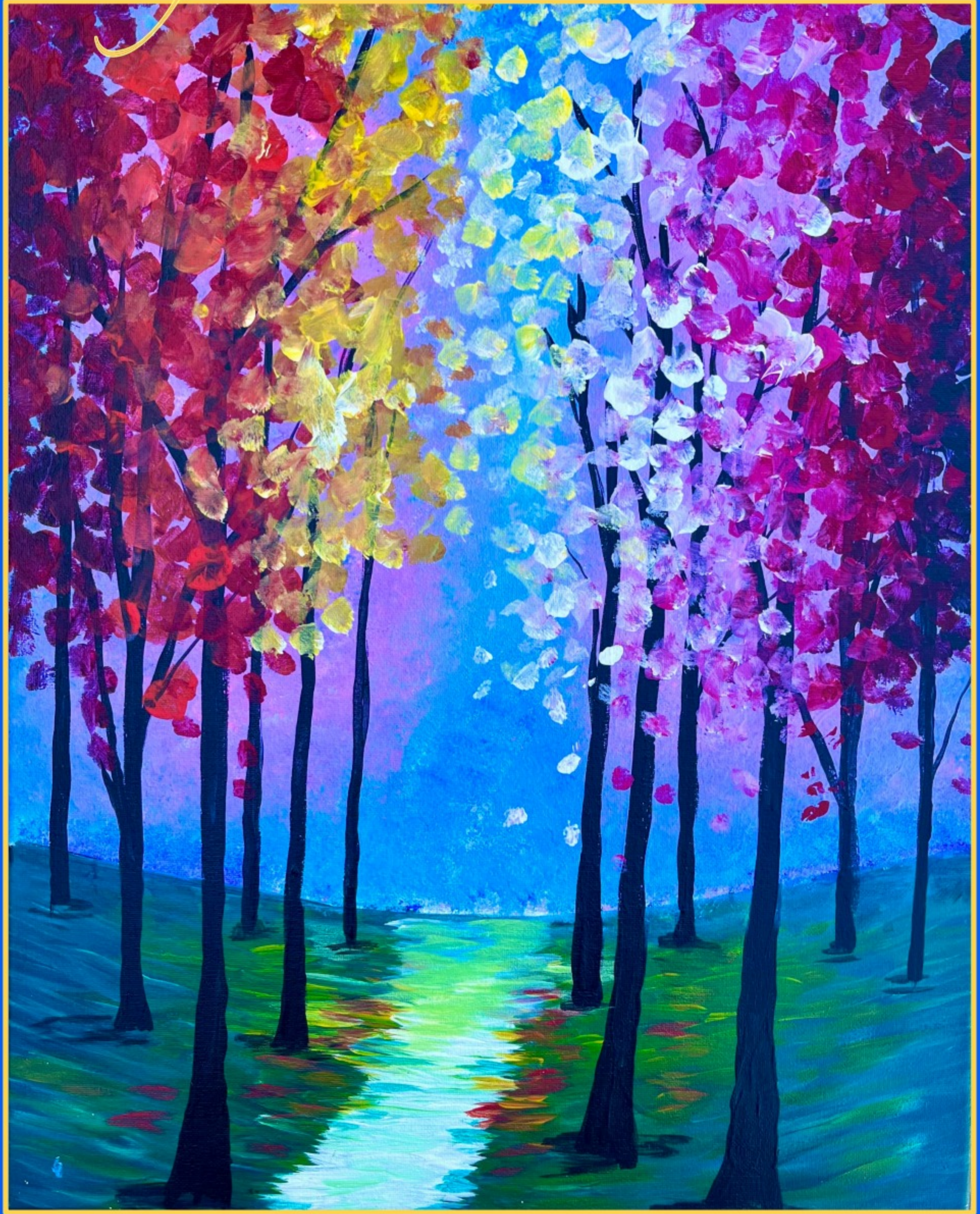


Federation of Christian Ministries

May/June 2023 Newsletter



Vol. 57
No. 3





Federation of Christian Ministries

May/June 2023 Vol. 57 No. 3

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Yellow Tulips

*Yellow tulips represent
Happiness
Cheerfulness
Hope.*

*"To Plant a Garden is
to Believe in Tomorrow"*
Audrey Hepburn

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Chairperson

CHRISTY HOWARD-STEELE.....CHAIRPERSON@FCMMAIL.ORG

May Flowers

The month of May always reminds me of flowers. Sayings such as "you're as welcome as the flowers in May" or "April showers bring May flowers" cosign my association of May with flowers. This year, as I think about May flowers, the expression "Give me flowers while I can smell them" came to mind. More than the physical giving of flowers (though that can be one way to show our appreciation), this expression encourages us to celebrate, tell, or show our appreciation, gratitude, love for those who have touched or impacted our lives in important and significant ways. I would like to encourage us to begin or continue a practice of giving flowers metaphorically by expressing our appreciation, gratitude, love to at least one person each month.

I would like to begin a practice with this newsletter edition where those of us in FCM give flowers in a more public way by submitting to the newsletter a brief expression of appreciation for someone in FCM. I want to begin by "giving flowers" to the following FCM member:



Antoinette Marold

Antoinette, as current director of communications and a former chairperson in FCM, is very active behind the scenes of FCM. While it is part of my responsibility as chairperson to consult with the two immediate past chairpersons, Antoinette has generously given her time in support of my chairpersonship with advice, counsel, and reminders.

We often tease that there is no quick question between us. FCM would not run as smoothly as it has without Antoinette. I appreciate not only how she has supported me I also appreciate Antoinette for the e-cards she sends that remind me that she is thinking of me. Love and thank you, Antoinette for your support and care.

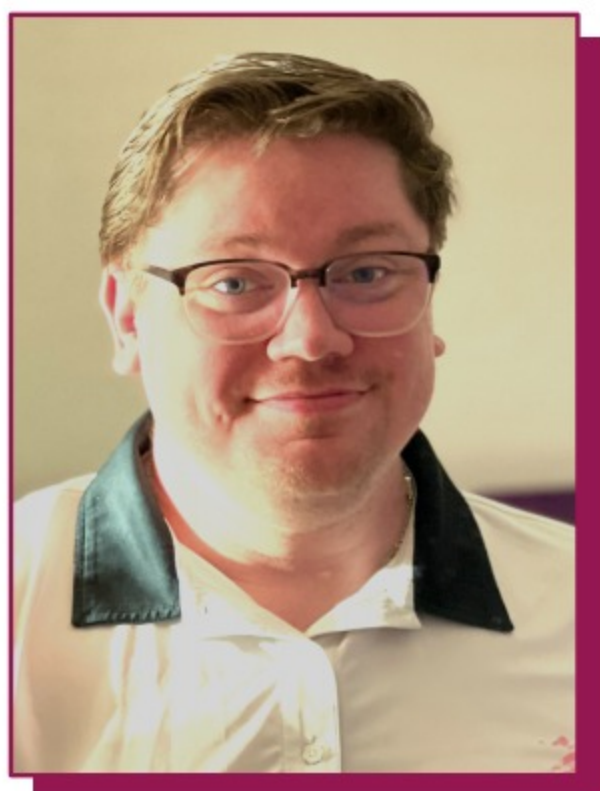


Chairperson

CHRISTY HOWARD-STEELE.....CHAIRPERSON@FCMMAIL.ORG

And Now We Have All Three Welcome!

