



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 55 Number 3

February 9, 2011

Sunday School at 9:30 A.M.
Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M.
Second Helping Dinner at 5:15 P.M.
Thursday Evening Taizé at 7:00 P.M.

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Not the Jesus I signed up for

It was a challenging morning for a newly minted first-grader. A new teacher, a new room, new routines and many new faces, but all in all, things had gone well. Maybe it would be almost as much fun as Kindergarten. As lunchtime arrived, the student gathered his things into his backpack and bid his teacher goodbye.

“It’s only lunchtime,” said the teacher, “First grade is not like Kindergarten—we go to school all day, not just for the morning.”

“Well who signed me up for that?” replied the incredulous young student.

One of the values and challenges of following the lectionary cycle of scripture readings that many churches share on Sunday mornings is that it takes the preacher to some texts we would be just fine in never preaching. In that we have an especially long season after Epiphany this year, we encounter *[continued page 2]*

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some texts that we hardly ever hear. The next couple of Sundays present some texts that manage to make us all uncomfortable. Take a look at Matthew 5:17-48 if you dare, and you may see what I mean. These words come from the most famous sermon Jesus ever preached—the Sermon on the Mount. But unlike the Beatitudes that he leads off with, you would not find these words cross-stitched and hanging on the wall of most Christians.

The first section raises the question of the relationship of Christianity and Judaism. Jesus says that he did not come to abolish the law or the prophets, but “to fulfill.” But what does that mean? Historically, the relationship between Christians and our closest cousins, Jews, has been a rocky one. What would Jesus think of that?

But if you read on, the going gets rough. This is not the Jesus most of us signed up for. Certainly not the gentle Jesus meek and mild we were just recently admiring in the manger. Here is just one example: *If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.* (Mt. 5:29) These are words that even the staunchest biblical literalists don’t take literally—otherwise there would be a world full of blind Christians stumbling about, victims of their own self-mutilation.

Since we say we take the Bible seriously but not literally, what do we do with the passages that make us squirm? The temptation is strong to preach on something else. I don’t know if I’m up to the task, but I’m sticking with Matthew the next few weeks, because these texts aren’t going away.

Sometimes preaching (and listening) is a Jacob exercise—wrestling with the word of God within the text, striving and contending in hope of a blessing. Sometimes all through the night. (Yes, sometimes Saturday night!) Sometimes there is a blessing; sometimes, more wrestling.

Grace & Peace,



Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns

- Contact the church office at 537-0485 for more information.

Helping

- **Need a ride to church?** Contact one of our transportation volunteers: Jim & Carolyn Hodgson, Bill Pallett, Jeff Keller, or Mike & Martha Miller.
- **Home Communion Visits** The Deacons can bring communion to your home on the first Sunday of the month. Visits at other times can be arranged with the pastor.

E~MAIL PRAYER CHAIN

If you wish to be added to the First Congregational e-mail prayer chain, please contact office@uccmanhattan.org.



Directory Updates

Please note the following changes and additions to information in the 2010 directory. If you have updates to share, please do so. We want the 2011 directory to be as accurate as possible when published.

You ought to be in pictures!



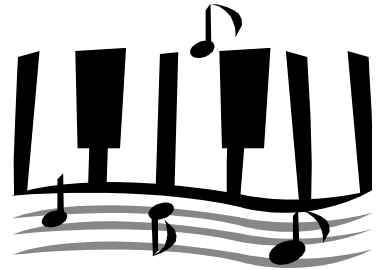
It's time for a new pictorial directory! We will be working with Olan Mills to create a new pictorial directory of members and friends this spring. Photography will take place on Tuesday, March 29, and Wednesday, March 30. Starting February 20, please visit the sign-up table on Sunday to select a time slot that works for you.

Our Partners in India

Sunday, March 6 at 9:30 A.M.

Sean Weston and Marguerite Carlson will share their experience of traveling to India in January. The Kansas-Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ has a partnership with the Madhya Kerala Diocese of the Church of South India. Learn more about our mission partners across the globe. Sean will also preach in worship that morning.

*From Advent
to Easter*



A Hymn Festival

Sunday, March 13, at 3:30 P.M.

Invite friends to join you for a special musical afternoon as our guest artist The Rev. Roger Goetz teams up with the choir and congregation to take a musical tour through the church year. Hymns will be presented in a variety of ways—organ solo, choir, and congregation. This celebration is a fundraiser for the continued enhancement of our sanctuary organ.

The family of Paul Young would like to invite all church members to join him in celebrating his 95th birthday on Sunday, February 13, 2011 from 2-4 P.M. No gifts please!



Women of the Church

Lunch Bunch March 2

Join the Women of the Church for Lunch Bunch on Wednesday, March 2, at the Colbert Hills Golf Clubhouse. It's not for women only—everyone is welcome to join us for lunch at 11:30 A.M.

Youth Corner

\$221.32 in cash and 125 food items were donated for Souper Bowl Sunday. Current national totals show \$3,080,073 donated by 2,485 groups. This total is still growing! Thank you for all of your support. Every bit helps!



A progressive dinner is being planned for March for the youth group. If anyone is interested in hosting the youth at your house for part of the meal, please contact Tracey Weston (313-0793). We will need volunteers for appetizer, main course and dessert. The youth fund can help with the cost of food if that is an issue. Attendance will range from 6-10 youth.

