

Federation of Christian Ministries



July/August 2024
NEWSLETTER

Vol. 58 No. 4



GOD BLESS
AMERICA



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



CHAIRPERSON
CHRISTY HOWARD STEELE - CHAIRPERSON@FCMMAIL.ORG

FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER ..JULY/AUGUST 2024...VOL. 58 NO. 4



What is Your Story?

Story. Everyone has a story. When I meet new FCM members, I like to hear their stories of how they've come to FCM. A significant part of spiritual care involves listening to the care recipient's story of illness, of loss, of resilience. Listening to someone's story can stir our empathy and compassion. Reviewing, exploring, and sharing our own stories can even help us become more compassionate with ourselves.

In our culture today we often hear stories, opinions, and/or interpretations about people and their situations that come through a particular cultural lens. This reminds me of the story of the Samaritan woman who meets Jesus at Jacob's well (John 4:1-30) that many of us have heard or read. In most interpretations of this story that I have heard, the woman is assumed to be avoiding others because she is ashamed. I find myself curious about how a woman in her context could have had five husbands. Did they die? Did they leave or divorce her? Did she leave them? What is her story? Her response to Jesus is not the response of a person who feels shame. She said to the people, *"Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done!"* Is this the reaction of a person who was so ashamed that they avoided facing others? This is the reaction of a person who feels fully seen, fully known, and understood for perhaps the first time in her life.

This is the beauty and value of community. I believe that many, if not all of us, have a desire to be fully seen and known. We often keep the parts of ourselves that we think others will find unacceptable hidden. Yet, this hiddenness has a cost. It costs feeling included. It costs feeling fully seen and known. After all, how can I believe I'm truly included, valued, and loved in community, if I can't be seen, accepted, and known in the fullness of my particular, peculiar, different, unique, sometimes flawed, imperfect, yet fully human, beautiful self?

Let us, FCM, continue to share our stories, individual and collective. Let us continue to value one another. Let us continue to expand our inclusiveness not just in word, but in community.



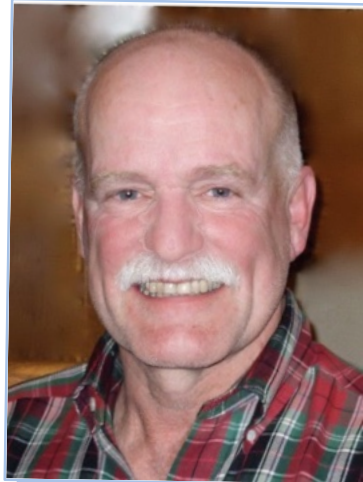


CHAIRPERSON
CHRISTY HOWARD STEELE - CHAIRPERSON@FCMMAIL.ORG

FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER „JULY/AUGUST 2024... VOL. 58 NO. 4



JULY/AUGUST FLOWERS



TOM STRICKER

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight and thank **Tom Stricker** for his contributions to FCM. Tom is the most recent past chairperson of FCM, former vice president of what is now the Heartland (formerly Great Lakes) region, and currently serves as the chairperson of the Endowment Committee.

Tom started the groundwork for this committee during his term as chairperson and has worked hard to bring it to its current success. His excitement, enthusiasm, and dedication every time he speaks about FCM, and our endowment fund is evident and infectious! If you have missed talking to him about it, please do. Thank you, Tom, for all your hard work!

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 "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.





PRESIDENT
TOM CUSACK PRESIDENT@FCMMAIL.ORG

Volunteers as FCM Workers

"As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "follow me." And he got up and followed him." (Matthew 9:9)

This gospel episode does not include any of Matthew's thoughts and prayers that came to his mind in response to the request from the Teacher. He simply got up from his lucrative job and followed Him. He did not consider how much time away from his full-time job he would have to report to the boss. He did not consider whether this was truly a call from God. He did not consider how many personal days he had, the extent of this vacation time, nor any severance package. He heard the call and responded. *He is an example of a volunteer.* FCM has been run and managed by volunteers throughout its history from 1968. As you know we are growing, and this growth is causing new pressures and new demands that cannot be handled effectively by volunteers. Here are two situations in which we need help. **Chairperson Christy Howard Steele** commented on these positions in our last newsletter.

