



# First United Methodist Church

Manhattan, Kansas

CONNECTING to Christ | GROWING in Community | SERVING the World



VOLUME 94 | NO. 2 | FEBRUARY 2026

An old news story I once read reported that police were searching for individuals who had entered an idling locomotive in a rail yard. The culprits had managed to engage the engine's controls and drive it forward approximately 200 yards before it derailed. No suspects had been identified.

The first thing that popped into my mind when I read the story at the time was, "200 yards?" "Derailed?" I assume that the engine hit an uncooperative switch along the way. Why else would a slow-moving train jump the tracks? Don't tracks, after all, pretty much determine where the train heads? It's not as if you can change lanes!

Another place where you can't "change lanes" is a favorite spot of mine at Fort Leavenworth, down by the river. Trailing down the hill near the old post chapel there is a shallow cut in the otherwise imposing western slope leading up from the Missouri River. Right through the middle of the cut are deep depressions in the earth—left more than a century ago by the thousands of wagons that were ferried across the Missouri to join up with the historic trails headed west. It's impossible to stand at the foot of the cut and not see the pioneers whose courage and determination made our nation great.

Well, all that is a long story, but it is what got me thinking about ruts and rails: both keep you locked into a direction, though we generally agree that it is good to be "on track" and not good to be "in a rut." The difference I think lies in the fact that the rails have been pre-set so those on the track can arrive at a particular destination along a particular route. Ruts, on the other hand, are the product of repetition without necessary regard to a plan. They are just "there," reflecting the choices we or others have made before. They don't have as much to do with the destination as they do with whatever momentary necessity was perceived in the past.



You will discover before long that these mind wanderings of mine always end in a spiritual question (Maybe that's its own rut!), so it will not surprise you to have me ask a question about your spiritual journey as we enter into Lent later this month: Are you on track, or are you in a rut? How can you tell? Do you have some thoughts about what to do about that?

Pax, Mike

## SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

Worship in-person or live on our website. Replays will also be available on our website.

8:45 am - Contemporary Worship  
9:45 am - Fellowship Time  
10:00 am - Discipleship Time  
11:00 am - Traditional Worship

11:30 am - Radio Broadcast on KMAN 1350 AM, 93.3, or 93.7 FM

The church office is open Monday through Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm and on Sunday Mornings.

**The church office will be CLOSED Monday, February 16 in honor of President's Day**

Please use the double doors from the parking lot into the Connecting Link during the week for all meetings and to visit the office. Thank you.

The newsletter is published monthly on the 28th for the following month. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month. If you have items for the congregation, please send them to Cathlene Higgins, Connections Coordinator, at [fumc@fumcmanhattan.com](mailto:fumc@fumcmanhattan.com).

When the newsletter is available you will receive a notification via email with a link to our website. If you prefer to receive a paper copy in the mail, please contact the office at 785-776-8821. If you have items for the bulletin, website, or Sunday morning worship screens, those should also be sent to Cathlene, [fumc@fumcmanhattan.com](mailto:fumc@fumcmanhattan.com).



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Manhattan, Kansas

[www.fumcmanhattan.com](http://www.fumcmanhattan.com) | [fumc@fumcmanhattan.com](mailto:fumc@fumcmanhattan.com)

785-776-8821

## Scripture Focus for February

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us."

**Hebrews 12:1**

February brings with it the excitement of the Winter Olympics. Athletes from around the world train for years to compete in events that demand discipline, endurance, focus, and perseverance. The writer of Hebrews uses a similar image when describing our life of faith. Faith, like an Olympic race, is not a sprint but a long-distance journey that requires commitment and determination.

The "great cloud of witnesses" refers to the faithful men and women who have gone before us, whose lives testify to God's faithfulness. Just as Olympic athletes are cheered on by spectators, we are encouraged by the examples of those who have trusted God through hardship, uncertainty, and challenge. Their stories remind us that perseverance is possible, even when the race is difficult.

The verse also calls us to "lay aside every weight." Let's be clear, not all weights are sins. Some are distractions, worries, habits, or commitments that slow us down or pull our focus away from God. Athletes remove anything that would hinder their performance. In the same way, we are invited to honestly consider what might be weighing us down spiritually and to entrust those burdens to God.

Finally, we are encouraged to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us." Each of us has a different race, with different responsibilities, struggles, and callings. We are not competing against one another. We are called to remain faithful in the path God has given us. As we watch Olympic athletes push through exhaustion and setbacks, may we be reminded to press on in faith, trusting that God is present in every step of our journey.

This February, may we be encouraged to run the race with perseverance, supported by faith, guided by God, and strengthened for the road ahead.

Cathlene Higgins, Connections Coordinator

## 2025 Worship Attendance

	In Person monthly average	Facebook	Youtube	Website	Notes
January	296	344	142	*	3 weeks due to snow storm
February	298	451	249	*	
March	294	334	350	*	
April	400	835	283	*	Lenten Services
May	246	195	182	*	Memorial Weekend
June	211	219	284	*	
July	195	163	152	*	Single Service
August	244	277	245	106	
September	349	248	377	145	Midweek Began
October	468	192	222	112	
November	283	285	286	116	
December	308	413	203	242	

\*New Website, prior numbers not available.

