

Federation of Christian Ministries



NEITHER JEW NOR
GREEK, THERE IS NEITHER SLAVE
NOR FREE, THERE IS NO
MALE AND FEMALE, FOR YOU
ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.
GALATIANS 3:26-28

MAY/JUNE 2024

NEWSLETTER



Vol. 58 No. 3

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Federation of Christian Ministries MAY/JUNE 2024 - Vol. 58 No. 3



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May 19, 2024*

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**LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT
THE FCM ASSEMBLY!**



Time, Talent, and Treasure:

Time, talent, and treasure, sometimes referred to as “The Three T’s,” is an expression of stewardship used by many faith communities to identify that which is offered in service to G-d. FCM has intentionally shied away from use of this expression, and other practices and lingo that are part of traditional church doctrines, because we don’t want to hurt or exclude people by their usage. And so, it is with care and thoughtfulness that I use this expression now to broach the topic of commitment and stewardship to FCM.

I use the expression with gratitude for the generous FCM members who give of their time, talent, and treasure in so many ways. As primarily a volunteer organization, we heartily rely on the commitment and stewardship of our members. As we have grown (as recently stated by FCM President, Tom Cusack in his Zoom address), we find ourselves with more to do without more volunteers to do it. As traditional as it may seem, to sustain our FCM community, it is time for us to reflect on our stewardship and commitment to FCM beyond completing our annual report and paying our dues.

I recently attended a concert where gospel artist, Jonathon McReynolds sang his Grammy-nominated song, “Make Room” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiycqP-kCKE>). A portion of the lyrics are:

*I find space for what I treasure
I make time for what I want
I choose my priorities and
Jesus you're my number one.*

The lyrics express the universal truth that we make time to do the things that are important to us. As we move from this year’s Lenten sacrifices through Easter Celebrations through Pentecost, how is the Spirit encouraging you to “make room” for FCM?

Individuals wishing to serve in their communities and around the world are finding, within FCM, a safe space to answer their call. FCM’s membership is growing, and membership opportunities abound. Are you willing to commit to at least three hours of your time, talent, and treasure to FCM as FCM supports you in your practice of ministry?

Along with other opportunities to serve, we need volunteers, “fresh legs” as they say, for the following positions:

- Treasurer
- Regional Vice President - Mid-Atlantic Region
- Newsletter Coordinator
- Communications/Graphics design
- National Assembly Support
- Marketing Committee
- Social Media

In addition, we are seeking a person to fill the part-time staff position of Administrator.

These positions require varying amounts of time for varying durations. Some require 3 hours a week, some 3 hours a month. Some require a 3-year commitment, some require 3 months. If you are interested in serving in one of these positions or would like additional information about a position, please contact chairperson@fcmmail.org or president@fcmmail.org.

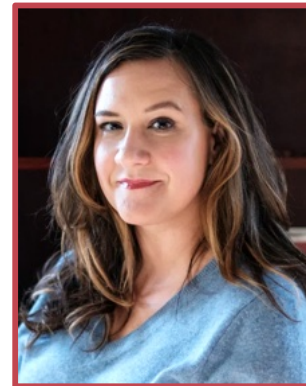
May/June Flowers

In this edition of the newsletter, I'm giving flowers to two members of FCM, acknowledging and celebrating **Dorie Griggs and Julia Styles, co-chairs of the 2024 National Assembly Committee.**

Dorie and Julia, having previously not attended an FCM National Assembly, brought fresh eyes to it. They hit the ground gathering information and contacting people. They have worked tirelessly to bring us the best Assembly at the lowest possible cost. **I am expressing my kudos, appreciation, and gratitude to Dorie and Julia for their hard work in advance of what I expect to be a phenomenal experience.**



Dorie Griggs



Julia Styles

As stated in previous newsletters, I would like to encourage us to engage in the practice of giving flowers metaphorically by expressing our appreciation, gratitude, and love to at least one person each edition.

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





State of the Federation of Christian Ministries

Name, Numbers and Needs

On February 24, 56 FCM members joined me on a Zoom call to learn about and discuss the state of the organization. Since many did not join the call, I will summarize key points in this article. The whole talk is available through this link:

<https://youtu.be/ovW2EVV57Fs>

What is our name?

Some FCM members, concerned about the portrayal of Christians in the United States today, question the use of the word “Christian” in FCM’s name. Christians and Christianity have become highly politicized, and some members expressed concern that someone unfamiliar with FCM might equate the organization and its members with “white Christian fundamentalist nationalism,” which is working hard to move the United States towards a theocracy. FCM is, in fact, at the opposite end of the theological spectrum from white Christian fundamentalist nationalism, and we want to make that clear. A second concern with “Christian” in the FCM name is that not all FCM members identify as Christian. The members not identifying as Christian share the vision and practical operation of FCM, but feel some dissonance with our name. The Circle is wrestling with these challenges and would like your input on the question of whether or not FCM should keep “Christian” in the organization’s name. Please let your thoughts be known by reaching out to a Regional Vice President. Quite a few members have expressed their views in writing already.

How much do we pay in dues?

Membership in FCM provides myriad benefits including credentials necessary for ministry; connection with diverse faith communities; social connections; spiritual mentoring, and assistance in discerning your ministerial call. We aim to continue to provide these benefits and meet new needs as they arise.

In July 2023, the Circle created a new budget, designed to meet membership needs, that is running a deficit of more than \$15,000. One reason for the deficit is that the basic commissioning fee of \$145 per year has not changed since at least 2015 and our attempts to keep fees low caused us to not keep pace with inflation.

