



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 51 Number 3

February 14, 2007

Sunday School for all ages at 9:30 A.M.	700 Poyntz Avenue
Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M.	Manhattan, Kansas 66502
Second Helping Dinner at 5:15 P.M.	telephone 785-537-7006
Thursday Evening Taizé at 7:00 P.M.	e-mail ucc@interkan.net

A Season of Reflection

That’s how I think of Lent—not so much a season of denial as of reflection. Not that there is anything wrong with “giving up” a vice or two for Lent, but if it is little more than a chance to try again at a failed New Year’s resolution, then it really misses the point. The sacrifice of giving something up for Lent was meant to remind us of Jesus’ willingness to give up his own life in love rather than strike back or retaliate against the powers.

Others prefer to “do something” for Lent, that is, to take a positive action as a Lenten discipline. Perhaps it is something as simple as renewing your commitment to gather with the worshipping community each Sunday. Perhaps it is an effort to explore a new spiritual practice. The intent again is to remind oneself of the cost and joy of discipleship. In this newsletter you will find opportunities to do, to study, and to reflect during the Lenten season. It may seem a bit countercultural, and it is. But then so was Jesus.

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Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns

THESE ITEMS ARE NOT AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE
PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE FOR MORE
INFORMATION

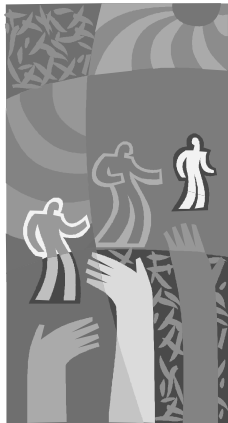
Thank You

- Friends at First Congregational,
Thank you for your friendship and generosity. Over the past year you have provided me a home church away from home. Thank you very much. — *Dwayne Young*
- From the Flint Hills Breadbasket: Your generous donation of 151 pounds of food makes it possible for us to continue to carry out our mission of eliminating poverty and hunger in our community.

- The churches in this community that support Shepherd's Crossing are the backbone of our organization. The support of our member churches is critical to the success of this organization. Thank you for your 2006 donations of \$1085.45. — *Shepherd's Crossing*

Helping

- **Need a ride to church?** Contact one of our transportation volunteers: Jim Hodgson & Carolyn Schwab, Mike & Martha Miller, Bill Pallett, and Jeff Keller.



Fall 2006 Church Survey Summary

In the fall of 2006, the Board of Deacons undertook an annual evaluation of our ministry. Thirty-three families returned completed surveys. The Deacons sifted through the responses to provide valuable insights.

Our strengths include openness, helpfulness, and friendliness. Christian education and membership growth were mentioned as areas that need to be strengthened. Our worship services received very high ratings. Many folks feel our church leaders have too many duties.

Please ask the church administrative assistant for copies of the summary of survey responses if you want further information. Thank you for your participation in our survey.

2007 Lenten Opportunities

Lent begins February 21

Ash Wednesday Worship

7:00 P.M. February 21 in the Sanctuary

With water to remind us of our baptism, ashes to remind us of the frailty of our lives, and the sharing of the peace to remind us of our forgiveness and reconciliation, we will begin our Lenten journey. Join us as we begin our annual journey from ashes to fire—from Lent to Easter to Pentecost.

Community Lenten Services

Wednesdays at Noon, February 21 through March 28 at First Christian Church, Courthouse Plaza

A simple lunch follows at 12:30 P.M.

Sponsored by the Manhattan Ministers Association

Weekday Lenten Study

Tuesdays at 10:30 A.M., February 27—April 3

No meeting on March 20 (Spring Break Week)

Folks have asked for an opportunity like the Adult Sunday morning class but on a weekday, so during Lent we will give it a try. Our resource will be another offering from the *Living the Questions* series: *Countering Pharaoh's Production -Consumption Society Today*, with renowned Old Testament scholar, provocative lecturer, and UCC member Walter Brueggeman. We will utilize 12-20 minute video presentations by Brueggeman followed by discussion. This class will be offered in the fall semester on Sunday morning.

