

# 2019

## Federation of Christian Ministries Newsletter



January/February 2019

Vol. 53 Number 1

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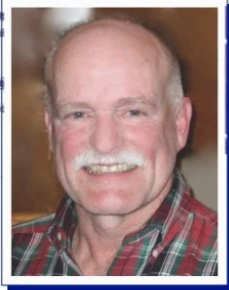
*Happy  
New Year*



May the faith of God  
be with you this year.  
May the peace of  
God surround you,  
and may you be  
blessed each day.

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# CHAIRPERSON

TOM STRICKER

## Sharing Our Wisdom

As we enter 2019, I wish you a blessed and fruitful New Year. May it be filled with awareness of the Divine presence. Throughout 2018 we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a fantastic time for the Federation of Christian Ministries. Reflecting on this history I am in awe of the powerful statement FCM has made as individuals standing together speaking truth through lives of compassion. Looking forward, I also want to challenge us as individuals and as an organization to live our lives to the fullest of our potential.

We are far from perfect and we minister to a world in much pain and confusion. We seem to be living in a time of division, hate and polarization, in need of new hope and vision. I also believe we have the ability to bring that hope and vision to our world by living in the now and seeing the opportunity before us. As children of God we bring this hope and vision to all in need. Judgement of ourselves and others is not what we seek nor does it accomplish the mission of Jesus. Now is the time for us to be that light and walk with that steeled intention. We are called to do as our brother Jesus did so long ago.

I believe Madeleine L'Engle says it well in her poem "**First Coming:**"

### FIRST COMING

He did not wait till the world was ready,  
till men and nations were at peace.  
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,  
and prisoners cried out for release.  
He did not wait for the perfect time.  
He came when the need was deep and great.  
He dined with sinners in all their grime,  
turned water into wine.  
He did not wait till hearts were pure. In joy he came  
to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.  
To a world like ours, of anguished shame  
he came, and his Light would not go out.

To focus our lives and ministries on living the mission of FCM, we must listen clearly to the call of our God and be well-grounded in our spiritual practice. If not, we will be distracted by the many illusions of our world; fear, hate and anger will rule. When we are grounded in spiritual practice, we will see beyond these illusions to know in truth we are all one. The gifts we give will be given back. If we live what we believe, then love will be the answer. If we live what we believe, we will welcome people of all spiritual persuasions. We will stand and speak truth to power. We will hear the cry of the poor and bring them the good news. We will actively work for the good of all people. We will fight oppression on all levels. We are not alone in our actions, we are one with our Creator and one with the universe.

I believe the way to put all that into practice lies in the wisdom of the FCM membership, so this February we will be coming to you for answers to these questions: How can we best support our commissioned and endorsed members? What does commissioning and endorsement empower us to do? How do we support and strengthen the growing number of our faith communities? How do we best use our voice as a Convention of Churches? I look forward to your response.



# FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

FCM Chairperson(s) Nomination

## Call to Service

It is time to fill the position of Chairperson(s) of the FCM Circle of Directors. This position is critical to the direction and vitality of FCM. We are calling for nominations for this national office on the Executive Committee of the Circle of Directors.

Any member in good standing can be nominated for this office. Any member may place himself or herself on the slate of nominations. Both talent and time are required by those who will fill this position. Service on the Executive Committee and functioning as Chairperson of the Circle of Directors requires a substantial investment of time. The term of office for this position is three years. The term will begin after the 2019 Circle of Directors meeting through the 2022 Assembly.

Members holding an office can be re-elected to that office for a second term. After two terms a director must take a one year break before holding office again.

Chairperson, Tom Stricker is ending his second term and is not eligible to serve in that position in this election.

The Chairperson(s) is responsible for:

- ❖ Policy planning, formulation and evaluation
- ❖ Setting the agenda for Circle of Directors meetings
- ❖ Planning and presiding at the Circle meetings
- ❖ Serves on the Executive Committee
- ❖ Ex-officio member of FCM Committees

To nominate a member for the office of Chairperson(s) complete the nomination form and mail it to:

**Tom Stricker, FCM Nominations**  
**9660 Hemple Road**  
**Germantown, OH 45327-9516**

or email: [tomstricker2009@gmail.com](mailto:tomstricker2009@gmail.com) **NO PHONE NOMINATIONS.**

All nominations must be received by **January 31, 2019**. The balloting for the National Election will be in March and the results will be published before the 2019 Circle of Directors meeting.

### NOMINATION FORM

**FOR CHAIRPERSON(S):**

I nominate: \_\_\_\_\_

Why I am nominating this member(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# PRESIDENT

TOM CUSACK

## On the Road toward the Next 50 Years

In 2018 we enjoyed a review of our first half-century. The Assembly in Philadelphia honored pioneers and the FCM core leaders who have brought us to the present. As we turn our attention to the future and ask where we go from here, we need to consider our current status.

