

# Federation of Christian Ministries



## Newsletter

November/December 2023  
Vol. 57 Nu. 6



## Thanksgiving Blessings



The Trees are Showing  
Us How Lovely it is  
to Let Things Go..

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

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# Giving Thanks



*"I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers, ..."*  
*Ephesians 1:16 NRSVUE*

As I approach this season of Thanksgiving, I find myself more curious perhaps even suspicious about the origins of this holiday. Having been taught the story of the Pilgrims and Native Americans sharing a meal in grade school, given the more recent information about Columbus' "discovery" of America, I realized I wanted to know more about this Thanksgiving story.

According to the History Channel, one of the sole examples of harmony between European colonists and Native Americans is the celebration of the Europeans first corn harvest in November 1621, with some Native American allies. While there were annual or sporadic celebrations after that, it wasn't until 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln heeded the request of Sarah Josepha Hale, author of the nursery rhyme "Mary had a Little Lamb", to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday. In the height of the Civil War, Lincoln issued a proclamation urging "all Americans to ask God to 'commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife' and to 'heal the wounds of the nation.'" Lincoln scheduled Thanksgiving on the final Thursday of November where it is currently still celebrated.

In our much-divided nation, the urging of President Lincoln still resonates with me now. I love the idea of both spontaneous and the declared national holiday of Thanksgiving. May we continue to give thanks not for all things, but rather in any and every situation or circumstance we find ourselves in, may we identify something for which we can be thankful. As we enter the end of this calendar year, I want to take this opportunity to express what a privilege it is for me to be a part of FCM with you. As I have opportunity to meet more of you, I am so grateful that we belong to this community together. Thank you, crafters of FCM! Thank you, cultivators of FCM! Thank you, every member of FCM.





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

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# November Flowers

## Chrysanthemums



In this newsletter edition, I would like to acknowledge and celebrate someone in FCM in a more public way. As stated in the previous newsletters, I would like to encourage us to engage in the practice of giving flowers metaphorically by expressing our appreciation, gratitude, love to at least one person each edition. Based on the saying of "Give me flowers while I can smell them", this month I want to "give flowers" to the following FCM member:

## Heidi Tierney



Heidi Tierney joined FCM in 2013. She was appointed Treasurer in 2018 and has served as our Treasurer and member of FCM's Circle and Executive Committee for the past 5 years. As a full-time chaplain and director of spiritual care for her hospital system, Heidi diligently and faithfully gives up some of her personal time every weekend to tend to our books and other financial matters. Heidi's insight, integrity, and commitment to the wellbeing of FCM has been invaluable. I am extremely grateful for Heidi and her ministry!

Do you have someone in FCM that you want to acknowledge. If so, please email your brief write-up to [chairperson@fcmmail.org](mailto:chairperson@fcmmail.org) or [newsletter@fcmmail.org](mailto:newsletter@fcmmail.org).



President

TOM CUSACK  
PRESIDENT@FCMMAIL.ORG

# Spiritual Evolution and Organizational Evolution

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## SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

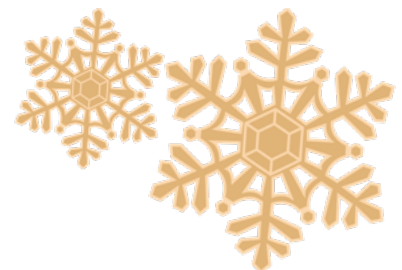
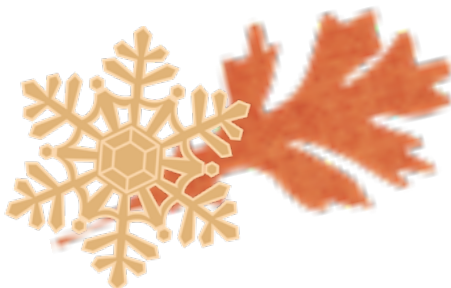
I have come to believe that the most important activity in which we can engage is personal spiritual and devotional activity. Our prayers and meditations have the unfailing result of generating personal spiritual growth. To have these activities as a number one priority allows all other priorities to fit into their proper places and to be developed with the close help of the Holy Spirit.

I have been on a path of meditation and spiritual reading for 35 years. During this time, I have changed. I can look back and see spiritual progress, which I believe is the purpose of our life. With this spiritual focus within, we better interact in a godly and loving way with people, and our inner wealth of the Spirit will shine through. This spiritual effect is managed by the Holy Spirit. We become a transparent vessel of that light.

For a community spiritual practice, I invite each of you to participate in the **FCM Prayer Gathering** which occurs every Thursday for one hour beginning at 8 PM EDT/EST, when you can. Each week one FCM member leads the group in prayer, reflection, and meditation for half an hour. The second half of the hour is devoted to discussion. Those who have attended these sessions find them to be inspirational, supportive of their ministry, and a way to experience spiritual fellowship and community with other FCM members. Look for the weekly invitation in your email inbox.

FCM itself is on a path of institutional evolution due to the positive and successful growth in membership over the last 20 years. To professionally grapple with the reality of a rapidly growing FCM, the Circle of Directors decided to hire a strategic planning specialist who will work with the Circle at its February in-person meeting. **FCM Chairperson Christy Howard-Steele** will be leading that effort. From that strategic planning will come new ways by which FCM can plan the future, manage its growth, present the organization more clearly to the broader community, and thus continue to serve its members most effectively.

Finally, please, every day, do 2 X 2 4 FCM. This formula means to pray for two minutes. To meditate for two minutes. All for the benefit of FCM. With this inner foundation, FCM can move successfully forward.





*Endowment*  
 TOM CUSACK  
 PRESIDENT@FCMMAIL.ORG

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**TIME TO SERIOUSLY GIVE TO FCM**  
 For members aged 72 and above

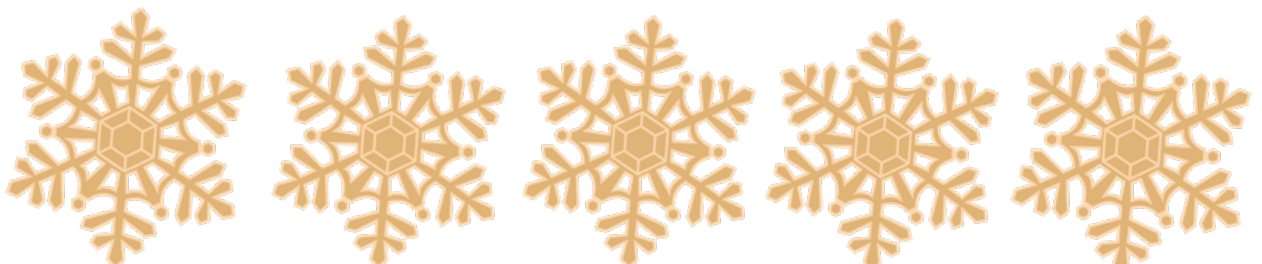
This article is aimed at those FCM members, like myself, who have many years of experience with FCM and are older than 71 years of age. I am asking you to seriously consider including the FCM Permanent Endowment as a beneficiary of the required minimum distribution (RMD) you must take from your retirement accounts prior to December 31, 2023.

