



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 52 Number 5

March 12, 2008

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.	www.uccmanhattan.org

The Pilgrimage

In the early 380's A.D., a woman by the name of Egeria made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. She wrote a long letter to her beloved circle of friends at home (she addresses them as her "sisters") about her experience. It provides us with rich descriptions of places and worship practices from the fourth century of the church. Describing the celebration of Palm Sunday in the churches of Jerusalem, she tells of the long morning service that lasts from dawn until past noon, and of the subsequent procession and worship to various holy sites associated with Christ's final days in Jerusalem. By late in the afternoon, they come to the time of a procession of palms:

"And as the eleventh hour [*about 5:00 P.M.*] approaches, the passage from the Gospel is read, where the children, carrying branches and palms, met the Lord, saying; *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord*, and the bishop immediately rises, and all the people with him, and they all go on [*continued p. 2*]

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foot from the top of the Mount of Olives, all the people going before him with hymns and antiphons, answering one to another: *Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord*. And all the children in the neighborhood, even those who are too young to walk, are carried by their parents on their shoulders, all of them bearing branches, some of palms and some of olives, and thus the bishop is escorted in the same manner as the Lord was of old. For all, even those of rank, both matrons and men, accompany the bishop all the way on foot in this manner, making these responses, from the top of the mount to the city, and thence through the whole city ..."

A Palm Sunday parade is nothing new. We've been doing it for over 1600 years if not longer, and children have always been a part of the celebration. Our parade is rather short compared to one "through the whole city." For many years, churches in one neighborhood of Topeka have gathered in one place and then processed to their various churches—a bit closer to the spectacle in Jerusalem. But whatever the length of the parade, I always am surprised by this Sunday that interrupts our routine, takes us out to the street, and calls us to shout "Hosanna!" despite all our buttoned-down Puritan roots.

But most of all, I am moved by the story that follows. The reading of the Passion from one of the gospels in all of its raw power, violence, and pathos. It needs no sermon to preach its meaning. One whose life broke so many culturally imposed boundaries and whose message called forth such self-giving love is clobbered by the machinations of power, order, and decency.

Likewise, when we gather on Thursday at the table to eat and to remember, the story comes alive again in the aroma of fresh bread and the taste of the cup. Our worship takes on the fleshy reality of the world and the Word. These Holy Week interruptions in our routine are the path to Easter, and on this path, the depth of the Easter story is to be found. I hope you will join the Church in this pilgrimage story. I hope you will invite others to accompany you on the journey, whether here or wherever you are next week.

Grace & Peace,

Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns

These items are not viewable on this website. Please call the church office for further information.

Thank You

- Thank you for your support of the Youth Souper Bowl Sunday Appeal. I am grateful for your generous donation and your continuing commitment to the Crisis Center's mission. I take great personal comfort from your support and promise to use your gifts wisely to sustain vital services to victims in our community.

Thank you, *Judy Davis, Executive Director*

- Thank you for all who have contributed to the **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering. As of March 9, First Congregational UCC, Manhattan, has raised **\$1,831.00**.

Helping

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

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Palm Sunday – Sunday of the Passion

March 16 at 10:45 A.M. Join the parade as we re-enact the Palm Sunday parade with music and a procession into the church. Then we will retell the passion story according to the gospel of Matthew in spoken word and in music.

Maundy Thursday

March 20 at 6:30 P.M. Join us in a simple supper of soup and bread in Blachly Hall. After the supper we will celebrate Holy Communion. Child care for infants and toddlers will be provided during the worship service.

Easter Sunday Breakfast

March 23 at 9:30 A.M. The Board of Christian Education invites you to begin Easter with a potluck breakfast at the church. Bring food to share—casseroles, sweet rolls, quick breads, fruit, or whatever strikes your fancy. Drinks will be provided. Sunday School classes will not meet that morning, so come and enjoy great food and fellowship. And remember, guests are always welcome!

Festival Easter Worship

March 23 at 10:45 A.M. Celebrate the resurrection in a festival Service of the Word. Join in music by the Congregational Brass Choir, organ, choir, and congregation. Pastor Kent will preach.

Easter Egg Hunt

March 23 at Noon Don't miss the egg-citement on the church lawn following worship. The egg hunt is prepared by the First Congregational Youth and the Christian Education Board.



There will be no regular Fellowship Hour on Easter Day.

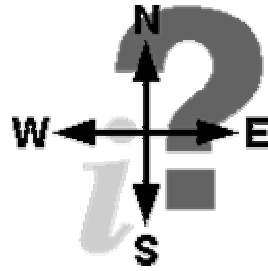


Inquirer's Lunches Sundays March 30 and April 6 following Worship

Join us for lunch and learn more about First Congregational UCC. Child care is provided. No reservations needed.

