



FCM Newsletter

Volume 59 - Issue 1

January - February 2025



" I want to focus on our spirituality, and how we can use it to ward off the effects of" Seasonal Affective Disorder". For me, that means breaking away from the isolation that is commonly associated with the winter months by leaning into healing and affirming communities that renew energy instead of draining it. Within and through FCM, there are many such communities to explore, such as the chaplain support groups and the Thursday Night Prayer Gathering. We are social creatures at heart and must be proactive in seeking community with others to support and be supported, to listen and be heard, to provide and be provided, to honor each other and be honored. That is why for us on the Faith Communities Committee, we are seeing 2025 as an opportunity to continue to better our efforts in spotlighting these communities and establishing connections to them in a more meaningful and intentional way." ~ the FCM Faith Communities Committee

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Christy Howard-Steele Chair Circle of Directors

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Re-Commitment 2025

Christy Howard-Steele, Chairperson

As 2025 commences, I have struggled with what to say in this article. I realize that some of my outlook for the near future has been dampened as perhaps is the case with many of you. I grieve the election results along with the reports and “cancel culture” nature of the commentary that has occurred afterwards. I’m just speechless.

As I have entered my 7th decade of life and I enter the last six months of my tenure as chairperson of FCM’s Circle of Directors, I am mindful of the many experiences of joy and some of the painful experiences. I am grateful to have found this FCM community that empowered me to fulfill my vocation of chaplain and chaplain educator. I have enjoyed meeting and spending time at FCM Assemblies and regional conferences, and faith group breakfasts. I am grateful for FCM’s focus on inclusive and expansive ministry both within and externally.

However, in the shadow of a multi-racial female presidential candidate’s loss, I painfully recognize that the work of embodying FCM’s mission is never-ending; that without access and openness to feedback and vigilant self-reflection and attention, our ways of being unconsciously continue to reflect the “white supremacist patriarchal” culture in which we have been formed. As FCM chairperson, I have experienced both micro-aggressions and blatant disrespect within FCM that deeply saddens me. As the imperfect human that I am, I admit that I have not always responded to these transgressions from my highest self.

As we enter 2025, it is my hope and prayer that we both acknowledge how far we have come in our ability to be inclusive, open and affirming and yet re-commit ourselves to continuing to do our work. We (FCM) are not there yet. If you are tired of doing the work, I am tired of continuing work needing to be done. May we continue exploring and discovering the ways we unconsciously still hold and embody in our minds, attitudes, and our ways of being that reflect an exclusive, elitist, male-dominant, culture.

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Tom Cusack President

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To Plan, to Act, to Hope

To Plan. FCM has been engaging over the last year in a process of strategic planning. I will describe some of the actions that have been taking place in response to the plan.

To Act. In the October 26, 2024 meeting of FCM's Circle of Directors (FCM's governing body) the Circle approved a new structural development. Circle members recognized that FCM national elections had become less and less meaningful to the broad membership of FCM. FCM was no longer a compact group of 250 – 350 members, many of whom personally knew one another. Now we are 650 members who have not had opportunities to meet in person. We could not get to know the candidates for our national offices of Chairperson of the Circle and for President. Participation in these national votes has been declining. The one-page summary candidates write to introduce themselves is inadequate as the basis of an informed choice. The Circle decided to end the national elections of these officers.

Creating new bylaws, the Circle will now choose these officers from, first, within the Circle. This would allow the Circle to choose personally-known people to fill these roles. In the meeting the new bylaws were agreed upon, and the Circle immediately moved to choose the new chairperson. Our current chairperson, Christi Howard – Steele, completes her final term of office in July, 2025. To bring forward a new chairperson the Circle immediately nominated and elected Christopher Breen, Regional Vice President of the South-Central Region, as our next Chairperson to lead the Circle. Congratulations to Christopher Breen who will bring his broad talents to bear for the benefit of FCM.

This departure from past tradition brings FCM into line with most nonprofits, which choose their chairperson from among members of their board. This same approach will be taken for the president position and for the representative-at-large position.

To move ahead with the strategic plan's goal of bringing aboard a new executive director for FCM, I formed a seven-person search committee of FCM members. They are Zachary Wheat, Regional VP of the Northwest Region; Michael Corso, Regional VP of the Northeast Region; Kathy Schuck, NE; Diane Haulcy, L&P; Tom Doyle, SE; Anitta Milloro, L&P; and Dorie Griggs, SE. They have begun outreach to FCM's membership for candidates. They have also prepared the process for vetting our candidates. Thank you to each of them.

To Hope. I understand the results of the November presidential election have created a wide range of feelings in many FCM members. These feelings range from disappointment to discouragement to fear for physical safety. FCM stands by its principles of expansive ministry and all that entails. We stand together and support one another. Here are some actions I recommend: become a frequent correspondent with your elected representatives. Offer them persuasion to your viewpoints and personal feelings. Form and deepen your FCM relationships. Regularly join with the Thursday night FCM Prayer Gathering. For now, consider bringing up the Prayer Gathering recording of December 5, with Mike Corso leading. It focuses on HOPE. It may be accessed via this link. <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=SUQCqEzjYU8>

FCM's entire spiritual treasury of Prayer Gatherings may be accessed with this link: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSqGezyJr2KXI1-pgZdqI03LURGjAQdSI>

We are a spiritual community. Go to the inner safety of your own spirituality through Scripture, good works, meditation, and prayer. Also, please spend some time in prayer and meditation for the benefit of FCM... two minutes of prayer per day, two minutes of meditation per day for the benefit of FCM. 2 X 2 4 FCM.

