



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 54 Number 3

February 10, 2010

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.	www.uccmanhattan.org

First Impressions

On my bad days, more numerous than I care to admit, my only hope is the grace of second chances. My sense of the stories of God in scriptures is that our God is one of second chances, and third, and more. You don't get far into the old family stories remembered in the book of Genesis before realizing that. Later on, the reluctant prophet Jonah is famous for his hissy-fit about God's willingness to give to the sin-city of Jonah's time, Nineveh, another chance. In the end, convinced that God is nothing but an old softie, he just plops himself down out in the desert hoping to die. Not to be outdone, God causes a plant to grow up over him "to save him from his discomfort."

I've never met anyone who wasn't at least a bit relieved that ours is a God of second chances. But that is not to say that first impressions don't matter. Anybody can tell you that they matter a lot. Bad ones can sometimes be overcome, given time and good experiences, but they have to be overcome. [continued p. 2]

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There is a certain advantage to avoiding the necessity of overcoming a mediocre first impression. All of us have a role to play in what sort of first impression our faith community makes on a visitor or a neighbor. It's not always easy for those of us who have been around awhile to notice things that may be a big part of our first impressions. We take a lot for granted and easily overlook rough edges because we already know what sort of church First Congregational UCC is. But we dare not take too much for granted.

Lots of things make for good first impressions, from the neatly mowed lawn or shoveled walks to clean bathrooms. How folks reach out to new faces is a critical matter—and we generally do a good job in that department thanks to you.

Not everybody's first impression is formed on Sunday, however. For many folks, the initial contact with First Congregational UCC may be by phone or by stopping in the office on a weekday. For almost three years, their first impression was greatly influenced by the first voice or face they encountered. Chasity Seibert has been a remarkable asset to the first impression that our congregation presents. I can't tell you the number of times that someone's call is transferred to me and the first thing they say is, "Do you know that you have the most cheerful and friendly voice answering your phone that I have heard in months?"

Any of you who have had the pleasure of working with Chasity in person know that it is not just a phone persona. As many of you know, Chasity will be leaving us at the end of February as her family moves to Arizona. She will be greatly missed, and will leave some big first impression shoes to fill.

On Sunday, February 21, Chasity and "her boys" will be with us in worship and fellowship so that we can all say "thank you" for her service to the congregation. I hope you will join me in expressing your appreciation for her service—always performed with a smile.

Grace & Peace,

Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns

Please call the church office for further information

Helping

- **Need a ride to church?** Contact one of our transportation volunteers: Jim & Carolyn Hodgson, Bill Pallett, or Jeff Keller.
- **Home Communion Visits** are available by contacting the office or the pastor. The Deacons can arrange to bring communion to your home on the first Sunday of each month as we celebrate the sacrament in worship. 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.



Announcement

- The time has come for the Siebert family to move on. We will greatly miss the people of this church family, as they have been such a lovely and caring part of our lives. Thank you for allowing me to be of service to your church as an administrative assistant. I will be resigning from my position as administrative assistant on February 26. My husband has accepted a position in Arizona. Feel free to keep in contact via email at filea2586@yahoo.com.

Thank you for this rewarding experience,

— *Chasity Seibert*, Administrative Assistant

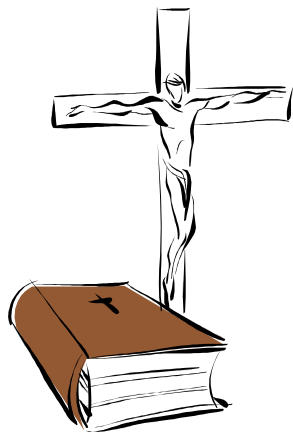
Thank You

- Many thanks to all in our church family and friends of Manhattan First Congregational UCC who hosted and supported the recent visit by the Doane College Choir. So many people contributed to the success of the visit: sixteen families served as hosts, Ann Smit and her dedicated crew were responsible for a delicious meal, members of our choir contributed a variety of salads, and over 60 people came to hear the wonderful concert, in spite of some stiff competition from the K-State vs. KU basketball game! Bravo and thanks to all!

