

Federation of Christian Ministries

Newsletter



March/April 2024 Vol. 58 No 2.



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*He is not here;
he has risen,
just as he said.*

Matthew 28:6 NIV

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NEW FCM WEBSITE GOES LIVE TODAY!



Chairperson

CHRISTY HOWARD-STEELE
CHAIRPERSON@FCMMAIL.ORG

News from the Circle

*"In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety."
Abraham Maslow*

As many of you may know, The Circle engaged a strategic plan facilitator for a portion of the February Circle meeting. We spent time listening to a summary of the survey results (see below) and doing a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. One question that we were asked to consider that I think is worthy of everyone's consideration is: What would it mean to you or what impact would there be for you if there was no FCM?

For me, FCM is the community that empowered me to continue to pursue my ministry as a first-year chaplain and later as a certified CPE educator. It empowered me first by commissioning and endorsing me. However, when I attended my first National Assembly in Columbus, OH, unlike so many times in the past when I felt invisible at best or "distinctly other" being one of the one or two who looked like me in the room, I was empowered by the surprisingly genuine welcome, affirmation, and celebration I received. This was a very powerful example of what inclusion feels like.

For me, if there were no FCM, not only would I need to find another community to endorse me, but I would also be deeply saddened at the loss of empowerment available to you and the future others who will need FCM. In a study commissioned by the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) and ACPE: The Standard for Spiritual Care and Education (ACPE) on faith group endorsement, FCM was named by several study participants as a faith group without which those who did not fit in mainline (Christian) traditions would not have a place to turn. While I am proud to hear this feedback about FCM, I find myself wanting to offer this empowerment to others who are not from a Christian tradition. I find myself wondering if it's time for FCM to be even more inclusive by expanding beyond our mostly Christian identity. What about you?

Some survey highlights:

- **157 surveys were completed**
 - 61% of survey respondents participate in Commissioning
 - 35% participate in Endorsement
 - 42% in regional meetings/National Assembly
- **Over the next 1 to 3 years, how would you like to interact with FCM?**
 - 54% increased regional activities
 - 47% newsletter
 - 45% bi-annual assembly
 - 45% faith communities/webinar
- **Over the next 3 years, what would you like to see FCM focus on?**
 - Provide relevant educational opportunities
 - Generating more opportunities to build community
 - Effectively communicating with its members
 - Being more inclusive of people of all faiths.
- **Does the current name of FCM adequately address who we are? 27% -Yes**



Chairperson

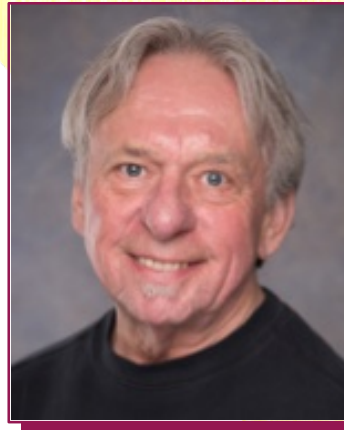
CHRISTY HOWARD-STEELE
CHAIRPERSON@FCMMAIL.ORG



MARCH FLOWERS

DAFFODIL

Happiness
New Beginnings
Rebirth
Rejuvenation
Respect



This month I am expressing gratitude for **Carl Yusavitz**, the current vice president of the Northeast region, and my former partner when we were chairs of the Specialized Ministries Committee. As many of you know, Carl is full of wisdom and experience. No matter the complexity of the issue, Carl can address it from a grounded, centered, and spiritual position. During my tenure, Carl has served FCM faithfully in both of his roles. Even with his current health challenges, Carl is still serving FCM well. I write this expression of gratitude to Carl with great affection for his character, his integrity, and with love for the person he is. If you know Carl, please join me in expressing love and gratitude for his ministry and his person.

Based on the saying, "Give me flowers while I can smell them," do you have someone in FCM that you want to acknowledge? If so, please email a brief write-up to chairperson@fcmmail.org or newsletter@fcmmail.org.



Chairperson

CHRISTY HOWARD-STEELE
CHAIRPERSON@FCMMAIL.ORG



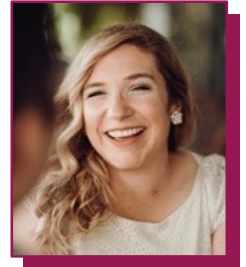
Circle Comings & Goings

COMINGS:



BARBARA

Announced in the last newsletter, the Circle was pleased to welcome **Jennifer Friedman** and **Barbara Zeman**, new co-chairs of the Southeast region to their first in-person Circle meeting.



JENNIFER



We look forward to welcoming **Michael Corso**, vice president-elect for the Northeast region to his first in-person Circle meeting in July when his term begins.



We look forward to **Zachary Wheat's** continuing presence on the Circle as he was re-elected to a new 3-year term as vice president of the Northwest region.

GOINGS:



We were saddened by the resignation of **Susan Loving** from her position as vice president of the Mid-Atlantic region. Susan made valuable contributions to FCM and the Circle while she served as vice president. We pray for her continued well-being.



President

TOM CUSACK

PRESIDENT@FCMMAIL.ORG



FCM Challenges and FCM Responses -- important news

The FCM Circle of Directors met in person together in Chicago for a very significant meeting. Attending this meeting also was professional strategic planner, Debbie DiVirgilio. She led the Circle through a full day's exercise determining areas of concern for FCM. Her work was informed by the 20% of FCM's membership who had responded to the survey she had sent out earlier to the entire membership.