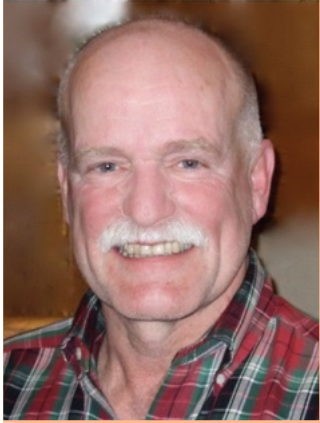
I suggest that you *apply a percentage for FCM to your required minimum distribution as follows*. For example, if you have been a productive FCM member for 20 years, consider a nontaxable direct contribution to FCM in the amount of 20% of your total distribution. If you have 15 years with FCM, consider a 15% distribution. Some have even higher numbers of years with FCM, years that were income-producing because of your work as a commissioned or endorsed member of FCM. Please look at those numbers of years and consider a percentage contribution to the endowment based on that number of years.

The endowment was enacted by FCM in 2018. **That makes 2023 its fifth anniversary.** I understand that the level of contribution that I am suggesting may be too much. But please consider the value of your life as part of FCM, and make your judgments based on that with your current financial condition.

To be nontaxable a contribution must go directly from your retirement plan, such as an IRA, to FCM. You cannot be a middle person in this transaction. That would make the transaction taxable. If your retirement plan allows you to write checks from it, write a check to Federation of Christian Ministries. Send that check to our **Treasurer, Heidi Tierney, at 23 Ellicott Rd., Milford, NJ 08848.** Write on the memo line of the check, "FCM endowment." If you do not have the capability of writing a direct check to the FCM endowment, request that your retirement firm disperse a check in the amount you wish to the above address.

An example in numbers: My RMD is \$1000. My tax bracket is 20%. If I take the full \$1000 for myself, I will net \$800 after-tax (\$1000 -\$200 tax). But if I send \$100 directly to FCM, I must take only \$900 for myself. After-tax this approach will net for me \$720 (\$900-\$180 tax). Effectively, your \$100 contribution to FCM has cost you only \$80. Please consider this approach. God bless FCM.





# Endowment Report

TOM STRICKER  
ENDOWMENT CHAIRPERSON



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# Thank You!

VALUE AS OF 10/20/2023  
**\$130,960.00**

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

### Regular Donation

Go to the FCM website [www.federationofchristianministries.org](http://www.federationofchristianministries.org) or go to your personal account on Realm [www.onrealm.org](http://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

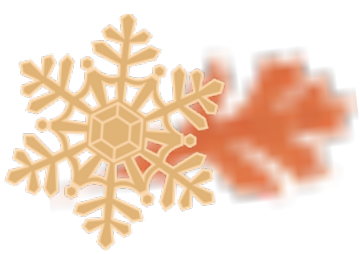
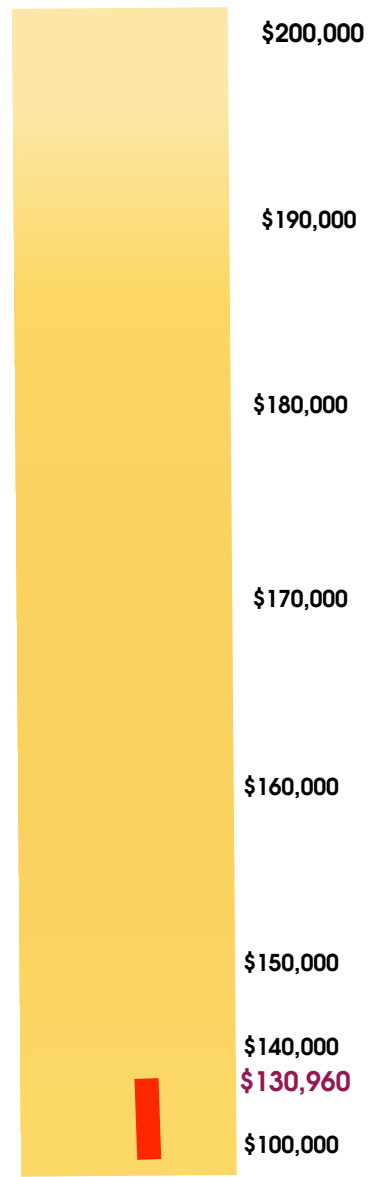
### Tribute Gift

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](mailto:endowment@fcmmail.org)



# Measuring Our Success

# 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](http://WWW.ONREALM.ORG)) OR ON THE REALM APP. NOT SIGNED IN TO REALM? ASK YOUR REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT OR [CONNECT@FCMMAIL.ORG](mailto:CONNECT@FCMMAIL.ORG) FOR AUTHORIZATION.  
CAROLYN HORVATH

## November/December

### 5 YEARS

Leo Stout	11/10/2018	Northwest
Rebecca Bass	11/18/2018	Southeast
Phillip Green	12/01/2018	Heartland
Hailey OKeif	12/13/2018	Northwest
Shannon Sterringer	12/14/2018	Heartland

### 10 YEARS

Sarah Lindberg	12/10/2013	Lakes and Plains
Frank Pisciotta	12/30/2013	Southeast

### 20 YEARS

Mary Jo Kruer	12/02/2003	Heartland
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JUDY LORENZ  
FAITHCOMMUNITY@FCMMAIL.ORG



**Faith  
Communities  
of FCM**

New Ministries for a New Millennium

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## *Welcome New Committee Member*

I would like to publicly welcome Quanita (Q) Hailey to the FCM Communities Committee. Q is a clinical staff chaplain at Brooklyn Methodist Hospital in New York City. Q is especially drawn to serve the most marginalized members of society. She identifies being a Womanist and queer as central to her delivery of pastoral care. She worships and occasionally preaches at a local Episcopal church. Q is excited to work with us to encourage the start-up of new communities, support our existing communities and find new ways for us all to “be community” for one other.

