

December 2011



Merry Christmas!

Advent: A Time to Give

By: Steve Ratliff, Senior Pastor

In our Sunday-morning worship services we've been highlighting various opportunities to "think outside the box" in terms of service and giving during Advent. We hope that the ministries and organizations we've highlighted have sparked your imagination and your faith. Here are web links to some of the organizations we've highlighted:

The Advent Conspiracy

(adventconspiracy.org) - A movement that encourages Christians to "Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, Love All"; suggests giving the gift of clean water through Living Water International, Inc.

Help Us Learn. . .Give Us Hope

(helpuslearngiveushope.org) - An organization based here in Manhattan that collects school supplies that US soldiers distribute to children in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Africa.

Kiva (kiva.org) - An organization whose mission is "to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty"; a network of microfinance institutions which allow you to loan as little as \$25 to an entrepreneur in an impoverished part of the world.

Local Ministries/Organizations

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Shepherd's Crossing.

Christmas Eve Offering. At our Christmas Eve service we will continue this emphasis on viewing Advent as a time to give meaningful gifts. We will be receiving an offering for our "Compassion Fund" that is used to help meet financial needs within our congregation as well as within the community. Thanks to those of you

have given generously to this fund in the past!

For the sake of confidentiality, we don't normally publicize how the Compassion Fund is distributed. But please know that many people have received substantive help through this fund. Brian and I receive requests for help (from those in need or from others who have noticed a need) and respond accordingly. People are blessed when we tell them that people at Faith have given specifically so that we can help meet needs such as theirs.

We wanted to let you know about this offering so that you might consider ahead of time whether you want to make a contribution to this fund. Some churches who receive this type of offering at Christmas collect enough money to support their Compassion Fund for the entire year. We would love to see something similar happen at Faith.

Since we have never taken an offering at the Christmas Eve service before, we wanted to make sure to communicate its purpose. Instead of passing the offering bags, we will place an offering box near the front doors of the building. You can place your offering in the box as you leave.

Holiday Worship Services

- Christmas Eve—5 & 7pm
- Christmas Day—9 & 10:30am
- New Year's Day—9 & 10:30am

Gone for Good by: Robynn Bliss, Deacon of Outreach

This past summer Jesse Huffman engaged a few of us from church to read the book *The Externally Focused Quest* by Eric Swanson and Rick Rusaw. Rusaw and Swanson outline in an incredibly convincing way how to become the Best Church FOR the community. If Faith E Free suddenly disappeared would anybody in Manhattan notice? Those of us who attend might be a little alarmed! ("What happened to our church?") but would anybody in the community bat an eye? Would they miss us?

Let's roll up our sleeves and serve our community. Let's find out how we can best bless our town in ways that they notice and feel it! Let's look for places where Kingdom work is happening and join in: where widows and orphans are cared for, where the captives are being released, where the oppressed are set free, where the poor are cared for and hospitality is extended to the foreigner. Let's volunteer, let's pitch in, let's help out!

Starting next month, Lord willing, those who are inclined will meet on a Sunday morning for an early



GONE for GOOD!

breakfast. From there we'll load up into cars and vans and go into the community to various service projects. We might clean up litter at Rocky Ford. We might help landscape at an elementary school. We might paint someone's living room, or clean for a shut-in. We might grocery shop for an elderly person. We might fix a deck or build a ramp! Whatever we do:

We'll be **Gone for Good**....And then we'll come back in time to attend the 11:00 service together.

Please contact Robynn Bliss...

- if you have any ideas of people or places we might bless in big or small ways.
- if you'd like to help be in charge and help to head things up.
- if you'd like to read a copy of *The Externally Focused Quest*.

If you'd like to be **Gone for Good** on a Sunday morning there will be a way for you to sign up on the Connection Card starting in January.

We'll start small and who knows how we'll end up? We might just become that church that they really would miss. Let's be **Gone For Good** for the sake of what God might do here in Manhattan, Kansas!

News & Notes

The Church Library—Check Us Out!

There is a new picture book in the library that everyone should read. It's a true story titled, *The Boy Who Changed the World*. This book "reveals the incredible truth that everything YOU do matters—what you did yesterday, what you do today, and what you will do tomorrow." The author "shows children that every action, however big or small, can have a ripple effect around the world." It's a great family discussion book. The library has also added nine new Veggie Tale movies, just in time for the

cold nights of winter, when kids can't get outside to play. Check out a new movie or book this week!

