

BE CURIOUS LEARNING



SEPTEMBER 29, 2024, AT 10:45 A.M.

Welcome! If you are worshiping 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 encourage you to sign in using our online connect card at uccmanhattan.org/online. If you're worshiping with us in the sanctuary you can also sign in at either door, if you'd rather. Immediately following worship, we hope you'll join us for conversation or just stay put in the Zoom room if you're worshiping online. We look forward to greeting you there. If you have questions, please ask.

If you need accommodations, 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. Diaper changing stations are located in both restrooms on the main floor.

Children are welcome in worship (and we know they may need to wiggle!). Please reach out to Brandy McDonald (brandy@uccmanhattan.org) if you have questions about children's ministries. You may visit our website for information about Sunday School for children and adults during the school year.

WiFi password for FCUCC guest:

YouAreLoved

Our service is recorded so we can share it with those who may have missed worship today. If you are present in the sanctuary, you may be included in this recording. Please contact one of the pastors for more information.

----- Assisting in Today's Worship -----

Sanctuary Greeter: Eliot, Emerson, Maitland
Word for Children: Brandy McDonald
Tech Team: Janet George, Carol Sevin

Reading Scripture: Ogden
Zoom Sharer: Kerri Keller
Fellowship Host: UCC Youth

WELCOME

INVITATION TO CURIOSITY

We live in a society that thinks we can search and instantly find the answer for every question. What learning takes more time? How do we find wisdom? As we begin worship, focus on something that you know or would like to know that would take time to learn.

CENTERING MUSIC

“Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose”

Mary Ellen Sutton, organ
Fedak

CALLED INTO GOD'S PRESENCE

One: Come, you who are filled with wonder.

Many: **Come, you who have unsettled questions in your heart.**

One: Come, you who are weary and worn out.

Many: **Come, you who have hard-learned wisdom or fresh curiosity to share.**

One: Come, however it is that you are. You are welcome here.

Many: **Let us worship our Still-Speaking God.**

✦ **HYMN 21** (*The New Century Hymnal located in pew backs.*)

“God Reigns O'er All the Earth”

Terra Beata

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

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: Rabbi, Teacher Jesus,
You who taught thousands
And yet were willing to learn from the least of these,
We confess that we pretend to know
When in truth we still wonder.

Many: **Forgive our pretense,
That we may open ourselves to unexpected teachers,
To fresh ideas, To one another, To you.**

One: Vulnerable Christ,
You who lived in generous love,
We confess that we have closed ourselves off,

That we have seen so much suffering
That we stop looking
Rather than see and respond to those in need.

Many: **Forgive our neglect**

**That we may care for one another
And follow in the example you set for us.
In your name we pray. Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Let us share these words of assurance with one another:

Many: **Disciples, followers, students of the living Christ, know that you are forgiven always and freed to begin anew through God's everlasting mercy and love. Amen.**

✦ **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." If you are worshiping online, you can use the chat feature in Zoom. Please be mindful of other people's preferences about physical contact. If you prefer not to shake hands, you can let others around you know by pressing your palms together in front of your heart (as if in prayer).

✦ **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:

Brandy McDonald

Children ages 3-1st grade are welcome to attend Kids Worship after the Word for Children. Children are walked up by staff/volunteer.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Ogden

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 (*First Testament page 565 in the pew Bible*)

James 3:13-18 (*Second Testament page 214 in the pew Bible*)

Contemporary Reading: by Robert Fulghum

SERMON

Rev. Caela Simmons Wood

“Be Curious: Learning”

🌀 RESPONDING

in hope and thanksgiving

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

Prefer to make an electronic contribution? Scan the QR Code at right with the camera on your smartphone to be taken directly to our donate page or visit uccmanhattan.org/giving to learn how to set up automatic giving. Thank you for being a part of our ministry.



OFFERTORY

“God Be in My Head”

Choir
John Rutter

✦ DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heav'nly host:

Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

You are invited to type your prayers into the chat.

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

PRAYER OF JESUS (*said in unison*)

You are invited to use whatever name for God you find most meaningful (Mother, Father, Creator, God, Friend, Holy One, etc.). Together, our names for God will create a beautiful chorus reaching out to the Holy.