Regional Vice Presidents have now been appointed for all three new regions. Yay! We look forward to the ministry and opportunities for connection. Thank you to **Chris, Susan, and Zack** for your willingness to serve FCM. Continued thanks to **Beth, Carl, Dan, Mary, and Shannon.**



VICE PRESIDENT, SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

FCM's Executive Committee appointed **Christopher Breen**, Vice President of the new South Central Region. Chris has been a member of FCM since 2022. Chris currently works bi-vocationally as a pastoral counselor as well as an information technology manager. Scheduling time to dedicate to FCM will be easy to integrate into Chris' existing workflows. Chris believes that diversity is the manifestation of the Spirit and that to respond and build community authentically, FCM must be willing to embrace change. Chris states, " I am excited to have an opportunity to walk with others as they discern how the Divine is working in their lives.

Chris' contact information is:
Email: southcentralvp@fcmmail.org
Phone: (401) 499-9231



VICE PRESIDENT, MID-ATLANTIC REGION

FCM's Executive Committee appointed **Susan Loving**, Vice President of the new Mid-Atlantic region. Susan has been a member of FCM since 2022. She currently works as a hospice chaplain; a role she says gives her flexibility to serve FCM. Susan is also a teacher of communication skills and Christian education. Susan's vision of leadership is "providing empowerment and affirmation while inviting others to join in and offering the sacred space for us to learn, grow, and bloom."

Susan's contact information is:
Email: midatlanticvp@fcmmail.org
Phone: 2(14) 697-0098



VICE PRESIDENT, NORTHWEST REGION

FCM's Executive Committee appointed **Zachary Wheat**, Vice President of the new Northwest Region. Zac has been a member of FCM since 2018. Zack currently works as the inpatient palliative care chaplain in Portland OR. Zack "feels energized by community, celebrating folks, and connecting with people who might've missed each other." As VP, Zack hopes to bring his creativity, passion, and expertise to the role.

Zack's contact information is:
Email: northwestvp@fcmmail.org
Phone: (904) 588-5097





President

TOM CUSACK.....PRESIDENT@FCMMAIL.ORG

He is the Prince of Peace... Uh, not so much

When the risen Jesus came into the locked room where the disciples were, he said to them, "Peace be with you." (cf. John 20) This was his first comment to his disciples, so we can stipulate that this is pretty important to him and his mission. We get to some deep problems, however, when we look at the historical record of how those who claim to be his followers have done in regard to espousing and supporting peace on earth. One of the Crusades, aiming to expel Muslims from the Holy Land, took the opportunity to pillage the city of their Christian brethren, Constantinople. In fact, we see centuries of bitter conflict and war in Europe as new interpretations of Scripture and church power were brought forth during the Reformation. These wars are all Christian-on-Christian violence. In WWII we have an ostensibly Christian nation, Germany, bringing havoc and destruction on all of its neighbors and attempting to exterminate our predecessors in faith, the Jews. Today we have Russia, a "Christian" nation, raining death and distraction on its neighbor Ukraine. What's our response to all this violence as members of FCM, who often are commissioned ministers of the Christ?

What I suggest to influence our country and world toward peace, is for each of us to *write one letter per month to our elected representatives*. This letter would come from your perception of how life could be peaceful in our world and in our country, if the government official made changes in law and practice to the peaceful pursuits you suggest. Write the letter to your representative in Congress. Then send an exact copy addressed to each of your two senators. Make yourself, a person of faith in the Prince of Peace, a presence in your elected representatives' awareness. Drip on them. We may not be able to establish peace on earth, but we may be able to influence the leaders of our government to place a higher value on aspects of life that are highlighted by our FCM Mission Statement, our Vision Statement, and our Core Values of Belonging, Compassion, Empowerment, Equity, and Mindful Living. These significant FCM expressions are on our website at <https://www.federationofchristianministries.org/index.html> Consider making them part of yourself.

My closing comments are to encourage you to increase your conscious involvement with FCM ever so slightly.

Our group of Regional Vice Presidents is strongly taking steps to understand and do their jobs more efficiently and better. Their efforts will affect all of our involvements in FCM as a community. Consider reaching out to your Regional Vice President and offering your help to them.

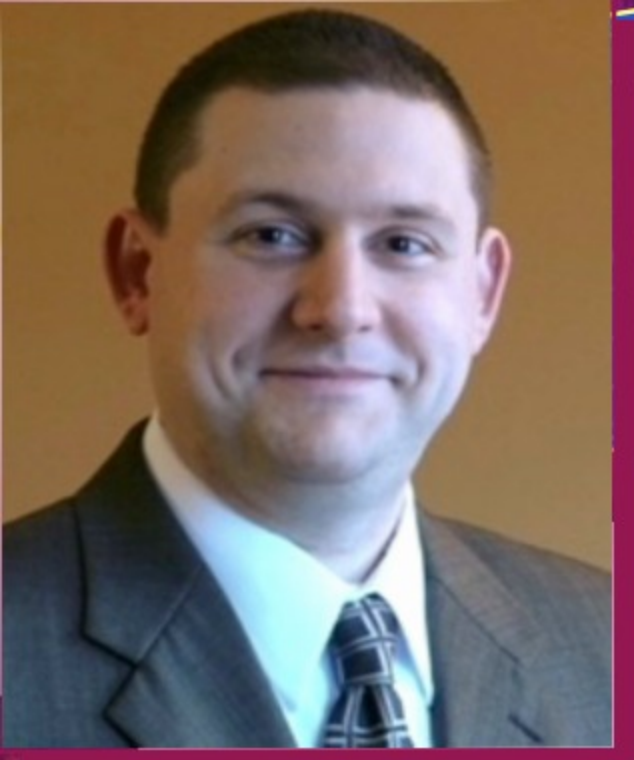
Chaplains, please be aware that there are FCM online chaplain gatherings occurring on a consistent basis. **Mark Bernecker** at Faithcommunity@FCMmail.org is the organizing force behind these meetings.

All members, please make it a point to attend the **FCM Prayer Gathering** on a quarterly basis. In this way you can dip into the spirituality of your peers in ministry. Invitations are sent to you from Realm weekly for this spiritual exercise.

Finally, please *pray for FCM daily* along this line: 2 x 2 4 FCM. What does this mean? It's a teaser: check my last or next Newsletter article. Blessings on you and your ministry.

PEACE
Be With
YOU!





FCM Administrator

BILL APPLETON.....CONNECT@FCMMAIL.ORG

I want to be very honest - this has been a very challenging Lenten season for me. The image that remains emblazoned on my heart is that of Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane and the agony experienced there. While I was at the last Circle of Directors meeting in early February, I was informed that my grandmother, who helped raise my sister and I, was admitted to the ICU. As of this writing my grandmother remains in the hospital. In visiting my grandmother day after day for the last 2 months, I have witnessed her own Garden of Gethsemane. This journey has also re-opened the fresh wounds of my sister's passing 3 years ago at the age of 44.