FCM Treasurer. Our Treasurer **Heidi Tierney** is coming to the completion of her time in this office. So, FCM leadership is actively recruiting a member to take on the responsibilities of the Treasurer. We have observed that our growing membership makes FCM bookkeeping a time-burden responsibility. To remedy this burden, we are developing an agreement with an accountant/bookkeeper to professionally handle routine financial affairs for FCM. With this development the Treasurer clearly becomes the chief financial officer for FCM. The Treasurer will oversee the finances of FCM but the multiple hours of bookkeeping and input will be removed from the responsibilities of the Treasurer. In addition, the Treasurer is a member of FCM's Executive Committee. The Executive Committee manages the day-to-day affairs of FCM between meetings of the Circle of Directors. Thus, the Treasurer takes part in all the normal management decisions of FCM. The Treasurer is also a member of the Circle of Directors, the decision-making board of FCM. As Treasurer you can influence the pathway of FCM going forward. Please consider it, especially if you have degree work or orientation towards numbers. *For you, this is a volunteer position, just as his new path was for Matthew*

FCM Administrator. This *part-time job carries competitive compensation.* The Administrator works from home. The core day-to-day work of the Administrator is found in overseeing our Membership Management System (MMS). The workflow includes initiating new members into their profiles in the MMS, tracking commissioning application work by members, and training new members of leadership in the use of the MMS. This position has many interactions with members as they move through our development processes. In fact, I began my time in FCM leadership as Treasurer in 2007. The Treasurer position opened meaningful experience for me over 15 years.

If you feel interest in the Treasurer position or the Administrator position, please contact me at President@FCMmail.org or contact our **Chairperson, Christy Howard Steele**, at chairperson@FCMmail.org

in our last newsletter be called for help for the position of mid-Atlantic Vice President. Now **Michelle Graham** has taken on the responsibility of that role. Thank you **Michelle**. *She is a volunteer for the benefit of FCM.*

FCM spiritual volunteer. Most will not be able to step into the two jobs just outlined. So, I ask you to volunteer to be part of the spiritual power plant of FCM. *Pray for FCM daily.* Pray to know how you can help FCM. We are a Christian community; we are not an ordination mill. To have FCM, our people must give back. Consider how you can give back. One way I suggest is to *spend two minutes per day in prayer and two minutes per day in meditation for the benefit of FCM.* **The formula is $2 \times 2 = 4$ FCM.** **Please let me hear from you.**





FAITH COMMUNITIES
JUDY LORENZ - FAITHCOMMUNITY@FCMMAIL.ORG



Reflections of Gratitude by Faith Committee Member, Q Hailey

37 He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." - Matthew 22:37-38 (NRSV)

The Great Commission as taught by Jesus serves as the guiding principle for my life and the lives of those who are believers in Jesus. It offers a model for how we are to exist in the world. Imagine my disappointment when people within leadership of "the church" were not able to offer this level of compassion towards me because of my queer identity. I experienced intense pain and suffering as I realized my call to ministry. This pain resurfaced when church politics prevented me from being ordained, despite being called to a specialized ministry in chaplaincy.

It was a moment of intense anguish and struggle especially as I knew I was called to the ministry. This anguish resurfaced when I encountered resistance from a more prominent pastor due to the church's internal politics. I was prevented from achieving ordained status, despite the calling in my heart.

I vividly remember my boss sharing her experiences in FCM and encouraging me to join, as she believed it would be a place of healing. I am extremely grateful for her recommendation. FCM has been a source of solace as I journey back to finding a church home. I appreciate the numerous opportunities that have emerged, allowing me to participate in committees, connect with community members through prayer, and stay informed about events in different regions through the newsletter.

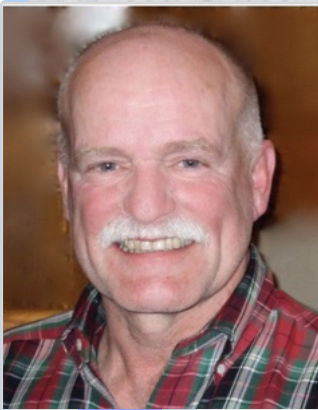
FCM truly embodies the Great Commission, providing us with a nurturing environment to grow and spread love in the world. The restoration that has occurred in my zeal for God and modeling the ministry of Christ has come from the community that I continue to cultivate through FCM.

Thank you for this space, and opportunity.

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FCM Faith Communities Committee
presents a free screening of
GOD & COUNTRY
View on-demand
September 18 - October 5
Jesus shows us the way of
love, peace, justice, and inclusion.
Christian Nationalism follows the way of
discrimination, hate, and violence.
Also attend our discussion on Christian Nationalism
on September 30. Watch your email for more details.



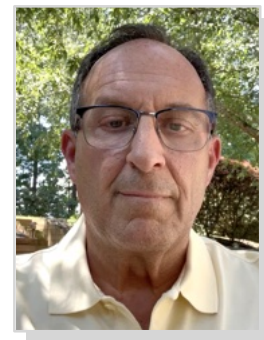
ENDOWMENT

TOM STRICKER CHAIR..TOMSTRICKER2009@GMAIL.COM



Tell Me Who You Spend Time With

by Jim Verrecchia - Endowment Committee



"Tell me **whom** you spend time with, and I'll tell you who is important!" was a phrase I heard during a retreat in my theology studies more than forty years ago, and it has never left me. It really reminds me of how I value the people and things in my life. It also makes me focus on the place that God holds within my being.

