



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 68 Number 5

May 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)

## Hello from Sabbatical

By the time you receive this newsletter, my 2024 sabbatical will be underway. I begin this sabbath season with a spirit of gratitude. I am thankful for the many capable leaders and staff in our congregation who have prepared our congregation for this season. I am also thankful for the many people who will try new things, step into our pulpit, and work together to ensure our ministry isn't diminished during my time away. I give thanks for a decade of ministry here at First Congregational and I look forward to seeing what the Spirit has planned for us upon my return. By now you've hopefully seen the information circulating from our church leaders about how pastoral coverage will be handled while I am gone. If you have questions, I hope you'll contact Moderator Paul Hunt or another church leader so they can assist.

Many folks have asked what this sabbatical period will look like for me, so I'd love to share a bit about that with you. Everyone approaches this gift of time differently and, for me, I take the sabbath part of sabbatical very seriously. And so I'm never quite sure how to answer *(continued pg 2)*



### Inside this Newsletter



Sharing & Caring.....	3	Christian Education.....	8
Celebrating our Graduates .....	4	Mission Statement.....	10
Strengthen the Church offering .....	6	Second Helping .....	11

the question, “what are you going to do on your sabbatical?” because a big part of what I’m trying to do is step away from the daily grind of “doing.”

Instead, my hope for sabbatical is to lean into BEing. Sabbath is about cultivating a spirit of deep rest. It’s also about creating space for the Spirit to inspire new life, energy, and joy. So I have done my best to create a sabbath season that has a few highlights planned but plenty of pace for unexpected adventures and creativity to blossom.

I will continue to meet with my spiritual director regularly. And I (of course) have about five piles of books I’m hoping to explore. The expansiveness of time each day means it will be much easier to cultivate new spiritual practices and reconnect with old spiritual friends like long walks outdoors, poetry, and silent meditation.

Our family has plans for travel to places we’ve never been before - nothing quite like seeing faraway places to inspire gratitude for the great diversity of God’s creation. I will also be traveling to Detroit with a colleague from my NGLI (Next Generation Leadership Initiative) group to focus on creativity in ministry. I have plans for a silent retreat in Tulsa, where I will also visit with some UCC colleagues and friends. And I will close the summer with a retreat-reunion with my spiritual director training cohort.

What I learned from my first sabbatical is that some of the most treasured gifts from this season are the things I didn’t have planned. So I am looking forward with eager anticipation to seeing what the Spirit has in store for me. I am so grateful for this gift of time and the many ways it will nurture my spirit for ministry.

I look forward to August 18th, when I return to worship with you.

Peace,

*Pastor Caela*

## **Lunch Bunch: May 1 @ LongHorn Steakhouse**

We join together in an opportunity to get to know one another, Wednesday, May 1 at LongHorn Steakhouse (505 Tuttle Creek Blvd). Everyone is welcome to join us for lunch at 11:30 a.m.



## 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 or Bill Pallett.
- **Home Communion Visits** If you would like to receive Communion at home, please reach out to Pastor Caela or a Deacon to make arrangements.

### **Sabbatical Coverage**

During Pastor Caela's sabbatical (May 1 - August 17) we have designated Ministers of Care who are on call to assist you with any pastoral care needs that might arise. If an urgent situation occurs outside our regular office hours, please contact the Minister of Care who is on call for assistance. Please note: you should leave a voicemail if they do not answer their phone, as many of us receive a high volume of spam calls and do not pick up when the number is unknown. The Minister of Care who is on call for the month of May is Stephanie R., (814) 853-0661.

***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.



# Celebrating our Graduates



Please join us in celebrating those graduating who are a part of our congregation!

- **Kathy Lillich** graduating from Kansas State University with a Master of Science in Academic Advising.
- **Madison Lillich** graduating from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Entomology and a minor in Plant Pathology.

Mother and daughter are pretty excited to be graduating the same weekend.

## Worship in the Park & Blessing of the Animals

It's time for our annual Blessing of the Animals and Worship in the Park. Join us at (shady) Long's Park on Sunday, May 12 for this special service. We will gather for fellowship BEFORE the service rather than have a potluck after the service as we've done in previous years. Fellowship begins at 10:15 and worship will begin at 10:45.

Childcare staff will be on hand to care for young kids who want to explore the playground or the rest of the park.

Things to bring to the park:

- your own lawn chair, if you have one
- your pet (or stuffed animal!) for a blessing

\*\*\*If you have any questions about accessibility at the park, please let us know.

For those worshipping at home, please use the regular Zoom link. If you have an animal you'd like blessed at home, please reach out to Pastor Sue so she can arrange a visit.

NOTE: no Sunday School on May 12. Join us at the park before worship for donuts and coffee beginning at 10:15 a.m.