Heavenly Parent, heavenly Mother,
Holy and blessed is your true name.
We pray for your reign of peace to come,
We pray that your good will be done,
Let heaven and earth become one.
Give us this day the bread we need,
Give it to those who have none.
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us,
From each one to each one.
Lead us to holy innocence
Beyond the evil of our days –
Come swiftly Parent, Father, come.
For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:
Forever your name is All in One. Amen.

This version of the prayer was adapted from Parker J. Palmer.

GOING FORTH

to be messengers of good news

✦ **HYMN 488** (*The New Century Hymnal located in pew backs.*)
"Be Still, My Soul"

Finlandia

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

New to First Congregational? We'd love to meet you. Use the QR code at right to complete a Connect Card.



✦ **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

One: We have listened today in curiosity and in hope.

Many: **May our minds be renewed.**

One: We have listened today in wonder and in imagination.

Many: **May our hearts be expanded.**

One: We have listened today in bravery and in flexibility.

Many: **May the world be transformed.**

✦ CONGREGATIONAL CHORAL BENEDICTION

"What A Wonderful World"

Bob Thiele and George David Weiss

I see trees of green - red roses, too.

I see them bloom - for me and you.

And I think to myself,
what a wonderful world.

I see skies of blue - and clouds of white.

The bright blessed day - the dark sacred night.

And I think to myself,
what a wonderful world.

POSTLUDE

"We Praise Your Name"

Diemer

Generosity Spotlight – This week we give thanks for....

the Ministry of the Decorative Scissors. This joyful group meets in the "crafting bunker" every month or so to craft, nosh, and provide support to one another.

Over the years this group has supported its members (many of whom are from the wider community) through life's ups and downs. They are also excel at hospitality, helping new folks as they seek community. Plus, they are always ready to help with our crafting needs from backpack tags to greeting cards to quilts to Paschal candles, balloon arches and more!

Thank you for Being the Church!

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, SEPTEMBER 29

- 8:30 a.m. Choir Practice
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:45 a.m. Service of the Word
- 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Hour
- 6:00 p.m. Second Helping

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

- 5:30 p.m. UFM Yoga Class, Blachly Room

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1

- 12:15 p.m. UFM Yoga Class, Blachly Room

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2

- 11:30 p.m. Lunch Bunch @ Panera Bread
- 12:00 p.m. MOA Narcotics Anonymous meeting, Conference Room
- 5:15 p.m. Board of Deacons meeting, Zoom
- 5:30 p.m. Board of Christian Education, Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Turning Point AA meeting, Blachly Room

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

- 7:30 p.m. MOA Narcotics Anonymous meeting, Andover Hall

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

- 7:30 p.m. MOA Narcotics Anonymous meeting, Andover Hall

NEXT SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6

- 8:30 a.m. Choir Practice
- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
Youth Donuts
- 10:45 a.m. Service of Word and Sacrament
Fill the Breadbasket
- 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Hour
- 6:00 p.m. Second Helping



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

Permission to print the music in this service obtained from One License with license #A-710121.

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



Volunteers for Sunday, October 6

Greeter: Carolyn Hodgson

Reading Scripture: Jim Mock

Fellowship Host: Kerri Keller

Zoom Screen Sharer: Brent Maner

Tech Team: Henry, Jason, Jo Maseberg-Tomlinson

Visit
uccmanhattan.org/sign-ups
to volunteer.

Second Helping Volunteer Opportunity -- The Second Helping is seeking volunteers for the following dates:

10/13: Head cook, assistant cook, greeter

10/20: ALL positions

Go to www.uccmanhattan.org, scroll down, and click on “Volunteer Sign Ups” to sign up now.

Be Curious: Learning and Knowledge – We can always learn new things about the world, but sometimes we forget curiosity when life gets busy or difficult. How do we practice staying curious and keeping an open mind? Jesus was always surprising folks in his ministry. He celebrated the wisdom of children and encouraged openness to new perspectives. Join us Sunday as we celebrate children and focus on learning as a part of curiosity. Let’s Be Curious together!

