



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
NEWSLETTER**

Volume 53 Number 5

March 11, 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>

## One Great Hour of Sharing

What do your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing do? They are helping the people of war-ravaged Afghanistan rebuild their lives and communities. In Kabul, Rahima Khorosh is teaching at a Church World Service rehabilitation center for children recovering from trauma and violence. Here, boys and girls share a classroom—something unthinkable during the Taliban era—where they learn skills to help them overcome conflict, something that has plagued their country for so many years.

Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing help provide these classes to the children of Afghanistan. OGHS support educational programs in countries from Angola to Vietnam, helping individuals and communities gain literacy, learn peace-building skills, gain new livelihoods, and pass on knowledge to younger generations. Look inside this newsletter for more information. One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday is March 22.

### Sharing Resources — Changing Lives!

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## Sharing and Caring

### *Prayers and Concerns*

Please contact the church office for further information.

### *Congratulations*

- Hunter and Gabriel Seibert arrived February 27 at 2:21 P.M. Gabriel was 4 pounds 13 ounces with blonde hair, and Hunter was 5 pounds 3 ounces with dark brown hair. Chasity is doing fine, and her husband Howie made it back to Manhattan the next day.

### *Helping*

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

## Thursday Evening Bible Study

We took a break during the coldest months of winter, but have resumed the Thursday Evening Bible Study. Join us at 5:30 P.M. in Blachly Hall. You are welcome to bring a brown bag supper or snack. We conclude at 6:45 P.M., just in time for Taizé worship. During Lent we will be studying the book of Amos, generally acknowledged to be the earliest literature of the prophetic tradition in the Hebrew Bible.



### 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 through April 1.

**Join us at Noon at First Christian Church**, Courthouse Plaza, for a brief worship service followed by a simple lunch. This Wednesday, March 11, the service will be led by College Avenue United Methodist Church.

**Reduced Office Hours** While our administrative assistant is on parental leave, please call ahead to be sure the office will be open. We will try to have volunteers or staff present Monday through Wednesday from 9:00 A.M. to Noon. Office hours at other times will vary. Also, please remember that e-mails sent to [office@uccmanhattan.org](mailto:office@uccmanhattan.org) may not receive a prompt response during this time. Please copy time-sensitive e-mails to [pastor@uccmanhattan.org](mailto:pastor@uccmanhattan.org).

## Cinema & Soul

### Reel Theology & Contemporary Issues

*Tuesday, March 24, at 6:30 P.M.*

### *King Corn*

You are what you eat. *King Corn* is a feature documentary about two friends, one acre of corn, and the crop that drives our fast-food nation. Ian and Curt move from the east coast to Iowa to grow one acre of corn and follow it through the food system. What they learn raises troubling questions about what we eat and how we farm. *Not rated. 2007. 88 minutes.*

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



### *North Central Association K-O Conference UCC*

## Spring Meeting

**Saturday, March 28, 2009**

**at White Memorial Camp**

**Registration 9:30 A.M. Meeting & Worship 10:00**

**Lunch served at 12:00**

Please contact the pastor or call the church office by March 20 if you plan to attend.

## Pocket Change to Change the World



During the month of March, we invite you to empty out your pocket change into the offering plate. These bits of metal will be dedicated as a special addition to our **One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)** offering on **March 22**.

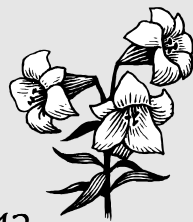
You will literally feel lighter when you release the weight of those coins to benefit those in need around the world.

**Use your pocket change to change the world!**  
*The Board of Mission and Outreach*

## Easter Lilies

You have the opportunity to remember or honor family or friends by purchasing a lily for the Easter Day worship service on April 12.

The lilies are \$14.00 each. You may send your check and completed form to the church office or place it in the offering plate on Sunday.



## God is still speaking...



A reflection by Bill Green,  
Minister and Team Leader, Stewardship and Church  
Finances Ministry, Local Church Ministries, United  
Church of Christ.

*Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!" And how he was afraid, and said "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven." (Genesis 28:10-17)*

With nothing but a stone for a pillow, estranged from the angry brother he had betrayed who was now planning to kill him, and amid the desolation of the wilderness late at night, Jacob found "the gate of heaven," experiencing a God who was still speaking amid so much that said God wasn't. At a vulnerable moment when all the odds seemed against it, God becomes real for him as never before. And Jacob finds himself chosen to carry on divine promise to bless "all the families of the earth." An ordinary stone and an unholy place prove to be the house of God, a place where heaven meets earth and God's presence becomes known.

There was nothing in Jacob's own past that could have prepared him for this experience. He came from a pious household only to learn, in the words of contemporary poet, Jack Gilbert:

“God does not live among the church bells, but is briefly resident there. We are occasional like that. A lifetime of easy happiness mixed with pain and loss, trying always to name and hold on to the enterprise under way in our chest. Reality is not what we marry as a feeling. It is what walks up the dirt path, through the excessive heat and giant sky...” (“Music Is In the Piano Only When It Is Played”)

For Jacob it was not the excessive heat but the cold of the desert late at night. This was no reality he would court as a blessing and the gate of heaven!

