



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWSLETTER

Volume 53 Number 9

May 13, 2009

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| 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 |

Confirmation

It's an odd thing, Confirmation. Not really fish nor fowl. We call it a "rite" of the church, but what does it mean? It does not make one a member of the church, for it is the sacrament of Baptism that marks us as a member of Christ's body. Yet those confirmed get reported at the end of the year as additions to our roll of active members in First Congregational UCC.

Confirmation is not necessarily a profession of faith, though we often say it is an affirmation of faith promises made on our behalf at our Baptism (if we were baptized as infants). It certainly is not a declaration that one has arrived at all the answers on the journey of faith—even in churches where memorization of the answers in a catechism is a part of the formation process. It is not a graduation or an accomplishment so much as a time when the church says, "We affirm that God is at work in you, the Spirit is alive in you, and we welcome you to continue the journey with us." [continued on page 2]

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To understand Confirmation, we have to understand something of the ancient practice of Baptism in the church. In the earliest days, the church baptized mostly adults—whole families sometimes, but because one was more likely to convert to Christianity than to be born into it, baptisms were mostly of adults.

Baptisms involved lots of water—and thus as the Church began to go public in the fourth century, special spaces were created for baptism that could accommodate large pools of water. Classic examples from antiquity include the baptisteries at Ravenna, Pisa, and Florence. These were large, freestanding structures near the main church.

Early descriptions of the celebration of Easter tell of how the congregation kept a vigil of prayer, psalms, and scripture in the church during the night of Holy Saturday. Those who had prepared for Baptism during the Lenten season assembled in the baptistery, but there was not room for the whole congregation—they continued their vigil in the main church. The baptisms took place just before dawn and included lots of water, prayer, and anointing with specially blessed fragrant oil (chrism). In desert climates, anointing always followed bathing to protect the skin. As dawn came, the newly baptized, with damp hair, dressed in white robes and smelling of the fragrant chrism, were led into the main church.

There they received a second anointing and laying on of hands by the bishop which *confirmed* before the whole congregation their new identity as Christian.

As time went on, and it became common to be born into a Christian family rather than to convert as an adult, the baptism of infants became the norm. As the church expanded across Europe into colder climates, freestanding baptisteries with large pools of water gave way to small fonts and a more symbolic washing—far more practical with infants. And one way or another, that second anointing and laying on of hands began to float free in time—becoming an event that occurred at a later date as what we now know as Confirmation.

While it's history is a bit fuzzy, and there is little theological justification for its separation from Baptism, Confirmation has become a time when the church confirms and affirms those who have undertaken study and preparation to take on expanded responsibilities in the life of the church.

Don't miss this Sunday—you will be moved by the faith expressed by these young Christians, and together we will confirm that the Spirit of God is indeed at work in them and through them.

Grace & Peace,



Sharing and Caring

Prayers and Concerns

Please contact the church office for further details.

Helping

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

Congratulations Graduates!

Eli Logan, son of Lauren Ritterbush and Brad Logan, is graduating from Manhattan High School on May 17. He will be attending Kansas State University, majoring in architecture.

Tim Sidorfsky, son of Dona and Frank, is graduating from K-State this spring with a degree in physical science.

Michelle Sidorfsky, Tim's wife will also be graduating from K-State this spring with a degree in geography.

Carson Schuette, daughter of Sue Zschoche, is graduating with a Master's of Arts Degree in American Studies from King's College, the University of London.

Chantel Vogel, daughter of Judy and Pate Willingham, and mother of Jonathan and Macy, graduates in December with her Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction, specializing in Reading/Language Arts. She hopes to pursue a PhD. For the time being, she will continue teaching 4th grade here in Manhattan.

David Vogel, Chantel's husband, receives his Master's degree this May in Landscape Architecture. No, he's not planning to landscape yards! He wants to work on large scale projects designing new urbanist communities that are walkable and sustainable. Knowing that they want to be in the Denver area, David and Chantel plan to move there in the next year, and hope for the job market to change!

Cathy Fagg, fiancée of Rob Lewis, is graduating from Northwestern Law School, Chicago, Illinois, with a degree of Doctor of Law.

Skyler Hawk, son of Tammi and Tom Hawk, earned his PhD in Psychology, Department of Social and Personality Development from the University of Hawaii. He began his current position as Promovendus Researcher at the University of Amsterdam in the Department of Social Psychology in September 2005 and will complete his second doctorate in October 2009.

Strengthen the Church

On Sunday, May 31 – the Day of Pentecost – we will receive the Strengthen the Church special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. This offering builds the UCC’s future. It funds new congregations and renews existing ones. It supports programs for youth and young adults, and nurtures current and future leaders. It aids the God is Still Speaking Ministry and its message of inclusivity. Directed to local Conferences, Local Church Ministries and the Still-Speaking Ministry, Strengthen the Church gifts help to create vibrant church communities of extravagant welcome.

Please use the enclosed envelope to make your gift. Together we will Strengthen the Church!