We all recognize the importance of developing a sense of community within our organization. These bonds are encouraged in our faith communities. Networking efforts, led by **Marita Grudzen** and **Ginny Cusack**, provide an opportunity for these groups through their representatives to exchange ideas and share common concerns. In addition, our growing use of video conferencing enables our geographically distant individual members to build relationships despite the miles that separate them.

Developing a sense of community and commitment represents a change from our past. Through much of its history, FCM presented itself as an association enabling ministries without a deliberate sense of community. This experience left the exit door open for those who no longer needed authorization for ministries such as wedding officiating, so they departed without hesitation. I believe a sense of community and commitment is the antidote for members departing after long periods of association. The effort involved begs the question: how do we continue to offer services while developing a stronger sense of kinship?

Although commissioning and endorsement fulfill an important need for our individual members, it is the experience of community that provides the motivation to reach out to others with an invitation to join FCM. This kind of one-on-one welcome to become part of a larger community is the key to expanding the number of people and faith communities to whom we can provide service. In doing so we support the larger Christian mission.

The exact way in which our efforts will evolve in the future is subject to debate and reflection. I suggest that a critical aspect of our future planning has to be continued systematic maintenance of our own spiritual lives. A deeper spirituality enables us to attain greater clarity of inner direction from the Spirit. From those inner motivations and feelings come concrete plans. From a deeper spirituality comes the increased possibility of doing God's will. This is the highest way of operating. It is completely dependent on personal spirituality. So, if we want FCM to grow, as I do, we all must step up our spiritual effort in 2019 and beyond.

These efforts will be manifested by meditation, prayer, reflection on and study of the Scriptures, becoming aware of inspirational figures for motivation, conscious selfless service, and similar devotional activities. I suggest each of us should perform a critical review of our own spiritual efforts. As you decide how to renew them and go forward, remember to include FCM in your spiritual devotions. Conduct two minutes of prayer and two minutes of meditation for FCM each day (2 X 2 4 FCM). The effort will bring all of us forward together, and 2019 will begin to look like a straight highway on a clear day.

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## Job Description

## PRAYER SUPPORT MINISTRY COORDINATOR AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Turnover among our Prayer Support Ministry volunteers leads me to make this request of you. Please consider and then volunteer to participate in the FCM Prayer Support Ministry. We are seeking a new Prayer Support Coordinator and for volunteers to spend time in prayer for needs that are expressed by FCM members through our website.

The job responsibilities are the following; The Prayer Support Coordinator will receive the requests via e-mail or requests called in to the coordinator. The Prayer Support Coordinator then contacts the Prayer Support Ministry Team. Members of Prayer Support Team, when they receive a request, are asked to focus their daily prayers for two weeks for the person/s requesting the prayer. The Prayer Support Coordinator is responsible to make bi-annual reports to the Circle via the President in the month preceding the Circle of Directors' Meetings; typically they are held in February and July.

For your information the Prayer Support Coordinator has their own FCM email address, [Prayersupport@FCMmail.org](mailto:Prayersupport@FCMmail.org), which can be forwarded to their personal e-mail address for convenience.

The rest is up to you and God.

Please reply to Carolyn at Central Office with your response to this request. Please take it that the Holy Spirit is making the request of your soul. [CentralOffice@FCMmail.org](mailto:CentralOffice@FCMmail.org)

1. content policy and procedure

a. The newsletter is published on a bi-monthly schedule with publication dates on the first of the odd-numbered months.

b. Required content includes messages from the president and chairperson, as well as regional reports from each of the vice-presidents.

c. Circle members, particularly vice-presidents are encouraged to invite members in good standing to submit articles on ministry, essays, poetry and spiritual reflection for consideration.

2. editorial duties

a. Contact members of the Circle on the first of the even-numbered months with a reminder that all submissions are due no later than the 15th of the month and are to be emailed to the editor only. Submissions received after the deadline may not be published.

b. On a regular basis, the editor will also solicit content from other members directly, e.g., representatives of faith communities, peace and justice leaders within the organization, etc. to request submissions.

c. Include a reminder to submit written content in Word format and images as jpg files. Names are to be included with photographs as these will be used unless requested otherwise.

d. Review submissions with regard to style (sentence and paragraph structure, brevity etc.) and grammar (spelling, punctuation etc.) and make corrections as needed.

e. Refer questions regarding appropriate content as necessary to the president and/or chairperson.

f. Forward copy upon thorough review to the layout person for formatting and preparation for publishing. No changes to copy will be accepted after submission for layout.



# TIME FOR A CHANGE

JOHN POLANSKI, NEWSLETTER EDITOR



It was a swell run. All good things must end. "...to spend more time with the family." When the Circle (specifically **Tom Stricker**) invited me to edit the Newsletter for a three-year term, it was never intended by anyone – least of all me – that this would be an open-ended commitment. And so it came to pass that when the current term concluded this past summer and I was offered a third opportunity to renew my appointment, I decided to pass the torch.