Areas of existential challenge for FCM include the following:

- managing FCM's affairs under a deficit budget (-\$15,667) passed in the July '23 Circle meeting
- presenting to society through an aging website
- dealing with the questions of identity generated by our name: Federation?... What's that? Is it from Star Trek? // Christian? Are you right-wing nationalist fundamentalists? ...and the like.
- managing FCM's growing individual membership (over 650 people) with a volunteer leadership cadre

Essentially, FCM is becoming too large to govern in the way we have in the past. The Circle has stepped up to these challenges.

Income and fee structure--NEW

The Circle rapidly coalesced around a new approach to our membership dues. I brought forward to the Circle that our commissioning dues of \$145 had not been changed since 2015. Recognizing that FCM's recent segmented time frames for payment have addressed this lack of change to an extent by having early-bird, regular and late time frames, this basic \$145 continues.

Here is the Circle's new fee structure and timeframe. Please prepare for it so you know when it is coming and what your new annual cost will be.

- **General membership dues become \$75**
- **Commissioned membership dues become \$190**
- **Endorsed membership dues become \$350**

The renewal time to pay these dues is September through October, 2024. After **October, 2024, any late registration incurs the regular dues plus an extra \$150. No one need incur this penalty with advance planning.** And remember, FCM does not deny membership based on financial considerations. *This new fee structure will move us out of deficit.*

Website-- under the creative leadership of South-Central VP **Chris Breen, FCM has introduced a new website** to gain new attention. Please check it out.





PAGE 2

President

TOM CUSACK
PRESIDENT@FCMMAIL.ORG

FCM Challenges and FCM Responses -- important news

The name of FCM.

A lot of thought is going into this question. It has been a question for several years. The Circle is not ready to reveal any new name currently. Our traditions, recognition, and history need to be referenced ... while expressing our reality with clarity and brevity to those searching. Such a change is a big action to take on so many fronts. That we are even considering it indicates the strong evolutionary situation in which we find ourselves. FCM is no longer a consistent 1970's demographic of resigned Roman Catholic priests who share extensive history together. Now we draw individuals to our values from across the denominational spectrums. We must accommodate to these changes to maintain the significant relevance that has characterized FCM's journey.

Finally, regarding adjusting our **volunteer leadership approach**, the circle discovered quickly that a major innovation is currently out of our reach. That innovation is to have a full-time Executive Director. FCM does not have the funds to accomplish this important change. So that changes in our future. You can see that there is more to do, and more Circle decisions will be revealed as they are made. Let us continue to journey together, and remember to do 2 x 2 4 FCM. [2 minutes of prayer and two minutes of meditation for FCM]. Peace.

FCM Circle of Directors

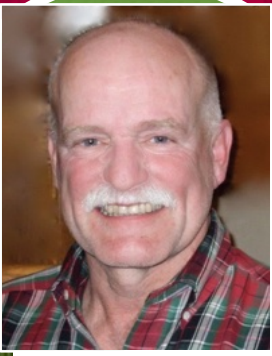
Taken at the
Circle Meeting
in Chicago
February 1-3,
2024



Endowment

TOM STRICKER, CHAIR

TOMSTRICKER2009@GMAIL.COM



FCM is building an endowment to ensure the future of the Federation of Christian Ministries. Every dollar given to the endowment will stay in that account for as long as FCM exists. And every dollar that goes in will generate a little bit more to support FCM's mission and the work we all do individually and together.

Horizon Prison Initiative (for which I work) received an FCM grant to purchase an inkjet printer, ink, and paper for the office in the London Ohio Correctional Institution. The program serves 134 men in a faith-based program, preparing them to deal with what brought them to prison and then to return as restored citizens to civil society. This little printer works daily to produce lesson plans, attendance records, and certificates for the men who complete classes in the program. Already, the endowment has grown enough to provide small grants for ministries of members and will begin to do so this summer.

Every year, my husband, **Dick Korn**, and I make a small donation to the endowment, knowing that those small contributions will keep working far into the future for other projects and assistance to the members' ministries. We have been assured that every dollar counts, and even \$5 a month makes a difference. Our membership dues help keep the FCM office running and the lights on. The endowment provides security into the future, growing opportunities for ministry.

So, with gratitude for the FCM grant that bought Horizon's office printer, Dick and I encourage all who can make contributions, small or large, that will grow the endowment and give life to other ministries.

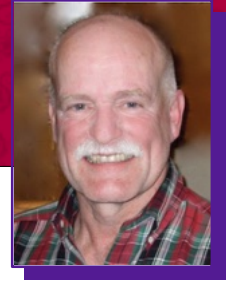
Madeleine G. Trichel





Endowment

TOM STRICKER, CHAIR
TOMSTRICKER2009@GMAIL.COM



Thank You!

VALUE AS OF 2/20/2024
\$146,490.00

Donate to the FCM Endowment Fund
NO GIFT IS TOO SMALL!

Regular Donation

Go to the FCM website www.federationofchristianministries.org or go to your personal account on Realm www.onrealm.org and make your donation.

1. Sign in to Realm or, if in the FCM Website, use the "Donation" button to get there.
2. Click on "Giving" (left hand column) and this will take you to donation page
3. Click on the "+ Give" button
4. You will see a pull down (FCM General Account); click on the pulldown arrow
5. Click on the "FCM Endowment Fund" button

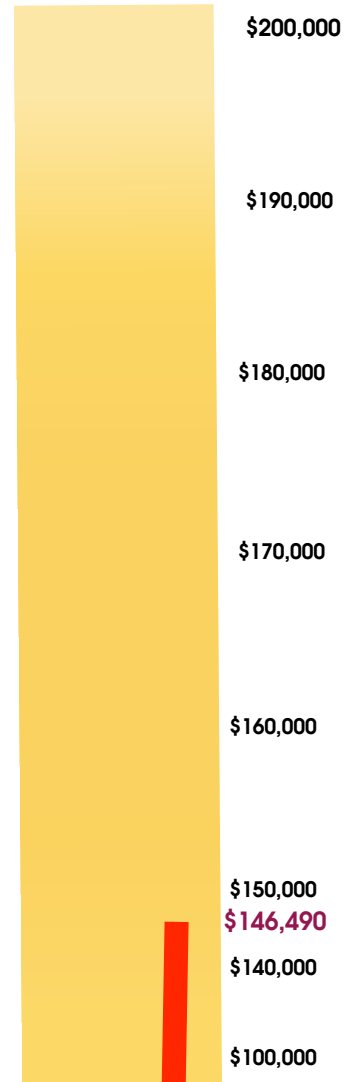
Tribute Gift

Is there a friend, family member, teacher, or mentor you would like to honor on their special day or send an expression of sympathy?