We are not confined to visions of God as victories of faith, any more than was Jacob. God speaks within the shadows of our lives, not only the sunlight. We may trust the God who still speaks beyond what we ourselves have known, and even in our wildest dreams. We do so, not alone, but in the company of others through the ages who have found that this is a God whose magnificence is the more extraordinary by becoming known in unproven places—including a jerkwater village like Bethlehem, where Jesus was born.

God is still speaking amid all we feel and face, and perhaps never more so than when we wish we were in some better place facing instead what we want to feel, not whatever “walks up the dirt path.”

Surely the Lord is in the dirt path. “Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it.” In the original Hebrew the verse literally reads, “and I, I did not know.” The sense is, “and me, I didn’t know.” Meaning, “and I wasn’t full of myself” or “I wasn’t so busy paying attention to my own feelings that I missed it.”

God is still speaking! Amid the din, often the dullness, also the disappointment of feeling that so easily consumes us, are we listening? Can we hear? Will we, like Jacob, let our “stones” become the gate of heaven? Like so many of our forebears, will we, too, hear the still speaking God addressing us in ways we haven’t heard or heeded before—and even amid circumstances we’d rather avoid?

## Youth Corner

**March 15 & 22**

No Youth Group—Spring Break

**March 28 Sunday**

6:00 P.M. Progressive Dinner

If you would like to host about 15 youth for a portion of their progressive dinner, please contact youth ministry coordinator Tracey Weston.

## Christian Education

**This Sunday, March 15**

**Inter-generational Sunday School**

Jeff and Kerri Keller will lead us in an experience that invites all ages to work together. Join us for fun and fellowship. We will return to the regular schedule of classes on March 22.

## ***New Members***

*On Sunday, March 29, we will receive new members into the congregation during the morning worship service. If you are interested in joining First Congregational United Church of Christ, please contact the pastor or leave a message in the church office, 537-7006.*

## Worship & Church Volunteers

### *March 15, 2009*

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**Greeters** ..... Carolyn Hodgson, Virginia Bigbee  
**Scripture Reader** ..... Judy Davis  
**Word for Children** .. Jim Ahrens  
**Fellowship Hour** ..... Carolyn Hodgson  
**Snow Removal** ..... **volunteer needed** (*through March 21*)

### *March 22, 2009*

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**Greeters** ..... Mike & Martha Miller  
**Scripture Reader** ..... Craig Weston  
**Word for Children** .. Tracey Weston  
**Fellowship Hour** ..... Sue Zschoche & Judy Davis  
**Snow Removal** ..... **volunteer needed** (*through March 28*)

### *March 29, 2009*

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**Greeters** ..... Dan Clark, Joy Schell  
**Scripture Reader** ..... Sue Zschoche  
**Word for Children** .. Amanda Tross  
**Fellowship Hour** ..... Angela Hubler  
**Snow Removal** ..... **volunteer needed** (*through April 4*)

### *April 5, 2009*

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**Greeters** ..... *Volunteer Needed*, Brent Maner  
**Scripture Reader** ..... Chantel Vogel  
**Word for Children** .. Kent Cormack  
**Fellowship Hour** ..... Lauren Ritterbush  
**Lawn Mowing** ..... **volunteer needed** (*through April 11*)

## 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 537-7006.*



### *March 15, 2009*

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**Chief Cook** ..... Jeff Keller  
**Volunteers** ..... Ann Gleason, First Christian Youth Group  
**Dessert** ..... Carolyn Thompson

### *March 22, 2009*

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

### *March 29, 2009*

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**Chief Cook** ..... Karen Franz  
**Volunteers** ..... Christy Crenshaw  
Manhattan Mennonite Church  
**Dessert** ..... Christy Crenshaw

### *April 5, 2009*

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**Chief Cook** ..... **volunteer needed**  
**Volunteers** ..... Ann Gleason, Phi Eta Sigma  
**Dessert** ..... Bonnie Lynn-Sherow

## Community News

### Habitat for Humanity's Chocolate & Tea

Manhattan Area Habitat for Humanity's Seventh Annual **Chocolate & Tea** fundraiser will be held on Sunday, April 19, 2009, from 2:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. at the Houston Street Ballroom in Manhattan. Tickets are \$15 per person. To purchase tickets, call Carol Bredesen at 539-9390. Tickets can also be purchased at the door.

### *Elisabeth of Berlin*

On April 27, at 7:00 P.M. you can view the film *Elisabeth of Berlin* at the Manhattan Public Library sponsored by the Micah Society. The film is set in Germany during the Second World War and tells the story of Elisabeth as she seeks to help Jews in her community in the face of the Holocaust. The producer of the film will be present to discuss the film after the screening. All are welcome.

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