Now that the Circle are seeking a new editor, it's obvious to anyone who knows me that a background in journalism is not required. In fact, as I reflect on the qualifications I consider as necessary or at least helpful to fulfilling the duties of this position, it simply comes down to appreciating good writing and understanding a little of what makes it that way. Beyond knowing the rules of correct grammar and sentence structure, all one really needs is the time to thoroughly review content and ask the question, "How might this sound better?" and then make a few adjustments.

Certainly, the best aspect of this job (did I mention it's a volunteer position?) is in getting to know the regular contributors (members of the Circle) as well as "guest columnists" through their writing. Though I always found that fascinating, I discovered a new level of interest during my tenure as I pored over reflections on ministry, life stories of new members and other aspects of the people who make up this organization as we endeavor to fulfill our mission.

As you read this and start thinking, "That sounds like a good way for me to contribute to FCM," please know a few more important details. First, I have made a commitment to assisting the next editor in any way possible so you would not be starting out completely on your own. Further good news is that the regular contributors know the drill pretty well and with a little nudge will do their part to submit materials on time. Finally, as you can see below, the policy and duties are pretty straightforward. And for those of you who have a concern about details like this, I have found it takes about 15-20 hours (every other month) to complete the necessary tasks.

So if you're thinking about it even a little or if someone puts the arm on you to consider it, keep in mind I am happy to talk with you honestly about the challenges (few) and rewards (many) of sitting in this chair. And remember: if I can do it, how hard could it be?

See page 5 for the Editor's position description



# TREASURER

HEIDI TIERNEY

Assembly Grant Program



At the February 2018 meeting, the Circle took a new step designed to enable more members to attend the July 2018 Assembly, voting to allocate \$5000 to support those who could not attend without financial support. In addition, the Circle approved making a request to the entire membership that they consider contributions to the Grant Fund to help support those who were in need of some assistance. Contributions amounted to \$650.00.

As members learned of the program, they could make requests for financial help through their Vice Presidents. When the Assembly took place, 10 members had availed themselves of the Grant Fund to participate. In all \$3,937.00 was expended in this initial effort.

The FCM leadership consider the program a success since the Assembly is the most important gathering our organization conducts. Thanks to these grants, that experience was possible for 10 of our members who would not have otherwise been able to share it.



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# COMMUNICATION

ANTOINETTE MAROLD

## We're Staying Connected

*Getting your name out there...* You've sent in your report and paid your dues. But are you taking full advantage of your FCM membership? Persons searching our database for a minister will find **your name** if you take just a few moments to include your information in the **Find A Minister** area of our website. It's easy and it's **FREE** and you can be listed under 3 categories. The listing includes state, city, name, phone number, email address & website if you have one. If you are listing a website it must be up to date.

Forms for all of the above can be found at [www.federationofchristianministries.org](http://www.federationofchristianministries.org). Go to the **Member Login**, sign in and a **Members Only** drop-down will appear on the top right of the home page where all of the forms are listed. You can complete the form online and submit or there is a PDF available for you to print and send in by US mail. If you have a problem with logging in please contact me at [communication@FCMmail.org](mailto:communication@FCMmail.org)

Those of you who preside at baptisms, marriages and holy unions need to remember that FCM maintains a registry for these celebrations. And please note that when you preside at a Baptism **you must register the baptism** with FCM as such records may need to be accessed in the future.

**Already Listed on the FCM Website?** You must renew your listing every year. Check your listing and if there are no changes email me at [communication@FCMmail.org](mailto:communication@FCMmail.org) with the subject "No Change."

Please note: the **Membership List for Download** that was in the member login area of the FCM website is now available in **Realm**. If you have any questions regarding your Realm account, contact **Amy Simpson** at [connect@FCMmail.org](mailto:connect@FCMmail.org)

**FCM needs your help on Facebook...** A week after you receive your Newsletter it is posted on our Facebook page for public viewing. <https://www.facebook.com/Federation-of-Christian-Ministries-179262215432851>

If you are active on Facebook, it would be very helpful if you would go to our page and share the Newsletter with your Facebook friends. This would help us be recognized nationally and promote your ministry as well.

**FCM Blog and Twitter account...** The FCM Blog is written by members and posted at [www.FCMblog.org](http://www.FCMblog.org) You are welcome to submit an article for the blog to [communication@FCMmail.org](mailto:communication@FCMmail.org) And please follow the Federation of Christian Ministries on **Twitter** at <https://twitter.com/FCMinst>

A Happy New Year to one and all!

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# SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

JEANNE HALE, SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

## While You Were Waiting

The Committee on Specialized Ministries is pleased to report that four commissioned FCM members were approved for endorsement this past November! Please welcome **Justin Ferko** (Northeast), **Melody Kinder Carpenter** (Great Lakes), **Michelle Marie Mehan** (Southern), and **Laura Smith** (Southern). Congratulations!!