I have been preparing myself for the very real possibility that by the time this newsletter is published, my grandmother may have joined my sister and the countless other family members and loved ones whose spirits have moved on to an eternally peaceful state.

Like every Lent however, I know that I will be reminded once again of the new life that we all share in and the call we continue to receive to bear witness to the endless love of God.

My role as Administrator has had its challenges, but like the experience of moving from the season of Lent to Easter, I get to experience moving into the joy of witnessing the many ways each and every one of you make a difference in our world.

Happy Easter and continued blessings to all of you as you continue to minister in the rich diversity of ways that makes FCM unique!

In service,

Bill
connect@fcmmail.org
216-210-0855

Realm Related Tips

If I can be of assistance to you regarding Realm related matters, please do not hesitate to reach out to me by email or phone.

Updated Information

Spring for many people brings Spring cleaning. Please make sure that you update any relevant information in your Realm profile. You can do so by logging in and at the top right-hand corner click on the drop-down arrow next to your name and then click on "My Profile" and "Edit Profile". After making any changes be sure to "Save".

Realm Log-in and 2 Step Verification

As with many software programs and platforms you may have noticed Realm has implanted new security measures. For additional information regarding this use this link [Realm Sign In](#). When logging in to Realm, please make sure you are typing in www.onrealm.org directly into the address bar of the search engine you are using. It is important to not have any extra characters and that you do not use the search feature.

BILL APPLETON.....CONNECT@FCMMAIL.ORG

Passwords- We are unable to reset member passwords on our end. If you have forgotten your password please go to the log in screen and click on the "Forgot your password?" and follow the steps to create a new password. The new password will go to the email address that is your account email in Realm. If you are uncertain which email is your account email please reach out to me.

Browser Compatibility/ Operating System Updates- In order to experience full functionality in Realm it is important to maintain updated versions of your operating system and browsers. Not all browsers have the same capabilities and it is well documented that websites can work differently depending on the browser you are using. Not sure you're using the latest browser? Go to whatsmybrowser.org/ to find out. This will also tell you what operating system (i.e. Windows 10, etc.) you are using.

Unsubscribe- I can relate to the fact that many of you are bombarded with vast amounts of emails, some of which are quite unwanted. Sometimes, members in their efforts to cut down on the emails they receive inadvertently unsubscribe or mark emails as abusive. At times, FCM members have unsubscribed from Realm (either unintentionally or intentionally). Please give careful thought if you have been considering unsubscribing as you run the risk of not receiving important information from FCM. Our Constant Contact distribution list is periodically updated from our Realm database. Any person who unintentionally unsubscribed please contact me directly to initiate a resubscription as Realm requires me to get your permission to initiate a resubscription.

New Process for FCM Sacramental Registry

A new process for the FCM Sacramental Registry which is used for Baptisms and Weddings. The Sacramental Registry will now be accessed through Realm. Steps to access the Sacramental Registry can be found below.

Members will complete a separate entry for each Baptism or Wedding.

As a reminder- All FCM members presiding at Baptisms must register the Baptism with FCM. We encourage you to register Weddings through the FCM registry in addition to following any state and local process required for your area.

Accessing the Sacramental Registry

- Go to www.onrealm.org
- Log into your Realm profile using your email address and password you created
- Find and click on the "Events" tab on the left-hand side
- Find and click on the "FCM Baptismal Registry (2023)" or the "FCM Marriage Registry (2023)" event
- Click on the "Register By (Date)" button
- On the right hand side you will see a note that shows "Who is attending this event?". Ensure your name is checked and click "Next"
- Complete as much information as possible ensuring to enter information for all required fields indicated with a red *
- Scroll back up to top right hand and click "Next"
- Review your information for accuracy
- Click on "Register" button
- Repeat process if you have other sacraments to register

Should you have any questions about accessing/using the FCM Sacramental Registry in Realm, feel free to contact **Bill Appleton**, FCM Administrator at connect@fcmmail.org or 216-210-0855. Other questions related to the FCM Sacramental Registry can be directed to **Maryann Crilly**, Sacramental Registrar at registry@fcmmail.org or 908-625-9072.



FCM Endowment

MARY VIDAS..LAKES & PLAINS VICE PRESIDENT..MEMBER FCM GRANT COMMITTEE

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

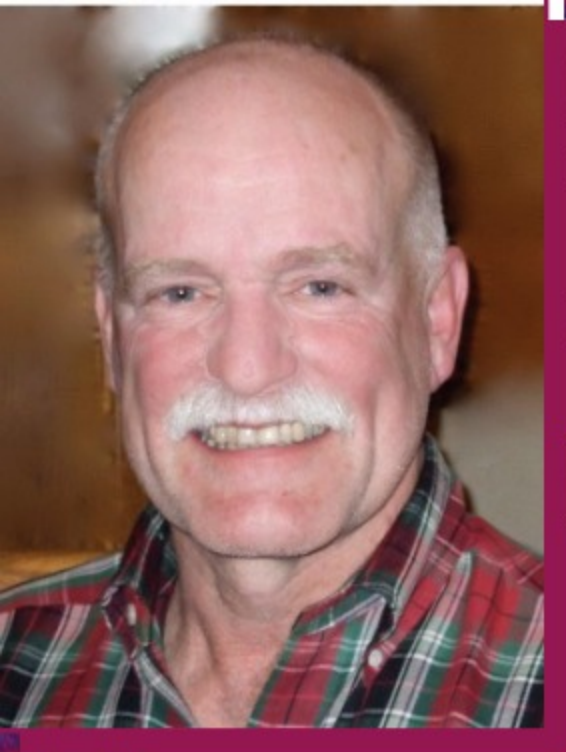
A member recently asked a good question, "Where does FCM's grant money come from?". Answer: There are two sources of funding supporting the grant program. Dollars set aside in the overall organizational budget, AND interest income realized from FCM's Endowment Fund.

Part of the Endowment Fund's mission is to raise donation capital that supports and sustains FCM's membership growth and operations; and provide specific types of support that extend FCM's mission, such as grants. Once the endowment fund is mature enough, investment returns generated may be distributed, thus leaving the principal to continue to grow. A widely used practice by nonprofits, faith-based organizations, educational entities, private and public foundations, and the corporate world. Many of the grants available come from such funds.

Just as our goal is to use our money and resources wisely, FCM takes seriously its covenant to manage FCM funding similarly. As the Endowment fund grows, so does FCM's capacity to strengthen and expand its distribution such as grant funding. I have seen first-hand how the grant program has extended FCM's mission and values in the public sphere via the various vibrant programs and initiatives awarded funding.

That is why I chose to donate to the FCM's endowment fund. I consider my donation not only a wise investment in FCM, but also a means to support FCM members and the diverse and dynamic ministries they represent. I hope that this year if you haven't already, you will consider contributing to the Endowment Fund. I found signing up via Realm to give monthly to be the easiest way to contribute. Truly, no amount is too small to be that gift that keeps on giving!