Cinema & Soul:

Reel Theology

- *Films that explore issues of justice, otherness, and the "isms" of the world we live in.*
- *Showtime is 6:30 P.M. Tuesdays Snacks provided. Come at 6:00 with a sack supper if you wish.*

Tuesday, February 27: **Crash**

From Canadian director Paul Haggis, this Oscar-winning drama about the complex nature of race in America will disturb and surprise you. Set over a 24-hour period in contemporary Los Angeles, *Crash* is a social commentary on the interconnectedness of life. The movie shifts between the stories of a half dozen groups of seemingly unconnected characters, exploring in depth the themes of racism and prejudice, cause and effect, chance and coincidence. Performances by the multi-ethnic ensemble cast are superb, and the tight script is at once gritty, heartwarming, shocking, tragic, and witty.

MPAA: Rated R for language, sexual content, and some violence. 2004. 113 minutes.

Tuesday, March 13: **Call Me Malcolm**

Narrated by Malcolm himself, this documentary explores the life of a recently ordained UCC pastor. For most of his life, Malcolm felt trapped in the body of Miriam. Focusing on trans-gendered people, the film follows Malcolm returning to his hometown as he describes his experiences after transitioning from female to male while in seminary. This is an unusual transgender story in that it is remarkably positive. Malcolm is supported by his church and his pastor, his friends and eventually his family. This film was produced in part by the United Church of Christ and received considerable play and several awards at film festivals.

This film is not MPAA rated, but is suitable for all audiences. 2005. 90 minutes.

A Baked Potato Bar

Sunday, February 25

following Morning Worship

You are invited to help Ecumenical Campus Ministries raise money for missions. Enjoy a baked potato with all the fixin's prepared and served by ECM students in Pioneer & Blachly Halls.

suggested minimum donation:
\$5.00



Progressive Christian Book Club

continues in 2007 on select Fridays at noon. The first date is March 2, Room 202, of the KSU Student Union. We will move to Chapter 4, the 95 theses Rev. Matthew Fox posted on the door of the same German church where Luther posted his 95 theses of the Reformation early in the 16th century.

We will also consider what book we would like to tackle starting late summer. Please come with suggestions. We intend to start our discussion at 12:10 and end by 12:50. This gives us time to get our food beforehand and for some of us to get back to our obligations by 1:00 P.M.

The 2006 Church/Ministry Survey responses indicate that members and friends of our congregation are interested in outreach to the campus community. Therefore, I propose that we continue the current book and then begin another in the fall semester.

— Jo Foy

Rainbow Table

The word got out that a new dinner group was organizing, called the “Fairy Feasters,” the “Diva Diners,” and various other appellations. The idea was to provide a fellowship group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Christians. We had our first meal at the Flak Goat Farm on Saturday, February 3. Out of 26 people invited, 13 responded, brought food and participated in our evening of food and conversation. Five additional people who were unable to come asked to remain on the mailing list.



Aware that some in the congregation felt the initial working name of the group sounded disparaging to some, the group selected the name **Rainbow Table** as an inclusive and affirming description. Several ideas are being considered for activities beyond potluck dinners, including dancing, eating at restaurants, watching films, outings, and providing some kind of service to our church family.

This group is a sort of local outpost of the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns. We aren't going anywhere! And we are already thinking of activities where we will open the doors to allies and friends. The intent is not to be an exclusive Festive Feasters group—many Rainbow Table folks also participate in Festive Feaster groups and plan to continue doing so next year.

Rainbow Table hopes to work with PFLAG to sponsor a prom for the LGBTQI students at Manhattan High School and at K-State. Of course, our ulterior motive is to be part of it ourselves!

We look forward to more food and fun. Please do not hesitate to tell us of your concerns and ideas, while you give us your blessing. Jo Foy is serving as a contact person for the group. The next dinner will be Saturday evening March 10 at the home of Bill Pugh and Kent Cormack.

Adult Forum Class Continues

Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian

That's the title of a book by well-known teacher and preacher Thomas G. Long, and it's the topic for our Adult Forum through mid-March. Join us Sundays at 9:30 A.M. in Pioneer Hall.

Christianity is not just about belief; it's also about practice. Our focus will be on the practice of talking about our faith. Long's book will help us think about how we can thoughtfully, considerately, and effectively talk about what our faith and our church mean to us. The class is being lead by Pastor Kent and is part of our Church Vitality initiative.

In the second half of March, Adult Forum will begin a class, led by Craig Weston, which will take up Marcus Borg's book **The Heart of Christianity**. Since its publication, this book has sparked a renewed sense of a progressive, inclusive, and Jesus-centered faith in folks from all walks of life.

