribution to 700 Poyntz Ave., Manhattan, KS 66502.
- 2) Donate online. Go to [uccmanhattan.org/giving](http://uccmanhattan.org/giving).
- 3) Set up a recurring online gift. It 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.

# Christian Education

Please contact Brandy McDonald ([brandy@uccmanhattan.org](mailto:brandy@uccmanhattan.org)) for more information about options for children and youth.

At the end of February, the kids got to learn more about M.A.R.T., or Manhattan Area Resettlement Team. We learned about the refugees they help, the sorts of services they provide, and how important it is to speak up for these members of our community! They made a paper garland to hang in their office!

They also learned a song with Gretchen to share with the congregation. The way our kids ask questions and serve with their whole hearts is always so encouraging and inspiring to those lucky enough to spend time with them!



## April Schedule:

**April 7, 14, 21:** Traditional Sunday School

**April 28:** Intergenerational Service Sunday: Caring for our Prairies!

## Adult Sunday School

Meet with us each Sunday in person or by Zoom at 9:30 a.m.

**April 7** Holy Week wrap up

**April 14** Environment in Trouble—But it's Not Too Late:  
*Jack Sytsma*

**April 21** Earth Day Activities: *Jack Sytsma*

**April 28** Walter Brueggeman – Materiality is Resistance  
series, video and discussion



# Help us Bless our Confirmation Youth

On April 28th we will be confirming 9 youth. We can't wait! The youth will be leading worship that day and the Board of Christian Education will host a special fellowship hour. We hope you'll be able to join us.

We will be presenting each confirmand with a student Bible and WE NEED YOUR HELP! You are invited to write down a note about a favorite Bible story or passage on a Post It note for each Bible. You can make 9 copies of the same note or pick a different passage for each confirmand. If handwriting isn't your thing, you can also print 9 copies of your note on small slips of paper.

At fellowship hour that day we'll have you stick your note in each confirmand's Bible. This will give them a jumping-off point for exploring their new Bible as they are surrounded by our love and care at this stage of their faith journey.

You can bring your notes with you on April 28th OR we will have some blank Post Its available at fellowship that day if you'd like to write them there. The photo shows a sample of what we're inviting you to do, but if you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Caela. If you cannot be at worship on April 28th, you can mail your Post It notes to the office ahead of time and we can place them in the confirmands' Bibles for you!

## Little Apple Pride: April 20 at City Park

The Little Apple Pride Parade starts at **3:00 pm.** in the City Pool parking lot. We are joining forces with the Multifaith Justice Team including our friends at the Manhattan Mennonite and Unitarian Universalist faith communities, so our witness to the community will have even greater resonance. Marching in the parade is a genuinely fun thing to do, and I heartily recommend you come and join us!

There is also an event in City Park. We will have a table staffed jointly with our faith community partners. We'll be outside this year, and the Vendor Event will take place from **3:00 to 6:00 pm.** Watch for more information in Friday emails and Sunday bulletins. Our Justice and Witness team members from FCUCC include April Asher, Jean Steiner, Kathy Sherlock, and Gretchen Lewis, with Nancy Stover and Mel Pooler as support. Please let us know if you'd like to give an hour or so of your time on Saturday, April 20 to help staff our table. Parade Marchers need to just show up a little before 3:00. Thanks!

*Gretchen Lewis* for the Justice and Witness Team

## Interfaith Earth Day Service

Need a moment to pause? Wish you could take a breath in the sunshine? Be a part of a shared interfaith service after some optional time outdoors (starting at 3PM) on Sunday, April 21 at 4:30PM at the First Christian Church of Manhattan. Come early to play lawn games and other fun outdoor activities starting at 3PM.

Our service includes music, readings and reflections from the host communities. All are welcome to join!

Sponsoring communities:

Manhattan Jewish Congregation

Ecumenical Campus Ministry at K-State

First Christian Church of Manhattan

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan

This interfaith service is meant as a way to meet each other and create community together. There are many ways we are already interconnected, so let's come together (in person!) to acknowledge our interconnectedness.

## RCHS program features history of First Congregational Church

Come explore local history as the Riley County Historical Society partners with Leo Schell and the First Congregational United Church of Christ for a presentation titled, "The Founding of the First Congregational Church: When, Where, Who, and Why." Held in the church's Pioneer Hall and Blachly Room at 700 Poyntz Ave., the program will be on Tuesday, April 23, at 6:30 p.m. The church was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2008.

Leo Schell is a church member and emeritus faculty of the Kansas State University College of Education, as well as a lifetime member and supporter of the RCHS.

The First Congregational Church got its start in April 1855 in a tent near the vicinity of the present building. Construction on the original stone church began in 1858. A fun fact is that donors for construction included Owen Lovejoy, Stephen A. Douglas, and Abraham Lincoln. The first building is still in use as Pioneer Hall. This gives the church the distinction of being the oldest Protestant church building in Kansas still in use by its original congregation. Many additions have been made to the original building through the years.

This event is part of the RCHS speaker series and is free and open to the public.

# Second Helping Volunteers Needed

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: Les Kuhlman, Second Helping Volunteer Coordinator.



---

## Current Second Helping needs:

- **shelf-stable food:** oatmeal packets, peanut butter snack crackers, cereal bars, canned vegetables (and we LOVE big cans) and slaw, ranch and Italian salad dressings.
- **cash donations:** for food items needed for meals and lunches and for To-Go supplies
- **Dessert Makers:** need homemade desserts for 60 every week. To sign up go to [www.uccmanhattan.org/sign-ups](http://www.uccmanhattan.org/sign-ups).
- **Head Cooks or cooking teams:** cooking teams in the kitchen are usually family members. Contact Jean or Linda for info.
- **Sunday evening volunteers:** 2 or 3 volunteers on Sunday evenings. Contact Jean
- **Lunch volunteers:** Making the sack lunches during any time before Sunday. Contact Shari. She also welcomes homemade goodies to put in the lunches.

## Mission Statement

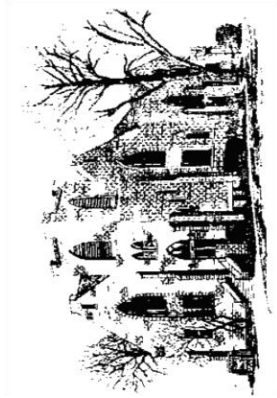
The Mission of First Congregational United Church of Christ is

- 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.

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

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



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

**Return Service Requested**