Although we've moved on liturgically from the season of Advent, as I thought about the process of becoming endorsed and the time and effort it takes, I was sparked to reflect a bit about waiting. Waiting is certainly a part of the endorsement process, and as a member of the Specialized Ministries Committee for FCM, I often have the privilege of being with people who are waiting. Waiting to have their gifts for ministry acknowledged in a way that empowers them to use those gifts to serve God and God's creation. Waiting to hear back about a job possibility. Waiting for a door to open. Waiting for people to write letters of recommendation. Waiting to meet a committee in their request to become certified as a professional chaplain. Waiting with uncertainty and hope.

Waiting plays a big role in other areas of my life, too. As a certified educator in a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, I learn with and from students every day about what it's like to be in that space of waiting. Waiting to complete a seminary degree. Waiting for this CPE unit to be over with, already! Waiting to have four units of CPE under their belt. Waiting for the pager to go off again, and hoping to get in at least a little sleep or maybe a bite to eat before it does. Waiting with terrified families to hear from the medical staff about a loved one who was just brought in as a trauma. Waiting to know what's next. Waiting with nervousness and expectation.

I also serve as a chaplain, primarily in the behavioral health unit at the hospital where I work. This is a locked unit with no windows, no televisions in the rooms, and shared bathrooms. It is a temporary, safe space for people to rest, get regular meals, and perhaps get back on needed medications or have adjustments made to help their medications work better. Mostly, though, it's a place of waiting. Long, boring days with little to do. Days spent waiting for the next meal. Waiting for the next medication. Waiting to go home. Waiting to go to another facility. Waiting to use the phone. Waiting for a loved one to come visit. Waiting for the voices to stop, for the pain to go away, for someone to take them seriously and treat them with dignity. Waiting with fear and courage.

I'm deeply grateful for the many people I have in my life who teach me every single day about what it means to wait and how to embrace the waiting in a way that allows room for uncertainty, hope, nervousness, expectation, fear and courage. I'm also deeply grateful to be a part of the FCM community. I know that we as an association of ministers and faith communities are not afraid to be in those waiting spaces, places and seasons, just as we are not afraid to move forward and to risk challenging ourselves and others through growth, speaking out about injustice, and broadening perspectives. May we embrace the gifts to be found in the times of waiting, and may we continue to be open to God's abiding presence in all the seasons of our lives.



# Faith Communities



GINNY CUSACK & MARITA GRUDZEN

## Faith Communities Stay Connected

We are delighted to announce that the FCM Faith Communities Zoom Networking Meetings will begin February 2019. The format will continue to bring representatives from each faith community together to exchange ideas on the liturgy and various topics plus share what is happening in each of their communities. We warmly welcome any FCM member and any faith community to participate in one or all of these discussions.

Our plan is to maintain the current schedule and meet on *the first Sunday of the month at 7 pm EST*. Meetings will begin promptly and will last one hour on the following dates: February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2. Since we understand a number of faith communities do not find that convenient, we are willing to meet a *second time each month on a weekday*. If that is your preference, please have a representative of your community email [Ginny \[cusack.g@gmail.com\]\(mailto:Ginny\_cusack.g@gmail.com\)](mailto:Ginny_cusack.g@gmail.com) as soon as possible and let us know a day of the week you can meet. If there are three or four groups that can meet on the same day and time we will meet via Zoom on that day.

There will be a brief check-in at the beginning of the meeting, a 10-minute presentation on the topic with discussion and sharing for the remaining 45 minutes. Since the goal of the meetings is to network and share with members of other faith communities, we've chosen pertinent topics on which to focus:

- February: Global Climate Action:** What can we do as individuals and communities to protect Mother Earth as disciples of Christ?
- March: Witness of Women:** What is the witness of women, based on their moral authority and calling?
- April: Interfaith:** Can we as faith communities find ways to build bridges of respect, compassion, understanding, and collaboration with other religious faith communities in our region?
- May: Contemplation:** How can we support each other in integration contemplation in our lives which is the source of hope, peace, courage and mission?
- June: Community as the Leaven of Christ:** Can we be the leaven of Christ and consider the area where we live our community?

Marita will gather resources for participants to read and/or listen to and send them a week prior to the meeting. We also welcome your input, so if you wish to share additional resources, please send them to Ginny [cusack.g@gmail.com](mailto:Ginny_cusack.g@gmail.com) or Marita [maritagrudzen@gmail.com](mailto:maritagrudzen@gmail.com).

We will send a Zoom link approximately a week prior to the meeting. If representatives have not used Zoom, please contact Ginny at [cusack.g@gmail.com](mailto:Ginny_cusack.g@gmail.com) who will assist you and explain the procedure and practice with you before the meeting. Please plan to be part of this enriching series!

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# A Welcoming Spiritual Home

MIKE CORSO

(Editor's note: Thanks to Northeast member **Mike Corso** for submitting the latest in our ongoing series on FCM faith community members.)



Ten years ago, people in Sussex, Morris and Bergen (New Jersey) counties were looking for an alternative to traditional liturgies. **Mary Ann Schoettly, RCWP** answered that need in August 2008 by forming **Sophia** - a welcoming, inclusive community practicing the discipleship of equals found in early church communities. All gifts are honored, and all gifts are offered in service to the People of God.



