PEARL OF THE PRAIRIE

A movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.

Church member Evan Russell enjoying his time at Big Lakes!

A Letter from the Pastor

Greetings to All! August is catching me off guard. I remember in a time of old when August was still a part of summer vacation. When school started after Labor Day. Those days are long gone. Rock Creek is starting August 6, and MHK starts August 11. Not to mention, all the teachers already working on their rooms.

This Sunday we will be blessing children's back to school backpacks, and briefcases for the educators. **Saturday, August 8th** is the **Christian Church in Kansas Regional Assembly in Salina.** Close enough to be worth the trip and there is still time to register.

August Sermons

August 2 – Wabi Sabi
Psalm 147:1-11

August 9 – Wanting Me Time
Matthew 14:13-21

August 16 – Prayer, Power, Purpose
Matthew 15:21-28

August 23 – How Many of Cephas Does it Take
Matthew 16:13-20

August 30 – Oh No! I Heard My Name
Exodus 3:1-6

The **Chancel Choir** begins weekly practices **Sunday, the 9th**. **The Barbershop Quartet** comes by to serenade us on **Sunday, the 16th**.

There is an **All-Women Breakfast on Saturday, the 22nd**; and our **5th Sunday Potluck on the 30th**. Not to mention all the usual groups that regularly meet every month. The Fall is full of exciting ideas being developed to include the greater Manhattan community.

Every week we pray for Christ to use us in his service. We are truly blessed that Jesus desires to let us be his disciples. What a joy that we have so many opportunities for others to see Christ Jesus through us. I am always amazed by the creative ideas He comes up with!

See you at the Table!

Pastor Laurie Lewis

Photo credit: lettersfromstpaul / Instagram

The Gift of Service to Others

Serving others with a cheerful heart is not just kindness, it is spiritual balm. It keeps our hearts gentle in a world that tries to harden them.

The Konza Prairie Trail is just outside of Manhattan. In the Spring and Fall we used to take our Cub Scout Pack there to hike, observe plants and wildlife, take in the fresh air and enjoy a picnic lunch together. It is also a place offering solitude and an opportunity for reflection.

The story goes like this: One morning, a man walked that trail carrying the heaviness of the week. He was weary from listening to elected leaders tear down what they were entrusted to build up, watching values he cherished treated as disposables. The noise of it all, the cynicism, the anger, the constant degradation had settled into his chest like a rock.

He wasn't so much angry. Just exhausted from it all. Tired in the way a soul gets when it's been absorbing too much of the world's negativity.

As he rounded a bend in a wooded areas along the trail, he noticed an older gentleman kneeling about thirty feet off the path. He was quietly disposing of wind-scattered debris he had moved from the trail... not because anyone asked him to, and certainly not because he thought anyone was watching.

It was simple, almost ordinary. But something about the gentleness of the act made the observer slow his pace.

He walked over to the elderly man and asked, "Do you work here?"

The older gentleman looked up with a smile and said, "No, I just like doing this because the world is loud, and this helps quiet the noise".

He went back to his work, humming softly — a tune the wind seemed to carry.

The observer stood there for a moment, watching. The prairie grass rustled. A Bobwhite quail called from the woods. And in that quiet moment he realized something:

The negativity of the world had been shaping his heart more than he wanted to admit. He had been waiting for leaders to restore what they had broken. Waiting for the culture to calm down. Waiting for the noise to fade.

But this older gentleman wasn't waiting for anything. He was doing something small, faithful, and good… right in the middle of the noise. Choosing service over frustration. Serving without applause.

I believe service to others is how we keep our hearts from becoming like the world that frustrates us.

Scripture to help illustrate the message:

Galatians 5:13 — "Serve one another humbly in love." Service is not optional for believers; it is the shape of our freedom.

Romans 12:21 — "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Negativity is overcome not by argument, but by goodness.

Philippians 2:14–15 — Shine like lights *in* a crooked and twisted generation. The darker the world, the brighter small acts of kindness appear.

Robert Russell, Coordinator of Disciple Men's Fellowship

Stewardship Moment

Wait – It's Already August?!

If you feel like me, this year has been speeding by. Take sometime this week to slow down and just breathe. Walk in the sunshine, or the rain, take in all the blooming flowers and enjoy the last bit of summer before students return, schools start back up, and the town gets busier.

Use this time of peace to count your many blessings and reflect on the gifts that you return to God. Are you on target, or have you received some extra income that should be factored into your giving calculation?

Giving statements were mailed to regular members last month. We're in the midst of our transition to the Ministry Brand Amplify platform for giving, communication, and engagement. As we go through this migration, it's important that you notify us of any discrepancies in your giving record. We are aware that gifts given via Easy Tithe in May were not included in the giving statements, but that has been addressed.