We will conclude at about 2:00 P.M.

The Board of Deacons will sponsor **Inquirer's Lunch** events following worship on **March 30 and April 6**. If you want to learn more about this congregation, explore membership in this church, or are just curious and want to meet others on a more personal basis, we hope you will attend. Lunch is on us, and child care will be available. Each even will begin at about 12:15 with lunch in Pioneer Hall and continue until about 2:00 P.M. We hope you can attend both Sundays, but it's also fine if you can only make one of the dates. Please join us for lunch.



News from Boards & Committees

The **Stewardship Committee** is recruiting a member. We will begin planning this spring and conduct a campaign in the fall. While not usually time consuming, this is a very important component of our church's ministry. If you would like to assist with this, you can notify the church office or call Jan Lange at 537-7006.

We are also looking for another member for **Trustees**. If you would like to work with this committee, notify the church office or give Jan Lange a call for information.

Members of our **Vitality Team**, Kerri Keller, Jean Hill, Craig Weston, and Kent Cormack are going to a national "Ready Set Grow" church vitality workshop at the UCC Church House in Cleveland, Ohio, on April 4 and 5.

White Memorial Camp Work Weekend – March 14-16

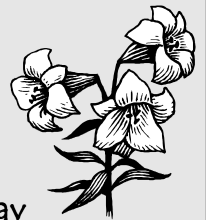
Due to inclement weather the dates of the work weekend have changed. Coffee and donuts will be out by 9:00 A.M. It is time to open White Memorial Camp for the spring and summer. We need: Bodies, Bodies, and More Bodies! Please bring: rags, gloves, buckets, brushes, and other cleaning supplies. We will need a few pick-up trucks to haul limbs and trash. We need those who can work with wood, stone and concrete. We need paint brushes, rollers, shovels, rakes, and hoes. Gardeners, we need flowers to plant. Come for a morning, afternoon, a day or the whole weekend. We will feed and house you!

Camp Scholarships Did you know that our church provides a scholarship of half of fees for all our kids who attend camp at White Memorial Camp? Just bring your enrollment form to the church office with a check for your portion of the fee, and we will submit it with the balance. (Remember: the church will not pay for any late fees.)

And did you know that your child can invite a friend to attend, even if they don't go to our church? That's right—Camp White welcomes everyone!

Easter Lilies

You have the opportunity to remember or honor family or friends by purchasing a lily for the Easter service on March 23. The lilies will be \$12. You may leave your check and completed form in the church office.



Tower Chime Update The March 8 workshop was well attended and very productive. Many thanks to David



Dave Sauer repairing the rheostat & volt meter box

Sauer, Josh & David Manning, Kathy Bleam, Sean Weston, Millie Schroeder & Bill Pugh! On the home front, Pastor Kent has completed the repairs to the drywall in the Narthex, and the stub wall at the north end of the coat rack is now ready for paint.

We still need some donors for new chime rack legs. You can be “a pillar of the church” by giving

\$125.00 for one of the six inch square by ten foot long kiln-dried timbers.

PVC conduit still needs to be installed above the ceiling of Andover Hall. If you have experience working with PVC and can help with the remaining conduit, please contact Bill Pugh at 537-7006.

If you have a free morning or afternoon and would like to help with the restoration of the strikers, call Bill.

While servicing the ten note Deagan tower chime in La Crescenta, California, last week, Bill was given a copy of the invoice for that 1926 system. Its cost was \$6,000.00. If our 1925 system cost the same amount, it would be the equivalent of \$72,192.00 in 2007 dollars!



Kathy Bleam shortening brass screws for the strikers

Tower Chime Work Party!

Saturday, March 15th, and Saturday, March 22nd, parties from 9:00 to Noon at Bill's shop at 902 Fair Lane, just east of the new car wash at 10th and Ft. Riley Blvd.

Cinema and Soul: *Freedom Writers*

Tuesday, March 25 at 6:30 P.M.—snacks provided

Freedom Writers is a 2007 American film starring Hilary Swank, Scott Glenn, Imelda Staunton and Patrick Dempsey. It is based on the book *The Freedom Writers Diary* by teacher Erin Gruwell. It is the amazing true story of strength, courage, and achievement in the face of adversity.