Gretchen Lewis

- First Congregational, thank you so much for graciously hosting us on our tour this year! We greatly appreciate all the planning that you did in order for us to sing at your church. The food was delicious, the homestays were great, and the church was a beautiful place to sing in. What great hospitality you provided us --you made our last night of tour in Kansas a great one. Thank you for all you have done!

The Doane Choir



Ecumenical Lenten Worship & Luncheons

Once again, the Manhattan Ministerial Association is sponsoring Community Lenten worship services at **Noon on Wednesdays** during Lent. Each service lasts about one half hour and is followed by a simple lunch. These events will be held at First Christian Church, Courthouse Plaza. Come as you are to share in worship and fellowship.

This year's series of services begins **Ash Wednesday, February 17, at Noon**. The Ash Wednesday service will be led by First United Methodist Church. First Congregational UCC will be leading the service on March 10. Please join us if you are able.

Ash Wednesday Worship

at *First Congregational UCC*

7:00 P.M. February 17 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 begin our Lenten journey.

Join us as we begin the ancient pilgrimage of seasons at the heart of the Christian tradition, a journey from ashes to fire – from Lent to Easter to Pentecost. Nursery care will be provided

Rethinking Eden

A year ago I was overwhelmed with a statistic that I'd read about how a billion people in the world are over fed, and about a billion people are



close to starvation. When I asked a friend what do to with that, he said, "I don't know, but you have to start small." So while walking to church and walking through the empty lot that the church owns, I saw a garden. And from that the idea of having a church garden was born. A lot of people helped with the garden last year, and it was a moderate success, but I know that we can make it be better.

A few people have asked about doing it again this year, and I think that we should. In fact, I'd like to see our extra food go to The Second Helping. However, last year I tried to do too much of it myself. This year we are going to form a **Garden Committee**. The committee will not have to meet many times. I am willing to do a lot of the labor, but I need people to help me organize it. If you would be willing to sit on the committee and help feed our church and people from Second Helping organic vegetables, let me know. Who knows, we might even get other churches to do the same thing and little by little turn back the wave of hunger in our country and in the world.

Bliss Always, Victor Force

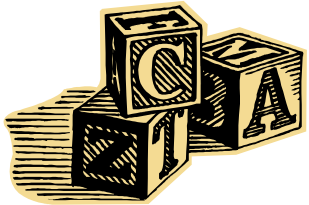
Good News for the 2010 Budget

From Women of the Church

At the Annual meeting, some attention was given to the need for fundraising this year. The Women listened! We have been involved with rummage sales and serving meals as fund-raisers. We decided to take \$2,000.00 from savings from past years' events and contribute to the church 2010 budget fundraising line item.

Some years ago the Women of the Church became Builder's Club members with Habitat for Humanity – pledging \$50 for each new home started. They have also supported various local missions. This year they have given a total of \$650 to Habitat for Humanity, Shepherd's Crossing, Crisis Center, Emergency Shelter and CASA.

Christian Education



Nursery Toy Drive We would like to replace some of the old and worn toys with newer toys for the nursery kids. Any kind of children's toys for ages infant to 3 years are welcome! Toys need not be new, but should be in good

conditions. Donations can be delivered to the office and would be very much appreciated.

That Strange Book—a Bible Study on Revelation

Thursday Evening Bible Study is studying that mysterious book at the end of the Bible—Revelation. Join us Thursdays at 5:30 P.M. in Blachly Hall as we explore this often misunderstood yet influential book that is not like any other in the New Testament. Feel free to bring a brown bag supper or snacks. Child care is available in the Nursery. We conclude by 6:45 P.M. so that you can attend the Taizé worship service if you wish.

Study & Discussion Opportunities for Adults

A Christian Response to the War in Afghanistan

February 14, Session 3: Rebuilding

Our presenter will be Dr. Yar Ebadi, Dean of the College of Business Administration at Kansas State University. Ebadi is Afghan by origin and is the leader of a project on rebuilding universities in Afghanistan.