A new membership fee structure and timeframe will go into place on September 1, 2024.

I am informing you now so that you have plenty of time to prepare for it, mark your calendars and accomplish your dues submission within the **2-month period set up for the 2025 renewal.**

All the regular dues must be paid in the months of September and October, 2024. After October the submission of dues will be seen as a late submission. Here are the new dues:

General members:

current \$50 per year..... New \$75 per year.

Commissioned members:

current \$145 per year.....New \$190 per year.

Endorsed members:

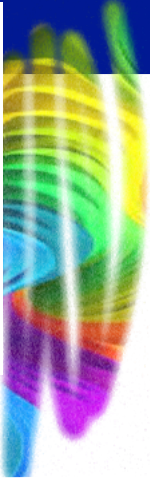
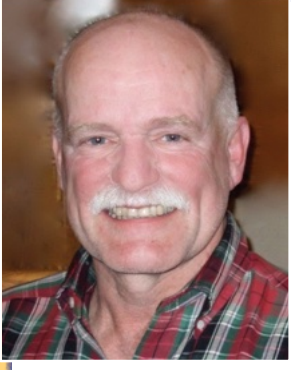
current \$235 per year.....New \$350 per year.

After September and October comes the **late fee time when we add \$150 to the standard fees that I have just described.** So please plan your payments now for the two-month renewal time. Avoid the penalty.

In addition, please remember that if you are confronted with financial difficulties and need relief from the dues that FCM requests, your Regional Vice President is authorized to provide relief to you. This relief can be in the form of a payment plan, a partial waiver of dues or even a full waiver of dues. FCM does not block membership based on an inability to pay dues.

Please Pray for FCM

We have a lot of changes coming and, while change is essential for growth and development, it can also be difficult. So, please pray for FCM. We encourage you to spend more systematic time in prayer and meditation as we move together through these changes. Pray for wisdom and that we will adjust and grow from a position of peace and inner confidence. Spend daily 2 x 2 for FCM [2 minutes of prayer and meditation for FCM]. Pray for Peace and for the benefit of yourself and FCM. Thank you.



Why do people donate to the FCM Permanent Endowment Fund? Here are a few reasons.

I started supporting the Endowment many years ago...on the invitation of a friend and because I liked the idea of contributing to the future of FCM. It was easy to set up a monthly recurring donation, I hope you will join me.

Shannon Queenan, Louisville, Kentucky.

I give to the endowment to secure the future of FCM and its ability to support the membership who are serving and ministering long into the future. I hope you will Join me.

Tom Cruse, Dayton, Ohio

My husband Vic and I donate to the endowment because we believe in the mission of FCM and how it gives people of many denominations and faiths the ability to serve and minister. I belong to a FCM faith community who also supported me in my ministry. I want to be sure that other people will have to opportunity to answer the call to serve long into the future. I hope you will join me.

Kathy Bean, Kettering, Ohio.

This year the 35% of the Accumulative Appreciation of the FCM Permanent Endowment Fund is supporting the FCM National Assembly.

I ask every FCM member to choose one way to support the FCM Endowment so that the Endowment can support others.

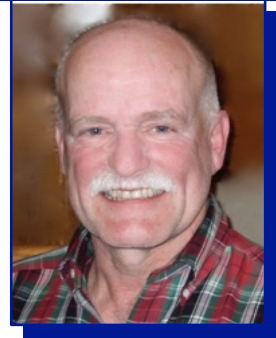
- You can do so by following the simple directions for a monthly reoccurring donation.
- You can make a tribute donation for a birthday, memorial, or special occasion.
- Donate part or all of your Annual Mandatory Disbursement and gain a tax benefit.
- Make one donation to the Endowment every year.

Any one of those ways will support the ministry of FCM members long into the future.

That is **WHY** you may wish to donate to the Endowment.

Thank You, Tom Stricker, FCM member since 1995.





Thank You!

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

VALUE AS OF 4/15/2024
\$151,963.00

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, click on "Endowment" on the top bar right
2. Scroll down to the heading "Giving to the Endowment"
3. Click on the "Give Now" button Submit a regular gift to the FCM Endowment Fund.
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?

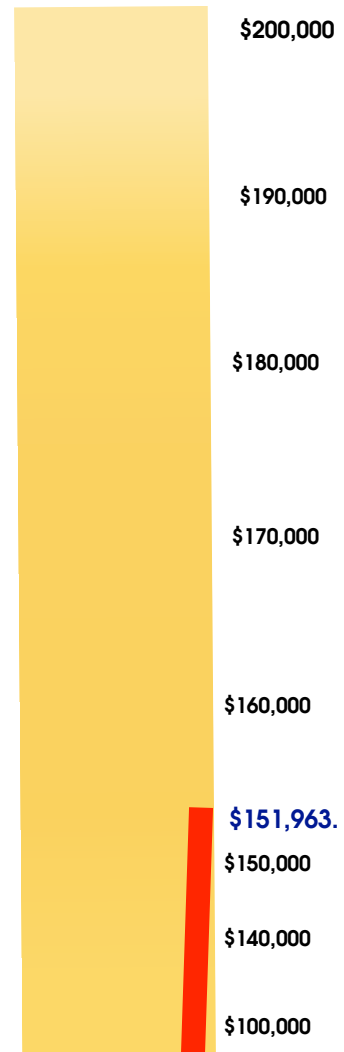
Consider a small donation to the **FCM Endowment Fund**.