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Tom Stricker Endowment Chair

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The Legacy of FCM

Dear FCM Member,

We, the Endowment Committee, would like to share where we are with our FCM Permanent Endowment Fund and introduce a challenge to you.

- From F/Y 2022/23 the Endowment distributed \$3,519.00 to individuals needing assistance to attend the FCM National Assembly.
- From F/Y 2023/2024 the Endowment will be distributing \$6,650.
- These amounts are generated by multiplying each year's Accumulated Appreciation by 35%.
- NO donated funds will ever be distributed- only 35% of the annual Accumulated Appreciation is distributed.
- At the end of the 24/25 fiscal year, we want to be able to double our distributions.

So, our Goal is to raise \$40,000 this year. Is this realistic? Let's Brainstorm!

If fewer than one half of our FCM members (300) would become new donors and give just \$5.00 a month (the cost of one coffee at a fine coffee shop), we could raise \$1,500 a month. Over 12 months that would come to \$18,000.

Could you make that kind of commitment?

Then, if we had 10 members who need to take a "Required Minimum Distribution" (RMD) and for their first time made a gift of this kind to the FCM Permanent Endowment Fund, this would be a tax-free distribution for the donor and would reduce their taxes by not taking the \$500 themselves. If 10 members gave \$500, that would provide an additional \$5,000. Does that describe you?

Then, if five FCM members created a "Tribute Gift" to commemorate a birthday, or a wedding anniversary, or a deceased friend; and if each "Tribute Gift" raised \$500, this would make a \$2,500 increase in our Permanent Endowment Fund! Could you put forward such a "Tribute Gift"?

Later this year we will be receiving an Estate Donation in the amount of \$5,000. It will be our first.

Have you named FCM in your will or trust? It is a Gift that will keep on giving for decades!

In our Brainstorm, we have now raised more than \$30,000

Over the last year, our Permanent Endowment Fund has earned more than \$20,000 from our investments. Remember that \$13,000 (65%) of this will stay in the FCM Permanent Endowment Fund to grow for the future

**Together we can accomplish this if we ALL commit to building
The Legacy of FCM**

Thank You,

The FCM Permanent Endowment Committee



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

Regular Donation

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

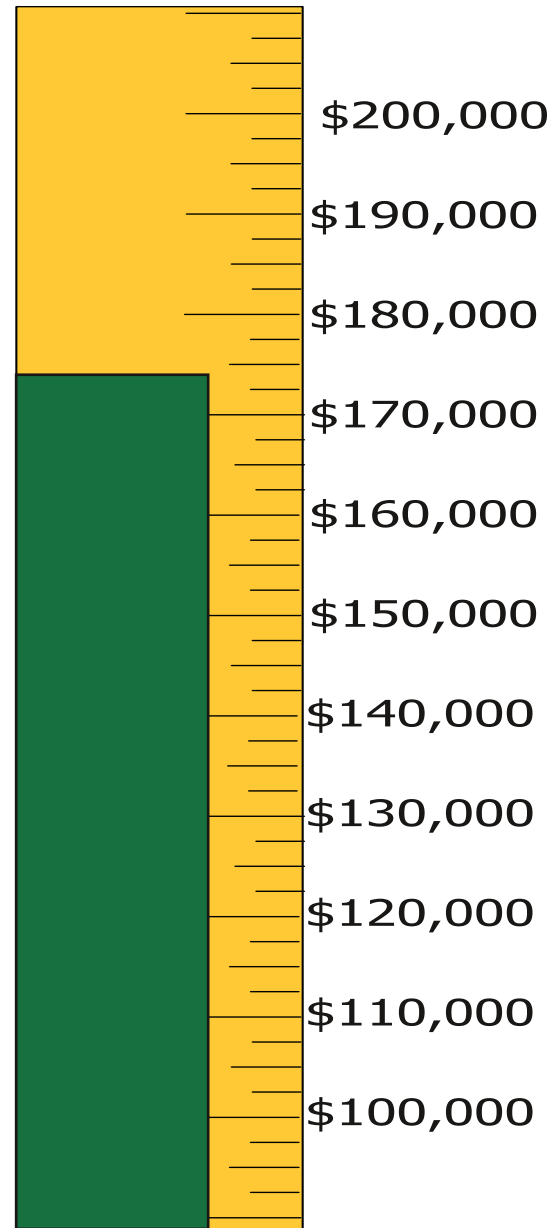
1. Sign in to Realm or, if in the FCM Website, use the "Donation" button to get there.
2. Click on "Giving" (left hand column) and this will take you to donation page
3. Click on the "+ Give" button
4. You will see a pull down (FCM General Account); click on the pulldown arrow
5. Click on the "FCM Endowment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