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS AND

**WORSHIP IN THE PARK**

Sunday, May 12 at 10:45am  
Long's Park (17th and Yuma)

Zoom link at [uccmanahattan.org/online](https://uccmanahattan.org/online)

## Pentecost is May 19

You're invited to wear red (or orange or yellow) on Pentecost Sunday. This tradition reminds us of the story in Acts 2 where "tongues of flames" ushered in the gift of the Holy Spirit. Wear your fire-y best for this joyful Sunday! Hats, streamers, tambourines and noise makers all welcome!

## Christian Education Recognition Sunday

Join us for worship Sunday, May 19 as we bless people of all ages who have participated in Christian Education offerings this past school year. Kids and adult learners....all our teachers....plus, we'll be presenting Bibles to some of our elementary students. We worship on Zoom at 10:45 a.m. and you'll find the link and bulletin at [uccmanhattan.org/online](http://uccmanhattan.org/online).

## Summer Shared Worship

Once again, we will join our friends from Manhattan Mennonite Church and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship for 3 shared summer worship services. On these Sundays, we will all gather in ONE building and worship together. Here's the schedule for these special services:



May 26: shared worship at UUFM (481 Zeandale Rd)



June 30: shared worship at First Congregational



July 28: shared worship at Manhattan Mennonite (1000 Fremont)

All three services will be offered via Zoom.

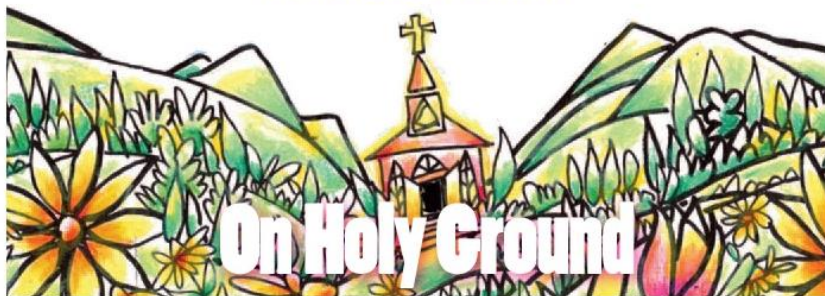
Note: we regret that the Mennonite meetinghouse is not fully accessible. If you have specific questions about accessibility, please reach out to the church office.



# Strengthen the Church Offering: May 19

The Strengthen the Church Offering is the second of the four national UCC denominational offerings which our local church supports each year. Often held in connection with the celebration of Pentecost, the Strengthen the Church Offering supports local UCC congregations in many ways.

Through the **Strengthen the Church Offering**, we help support the work of conferences and the national setting as we become a multi-racial/ multi-cultural church.



## 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).

MAY 19



CHRISTIAN

EDUCATION

SUNDAY



Honoring our Christian  
Educator and participants,  
and getting bibles to our  
outgoing 2nd graders!



## 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.*

Holy Week and Easter is always a highlight of the Children's Ministry year! This year on Palm Sunday, our kids once again let "Walking Through Holy Week" to help church members



prepare their hearts for Holy Week. On Easter Sunday, we enjoyed a special butterfly craft during church and then, of course, the egg hunt! During April we also learned about the generosity of the woman in the temple who gave little but all that she had, and an Intergenerational Sunday School service Sunday about caring for our earth!



## Looking forward to May:

**May 5:** Traditional Sunday School

**May 12:** No Sunday School due to

Worship at the Park, childcare will be available on the playground with our nursery staff!

**May 19:** Traditional Sunday school and Christian Education Sunday!

After that Sunday school will be on the break for the summer! Kids Worship is TBD, but I'll keep you posted!





# Adult Sunday School

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

- May 5** Walter Brueggeman video discussion: Materiality
- May 12** No Sunday school. Blessing of the animals at the park
- May 19** Last day of Sunday school. Idea brainstorming for next year.

# Tuesday Book Study

The Tuesday Book Club has finished reading Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* and is taking a six-week hiatus.

The Tuesday Book Club regularly meets each Tuesday from 11:30 to 1:00 via Zoom. 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.



## 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.

Thank you for keeping your pledge current during the summer months.

Have you considered setting up automated giving? You can ask your bank to send a recurring donation or fill out an authorization form at [www.uccmanhattan.org/giving.html](http://www.uccmanhattan.org/giving.html). You can also set up recurring donations using the Give Butter donation form on our website.

Questions about setting up automated giving? Please contact the church office and Sandy will get you started.

## Staff Availability

Please note the office will be closed on Monday, May 27 in observance of Memorial Day.

## 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.

# 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.



---

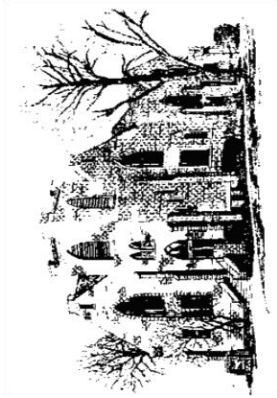
## Current Second Helping needs:

- **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 Les 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.

**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**