We appreciate your steady and continuing support of FCC Manhattan. The Finance Team is always available to help in any way that we can.

In Christian Service,

Tresa Landis, Stewardship Ministry Team

August Birthdays

August 2 – Ashley VanGilder

August 3 – Mike Thomason

August 4 – Alice Trussell

August 12 – Fran Irelan

August 13 – Tim Berggren

August 14 – Virgina Wesley

August 27 – Michael Masterson

August 29 – Steve Jankord

August 30 – Elizabeth Chapman & Chloe Purvis

Outreach Ministry Team

Helping our neighbors at Be Able

On Saturday, July 11 we hosted a special "Veteran's Breakfast" at Be Able. A big thanks to Barb King and Mark Maxwell for stepping up to help Ron and Heather make this a successful event. The veterans were very thankful and there was enough food left over to serve the rest of the Be Able community. We have been helping with a Saturday Be Able brunch about once every eight weeks and plan to continue for the rest of the year.

Next Be Able Cookout August 7

We will be hosting another Be Able cookout luncheon on **Friday, August 7**. We will be serving our famous chili hot dogs along with all the fixins! Plans are to use Sign-up genius to solicit donations and volunteers. Any money donations will be received through the church office.

Other Be Able Volunteer Opportunities

I have been asked, "what other volunteer opportunities are there at Be Able?" So I spoke with Rachel Braddy, the volunteer coordinator at Be Able and she said they are always looking for volunteers to help out; whether you enjoy working one-on-one with people, helping behind the scenes, or pitching in with larger hands-on projects. Rachel listed a few areas at Be Able where they currently have a need:

Transportation

- Give rides so people can get to the center and to the resources they need

Mentoring

- Spend time encouraging and supporting someone as they work toward their goals; teaching life skills such as budgeting and job pursuits

Shower and Laundry supervision

- Monitoring the facilities to keep the space clean, safe, and comfortable for everyone.

Another area where Be Able will need volunteers in the future is when they get their new learning center up and running. They plan to provide classes that will help educate individuals in work and life skills.

They have also appreciated the donations our members have made in the past (financial support, furniture, bedding, toiletries). I assured her we will continue to help in this area especially during their donation drives.

If interested in some of these opportunities, feel free to contact Rachel directly at rachel@beablecommunity.com.

School Supplies Delivered

We collected several boxes of school supplies for this year's USD 383 "Stuff the Bus" community-wide event which included 34 backpacks **(special thanks to Beth Pannbacker and Art Chaput for their significant donation!)** A big thanks to **Debi** for delivering the donations to the Walmart collection site. Our school district greatly appreciates the generosity of our church and the surrounding community.

Another Successful TEFAP Tuesday!

On July 21 we had eight members who volunteered to help with The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) at the Flint Hills Breadbasket food pantry to prepare and distribute the monthly food packages.

We also had some extra time to help sort through and pack eggs into cartons at the Breadbasket. So many

eggs; we saw boxes and boxes of eggs in which Rich asked me, “where do all these eggs come from?”

My response, “I may be wrong, but I think they come from chickens!” *(I don’t think they appreciate my commentary).*

The Breadbasket is very thankful for our support in helping with this program each month. The next one is planned for **August 25**.

Ron Thomas, Chair

Christian Education

Upcoming Events:

- August 2 - Backpack Blessing
- August 23 - Sunday School Teacher Recognition
- August 30 - Ministry Café

Placed on Purpose | Ministry Café
August 30th, Before and After Worship

- God didn't design us to just attend church—He designed us to be the church together!
- You're invited to our Ministry Café, an informal showcase of all the incredible ministries that make our congregation thrive. From hospitality to outreach, every team plays a vital role.
- Come and learn what each team does, and discover how your unique gifts can make an impact. Come curious, leave connected!

Schedule for Children’s Worship and Wonder

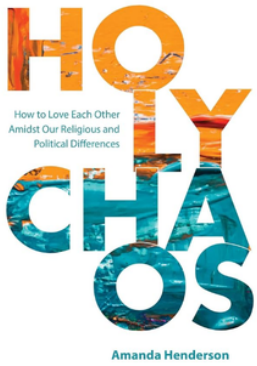
August	Story Title
2	The Promised Land
9	The Temple, a House for God
16	Exile and Return
23	The Great Pearl
30	The Great Banquet

Fall Book Study: Holy Chaos by Rev. Amanda Henderson
Wednesdays, Sept 2 – Oct 21 | 6:00-7:00pm
How do we stay grounded, love radically, and keep our cool in a world that feels increasingly divided? Join us this fall for an 8-week interactive study on Rev. Amanda Henderson’s book, **"Holy Chaos: Creating Connections in Divisive Times."**

Together, we’ll explore how to navigate tough political and social conversations with faith, grace, and curiosity—whether at the dinner table with family or out in our broader community. Each 60-minute session balances meaningful discussion, Scripture grounding, and practical weekly exercises.