Tribute Gift

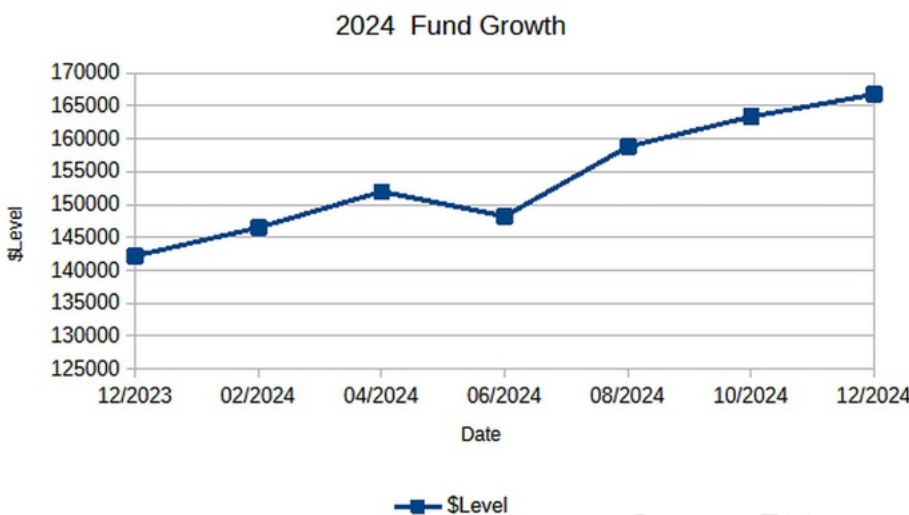
Is there a friend, family member, teacher, or mentor you would like to honor on their special day or send an expression of sympathy? Consider a small donation to the FCM Endowment Fund.

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

For more information go to the FCM web site under FCM Endowment Fund for the online Tribute Gift Form orendowment@fcmmail.org



Total 12/2024 = \$166,744.



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Judy Lorenz Faith Communities Chair

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It goes by many names: Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), winter doldrums, winter blues, or, as Shakespeare's greatest villain Richard III describes it, "the winter of our discontent." For some, this time of year is a time of celebration, family get-togethers, flavored coffee, boots and sweaters, and fresh starts. For others, it means sleepless nights, constant fatigue, depression, and over-eating. This winter in particular may be especially difficult with national change upon us. For me, as a hospital chaplain, it is a time of proverbial heavy lifting. This season often sees the best and the worst of things in healthcare; and while I may not be diagnosed with SAD, I can easily feel its effects. As ministerial leaders, we are often confided in and "bear one another's burdens," so I expect all of us to be affected in some way (directly or indirectly) by the spirit of SAD. While there are many ways of treating SAD physically and psychologically (all of which I recommend under the guided care of a physician or psychologist), I want to focus on our spirituality, and how we can use it to ward off the effects of SAD. For me, that means breaking away from the isolation that is commonly associated with the winter months by leaning into healing and affirming communities that renew energy instead of draining it. Within and through FCM, there are many such communities to explore, such as the chaplain support groups and the Thursday Night Prayer Gathering. We are social creatures at heart and must be proactive in seeking community with others to support and be supported, to listen and be heard, to provide and be provided, to honor each other and be honored. That is why for us on the Faith Communities Committee, we are seeing 2025 as an opportunity to continue to better our efforts in spotlighting these communities and establishing connections to them in a more meaningful and intentional way. It is our intention to bring us all closer together in a time when division and isolation seem to be the only alternatives. For all of us at the FCM Faith Communities Committee, we hope that 2025 finds all of you a community of support, healing, and growth.

FCM Faith Communities Committee has sent a follow up email to those who asked for information/assistance to join and/or begin a FCM faith community. Please access and complete the questionnaire by clicking on the link included in the email. If you missed the email, or have decided to seek the help of the Faith Communities Committee, you can find this questionnaire at <https://forms.gle/strEUGFVdXVjm1qg7>.

The Faith Communities Committee will be presenting Spring webinars again in 2025! Please look for our email invitation to register.

Our theme focuses on the ministries taking place in our Faith Communities and the fruitfulness of the faith which inspires us.

We hope FCM members and members of our communities will be a part of this webinar series.

the first in the series...

Our Faith at Work

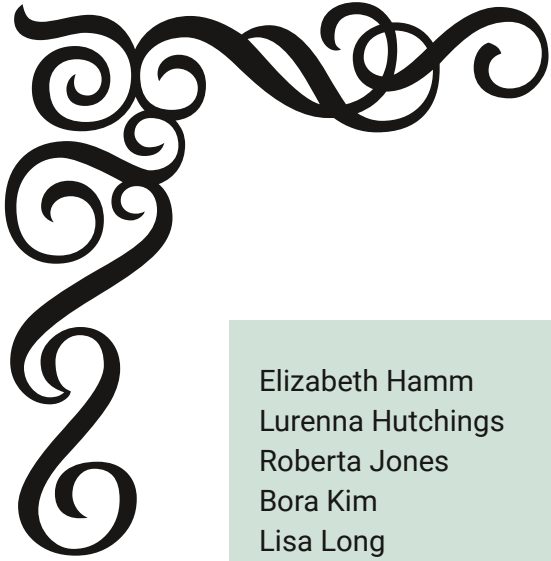
Mon. Feb. 24th at 8 p.m. EDT

- The Magdala Community from San Jose, CA will be presenting on their ministry to homeless persons living in an encampment.

- Please join us as we learn how to better meet the needs of the unhoused and grow in compassion by the inspired stories that will be shared.