Tuesday Book Group – The Tuesday Book Club regularly meets each Tuesday from 11:30 to 1:00 via Zoom. Together, we read books with spiritual relevance. Our past readings have included works about the life of Jesus, Celtic Christianity, the life of Mary Magdalene, the Sermon on the Mount, and many more topics. Conversations are always marked by lively questions and deep contemplation of what we have read, and the group is known for its loving support of each other. The fall book is “Wearing God: Clothing, Laughter, Fire, and Other Overlooked Ways of Meeting God” by Lauren Winner. If you are interested in joining our book study, please contact Pastor Sue: sue@uccmanhattan.org.

For more music updates go to www.uccmanhattan.org/news.

Lunch Bunch: October 2 @ Panera Bread – We join together in an opportunity to get to know one another, Wednesday, October 2 at Panera Bread (315 Southwind Place). Everyone is welcome to join us for lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Mini Hymnal Creation – We had some excellent congregational singing this summer. I'd love to put together a kind of First Congregational mini hymnal of hymns you'd like to sing every two or three months. If you have favorite hymns to suggest, please send me some hymn titles. If we have a good response, we can select the 15 - 20 greatest hits, and put them in a rotation. Thank you!

Gretchen Lewis, Music Coordinator (gretchenlouise17@gmail.com)

Go to <http://www.uccmanhattan.org/news/music-notes-september-2024> for more music updates

Adult Sunday School – 9:30 a.m.

Oct. 6: Earth as a Foundation: Deane Lehmann

Oct. 13: Indigenous Peoples Day: Lisa Tatonetti

Oct. 20: Environment discussion: Jack Sytsma

Oct. 27: Intergenerational activity

A Place for You – "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." At some point in your journey, you may discover that you are feeling a pull to deepen your commitment to our faith community. You may be wondering, "Hey, how do I become a member of this congregation?"

If you're feeling a tug to consider membership, we'd love to explore that with you. We anticipate welcoming new members in November (but can also work around your schedule). You can reach out directly to the church office to express your interest. Learn more about what membership means on our website:

<http://www.uccmanhattan.org/become-a-member.html>

Time to Update the Directory – It's time to update photos in our church directory. Please consider having your individual and family photos taken after worship in September. (Think: iPhone snap not a formal portrait - no need to get dressed up.) Just look for us after worship in the main lobby or outside (weather permitting). We plan to print a 2024-2025 directory for those who would like a hard copy sometime in October stay tuned for info about how to request one.

If you'd rather upload your OWN photo or other information you can do that any time by logging into Breeze. Lost your Breeze login information? Contact the church office to get connected.

Come and Find the Quiet Center – Please know that you're welcome to come use the sanctuary for quiet contemplation and prayer whenever the building is open. If you're coming from a distance, you might want to call ahead to make sure no one else is using the space or to ask for the temperature to be adjusted. Pastor Caela has put together a basket of Prayer Resources that you can use while you're in the sanctuary. There are books featuring the writings of Howard Thurman, Marian Wright Edleman, Henri Nouwen, Rumi, Sarah Bessey, Ross Gay and more. You can also share your written prayers in our spiral bound prayer notebook for others to read, as well. Just grab the basket from the bookshelves in the corner of the main lobby and return it when you're finished.



TAKE TIME FOR TAIZÉ

Join us on the third Thursday of the month 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.

Membership Engagement Committee Seeks Your Help

The Member Engagement Committee or Nominating Committee is responsible for filling the positions on Committees and Boards that serve the church and work to fulfill our mission.

It is that time of year when we work to fill openings on these Committees and Boards to serve next year, 2025. Members of the Nominating Committee will be contacting all who attend First Congregational Church to ask if you will serve. We know that many of you are already committed to serving on a Committee and Board and will continue in that role next year. Thank you! However, there are several openings that we will work to fill before the entire slate is approved and installed by the Congregation. It is our hope that we can complete this task by the end of September. Please consider taking on a role of service on a Board or Committee if asked. The church cannot continue to flourish and grow unless all who are able and willing will take on a role of service in this way.

First Congregational Church does so much for so many in our congregation, community, and beyond our area. That can only continue if we all do our part. Serving on a Board or Committee can be such an effective way to support the church. Boards and Committees are the foundation upon which all the good that is done flourishes.