Exploring Christian Spiritualities

An Adult Forum series for Lent

"I'm spiritual but not religious," seems to be one of the mantras of our time. But what do we mean by "spirituality?" Spirituality is nothing new—most would say that it's a part of being human. We will attempt to scratch the surface a bit, looking at some "ways" of spirituality. This series is based in some of Pastor Kent's continuing education study last summer at Oxford University.

Introduction to Spirituality. What is spirituality? What are some of the major spiritual movements? What is the relationship between spirituality and religion? What makes a spirituality "Christian?"

The Mystical Way. Mystics have always been with us, but how do we understand mysticism? Who are they? We will look in particular at Julian of Norwich and her famous text "Showings."

The Way of Everyday Action. How is spirituality a part of everyday life? How can we live in more focused ways, aware of God's activity in our lives? We will talk a bit about St. Ignatius Loyola and his "Spiritual Exercises."

The Way of Imagination. Creativity and spirituality seem to go hand in hand for many. Why is that? What sorts of creativity seem especially spiritual. In this session, we will look at some of the poetry of George Herbert.

The Way of Social Engagement. Is Liberation Theology, a 20th century development, a spirituality? We will look at a few of the pioneering Liberation theologians.

Worship & Church Volunteers

February 14, 2010

Flowers *Volunteer Needed*
 Greeters Carolyn Hodgson, *Volunteer Needed*
 Scripture Reader Ann Smit
 Word for Children ... Judy Willingham
 Fellowship Hour Ann Smit
 Snow Removal Jim Ahrens (*through February 20*)

February 21, 2010

Flowers *Volunteer Needed*
 Greeters Vickie Korroch, Elain Donnoe
 Scripture Reader Sean Weston
 Word for Children ... Kerri Keller
 Fellowship Hour *Volunteer Needed*
 Snow Removal Dan Clark (*through February 27*)

February 28, 2010

Flowers *Volunteer Needed*
 Greeters Mary Ellen Barkley, *Volunteer Needed*
 Scripture Reader Chantel Vogel
 Word for Children ... Tracey Weston
 Fellowship Hour *Volunteer Needed*
 Snow Removal Dale Stearns (*through March 6*)

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 785-456-6743 or mandy.strawn@gmail.com.



February 14, 2010

Chief Cook Andy Barkley
 Volunteers Mary Ellen Barkley, Ann Gleason,
 *Volunteers Needed*
 Dessert Barbara Withee

February 21, 2010

Chief Cook Dale Stearns
 Volunteers Delta Sigma Theta, Ann Gleason,
 Caren Knicklebine
 Dessert To be announced

February 28, 2010

Chief Cook Ann Smit
 Volunteers ESA Sorority
 Dessert Ann Smit



**Shepherd's
Crossing**
NEW WINE LOVE

Third Tuesday
EVERY MONTH

Eat at *Sirion Stockade* on the *Third Tuesday* of each month and benefit Shepherd's Crossing. Sirion Stockade will donate a generous portion of the cost of your meal to assist families needing help with rent, utilities or prescription medication.

Clip and present this coupon to the cashier and leave a copy of your cash register receipt.
Valid only at the Manhattan location.

Both Sirion Stockade and Shepherd's Crossing thank you for your patronage.

Community News

Head Start USD 383 Head Start, which serves the Manhattan, Ogden and Riley County School Districts, is accepting applications for the 2010-2011 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, 2010 but not yet kindergarten age eligible. For more information, call 587-2045 or stop by Head Start at 1700 Leavenworth in Manhattan.

Extra Help North Central Flint Hill Area on Aging Agency is spreading the word about Extra Help. Extra Help pays for Medicare Part D premiums, co-payments and deductibles. People on Medicare with limited income and resources may be eligible. Under a new law, more Medicare beneficiaries could qualify because some things no longer count as income and resources.

Hospice Volunteer Training Hospice Volunteer Training will prepare volunteers to provide respite care, transportation, visitation and assistance for Homecare and Hospice Clients. Classes begin on February 18. Please RSVP by February 15 by calling 537-0688 ext. 216 or email Mary Evens at mevans@hcandh.org.

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