Facebook numbers are views over one minute.



# CLASSIFIED

The life of our church is shaped and sustained by people just like you who choose to serve. We invite you to prayerfully consider volunteering in one of the opportunities listed and help keep our church vibrant, welcoming, and growing.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH



### GEEZERS

Come be a "Handyman" around the church on Tuesday morning 8-12. We spend the first 30-45 minutes catching up with each other and enjoying good fellowship to start the day off on a high note. Routine work involves minor labor tasks & repairs around the church campus. For more information, contact Fred Caldwell at [caldwell.fred@gmail.com](mailto:caldwell.fred@gmail.com) or just come on down any Tuesday to see for yourself.



### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Do you love helping kids grow, learn, and have fun? Our Children's Ministry is looking for caring, energetic volunteers to join our team! Whether you enjoy storytelling, hands-on activities, or helping behind the scenes, there's a place for you. We have opportunities on Wednesday evenings, Sunday mornings, and with special events. Reach out to [children@fumcmanhattan.com](mailto:children@fumcmanhattan.com)

### LYDIA MINISTERS

Seeking someone with a heart for struggling community members. This involves a once a week commitment at the church providing practical help as we fulfill our mission of offering hospitality, hope, and help in Jesus's name. For information or to volunteer, contact Cathlene Higgins, or a pastor.



### 11 AM USHERS

Serve one Sunday a month to greet, and receive offering at the 11:00 am Traditional Worship service. We are also needing a coordinator for scheduling all the 11am ushers. Contact Pastor Courtney.

### MONEY COUNTERS

Each Monday at 10am two volunteers count the cash offering from the previous week. We send a sign up every couple of months. Even if you can only assist occasionally, we would truly appreciate your help. Contact Noni Buster for more info on this opportunity. [finance@fumcmanhattan.com](mailto:finance@fumcmanhattan.com)

### TECH BOOTH

Join the Tech Team! If you're interested in audio, video, streaming, cameras, production, or just playing with fun technology, come join us! We have several roles to fill each Sunday and would love to get you involved.

Contact:  
[Rphillips@fumcmanhattan.com](mailto:Rphillips@fumcmanhattan.com)

### SANCTUARY

Lend a hand once a week with organizing pew books, giving envelopes, replacing candles, and other small tasks that help prepare our sanctuary for worship. Contact Cathlene at [chiggins@fumcmanhattan.com](mailto:chiggins@fumcmanhattan.com)

# Student Ministries



CHILDREN'S  
MINISTRY FUMC

Jeff Cunningham, Director of Youth Ministries  
[jcunningham@fumcmnhattan.com](mailto:jcunningham@fumcmnhattan.com)

Misti LeMoine, Director of Children's Ministries  
[children@fumcmnhattan.com](mailto:children@fumcmnhattan.com)



Young Christians' Weekend 2026 is coming! Sign up now for a great weekend of fun, music, fellowship, and teaching at Silver Dollar City in Branson, MO. We will leave on the evening of March 27th and return Sunday evening, the 29th. Contact Jeff for more information or to reserve your spot.

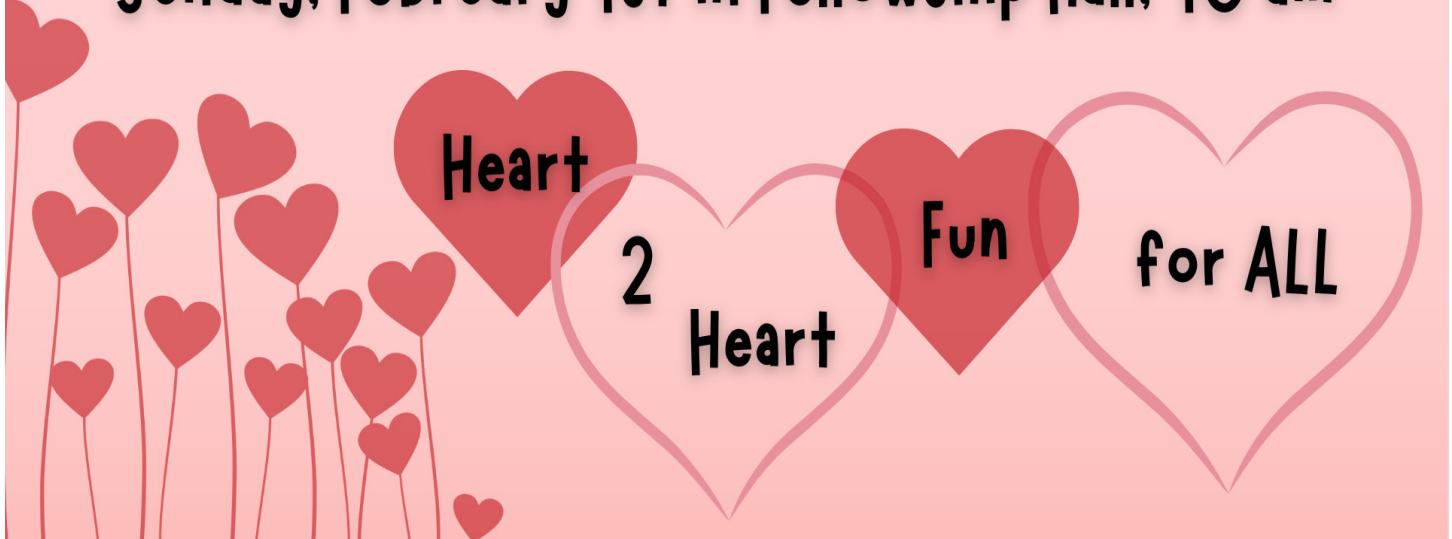
Jeff Cunningham  
Youth Director  
FUMC Manhattan  
620-714-0543

