



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 53 Number 1

January 14, 2009

Sunday School 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.	<a href="http://www.uccmanhattan.org">www.uccmanhattan.org</a>

## Regifter

*On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gold, frankincense and myrrh.*

*(Matthew 2: 11)*

Gold, maybe. But frankincense and myrrh? Surely Mary must have considered it.

The concept was nothing new—white elephant gift exchanges are a longstanding tradition—but the word was new. The contemporary term “regifter” was invented on an episode of the NBC sitcom *Seinfeld*. In the episode, called “The Label Maker,” the character Elaine calls Dr. Tim Whatley a “regifter” after he gives Jerry Seinfeld a label-maker that was originally given to Whatley by Elaine.

Regifter, as it was coined, was no compliment. But of course the real problem was not so much the practice but simply that Whatley got caught. In this post-*Seinfeld* era [continued page 2]

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there are websites devoted to the proper etiquette surrounding the practice of regifting. Rules include rewrapping the gift, not using the gift before regifting it, and not giving the gift back to the original gift-giver (or in the *Seinfeld* example a good friend thereof). Monogrammed and handmade items are off limits. And partially-used gift cards, well that’s just tacky.

But UCC pastor Marene Tirabassi reminded me this week in her online stewardship message that “Mary didn’t regift the frankincense. She regifted the Child—to all of us.” She writes, “In fact, our lives are full of this practice—we do give what we have been given. We give from our emotional gifts; we give from our skills and aptitudes; we give from the love we receive. A newer term is “paying it forward.” An older term—“tithing.””

So may this season after Epiphany be a season of regifting in the best sense of the word. If we find ourselves blessed with gifts in our life of faith, may we regift them with abandon. And if we find ourselves wanting, may we receive from others those well worn gifts that they have found helpful in their journey.

And if somebody leaves several pounds of myrrh at my office door, well all I can say is what goes around comes around.

Grace & Peace to all you regifters out there.

*Kent*

## Annual Meeting

**The Annual Meeting of the Congregation  
will be held Sunday, January 25, 2009,  
following Morning Worship.**

## Sharing and Caring

### *Prayers and Concerns*

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

### *E~MAIL PRAYER CHAIN*

If you wish to be added to the First Congregational e-mail prayer chain, please contact [marianfuller@gmail.com](mailto:marianfuller@gmail.com).



### *Congratulations*

Congratulations to Hikaru and Jeff Peterson on the arrival of Kaia Hanawa Peterson. Kaia was born on Saturday January 10 at 8:48 A.M., weighed 6 pounds 8 ounces, and was 19 inches.

### *Helping*

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

### *Thank You*

- We thank you for your \$35.00 donation. During the rough winter months, we see an increase in need due to the high utility bills and job lay-offs. Your donation enables us to continue projects that address this need such as Holiday Food Baskets and round emergency food for families struggling to make ends meet. — *Flint Hills Breadbasket*
- I am grateful for your generous donation of toiletries. We'll distribute them to the women in our safe shelter. Thank you for thinking of us. Sincerely, — *Judy Davis*, Executive Director, The Crisis Center
- On behalf of the clinic staff, volunteers and Board of Directors, I would like to thank you for your donation of \$138.00 to the Flint Hills Community Clinic. With the continued financial support of churches and organizations like you, the clinic has provided free health care to many area residents! Please know that it is through the community's support that our volunteers remain encouraged and inspired to continue serving those in our area who are without health insurance.  
— *Fedra Zamphiropolos*, Administrative Coordinator

## Community News

### **Flint Hills Human Rights Project & PFLAG--Flint Hills Chapter Meeting**

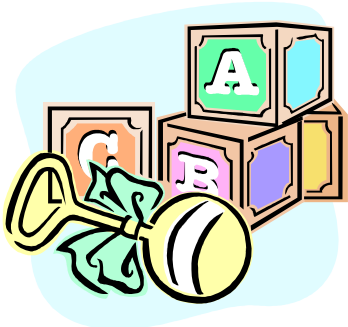
“The LGBT Community and Local Law Enforcement” is the topic of an educational meeting on Tuesday, January 20, at 7:00 P.M. at First Congregational United Church of Christ, 700 Poyntz. Our invited guests are Brad Schoen, Director, Riley County Police Department and Ronnie Grice, Vice President & Director, K-State Campus Police. The goal of this event is to create a dialogue between members of the LGBT community and local law enforcement about their issues and concerns.