FCM Endowment Report

TOM STRICKER - ENDOWMENT CHAIRPERSON

Thank You

VALUE AS OF 4/22/2023
\$122,845.00

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

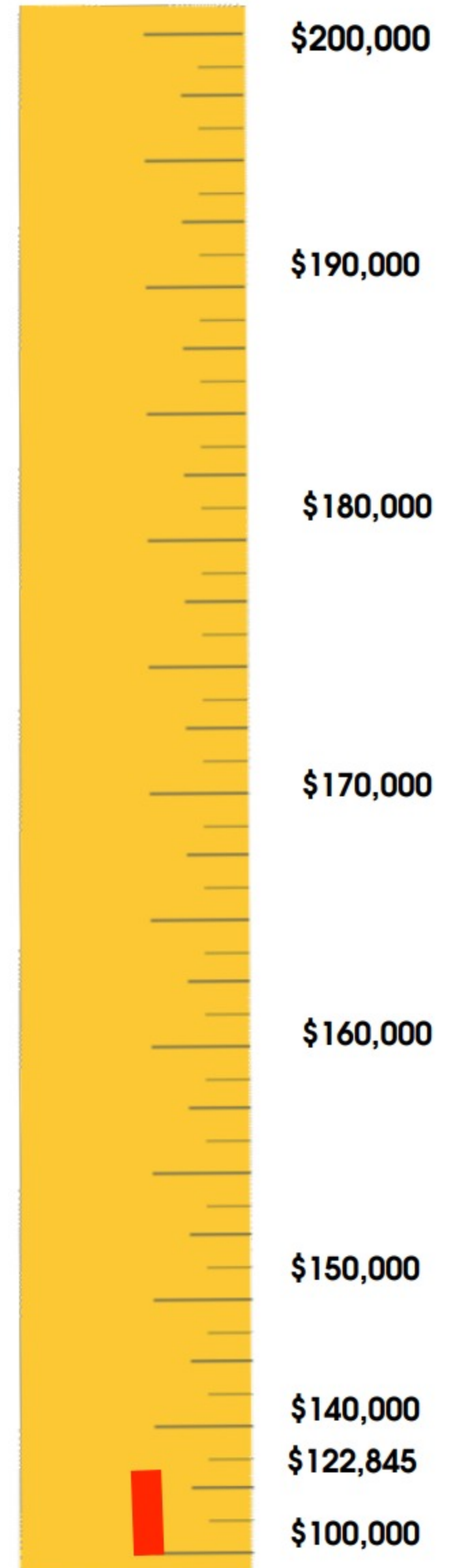
Tribute Gift

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@fcmmail.org



Measuring Our Success

FCM Faith Community Spotlight

BY JUDY LORENZ, FCM



Sophia Inclusive Catholic Community



As a member of FCM's Faith Communities Committee, I am learning about the different communities within the FCM organization. Last month I had the pleasure of meeting **Bobbi Boyle** and **Joe Pilewski** of **The Sophia Inclusive Catholic Community**, based in Northern New Jersey. I found the group in our FCM listing of Faith Communities and my inner Jersey girl led me to contact them first. I'm so glad I did!

I contacted the Sophia Community Presider, **Mike Corso**. He directed me to two individuals in order to get folks who became part of the community at different times - each with unique perspectives.

The three of us joined in a shared zoom call and they took turns answering my questions. When I inquired as to how long they have been a part of Sophia, Bobbie said that she was a member of the community before it was a community! She had been active in the Newman Center in college, and searched for progressive parishes that were responsive to the calls of Vatican II. She and her husband Bernie became Third order Franciscans and were active at Christ House in New Jersey which later became Sunrise House.



Sophia Inclusive Catholic Community

Bobbi and Bernie had a number of like-minded friends, so they decided to become the structural changes they wanted to see in the Church. Bobbi realized that she should not be seeking validation of her relationship with God from others or authority figures. "Find God that resides within You and travel with him," is her motto.

And so, she and her friends started meeting monthly as a group discussing theology and spirituality and it went on for twenty years! One of those folks was a woman named **Mary Ann Schoettly** who one day unexpectedly announced that she was going to become a Roman Catholic Woman Priest. She followed her heart and upon ordination, along with the original group, she brought in people who had followed her in her journey and others interested in finding a new type of liturgy. In 2009 they gathered in her home as Woman Priest, Mary Ann, became the Presider of the Sophia Catholic Inclusive Community.

Joe Pilewski, on the other hand, has been a part of Sophia for the past seven years. He was a cradle Catholic and has never **ever** missed going to Mass on Sunday. But, it was of the obligatory nature. His ideology was to find the quickest Mass and get himself in and out with as little fanfare as possible. But one day he happened upon a lecture given by theologian/author, Michael Morwood. Joe was greatly moved by Michael's perspective on faith and its relation to the cosmos, the earth we inhabit, and the universe! Soon after, he heard about Sophia from a Marriage Encounter friend. Joe and his wife gave it a try. No more in and out. This group started at 10 a.m. and ended at 1 p.m. After two experiences, they were hooked! This was community. This was it! Or at least the Roman Catholic Church that he had been experiencing in his life thus far, was definitely not it.

So, what is it about small faith communities that work? What inspires people to go? To continue going? What do folks enjoy most about it? What is its purpose?

Joe really enjoys the time before the liturgy. Folks get updated on what is happening in life and there is connection. He also recognizes that the community is gifted with many working together to create beautiful liturgies. Bobbi says it's sharing in our humanity. The sense of community is what makes them unique. It is open, developing and growing in wisdom, attitude and knowledge.

Joe also mentioned the social justice aspect of the community. The community hosts several presentations throughout the year. Coming soon will be a visit from "Nuns on the Bus" speaking on wealth and inequality.

Bobbi speaks of the Sophia Catholic Inclusive Community as a place where you can travel along on your path to God. It does not have to match anyone else's path. "I cannot imagine my life without this community. It helps us in trying to replicate the life of the man/person, Jesus."

I would like to thank **Mike Corso** for introducing me to Bobbi and Joe. I hope their experiences will inspire you to join or form a community near you. Or, you can join the Sophia group who meet weekly via zoom by emailing Mike: corso_mike@yahoo.com

Beliefs from the Sophia website:

Roots: Our roots are Catholic. However, our liturgy has changed and adapted in our 14 years. We are grounded in the Holy Spirit, so that **all** are welcome to celebrate with us. No one is "out" and no one is "in." We are one. Our theology flows from Sophia, Wisdom of God, as recognized in the Hebrew Testament.

Vision: We are an alternative Community which is a safe spiritual home for all. Our community and our actions are rooted in the Gospel values of love, compassion, inclusivity, diversity, peace and justice seen in the mission and ministry of Jesus.

Mission: We are creating and practicing new ways of being Church through a discipleship of equals – carrying out the priesthood of the people through radical inclusivity in joyful worship and ministry. Each person's uniqueness is honored and offered as gift to the community.

FCM Anniversaries

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.

Carolyn Horvath

May/June 2023



*Congratulations
55 years*

Joseph Ruane 5/25/1968 Northeast Region

10 years

Nancy Johnson	5/5/2013	Northeast Region
Yvonne Valeris	5/23/2013	Northeast Region
Thom McLeod	6/5/2013	Southeast Region
Mary Streck	6/10/2013	Northeast Region
Ellen Anderson	6/21/2013	Lakes & Plains Region
David Morrison	6/26/2013	Heartland Region

Mary Magdalene, First Apostle 5/20/2013 Lakes & Plains Region

5 years

Anthony Capone	5/01/2018	Northeast Region
Zachary Wheat	5/02/2018	Northwest Region
James Carter	5/05/2018	Heartland Region
Arlene Webb	5/17/2018	Northwest Region
Sarh Kronkvist	5/21/2018	Lakes & Plains Region
Christopher Lillehei	5/21/2018	Lakes & Plains Region
Mary Aktay	5/22/2018	Northeast Region
Abbie Engelstad	5/31/2018	Lakes & Plains Region
Melody Carpenter	6/13/2018	Heartland Region



Do I Hear Any Voices?