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FCM Anniversaries



5 YEARS

Elizabeth Hamm	2/09/2020	Heartland
Lurena Hutchings	1/29/2020	Heartland
Roberta Jones	1/02/2020	Lakes and Plains
Bora Kim	2/27/2020	Southwest
Lisa Long	1/27/2020	South Central
Drusilla McLeland	1/08/2020	Southwest
Jo Brenneman-Fullwood	12/11/2020	Lakes and Plains

10 YEARS

Dustin Crawford	1/5/2015	Lakes and Plains
Rene Francios	2/6/2015	Southwest
Krista Messam	2/2/2015	Southwest
Lee Tyson	1/23/2015	Heartland
Tina Ward	1/15/2015	South Central

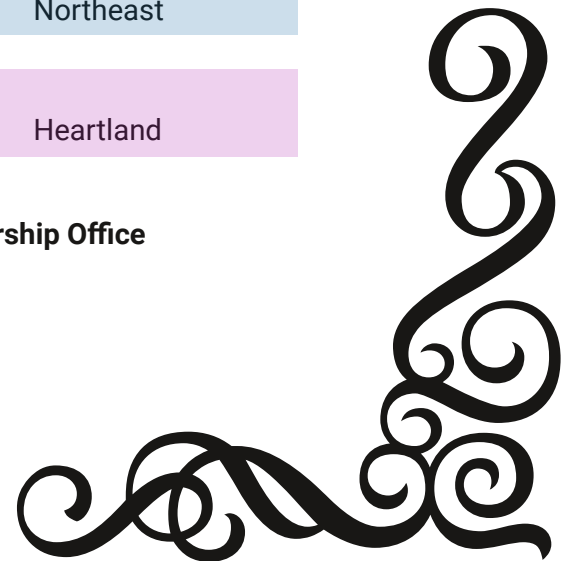
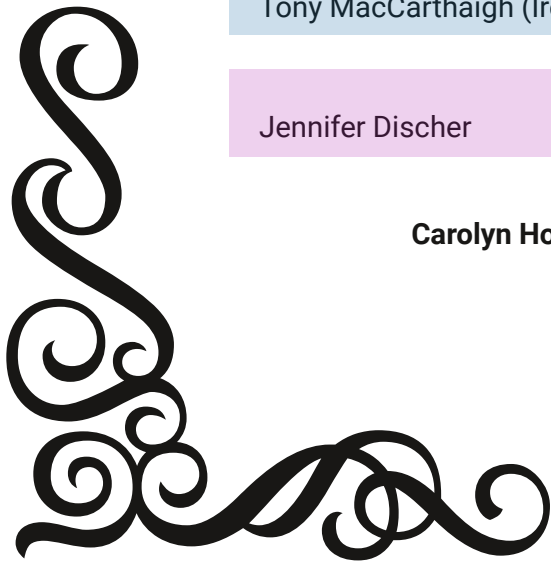
15 YEARS

Kathryn Christian	1/22/2010	Heartland
Ron Davis	1/22/2010	Heartland
Caryl Johnson	2/28/2010	Northeast
Tony MacCarthaigh (Ireland)	1/26/2010	Northeast

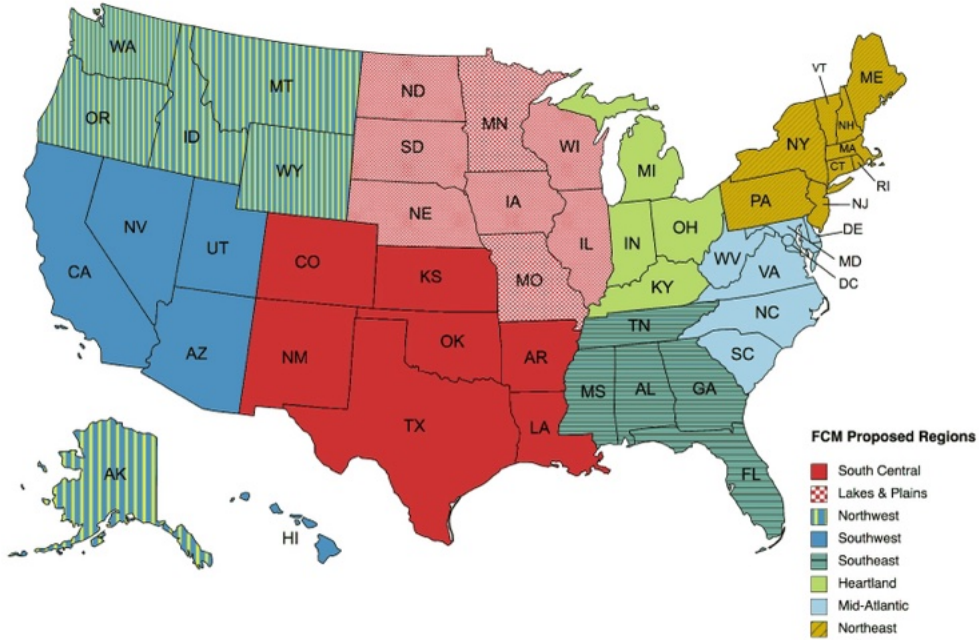
20 YEARS

Jennifer Discher	1/17/2005	Heartland
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Carolyn Horvath, Central/Membership Office



FCM Regions



Created with mapchart.net

Northeast

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

Mid-Atlantic

West Virginia
Virginia
Delaware
Maryland
Washington DC
North Carolina
South Carolina

Southeast

Tennessee
Mississippi
Alabama
Georgia
Florida

South Central

Colorado
Kansas
New Mexico
Oklahoma
Arkansas
Texas
Louisiana

Heartland

Michigan
Indiana
Kentucky
Ohio

Lakes & Plains

North Dakota
South Dakota
Nebraska
Minnesota
Iowa
Missouri
Wisconsin
Illinois

Southwest

California
Nevada
Utah
Arizona
Hawaii

Northwest

Alaska
Washington
Oregon
Idaho
Montana
Wyoming



Mike Corso VP Northeast

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Northeast Newsletter

This past fall celebrated the Commissioning of Jessica Jasitt on November 2, 2024, and Mikhala Heil on December 3, 2024. Both were festive celebrations signifying the importance of this event.