Consider a small donation to the **FCM Endowment Fund**.

A notice of your gift will be sent to the honoree or a member of their family. You will also know that your gift will help ensure that FCM will be able to support future generations of ministers and congregations.

For more information go to the FCM web site under FCM Endowment Fund for the online **Tribute Gift Form** or endowment@fcmail.org



Measuring Our Success



Faith Communities

JUDY LORENZ

FAITHCOMMUNITY@FCMMAIL.ORG



Faith Communities Committee Members



In our next few newsletters, we will feature bios on the Faith Communities Committee members, so you can get acquainted with the individuals and their passions. This month, please enjoy learning about

Marita Grudzen:

I was there before the beginning of FCM when it was **The Society of Priests for a Free Ministry**. It was at the 1973 Convention that we voted to transform into the **Federation of Christian Ministries**. The active participation of so many women was one, if not *the* main reason for the change.

My husband **Gerry** and I became Co-Presidents in 1978 and, understanding there were many communities in FCM, we decided to visit as many as we could (20!) in a trip across the country with our two preschool daughters.

Each community had a distinct character and mission e.g., Catholic Worker, providing counseling, developing different formats for small faith communities, traveling music ministry, etc. That four-week experience of receiving such warm hospitality and witnessing the strong sense of Christian ministry, exhibited the vitality of FCM and its communities and individual members. At that time there was no community membership in FCM. On a personal note, building community has always been at the heart of both my self-understanding and my basic way of contribution whether at home, in my neighborhood, my teaching, in the medical school, and providing faculty development with faculty coming from universities across the country.

Gerry and I have participated in three faith communities since the mid-seventies on both East and West Coasts. About eight years ago we founded a Christian Muslim Spiritual Community with which we meet online every month. We lived in two intentional communities: the first for five years and the second for 18 months.

Six years ago, **Ginny Cusack** wanted to bring her leadership in organizational development to the FCM faith communities. I agreed to assist her, and a position was created on the board which we shared. Since that time, we have also developed the Faith Communities Committee.

Gerry and I have two daughters (Corita and Simone) and three grandchildren (Quincy, Olympia, and Juniper.) Most of my professional life was at Stanford Medical School (34 years) in administration and teaching (Ethnogeriatrics and Spirituality and Meaning in Medicine). I lectured internationally in Japan twice and in Turkey, where I received an international award from the Prime Minister. Most recently I began serving on the faculty for **Global Ministries University** teaching Laudato Si and Spirituality and Aging.

Judy: And that my friends, is a Community Leader! We are blessed.

THANK YOU!

I would like to extend a huge, "Thank You!" to **Mark Bernecker** and **Q Hailey** for their powerful presentations on bipolar disorder. Their decision to share their own personal experiences living with this disorder is admirable and demonstrates their selflessness in providing necessary education as a gift to our community. We are blessed to have them serving in FCM. If you missed that webinar, you may click the link below to view a recording of it.

<https://youtu.be/g5EwjNX90Fs>.



Faith Communities

JUDY LORENZ

FAITHCOMMUNITY@FCMMAIL.ORG



Upcoming Spring Webinars

Exploring Meditation Techniques and how they can help in a Crunch! **Wednesday, March 20 at 8 p.m.**

Marita Grudzen, who introduced herself to you in today's bio, will present three meditation techniques for self-calming of the body, mind and soul. She will touch on mindfulness, centering prayer, and mantra repetition. Marita has used meditation for many years and her beautiful spirit is sure to lead us in a lovely and productive evening.

Honoring our Earth **Monday, April 22 at 8 p.m.**

Debbie Mytels will lead us in a presentation to educate and motivate us to take responsibility for the planet we are blessed to call home. She will explain the challenges we face and opportunities available for us and our communities to respond to our climate challenges. Debbie will show us ways in which we can contribute to a healthier environment.



*Have a
Blessed
Easter*





Faith Communities

LIVING BEATITUDES COMMUNITY



BY KATHERINE CRUSE

Our Journey to Understanding the Trans Experience



Approximately 45 people braved a cold and snowy Saturday in January to attend the first session of the four-part Our Journey to Understanding, presented by Living Beatitudes Community in the building of Christ Episcopal Church in Dayton, Ohio.

Living Beatitudes Community (LBC) has been a faith community of the Federation of Christian Ministries since 2003, when Dignity/Dayton, FCM, Roman Catholic Women Priests and former members of St. Agnes parish created this intentional Eucharistic community.

This union has brought together a vibrant group of people who seek to live the gospel through radical inclusivity and social justice.

In keeping with its mission to seek the unity of all people and to respect diverse sources of wisdom and spiritual inspiration, LBC is presenting a series of programs under the heading Our Journey to Understanding: Awareness leads to education leads to transformation.