## *Upcoming Webinar - November 27: Not Just Happy or Sad*

What is bipolar disorder? Many think they understand what life is like for those who are diagnosed with this condition. Although there are certain characteristics of bipolar disorder, the way it is experienced varies widely. Mark Bernecker of the Northeast region will provide the facts about the characteristics and use his experience living with bipolar disorder as an example. Mark was diagnosed with bipolar disorder over thirty years ago. He has served as pastor for several Lutheran churches and is current pastor of Light of Life Fellowship of Faith and New Life Network. The webinar is open to all FCM members and Faith Communities. If you haven't registered you can do so at [registration.fcmfc.org](http://registration.fcmfc.org)

The invitation and zoom link will be emailed to you after you register.

### *A Quick Note:*

I would like to extend my prayers and greetings to all of our FCM communities. Throughout the year you prepare special liturgies, offer retreats, and continually find new ways through spiritual and social justice programs that enrich your own lives and serve the needs of people around the world. Thank you for this ministerial work!



# Communication

ANTOINETTE MAROLD

COMMUNICATION@FCMMAIL.ORG

## In Memory of....



### CHRISTOPHER BREEN, FCM

It is with deepest sympathy and great sadness, that we announce the passing of **Christopher Breen** on September 10, 2023, a long time FCM commissioned member of the Pacific/Northwest Region.

**The Celebration of Life Service was held Saturday, October 21, 2023 from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM with a reception immediately following.**

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at [www.acaciafuneralhome.com](http://www.acaciafuneralhome.com)  
**Obituary:**  
<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/seattle-wa/christopher-breen-11466078>

Seattle Group: Note from Pat Callahan, FCM Chris' wife Susan Blake has asked me to share the obituary and his Memorial Service. In addition to the information in the obituary, Chris was a member of the Federation of Christian Ministries (FCM) which provides commissioning and endorsement for members practicing ministries outside the traditional denominations, and enabling them to obtain chaplain positions.

He was also active in our group of wedding officiants and The Seattle Group itself, hosting summer gatherings at their lovely home in Kenmore. A gracious and talented man.

Expressions of Sympathy can be emailed to Susan Blake at: [blakebreen102@gmail.com](mailto:blakebreen102@gmail.com)

### ELLEN SIX, FCM

It is with deepest sympathy and great sadness, that we announce the passing of **Dr. Ellen Six** on November 28, 2022, a long time FCM commissioned member of the Pacific/Southwest Region. The following information was provided by her FCM ministry partner, **Karen Schwarz**.

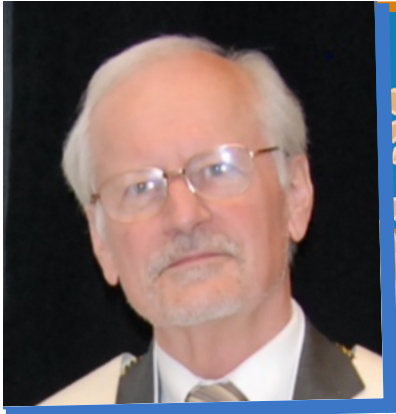
Ellen was born in Chicago in 1941, into a Lithuanian family. She always wanted to be a priest. She and her husband Paul, moved to CA.

Ellen received a DMin at Jesuit School at GTU in Berkeley. She taught in, and chaired, the Religious Studies department at Notre Dame High School in Belmont CA for many years. She also founded and coordinated the Campus Ministry program at NDB. In addition, she was an adjunct professor in the Religious Studies and Women's Studies Departments at Dominican University in San Rafael, University of San Francisco, and Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont CA. For many years, Ellen's Women's Studies classes at Dominican presented the play, The Vagina Monologues, to the public, a first for a Roman Catholic school in the Archdiocese of SF.

In the 1980s and 1990s, she helped me with the SF Bay Area Women's Ordination Conference local group, organizing and participating in media events and gathering. One such media event was a local CBS television discussion on women in the church, filmed in her living room, when Pope John Paul came to SF.

Ellen leaves behind her 3 daughters, Laura, Renee, and Michelle, Michelle's husband Eric, and 6

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# FCM Prayer

ANTHONY ERCOLANO

COMMISSIONINGCHAIR@FCMMAIL.ORG

The Federation of Christian Ministries was never intended to merely provide a legal avenue toward Commissioning or Endorsement for candidates. From the beginning, our vision was to be a community in which individuals committed to inclusive ministry would gather to support each other in their various pastoral situations and challenges.

While the process of Commissioning and Endorsement remains critical to our endeavor, unfortunately, due to our growth, we've lost the intimacy that we once celebrated: we've "lost that loving feeling." But our growth can also be viewed as an impetus. Perhaps it can provide us with the opportunity to take a new look at our relationships with each other. And, maybe, that can begin with a simple greeting.


Our FCM prayer community, our regional and national gatherings, our blog, our conversations with our ministerial companions: these are valuable ways to maintain, or re-establish, that communion.

And, our entire membership is listed on our very-accessible Realm site. Why not look up someone in your neighborhood and strike up a dialogue.

But there is still more that remains to be done to recover our foundational experience of "Church."

Why not add our **FCM Prayer** to your daily Office. At the very least, we can pray for each other every day.

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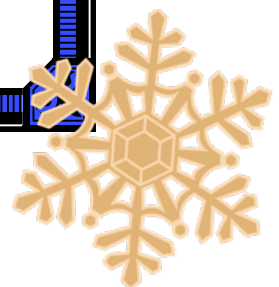


Holy One, Source of all that is,  
 You marvelously create and sustain all in Being.  
 We ask you to bless the work of our Federation.  
 May we be a sign to all of Your Presence.  
 May our communities be churches,  
 where we are supported  
 and where we can offer support to one another  
 all while embracing our differences  
 as well as our common humanity.  
 And, as we serve in Your Name,  
 may we see and reverence  
 Your Divine Presence in each other,  
 in those to whom we minister,  
 and in all Reality. Amen

What *else* can you do?

And, what can we do together to achieve this objective?