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 click on the **Create a Tribute** box or <https://fedcm.org/endowment/endowment-tribute-gifting/>

Estate Giving

For more information go to the FCM web site under FCM Endowment Fund click on the **Estate Giving** box or: <https://fedcm.org/endowment/estate-designation/>



ENDOWMENT FUND

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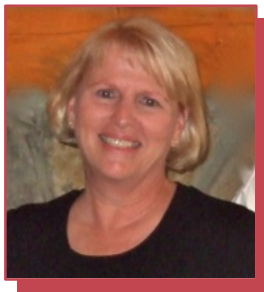
Measuring Our Success



The Faith Communities Committee wishes each of you a Blessed Easter Season!

We encourage you to register for the FCM Assembly to be held in Atlanta, GA - July 19-21, 2024

The Faith Communities Committee and community leaders will be presenting different types of community philosophies, worshipping styles and how our faith calls us to serve. This weekend is an opportunity for all members to be a part of the entire FCM community!



This month we celebrate Faith Communities Committee member, Patty Stricker, who has given so much of herself to the FCM organization and the FCM community to which she belongs. Read and be inspired!

Patty Stricker lives near Dayton, Ohio, with her husband Tom. They have been members of FCM since 1994. Patty has worked on FCM planning committees for several of the FCM National Assemblies. Over the last 2 years she has been a member of the FCM Small Faith Communities Committee. Patty is also presently working with the National Conference Committee of DignityUSA to plan for their National Conference in 2025.

Patty is an educator, having spent 38 years in educational leadership, teaching at the university level and, more recently, working with DignityUSA's leadership faculty.

Patty is going into her second term as Chairperson on the Living Beatitudes Community (LBC) Board, a DignityUSA Chapter and a Faith Community Member of the Federation of Christian Ministries.

The Living Beatitudes Community (LBC) is an Intentional Eucharistic Community that believes the Beatitudes are the fullest expression of how to live as a disciple of Jesus. The Community worships together, works for social justice together, and lives in emulation of the spirit of the Beatitudes. LBC welcomes all, and the community's social and ecclesial diversity enhances each individual's spiritual journey as well as its collective pilgrimage.

LBC seeks the unity of all peoples; respects diverse sources of wisdom and spiritual inspiration; believes there is more value in questioning than in absolute doctrines, and considers Jesus' life lived for peace, inclusion, and justice an ideal model for bringing God's kingdom to earth.

Patty has been a volunteer of Ohio's Hospice for the last 24 years and currently trains all new volunteers who wish to work with Ohio's Hospice.

Thank you, Patty, for all you do.



by Katherine Cruse

Reflecting Collectively, on Equity, Race and Social Justice



Living Beatitudes Community (LBC) has been a faith community of the Federation of Christian Ministries since 2003, when Dignity/Dayton, FCM, Roman Catholic Women Priests and former members of St. Agnes parish created this Intentional Eucharistic Community. This union has brought together a vibrant group of people who seek to live the Gospel through radical inclusivity and social justice.

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

Reflecting Collectively, on Equity, Race and Social Justice was the title and theme of the second of four programs and was led by Michael Carter, Senior Advisor to the President and Chief Diversity Officer of Sinclair Community College.

Carter divided the more than 40 attendees into groups of four, which stayed together for the entire day. He began by asking a series of questions for each group to discuss, then shared some responses with the entire group. These questions started with simple topics, personal likes and dislikes, favorite foods, earliest memories. As the day progressed, the topics became more focused on attitudes and learned behaviors and feelings about race. The small group format allowed and encouraged even the quiet people to speak up.

One important thought-provoking question was: “When did you first learn about your race?” Black children learn about their race at an early age, but for many in this audience college was when they first really met people of different races and began to recognize their own race. (How do you know you’re white when everyone around you is white? What does it mean to be different?) People in the group mentioned that for them, those in the non-dominant group might be Hispanic, Jewish, or female.

Carter asked questions like, “What childhood experiences did you have with friends or adults who were different from you in some way?” And, “How, if ever, did any adult give you help thinking about racial differences?”

Throughout the day, Carter found ways to help the attendees recognize their internal biases and attitudes about equity. He used quotes and visual examples to stimulate discussion. The quotes challenged assumptions about equality and equity, about health care, and about meritocracy. One example, “...morally speaking, there is no limit to the concern one must feel for the suffering of human beings, that indifference to evil is worse than evil itself, that in a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.” Carter pointed out that concern for the suffering of others is tempered by proximity, a trait we all share. The quotes challenged complacency and urged people to become aware of privilege. Many comments by participants brought out concerns about social justice.

At lunch the small groups stayed together and were asked to consider and discuss a newscaster’s statement that the so-called Black National Anthem does not belong at the Super Bowl, that “we already have a National Anthem, and it includes everyone.” Carter provided a response that included a history of the Black National Anthem, and a reminder that keeping quiet and learning are important in the fight for knowledge and justice.

The afternoon continued with the format of eliciting responses and stories of lived experiences by using quotes from a wide variety of people, including Maya Angelou, John Lewis, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others. Discussion centered around dealing with racism and how it affects life in the United States, its school systems, its criminal justice and law enforcement systems, its real estate, its unequal wealth, and poverty. Many of the quotes expressed the belief that we have an obligation to speak out and take action when we see injustice.