In addition to an alternative liturgy, we offer the opportunity to spend an hour with the community, discussing the readings and how they impact our lives. We leave each Sunday with a better understanding of how we can bring the joy, light, compassion and peace of Christ to those around us, especially to those most in need. We also understand the value of continuous spiritual development and so engage in regular Spiritual Days of Reflection. Just a few of our facilitators have included Edwina Gately, Michael Morwood, Barbara Fiand and Jan Novotka.

Recognizing that personal, spiritual growth is not enough, our community engages in many outreach initiatives, offering our time, talent and treasure to various causes. Our longest engagement is with **Pathways 2 Prosperity**, a local organization that assists low-income families and individuals who have made a serious commitment to change their lives. Members of our community volunteer every Tuesday night as well as assist in "Carousel," their annual fundraiser.



Sophia also contributes to the Sparta Ecumenical Council Food Pantry, Summer Children's Food Program and Summer Pet Food Program. In addition, we often respond to global needs as they arise, such as natural disasters and the effects of war on families. We support a sister community in Rochester, NY that provides assistance to migrant farmers. Our latest outreach includes Refugee Assistance Morris Partners (RAMP), a group which assists families held in Middle Eastern refugee camps to transition to productive lives of dignity, safety, and hope in the Morris County area of New Jersey.

In addition, we keep ourselves up-to-date on a variety of social justice issues by hosting guest speakers who give us an in-depth education on the situation. We have learned much about the plight of immigrants, the peoples of the Navajo Nation, environmental impacts issues and those who provide hope to orphans in Africa.



As you can see, the Sophia community makes a difference in the individual lives of community members as well as those beyond our walls. We look forward to continuing our presence and contributing to the citizens of Sussex County and beyond for many years to come! To learn more about us visit <http://sophiainclusivecatholiccommunity.org/>. All – all – are welcome!

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TOM CUSACK

# FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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## Consider Insuring the FCM Endowment

As Endowment Committee Chair, I am happy to report our fund has grown to \$13,100. This is wonderful news, as we have not yet made a major solicitation. Although our committee is currently developing a comprehensive contribution strategy, we encourage you to donate at any time.

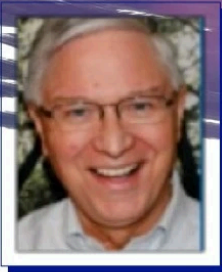
An efficient way to do this is through life insurance you already own. If you decide that helping FCM to grow into the future is a value for you, review the life insurance policies you own. Begin by choosing an amount by which you would like to benefit the endowment at the time of your death. For example, \$10,000 can create a named memorial in the endowment. The earnings generated by an amount of \$25,000 can be disbursed for a purpose of your choice. Perhaps you would want an assembly scholarship to be offered in your name, assisting members for years to come. Smaller amounts from life insurance policies are wonderful also.

Once you have decided on an amount, take out your policy and contact your life insurance company's customer service number. Let the service representative know your policy number and indicate that you want to change your beneficiary designation. Have in mind the exact new designation you desire, as you may be able to tell this designation to the representative who may complete the paperwork for you. Then the company will mail it to you for your signature. Sign it and send it back, and the new beneficiary designation will be in place. If you would like additional assistance from FCM, contact **John Jeffrey** at [endowment@FCMmail.org](mailto:endowment@FCMmail.org)



Here are a couple examples: 1) You have a \$25,000 policy and would like FCM to receive \$10,000. The best way to accomplish this beneficiary designation is by percentages. You would arrange two primary beneficiaries. For your first primary beneficiary you would designate FCM to receive 40% of the policy proceeds. And the second primary beneficiary, say that was your nephew, would receive 60% of the policy proceeds. At the time of your death the amount of \$10,000 would go to the endowment as a named memorial. The other \$15,000 would go to your nephew. 2) You have a \$15,000 policy on which you are still paying \$20 per month. On this policy you could change the owner to FCM for the endowment fund. You can continue to pay the premiums, and now they will be considered tax-deductible donations to FCM. At the time of your death the policy proceeds would go to the endowment in your memory.

Our ongoing thanks are due to the members of the Endowment Committee: **Tony Ercolano** (Circle), **Jim Verrecchia** (Southern Region), **Mary Ann Cejka** (Northeast Region) and **John Jeffrey** (Pacific Region).



# FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

TOM CUSACK

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## FCM Fundraising for California Fire Victims



As FCM leadership recognized the horror of the California wildfires, we determined to make a request to our membership and to the broader community, reached through our social media, for assistance to aid the victims of this terrible disaster. We explained that the funds collected would be dispersed with no processing fees exacted by FCM or its financial vendors.