Christian Education for Kids

Our children will be exhibiting their artwork at the Manhattan Arts Center March 9 through 11 in conjunction with the play *You Belong to Us*. The theme of the show is Unconditional Love—in our society and throughout the world.

During February we are studying a man rejected by his society, Zacchaeus. A short, hated tax-collector, he climbed a tree in order to see Jesus. Jesus called him by name and invited himself to dinner demonstrating that Zacchaeus was a friend, a member of society, and worthy of God's love.

March classes will study the life of Mary Magdalene. April will explore the celebration of Easter around the world. Teachers are still needed, and these units look like a lot of fun. Please contact me if you have the time to contribute. Your help will be appreciated, not only by me, but by our wonderful kids.

— Cheryl Poister, Christian Education Director

Youth Corner

Our **Souper Bowl Challenge** exceeded the Goal! \$224 was raised to go toward the Flint Hills Community Clinic and 218 cans were donated. Thank You!

The Third Annual Progressive Dinner is Saturday February 17. Please meet at the Hanna's residence at 6:00. From there we'll go to the Smit's and then end our evening at the Lewis home.

Kudos to Paul Hargrove who was spied acting in a play (he was a joker) *Robin Hood* at the Manhattan Arts Center. Way to go Paul!
— Tracey Weston, Youth Ministry Coordinator

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 church office @ 537-7006.



February 18, 2007

Chief Cook Bob Atchison
Volunteers Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship, Ann Gleason
Dessert Mary Lee Cochran

February 25, 2007

Chief Cook Ann Smit
Volunteers ESA Sorority
Dessert Ann Smit

March 4, 2007

Chief Cook Bill Hargrove
Volunteers Kathy Bleam, Paula Ford, Ann Gleason, Paul Hargrove, Kristen Hymer
Dessert Kay Sinnott

Worship & Church Volunteers

February 18, 2007

Sanctuary Flowers... Marian Fuller
Greeters Paula Pierce, Shai & Simone;
Virginia Bigbee
Scripture Reader Ann Smit
Acolyte Simone Buelow
Word for Children .. Cheryl Poister
Fellowship Hour
Snow Removal Leo Schell (*through February 24*)

February 25, 2007

Sanctuary Flowers... Dona Sidorfsky
Greeters Brad Logan & Lauren Ritterbush
Scripture Reader Jim Lewis
Acolyte Elle and Meg Mankin
Word for Children .. Cheryl Poister
Fellowship Hour Kerri & Jeff Keller
Snow Removal *Volunteers Needed (through March 3)*

March 4, 2007

Sanctuary Flowers... Jerry Hanna
Greeters Chantel Vogel
Scripture Reader Jo Foy
Acolyte Lilly Marshall
Word for Children .. Cheryl Poister
Fellowship Hour The Westons
Snow Removal *Volunteers Needed (through March 10)*

Community News

You Belong to Us

In an effort to continue the dialogue started by the Family Ties Project in October, Flint Hills PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is proud to announce the second of the plays written by students at Kansas State University.

You Belong to Us was written by Jemie Godwin, a K-State graduate student, and uses dialogue taken from interviews with straight parents who have lesbian or gay children. The play will allow the community to understand the inner roller coaster of emotions that parents experience when they realize that their child is lesbian or gay. One emotion parents shared was fear—the fear that their child would be a victim of hate crimes—and in some cases anguish, because their child is suffering from violence and abuse in their daily school lives.

You Belong to Us will be performed at the Manhattan Arts Center:
Friday, March 9 at 7:00 P.M.
Saturday, March 10 at 2:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M.
Sunday, March 11 at 2:00 P.M.

The production is funded by a generous grant from the Caroline Peine Charitable Foundation and is free and open to the public. The play is about inner conflict, acceptance, understanding and most of all, unconditional love.

The cast and crew have been busy rehearsing (in First Congregational's Andover Hall) for the upcoming P-FLAG production of the original play, *You Belong to Us*. Performances are scheduled at the Manhattan Arts Center.

Head Start Opportunity Preschool, serving the Manhattan-Ogden and Riley County School Districts, is accepting applications for the 2007-2008 school year. Head Start is a free, federally funded early childhood program that serves families with low income. To apply, a child must be 3 years old by August 31, 2007, but not yet kindergarten age eligible. For more information, call 587-2045 or stop by Head Start at 1700 Leavenworth.

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Return Service Requested