Following a God without Limit

Historically serving immigrating, first generation, and second generation Filipinos, **Moanalua Community Church UCC, Honolulu**, is in transition. This church believes that vital, healthy churches welcome ALL peoples from ALL walks of life because **GOD IS A GOD WITHOUT LIMIT**. It uses its strategic location, the Pearl Harbor Memorial Chapel on Naval property, to welcome a very diverse military population.

Members of Moanalua draw on their rich history of strong extended families, to offer themselves as an extended family to military personnel far from home. Through their Preschool and Day Care Program and partnership with a predominantly Caucasian, military congregation, they live their vision with help from a **Strengthen the Church Revitalizing Church grant**.



God is still speaking...



A reflection by Ron Buford,
Coordinator and Team Leader of the
Stillspeaking Initiative
United Church of Christ

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.
(John 16:12-13)

Long before the Internet, Jesus reassures his followers that when he can no longer be with them physically as master teacher, they will have something even better – the presence of a Divine teacher so close as to be a virtual teacher running alongside them. Jesus goes on to say their new teacher will be even better than his physical presence because they will have access to a perpetual Presence as teacher, coach, and comforter, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Such a teacher could only be God’s own presence with us, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus seems more interested in creating an expectation for dynamism and continuous learning about life, the world around us, and God than he is about control. When Jesus says, “I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now,” He does not stop there. He goes on to promise the comfort and guidance of another, the Spirit of Truth who will declare the things that are to come. In other words, the Way Christ taught will never become obsolete ...as long as we look and listen for the Spirit in the moment who makes us relevant in each generation. The Spirit will not only impart words that may be challenging, but comfort as well amidst the change.

This passage creates a picture of dynamism. The Spirit speaks Divine words in the moment, sending impressions for you and me when we need them, when we’re ready to understand them and put them to use. Thus the church, the life, the organization, the individual and relationships that embrace the Spirit, embrace

God's continually unfolding future, are continually re-created. God efficiently makes us ready for what lies ahead – just in time.

Is it any wonder Jesus said continually, "Be not afraid?"

Prayer: Gracious God, help us to be ever mindful of your Spirit Presence each day. Sometimes there is so much change that we simply want the change to stop. Help us to recognize when your Spirit calls us to change. Thank you for the many times your Spirit Presence has come and helped us adapt to changes all around us. Help us to look for and wait upon your Divine Presence.

Like the dawn of each new day, may we be the re-creating and re-created people you call us to be. Amen.

Christian Education

Parents' Meeting this Sunday May 17

Parents are invited to gather at 12:30 in Andover Hall. We will be meeting to discuss the new curriculum, *Our Whole Lives*, to be taught in Sunday School grades Kindergarten through First and Fourth through Sixth. This will be offered in the fall semester of 2009. Come to learn more about this opportunity.

Last Day of Sunday School The final day for spring classes is this Sunday, May 17. Please plan to join us as we wrap up another year. Classes will resume in the second half of August. Watch for news of summer opportunities.

Youth Corner

May 17 6:00 P.M. Cookout at the Weston's

Women of the Church

Summer Rummage Sale June 12 & 13

Start sorting now. The First Congregational 2009 Summer Rummage Sale is scheduled for Friday, June 12, 4:00 to 7:00 P.M. and Saturday, June 13, 8:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. in Andover Hall (the sanctuary basement).

Sales on Friday will be priced by the item and Sales on Saturday will be priced by the bag.

Rummage will be accepted, starting June 7. After the worship service, we will need help in setting up tables and clothing rods. Then the organizing will begin.

We Need: large paper grocery bags, seasonal clothing in good condition, clean useable linens, working household appliances, kitchen ware, and decorative items.

Again this year the Youth Group will be handling sales of large items such as furniture in Blachly Hall. Depending on item and time frame, they may be available to help in transporting those items to the church. Tracey Weston, Youth Ministry Coordinator, will be organizing those efforts. She can be contacted at 537-7006.

Please – NO shoes or books. They just don't sell. Stained and damaged items don't sell either. Just because it's called a rummage sale doesn't mean that things that are truly junk will sell.

Sign up to volunteer. YOU are needed! There are opportunities for volunteers to help with organizing and set-up each day and evening during the week before the sale. Call Judy Willingham at 537-7006, to get your name on the sign-up sheet. There will be opportunities to sign-up in the Church office as well. The sheet will be posted on the office door.

Questions? Call Judy at 537-7006



Board of Mission & Outreach Trip to Pine Ridge Reservation, Summer 2010

The Board of Mission and Outreach wishes to organize a week-long mission trip to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota during the summer of 2010. The time there will be divided between work and cultural immersion. The experience will be organized by Re-Member, an organization that works to improve the quality of life for the Oglala Lakota people on Pine Ridge. You can learn more at www.re-member.org.

We plan to drive a minivan (a 13-hour trip each way). The cost is \$350 per person, and we hope to be able to underwrite some of the expense. Accommodations are camp-like, with bunks in dorms and common restroom facilities. If you are at least 13 years old, and are interested in being part of this work trip, call Judy Willingham at 537-7006. She will collect names and organize a meeting where we can talk more.