In the fall of 1994, in Room 203 at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, California, an idealistic teacher named Erin Gruwell faced her first group of students, labeled by the administration as “unteachable and at-risk teenagers.” The class was a diverse mix of African-American, Latino, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Caucasian students, many of whom had grown up in rough neighborhoods in Long Beach. In the first few weeks of class, the students made it clear that they were not interested in what their teacher had to say, and they made bets about how long she would last. Then a pivotal moment changed their classroom forever. *Rated PG-13 for violent content, some thematic material, and language. 2007. 123 minutes.*

The show starts at 6:30 P.M. — snacks are provided

See you at the movies!

ONA Sunday March 30, 2008

Come and join us as we celebrate becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation. 2008 marks our 5th Anniversary of proclaiming that God's Love is for all. Don't miss the Biblical Self-Defense Workshop on March 29. (See page 12 of this Newsletter for details.)

"Gifts" for the Giver

April 8, 2008 at 5:30 P.M. in Blachly Hall.

Please join the Gifts and Endowments Committee for dinner and a brief presentation on ways to perpetually support our church and it's mission.

People choose to make charitable gifts for a variety of reasons, primary of which is a desire to support work they believe in. Giving also provides benefits to you, the donor. A gift to the Church may include some or all of the following:

- Fulfillment of charitable goals
- Charitable tax deduction
- Avoidance or reduction of capital-gain tax
- Income payments for life
- Tax-free income
- Reduction of federal estate tax
- Expert investment management by the United Church Foundation using socially responsible investment principles

First Congregational UCC is exceedingly grateful for the inspired generosity of its members and friends. We have benefited in countless ways by planned gifts of previous generations—funds for camp scholarships, special ministry projects, lay education programs, enhanced music programs, and local and worldwide mission activities to name a few.

Your support is vital in continuing the work of First Congregational in all its settings, and the Financial Development Ministry Team of the UCC is eager to assist you in developing financial resources for the mission and ministry dear to your heart!

Rainbow Table March 14

RSVP to 537-7006 if you will be attending the next gathering, Friday, March 14 at 7:00 P.M. at Leo's Hillside Café. All are welcome.



Women of the Church

Lunch Bunch April 2, 2008 at 11:30 A.M. Lunch Bunch will meet at the Hanna's home. They live at 815 Wildcat Ridge (two blocks behind the old Farm Bureau building on Anderson Avenue). A light buffet will be provided. All are welcome.

Will There Be a Spring Rummage Sale?

During the March Lunch Bunch, several expressed interest in holding a spring rummage sale. I agreed to "test the waters" for helpers and contributors. April 26, Saturday is tentatively scheduled for the spring rummage sale... IF there will be enough people to help organize and set-up the rummage, and staff the actual sale.

Please call me, Judy Willingham, on my cell phone 537-7006, and let me know when you could help. Workers are needed during the mornings on weekdays before the sale. There will be evening hours for those who can help after work. Don't forget that people are really needed to staff the sale and to pack up afterwards.

I'm waiting for your calls! — *Judy Willingham*

Youth Corner

The youth had a very successful Progressive Dinner. There were 11 youth who attended. Many thanks to Jerry and Atina Hanna, Dave and Ann Smit, and Kent Cormack for opening their homes and preparing delicious food for the group.

Thank you to Kent Cormack and Craig Weston for leading the youth Sunday School class March 2 and 9. Many good comments about the classes have been received, and there's word that the youth would like one or both back for more!

Christian Education

Easter Breakfast Please join us in Pioneer and Blachly Halls at 9:30 A.M. on Easter morning, March 23 for fellowship and food. This is a potluck style breakfast.

Camp White Sunday: April 6 The Rev. Ira Williams, Director of Camp White will be our guest preacher and will have a display at fellowship hour. He will also be giving a short Sunday School lesson to the Children's classes at 9:30 A.M. Parents are invited to join us downstairs in Andover Hall to get some answers to questions you may have about camp for your children.

Bible Study Nursery care is provided during the Thursday evening Bible Study. Please contact the church office if you will not be attending so we can contact the nursery attendants.



Beginning March 16: ***The House of the Lord***

Our series begins with a look at how we read architecture—what buildings say about those who build them, how they shape and are shaped by what goes on in and around them. The first session will look at some of the earliest surviving structures and art of the church: house church “conversions” such as at Dura Europas, burial sites such as the Catacombs in Rome, and the earliest images of Jesus (before he grew a beard). Join us at 9:30 in the Holywood Theater (2nd floor).

There will be no class on March 23 (join us for Easter Breakfast instead). We will resume on March 30 with the building boom that followed the official sanction of Christianity by the Roman Empire in the fourth century. The series will continue through April 20.

Biblical Self-Defense Workshop

Saturday, March 29, 2008, 1:00 to 5:00 P.M.