The first program in the 2024 series was called Understanding the Trans Experience, guest presenter **Madeline (Maddie) Marlett**. Ms. Marlett is a Clinical Oncology Researcher who is passionate about LGBTQIA+ activism especially around faith and transgender issues. She volunteers with PFLAG working on advocacy and inclusivity trainings. She is also active with DignityUSA leading their National Young adult caucus ministering to and creating faith space for LGBTQIA+ individuals. As a queer Catholic transwoman, she is especially passionate about helping others reconcile their LGBTQIA+ identity with their faith identities.

At this session on understanding more about transgender issues, Maddie spoke to the assembled audience presenting facts and figures on transgender issues, giving us vocabulary, history, some gentle do's and don't's. and answering questions. A key takeaway point is that gender and sexuality are two different things. A person's sex is the identity determined by biological factors like genitalia and chromosomes and is usually how people present themselves to others. Gender is how people understand themselves, as male or female. Even very young children understand this about their core selves, even if they don't yet have the language to describe it.

This is the second year Living Beatitudes has offered a series of programs under the heading Journey to Understanding: Awareness leads to education leads to transformation. Future sessions are: Reflecting Collectively on Equity, Race and Social Justice; Navigating and Surviving Difficult Conversations (with family, friends, and acquaintances); Understanding the History of Drag.

If you would like to hear the presentation from Maddie Marlette go to Living Beatitudes Community.org. Click the Homily Blog.



2024 FCM Assembly

CO-CHAIRS REV. JULIA STYLES & REV. DORIE GRIGGS



We are excited to invite you to Atlanta, Georgia for the FCM Biannual National Assembly. This year's conference: **From Burden to Belonging: Finding Rest and Renewal in the FCM Vision** will take place at the **Sonesta Hotel in Atlanta, GA from July 19-21, 2024.**

The conference theme is inspired by Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus tells his followers, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." As clergy, we often carry a load too heavy to bear, trying to balance our grief, the burdens of those we serve, and the overall weariness of a world plagued with violence and injustice. Jesus calls us to lay those burdens down and walk with him so that we may find true rest and learn the unforced rhythms of grace. Emphasizing the core values of FCM: *belonging, compassion, empowerment, equity, and mindful living*, we hope to draw our diverse community together through our shared vision of transforming society through inclusive ministries.

Highlights of the conference will include keynote speakers **J.S. Park** and **Rev. Dr. Laura Truax**, a panel from **Interfaith Atlanta**, mindfulness and prayer practices led by trained spiritual directors, music from **H.L. McConnell**, a chance to gather with FCM members, and a commissioning and endorsement ceremony for all those that missed an opportunity during the pandemic to do so in person.

Registration

Conference registration will open in early February through **OnRealm.org** Register before April 1st for the early bird deal of \$349, which includes all conference fees and most meals. The Sonesta hotel is close to the airport with a free shuttle and a reasonable price. At just \$119 a night, you won't find a better deal in the city. Make sure to book your room with the **group code G06162FCM.**

ASSEMBLY REGISTRATION:

<https://onrealm.org/fcm/Registrations/Registrants/2554b217-6619-4b21-9ab7-b10f0025c789?congregantView=True>

HOTEL

<https://www.sonesta.com/sonesta-hotels-resorts/ga/atlanta/sonesta-atlanta-airport-north?isGroupCode=true&groupCode=G061624FCM&checkin=2024-07-17&checkout=2024-07-21>

LINKS from article:

J.S Park <https://jsparkblog.com/>

Rev. Dr. Laura Truax https://www.amazon.com/stores/Laura-Sumner-Truax/author/B00DMM4PH2?ref=ap_rdr&isDramIntegrated=true&shoppingPortalEnabled=true

Interfaith Atlanta <https://interfaithatlanta.org/>

H. L. McConnell <https://hlmccconnell.wordpress.com/>



Communication

ANTOINETTE MAROLD
COMMUNICATION@FCMMAIL.ORG



CONGRATULATIONS!
WELCOME SAMUEL!



Congratulations to:

**Samantha & Alex Larson on the birth of their son
Samuel**

**Samuel was born on February 13, 2024
7 lbs, 1oz. 19 inches long**

Samantha is co-editor of the FCM Newsletter



Accessing the Sacramental Registry

All Baptisms by FCM members must be registered.
Marriage Registry is suggested but optional

- Go to www.onrealm.org
- Log into your Realm profile using your email address and password you created
- The initial screen you should see is **"News"**
- Look for the **"Baptismal Registry"** or **"Marriage Registry"** and click on the provided link.
- Complete a separate registry for each baptism or wedding. Do not forget to click **"Submit"** when finished.
- After you submit your entry, you are offered an option to print or save your response if you choose. You may also submit additional entries simply by clicking on **"Submit another response"**.



FCM Anniversaries

CAROLYN HORVATH

THE PEOPLE LISTED BELOW HAVE WORKED LONG AND FAITHFULLY TO BUILD FCM TO ITS PLACE TODAY. IF YOU WISH TO CONGRATULATE THEM, SEARCH THEM ONLINE IN REALM (WWW.ONREALM.ORG) OR ON THE REALM APP. NOT SIGNED IN TO REALM? ASK YOUR REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT OR CONNECT@FCMMAIL.ORG FOR AUTHORIZATION.