I was able to attend Jessica's celebration in person and Mikhala's via Zoom.

We continue to meet for our monthly Zoom meetings at 10:00 am on the second Tuesday of each month and at 9:00 am on the second Saturday of each month. In November, we shared the impact of the election results on our personal and professional lives.

As we drift into winter, I thought this poem by Mary Oliver would be fitting.

Starlings in Winter by Mary Oliver

Chunky and noisy,
 but with stars in their black feathers,
 they spring from the telephone wire
 and instantly
 they are acrobats
 in the freezing wind.
 And now, in the theater of air,
 they swing over buildings,
 dipping and rising;
 they float like one stippled star
 that opens,
 becomes for a moment fragmented,
 then closes again;
 and you watch
 and you try
 but you simply can't imagine
 how they do it
 with no articulated instruction, no pause,
 only the silent confirmation
 that they are this notable thing,
 this wheel of many parts, that can rise and spin
 over and over again,
 full of gorgeous life.
 Ah, world, what lessons you prepare for us,
 even in the leafless winter,
 even in the ashy city.
 I am thinking now
 of grief, and of getting past it;
 I feel my boots
 trying to leave the ground,
 I feel my heart
 pumping hard. I want
 to think again of dangerous and noble things.
 I want to be light and frolicsome.
 I want to be improbable beautiful and afraid of nothing,
 as though I had wings.

From:

Owls and Other Fantasies: Poems and Essays
Copyright ©: Mary Oliver



Creator: Oleg Gapeenko | Credit: Vecteezy
Copyright: Oleg Gapeenko

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Michelle Graham VP Mid-Atlantic

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BLESSING FOR THE LONGEST NIGHT

All throughout these months,
as the shadows
have lengthened,
this blessing has been
gathering itself,
making ready,
preparing for
this night.
It has practiced
walking in the dark,
traveling with
its eyes closed,
feeling its way
by memory,
by touch,
by the pull of the moon
even as it wanes.
So believe me
when I tell you
this blessing will
reach you,
even if you
have not light enough
to read it;
it will find you,
even though you cannot
see it coming.
You will know
the moment of its
arriving
by your release
of the breath
you have held
so long;
a loosening
of the clenching
in your hands,
of the clutch
around your heart;

a thinning
of the darkness
that had drawn itself
around you.
This blessing
does not mean
to take the night away,
but it knows
its hidden roads,
knows the resting spots
along the path,
knows what it means
to travel
in the company
of a friend.

So when
this blessing comes,
take its hand.
Get up.
Set out on the road
you cannot see.
This is the night
when you can trust
that any direction
you go,
you will be walking
toward the dawn.
—Jan Richardson
from *The Cure for Sorrow*

Some of us love the winter months. " There is a unique beauty in the chill. Maybe you're someone who loves winter activities that require snow.

But for others the winter months can be a difficult time. Our bodies notice the shorter hours of sunlight. The vibrant greens have turned to browns and greys. The sparkle of holiday season has dimmed.

This winter I am especially thinking of our neighbors in Western North Carolina who are entering these months without power restored, having lost homes or jobs or loved ones ".

The wintertime Norwegian word *koselig* (pronounced "koosh-lee") is about finding comfort in the world around you, no matter where you are, through companionship and connection. It embraces the idea that winter isn't a time to hide, but a time to bond.

How might you practice *koselig* during these winter months? Where might you find comfort in the world God has created around you? How might connection be a source of warmth this season?

I also wonder how we might lean into *koselig* as a region this year. Stay tuned for opportunities to connect virtually and in person

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Jennifer Friedman & Barbara Zeman VP s Southeast

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Highlights from 2024

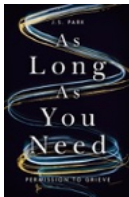
by Rev. Barbara Zeman and Rev. Jennifer Friedman

“As we begin the New Year we come before You, Gracious Creator in grateful thanksgiving for all that has gone before. We remember those who are now wrapped in Your Loving embrace. And, we joyfully welcome the children of second quarter of the 21st century. We ask that You continue to grace us with greater awareness of our purpose here and bless our path as we walk each other into the light, step by step.”

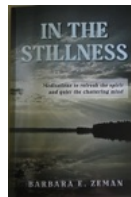
Published in 2024

Three great reads published by Southeast members.

Jon Park



Barbara Zeman



Beth Knight



Atlanta 9/11/2024:

Rev. Dorie Griggs, Roswell Fire Department Chaplain, was invited by the office of Governor Kemp to give the benediction for the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at the Georgia State Capitol. The Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square were featured.