**Financial Statements** The Fourth Quarter Financial Statements are now being distributed. These reports have weekly details for the fourth quarter only, but do have yearly totals. Please review this report as it serves as an audit of the accuracy of the Financial Secretary's records. Phone the church office (537-7006) if you have questions. Please note: if you are making final payments on a 2008 pledge, please note that on your check.



### *Calling all Bell Ringers!*

We hope to start an ongoing handbell choir that will have weekly rehearsals and play regularly in our Sunday worship, contributing to the liturgy, playing solo pieces, and accompanying hymns & anthems. Rehearsals are tentatively planned for either Mondays or Tuesdays at 7:00 P.M. If you are interested in making a commitment to this ministry, please contact the church office. This is the UCC; we welcome players of all abilities and ages!



### **All-Church Baby Shower for Chasity Seibert Sunday, January 18**

Please join us for a baby shower next Sunday, January 18, at 1:30 P.M. in Pioneer & Blachly Halls for our administrative assistant, Chasity Seibert. Chasity and her

husband Howie, who is currently deployed to Iraq, are expecting twin boys in March. We want to help Chasity and Howie prepare for their babies by providing gifts and warm wishes. Chasity and Howie are registered at Target and Wal-Mart stores. The Board of Deacons is sponsoring the event, and the whole church family is invited.

## **Cinema & Soul**

### **Reel Theology & Contemporary Issues** *Tuesday, January 27 at 6:30 P.M. Ararat*

A film within a film, *Ararat* is a contemporary story of the making of a historical epic about the Armenian genocide between 1915 and 1918. The multi-layered storytelling connects various family relationships, the horrors of genocide, the power of art to heal, and the capricious nature of memory, denial, and truth.

*MPAA: Rated R for violence, sexuality/nudity, and language.*  
*2002. 115 minutes.*

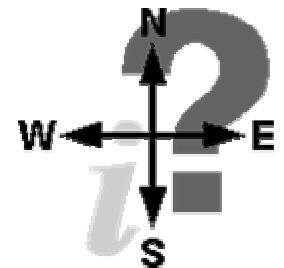
If you know little or nothing about the Armenian genocide, this is a great film to open up this little known piece of history. And if you like great filmmaking, this is a film to see.

*Join us for popcorn and a movie worth thinking about!*

## **Inquirer's Lunches** **February 8 & 15**

Join us for lunch and learn more about First Congregational UCC. Child care can be provided if requested in advance (call 537-7006 by Friday) We will conclude at about 2:00 P.M.

The Board of Deacons will sponsor **Inquirer's Lunch** events following worship on **February 8 and 15**. 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 event 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.



## God is still speaking...

A reflection by Pastor Donna Shaper  
Pastor of Judson Memorial Church, New York, NY



*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you or to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first; and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. (John 2:1-11)*

We are no longer the church we were. The Stillspeaking Initiative has changed the story that we tell about ourselves. We are no longer the people of membership decline but instead the people of extravagant welcome. We are no longer defining ourselves by what we are not but now define ourselves by commas, etched in red and black, punctuation that says God's revelation is ongoing and we are lining up to hear the new.

As a church of firsts, an "early" church, we know what it is like to make history. We ordained the first free black slave, the first woman, and the first gay person. We made noise about the Federal Communication Commission and the need for airwave justice before most people knew there was an issue.

We also threw some tea into the Boston Harbor, making a kind of history that school children now must learn. We know

what it is like to be early—and we know the temptation that entails. Many of us think our best years have already been and gone. They are wrong. God has yet more light and truth to shine forth, as John Robinson said, and, comma, he wasn't kidding.

Consider the real message of the story about Jesus, the water and the wine. It is a warning away from famine into feast, away from scarcity into plenty. It is also a story about the end time. What it says is that even better things are coming than have come before. For those of us who live in times of spiritual famine—most notably expressed in the epidemic time famine of first world people—and those of us who live in times of doom—as in when will the next bad thing happen and how—this story is a glorious antidote.