**Let's talk!**





I have recently come across articles written by Cameron Freeman, a theologian and philosopher from Australia, on the paradoxical teachings of the historical Jesus. His articles, along with his doctoral thesis have stirred me, shaken me, and piqued my interest afresh in Jesus' parables.

Jesus, in his parables, opened up a window into that life dimension that he named 'The Kingdom of God'. In his parables, Jesus radically revises the stories, narratives, and operating logic behind the accepted cultural understanding of what is deemed normal and objective, and comes up with a new and baffling insight. The parables are a type of holding paper that gives a taste of Jesus' vision of God's unconditional, inclusive, flexible, open, hospitable, and incredibly 'wasteful,' welcoming love. Using the paradoxes contained in almost all of the parables, Jesus frustratingly utilizes paradoxical or bi-polar reversals and turns everyday expectations on their head; which, nobody, including his disciples, could make head nor tail of. The focus of the parables is primarily not so much on morality and objective truths but on a God experience of a paradoxical and mysterious love that honors those who are 'lost,' 'last,' 'sinners,' 'degenerates,' etc. The parables of Jesus, along with his short sayings, portray a consistent pattern or code that can be shown in all probability to belong authentically and historically to Jesus.

**Examples of a few of Jesus' parables:**

- Those who appear to be outsiders are insiders and those who are portrayed as insiders are outsiders (Lk. 15:11-32, Mt. 22:1-14)
- Those who are considered degenerate are upright and those who are seen as upright are degenerate. (Lk. 10:26- 37 and 22: 1-14)
- The last shall be first and the first, last. (Mt. 20:1-16; 21:28-32; 24. 45-51, Lk. 16:19-31)

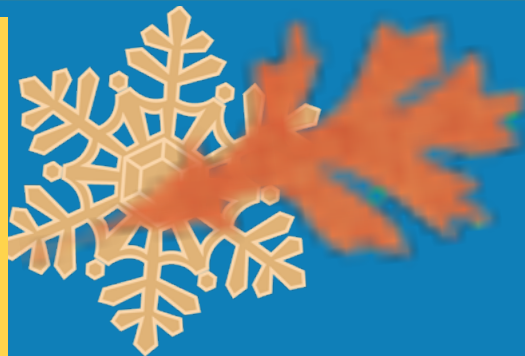
It seems that there is a holy perversity, a divine anarchy in the paradoxical logic behind Jesus' proclamation of, 'The Kingdom of God.' Jesus' teaching says consistently that the further 'outside' a person is, the stronger the trace of God is found and the more a person is considered and placed as 'an insider.' The further the distance from God shades, no doubt, of, 'God's option of the poor,' of Liberation Theology. The parables of Jesus are disturbing and unnerving, and they undercut the agreed myths, truths, and narratives of the commonly accepted world. "For against all expectations to the contrary, it is the outsiders, the poor in spirit, the bereaved, and the hungry who are welcome in the Kingdom in an unconditional event of God's incalculable graciousness."

As I write and ponder on all of this, I am thinking of my grandson Ben. He is 9 months old and is currently in Our Lady's Hospital, Dublin. He has spent almost all of his short life to date in hospital. His life has been one of struggle, pain, and vulnerability. I hope that his story finds its nest in the primary story behind the stories of Jesus' parables and that such littleness and vulnerability propels Jesus to claim that he is blessed and is among 'the first'.

My take is that there is a center-point of the paradoxes in the parables that constitute a zero-point of love that returns again and again in ever new ways- the axis around which the vicissitudes and evolutionary changes of life occur. And maybe that was what allowed somebody like Julian of Norwich to say amid loss and plagues, centuries ago - "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

Furthermore, maybe it's time that I listened more to the parables and be drenched in them, instead of just reading about them!

<sup>1</sup> some essays by C. Freeman - Source Code - The historical teachings of the historical Jesus; There's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in - Žižek's parallax view of the perverse core of Christianity; Towards a post-metaphysical theology, etc...



# More than Metrics

GINA MERCURIO-BROWN  
ENDORSED AND COMMISSIONED  
FCM MEMBER  
FROM THE NORTHEAST REGION

*Federation of Christian Ministries Nov/Dec Vol.57 No.6*

When we transition a patient in the hospital to comfort care, there are times when the medical staff still needs to leave on the monitor showing heart rate, blood pressure and oxygenation. Unfortunately, the families keeping vigil at the bedside tend to become glued to the numbers and the crazy making attempt to predict what will happen next and when. As chaplains and palliative care practitioners, we gently invite them to stop watching the monitor and just look at their loved one. Let their bodies guide us as to what they need and how comfortable they are.

Accompanying someone progressing towards a natural death changes the emphasis from doing to/for, hoping to change the trajectory of one's outcome, to being with and accompanying them for What Is. We know at this point in a dis-ease or injury progression that there is not much more we can do; other than treat anxiety, pain and breathing difficulties fairly effectively, even for those who are semi or unconscious.

In a way many of us have become our own versions of semi-conscious. Even as healthcare workers and community ministers, faced with death and major life transitions daily, we continue to need this calling home to our own bodies and spirits, far sooner than our own times of death and serious illness.

We have our own kinds of pain. And we are all very trained, if not addicted, to monitoring ourselves with devices and social media statistics. Today, while walking in my favorite park on the most beautiful day of weather we have had in months- I caught myself checking my phone to count my steps and see if I had gotten "enough" movement in for the day.

Instead of feeling in my body when I was done walking, I had to use my phone, and whatever arbitrary statistical goal I had set for myself, to decide when I would stop.

You cannot measure or rate the experience of the wind on your skin and the sun on your face after endless days and nights of fluorescent lighting, cement blocks, and linoleum.

There is no checkbox on my clinical record keeping software that can articulate or qualify the Light sparkling on the surface of the flowing creek.

How do we measure a "good day" or a "bad day"? How do we know if we are successful? How do we decide what will matter when we are the ones in the bed, with our final life processes being vigilantly monitored by our loved ones? It won't be a step monitor, or an iPhone, or like's on a social media scroll that will define who we are as individuals, or within the most important relationships in our lives.

Look away from the inorganic monitors of performance; and look within your heart and soul to measure your quality of Life!

What metrics can you let go of to embrace the sensations of a life fully lived?