Rev. Griggs Benediction:

“It is an honor to be a part of this ceremony today. I grew up in New Jersey but have lived here in Georgia since 1985. I lost a dear childhood friend on 9/11 who worked on the 104th floor of the South tower. Through my work in trauma studies I've met many who were on the ground in NY, PA and DC 23 years ago. One of them, David Handshuh, who was severely injured when the towers fell, was good friends with Fr. Mychal Judge, NYFD chaplain, and first official recorded 9/11 homicide. David told me Fr Mychal had a prayer he'd say with a twinkle in his eye.



‘Lord, take me where You want me to go. Let me meet who You want me to meet. Tell me what You want me to say and keep me out of your way.’ Go in Peace.”

Fort Myers/Rome Italy:

We asked Pope Francis to engage in a ‘conversation in the Spirit’ and to remove all barriers that excommunicate those who answer the Spirit’s call to



Bishop Bridget Mary Meehan stated, "While Vatican officials have taken a decision about the ordination of women deacons off the agenda of the Synod on Synodality in October, 2024, we came to Rome to ordain three women priests: and three deacons in Rome on October 17, 2024..



Check out the great interview - Bishop Bridget Mary Meehan and Rev. Mary Theresa Streck were interviewed by Lisa Ling on CBS Mornings
<https://youtu.be/YJMka65NSsE>



Orlando:

Rev. Beth Knight "My seminary occasionally highlights graduates/ alumni and I am so honored by having been interviewed. Check out both the written portion and a brief video here (link in IG bio)."
<https://thrive.asburyseminary.edu/beth-knight/>

River Dale, Georgia

Chaplain Tammy O'Neal received a special award through a VA conference last week.



Tampa:

New member Rev. Tom Doyle commissioned in 2024 is already hard at work on the search committee for our new executive director.



ZOOM Monthly Meets:

Join us every third Tuesday at 8:00-8:30 pm, EST for a Southeast Regional check in
Click [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4261272157?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4261272157?pwd=TkNrBm5aY3R6bXZ0Y2hlZksZ3Y1UT09&omn=87313774732)

[pwd=TkNrBm5aY3R6bXZ0Y2hlZksZ3Y1UT09&omn=87313774732](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4261272157?pwd=TkNrBm5aY3R6bXZ0Y2hlZksZ3Y1UT09&omn=87313774732) to join our scheduled Zoom Meeting.



Christopher Breen VP South Central

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South Central Report: January/February 2025

Greetings all!

As the calendar turns to 2025, a new year invites us to pause and reflect—on where we have been, where we are now, and where we are being called. Across the mountains of Colorado, the plains of Kansas, the deserts of New Mexico, and the vast stretches of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, chaplains ordained through our ministry stand ready. They are there to bring light, hope, and presence to those navigating life's thresholds—joyful or painful, familiar or uncertain.

In these first days of a new year, I am reminded of the prophet Isaiah's words:

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

Members, you are witnesses to this "new thing" every day. Whether in hospital corridors in Dallas, military bases in Colorado Springs, or prisons scattered across rural Oklahoma, you meet people exactly where they are—on the edges of grief, in the midst of transition, or within moments of sacred clarity. You do this holy work not by solving problems, but by simply being present. You hold space for others to see their own light, hear their own answers, and experience the gentle stirrings of the Divine.

Sacred Work for a Sacred Environment

The South Central Region is as vast and diverse as the Calls we answer as ministers. Our landscapes range from the bayous of Louisiana to the deserts of New Mexico, from the fertile fields of Arkansas to the urban centers of Houston and Kansas City. And just as this land is varied, so too are the lives of those we serve. Members in our region walk alongside oil field workers, farmers, first responders, students, soldiers, caregivers, and countless others. In a time when so many feel untethered – burdened by personal struggles or overwhelmed, remembering that every act of presence, no matter how small, makes an eternal impact.

The Role of Chaplains in Renewal

A new year is often filled with resolutions, hopes, and uncertainties. We embody the invitation to renewal not just in January but every day. You reflect the Sacred's ever-renewing grace to those who feel stuck in their own wildernesses. Your presence reminds others that healing is possible, hope can endure, and peace is always within reach.

A Word of Gratitude

To the members of our South Central Region: thank you. Your calling, your ministry, and your work matter. Whether you serve in the heat of summer in Texas or through the snows of Colorado, in the halls of a hospital in Baton Rouge or by a bedside in Little Rock, you are living out the Divine presence.

As we step into this new year, I offer these words from Psalm 90 as a blessing for your journey:

"May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands."

May you feel renewed in your ministry, confident in your calling, and reminded of the light you carry into the world. The people you serve may not always remember your words, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

Blessings,

Rev. Christopher P Breen, MDiv, MA

Regional Vice President, South Central Region

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Peter Wolf VP Heartland

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Heartland News and Reflection

The Heartland newsletter has two important messages.

The first is an announcement on the progress of Maria Stein Retreat in October 2025.

On November 22, 2024 the beginning of a planning committee was started.

- present: T Cruse, B Funaro, C Horvath, J Rolon, J Tinkham, P Wolf.
- excused: T Stricker, T Elders, B Wisniewski

The discussion among us reflects the guidance of the spirit. We shared a need to be a covenant people creating a safe place to be nourished at a time of global strife. We are forming an outline of the retreat that “deliberately” encourages all to share and not advise, to express and not judge, to listen in order to understand. So mark your calendars for October 24th-October 26th at Maria Stein Retreat Center, Ohio and join us in a time together to hear God in creation and each other.