Worship Ministry Auditions

Are you interested in serving as part of the worship ministry? We will be auditioning female vocalists on Saturday, February 11th at 12:30pm. If you're interested in this or in other types of involvement, please contact Micah Peacock (micah@faithmanhattan.org).

Financial Update

In order to fully fund our budget, we need \$63,684 in monthly giving.

	<u>November</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
General Giving	\$58,190.89	\$696,875.40
Other (missionary support, etc.)	1,378.40	34,135.18
Making Room	23,966.00	151,370.58
Total Receipts	\$83,535.29	\$882,381.16



**Thanks
for Giving!**

Faith in Recovery by: Kim Moir

The word “recovery” brings many things to mind ~ recovery from surgery, from an exhausting day, or from a difficult situation. In a sense, when we come to church on Sunday, we are trying to recover from the week before and become refreshed for the week ahead. We come together on Sundays and other fellowship or ministry times with many circumstances lingering in our minds, and sometimes those circumstances feel overwhelming to us.

I became a Christian when I was 21 years of age and God ushered me into the beginning of my “recovery”. Surrounded by members of the body of Christ, people in the church began to pray for me, comfort me, guide me, and teach me how to mature in my faith despite some difficult obstacles and circumstances I brought with me into my new life in Christ. Through the years my life has been impacted by believers who were, in a sense, “farther down the road than I”, who helped shepherd me into greater maturity and intimacy with God and others. This was prior to many of the “recovery ministries” which are present now in many churches

which help believers deal with a myriad of issues such as anxiety, depression, divorce, addictions, self concept issues, and *an inability to see God aright*.

Here at Faith, a team has been meeting on a regular basis to consider what such a “recovery” ministry might look like in our church. We are exploring different models of recovery ministries and trying to intentionally consider what type of ministry would be helpful to our congregation. The current team consists of Anita Peterman, Michael Welsh, Kimmery Newsom, Ken and Diann Goodyear, Brian Anderson, and Bill and Kim Moir. Our desire is to offer a ministry where people can feel safe, loved, and led closer to our Savior.

Our team welcomes input from others in the church that might be interested in such a ministry. For now, we are in the exploration and prayer phase. Next, we will pursue training in specific ministries. Finally, as God leads, we will develop the structure for Faith in Recovery. Stay tuned and prayerful for this new outreach in the church.

KidMin Update by: Chris Barker, Children’s Pastor

Hard to believe Christmas is upon us again! This is a magical time of year for children. May we all seek to make this year memorable.

Traditions are a big piece of what makes this time of year so special for children. If you feel like you need some new traditions or would like to share your own check out www.faithmanhattan.org/familylink for some ideas. We would love for you to log on and share some of your own.

As a reminder the preschool and elementary ministries will take a break for the next two weeks on December 25th and January 1st. This gives our amazing crew of volunteers a chance to fully experience the holidays with their families. All children are welcome in the main service. There will be a table of resources in the children’s hallway that might help

children stay attentive/quiet during the services. The nursery will still be open.

Praying that everyone has a Merry Christmas. We have some exciting things planned for 2012.





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Alpha in Aggieville? by: Steve Ratliff

"You're having an Alpha course WHERE? At the Kathouse Lounge? Why would a *church* have a course about Jesus at a *bar*?" Those are great questions. I'm glad you asked.

Here's the short answer: We hold Alpha at the Kathouse because *some* people will come to a course in Aggieville who wouldn't come to a course at the church building. For a variety of reasons, some do not consider church to be a safe place. As an expression of our love for those who don't yet know Christ, once a year we hold Alpha at the Kathouse.

Just this week I was talking about Alpha with someone who attends Faith. He told me that he had talked with a friend about this fall's Alpha course, but when his friend heard that the course was held at the church building he wasn't interested. Perhaps his friend would be willing to come with him to the Kathouse on Tuesday nights after the first of the year.

Not everyone without Christ has an aversion to attending a course at a church building. That's why two out of the three yearly Alpha courses are held at Faith. We

love having Alpha at Faith because the church building often becomes a place where our guests feel welcomed and loved. Some of them find it very natural to return on Sundays for worship.

Holding Alpha once a year at the Kathouse removes a significant barrier for those who *do* find it difficult to enter a church building. Some who have attended Alpha at the Kathouse in past years are now part of Faith (and THE faith!) and worship at the church building on Sundays. For some, the process of falling in love with Jesus begins by learning about Him in a venue such as the Kathouse.



Alpha

Spring 2012 Alpha Course
January 24 - April 17
Kathouse Lounge, 1111 Moro St.
Childcare available off-site (by request)