We tend to give most of our attention, **time**, and resources to the people, **places**, and things that are really important to us. One of the common threads that we all **have** and share is our life within and our commitment to FCM. The work of FCM is critical now **and will remain so** in the future. **At** a time when so many people are disillusioned with the organized churches in our communities, the ministry and message of our FCM is critical.

How will this ministry continue? Your support now and in the future will ensure its ability to preach the Gospel's Good News. Financial gifts, no matter the size, are very important to our Endowment Fund. Future support is also something that can be planned now by considering making a gift in the form of a planned estate remembrance.

The most significant gift a person will ever make to their loved ones or **to a** charity often occurs through their estate. A thorough and **fully-executed** estate plan can serve as a source of family comfort and pride. Gifts are an important part of estate planning and can provide numerous benefits for both you and FCM. They can help reduce taxes on an estate and achieve specific goals in an estate plan.

Discussions with members of the Endowment Committee can offer you a chance to develop personal relationships within our ministerial family and **to** become further engaged in its mission.

"Tell me **whom** you spend time with, and I'll tell you who is important!" Your legacy is partially defined by the charities you choose to support now and through your estate plans. Can FCM count on you to continue our mission in the future?

Visit our endowment page <https://fedcm.org/endowment/> for more information.

On behalf of the entire FCM family, thank you!





ENDOWMENT FUND

TOM STRICKER CHAIR..TOMSTRICKER2009@GMAIL.COM

Thank You!

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

VALUE AS OF 6/20/2024
\$158,219.00

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?

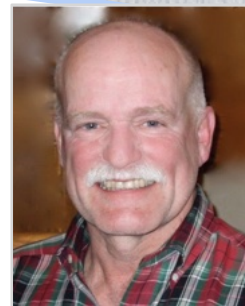
Consider a small donation to the **FCM Endowment Fund**.

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/>



Measuring Our Success





A Time for Everything

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens: Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV)

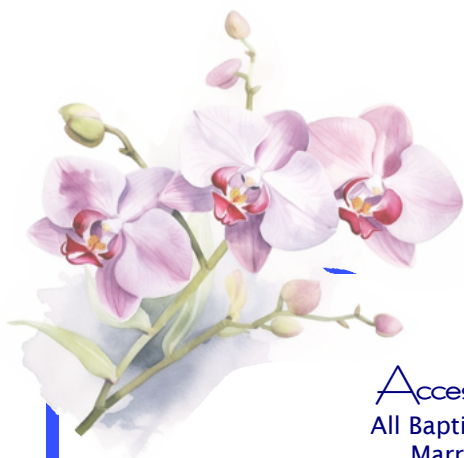
My time as FCM Communication Chair will end on June 30, 2024.

This is the last of (52) newsletters that I will design. A special thank you to the newsletter editors that have shared this experience with me. **John Polanski, Tom Cruse, Sandy Tracy, Carole duBois and Samantha Larson.**

Thank you to the members of the **Circle of Directors** and all the members of FCM for your support.

It has been a privilege to serve with you, and I will cherish the memories we've created together.

Namaste,
Antoinette



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".



ANNIVERSARIES

CAROLYN HORVATH - CENTRALOFFICE@FCMMAIL.ORG

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.



THIRTY YEARS

Bill Wisniewski 8/7/1994 Heartland

TWENTYFIVE YEARS

Susanna Branch 8/31/1999 Southwest

FIFTEEN YEARS

Raymond Mattes 7/13/2009 Southwest

TEN YEARS

Dagmar Celeste 8/15/2014 Heartland

FIVE YEARS

Jacqueline Boyer Jackson	7/01/2019	Southwest
Kellin Kumanchik	8/19/2019	Heartland
Community of St. Hildegard	8/13/2019	Heartland
Wanda Thomas	8/24/2019	Mid-Atlantic



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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

FROM BURDEN TO BELONGING FINDING REST AND RENEWAL IN THE FCM VISION

FCM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
JULY 19-21, 2024
ATLANTA, GA

Register Today
on Realm

"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."

-Matthew 11:28-30

The FCM National Assembly

<https://fedcm.org/events/national-assembly-2024/>
will take place in Atlanta, Georgia from
July 19-21, 2024.

Join over 60 FCM members from around the country as we explore the theme: **From Burden to Belonging: Finding Rest and Renewal in the FCM vision.**

Registration

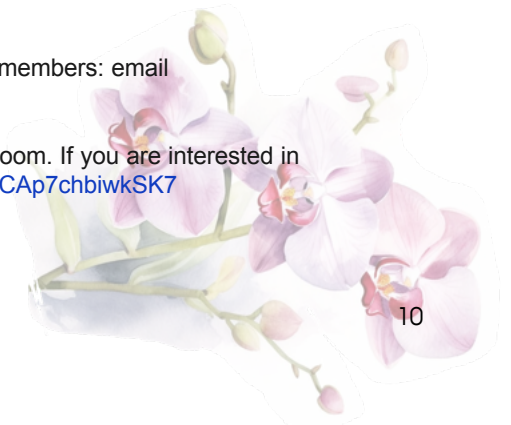
<https://onrealm.org/fcm/Registrations/Registrants/2-554b217-6619-4b21-9ab7-b10f0025c789?congregationView=True> to attend the assembly in person will remain open until July 15th.