ANTHONY ERCOLANO.....ASEDMIN@ATT.NET

Then, Behold, the Veil of the Temple Was Torn in Two From Top to Bottom. Matthew 27:51 (NKJV)

I have frequently pondered the significance of this passage. Some contend that it reports an historical fact. Some believe that it dramatically represents the termination of the First Covenant - this curtain that traditionally separated the Ark of the Covenant from the ordinary people.

I believe that it indicates that there is no longer a veil (a separation) between the Sacred and the Secular. As Jesus' Blood penetrated the earth, everything became (or always was, for the One who transcended time) Sacred and was so declared.

The primary task of a priest/spiritual leader is to remind us that:

- All food and drink are holy.
- The community of believers is holy.
- The table is sacred.
- Creation itself is sacred.

The duty of the presbyter is not to re-consecrate what has already been made holy. S(he) is to bring people to an awareness that everything is already consecrated. Food and drink. Humanity. The table. All creation.

At the Last Supper, Jesus announced, "This is my body. This is the cup of my blood." He did not say, "I am taking unleavened bread and am changing it into my body." He was recognizing something that was already true: that when we eat and drink, we share the body and blood of the Christ.

One can also imagine him looking into the eyes of his disciples while saying, "This is my body, my blood."

It is the duty of the presbyter to re-enact this and then send us home to do the same – around *our* tables, together with *our* domestic churches. To share Communion with each other.

And if this Communion is the Body of the Christ, then it is important for us to define what "Body of Christ" means.

Does it mean the community? Does it mean the Body of Jesus on the Cross? Does it mean the Christ, alive in Glory? Does it mean the Mystical Body of Christ (us), now one with the Divine?

This requires conversation and clarification. **Do I hear any voices?**

The first disciples of Jesus kept Him alive by praying together, sharing a table meal and eating together, and by finding Him in each other.

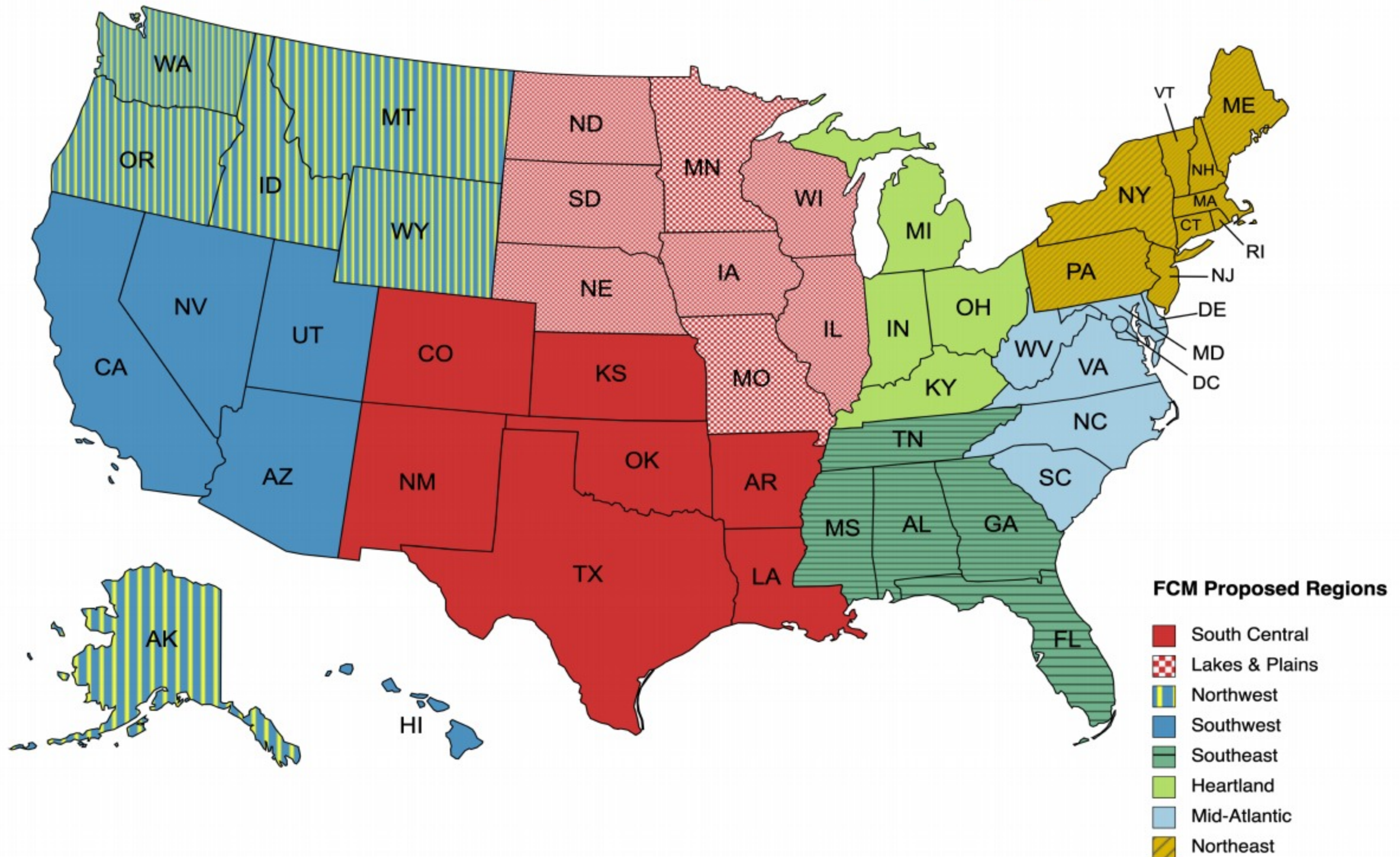
We are called upon to do the same. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Anthony S. Ercolano, D.Min.
asedmin@att.net

Anthony invites you to contact him if you would like to be a member of a group to discuss the above article.