Shannon Kelley

FCM SOUTHWEST MEMBER  
COMMISSIONED/ENDORSED

*Interfaith Prayer  
A Few Ins and Outs*



*Federation of Christian Ministries Nov/Dec Vol.57 No.6*

Once in Buddhist seminary, my classmate asked our teacher whether as professional chaplains, we could be disciplined for praying with patients of other faiths. The answer was swift: no problem. In America, this would happen a lot. My friend, a monk from another country, had pictured spiritual care as teaching meditation. For me, an American, raised Presbyterian, fostered in Hindu communities and finally arriving at a Buddhist identity and practice, the space of "Interfaith" encounter had been a refuge over many years.

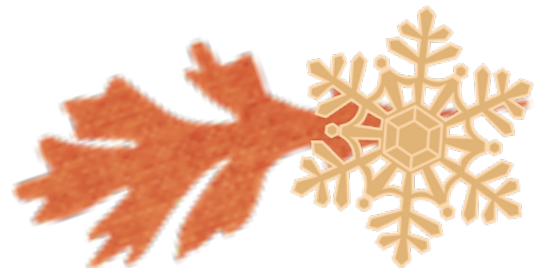
We both had much to learn. I discovered that chaplaincy colors "Interfaith" possibility differently than a formation journey, entailing cultural humility and self-awareness. Wisdom traditions and individual theologies represent distinct cultures that cohere and operate on their own terms. No single thought system, nor any amount of curiosity, serves as a passport. But there may be hope of contact.

Once, when in CPE, I entered the room of an infant who had undergone heart surgery. The parents, professed Christians, had gone home to rest. Beholding the tiny patient, my heart uttered a brief prayer to God: "couldn't this little one get a break?" Stepping away, I realized that this was a complicated moment for a Buddhist chaplain. Accustomed to praying with families, I felt that these parents would have welcomed the gesture. But my unsolicited prayer was more than a recitation. It had a definite pulse. What did this say about me, styled as a "non-theist?"

Faith traditions can be parochial; unconcerned with obscurities like "Interfaith experience" that pull away from the center. But there are sometimes porous boundaries. Buddhism urges a "right view" of such things as the impersonal effects of karma (not willful Providence), but Buddhist tradition also cautions against grasping or fetishizing teachings; a spacious outlook in a tradition with lots of doctrine.

In a teenage agnostic phase, I was faced (not for the first time) with an adult's presumptive religious language. "Isn't God great?" a man asked, pointing at the blue sky. "Yes," I answered, suddenly thinking this could be a way of saying "what a beautiful blue sky." We had both been moved, and his statement seemed a valid emanation of our shared experience. So much less exhausting than pushing him away or saying "yes" grudgingly. I daresay the sky was more beautiful because of it.

This semantic consideration has helped me in chaplaincy, and in life. When a care receiver offers testimony about the works of God, one can occasionally see something powerful at work in this person's life--whether from a high place, or an inner place, is splitting hairs. This understanding has been my best avenue to courageous, full-throated involvement in prayer, while maintaining my spiritual grounding and integrity. Prayer is a duty, a competency, but with empathy as one of the most worthwhile effects, promoting a pastoral alliance. If I encounter an experience beyond my understanding, I can meditate on this. I do so in a spirit of thanks, that causes and conditions finally brought me to this work.



# FCM Sacramental Registry

## Accessing the Sacramental Registry

All Baptisms by FCM members must be registered.

Marriage Registry is suggested but optional

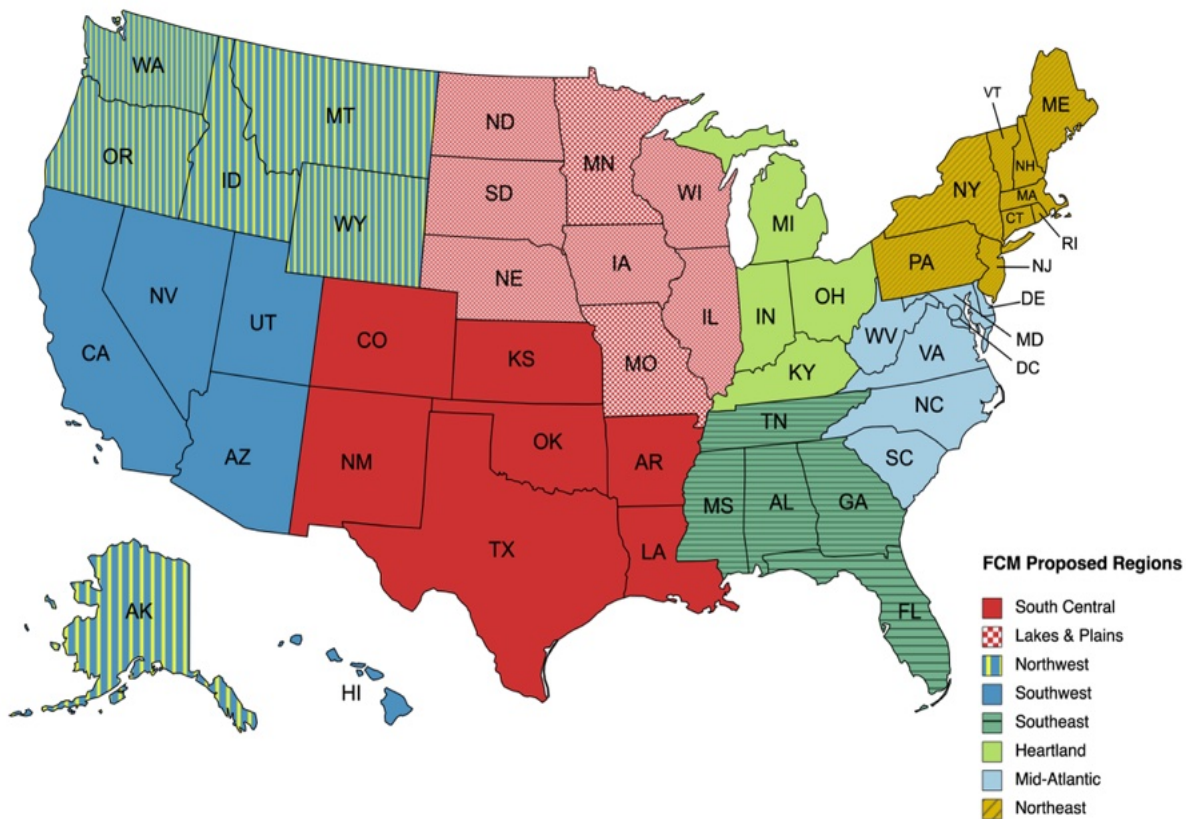
- Go to [www.onrealm.org](http://www.onrealm.org)
- Log into your Realm profile using your email address and password you created
- The initial screen you should see is **"News"**
- Look for the **"Baptismal Registry"** or **"Marriage Registry"** and click on the provided link.
- Complete a separate 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"**.