There will be opportunities to learn more about the vision of FCM, celebrate newly commissioned and endorsed members, engage in restorative spiritual practices, and fellowship with colleagues.

- Keynote speakers include chaplain **J.S. Park**, Rev. Dr. **Laura Truax** and author **Dominique Gilliard**.
- Workshop presenters include **Kevin Garcia**, **Riley Cote**, **Barbara Zeman**, **Dorie Griggs**, **Soumaya Khalifa** and **Rabbi Lydia Medwin**.
- Music will be led by an **Atlanta Gospel ensemble**, recording artist **Flamy Grant**, and an **FCM worship team**.

There are multiple ways to support the national assembly, even from afar:

- Place an ad or announcement in the program, opportunities to sponsor the conference range from \$25 to larger corporate opportunities. Learn more about sponsorship [here](https://fedcm.org/events/national-assembly-2024/sponsor-na2024/):
<https://fedcm.org/events/national-assembly-2024/sponsor-na2024/>
- Join the conference prayer team to intercede for FCM leadership and members: email spiritualdirectionwithjulia@gmail.com to join.
- We are still working out the technology to stream the conference via Zoom. If you are interested in streaming or recorded sessions fill out this form: <https://forms.gle/kAAiCAp7chbiwkSK7>





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



Flamy Grant
Performing Artist

PREFORMING ARTIST & SPEAKERS

Award-winning and Billboard-charting artist Flamy Grant is a shame-slashing, 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



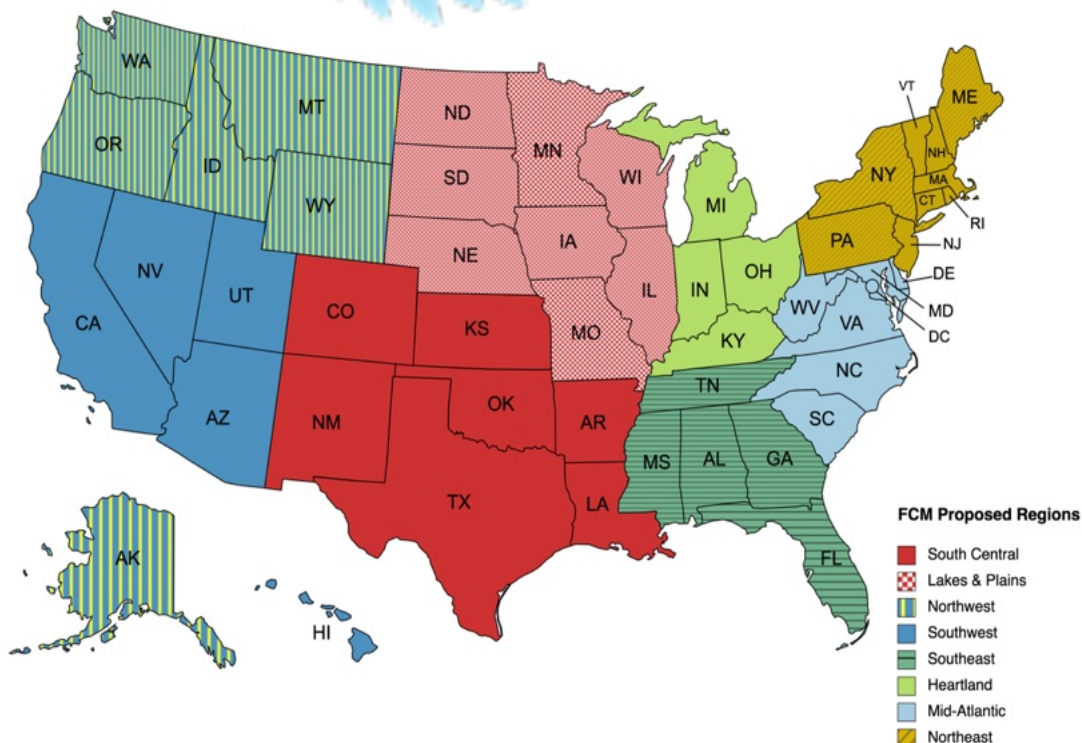
The Interfaith Speakers Network (ISN) is an educational program provided by Interfaith Atlanta in cooperation with an array of faith traditions and faith organizations. It was initially created as an arm of the Islamic Speakers Bureau, in collaboration with Interfaith Atlanta (formerly FAMA). In 2020, 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, interactional 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.