30 YEARS

Delmar Smolinski 3/4/1994 Heartland

20 YEARS

Jeanne Barnes 3/4/2004 Southeast
Robert Ferret 3/4/2004 Lakes&Plains

15 YEARS

James Barrens 3/3/2009 Southeast
Christy Howard-Steele 4/21/2009 Lakes & Plains

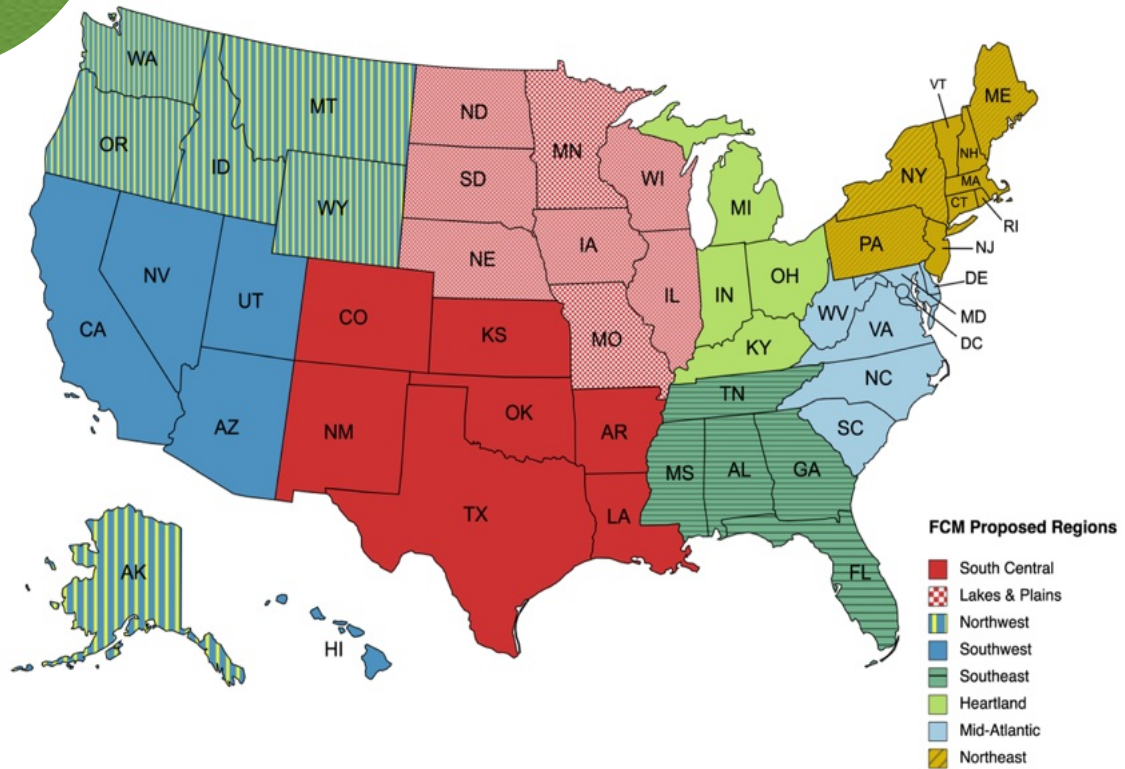
10 YEARS

Mary Foley 4/29/2014 Mid-Atlantic

5 YEARS

Kathy Bohley 3/1/2019 Heartland
Alisa Cramer 3/8 /2019 Mid-Atlantic
John Herberger 4/2 /2019 Southeast
Chad Kaminski 3/28/2019 Southwest
Samantha Larson 3/27/2019 Mid-Atlantic
Dale Lyons 3/9/2019 Heartland
Joseph Mitcho 3/3/2019 Mid-Atlantic
Nicole Saxon 3/22/2019 Southwest
HaLana Thompson 3/27/2019 Lakes&Plains
Wendy Tingle 3/16/2019 Mid-Atlantic
Dennis Waugh 4/7/2019 Lakes&Plains
Caroline Weaver 4/13/2019 South Central
John Wooden 3/8/2019 Heartland





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southcentralvp@fcmail.org

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Oklahoma
Arkansas
Texas
Louisiana

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Wisconsin
Illinois

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West Virginia
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Delaware
Maryland
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North Carolina
South Carolina

Southeast
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Tennessee
Mississippi
Alabama
Georgia
Florida



Northeast Region

CARL YUSAVITZ

NORTHEASTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Your Voice Matters

I hope that all members of the region received the latest strategic planning survey and responded by the deadline of January 24. Since we are a large region, we want to provide good input as FCM considers its future. FCM tries to live the value first articulated by church reformers 400 years ago: "Ecclesia Semper Reformanda" (a church ever reforming).

Thank you to our strategic planning committee for their work in bringing to life the vision of a church ever reforming. While the survey is the primary tool for the committee's work, it is not the only one. Please continue to communicate your thoughts and ideas to me and other FCM leaders. Your voice matters.

Blessings to **Madeline Baas**, FCM member ministering in New York City, who was granted FCM commissioning at our February Circle meeting.

Mark your calendar: Our next on-line NE Region gathering is March 8th at 9 AM. At our January and February gatherings, participants voted to continue these Zoom meetings after my VP Term ends in July. They also favored the idea of seasonal (4 times a year) continuing education presentations. More information will be forthcoming. Stay tuned.



Irish Blessing

*May the sun shine warm upon your face.
And rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you
in the hollow of His hand.*



Southeast Region

BARBARA ZEMAN & JENNIFER FRIEDMAN

SOUTHEASTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG



Celebrations!

We would like to congratulate and celebrate our newly endorsed members, **Janyth Bryant** and **Patrick Whiteford**! We would also like to celebrate **Joon Park** and **Nico Wrobel** who were approved in our November session! May Spirit uphold and guide each of you always as you minister to all.



BARBARA & JENNIFER CELEBRATING

In further celebrations, we congratulate **Barbara Zeman** and **Joon** –known as **J.S. Park**–on their upcoming new books! Barbara's book will be called *In the Stillness* and includes beautiful meditations from the Pandemic lockdown and beyond. If you are able, we encourage you to go ahead and pre-order Joon's upcoming book *As Long As You Need: Permission to Grieve* linked here:

<https://www.thomasnelson.com/p/as-long-as-you-need/>

If you have a celebration or announcement we missed, please let us know at southeastvp@fcmmail.org and we'll include it in our next newsletter!