## Christmas Blessings



# FCM Regions

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**South Central**  
Christopher Breen, VP  
southcentralvp@fcmmail.org

Colorado  
Kansas  
New Mexico  
Oklahoma  
Arkansas  
Texas  
Louisiana

**Lakes & Plains**  
Jo Brennehan-Fullwood, VP  
lakesplainsvp@fcmmail.org

North Dakota  
South Dakota  
Nebraska  
Minnesota  
Iowa  
Missouri  
Wisconsin  
Illinois

**Northwest**  
Zachary Wheat, VP  
northwestvp@fcmmail.org

Alaska  
Washington  
Oregon  
Idaho  
Montana  
Wyoming

**Southwest**  
Daniel Windham, VP  
southwestvp@fcmmail.org

California  
Nevada  
Utah  
Arizona  
Hawaii

**Northeast**  
Carl Yusavitz, VP  
northeastvp@fcmmail.org

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

**Heartland**  
Peter Wolf, VP  
heartlandvp@fcmmail.org

Michigan  
Indiana  
Ohio  
Kentucky

**Mid-Atlantic**  
Susan Loving, VP  
midatlanticvp@fcmmail.org

West Virginia  
Virginia  
Delaware  
Maryland  
Washington DC  
North Carolina  
South Carolina

**Southeast**  
Beth Knight, VP  
southeastvp@fcmmail.org

Tennessee  
Mississippi  
Alabama  
Georgia  
Florida





# Northeast Region

CARL YUSAVITZ

NORTHEASTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

*Federation of Christian Ministries Nov/Dec Vol.57 No.6*



As we enter this busy holiday season, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the Northeast Region members who continue to make FCM so vibrant and relevant in today's evolving church. More specifically, we are grateful for all you Northeast members who

- ❖ **Attend and often lead our FCM Thursday evening prayer gatherings**
- ❖ **Contribute stimulating articles for our FCM newsletter**
- ❖ **Volunteer to mentor new members**
- ❖ **Renewed your FCM membership early**
- ❖ **Signed up to attend our upcoming fall retreat**
- ❖ **Helped plan and facilitate our in-person fall retreat**
- ❖ **Contribute to our FCM Endowment fund**

We continue our monthly regional gatherings via Zoom. Our next gathering will be November 11th at 9 AM. An invitation to join your colleagues will be sent out ahead-of-time.



## Greetings friends!

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After the scorching summer for most all the USA, it's a deep gratitude to be in the "fall" season here in the Southeast Region. We are five states which include: **Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama.**

We are folk who love encouraging one another and lifting high the mission and values of FCM; especially "nurturing those inspired for inclusive ministries".

**Key to make note of:**

1. Welcome **New Member!** **Dr. Hellena Moon**, Atlanta, GA; who is a published author, assistant professor and veteran of CPE. Check out her monograph: "**Liberalism and Colonial Violence: Charting a New Genealogy of Spiritual Care**".
2. We prayerfully **await approvals of 3 members for their endorsement**; which will be determined November 18, 2023, and will be announced and celebrated publicly in the next newsletter. **NOTE:** If endorsement is part of your calling and vision for ministry please contact: [specmin@FCMmail.org](mailto:specmin@FCMmail.org).
3. We are in the midst of **annual renewals** ~ which means you need to complete the online ministry report if you are commissioned or endorsed. Even if you receive some financial assistance through our waiver program ~ **please fill out the online ministry report. Thank you in advance for helping us keep that process flowing well.**
4. Regional gatherings continue for us and on Fri. September 22 the **central Floridians had a fall gathering**. Below is a picture of a few folks enjoying a meal together, and FCM fellowship, after a long week of committed service to their ministry work.



(L to R: Jennifer Carpenter, Barbara Zeman, Beth Knight, Susan Levy, Sam Mullen)



Beth Knight and Rev. Jamez Terry

5. Our Zoom regional quarterly meeting was Wed. Sept. 20. Those who attended supported each other in prayer and we also took time to do a special meditation with a labyrinth. Our **next quarterly zoom gathering will be in early 2024 after the upcoming holidays.**

6. While on a personal trip to Alaska this summer, I was honored to meet FCM's one and only Alaskan member! We met at a local Anchorage, AK coffee shop and had breakfast together. FCM coverage, throughout the USA, is represented so well. On behalf of all of FCM, and as the SE Region VP, I truly enjoyed meeting, our most northwesterly FCM member, Alaskan endorsed chaplain, **Rev. Jamez Terry.**



# Mid-Atlantic Region

SUSAN LOVING

MIDATLANTICVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Federation of Christian Ministries Nov/Dec Vol.57 No.6

Dear FCM Community,

The Mid- Atlantic region is filled with fabulous folks who are serving and ministering in their communities with grace and joy!

In September, **Bill Appleton**, our guru of the *Realm*, visited with us to review the annual renewal period.

In October, **Micah Buff**, with L'Arche International in Washington shared their excellent presentation regarding working with our LGBTQIA siblings in our pastoral roles.

In November, **Rev. Sarah Bowen** will share her journey in developing animal chaplaincy. If you have patients with pets, please consider joining us.

Reach out to me and I will happily share the link.

May the fall breezes and glorious colors give you hope for each day.

Be well,

**Susan**

fall TO YOUR  
knees  
AND PRAY





## How have you experienced FCM community?

I started my role as Heartland VP last July and am not only learning about all the responsibilities of a Vice President, but also learning about the movement of the Spirit within FCM. So, in this edition I am going to share some insights, reflections, and words of encouragement related to FCM's goal of forming community.

The following two reflections emphasize the importance of community in our history as well as in the present and future of FCM.

**Anthony Ercolano**, writing about remembering the foundation and purpose of FCM, wrote "From the beginning, our vision was to be a community in which individuals committed to inclusive ministry would gather to support each other in their various pastoral situations and challenges."

And **Bob Funaro** in Michigan wrote, "It was September 12 that the Michigan FCM community, after much emailing, gathered for some prayer, sharing, and introductions of new members. It was a great time and a sacred time. We opened with a meditation and sharing of Psalm 91 which begins: 'Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Holy one You are my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust...'