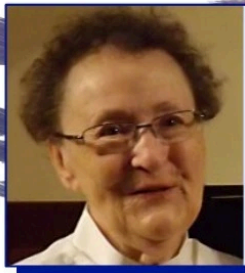
The response resulted in donations totaling \$1075. Since the situation on the ground was evolving quickly, in discussion with Pacific Region Vice President **Donna Schreiber** we decided to disburse the funds through *La Comunidad* in San Jose, California, one of our faith community members. **Marita Grudzen**, long-time member of both FCM and *La Comunidad*, took the responsibility for finding three recipients.

The first beneficiary, an older couple whose property was completely destroyed, declined the contribution in favor of someone with greater need. A search for a new recipient is underway.

Marita described our second recipient in this way: "She is a wonderful young woman, hard-working, dedicated, and kind. She is a Catholic and former member of St. John of God Church in San Francisco. She is now employed as a nurse in a prison. She and her fiancé, a welder, purchased a fixer upper home in Paradise, California one year ago. They spent all their free time and money to bring this dwelling up to code and make it livable. The Paradise fire totally destroyed their home all their belongings. Temporarily renting an unfurnished apartment, they express their extreme gratitude to FCM for this financial grant. They plan to use the money to obtain a second pair of nursing shoes for her, pots and pans, and pantry supplies. They thank you for your generosity."

The third is attending California State University at Chico. "He rented a room at a home in Paradise, California with his cousins and others. They escaped the fire with only the clothes on their backs. The house and the whole area were destroyed by the Paradise fire. His grandparents have bought him some clothes, but he still needs more clothes, bed, desk, etc. He lost everything."

On behalf of the rest of the Executive Committee – Chairperson **Tom Stricker**, Treasurer **Heidi Tierney** and Secretary **Kathy Bean** – I express deep gratitude to those who donated. We are making an impact in the lives of a few people in a desperate situation. As you continue to raise your prayers for those who lost loved ones and the many who lost all their property, please consider making a contribution.



# Divine Obedience and Civil Disobedience

RITA LUCEY

(Editor's note: thanks to **Rita Lucey**, a member of Southern Region, a wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother and a Roman Catholic Woman Priest. <https://arcwp.org/?s=rita+lucey> )

In 1996, I read of a documentary film *School of Assassins* by the Maryknoll Missionaries. Fascinated by the title and the fact that it was nominated for an award I sent for it. The day it arrived I watched it and my first response was "My government wouldn't do that." After the second viewing it was, "Oh, no..." and after the third time I called the number at the end of the film and so begins my story.

For many years the United States has maintained a training school for the Latin American military at Ft. Benning, Georgia. This infamous institution – the School of the Americas (SOA) – has trained hundreds of Central and South American military conscripts in various types of "warfare" and acts of terrorism. Many of these graduates become the worst human rights abusers in the Western Hemisphere.

At the age of 65, in 1996 I "crossed the line," carrying a makeshift cross bearing the name of Jean Donovan, one of the victims of the violence perpetrated by graduates of this institution. I was arrested along with 60 others and cited with a five year Do Not Return document that is also known as a "Bar and Ban."

In the interim I traveled with Witness for Peace and a group called EPIC A to confirm for myself the horrors I had witnessed in the film. The truths were evident in the sharing by witnesses of these atrocities, and by the work of the UN Truth Commission in El Salvador and Guatemala. They named those guilty of these crimes and the attendance records of the SOA confirmed their enrollment and the courses studied. With this in mind, how could I not ignore the Bar and Ban and once more cross that line? Now the charge for ignoring the Bar and Ban under the U.S. Military Code became criminal trespass, subject to six months in prison and a fine of \$3000.

Yes, prison. It proved to be more difficult than I expected and an eye opener about the injustice of our justice system. The women confined there, some 500 made up mostly of minorities, were under-educated and subject to poor economic situations. They were sentenced for non-violent crimes, mostly drug-related though they were not dealers. And to further traumatize these prisoners, they nearly all had children under 18. The social implications here cannot be justified considering the harm that happens as a result.

As an advocate for human rights, with a special interest in prison conditions, the Spirit Sophia, not done with me yet, next introduced the plight of asylum seekers. While attending the protests at Ft Benning, a side trip to a private prison in Lumpkin, Ga, an impoverished rural town, again led to an arrest. This private prison housed over 1700 men under questionable physical and mental conditions. Dressed as the Statue of Liberty and holding my torch high the good sheriff handcuffed me in the front as I reminded him of his mother! This gave me the opportunity to hold my cuffed hands out the rear window, torch in hand, on the way to police headquarters.

The Spirit leads where it will. My personal encounters with civil disobedience are accompanied by and with like-minded individuals. We commit to these actions from our different responses to beliefs, cultures, knowledge and experiences. Often our first responsibilities are to family, children, and financial concerns. Only then are we free to consider the possibility of prison, of fines, of the loss of civil rights.

For the last several years, I have dedicated my presence at protests to commemorate Rufina Amaya, a Salvadoran woman, the sole survivor of the massacre at El Mozote perpetrated by graduates of the SOA. Away from her village that day, she returned to the horror of watching her husband, four children, parents and sibling die in gunfire aimed at the school which the villagers were forced to enter. As a final act the structure was set afire.