- **When:** Every Wednesday in September and October (Sept 2 – Oct 21)
- **What to bring:** A copy of the book and an open heart!

Sign up in the Narthex or contact the church office to let us know you're coming and if you need a copy of the book! We will have books available in the middle of August.



CE Phone Hours:
M - 10:15-11:05am
Tu/W - 10:30-11:20am
F - 10:05-11:25am
M-F - 4:30-5:30pm

Ashley VanGilder, Director

Worship and Spritual Life Ministry Team

Pam and Marilyn are at it again! Come in, look around the sanctuary and count the sunflowers. It is looking like fall, the most wonderful time to decorate with all the fall colors.

We have some interesting music to look forward to so make sure you come to worship service.

Fred Burrack and the Praise Band:

August 2 – Camp Fire Music

August 9 – Dixieland Band

August 16 – Little Apple Barbershop Chours will sing

August 23 – Pick a song for August 30th. Write it on a slip of paper and put in in the collection plate.

August 30 – Hymn Sing

A Message from Ryan Hernandez-Chancel Choir Director:

The choir is coming back from our summer vacation! We will resume our weekly rehearsals on **August 9th** starting at **8:30 AM** and perform in worship on **August 16**. Our basses will be touring with the barbershop chorus, so on August 16, only sopranos and altos will sing, but all are welcome to come and rehearse for future Sundays! Looking ahead, we will also perform another cantata for Advent/Christmas season, date TBD. If you have any questions or want to know more, reach out to me via email at: rthernandez99@gmail.com.

Scout Updates

There was a Court of Honor for Troop 275 on the 25 of July. Three individuals completed the requirements for the rank of Second Class Scout. Congratulations to...

- Chelsea Robert
- Felicity Dongoski
- Ember Upchurch

Two individuals completed their requirements for the rank of Star Scout. As a Star Scout, you are taking a long step toward Eagle Scout. Congratulations to...

- Annalise Orona
- Lila Allen

On July 24–25, Troop 275 also hosted their lock-in here at FCC.

Good job to all of you. Awesome! 👌

Doug Myers

Upcoming Fellowship Events

Women's Back to School Breakfast

Saturday, August 22
9:30 am
Community Hall
All women welcome!
Voulunteers needed, reach out to Marilyn Masterson for more info.

All Church Potluck

Sunday, August 30
After service
Community Hall
Bring a dish if you are able

From Cradles to Crayons

July has been extremely hot, but that hasn't stopped us from getting outside and enjoying the water. The children look forward to water play every week, and we enjoy watching them have fun!

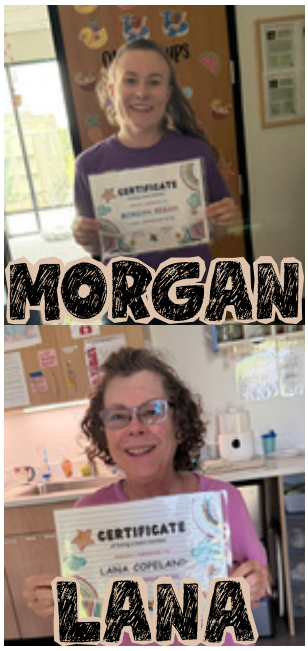
We also had a very successful Red, White, and Blue Parade with our best turnout yet—almost all of our families attended. We gathered for ice cream in the fellowship hall afterward, and the parents expressed just how much fun they had.

Looking ahead, we are planning the Preschool Graduation for August 7th.

Seven children in the Koala class will be graduating. It will be bittersweet for me, as I had four of them when I was the lead teacher in the infant room, and they will be greatly missed!

With August around the corner, we are getting ready for transitions. We will move children up from each room as soon as the Koalas graduate. So far, we have moved four infants to the Panda room and are waiting for four new infants to start soon. We also have a new child starting in the Hedgehog room, and a former student is returning to finish preschool here at FCC. While we will have some empty spots to fill in a few rooms, we want to get through these transitions and settle in before focusing on enrollment.

On a final note, Lana and I just celebrated our five-year anniversary here at FCC, and Morgan will celebrate her one-year anniversary soon. We are truly blessed with great staff and are so thankful to have them.