Calling All Southeast Members:

This year, it is our turn to host the National Assembly in Atlanta in July. We know FCM is full of wonderfully talented members, both long-standing and new! With that said, we are in need of volunteers to assist us in making it a wonderful time of connecting and fulfilling our mission to nurture one another in our ministerial call. We need help in all manner of areas from organizing materials, to greeting folks and hospitality, to helping with prayer, to helping with breakout sessions, to helping with creative or tech or sound and production, we need you! Please send an e-mail to Julia Styles spiritualdirectionwithjulia@gmail.com, Dorie Griggs at dorie@dorielgriggs.com Or southeastvp@fcmmail.org and list what interests you most in volunteering!

Additionally, **if you were Commissioned/Ordained or Endorsed from 2020 until now** and were unable to have a ceremony with others where you could receive a stole and/or receive laying on of hands, there will be an opportunity for you to participate in a larger Commissioning/Endorsement ceremony with others throughout FCM. If you would like to participate, please let us know at southeastvp@fcmmail.org.



Southeast Region Farewell to Rev. Frank Pisciotta

Our beloved friend in ministry, **Rev. Frank Pisciotta** has gone home to God and we who are left behind, are deeply saddened. Frank has been a regular attender of the FCM Thursday night Zoom prayer service where his voice and wisdom was always cherished. He first served God as a Roman Catholic Priest, was a lifelong educator in New York, then in various ministries in Africa, and as a valuable member of the Global Ministries University of FCM Peace Program in Kenya.

FCM remembers Frank with deep reverence and love as he is a stellar gentleman who represented our mission and values.

The Southeast Region will be planning a service for Frank and will provide notice at a later date.

Frank's obituary: <https://www.banfieldfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Frank-Joseph-Pisciotta-Jr?obid=30726927#/obituaryInfo>





Connecting and Continuing:

Thank you to the few who came to our introductory zoom meeting in January. We will resume regular zoom and in-person meetings this year. Please be on the lookout for those invitations via e-mail and text. We also will not be meeting as often because we want to make sure you have ample time to connect and assist with our upcoming National Assembly.

Barbara and I had the privilege of meeting (or in Barbara's case, reconnecting) with our fellow FCM Circle leadership members in the beginning of February. We laughed together, ate together, and prayed together. We celebrated that we have quickly grown from a small volunteer organization to a ministry of support for over 600 people!

In light of this growth, we discussed many areas of feedback from all members regarding our name, our mission, our vision, our values, and our structure. We participated in a strategic planning meeting where we discussed how we can best implement your feedback to fulfill the call to empower and nurture all called to inclusive and expansive ministry. With this information, we have exciting ideas and needs before us. Our FCM President, Tom, has shared with you regarding current and upcoming changes within FCM, and there are ways we can all participate in continuing to make FCM a great place to belong and become. You'll be hearing more in the months to come, and especially at our business meeting at the National Assembly in July. We are honored to be your Southeastern representatives during such an exciting time, and we welcome feedback or any questions!

National Assembly Information:

We are excited to invite you to Atlanta, Georgia for the FCM Biannual National Assembly. This year's conference: **From Burden to Belonging: Finding Rest and Renewal in the FCM Vision** will take place at the **Sonesta Hotel in Atlanta, GA from Friday July 19- Sunday July 21, 2024.**

The conference theme is inspired by Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus tells his followers, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." It's no secret that the average clergy member leaves full-time ministry after seven years, often due to burn-out. As clergy, we often carry a load too heavy to bear, trying to balance our own grief, the burdens of those we serve, and the overall weariness of a world plagued with violence and injustice. Jesus calls us to lay those burdens down and walk with him so we may find true rest and learn the unforced rhythms of grace.

Highlighting the core values of FCM: *Belonging, Compassion, Empowerment, Equity and Mindful Living*, we hope to draw our diverse community together through our shared vision of transforming society through inclusive ministries.

In addition to our Keynote from the Southeast, J.S. Park, we will have breakouts and main sessions regarding interfaith dialogue, mindfulness and prayer practices, support for faith communities, a commissioning and endorsement ceremony, and many more fun opportunities to connect and be encouraged.

Please find more information on the Assembly and registration on our website www.federationofchristianministries.org



Heartland Region

PETER WOLF

HEARTLANDVP@FCMMAIL.ORG



Meditation & Healing Prayer Shared by Dawn Bodak, FCM Heartland Region

God calls us to be in relationship, yet we often approach his Word with our *head* rather than our *heart*. Of course, his Word is a source of guidance, but it is also a source of his tangible love, an opportunity for us to just be held.

This isn't the type of prayer that one would open a meeting with as it is more time consuming, however, it can be effective in a group setting, and is at the root of some very effective spiritual direction methods, including healing prayer. This same method can also be adapted to use with "experientials" such as a picture of God holding a sheep.

It is called Lectio Divina is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God. It's not about studying Scripture, but approaching it as the Living Word. Eugene Patterson equates it to a dog knowing on its bone, savoring it.

Latin for "divine reading," and is characterized by the slow, prayerful examination of Scripture.

The focus of Lectio Divina is not a theological analysis of biblical passages but an opportunity to *experience* them through in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

While there are no hard and fast rules, there are four main steps that guide Lectio Divina:

Lectio (read slowly, even multiple times--- try not to assign your own meaning)

Meditatio (ponder the verse, allowing the Holy Spirit to highlight meaning & how the passage relates to you. Do certain words or phrases stick out?)

le: John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you".

Theo analysis = focus on why Jesus said that, the fact that it was said at the Last Supper.
Lectio would focus more on what it means for you to enter into/share peace with Christ.