One attendee apologized for not realizing his own privilege and prejudices at an earlier age. Carter responded that becoming aware, becoming “woke,” is a life-long learning process. This seminar was a step in the process.

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



30 YEARS

Edward Haggerty 6/21/1994 Southwest
Rosalie Robles 5/21/1994 Northwest

25 YEARS

Donna Podobinski 5/13/1999 Northeast
William Podobinski 5/13/1999 Northeast

20 YEARS

Karen Schwarz 6/22/2004 Southwest

15 YEARS

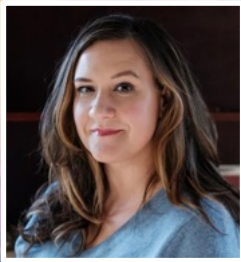
Chava Redonnet 6/3/2009 Northeast

10 YEARS

Barbara Beadles 5/12/2014 Mid-Atlantic
Kathleen Bean 6/13/2014 Heartland
Karen Beck 6/28/2014 Southwest
Jacqueline Clarys 5/19/2014 Mid-Atlantic
Ralph Garofano 6/02/2014 Mid-Atlantic
Daniel Hoard 5/15/2014 Lakes & Plains
Adam James 6/04/2014 Lakes & Plains
Elizabeth Jones 6/18/2014 Lakes & Plains
Lauren Littrell 6/03/2014 Lakes & Plains
David Moss 5/27/2014 Lakes & Plains

5 YEARS

Tres Adames 5/12/2019 Southwest
Jim Andrews 5/09/2019 Southeast
Susan Booth 6/16/2019 Northeast
Carole duBois 5/12/2019 Mid-Atlantic
Joni Johnson 6/19/2019 Northeast
Amber Litka 6/09/2019 Mid-Atlantic
Kimberly Mehan 6/13/2019 Southeast
Betsy Newsome Moody 6/04/19 Mid-Atlantic
Randy Shebek 5/04/2019 Southeast
Norman Simmons 5/12/19 Northeast
Kellan Weyer 6/26/2019 Lakes & Plains



FROM BURDEN TO BELONGING

FINDING REST AND RENEWAL IN THE FCM VISION

July 19 - 21, 2024 - ATLANTA, GA

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

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

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

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

Registration

Conference registration is open through **OnRealm.org** Registration is \$399, which includes all conference fees and most meals. **The Sonesta hotel** is close to the airport with a free shuttle and a reasonable price. At just \$119 a night, you won't find a better deal in the city. Make sure to book your room with the **group code G061624FCM.**

ASSEMBLY REGISTRATION:

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

HOTEL

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

LINKS from article:

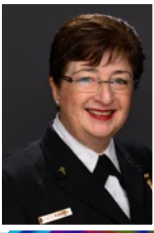
J.S Park <https://jsparkblog.com/>

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

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

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





FROM BURDEN TO BELONGING

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

SPEAKERS

J.S. Park

Keynote Speaker

J.S. Park is a hospital chaplain and former atheist turned skeptical pastor, dedicated to supporting those who feel beaten down by life's trials. Through his blog, J.S. Park shares deeply personal stories and insights from his work with patients, addressing themes of grief, healing, and hope. His writing emphasizes empathy, inclusivity, and the importance of acknowledging and addressing systemic injustices. Park's journey from skepticism to faith informs his compassionate approach, aiming to connect with people in their moments of doubt and pain, providing a space for healing and reflection.



Rev. Dr.

Laura Sumner Truax

Keynote Speaker



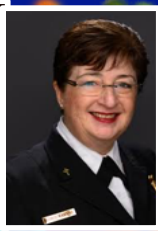
Rev. Dr. Laura Sumner Truax is an author, pastor and spiritual director. Her doctoral work examined the spiritual practices of progressive evangelicals who have left their former churches. Laura facilitates an online meditation group at MeditationChapel.org, practices spiritual direction as an adjunct professor at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, and teaches through a variety of online groups. Laura is the author of "Undone: When Coming Apart Puts You Back Together" (InterVarsity, 2013) and the co-author of "Love Let Go: Radical Generosity for the Real World" (Eerdmans, 2017). Rev. Truax holds a Master's in Pastoral Studies with an emphasis in Spirituality and a Master's of Divinity degree, and a Doctorate of Ministry from Fuller Seminary.

Dominique Gilliard

Keynote Speaker

Dominique DuBois Gilliard is the director of racial righteousness and reconciliation for the Evangelical Covenant Church. He is the author of Rethinking Incarceration: Advocating for Justice that Restores, which won a 2018 Book of the Year Award for Inter Varsity Press and was named Outreach Magazine's 2019 Social Issues Resource of the Year, and Subversive Witness: Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege, published in 2021. Gilliard also serves as an adjunct professor at North Park Theological Seminary and on the board of directors for the Christian Community Development Association. In 2015, the Huffington Post named him one of the "Black Christian Leaders Changing the World".





FROM BURDEN TO BELONGING

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

PERFORMING ARTIST & SPEAKERS

Flamy Grant Performing Artist



Award-winning and Billboard-charting artist Flamy Grant is a shame-slaying, hip-swaying, singing-songwriting drag queen from western North Carolina. Her 2022 debut record, Bible Belt Baby, reached the #1 spot on the iTunes Christian Charts and was nominated for Best Pop Album at the San Diego Music Awards. She is a winner of the 2023 Kerrville Folk Festival New Folk Competition and a 2023 QueerX Award nominee for Best Drag Artist.