FCM Regions

FCM New Regions went into effect January 1, 2023



South Central
Christopher Breen, VP
southcentralvp@fcmail.org

Colorado
Kansas
New Mexico
Oklahoma
Arkansas
Texas
Louisiana

Lakes & Plains
Mary Vidas, VP
lakesplainsvp@fcmail.org

North Dakota
South Dakota
Nebraska
Minnesota
Iowa
Missouri
Wisconsin
Illinois

Northwest
Zachary Wheat, VP
northwestvp@fcmail.org

Alaska
Washington
Oregon
Idaho
Montana
Wyoming

Southwest
Daniel Windham, VP
southwestvp@fcmail.org

California
Nevada
Utah
Arizona
Hawaii

Northeast
Carl Yusavitz, VP
northeastvp@fcmail.org

Pennsylvania
New Jersey
Rhode Island
New York
Connecticut
Massachusetts
New Hampshire
Vermont
Maine

Heartland
Shannon Queenan, VP
heartlandvp@fcmail.org

Michigan
Indiana
Ohio
Kentucky

Mid-Atlantic
Susan Loving, VP
midatlanticvp@fcmail.org

West Virginia
Virginia
Delaware
Maryland
Washington DC
North Carolina
South Carolina

Southeast
Beth Knight, VP
southeastvp@fcmail.org

Tennessee
Mississippi
Alabama
Georgia
Florida



Northeast Region

CARYL YUSAVITZ.....NORTHEASTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Regional Gatherings

Welcome to **Bruce Aguilar**, our newest FCM regional member. Bruce lives and ministers in Massachusetts.

Our **second regional gathering** was held at our President, **Tom Cusack**, and his wife, **Ginny's**, home in central New Jersey on March 11th. Over a dozen members shared personal and ministerial journeys, enjoyed delicious food, and broke bread together, as Jesus taught us.

Our **next regional gathering will be in the Philadelphia area on May 6th** and an invitation will be sent out to all regional members. We are still hoping for future gatherings in central Pennsylvania and New England. I am aware that in your annual FCM reports, some of you have volunteered to host an FCM NE Region gathering. Please contact me with your plans. Thank you.

As you are aware, the **FCM regions have been expanded and redrawn**. If you are new to the Northeast Region (and not receiving messages) or no longer in the Northeast Region (and do not need Regional updates and invitations), please contact me.



March 11, 2023 Gathering



Mid-Atlantic Region

SUSAN LOVING....MIDATLANTICVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Mid-Atlantic News

I hope the spring season has brought you glimpses of the glorious colors to come as summer heads our way!

The Mid-Atlantic Region celebrated our first gathering at the end of March, and it was delightful to hear all the wonderful ways our members are serving the Divine and their communities.

My hope moving forward is to gather in regional communities and be able to visit with each group. **Carole DuBois**, in North Carolina, is spearheading a face-to-face retreat planning this season, and I am excited to see the wonderful work that is coming from her creative and generous heart.

I will be reaching out to members who have indicated they want to become more involved; and I am seeking regional coordinators and mentors for our new FCM members. We will continue to meet monthly- hoping to hit on an evening when more can join in.

This is my first spring in Central Virginia, and I am already in awe of all that is blooming around me. I hope amidst this busy time you can take a few moments to listen to the birds, admire the budding trees, and rest assured in the beauty of this earth.

May you and yours be well.



Heartland Region

SHANNON QUEENAN...HEARTLANDVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

View from the Heartland

Hello Friends! The days are getting longer and the world is waking up!! I hope you are finding opportunities to get outside and soak up the beauty of the season.

Regional Retreat: Harnessing the Power of Love is October 27-29 at Maria Stein, OH. If you have been to the retreat before, you know what an amazing space, physical and spiritual, that we find there and create together. If you haven't been able to join in a regional retreat, please consider joining us this Fall. We have a team working to create a meaningful experience. Register via Realm. \$200 pp or \$280 per couple.

Connect and Reflect gatherings continue to provide regional members with opportunities to meet and support each other. We meet at 7:30 for one hour of reflection and sharing. Everyone in the region receives an email invite with a zoom link to join the gatherings: **Tuesday, May 9** is the last scheduled meeting this season.

Congratulations to Nancy Harbron in Indianapolis. This photo is with her colleagues at her commissioning on March 10:



Winter has been long and Spring appears to be short. This poem by Mary Oliver leads us into a contemplation that is most worthy for any season:

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

—Mary Oliver



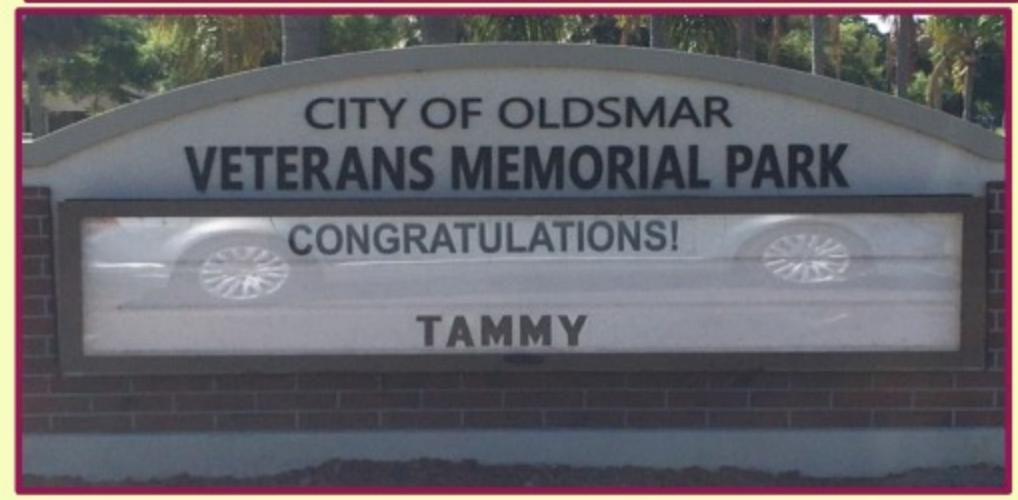
Southeast Region

BETH KNIGHT....SOUTHEASTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Hello friends,

We are a collective of ministers and small faith communities who value affirming relationships and vocational support. In our region, we are leaning into several ways of gathering more often. Whether by Zoom, in person for commission services, or small meals together, we are becoming closer in our moments together and nurturing bonds across the miles! March was a very rich time for our region, as we celebrated commission services in Oldsmar, FL and in Decatur, GA. Take a moment with me, please, to gaze upon these gatherings and say "Thanks be to God!"

Rev. Tammy Davidson (center of group photo), Florida, Chaplain with Bay Care Hospice, celebrated her commission service, Sunday March 12, with friends and family at the local Oldsmar Veterans Memorial Park.



Rev. Julia Styles, Georgia, Spiritual Director (center of group photo), celebrated her commission service on Sat. March 25 in Decatur, GA among friends, family and FCM peers.



ONLINE ZOOMS: We held a REGION ZOOM GATHERING on Wed. March 15 with our sister region, Mid-Atlantic, to allow ourselves time to acknowledge our regions becoming reconfigured and to welcome the new VP for the Mid-Atlantic area: **Rev. Susan Loving**, MDIV, hospice chaplain.

NEXT Southeast Region ZOOM: Please watch for the Zoom link and email reminder for the next Southeast Region Zoom ~ which will be Wed. May 24, at 7 pm.



DINNER GATHERINGS

CENTRAL FLORIDA held a meal together, Thursday, April 20 at 6 pm at Urban Kitchen, Plant Street, Winter Garden.

For future attendance, if you are in our area or would like to drive from somewhere in Florida to join us ~ please do!

For details contact Beth Knight, text/ph 352-978-8180.



Spotlight

Our new series of spotlighting one of our own is a chance for us to acknowledge one of our region's ministers, lift up their passion and calling, as well as savor the diversity of God's gifts and graces among us.