Chan'Tal Underwood, Director

Launching Lunch

Thursday, July 16th...
We had eight of us enjoy a nice fun filled meal at the "Authentic Spice Indian Cuisine" restaurant in Aggieville. If you have never been there you should, it was quite good food and great service. Also, they have a generous supply of choices on the menu that allow you to choose just the right amount of spice for your preference. Mild all the way for me but other's are naturally Spicer than me! 😘

We look forward to having Fran back in charge of things next month August 20th, as we enjoy the new opening of **El Corral** (3901 Vanesta Dr, MHK) next to Mr. K's.

Donna Whitehill

Member Highlight

by Pam Crawford

We have watched the Crain family grow up! Two sweet baby girls – Millie and Sadie.

Sarah Maxwell Crain grew up in Manhattan. She graduated from K-State as an elementary education teacher and a master's in educational leadership. She started her career on Fort Riley teaching at USD475.

Joe grew up in Corpus Christi, TX and joined the military at age 18 for 5 years. He decided to stay in Kansas after he got out.

Joe and Sarah met in 2018 and married during Covid in 2020.

Sweet baby Millie was born in 2021. Joe graduated from K-State with his bachelor's in Business Administration with concentration in Management Information Systems in 2022.

Adorable Sadie was born in 2023.

Sarah teaches 2nd grade at Amanda Arnold Elementary and Joe is working as an applications developer in the IT department at the college of engineering for K-State.

Joe and Sarah enjoy doing activities together such as board games, puzzles and cards. Joe is musically inclined and enjoys playing the drums and guitar, as a hobby.

Fun fact: Sarah's birthday is 2/22 and Joe's is 5/5. Duplicate numbers for their birthday dates.

The Crains spend lots of time with the girls and their AMAZING grandparents. Thank you for all the help you give First Christian Church!

Discipleship Ministry Team

For Children's Worship and Wonder in July, we studied lessons from the Old Testament and the Parables. Substitute teachers and greeters are always welcome in the Hummingbird room along with visitors.

Thanks very much to **Renate Woodmansee, Alicia Chaline, Ashley VanGilder, Linda Uthoff and Sarah Crain** for being our teachers in July!

DMT is helping in the effort to get a wall up in the future youth space in the basement. Thanks to Dave Woodmansee for reinvigorating this effort!

Blessing of the Backpacks will take place during the church service on **August 2nd**. Teachers, staff and students of any level should bring their backpack, briefcase, etc. and receive the Congregation's support as we begin another school year.

Our local school district is changing their daily schedule this school year, and many parents of elementary age students are searching for educational opportunities from 2:30-5:30 pm each school day. The executive Director of our local UFM (University for Man), Aliah Seay, came by our ministry team meeting discuss the A.B.L.E Program. This after-school program provides STEAM programming, leadership skill development, mentoring and teambuilding, homework support, recreation activities, and transportation from school to the program. A.B.L.E runs Monday - Friday from 2:30-5:30 pm.

As always, DMT is seeking new ministry team members!

Linda Uthoff, Chair

Kylie Teel checking in at Camp Tawakoni. Thanks for your support to send our young people to Camp!

Reminders & Updates

Christian Church - Disciples of Christ Kansas Regional Assembly 2026

Mark your calendars for the 2026 Kansas Regional Assembly on **Saturday, August 8**, from **9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at Belmont Boulevard Christian Church in Salina**. The gathering will bring together Christian Church Disciples from across the region for worship, fellowship, learning, and regional business. Registration is now open HERE for both adults and youth, with additional event information available through the Kansas Disciples website.

Coming Up

Backpack Blessing

02 August 2026
During service

Elder's Meeting

02 August 2026
11:30 am

Polling Location – Community Hall

04 August 2026
7 am to 7 pm

Kansas Regional Assembly

08 August 2026
9 am – 4:30 pm, Belmont Boulevard Christian Church in Salina

1st Chancel Choir Rehearsal

09 August 2026
8:30 am

Men's Fellowship

11 August 2026
8 am, Vista Drive-In

Search Committee Meeting

11 August 2026
5:30 pm

Do Day Group

12 August 2026
9 am

DWF Faith Sisters

13 August 2026
5:30 pm

Little Apple Barbershop

16 August 2026
During service

Ministry Team Meeting

16 August 2026
11:30 am

Coordinating Council Meeting

16 August 2026
12:30 pm

Launching Lunch

20 August 2026
12 pm, El Corral (West location)

All Women's Breakfast

22 August 2026
9:30 am

Flint Hills Breadbasket Volunteer Day

25 August 2026
11:30 am – 2 pm at the Breadbasket

Congregational Meeting

30 August 2026
After service

Church Potluck

30 August 2026
After service

Contact Us:

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