A powerhouse vocalist, intrepid songwriter, and irreverent comedy queen, Flamy drags you into a therapeutic, theatrical mix of storytelling and song. Armed with a bold lip and a blistering voice, Flamy is brilliant, resilient proof that nothing is sacred (but everything is holy) and shame belongs in the closet.



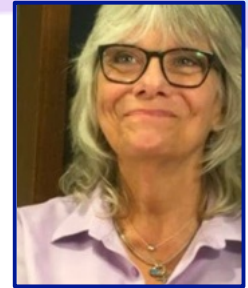
Kevin Garcia is a spiritual recovery coach, a mystical theologian + practitioner, an author / speaker, and a wild lover of life based in Atlanta, GA. After coming out in the fall of 2015 as a queer Christian, Kevin has reached thousands of individuals across the globe with messages of God's unending love for all people, regardless of who they are, what they profess, or what they actually believe. Kevin's the author of *Bad Theology Kills: Undoing Toxic Beliefs and Reclaiming Your Spiritual Authority*, published January 2020.

Kevin's work also appears in several anthologies by queer people of faith. Kevin's new book: *What Makes You Bloom: Cultivating a Practice To Help You Connect to Your Divine Self* was released this spring. Kevin believes that by telling our stories, we set others free to tell their own. Kevin holds a Masters of Arts in Practical Theology from Columbia Theological Seminary (2020) and a Bachelors of Music in Choral music education from Christopher Newport University (2013)

Plenary Speakers



The Interfaith Speakers Network (ISN) is an educational program provided by Interfaith Atlanta in cooperation with an array of faith traditions and faith organizations. It was initially created as an arm of the Islamic Speakers Bureau, in collaboration with Interfaith Atlanta (formerly FAMA). In 2020, FAMA assumed full responsibility for the ISN. ISN provides opportunities to hear and interact with a panel of local practicing representatives from six faith traditions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism (the Abrahamic faiths) and Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism (the Eastern faiths). The panels are educational, interational and facilitate dialogue and understanding between different religions. In addition to sharing information, ISN panels showcase ways that different faith traditions can work together.



Rev. Barbara Zeman is no stranger to 'firsts'. In 2008 she became Chicago's first Roman Catholic Woman Priest. She served Dignity Chicago, the Roman Catholic LGBTQI community, as their first woman priest, for over 8 years. In 2010, she began the first weekly meditation hour for Gilda's Club - a cancer support community. In 2014, she was named one of Chicago's 100 Women of Inspiration by Today's Chicago Women and was invited to be the first Roman Catholic Woman Priest to lead the opening prayer for Chicago City Council. Working with Lambda Legal she officiated the first official LGBTQI wedding in Illinois in 2016. Meditation has always been a part of Barbara's prayer life. As a meditation coach for over 25 years, her voice has led many to discover the spirit within. Through retreats and individual spiritual direction, she shares her gifts with all who come her way. Her first book, *In The Stillness - Meditations to refresh the spirit and quiet the chattering mind*, published in March of 2024. A member of FCM since 2008, Zeman now serves as Co-Vice-President of the Southeast Region. She currently resides in Orlando, where as a member of Spirit of Joy - ELCA, Rev. Zeman leads their first contemplative prayer/meditation group, *The Sounds of Silence*, each week.



Eclipse Excitement in Cleveland, Ohio

April 8, 2024 was an unusual day in Cleveland. Many schools were closed, corporations had long lunch hours, it was the first baseball game of the season, and above all the Eclipse was arriving that afternoon.

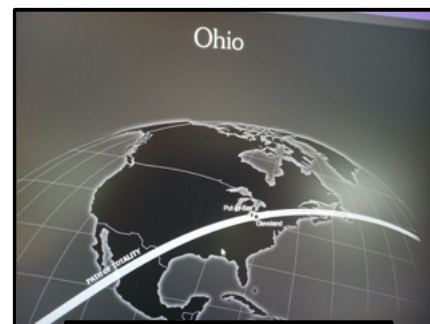
It seemed to me that people were friendlier than usual. Families were together and although the city was crowded with hometown folks and many travelers there was a peacefulness in the air.

Although I did not experience looking directly at the eclipse (due to the possibility of additional damage to my eyesight) I was able to watch it on TV near the window. We experienced the darkness and the silence until it passed at which time there were great noises of celebration. It was a very moving experience.

I would like to share the following prayer written by Judith Eugene a friend and fellow Reiki Master.

An Eclipse Prayer

*As I stand in awe of nature, I know that I am one with it.
Separation melts, energy connects.
As the sun and moon dance together,
so does the collective conscious and subconscious.
I open myself to new wisdom, new energy, and new direction.
I make peace with what was, and I open to what will be.
I am grateful to be here now.
May love energy flow through everything I think, do and say today.
I know that I am one with all beings.
I know that I am love.*



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

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



The Beatitudes ARE the Gospel!

The Beatitudes that Christ taught come to us in two parts. The first four describe the surprising recipients of Christ's favor.

**Blessed are the poor in spirit
Blessed are those who mourn
Blessed are the meek
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice**

These are the ones most people consider at the bottom of society's pecking order. They represent people who are on the fringes, whose lives seem destined for sorrow and failure, who find themselves without power, and who are crying out for justice in their unjust circumstances. The systems of this world are often stacked against them.

Nobody wants their life. Nobody makes it their ambition to go down the path they're on. They are mostly empty, powerless, and oppressed. No one would consider them life's "winners."