Somehow, in faith we trust that all is evolving as it should to what Teilhard de Chardin called the Omega Point. And we ask "Oh Holy One, is it I?" as we await the response knowing He goes before us always. May the restlessness of Christ continue to inspire us all.

(note: For information about the School of America Watch: <https://youtu.be/CzeJ4UEdAuE> )





# NORTHEAST REGION

VICE PRESIDENT - CARL YUSAVITZ

## Region Celebrates New Members



**Anthony Capone** (center) was commissioned in July and celebrated with his extended family on November 23<sup>rd</sup> at his home in Stewartville, NJ. Anthony is a spiritual director, with a certificate in spiritual direction from Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, PA.



Chaplain **Justin Ferko** was endorsed this fall and serves patients, families, and staff at Geisinger Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill, PA. He ministers in Palliative Care, Trauma, and Progressive Care, as well as with Spanish-speaking patients throughout the hospital.

Endorsed member Chaplain **Cheryl McDevitt** was granted "full" Certified Educator status by The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education in October. Cheryl is the Director of Spiritual Care and Education at Beverly (MA) Hospital, part of the Lahey Health System.



Calling for volunteers to help plan our Spring 2019 Regional Gathering!



In conversations with Eddy Farm, where we met twice before, we have 2 weekend options to meet in May. Eddy Farm is a Christian retreat center located approximately 85 miles from New York City (near Port Jervis). The center is situated on 100 acres of beautiful property on the Delaware River near where New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey meet. Eddy Farm also has a number of options for rooms and baths. Ideally, a committee of 4, meeting by Zoom conferencing, could plan our gathering. Would you be interested in serving our region this way?

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# GREAT LAKES REGION

VICE PRESIDENT - RON DAVIS

## Local Gatherings Scheduled

**Renewal period concluding...** Now that the new year is with us, our hope is that all members have completed their renewal. If you have not done so due to a financial hardship, please remember that FCM is a compassionate and caring organization. We are always willing to work with members who are going through challenging times. Feel free to talk to your vice president so that your ministry will not be disrupted and you can be supported by the greater community.

**Area gatherings on the way ...** Plans are coming together for small group gatherings in our region. The first two of the year will take place on January 19<sup>th</sup>. **Shannon Queenan** has informed us that **Bob Mueller** [bmueller@hosparus.org](mailto:bmueller@hosparus.org) will host a group in Louisville. The other will take place in Cincinnati and will be hosted by **Amy Simpson-Bennethum** [connect@fcmmail.org](mailto:connect@fcmmail.org). We hope you are able to make the trip as either event will provide a great opportunity to meet and visit with other FCM members in this part of the region. You can make contact with Bob or Amy on Realm or by email.

Other opportunities to gather will take place during the spring. The Cleveland community will set their first date soon, and I am in conversation with members from the Indianapolis area to see if we can schedule a meeting in that city. The first Michigan gathering will take place in the spring sometime after the winter's snows have passed. Our hope is to use Realm to communicate more about the dates as they move closer.



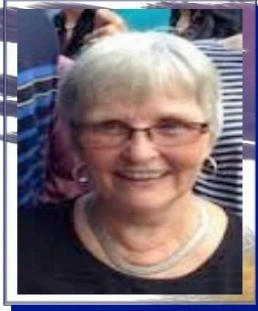
**Happy news to share...** On a personal note, this has been an exciting couple of months for me. Todd and I were married on November 13<sup>th</sup>. We had a fun celebration with friends on December 15<sup>th</sup>. It's a good and blessed time for the two of us.

As 2019 begins, I will sound like others my age by saying "time is flying by so very fast!" God bless you and thank you for your prayers, support and participation with the entire FCM family.

### Save the Date.. members and friends of the Great Lakes Region...

**Maria Stein Conference and Retreat Center has been reserved for us for October 4 -6, 2019.** As in 2017, we will be there the same time as the Minster, Ohio Oktoberfest. For those of you who are up for a challenge, there is a 10k race taking place early Saturday morning on October 5<sup>th</sup> as part of the Festival. You still have time to train ☺ We will duplicate our planning effort from 2017 with a different area of the region taking the lead for each of the weekend's segments.

In addition, we continue to put a schedule of **local gatherings together for 2019.** Our hope is to have times set aside to gather so that we can offer support and encouragement to one another so **STAY TUNED!**



# SOUTHERN REGION

VICE PRESIDENT - DIANE DOUGHERTY

## Meaning in Leave-Taking



Experiencing the journey of today's migrants – leaving all to find a new future – I reflected it was no different than the flight the Holy Family took to escape the oppression of Herod. In asking the question, "*How is your growing faith presenting you with a challenge or place you never thought existed?*" I realized each of us processes forms of mental and physical migrations – a leaving of that present space to venture toward an unknown. In this season of quiet, listen to the stories of members of the Southern Region as they share their faith journey.