FCM REGIONS



South Central
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Colorado
Kansas
New Mexico
Oklahoma
Arkansas
Texas
Louisiana

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Delaware
Maryland
Washington DC
North Carolina
South Carolina

Southeast
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Jennifer Friedman, VP
southeastvp@fcmmail.org

Tennessee
Mississippi
Alabama
Georgia
Florida



NORTHEAST

CARL YUSAVITZ.. NORTHEASTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Thought for this month:

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive." Howard Thurman

Congratulations to Kelly Chripczuk who was commissioned on May 4th by the FCM Circle of Directors. Kelly currently ministers as a chaplain in central Pennsylvania.



This will be my last FCM Newsletter report to you as your Northeast Region VP. My term ended on June 30th and we are all blessed to welcome **Mike Corso** as your new VP. Mike's term begins on July 1st.

On a personal note, as I transition from this ministry, my heart is filled with gratitude and joy for the many ways I have witnessed your support for FCM and for the many prayers I received during my illnesses.

As your retiring VP, I am reminded of what Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 17: 10, which I paraphrase – **"When you have done all these things I have commanded you, remember that you have done only what your discipleship required of you."**

I leave you with one of my favorite songs, the Shaker hymn,

"Simple Gifts."

'Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free.
'Tis a gift to come down where I ought to be.
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,
But to turn, turn, will be my delight,
Till by turning, turning we come round right.





Atlanta Assembly....Here we come!

With the Atlanta Assembly just days away Jen and I are making last-minute preparations for what we trust will be an Assembly to remember. As we journey from 'Burden to Belonging' with the Assembly, we are discovering how belonging plays out in ministry today. We've all been through a lot in the past few years and the world has changed in many ways. For some, the **Burden** of feeling marginalized or alone has made us aware of how important it is to **belong** to a faith community that aligns with our values. For others, the way we minister looks so different that navigating the new sometimes feels overwhelming.

During the pandemic what we value has come into focus. Fear of the unknown has often stopped us cold. Although we need time to grieve that 'time gone by' we also have an opportunity to embrace the present with a renewed sense of awe. The diversity within our region, and in FCM as a whole, attests to the strength and resiliency of who we are as ministers, priests, and chaplains.

The Southeast has been steadily growing.

We have much to celebrate!

1. We celebrate the ordination of **Reverend Mary Murphy to RCWP** (Roman Catholic Women Priest). Rev. Murphy is Endorsed by FCM and has been a member since 2021.

When asked to reflect on that she said, "I owe a great deal to FCM. The endorsement process prepared me for my BCC interview and my candidacy for ordination. I am truly grateful to members **Rev. Ron Hindelang**, **Rev. Jackie Clarys**, and **Bishop Jean Marchant**— all FCM members who have supported me in my journey toward ordination to Roman Catholic women priesthood. Thanks FCM!"

1. We are also prayerfully awaiting the approval of 1 member for Endorsement and 1 member for Commissioning to be determined on July 18th.
2. We are getting ready to welcome the entire FCM family to Atlanta, for an Assembly filled with grateful thanksgiving, thought-provoking plenary and breakout sessions, music, and Spirit-filled fun.

As we grow in numbers, may we also grow in faith and remember what Thomas Merton, theologian, writer, and Cistercian Monk, once prayed, "MY LORD GOD, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you."



MARY MURPHY AND FAMILY (LIS, SON RICHARD'S FIANCÉ), RICHARD, MARY, MEGAN AND DOUG MURPHY



REV. MARY MURPHY, BISHOP JEAN MARCHANT, BISHOP ANDREA JOHNSON, REV. WENDY STEINBERG, REV. JACKIE CLARYS



HEARTLAND
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WEDDING SCAM ALERT!



Usually, this article is about happy events in our Region however I want to make perfectly clear to all FCM membership a wedding scam that almost had me caught in a costly endeavor. Thanks to the fantastic advice and guidance from Antoinette Marold to be cautious because of similar characteristics of other scams. So here is the timeline of the scam.

March 2024: I received an email stating a date (April 29th), time (1:00), and place (Masonic Temple which is a familiar landmark building in the city of Detroit) and asking how much I would charge to officiate their wedding and rehearsal. Note: They informed me that presently they were out of the country and would respond upon returning.

I responded with a price \$500. They agreed that the charge was acceptable and they would be sending a check for \$350 now and the remainder \$250 at the time of the wedding.

Soon after they informed me that her boss is giving a gift of payment for my services and the check should be coming from him. However there was a change in plans. She reported that her boss mistakenly sent not only payment for my services but also for the photographer and "...would you do a favor for us...and pay the photographer?" My response was "no" and I will send the check back to him. Therefore I need an address to return the check. I also requested information about the wedding such as specific wedding rituals, name of fiancé, etc. I also checked out the Masonic Temple and there were weddings scheduled but the administration was not able to give out the name of the specific wedding parties.