When Christ pronounces them blessed, he evokes the mission he proclaimed in Luke 4:18-19 —

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Though the world mostly neglects them, Christ has set his attention upon them. Though most people ignore them, Christ has come to walk with them. Though life and its structures seem to offer them little hope, Christ is acting to redeem them and make their lives new. Though religion often has taught them that righteousness would bring them blessing and prosperity, they haven't seen a pay-off. They remain poor, sad and hopeless.

Nevertheless, our Father has destined them to receive his favor. In other words, the first part of the Beatitudes IS the Gospel; the Good News directed particularly at those who have nothing but bad news in their lives.

This is the surprising thing about these sayings. One might have expected that Messiah would come to the religious leaders, to the powerful, the gifted, those with the resources and connections to "make things happen" in the world, so that our Father's Kingdom could come in power and glory.

However, from the beginning Christ surprised the people in authority by directing his message to the most unlikely to succeed. To be sure, Christ came for everyone, but he came with a special focus on the poor to reveal the extent of our Father's love, grace, and transforming power.

That brings us to the second part of the Beatitudes. These have a different focus.

**Blessed are the merciful
Blessed are the pure in heart
Blessed are the peacemakers
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake**

No longer is Christ talking about those who are poor and oppressed. Instead, he is speaking to us who are trying to do something about the poor and oppressed. He is addressing us who are trying to make the world a better place, to bring healing and comfort to the kinds of people who are mentioned in the first half of the Beatitudes.

We are not doing it from positions of power and authority. We are not using the methods and tactics of the world to try and solve the world's problems. We do this simply because we love.

Instead of pronouncing judgment, we are exercising mercy. Instead of focusing on the faults of others, we are trying to keep our own hearts pure. Instead of fighting, we are working to make peace.

And as a result, instead of being honored, we may at times be ridiculed for trying to do what is right ... which is to usher in TRANSFORMATION through Christ.

Christ is pronouncing blessing on his followers who are seeking to be active in his Kingdom come. We see straight to the heart and focus our efforts on the problem. In these Beatitudes, Christ joins our company as the last and greatest of the prophets, the merciful, pure, peacemaking King who was persecuted, suffered, and died.

In other words, the Beatitudes are about: the unlikely people Christ came to bring good news to, and the unlikely way in which he (and others) would bring them that news.

I'm struck especially by the second point as it brings deeply to heart the mission of FCM as well as our roles, service and ministries inside of it.

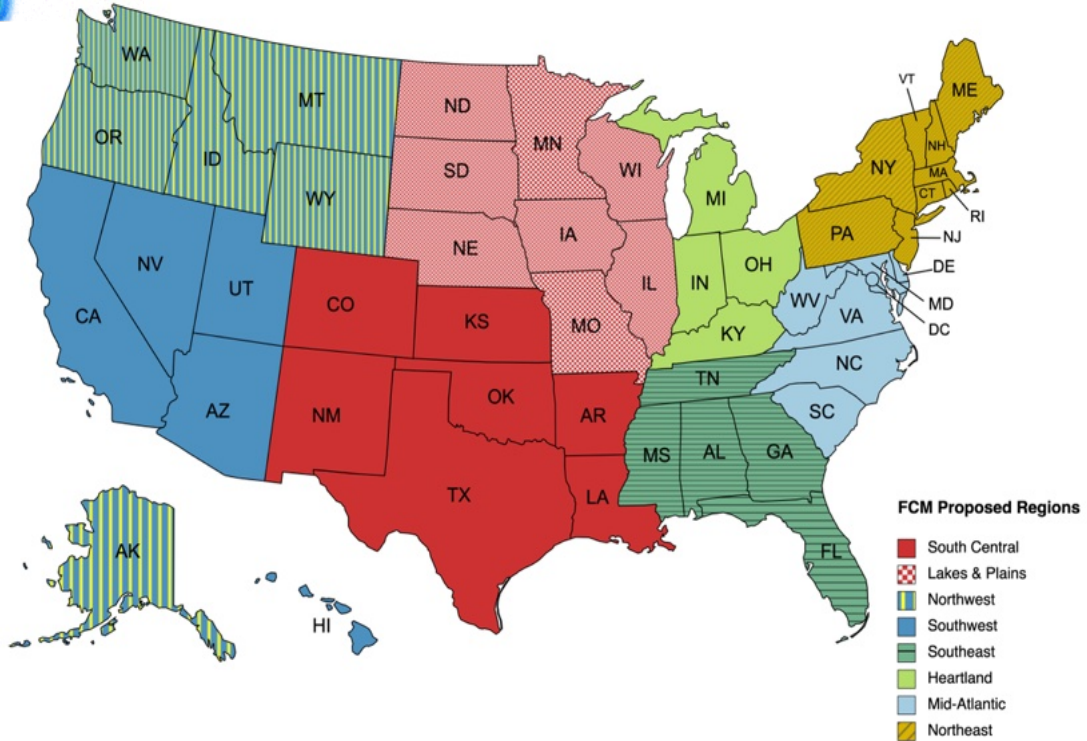
We know what Christ wants us to do. He set the pattern: Bring good news to the poor. Be merciful. Keep our hearts pure. Make peace.

~ Rev. Chaplain Randy Dawson, Heartland Region

FCM REGIONS



Federation of Christian Ministries MAY/JUNE 2024 - Vol. 58 No. 3



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Northeast Region News

Following our lively and informative national Zoom meeting with our FCM president, I heard from a number of you by email. For the most part, you voiced a great deal of negativity about the idea of dropping the word “**Christian**” from our self-understanding and even our title (FCM). I encourage all of our Northeast members to stay engaged with our on-going self-study and hold this necessary self-study in prayer.