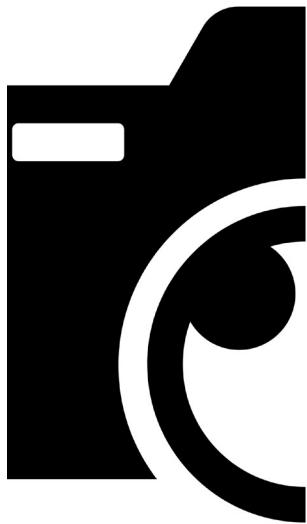




# You're invited to join us for First Families

Sunday, February 1st in Fellowship Hall, 10 am





## A Fresh Look for a New Season

As we prepare to welcome our new minister this July, we are working to ensure our church database is as up to date as possible. Over the next several months, Cathlene will be taking updated photos of church members and individuals serving on committees.

Photos will take just a few seconds and will be taken at convenient times like prior to committee meetings or during church events. These updated pictures help our staff and new minister put names with faces and strengthen connections within our church family.

Thank you for your cooperation and for helping us prepare for this exciting new season in the life of our church.

## AN AFTERNOON ORGAN RECITAL

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1  
AT 3:00 PM

First United Methodist Church  
612 Poyntz Ave, Manhattan, KS 66502

Free Admission





# YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP

**WED. EVENINGS @ 6:30  
CLASSROOMS 1 & 2**

## Manhattan Community Mission Opportunities

Do you want to help your neighbor in need? Do you have questions about how to help and where to volunteer? the following list may help you become more informed and help you make a decision on how you can help. Check out the following websites:

- Be Able helps people in adversity by providing connections, skills training, and opportunities to break cycles of poverty. Check out the website at [beablecommunity.com](http://beablecommunity.com)
- Center of Hope Ministry provides a safe, warm place to escape the harsh winter nights, to renew the hearts, minds, and souls of our neighbors giving them hope and one more day. Their website is the [centerofhopemk.com](http://centerofhopemk.com)
- Common Table serves meals seven nights a week at 6pm at the Lincoln Education Center, 901 Poyntz Avenue. They need nine volunteers to serve meals every night. Their website is [mhkcommontable.org](http://mhkcommontable.org)
- The Crisis Center, Inc. is for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Read about how you can help at the [crisiscenterinc.org](http://crisiscenterinc.org)
- Donate to the FUMC Food Pantry and Blessing Box. You can leave your donations in the Link.
- Flint Hills Breadbasket combats food insecurity by providing food and hygiene items to those in need in Riley and Pottawatomie counties. Information can be found at [flinthillsbreadbasket.org](http://flinthillsbreadbasket.org)
- Friendship Meals provide onsite and home delivered meals. They always need volunteers to deliver meals. Call 785-587-2462 to volunteer.
- Manhattan Emergency Shelter, Inc. provides emergency shelter, supportive housing, and rental assistance for homeless individuals and families in Manhattan, Kansas and the surrounding Riley County areas. Their website is [mesikansas.org](http://mesikansas.org)
- Thrive Flint Hills is dedicated to the mission of reducing poverty by building skills and relationships that strengthens families and individuals. Their website is [thriveflinthills.com](http://thriveflinthills.com)



# FEBRURARY 12

FELLOWSHIP HALL  
BREAKFAST SERVED AT 6:45 AM

**SPEAKER: PASTOR MIKE CHAMBERLAIN**

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST  
PRE SCHOOL  
AND CHILDREN'S DAY OUT**

**2026-2027 Priority enrollment for  
church members and currently enrolled families  
opens 2/23/26**

**Contact Lindsay Kinsinger for more information!**



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Developmentally  
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9:00 am - 1:00 pm.



785-776-7030



preschool@fumcmannhattan.co



# NEW MEMBER CLASS



Information coming soon!

CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. AND MR.



PASTOR COURTNEY FELLERS MARRIED  
PAGE GASPER AND JARED HAWKINS  
ON JANUARY 17, 2026



**First United Methodist Church**  
Manhattan, Kansas

612 Poyntz Avenue  
Manhattan, KS 66502-6041

Pastors: Mike Chamberlain, Courtney Fellers  
Editor: Cathlene Higgins

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HELP US  
**PAD THE PANTRY**  
*with  
Pancake Mix  
& Syrup*

DONATIONS CAN BE PLACED IN THE  
PANTRY BOX BEHIND THE DESK IN THE  
CONNECTING LINK.