Their response was "...so does this mean you will pay the photographer?" Again, my response was emphatically "no". At this point I contacted Antoinette for guidance. Her advice was "get out of it!!!"

April 2024: After twice declining the payment to the photographer and not receiving the check as was told I informed them I would not be available to officiate their wedding. There was no further response.





Celebrating Summer's Abundance and Reflecting on Our Journey

Dear FCM family,

As we bask in the warmth of summer, these months of July and August offer us a time to celebrate the abundance around us and reflect on the journey we've embarked upon this year. Summer, with its long days and vibrant life, is a reminder of God's continuous blessings and the ever-present opportunities for growth and renewal in our lives.

Summer: A Time for Reflection and Growth:

The fullness of summer is a perfect metaphor for the richness of God's love in our lives. It's a season to appreciate the beauty of creation, to gather in fellowship, and to grow in our faith. Let us use this time to nurture our spiritual gardens, tending to the needs of our communities and our own souls with equal care.

Celebrating Community and Fellowship:

Summer is synonymous with community events - from outdoor worship services to church picnics and mission trips. These gatherings strengthen our bonds and remind us of the joy found in coming together as a family of faith. Let's cherish these moments of fellowship and use them to deepen our connections with one another.

Gratitude for God's Bounty:

As we enjoy the bounty of summer, from the beauty of nature to the company of loved ones, let's remember to give thanks for these blessings. Our gratitude is a testament to our recognition of God's work in our lives and the world around us. Let's carry this spirit of thankfulness in our daily walk.

Closing Thoughts:

In these months of July and August, as we enjoy the beauty and warmth of summer, let us also take time to reflect on our journey with God this year. May we find joy in the abundance of this season, strength in our faith, and continued growth in our spiritual lives. May our hearts be filled with gratitude for the many blessings we have received and the opportunities to serve others.

Wishing you a summer filled with warmth, joy, and the love of God.
In Christian love and fellowship,

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





SOUTHWEST
DANIEL WINDHAM - SOUTHWESTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

Grace and Peace, Southwest Region!

I recently had the opportunity to visit southern California and to participate in a commissioning ceremony for **Rev. Anica Leitch**, who is a commissioned chaplain working in Burbank, Ca. at Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center. The ceremony reflected tremendous diversity and inclusion and it demonstrated the wonderful community with whom Anica provides care at the hospital. It was an honor and a privilege to participate in the ceremony and to meet the people she journeys with every day.

Summer break is here! For the Windham family, June marks the beginning of summer break. Eliza's last day of school was May 23. Erin and I had our last teacher contract day on May 24. We took a short staycation to the Great Wolf Lodge in Scottsdale, AZ to kick off our summer break, and now we are preparing to see y'all in Atlanta in July. From some conversations I've had during regional Zoom calls, it sounds like some folks are faced with limited PTO and the need to make choices in how to use it. That can be challenging.

It means that some people might want to come to the assembly and don't have the PTO to use for the trip. Resources can be limited as well. Getting to Atlanta and paying for a room might be challenging for some. Brainstorming ways to make events more accessible and beneficial to the larger FCM body is always a subject we can explore in our regional meetings.

The assembly looks to be a great adventure and I have a personal stake in the programming as I am preparing to participate in a breakout session on psychedelics and spiritual care. The session will be informative and inspiring as some are more and less familiar with the paradigm and the opportunities for chaplains in the psychedelic assisted therapies spaces. There is a lot to talk about in this emerging paradigm and I have been exploring literature on the subject for some time. This is also something we can talk more about in our regional meetings.

I look forward to seeing folks in Atlanta and on Zoom in the coming months. Take care!

Dan Windham, MDiv, BCC, CSCS



Deepest Sympathy

It is with great sadness that we inform you that long time FCM member Jean Conley passed away peacefully in her home on June 8, 2024.

Jean, along with her FCM member husband Mike served as Development Directors on the Circle of Directors. They also received the Anthony Soto award at the 2016 Assembly.

Jean became a key member of GMU University shortly after its founding in 2001. She was the Founder and Director of the Celebrant Training Program.

**Celebration of her Life will be held at The Reef in Long Beach on
Sunday, July 21, 2024 at 2 pm.**

We offer our prayers and condolences to Mike, son Tony, Daughter Carrie and Grandchildren.



NORTHWEST
ZACHARY WHEAT - NORTHWESTVP@FCMMAIL.ORG

FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER „JULY/AUGUST 2024... VOL. 58 NO. 4



Hello from the beautiful and perfect PNW.

Hello everyone from the once again beautiful and perfect PNW. Now that the rain is mostly gone, and the sun is back it seems like life is starting to flourish again from many perspectives. We are very much looking forward to Assembly and for those of us who will not make it in person, we will certainly be there in spirit. Over the past months, we have had the opportunity to welcome some new faces into our company. Since the last time I have written, I deeply apologize for missing a newsletter window, we have gained two new commissioned members, **Alina Wahl**, and **Heather Friedhorsky**.