We used a form of Lectio and shared our hearts with one another and saw how the Creator is watching over us in all of our different ministries. We had an opportunity to introduce ourselves to each other and to meet a new member to the group, Trent Elders who is seeking to be endorsed and who is already commissioned.

It is always a blessing to hear from each other how FCM has responded to our diverse needs and desires to grow spiritually. We are looking to meet again in a couple of months, around mid-November when we will build our time together around the theme of the various ways that we are Thankful.

We hope that many of the other members will be able to be in attendance so that we can pray together and share our common ministerial sister and brotherhood. We also reminded each other about renewing our memberships during September and invited each other to retreat at *Maria Stein Retreat House*.

We closed by offering the FCM prayer and prayed "for..." the work of our Federation. ... and that "we will see and reverence Your Divine Presence in each other, in those to whom we minister, and in all Reality. Amen from Michigan!"

Thanks Anthony and Bob for the words of wisdom and building of community.

Please consider sharing your experiences of community on this forum; and keep in mind that community is experienced in multiple variants such as gender identity, culture, age and events specific to our life journey. The more perspectives that are shared, the greater the wisdom and sense of community is built within FCM.

### FCM Members Visit Hildegard Haus





**Greetings from the South Central Region!**

As the crisp autumn air settles in, we find ourselves surrounded by the vibrant tapestry of fall, a season of transformation and reflection. Just as the leaves change colors, so too do our hearts as we delve into the profound connection between the fall season and the essential role of chaplaincy in our own, and the spiritual journey of those we serve.

**The Harvest of Reflection:**

In the natural world, autumn marks the harvest—a time when the fruits of labor are gathered. Similarly, in our spiritual lives, the fall season invites us to reflect on the seeds we've planted throughout the year. Our collective yet distinct ministries, with their nurturing and supportive presence, play a crucial role in guiding us through this reflective harvest.

**A Compassionate Guide:**

Chaplains, much like the changing seasons, provide a sense of comfort and assurance during life's transitions. In times of joy or sorrow, they stand as compassionate guides, helping us navigate the diverse landscapes of our faith. As the leaves fall, so too can the burdens that those who we serve carry, with the support of a chaplain's understanding presence, those burdens can turn from devastating to manageable.

**Lessons from Nature:**

Consider the falling leaves as a metaphor for letting go of what no longer serves us. In the same way, chaplaincy encourages us to release burdens, fostering spiritual growth and renewal. Through active listening, prayer, and meaningful conversations, chaplains help find solace and purpose in the changing seasons of life.

**Chaplaincy and Community:**

Just as autumn brings communities together for harvest festivals, chaplaincy unites us in times of celebration and challenge. It reinforces the sense of togetherness that defines our faith community, creating a space where individuals can share, support, and uplift each other.

**Closing Thoughts:**

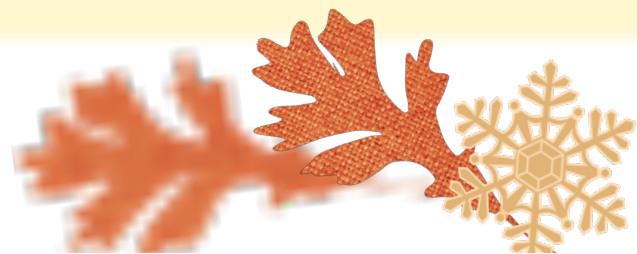
As we revel in the beauty of fall, let us embrace the spiritual harvest within our hearts. Remember that your ministry serves as a gentle breeze guiding many through this season of reflection, offering solace and encouragement. May we find inspiration in the changing leaves and the unwavering support of our shared FCM community as we navigate the intricate path of our faith.

In this season of abundance, let us be grateful for the chaplains who walk alongside us, helping us gather the spiritual fruits of our journey.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
 Chris

**Note:**

Our South Central Gathering was scheduled in October, however after hearing from many members across the region our plans for an in-person gathering changed. We will still be having a gathering; however, it will be entirely virtual. Please make sure your profile is up to date in Realm, so you don't miss out on any announcements!





Greetings & Salutations,

As I drive through my neighborhood, I note the swift changes that are occurring around me. I am witnessing Mother Nature preparing the earth for the upcoming season and she is attending to all that must take place because of the upcoming winter season. As seen in the photo above, the leaves are showing their final wonder of beautiful hues, and the wind warns us as they shift from a warming embrace to a cool crisp tap. Like nature, some of our members in our region are evolving.

We have new members joining and several members are entering the commissioning or endorsing process. When you have a moment, please drop an email to welcome our new members:

Name	Area	Email
<b>Wanjiku Kamuyu-Anderson</b>	Illinois	<a href="mailto:wfrances23@gmail.com">wfrances23@gmail.com</a>
<b>Laurel Crusinberry</b>	Iowa	<a href="mailto:laurelcrus@gmail.com">laurelcrus@gmail.com</a>
<b>Andrea Johnson</b>	Illinois	<a href="mailto:andreamariejohnson@comcast.net">andreamariejohnson@comcast.net</a>

Final Thoughts:

As the year quickly comes to an end. I am planning to meet with the area representative regarding meeting together this year. I will send out an email with more details to come. As each holiday or celebration approach, please take time to admire the view. Additionally, if you have a favorite poem or quote, send them to me. You just might see it in the next newsletter!

Below you will see a link with an inspirational poem for this quarter is by Emily Dickinson called, "Hope" is the Thing with Feathers.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42889/hope-is-the-thing-with-feathers-314>

I do hope that your fall season treats you well.

Peace Be With You All,  
 Rev. Jo





# Southwest Region

DANIEL WINDHAM

SOUTHWESTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

## Change

Colleagues:

I recently quit my staff chaplain job at a local hospital to pursue a return to teaching English and coaching football at a local high school. I found a job after the school year started; the transition has been difficult for my students, whose schedules were suddenly changed four weeks into the school year, with no advance notice, and they ended up in my class on a Wednesday in week 5.

The change has brought about anger, apathy, and antipathy in some students and in some parents. It is a challenge to endure and to bear the blame and judgement for the ways their child's grade has dropped since I came on board. Clearly there are extenuating circumstances. It's a lot more nuanced than all that.

Change can cause various emotional responses in people, and anxiety is certainly among them. Aptly, my students are freaking out as they contend with the differences between their previous teacher and me. They are grappling with the implications their unmet expectations have on their experience in my class. We're feeling each other out. We're finding a way forward.