Thanks to all of you who volunteered to serve as FCM colleagues for our new members. This relationship is so vitally important now, as more and more persons in ministry are drawn to us.

Have you seen the dynamic list of presenters for our **National Assembly** in Atlanta this summer? The team planning the assembly is doing a terrific job in providing us with continuing education, as well as opportunities for FCM engagement and community. If you are already planning to attend, great! If not, please reconsider.



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Madeline Baas, who was granted FCM Commissioning in February. As a way of celebrating Madeline’s Commissioning and connecting her to all of you, here’s what she wrote:

Hello everyone! I am a newly confirmed member of FCM, and I am feeling excited to get to know more people in this community.

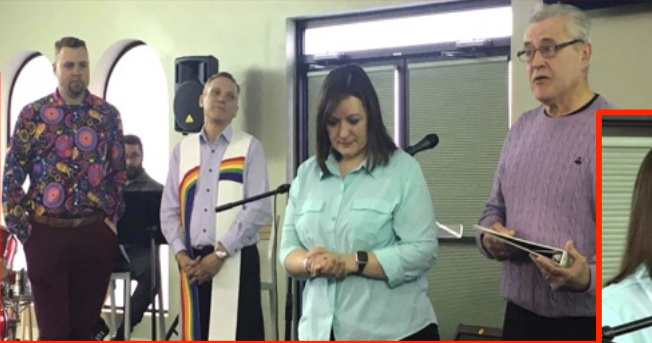
In terms of my work, I am a full-time staff chaplain at Mount Sinai Morningside in New York City. I care primarily for the cardiac patients and behavioral health patients at our hospital.

I do regular pre-op and post-op visits for all patients who are receiving major heart surgery. I lead two spirituality groups for our behavioral health patients: one for kids and one for teens. I round on some of our long stay patients on a few medical/surgical floors that I am assigned to. I am also beginning a research project on the impact of personal spirituality for kids and teens who have depression.

Every day looks a little different when you work at a hospital, but I really enjoy what I do and consider my current position a “dream job.”

Outside of my work, I enjoy reading, running, cooking, and spending time outdoors. I am looking forward to meeting more FCM members and hoping that we can share wisdom with each other and support each other in our respective ministries.

Our next Regional Zoom gathering will be May 11th at 9:00 AM. An invitation will be sent to you ahead of time.



Great Reflections on a Blessed Commissioning of Carrie Walls Suarez

My purpose for seeking commissioning from FCM was to finally given outward sign to an inward grace that had been burning in me for 30 years—that of walking the path of ordained ministry.

Since I was a teenager, I have sensed a calling to guide, coach, shepherd, and journey alongside others who are also on a path of spirituality. I knew from this young age that I would one day become a minister, but I also came to believe this could never be a reality due to what my denomination taught about my then-secret identity and inclusion in the LGBTQ+ community.

It took over 20 years for me to finally accept myself and to accept what I knew in my heart all along about what God thought of me, and finally leave that denomination. Despite what others had me convinced of for decades, the call to ministry continued to burn inside of my being.

At this point, I had gone through several years of deconstruction and reconstruction of my faith to arrive at the juncture of space and time where the opportunity was finally available to me as one whole, integral person to fully serve in ministry.

I am immensely grateful to FCM for providing an organization where people like me are not only accepted and loved but provided a path to ordination so that we can even more actively perpetuate the message of each person’s belovedness and worth. For so many years, I did not think this day would ever come and I couldn’t be happier to share it with my wife and my wonderfully supportive faith community.



Excitement is in the air!

As we get ready for the Atlanta Assembly our region continues to grow, to commission and endorse, and to celebrate belonging.

Our fabulous Assembly planning team is putting the finishing touches on the gathering. Believe me ... *there's something for everyone!*

From the invigorating experience of powerhouse **Flamy Grant** to thought-provoking speakers such as our own **J.S. Park**, to uplifting early morning prayer and meditation services there will be many opportunities to go from burden to belonging.

Whether you want to take a close look at how grief impacts our lives or unpack how ministry in the 21st century often includes spiritual recovery and a solid grounding in meditation, there's something for everyone. If you haven't already, hurry and register and reserve your rooms here:

<https://fedcm.org/events/national-assembly-2024/>

Also, if you, your organization, or others you may know would like to sponsor our National Assembly or put a special message in the Assembly program, please find all of our sponsorship information here:

<https://fedcm.org/events/national-assembly-2024/sponsor-na2024/>

As new VPs Jen and I have a lot to learn. Besides helping to support the Assembly gathering, we are making plans to visit FCM members throughout the Southeast in the next few months. Please keep an eye out for survey invitations for gathering times!

What a busy and delightful job this is. I, for one, feel blessed to have such a great partner in Jen. Together we swim from different generational entry points in the same beautiful ocean of faith that unites us all.



We recently welcomed **Garth Battick** to FCM and the Southeast Region! Garth is a chaplain at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida. Prior to joining Moffitt, he spent 9 years in the field as a hospice chaplain in Pasco and Pinellas Counties.