Oratio (dialogue with God)

Contemplatio (silence; listening for God to speak; rest)

This is often a time when God may give you a special word or sense of peace.

Lectio Divina does not seek information or motivation, but communion with God. It is less a practice of reading than one of listening to the inner message of the Scripture delivered through the Holy Spirit.

The Biblical basis for this practice can be found in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 which emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing the Word of God ... "these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."

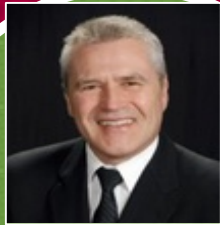
Psalms 46:10: tells us to "Be still, and know that I am God." So it is a good idea to take a few minutes to settle oneself, perhaps with a few deep breaths and a short prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to guide the reading of the Scripture that is to follow.

Continued....

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PETER WOLF
VICE PRESIDENT

Heartland Region

Meditation & Healing Prayer

Shared by Dawn Bodak, FCM Heartland Region

Born out of this ancient method of praying scriptures is the **African Bible Study Method**, which is intended to create space to hear the voice of God. This bible Study method was introduced by the African Delegation to the Lambeth Conference in 1998.

Any Scripture may be the subject of prayer. In a group context, the discernment is mutually edifying and encouraging.

Opening Prayer:

O Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

- Invite participants to take a few deep breaths to settle in, and then ask them to listen for the word or phrase that catches their attention.
- One person reads passage slowly. Allow **1** minute of silence for reflection.
- Each participant shares the word or phrase with the group. (No more than that—just the word or phrase—no commentary or explanation.) (3-5 minutes)
- The leader poses the second question for reflection: Where does this passage touch your life today?
- The scripture is read by another voice from the group (from a different translation if possible). Allow **1** minute for silent reflection.
- Each person shares their response to the question. Again, no discussion, just a brief statement of sharing. Feedback from other participants is not provided. (3-5 minutes)
- The leader poses the third question for reflection: From what I have heard and shared, what is God speaking to my heart?
- The scripture is read by another voice from the group (from a different translation if possible). Allow **5** minutes for silent reflection.
- Each person shares their response to the question. Feedback from other participants is not provided. (5-10 minutes)
- Each participant briefly prays for the person on their right, naming what was shared in other steps, and without providing analysis. (5 minutes)

Closing Prayer : The Lord's Prayer

- This should be treated as a template rather than a set of *rules*. However, providing feedback and advice giving during the exercise really should be discouraged.
- Participants should be educated about confidentiality-- What is said in the group, stays in the group.
- Participants are free to pass at any time.
- Feel free to substitute other reflection questions. Some examples:
 - What does this reading say to you about God?
 - What does this reading say to you about who you are?
 - What do you hear God asking you to do or be?

Another variation to consider:

Reading one: Close your eyes and listen to the story. What do you hear? See? Feel? (in one or two words)

Reading two: As you imagine the scene, where are you in the story?

Reading three: What is God saying to your head and your heart?



South Central Region

CHRISTOPHER BREEN

SOUTHCENTRALVP@FCMMAIL.ORG



A Season of Reflection and Rebirth

Dear FCM family,

As the winter thaws into the hopeful bloom of spring, we find ourselves in a sacred season of reflection and rebirth. March and April bring us not only the beauty of the natural world awakening but also significant moments in our Christian journey - Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.

Lent: A Call to Inner Journey:

As we continue through Lent, this time calls us to introspection and preparation. It's a period marked by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, urging us to turn inward and reflect on our relationship with God and with each other. How can we, like the clay in the potter's hands, be remolded and renewed by our faith?

Holy Week: The Path of Sorrow and Joy:

Holy Week takes us through the profound depths of Christ's passion, from the somber reflection of Good Friday to the silent waiting of Holy Saturday. It's a time to meditate on the immense sacrifice made for us and the boundless love it represents. Let's walk this path together, supporting each other in our moments of sorrow and anticipation.

Easter: Celebration of Resurrection:

And then, joyously, Easter arrives, heralding the resurrection of Christ and the triumph of life over death. This is a day of exuberant celebration, a reminder of the hope and renewal that faith in the risen Christ brings. As we celebrate, let's also remember to extend the love and grace we've received to others, embodying the spirit of resurrection in our actions and interactions.

Spring: Nature's Testament to Rebirth:

Just as Easter speaks to the spiritual rebirth, the spring season around us echoes this theme in the natural world. Trees bud, flowers bloom, and the earth seems to come back to life. Let this visible transformation remind us of the unseen changes and growth occurring within our own spirits.

Closing Thoughts:

As we journey through these months, may we embrace the lessons of Lent, the solemnity of Holy Week, and the joy of Easter. Let's also take time to enjoy the beauty of spring, seeing in it a metaphor for our own spiritual renewal. Together, we continue to build a community rooted in love, compassion, and the hopeful promise of new beginnings.

Wishing you a reflective Lent, a meaningful Holy Week, and a joyous Easter.