Coping with the loss and grief change engenders is no easy task. Differentiating myself in the moment I'm feeling condescended or denigrated isn't either. It's helpful, though, to find ways through the tumult and get to the other side. The view is so much different when the storm is behind than when it's ahead. I know these growing pains go with the journey and once we get through them we'll be able to have a mutually engaging experience in my English classes.

Arriving at this point is only possible with the community surrounding me and the support I receive. Accordingly, as we make our rounds in the ICU and we grade our literary analysis papers, let's lean into our supporting community to share our experiences and to remember that Jesus walked this lonesome valley.

I'll be visiting Maui in December. I'll be staying in Paia. We'll be gathering there to perform a liturgy lamenting the loss and grief the island has experienced, to honor our FCM colleagues who provide chaplaincy care in the hospital, and to pray for healing and restoration with music and song.



See y'all soon!  
Peace,  
Dan

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# Northwest Region

ZACHARY WHEAT

NORTHWESTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Hello from the now very rainy and dreary PNW. The leaves are changing, the temps are dropping, the rain has begun and I for one am settling in for a cozy wintertime.

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The one major update that we have from the end of summer is a commissioning celebration and service for one of our newly endorsed members, **Mary Sykora-Haley**. Mary comes to us from the catholic tradition and planned her commissioning to weave the many strands of her person together. It included pieces from native spiritual traditions, her catholic formation, her life in recovery, and friendships spanning a lifetime.

It was a pleasure to be able to spend time with Mary and her people outside on a beautiful Vancouver Washington day.

The other thing that I can report is that as chaplain residencies are wrapping up and a new batch of chaplain residents are looking for jobs and starting their board certification journeys, I have begun many conversations about FCM membership.

This is a unique time as chaplains begin a further process of discernment and vocational assessment; and FCM is a community with lots of wisdom and resources to offer. If you know of anyone that has finished a residency and is looking for a spiritual home, feel free to connect them with me or another FCM member to facilitate those conversations.

My hope for each and every one of our members is for a safe, peaceful, relaxing autumn and winter.

In peace, Zack Wheat.







NEWSLETTER EDITORS  
Carole duBois  
Samatha Larson

Newsletter Email: [newsletter@FCMmail.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:centraloffice@FCMmail.org)  
PHONE NU. 216.571.7698  
1709 W. 69th. St., #1  
Cleveland, Ohio 44102-2957

FCM Website: [www.federationofchristianministries.org](http://www.federationofchristianministries.org)  
FCM Blog: [fcmblog.org](http://fcmblog.org)

### 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](mailto:connect@FCMmail.org) - [membership@FCMmail.org](mailto:membership@FCMmail.org)

## FCM Registry

FCM BAPTISM AND WEDDING REGISTRIES ARE NOW ON  
[www.onrealm.org](http://www.onrealm.org)  
Sacramental Registry - Click EVENTS AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS for additional help Email: [registry@fcmmail.org](mailto:registry@fcmmail.org) or [connect@fcmmail.org](mailto:connect@fcmmail.org)

## 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](http://www.federationofchristianministries.org) Inquiries may be made by email at: [specmin@FCMmail.org](mailto:specmin@FCMmail.org)

### GLOBAL MINISTRIES UNIVERSITY

GMU offers degree completion programs, certificates, a Celebrant Training Program, and individual courses online. FCM members are eligible for a 5% discount on degree programs. For more information, visit the web site: [www.globalministriesuniversity.org](http://www.globalministriesuniversity.org) Email: [info@globalministriesuniversity.org](mailto: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](mailto:chairperson@FCMmail.org)

**President: Thomas Cusack**  
Phone: 609.947.0770 | Email: [president@FCMmail.org](mailto:president@FCMmail.org)

**Treasurer: Heidi A. Tierney**  
Phone: 908.217.8981 | Email: [treasurer@FCMmail.org](mailto:treasurer@FCMmail.org)

**Secretary: Michelle Joachim**  
Phone: 757.642.1396 | Email: [secretary@FCMmail.org](mailto:secretary@FCMmail.org)

**Chair: Specialized Ministries:**  
**Jeanne Hale** Phone: 919.350.7853  
Email: [specmin@FCMmail.org](mailto:specmin@FCMmail.org)

**Chair: Faith Communities:**  
**Judy Lorenz** Phone: 301.633.2823  
Email: [faithcommunity@FCMmail.org](mailto:faithcommunity@FCMmail.org)

### REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

**Southwest: Daniel Windham**  
Phone: 760.845.4378 | Email: [southwestvp@FCMmail.org](mailto:southwestvp@FCMmail.org)

**Northwest: Zachary Wheat**  
Phone: 904.588.5097 | Email: [northwestvp@FCMmail.org](mailto:northwestvp@FCMmail.org)

**Lakes & Plains: Jo Brenneman-Fullwood**  
Phone: 229.938.0587 | Email: [lakesplainsvp@FCMmail.org](mailto:lakesplainsvp@FCMmail.org)

**Heartland: Peter Wolf**  
Phone: 502.568.2174 | Email: [heartlandvp@FCMmail.org](mailto:heartlandvp@FCMmail.org)

**Mid-Atlantic: Susan Loving**  
Phone: 214.697.0098 | Email: [midatlanticvp@FCMmail.org](mailto:midatlanticvp@FCMmail.org)

**Southeast: Beth Knight**  
Phone: 352.978.8180 | Email: [southeastvp@FCMmail.org](mailto:southeastvp@FCMmail.org)

**South Central: Christopher Breen**  
Phone: 401.499.9231 | Email: [southcentralvp@FCMmail.org](mailto:southcentralvp@FCMmail.org)

**Northeast: Carl Yusavitz**  
Phone: 215.248.2140 | Email: [northeastvp@FCMmail.org](mailto:northeastvp@FCMmail.org)

### FCM ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

**FCM Endowment: Tom Stricker**  
Phone: 937.477.0139 / Email: [endowment@FCMmail.org](mailto:endowment@FCMmail.org)

**Ethics Committee: Joseph Ruane**  
Phone: 215.387.7998 / Email: [j.ruane@uscience.edu](mailto:j.ruane@uscience.edu)

**Prayer Support Leader/Coordinator: Anthony Capone**  
Prayer support button on the website or:  
Email: [prayersupport@FCMmail.org](mailto:prayersupport@FCMmail.org)