It's with much warm regard that I share with you this month's spotlight member: **Rev. Phillip Crenshaw**, a commissioned/endorsed FCM member and Bereavement Coordinator/Chaplain at Harbor Grace Hospice in Atlanta, GA.

Phillip embraces Desmond Tutu's harmony-seeking philosophy of "Ubuntu" and the belief in a universal bond of sharing and mutual support that connects all humanity plus belief in helping one another to complete themselves. This redemptive thinking informs his ministry and chaplain posture towards others, especially those who are living in unfortunate circumstances.

Phillip feels God has called him to currently minister in hospice. He appreciates serving in hospice because of the different demographics of people he serves. Whether he ministers to infants, children, adolescents, young, middle, and older adults, Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, non-native American persons, Muslim, Hindi, and Christians (Protestant and non-Protestant), he understands that God has called him to be God's ambassador and an advocate to patients and their families who are experiencing the dying process.

Join me please in being grateful for the life and ministry of
Rev. Phillip Crenshaw.

AREA REPRESENTATIVE OPPORTUNITY



BETH KNIGHT & DIANE DOUGHERTY

Would you like to help represent FCM in your state or city? Five years ago when I joined FCM, I had no idea what God was up to! I served as an area liaison for Florida and assisted **Rev. Diane Dougherty**, former Southern VP. Learning from and observing Diane's service prepared me for when the torch needed to be passed on to another VP.

Because we are an affirming collective of ministers, it is so important that we are available to one another in local ways that support of our callings. Or maybe it's as simple as you might like to occasionally host small local gatherings, dinners or coffee chat meetings?

Please call or email me (**Beth Knight**) and let me know if you would like to discuss being an area representative... "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, encouraging one another." Hebrews 10:24-25



Lakes & Plains Region

MARY VIDAS...LAKESPLAINSVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

"This is the power of gathering: it inspires us, delightfully, to be more hopeful, more joyful and more thoughtful, more alive!" Alice Waters



ANN TODD, JOAN MERTENS & ERLIN PERLANDO-MERTEN



PAUL VINCENT REITHMAIER, & REV. MARYBETH MCBRYAN

Welcome Spring blossoms and Summer blooms! It was an exciting to see the new growth take hold on my recent visit to St. Louis, MO. Friday, upon my arrival the first order of business was to join the group for a traditional Fish Fry Dinner at St. Stephen's Protomartyr Parish. The food was delicious, and each table was packed to the gills! Following the dinner, we continued to meet at **Rev. MaryBeth McBryan's** home, not far from the church. Thank you **MaryBeth** for hosting our gathering! **Anna Todd** for facilitating the various zoom meetings for the group!



MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDENS

PAUL VINCENT REITHMAIER, VP MARY VIDAS & JAN REITHMAIER

Saturday, I met up with chaplain colleagues at the Missouri Botanical Garden. With tulips and crocus adorning the walkways, the tropical atrium was lovely to walk through! That evening was yet another opportunity for member visits. I appreciated hearing **Paul Vincent and Jan Reithmaier's** recollections as FCM's first vice presidents of the Mountains and Plains Region, the creation of their monthly newsletter, and faithful engagement through the years.

Sunday, attendance at the St. Louis Group's "Reaching Out" Worship Service was held online. The readings for our worship service reminded us that Jesus is always with us. I could not help but think...Yes, Lord, where two or more gather, you are there. For I have seen this first-hand on my visit to FCM St. Louis!

All in all, a wonderful visit! A big thank you to the St. Louis FCM members for their warm welcome and hospitality. And, for sharing your wisdom, insights, and perspectives on our topics. Indeed, your light shines bright in representing FCM in all you do! Know I look forward to future visits to local FCM groups within our Lakes & Plains Region. **Summer blessings! Mary**



Paul Vincent and I then headed to the countryside to FCM members **Erlin Perlado-Mertens** and spouse **Joan's** residence. Their beautiful log cabin nestled in the Missouri hillside became our sanctuary for Erlinda's commissioning ceremony. Thank you, Paul Vincent (an excellent classical guitarist), for filling the rafters with your gift of music. And those in attendance online.

Ordinations

Congratulations to **Reverend Michael Penner, FCM** and **Reverend Erlinda Perlado-Mertens** on their ordination! We were honored to gather as a community to affirm your commissioning and call to ministry. A special thank you to **Reverend Christopher Breen, VP South Central Region** for co-officiating, and the family members, friends, FCM colleagues for their in-person and online attendance!

Reverend Erlinda Perlado-Mertens, St. Louis, MO

Erlinda serves as a triage chaplain at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, MO



ERLINDA WITH SPOUSE JOAN.....REV. ERLINDA PERLADO-MERTENS.....ERLINDA WITH VP MARY VIDAS

Reverend Michael Penner, Dallas, TX

A former member of our Mts. & Plains Region, Michael Curently serves as a hospital chaplain in Dallas, Texas



MICHAEL WITH SPOUSE VELESIA



REV. MICHAEL PENNER



MICHAEL WITH PARENTS ROD & DEBBIE



CO-OFFICIANT REV. CHRISTOPHER BREEN VP, SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

LAKES & PLAINS REGIONAL ZOOM MEETING

Mark your Calendars! The next Regional Zoom Meeting will take place on

Wednesday, May 10, 2023 @ 7:00 pm (Central)

MINI ECO RETREAT Note: recurring link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86076030205?pwd=YnFYLzdPQklzRnNuY2thQlorWXZ5dz09>

Dial by your location: 1 646 931 3860 US 1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)



South Central Region

CHRISTOPHER BREEN....SOUTHCENTRALVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Greetings

"I know I'm made of clay that is worn, blinded by imperfect form, Yet I will trust in the artist molding me"
- half•alive, creature on Now, Not Yet 2019

Greetings from South Central!

For those I have yet to have the blessing of meeting, my name is Chris and I am the recently appointed Vice President for the new South Central region of FCM. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible as time goes on and as we serve alongside each other.

In 1622, Pope Gregory XV shocked many when he canonized a farmworker from Spain who founded no order, didn't write a book, or preach a single sermon from a pulpit. Isidore de Merlo y Quintana (or Isidore for short) was a farmer known for his piety towards the poor and his love for animals. Isidore lived a simple existence, committed to generosity and hospitality, even in the face of his abject poverty, as an indentured servant working his landlord's land.

In my conversations with many in the South Central region since my appointment, Isidore's life of quiet piety and diligent commitment to the Lord and his community has come to mind often. Like Isidore, the ministry that you work at day in and day out, is a testament to God's Love in the world, even when things feel heavy and bleak. Our ministerial work may not result in success in the world's eyes; but it is making a difference to many.

The Artist that molds each one of us for ministry in the world, calls us and depends on our Isidorian commitment to preaching the Gospel through the example of our lives. FCM is a community of those made of worn clay, but trusting in the wisdom of The Artist. This trust brings about transformational change and impact through inclusive ministries. It is truly a blessing to be included in community with each of you, and I am energized and excited to continue to learn more about each of your ministries and serve alongside you, discerning and executing the Vision of The Artist in our world together.