Heather currently hails from what is quickly becoming an FCM stronghold of Anchorage. We have an ever-growing presence at Providence Alaska Medical Center. Heather is an amazing chaplain who has a breadth of experience and clinical responsibility. We are lucky to have her.

Alina is a chaplain in the Seattle area at UW and Fred Hutch Cancer Center. I won't tell too many of her secrets but she does happen to be published if spiritual care research is of interest. Alina is another excellent addition to our crew in the Northwest.

Outside of these two newly commissioned members we are also working on getting several other folks up to speed and commissioned as well. I look forward to a couple more exciting announcements and additions.

As always I hope you all are well and if you ever need anything feel free to reach out.

In peace, Zack





JOHN POLANSKI, FCM

JOHN POLANSKI HAS BEEN A HEARTLAND MEMBER FOR ALMOST FIFTEEN YEARS AND IS A FORMER NEWSLETTER EDITOR. HE IS DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THE GENEROUS, COMMITTED MEMBERS OF FCM, AS WELL AS HIS EXPERIENCES AS A COURT MEDIATOR AND PASTOR IN NORTHEAST OHIO, WHERE HE ENJOYS RETIREMENT WITH HIS WIFE, MARGIE MINGHETTI.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

In a recent issue of the National Catholic Reporter, Elizabeth Hamilton offered the following observation in a review of the Netflix miniseries "All The Light We Cannot See," based on the Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Anthony Doerr: "Throughout the series, the 'light we cannot see' becomes a kind of poetic refrain for everything good, true and beautiful that surely exists even if we cannot see it, even if signs point to its not existing at all."

Reading those words, you know what she's talking about: the experience of an undeniable presence, when for a fleeting moment, there was something hard to describe and just as difficult to ignore. It's as though divinity itself somehow became available, right before your eyes, then just as suddenly vanished, leaving a sensation that life really is as wonderful as we've heard.

I would go so far as to suggest that in one way or another, it is just such experiences that lead us to do what we do, like the Baptist to "be a witness to speak for the Light," wherever and however possible. Ours is not the task of convincing others that such experiences are possible, rather to encourage the awareness that enables us to anticipate their existence and cultivate a sense of awe within our hearts. However, this demands we accept the truth of something of which we are terrified: the presence of that Light within ourselves.

In *The Hidden Ground of Love*, Thomas Merton proposes that "if we once began to recognize, humble but truly, the real value of our own self, we would see that this value was the sign of God, the signature of God upon our being." To imagine our worth is simply a matter of recognizing there is nothing we can possibly do merit this "signature," other than to accept that sacred character in grateful joy.

Nor does it minimize or dilute the holiness we regard in Jesus. Time and again, the gospels present him as not claiming any special status whatsoever. His appreciation of the worth of others without exception was nothing more or less than a revelation of his deep desire for his sisters and brothers to see in their reflection the goodness he had come to experience. The Good News is that the Source of all love is not limited, certainly not by human estimation.

The worth of consistently bearing witness to the divine presence is considerable and something we ought to celebrate rather than overlook or deny. I can imagine no more significant step we can take as members of FCM than to make this part of our personal spiritual practice.





PAUL JOSEPH SCHLEITWILER FCM

What do we mean by Christian Ministries?

Some people use Christian like a tribal identity to separate themselves from others. To us, it is a description of our ministries. But our understanding of those ministries has evolved from our beginning.

The Society of Priests for Free Ministry thought it was a priests' ministering according to Vatican II independent of episcopal authority.

"The members of the Society understand themselves as living in the historical tradition of Catholicism. They do not separate themselves from this church, but rather they desire to serve humanity through their church tradition in new and creative ways. In a time of transition the Society intends to be a source of fraternal support and inspiration to priests, particularly those who elect to minister outside official structures."

-Eugene Bianchi*

When it became evident that we had changed with the inclusion of women and other men and that ministry was not solely by priests, Free Ministries became Christian Ministries but remained largely Catholic.

"Accordingly, we propose that the Society become in name publicly what it has already become in fact, a national association of principally Catholic men and women who are individually or in communities seeking to grow in the discipleship of Christian ministries."

"Theologically, it appears to us, that it is now commonly accepted that the ministerial powers of Christ are not encapsulated in the Papal, Episcopal, or Sacerdotal institutional offices in the way previously believed, but are there radically as they are present in the ministerial activity of any who act faithfully in the name of Christ."

"Terry Dosh made a proposal, later accepted by the assembly, that our association take as its name the Fellowship of Christian Ministries as it incorporated three biblical terms in the New Testament which carried the essence of what we were to be: koinonia or community, diakonia or service, and marturia or witness. These terms would express our mission as an ecumenical community of primarily Catholics initially intent on serving the needs of the world in the company of our Christian brothers and sisters. The members of our ecumenical FCM community would be free to maintain their memberships in their original households of faith."