Empty Planters Needed

Sharyl Reynard is need of empty, 1 gallon or larger pots and planters for a plant sale she will be having. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Second Helping. Please contact her at 537-7006.

Birthday Celebration You are cordially invited to a come-and-go reception on May 17 in honor of Julia Bosma on the occasion of her 91st birthday. The party is at the home of Ann and Dave Smit, from 3:00-5:30 in the afternoon. We request no gifts, just the pleasure of your company. Instructions for finding the Smits' home will be in the narthex.

Worship & Church Volunteers

May 17, 2009

FlowersMary Ellen Barkley
GreetersChantel Vogel, Jerry Reynard
Scripture ReaderJim Mock
Word for Children ...Chantel Vogel
Fellowship HourThe Keller Family
Lawn MowingMike Miller (*through May 23*)

May 24, 2009

FlowersMelissa Jones
Greeters*Volunteers Needed*
Scripture ReaderChantel Vogel
Word for Children ...Brent Maner
Fellowship HourThe Weston Family
Lawn MowingSue Gerth (*through May30*)

May 31, 2009

FlowersJan Lange
GreetersCarolyn Hodgson, Marsha Tannehill
Scripture ReaderJerry Reynard
Word for Children ...Dave Smit
Fellowship HourCarolyn Hodgson, Marsha Tannehill
Lawn MowingDon Cannon (*through June 6*)

E-MAIL PRAYER CHAIN

If you wish to be added to the First Congregational e-mail prayer chain, please contact office@uccmanhattan.org.



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.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

700 Poyntz Avenue
Manhattan, KS 66502
(785) 537-7006
uccmanhattan.org

May 17, 2009

Chief Cook Jeff Keller
Volunteers Ann Gleason, Sue Gerth, Caren Knicklebine
Dessert Amanda Tross

May 24, 2009

Chief Cook Melissa Jones
Volunteers ESA Sorority
Dessert Melissa Jones

May 31, 2009

Chief Cook Ann Smit
Volunteers Joy Schell, *Volunteers Needed*
Dessert Christy Crenshaw



Community News

Court-Appointed Special Advocate

Volunteer to be the difference between abuse and hope; become a Court-Appointed Special Advocate. Summer training begins Tuesday, June 16 at 6:00 P.M. in the Alan Lee Center, 621 Humboldt. It continues on Tuesday nights through July 21. CASA is currently in need of new volunteers. Since the beginning of 2009, nearly forty “child in need of care” cases have been filed in Riley County. Please contact us at sunfcasa@interkan.net, 537-6367, or visit <http://casa.manhattanks.org> if you are interested or would like information. There is a child waiting for your voice.

When the Levee Breaks....



"We at Beecher have been so blessed to have so much support -- from prayers, to financial support, to volunteers working in the church as we have struggled mightily to re-build our congregation and our church building. We know that God is calling us to ministry in this broken place called New Orleans. Our support of Strengthen the Church is just one way for us to thank the UCC for its love and its commitment to us and to help another church to follow God's call."

Bernadette Terrell, moderator



Before Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, New Orleans' Beecher Memorial UCC was not unlike many churches -- modest in size, but significant in mission -- with a century-long tradition of providing educational and community development programs, and a vibrant gospel music ministry reaching 90 people a week. Then the levees broke. Its building drowned, its people displaced, and no endowment to draw on. Meeting in a nearby church, Beecher's attendance hovered at about a dozen.



Beecher could have called it a day. As the song says, "When the levee breaks, mama, you got to move." But the Spirit had other plans for Beecher. Instead of moving out, Beecher dug in. They worshiped in the studs of their church. Their large former choir became a praise team. Their Bible study met in a FEMA trailer. They began a quilting ministry and reached out to the homeless. Every Saturday, they "walked" the community, greeting people, passing out flyers, praying. And as they re-built, people returned -- both those they expected and those they didn't. This historically black church now draws on a much broader demographic -- justice-seeking, spirit-filled, music-loving people of God who believe that God is still speaking and working amid the chaos and pain of New Orleans.

Strengthen the Church Special Mission Offering

SPREAD THE LOVE



ABOUT STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

Beecher Memorial's renewal has been supported by funds from Strengthen the Church. Last year, Beecher joined your church and thousands of other UCC congregations in supporting Strengthen the Church. Your gift to this special offering grows the UCC's future by funding The Stillspeaking Ministry, new and renewing churches, youth and young adult ministries, and lay and pastoral leadership formation -- especially among women and people of color. Your offerings are directed to your church's Conference, Local Church Ministries, and The Stillspeaking Ministry.

ABOUT STILLSPEAKING

The God is Stillspeaking Ministry spreads the message of God's extravagant welcome, reaching out especially to those who have felt there is no room for them within Christianity and the church -- the excluded and alienated, the spiritually homeless, the questioning. Last year, Stillspeaking reached an estimated 25 million people through national, regional and local advertising.

**Your generosity today ensures our vibrancy tomorrow.
God is Still Speaking.**

Produced for use in congregations of the United Church of Christ by Local Church Ministries and The Stillspeaking Ministry, United Church of Christ, 2009



**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

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