In Christian love,
Rev. Christopher Breen
Vice President, South Central Region, FCM



Lakes & Plains Region

JO BRENNEMAN-FULLWOOD
LAKESPLAINSVP@FCMMAIL.ORG



Greetings & Salutations

Winter is here! Farewell holiday season and hello to the hustle and bustle of everyday life. It is my hope that we are finding time to enjoy the beauty found within the winter season. The season has changed and so has Lakes & Plains. We have new members joining and several members are seeking the commissioning or the endorsing process. When you have a moment, please drop an email to reach out to following members:

Let's welcome our member(s):

Name	Area	Email
Mark Kormann	Minnesota	markkormann@gmail.com
Deborah (Deb) Barry	Iowa	deborahlbarry@gmail.com

Let's celebrate our member(s) who are newly Commissioned:

Name	Area	Email
Jake Carlson	Illinois	jakecarlson520@gmail.com
Ali Chamsessine	Minnesota	ali.chamsedd@gmail.com
Laurel Crusinberry	Iowa	laurelcrus@gmail.com
Dianne Haulcy	Minnesota	dhaulcy@comcast.net
Karyn Robertson	Iowa	karyn.robertson.7@gmail.com

Let's celebrate our member(s) who are newly Endorsed:

Name	Area	Email
Kelsey Plummer	Iowa	kelsey.plummer@unitypoint.org

Open Volunteers Positions:

- The FCM Endowment committee is looking for two members to join their efforts. The time commitment is low at a single 1-hour meeting per month via Zoom. Contact me at lakesplainsvp@fcmmail.org to express interest and I will connect you with the chair of the committee.
- The National Assembly planning committee is looking for volunteers to help support the upcoming National Assembly in Atlanta, GA on July 19-21, 2024. Please consider offering your talents and knowledge to the wider FCM community. Contact Julia Styles at spiritualdirectionwithjulia@gmail.com
- Marketing committee is looking for three members to join in spreading the word about FCM. If you have 1 hour once a month, please contact me at lakesplainsvp@fcm.org
- FCM needs a Treasurer. If this area is your niche, please contact president@fcmmail.org for further information.

- Meet the VP monthly zoom will be the first Monday of each month. Through this recurring link. Just click on the following link below! Looking forward to meeting you soon! **Join Zoom Meeting**
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83666911344?pwd=9nGIHUIL-b24Orlu8Q2wHTxmb1yLjm.1>
Meeting ID: 836 6691 1344 Passcode: 796312

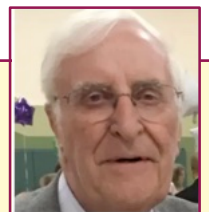
Final Thoughts: Friendly reminder of the National Assembly at the Sonesta Hotel in Atlanta GA July 19-21, 2024! I hope to see you there! You will receive more information regarding the assembly in this newsletter. Scholarships are available, so please email me if needed.

The inspirational poem for this quarter is by Amanda Gorman found <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/20/amanda-gormans-inaugural-poem-the-hill-we-climb-full-text.html>.

I do hope that your winter season treats you well.

Peace Be with You All,
Rev. Jo

Let's remember to keep the family of **Robert Schutzius** in our thoughts and prayers. Rev. Robert "Bob" Schutzius was a long-time member of FCM. He published Diaspora (the FCM newsletter) for many years, which was printed by the late Frank Simoni at his printing company in Saint Louis. He will be dearly missed.





Southwest Region

DANIEL WINDHAM
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Grace and Peace, Southwest

I apologize for having missed the December due date and for not submitting an article in time for the January newsletter. I am currently sitting at a table at the Chicago O'hare airport fresh off of our February Circle of Directors meeting working on this article. There was a lot of activity, per usual, at the meeting, and there is lots to talk about. Change is coming to FCM.

Among the discussion topics at our meeting was membership dues, renewals, late fees, organizational structure, volunteering, and regional connection.

I have been making an effort to visit the region over the past several months, hosting a commissioning ceremony in Berkeley, CA in April, and connecting with our Maui, Hawaii chaplains in December. I want to plan an Arizona gathering before it gets too hot, and to visit Southern California this summer. Be on the lookout for a gathering near you.

Regarding gatherings, I have been in some regular communication with a small group, mostly from California, and we are making an effort to share research literature related to Chaplaincy during our Zoom gatherings. The goal is mutual edification, education, and enhanced praxis. FCM is growing rapidly as more and more chaplains come to the organization seeking commissioning and endorsement for professional chaplaincy. For posterity, I want to continue leaning into this chaplaincy wave in our demographics, and to reimagine what faith communities can look like, particularly among Board Certified Chaplains.

A final note about gatherings: **The FCM National Assembly is July 19-21** at the Sonesta Atlanta Airport North Hotel right next to the Atlanta International Airport. Mark your calendars and make every effort to attend. It will certainly be a worthwhile adventure.



Listen to the wind,
it talks.
Listen to the silence,
it speaks.
Listen to your heart,
it knows.

Native American Proverb



FCM Directory



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The FCM Newsletter is published bi-monthly by the Federation of Christian Ministries, a non-profit religious body. As the informational publication of FCM, its mission is to keep members current with the organization and its activities, to provide ideas to further ministry and to promote community building among local FCM groups and the national organization. All current members receive a copy. Articles and feedback are welcomed and can be sent to: newsletter@FCMmail.org by the 4th of each month (February, April, June, August, October and December). FCM member-submitted articles should aim for 500 words and 2-3 selected photos in MS Word and JPG formats.

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FCM CERTIFICATES

These lovely certificates are available from the FCM Central Office. Please specify your choice: Baptism, Marriage, Holy Union, and the number of certificates you need. Certificates are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Each certificate is printed on certificate weight paper in blue ink; they carry the FCM logo and seal.

FCM Membership & Realm

REALM ADMINISTRATOR & MEMBERSHIP
Emails: connect@FCMmail.org - membership@FCMmail.org

FCM Registry

FCM BAPTISM AND WEDDING REGISTRIES ARE NOW ON
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Sacramental Registry - Click **EVENTS AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS** for additional help Email: registry@fcmail.org or connect@fcmail.org

Endorsement for Specialized Ministries

Qualified FCM members may apply for "Religious Body Endorsemen" for the specialized ministries of Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Pastoral Education. Such endorsement is required by professional certifying organizations and many institutional employers. The FCM Circle of Directors acts on endorsement applications three times yearly. Endorsement application materials are available for downloading on the FCM website at: www.federationofchristianministries.org
Inquiries may be made by email at: specmin@FCMmail.org

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