-William Manseau*

As membership grew to include non-Catholics and the variety of ministries they were engaged in, we understood our ministries in a new, more Christ-like way.

"A total of 80% valued the ecumenical approach. There seemed to be a continuing interest attached to a Vatican II vision, but consistent with the FCM following the 'priesthood of the baptized' as a call to a life of ministry with no hierarchical consequences or distinctions. Service is what is important. The survey indicated that FCM was evolving, with most of the membership maintaining their Catholic/Christian values, but in process toward a more ecumenical practice of their Christianity that may or may not entail being seen as a traditional Roman Catholic."

-Joseph Ruane*

Cont'd



PAUL JOSEPH SCHLEITWILER, FCM

What do we mean by Christian Ministries?

We have continued to evolve, as an organization of churches as well as ministers, and in the variety of ministries we perform. But what do all these ministries have in common?

Jesus began and ended his public ministry by feeding people and maintaining their dignity. At Cana, he provided wine for the family and friends and preserved the dignity of the bride and groom. He cooked and fed fish to his disciples at the end while giving Peter a chance to recover from his earlier denial of Jesus, exhorting him to feed the people in his care. He did preach and teach, not to found an exclusive community, but one including everyone. He upheld the summation of the old Law, love God with all of yourself and love other people as much as you love yourself. He added a new commandment, love one another as he loved us. The evidence of that love was giving up his body and blood, his whole self, for the sake of everyone. His ministry was caring for others, healing them physically and emotionally, feeding them, and recognizing the dignity of those on the margin, those rejected by society.

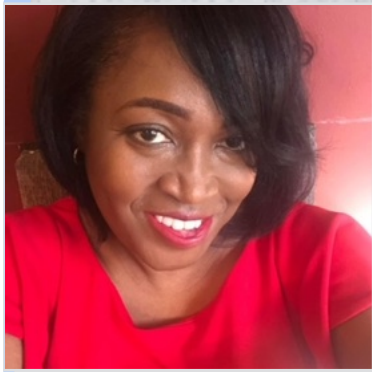
These are our ministries, both as ministers and a church of churches. We serve others with compassion, filling their needs as we are able, maintaining their dignity, welcoming everyone, and supporting each other in doing these ministries.

-Paul Joseph Schleitwiler, FCM

*Taken from the FCM 45th Anniversary History Book from 2013.



Looking forward to the FCM 2024 Assembly



Is 11:00am Still the Most Segregated Hour on Sunday?

On April 17, 1960, during an interview on, "Meet the Press," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated: "One of the most shameful tragedies is that at 11:00 on Sunday morning is one of the most segregated hours in Christian America." This statement was made before the court cases and legislation prohibiting segregation and discrimination in housing, public facilities, interstate transportation, and schools, such as the 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, or the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

After decades of the aforementioned laws, Dr. King's statement about the segregated worship hour should be irrelevant today. Unfortunately, as I write this article in 2024 the worship service *remains* segregated. Why?

The segregated worship hour still exists because despite the ability of blacks to reside anywhere most metropolitan areas remain divided by race. Even after Dr. King's 1965 Chicago visit to protest the living conditions of black people, my hometown of Chicago remains segregated. The fact we do not live in diverse communities or engage beyond a surface level increases the likelihood of a segregated worship hour.

While visiting my daughter in a diverse Southern community, I attended church expecting a diverse church service; yet, somehow, everyone knew where the Black and White churches existed and attended their segregated services. As the granddaughter of a sharecropper, for numerous blacks, the same struggles for equality still exist today making it uncomfortable to attend an integrated worship service. Even in diverse communities, there may be a preference to attend worship services with their same race.

Many reading this article may point to churches such as Lakewood Church in Texas which have a diverse congregation, but, those examples are few. Many folks will say to look at the denominational websites and social media posts that expound a welcoming environment. I wonder, "Is it implemented?" Are blacks comfortable attending these worship services or feel isolated and uncomfortable?

As a GenXer, I am doubtful the Sunday worship hour will be integrated during my lifetime. This is discouraging because I am sure my sharecropper grandfather did not envision that his ancestors would still be facing challenges of segregation including in the church.

I am sure my stance towards an inclusive worship hour will offend some of my black colleagues. My experience in seminary studying among people from diverse backgrounds, including whites, provided a glimpse of the benefits of being in a community together. What if we begin with having monthly or even yearly joint worship services between a black and white church? The time of fellowship will allow us to engage in dialogue to understand our history, challenges, and yes, similarities.

I am hopeful that my ancestors will not be dealing with a segregated worship hour and will be able to worship God anywhere and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s hope of an integrated worship hour will exist.



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

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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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