Pioneer and Blachly Halls

**Tim Brown, Youth and Young Adult National Coordinator
For the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns**

Too often, the religious right misuses a few passages from the Bible to justify the oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Too often, young people do not know how to respond to these texts, or what they really mean, and what their contexts are. As a result, any conversation, be it in person or in society, can become an invitation to an LGBT person to feel poorly about him/herself, or can prevent allies from speaking up.

This workshop analyzes each of the so-called “slammer passages” in detail, removing the fear they sometimes can instill. Included will be examination of contexts and translations. The workshop also empowers young people to feel positively about the combination of being LGBT and a person of faith, no matter the faith, by looking at other passages from both testaments.

Introduction to Christian Theology

April 11-12, 2008, Parish House, Pilgrim UCC, Wichita

A class open to all members of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference. Cost: \$75 which includes meals. The instructor is John Tamilio, Senior Minister at Colonial Church UCC in Prairie Village

Textbook for the class is *Faith Seeking Understanding* by Daniel Migliori, available at Amazon.com for \$17.82. To attend the class, you must register with the Conference Office. Send your check to Judy Vincent, K-O Conference Office, 1245 Fabrique, Wichita KS 67218. **Deadline for registration is March 28, 2008.** For questions about the class itself, contact Janet Storts, Director of the Lay Ministry Education Program at storts@bigfoot.com.

Worship & Church Volunteers

March 16, 2008

Sanctuary Flowers... Palm Sunday Palms
Greeters Carolyn Hodgson, Kathy Bleam
Scripture Reader Mary Ray
Word for Children .. Judy Ahrens
Acolytes Simone Buelow and Sina Hanna
Sunday School..... Ellen Logan / Grizelda MacDonald,
Jeff Keller and Jerry Hanna
Fellowship Hour Judy Davis, Sue Zschoche
Snow Removal Donna Keyser (*through March 22*)

March 23, 2008

Sanctuary Flowers... Easter Lilies
Greeters Duane Kiefer & Chris Hogan
Colin & Sandy O'Grady
Scripture Reader Judy Davis
Word for Children .. Children
Acolytes Ben and Nick Clark
Sunday School..... Ellen Logan / Grizelda MacDonald,
Jeff Keller and Jerry Hanna
Fellowship Hour Easter Egg Hunt
Snow Removal *Volunteer Needed (through March 29)*

March 30, 2008

Sanctuary Flowers... Geneva Denholm
Greeters Jan Lange and Brent Maner
Scripture Reader Ellen Logan
Word for Children .. Angela Hubler
Acolytes Jonathan Vogel and Joshua Manning
Sunday School..... Ellen Logan / Grizelda MacDonald,
Jeff Keller and Jerry Hanna
Fellowship Hour Atina and Jerry Hanna
Snow Removal Jim Fuller (*through April 5*)

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 Sandy O'Grady 537-7006.



March 16, 2008

Chief Cook Jean Hill
Volunteers Health and Nutrition Society, Ann Gleason
Dessert Church

March 23, 2008

Chief Cook Brent Maner
Volunteers ESA Sorority
Dessert Ann Smit

March 30, 2008

Chief Cook Paula Ford
Volunteers Alpha Kappa Psi
Dessert Church

Community News

Flint Hills PFLAG New Drama Project

In 2006, Flint Hills PFLAG along with several community partners recruited two K-State Drama Therapy graduate students to interview local LGBT individuals, their parents and siblings. The interviews were turned into two non-fiction plays *If Truth Be Told* and *You Belong to Us*. The mission of these plays was to educate the community about the life experiences of LGBT people, including the “coming out” process, and reduce negative attitudes towards diversity.

Another drama therapy student, Sarah Stevenson, has approached the Flint Hills PFLAG Chapter with an offer to write another non-fiction play based on the perceptions and perspectives of LGBT committed couples about marriages.

Stevenson writes: “Everyone has childhood dreams about having a wedding as well as childhood conceptions of marriage. But, as you know LGBT individuals are not allowed to marry in most states in this country and in most countries in the world. My play will focus on our society’s treatment of LGBT people in relation to marriage as it is legally defined today and as they would wish it to be defined in an ideal situation. I want to interview LGBT individuals who have experienced unfair treatment because they were not married to their significant others. An example of this would be a partner who was denied hospital visitation due to not being “family” in legal terms.”

As in our previous plays, the identities of couples/individuals participating in the project will be vigorously protected and a release form will be used. If you are interested or know of someone who might be willing to participate, please contact me.

Clay Myers-Bowman, Myers-Bowman Consulting
785-410-3319 or 785-537-4872 clay@myers-bowman.com
www.myers-bowman.com

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