Campus Ministry

Alternative Spring Break Mission Trips

ECM is offering four mission trips during Spring Break this year. They are:



- Louisville, Kentucky with UrbanSpirit (a poverty immersion experience)
- Nashville, Tennessee, staying at the Bellevue Christian Church and participating in an ecumenical recovery effort from the May 2010 flood
- Texas City, Texas with the Presbyterian Volunteer Village, (a Hurricane Ike recovery effort)
- Manhattan-Ogden, Kansas with Jubilee Village, a poverty immersion experience from a developing nation perspective, combined with service at Ogden Friendship House.

ECM is hoping to keep the prices of its first three mission trips down to a minimum, by asking congregation members if they have vans or SUVs that the ECM students can use on the trips. If you can help, please contact Sarah Taylor at ECM via phone: 539-4281 or e-mail: sktaylor@ksu.edu.

Baked Potato Bar Sunday, February 27

**Enjoy a Baked Potato with all the
fixing's after worship at
First Congregational
courtesy of
Ecumenical Campus Ministry**

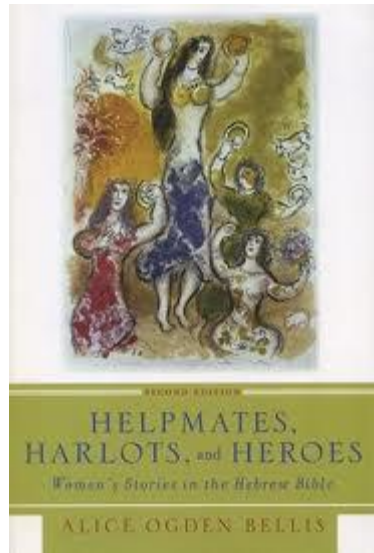
Thursday Evening BIBLE STUDY

HELPMATES, HARLOTS, & HEROES

The Thursday Evening Bible Study is taking up a new topic – Women in the Hebrew Scriptures – and our companion along the way will be the book *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* by Alice Ogden Bellis.

"In this significantly updated second edition, Alice Ogden Bellis continues to provide a broad and balanced sampling of feminist interpretations of the sweep of women characters in the Old Testament and Apocrypha"

— Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, the William Albright Eisenberger Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary



Bible Study meets Thursdays at 5:30 P.M. in Blachly Hall. Feel free to bring a brown bag supper or snacks. Child care is available in the Nursery by prior arrangement – call the office for details. We conclude by 6:45 P.M. so that you can attend the Taizé service if you wish.

Worship & Church Volunteers

February 13, 2011

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Flowers | Kathy Bleam |
| Greeters | Barbara Withee, <i>volunteer needed</i> |
| Scripture Reader | Ann Smit |
| Word for Children ... | <i>volunteer needed</i> |
| Fellowship Hour | <i>volunteer needed</i> |
| Snow Removal | Brent Maner (<i>through February 19</i>) |

February 20, 2011

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Flowers | Rebecca Smock |
| Greeters | Joy Schell, <i>volunteer needed</i> |
| Scripture Reader | Donna Keyser |
| Word for Children ... | <i>volunteer needed</i> |
| Fellowship Hour | Joy Schell |
| Snow Removal | Bill Pallett (<i>through February 26</i>) |

February 27, 2011

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Flowers | Marilyn Mock |
| Greeters | <i>volunteers needed</i> |
| Scripture Reader | Mary Ellen Barkley |
| Word for Children ... | <i>volunteer needed</i> |
| Fellowship Hour | <i>volunteer needed</i> |
| Snow Removal | Dave Smit (<i>through March 5</i>) |

*To volunteer, contact the office at 537-7006 or e-mail
office@uccmanhattan.org.*

The Second Helping

The Second Helping is a local mission of First Congregational UCC. It serves a hot meal every Sunday evening and provides sack breakfast and lunch items to each guest. To volunteer, contact the office at 785-537-7006 or office@uccmanhattan.org.



February 13, 2011

Chief CookKaren Franz or Bob Atchison
VolunteersAnn Gleason, Manhattan Mennonite Church
Dessert*volunteer needed*

February 20, 2011

Chief CookGretchen Lewis
VolunteersAnn Gleason, Caren Knicklebine, Myla Gayer, Kathy Bleam
Dessert*volunteer needed*

February 27, 2011

Chief CookAnn Smit
VolunteersESA Sorority
DessertAnn Smit

Dessert volunteers needed

Attendance at the Second Helping meal is up and desserts are needed. Contributing a dessert is quick and easy! Items may be store bought or made in the church kitchen in order to comply with food safety regulations. Cakes, cupcakes, or cookies & ice cream are always a hit - but don't be afraid to think outside of the box, too! Please contact the office at 537-7006 for more information.

Community News

Women's Spirituality Conference March 5, 2011 - St. Thomas More Parish Center

Based on Macrina Wiederkehr's popular book, *Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours*, this retreat is an invitation to pause from your busy schedule to keep vigil with your life. You will be drawn into waiting and vigilance, trust and surrender, silence and solitude. Each pause will be a little vigil, a remembrance of God, right in the midst of the beautiful struggle of daily life. It will be a feast of poetry, song, story, prayer, and scripture reflection, along with periods of silence, all grounded in your deep yearning for union with God.

A registration fee of \$30 due is with registration form by February 26. For more information, visit www.mhtnspiritconf.org.



Ecumenical Lenten Worship & Luncheons Wednesdays at Noon

The Manhattan Ministerial Association is again sponsoring a series of half hour worship services followed by lunch on Wednesdays beginning Ash Wednesday, March 9.

Join us at Noon at First Christian Church, Courthouse Plaza, for a brief worship service followed by a simple lunch.

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