In most cases, board membership does not require a great deal of time...one meeting each month (usually through Zoom), and one or two activities to aid or support their work.

The Board of Mission works to coordinate the programs we support that serve all the people. Their focus is Second Helping, which requires a number of volunteers beyond those on the board.

The Board of Christian Education strives to assist our staff and volunteers who provide the many educational opportunities for all who attend First Congregational. Sunday School, Youth Group, Adult Education, and other educational outreach programs are the focus.

The Board of Deacons serves the spiritual life of the church, coordinating with the pastor on matters relating to worship and the care of members. They also coordinate volunteers to help with worship activities.

The Board of Facilities is charged with taking care of the building and grounds. They collaborate with the custodial staff and outside contractors as well as take on projects that can be completed internally with the help of volunteers.

The Board of Justice and Witness facilitates a strong faith-based movement of peace, justice, equality, and inclusivity. That board has joined with other churches to form an alliance to better meet this important mission.

Other committees that serve the church include Member Engagement; Gifts, Endowments and Investments; Pastoral Relations; Stewardship; and Ecumenical Campus Ministry.

In addition, there are those who serve in capacities within the church who are indispensable to helping the church meet all its missions. The Archivist, Budget officer, Financial Secretary, Head Usher, Membership Clerk, Recording Clerk, Treasurer, Moderators, and Cabinet Members at Large fill these roles.

It takes many volunteers and helping hands to fulfill our promise to “Love Every, Single, Other.” We know that there are many ways you can do this. The Stewardship Committee is specifically tasked to secure your financial support. Those who have served for many years and now enjoy the support of the community as they retire to emeritus status are examples of how we must continue to support our church, those who pray for others, those who quietly do the little things that are rarely noticed, and many others.

Nothing we do is accomplished without the help of everyone in whatever capacity they can serve. Agreeing to give your time, energy, and talent to a committee or Board is one way we are all called to support our church, our mission, and our community. When we ask, please prayerfully consider saying yes to this service.

Nominating Committee: Jeff Watson, Craig Weston, Di Hinrichs-Toburen

September 29, 2024
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
“Courage for Community”
Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22

An ad sponsored by the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism, which ran during last winter’s Super Bowl, reminded viewers that silence isn’t golden when others are being persecuted.

It featured Clarence B. Jones, a civil rights activist and draft speechwriter for Martin Luther King Jr., who, as images of hate flashed on the screen, spoke these words, “All hate thrives on one thing: silence.”

A Jewish woman named Esther, who would become Queen of Persia, knew all about speaking up for the good of a community. Her story, recorded in the Book of Esther, tells of the Jewish people living in exile in Persia after the destruction of the First Temple. Under the reign of King Achashverosh, a royal advisor named Haman concocted a plot to wipe out the Persian Jewish community. Esther, along with her guardian, Mordechai, were able to foil Haman’s plot and save the Jewish community.

At the climax of this story, when the Jewish community of Persia is facing imminent destruction, Mordechai calls on Esther to speak up on behalf of the Jewish people. Esther hesitates at first for she fears her own safety, being a Jew herself in the inner court. Mordechai reminds her that she is forever tied to the Jewish people and that her voice needs to be heard.

In the end, Esther speaks up and her people are saved. To this day, Esther is remembered and celebrated as a hero and an advocate on the Jewish celebration known as Purim.

The need to speak is great, yet still so very scary for many of us as we fear our own safety and security. Throughout history, though, God calls for voices like Esther’s, like Clarence B. Jones’ — like yours — to speak for those whose voices are not being heard.

Ask God for the courage to do so and trust the words to come.

Loving God, give us the courage of Esther to speak up when we see communities hurting. May our words not be confrontational or hateful. Rather, may they be filled with love and point to your glory. Amen.



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The Rev. Caela Simmons Wood, Pastor
Paul Hunt, Moderator
Sue Zschoche, Pastoral Associate
Brandy McDonald, Director of Children’s Ministries
Sandy Nelson, Administrative Assistant

Gretchen Lewis, Music Coordinator
Mary Ellen Sutton, Organist
Alicia Santee-Davis, Pianist
Brent Maner, Treasurer
Jeff Keller, Financial Secretary
The Rev. Christian Watkins, Campus Pastor