FYI if you are interested in joining or contributing to the group ideas, needs, preferences, topics, etc. please feel free to send a message to any of us and we will bring your insights to the group meeting on January 4th at 3:00pm EST and February 1st at 3:00pm both will be virtual.



The second item to the newsletter is a reflection on our world, neighborhood, and lives. I share my thoughts with you and hope this will carry you through the whole year.

“...Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from ...anxiety of daily life...”

These are difficult times politically, financially, and even spiritually. We need Advent. Advent invites us to reflect, listen and respond. Jeremiah shares similar difficult times in his search for a “...safe...and secure dwelling”. St. Paul asks the Thessalonians to “...abound in love for one another AND for ALL...” In the Gospel, St. Luke outlines three tasks to guide us toward these goals.

The first task is to be aware that there will be signs “...in the sun, the moon, and the stars and on earth...” So during this Advent lock in time each day to be aware of nature that is more than beauty that surrounds us but a place to hear God’s presence and voice.

The second task is to reflect on the Son of Man coming “... in a cloud with power and great glory.” Advent is a time to remember God’s promise to us no matter what fears or worries challenge us. We recognize that we are strong with each other. We are a community of humanity.

The third task calls us now. In other words, “...stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.” Advent is now. Now is the time to act on our service to each other, the world around us, and care for each other as human beings.

We need Advent to prepare ourselves to extend best wishes throughout the whole year.



Jo Brenneman-Fullwood VP Lakes & Plains

lakesplainsvp@FCMmail.org



Greetings & Salutations,

And just like that, winter is back! For some, this is their favorite season. It reminds them of warm blankets, snow angels, and sipping hot chocolate by a fire. This season, I am reminded to take note of what is missing and the significance of those missing components. The winter season provides an opportunity to practice mindfulness moments of pause. As we note our breath, we can see how it interacts/intersects with the cool, crisp air. Take a moment to inhale, hold for 5 seconds, exhale, and watch the beautifully intertwine occurrence. The give and take of breathing and its significance to all. For those who prefer warming weather, hold fast. The earth will return with spring and all its glory. Several members have accomplished goals personally and professionally. Today, we welcome new members and congratulate our recently commissioned and endorsed members! If I have missed you in this announcement, please email me so we can celebrate with you in the following newsletter. Lakes & Plains, please join me in celebrating the many occasions in our area. When you have a moment, please drop an email to reach out to following members listed below.

Let's Celebrate with our Member(s)

Name	Area	Occasion	Email
Laura Johnson	MN	New Member	laura.johnson12@va.go
Deb Castle	MN	Commissioned	drcastle1959@gmail.com
Rachelle Swanson	WI	Commissioned	biglake1460@gmail.com
Christine Wagner-Hecht	MN	Commissioned	christinewagnerhecht@gmail.com
Jo Brenneman-Fullwood	IL	Endorsement	lakesplainsvp@fcmmail.org

Volunteer Opportunities:

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@fcmail.org to express interest and I will connect you with the chair of the committee.



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

Zoom Meeting ID: 836 6691 1344

Passcode: 796312

Final Thoughts: I pray that the holiday seasons bring cheer to your home and that the upcoming year treats you well! Below, you will find a poem for the finishing seasons.

Bay Leaves

I watched Mommy
Cook
Though I cooked
With Grandmother

With Grandmother I learned
To pluck chickens
Peel carrots
Turn chittlins inside out
Scrub pig feet

With Mommy I watched
leftovers for stew
Or vegetable soup
Great northern beans
Mixed collards turnips and mustard greens
Garlic cloves Bay Leaves
Very beautifully green
Stiff so fresh
With just a pinch of salt
Not everything together
All the time but all the time
Keeping everything

I make my own
Frontier soup in a crock pot
I make my own ice cream with a pinch of salt
And everything else
With garlic
But fresh Bay Leaves
Are only for very special
Ox Tails

By Nikki Giovanni

Born: 1943, Knoxville, TN

Died: December 9, 2024 (age 81 years), Blacksburg, VA

Please use this link to hear the late great Nikki Giovanni read her poem. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/159787/bay-leaves>

See more at <https://nikki-giovanni.com/>

Peace Be with You All,
Rev. Jo

[Return to TOC](#)



Daniel Windham VP Southwest

southwestvp@FCMmail.org

Grace and Peace, Southwest Region!

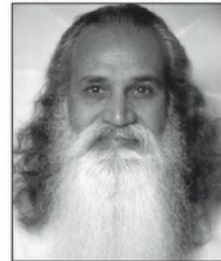
It's Friday the 13th. Superstitiously, this day imparts fear and trembling in those who believe it to be wrought with bad juju or evil spirits or whatever. My dad always said, "Friday the 13th is my lucky day," because all the superstitious people are too busy being afraid something bad will happen to claim the luck that's floating around and always available to us. It seems like it's all a function of mindset. What we believe is what we perceive.