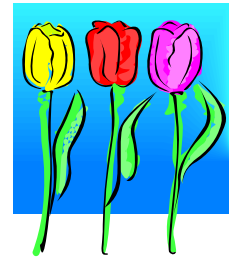
That brings me to a close with a poem I was gifted with at my ordination as a Roman Catholic Woman Priest, by Alla Renée Bozarth (Bozarth-Campbell), one of the first 11 Episcopal Women ordained in 1974.

*We do not want to Rock the boat; you say,
mistaking our new poise for something safe.
We smile secretly at each other, sharing the reality
that for some time we have not been in the boat.
We jumped or were pushed or fell
and some leaped overboard.
Our bodies form a freedom fleet,
our dolphin grace is power.
We learn and teach and as we go each woman sings;
each woman's hands are water wings.
Some of us have become mermaids or Amazon whales
and are swimming for our lives.
Some of us do not know how to swim.
We walk on water.*



Greetings & Salutations,

Spring is here! Well, perhaps for some of our region, the tulips can be seen peeking through to welcome in the new season. I appreciate seeing the tulips blossom at different paces and the beautiful colors they bring to the city. If you have pictures, please send them my way so that I can share them in the next newsletter. My hope for you this season is that you find time to rest and enjoy the beauty that surrounds you through the birds chirping, trees budding, and the laughter of those you call family.



Lakes & Plains please join me by welcoming the new members this spring season. When you have a moment, please drop an email to reach out to the following members:

Let's welcome our member(s):

Name	Area	Email
Timothy Rosten	Illinois	TRRosten@Gmail.com
Red Holdridge	Illinois	Red.holdridge@ascension.org
Christine Elise Wagner-Hecht	Minnesota	christinewagnerhecht@gmail.com



We're still looking for a few stars to shine in our open volunteer positions:

The **FCM Endowment Committee** is looking for two members to join their efforts. The time commitment is low at a single 1-hour meeting per month via Zoom. Contact me at lakesplainsvp@fcmmail.org to express interest and I will connect you with the chair of the committee.

The **National Assembly planning committee** is looking for volunteers to help support the upcoming National Assembly in Atlanta, GA on July 19-21, 2024. Please consider offering your talents and knowledge to the wider FCM community. Contact Julia Styles at spiritualdirectionwithjulia@gmail.com

The **marketing committee** is looking for two members to join in spreading the word about FCM. If you have 1 hour once a month, please contact me at lakesplainsvp@fcm.org.

FCM needs a Treasurer. If this is your niche, please contact president@fcmmail.org for further information.



Chat with the VP monthly Zoom will be the **first Monday of each month at 8:00 pm CT**. Please utilize this recurring link. Just copy and paste the link into your browser or use the **Meeting ID and Passcode below!**
Looking forward to meeting you soon!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83666911344?pwd=9nGIHUIlB24Orlu8Q2wHTxmlb1yLjm.1>

Meeting ID: 836 6691 1344

Passcode: 796312

Final Thoughts:

Another friendly reminder of the **National Assembly at the Sonesta Hotel in Atlanta, GA July 19-21, 2024!** Will I see you there? If so, please send me an email so that we can get together as a region for a meal or dessert! There are still scholarships available for the assembly, so please email me if needed.

The inspirational poem for this quarter is by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

The inspirational poem for this quarter is by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ

Translated from the Spanish by Harry Thomas

To Hope

Green hypnotist of every human life,
mad hope! the gilded frenzy every man
is swept away by day by day, the strife
of dreaming you'll win wealth because you can.

The world's soul; flourishing senility;
the happy remedy for age's sorrow;
the day the lucky know will be today,
and the unlucky think will be tomorrow.

Let those whose spectacles of green glass dye
the world so that it satisfies demands,
invoke your name, who need your light so much;

but as for me, unsure of fortune, I
will keep my eyes well shaded by my hands,
and only see the things that I can touch.

I do hope that your spring season reveals a fresh start with wonder-filled opportunities!

Peace Be With You All,
Rev. Jo



Embracing Growth and Community in Spring

Dear FCM family,

With the arrival of May and June, we are reminded of the vibrant energy and renewal that spring brings. This season offers us a chance to reflect on growth - both in the natural world and within our spiritual lives. It's a time to celebrate the beauty of creation and the nurturing power of community.

Spring: A Season of Renewal and Growth:

As we observe the world around us blooming, let's draw inspiration for our spiritual growth. Just like the seeds that sprout into beautiful flowers, our faith, nurtured through prayer and community, can blossom into something truly magnificent. Let's use this time to deepen our connection with God and with each other.

Pentecost: The Birth of the Church:

In May, we celebrate Pentecost, commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. This event marks the birth of the Church and the beginning of its mission in the world. Let's take this opportunity to reflect on how the Holy Spirit is moving in our lives and guiding us in our ministry.

Community: The Heart of Our Faith:

Spring is also a time of community gatherings, be it picnics, festivals, or outdoor services. These moments remind us of the joy of fellowship and the strength we gain from being part of a spiritual family. Let's cherish these times of togetherness, supporting and uplifting one another in our journey of faith.

Closing Thoughts:

As we move through these months of May and June, let's embrace the spirit of growth and community that defines this season. May we find joy in the beauty of creation, strength in our shared faith, and renewed energy for our ministries. Let us also remember to extend our hands in fellowship and support to those around us, embodying the love and grace of Christ in all that we do.

Wishing you a season filled with growth, community, and the warmth of God's love. In Christian fellowship,

Rev. Christopher Breen, Vice President, South Central Region, FCM



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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.



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FCM CERTIFICATES

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

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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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