Prayers and blessings, your brother in Christ,

Chris





South Central Region pg. 2

CHRISTOPHER BREEN....SOUTHCENTRALVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Prayer

Everlasting Artist, you hear our prayers whether they are full of thanksgiving or full of complaint. Your mercy is unending, even within your discipline you restrain yourself in ways we cannot know. May our mumbled words of gratitude and our fleeting praises of your Artistic direction find crevices where they can grow within Your presence, Artist of the morning light, and the evening stars. Amen.

Side-bar

Stay tuned for upcoming information about our South Central region in-person gathering in Dallas, Texas in October of 2023! We will come together to share time and space in worship, conversation and discernment for the first time as a new FCM Region. More information will be shared via email, so make sure your contact information is up to date in Realm!

References

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St. Isidor Ceremonial Standard. (1472-1492). [Oil on canvas]. Hüttau Parish Church, Salzburg, Pongau, Austria.





Southwest Region

DANIEL WINDHAM...SOUTHWESTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

The Long View

Grace and Peace Southwest Region!

I recently had the opportunity to celebrate a commissioning ceremony for two of our Northern California chaplains. It was a wonderful experience with a steep learning curve. It brought me to consider the long view, as a vantage point from how I see myself functioning in this role, to where I would like to be by the end of this first term in 2025.

In some ways I feel good about making connections with incoming members looking for support with commissioning and endorsement. The challenge I see around these connections is that they fade after the commissioning and endorsement processes are completed. Ideally, there would be an ongoing conversation with all the newly commissioned and endorsed and all the veterans in the region. I am responsible for facilitating these conversations, hence traveling to different areas in the region.

The learning curve I experienced in this first trip to Berkeley regarded strategic planning to have an answer to the myriad unanswered questions that came up. Now that you finally got the food, did you remember to get plates and utensils? Drinks? What are you going to do if your daughter wants you to play with her instead of starting the liturgy?

It was difficult to encounter these questions and struggle to answer them. It was helpful to facilitate better planning in the future. Perhaps the biggest thing that comes to mind as I press forward to realize the long view over the next two years, is stirring the commissioned, endorsed, members, and friends of FCM to be present at these gatherings.

The goal is to strengthen the regional and national bonds. The goal is to build a network of support for one another. Ministry has its challenges, and a strong support network goes a long way toward helping ministers navigate their ministries. There were some commissioned and endorsed members at the gathering in Berkeley. It was exciting to meet them in person for the first time. It was a wonderful first experience and I am hopeful for the coming trips. Be on the lookout for email notifications. I plan to visit your area in 2023. I'll see y'all soon.



See y'all soon!

Peace,

Dan





Northwest Region

ZACHARY WHEAT...NORTHWESTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Greetings Everyone

from the Northwest Region



Greetings everyone from the Northwest. For our folks closer to the coast, we are entering the best time to live in the Northwest in my opinion. Rain, sleet, snow, fog, and overcast are beginning to give way to sun, cherry blossoms, and perfect temperatures to spend time outdoors. This is my first official newsletter update and so I wanted to take the time to introduce myself and my hopes for our new region as well as provide an update.

In addition of the changing seasons I am also entering the busy season of my life as a triathlete. Race season is underway, and I am looking forward to some awesome races in awesome places this year. My work in the hospital as a chaplain is also going well and I am enjoying opportunities to be a part of some visioning work in my department. As I look toward my role with FCM I feel incredibly excited to continue to connect with folks and build relationships across the region. My plan is to host monthly gatherings that rotate between the Seattle/Tacoma area and the Portland Area where the majority of our members are located. I am also looking forward to connecting with folks that live in the other parts of our region as time allows.

We had the first of these gatherings this past month and we had four members in addition to me. From front left to right in the photo we had **Lance Baker**, **Andrew Weygandt**, **myself**, **Sean Manseau**, and **Mary Haley**. We met at what Mary shared with us was an old MCC building turned brewery. We shared stories and our lives with each other in addition to food and drink. For myself one of the most exciting things was to connect with Sean and hear about how he is guiding people. The other four of us are clinical chaplains from a variety of settings but Sean shared with the group his thoughtful and complex view of spirituality and the things he is working on. Sean is also connected to FCM through his father who is one of our founders. Mary is one of our newest members here in the Northwest and is a chaplain at an inpatient hospice across the Columbia River from Portland in Vancouver, WA.

Speaking of new members, I would like to welcome our new members from recently which include **Mary Sykora-Haley**, **Adina Meyer**, **Terry Boyer**, and **Kathy Brainard**. Several of these folks are also discerning and pursuing commissioning. We are grateful to have them and it has been lovely to connect with them.



NEWSLETTER EDITORS
Carole duBois
Sandy Tracy

Newsletter Email: newsletter@FCMmail.org

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.

FCM Central Office



COORDINATOR
Carolyn Horvath
Email: centraloffice@FCMmail.org
PHONE NU. 216.571.7698
1709 W. 69th. St., #1
Cleveland, Ohio 44102-2957

FCM Website: www.federationofchristianministries.org
FCM Blog: fcmblog.org

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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.

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Endorsement for Specialized Ministries

Qualified FCM members may apply for "Religious Body Endorsement" 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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info@globalministriesuniversity.org
Phone: 866 419 8020 toll-free

FCM Circle of Directors

Chairperson: Christy Howard-Steele
Phone: 708.285.5845 | Email: chairperson@FCMmail.org

President: Thomas Cusack
Phone: 609.947.0770 | Email: president@FCMmail.org

Treasurer: Heidi A. Tierney
Phone: 908.217.8981 | Email: treasurer@FCMmail.org

Secretary: Sarah Lindberg
Phone: 712.249.3410 | Email: secretary@FCMmail.org

Chair: Specialized Ministries:
Jeanne Hale Phone: 919.350.7853
Email: specmin@FCMmail.org

Chair: Faith Communities:
Mark Bernecker Phone: 216.744.7704
Email: faithcommunity@FCMmail.org

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

Southwest: Daniel Windham
Phone: 760.845.4378 | Email: southwestvp@FCMmail.org

Northwest: Zachary Wheat
Phone: 904.588.5097 | Email: northwestvp@FCMmail.org

Lakes & Plains: Mary Vidas
Phone: 651.303.6005 | Email: lakesplainsvp@FCMmail.org

Heartland: Shannon Queenan
Phone: 502.568.2174 | Email: heartlandvp@FCMmail.org

Mid-Atlantic: Susan Loving
Phone: 214.697.0098 | Email: midatlanticvp@FCMmail.org

Southeast: Beth Knight
Phone: 352.978.8180 | Email: southeastvp@FCMmail.org

South Central: Christopher Breen
Phone: 401.499.9231 | Email: southcentralvp@FCMmail.org

Northeast: Carl Yusavitz
Phone: 215.248.2140 | Email: northeastvp@FCMmail.org

FCM ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

FCM Endowment: Tom Stricker
Phone: 937.477.0139 / Email: endowment@FCMmail.org

Ethics Committee: Joseph Ruane
Phone: 215.387.7998 / Email: j.ruane@uscience.edu

Prayer Support Leader/Coordinator: Anthony Capone
Prayer support button on the website or:
Email: prayersupport@FCMmail.org

FCM Communications: Antoinette Marold
Phone: 440.232.6212 / Email: communication@FCMmail.org