I recently began studying the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, translation and commentary by Sri Swami Satchidananda. I commend the book to y'all. You can find a free copy online here.

https://ia803401.us.archive.org/10/items/yoga-sutras-of-patanjali_202101/Yoga%20Sutras%20of%20Patanjali.pdf

Yoga is the basis of all religions; it is more than the postures. There are eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga. The Asanas (postures) are one limb. Sutra 1.2, in translation, says, "The restraint of the modifications of the mind-stuff is Yoga." This is the goal of Yoga: to bring the mind under control. The commentary on Sutra 1.2 goes on to say, "The entire outside world is based on your thoughts and mental attitude. The entire world is your own projection...If you feel bound, you are bound. If you feel liberated, you are liberated. Things outside neither bind nor liberate you; only your attitude toward them does that."

The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali



Translation and Commentary by
Sri Swami Satchidananda

I have a friend who was once involved with the Hell's Angels and served time in prison. As with other gang organizations, there were rival gangs and rival gang members who might rather see him dead than alive on the prison yard. Participating in the negativity and violence associated with his respective role as a Hell's Angel in that environment would have been the natural progression. Instead, he garnered the respect and admiration of prisoners and guards alike. Everyone valued and respected him during his incarceration. It was a function of his mindset and his approach to his incarceration. He treated prison as an opportunity for soul growth and human development, rather than treating it as an extension of his gang life.

Bob Marley sang, in his 1980 hit Redemption Song, "Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds." This is Rasta. This is Yoga. If we could ask Carl Jung, he might say that our psychic connection to the collective unconscious is an open door to all the psychic material that bubbles up into our individual consciousness. Unless we take an active approach to managing the flow, as it were, it takes control. This is mental slavery. Some people just go with the flow. Others realize the need to manage it. That pursuit takes many lifetimes. The journey continues.

In CPE we were taught about differentiation. It's our ability to separate feelings and intellect. In the context of a hospital room, where someone is dying and the family members are freaking out, differentiation is the ability to stand in the room with everyone, to be aware of our own emotional energy, to be aware of everyone else's emotional energy, and to remain calm and non-judgmental to the extent that we can provide empathic presence, holding the space for everyone to have their experience.

If we could ask Murray Bowen, he would say:

“...Most of society fits into this [0-50%] segment. I’m finding very few people go above this [50%-100%] as I have defined it. In general terms, the lower half of the scale goes increasingly toward a feeling orientation to life...feelings that are fused with intellect...[0-50%] you can’t separate them. Above this [50%-100%] there is an awareness that there’s a difference between feeling and intellect, an increasing awareness, so that people high up the scale have well-defined feeling systems and separate, well-defined, intellectual systems. When the feeling system and the intellectual system are separate, then the feeling system can be free and so can the intellectual system be free. And in the lower half of this scale [0%-50%] where feelings and intellect are fused, then one’s feelings become a sort of prison



You can listen to The Basic Series here,

<https://www.thebowencenter.org/bowen-theory-vids#basic-series>

Bowen’s recorded lectures on the basic tenets of his theory. It’s easier to differentiate oneself in some contexts than it is in others. My goal is for differentiation to always be easy. The journey continues.

I am in the home stretch, as it were, for my first term in the VP role. I took on the role three years ago. My term officially ends in July. For those who may not have heard, FCM has been engaged in a metamorphosis, of sorts, for the past few years, and maybe it has always been unfolding. Currently there is a search for an Executive Director and we are exploring some changes to the structure and function of our leadership. Hundreds of Board-Certified Chaplains depend on the FCM’s Commissioning and Endorsement. The organization has reached a pivotal juncture in its life arc. There is an increasing need for FCM membership to participate fully in this ecclesia and to double down on this community as an integral part of our personal, spiritual, and vocational lives.

Many blessings on the journey!

Dan Windham, MDiv, BCC, CSCS, TSAC-F

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Zachary Wheat VP Northwest

northwestvp@FCMmail.org

Northwest Newsletter

Hello, folks. We are officially in the season of cold and wet here in the Northwest. We don't have a ton of new things going on or announcements. As this is released, we will have had our zoom meeting to chat and catch up with each other. We will also be working on some new commissioned and endorsed members in the next cycle and we will update when that all is finished.

I would like to give a shout out to one new member in Idaho, AJ Zimmerman who has connected several folks to FCM in the last couple of months. I want to wish you all a good start to 2025.



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FCM Directory

FCM Newsletter

Email: newsletter@FCMmail.org

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

FCM Central Office Coordinator Carolyn Horvath

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FCM Website: www.federationofchristianministries.org

FCM Blog: fcmblog.org

FCM Certificates

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

Realm & Membership Administrator

Emails: connect@FCMmail.org - membership@FCMmail.org

FCM Baptism and Wedding Registries

are now on www.onrealm.org Sacramental Registry - Click EVENTS and follow directions for additional help Email: registry@fcmmail.org or connect@fcmmail.org

Endorsement for Specialized Ministries

Qualified FCM members may apply for "Religious Body Endorsement" for the specialized ministries of Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Pastoral Education. Such endorsement is required by professional certifying organizations and many institutional employers. The FCM Circle of Directors acts on endorsement applications three times yearly.

Endorsement application materials are available for downloading on the FCM website at: www.federationofchristianministries.org Inquiries may be made by email at: specmin@FCMmail.org

Global Ministries University

GMU offers degree completion programs, certificates, a Celebrant Training Program, and individual courses online. FCM members are eligible for a 5% discount on degree programs. For more information, visit the web site: www.globalministriesuniversity.org Email: info@globalministriesuniversity.org Phone: 866 419 8020 toll-free

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