It says two things on two levels: one is that feast will (miraculously) beat out famine as metaphor and actuality for life. It also says that things at the end will be better than they were in the beginning. The good wine is saved till last. No doubt Jesus was also letting this incident say something about who he was to become, but that is another story. For now just reconsider the feast that the United Church of Christ was, is and will be. Replace the myth of decline and running out of wine and time with the myth of hope for a beautiful future. Know that God is still speaking and that the best is yet to come.

Prayer: God of the comma, God of the grape, God of the surprising future, draw near and bless our church, not with arrogance about how great we have been or will be but with a humility and gratitude born of the feast that is set before us. In the name of Jesus who came and who will come again, Amen.

# *Ding Dong Merrily on High*

## *The tower chimes are ringing*

### Yes, the Tower Chimes are ringing!

The chimes were first playable in our tower at about 3:00 P.M., December 24, 2008. They were used in worship five hours later in the final measures of "Silent Night," which was the last of the pieces that Bill Pugh played for the Prelude. At the lighting of the Christ Candle, Bill rang a "Queen's Row" peal and the introduction to the hymn "On Christmas Night All Christians Sing" (Sussex Carol). After the Children's Message the chimes rang "Angels We Have Heard on High" (Gloria), and the postlude consisted of about fifteen minutes of Christmas hymns and carols. It was quite a sight to see dozens of people standing in the church lawn on a cold winter night! The chimes have been played before and after each service since then, and Sean Weston & Bill have played them occasionally during the week.



**Letting the sound out.**  
Here is a photo of Sean Weston & Dan Clark installing screen on the louvers on the east side of the chime loft. The louvers had been sealed with metal for many years.  
December 20<sup>th</sup>

There are still a few odds and ends to complete: We need to stencil some black "God Is Still Speaking" commas on the rack legs. The Tower Room paneling that was removed to install the conduits to the loft needs to be reinstalled. Repairs to the drop ceiling of the Tower Room need to be completed. Permanent ladders to the loft and to the walkboards on the chime rack need to be built or purchased. A dedication plaque will be ordered and installed in the narthex (which was part of our agreement with First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma when they gave our church the chimes).

## 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 Mandy Strawn at 785-537-7006.*



### *January 18, 2009*

**Chief Cook** ..... Brent Maner  
**Volunteers** ..... Ann Gleason, Mary Ellen Barkley  
**Dessert** ..... Bill Pugh

### *January 25, 2009*

**Chief Cook** ..... Ann Smit  
**Volunteers** ..... ESA Sorority  
**Dessert** ..... Ann Smit

### *February 1, 2009*

**Chief Cook** ..... Jeff Keller  
**Volunteers** ..... Ann Gleason, Phi Eta Sigma  
**Dessert** ..... *Volunteer needed*

## Worship & Church Volunteers

### *January 18, 2009*

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**Greeters** ..... Carolyn Hodgson, Chantel Vogel  
**Flowers** ..... *Volunteer needed*  
**Scripture Reader** ..... Gretchen Lewis  
**Word for Children** .. Jim Lewis  
**Fellowship Hour** ..... Sue Zschoche, Judy Davis  
**Snow Removal** ..... Brad & Eli Logan (*through January 24*)

### *January 25, 2009*

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**Greeters** ..... Jim Mock, Dan Clark  
**Flowers** ..... *Volunteer needed*  
**Scripture Reader** ..... Marilyn Mock  
**Word for Children** .. Jeff Keller  
**Fellowship Hour** ..... Jerry and Atina Hanna  
**Snow Removal** ..... Donna Keyser (*through January 31*)

### *February 1, 2009*

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**Greeters** ..... Mary Ellen Barkley, Angela Hubler  
**Flowers** ..... *Volunteer needed*  
**Scripture Reader** ..... Judy Davis  
**Word for Children** .. Leo Schell  
**Fellowship Hour** ..... Judy Ahrens  
**Snow Removal** ..... R.C. & Melissa Jones (*through February 7*)

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[uccmanhattan.org](http://uccmanhattan.org)