### Weaving Wide Webs for Family

Ourselves aging, caring for aged and ill family members in different states of the nation, moving them closer to us while at the same time visiting grandchildren on opposite coasts.

• Shane McCarthy, McLean, VA

### Exploring Beliefs Then and Now

I used to be big on looking at the various doctrines of faith and trying to understand them. However, becoming more versed in creation spirituality, I no longer find any value in the explanations of those doctrines.

I used to think that I needed to know what faith was all about. Today, though, I see faith as no longer a set of beliefs, but rather faith is a realization that I really have no answers to life's questions.

Faith today is nothing more than complete trust in a caring creator whom I no longer can describe other than as a caring and creative energy.

• Arnold Simonese, Pineville, West Virginia

### Discovering the true origins of scripture does not shake my faith

After reading the arguments and evidence, and seriously weighing the possibility, nay, very high probability, I have concluded, that the Passion of the Christ was likely the Passion Play of the death of Caesar. I find that my faith in Christ and God is not shaken.

• Bert Thurston, Stone Mountain, GA



### Uncomfortability, struggle and confusion

I have always believed that appropriate rules and regulations are necessary for the peace and safety of society. I understood that those requirements must always be subject to change as conditions demand.

What I never thought would exist in my faith process is the confusion that accompanies supporting positions which also allow abusive and criminal situations to accompany what is good and righteous.

• Frank Pisciotta, Orlando, FL



**We are all ONE**

Challenges? The insights into the Oriental/Asian religions with the emphasis on mindfulness, reality, and compassion that continues to raise my awareness of Presence. How the practice of centering prayer, meditation, and a recognition of the Sophia Wisdom is grounded in a Cosmic Christ known by Allah, God, Adonai, Confucius, Buddha, and the 330 gods of Hindi. Is this revelation within us unacknowledged?

- Rita Lucey, Orange City, FL



**Giving voice to weakness as strength**

To answer the second part of your question, how has your growing faith led you to a place you never thought existed? I have come a long distance from that rural mentality that one is always strong and never speaks of weakness. God has saved our family and now we must tell of his goodness. In the telling of our weakness, we have found great strength.

- Jeanne Barnes, Gulf Breeze, FL



**Companions on the journey**

My growing faith is presenting me with the challenge to walk alongside others, recognizing that it is an honor to be invited on the journey and offering compassionate support while not assuming that I know better than they what is best for them.

- Jeanne Hale, Knightdale, NC



**Resisting ripples of injustice- brings forth waves of justice**

My growing faith is leading me to keep making the connections between gender injustice and all other injustices as intimately related through prayer and actions like peaceful demonstrations, calling state and national officials and representatives. All justice issues are integral to living the Gospel.

- Bridget Mary Meehan, Sarasota, FL



**Finding my words-my beliefs**

What has caused me great pause is the first assignment in "Contemporary Theology 101:" to define and articulate my Creed.

- Shelley Gilchrist, Deland, FL



**Hearing Our Hearts' Stories**

Our country is so terribly divided now. Stereotyping, demonizing, fear and even hatred of the "other" abound. I feel a need to heal. I am preparing myself (and my own heart) to form a small group from both sides of the aisle to engage with each other. We will not debate issues We will hear one another's deep heart stories – the feelings and life experiences that run underneath the issues. The goal will not be to find solutions or even common ground, but rather to come to understand one another better and hopefully grow in love of one another.

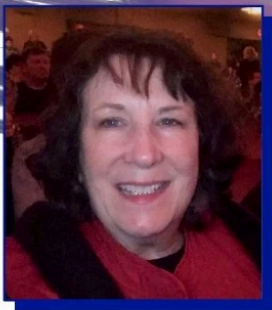
- Ann Temkin, Decatur, GA



**A Faith Rich, Inclusive, Loving and Diverse**

Joining FCM is a reflection of years of growth that took me in a direction I never realized would happen. My faith has blossomed into a rich, inclusive, loving, and diverse faith that allows for the wisdom of not only my faith tradition but also the wisdom of all others. Understanding and practicing inter-religious dialogue has become a critical need in our country when it is evident that the Christian faith is being hijacked by politics and other spheres of society that have perverted the gospel of Jesus.

- Ryan Mulkowsky, Lilburn, GA



# PACIFIC REGION

VICE PRESIDENT - DONNA SCHREIBER

## Regional Events Live and In Person



Save the date for an *Arizona* gathering. On March 23, **Tracy Peterson** is hosting once again at Hope Covenant Church, 1770 S Dobson Rd, Chandler, AZ 85286. Watch for more information.



We are pleased to announce a day to share spiritual practice with FCM colleagues in the *Northern California* area. It will be held on January 12 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm (Doors open at 9:30 am) at The Journey Center, 1601 4th Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Cost is \$25.00 for the facility rental. RSVP to **Gretchen Daniels** 707-235-4698 via text or email: [pleasantword@sonic.net](mailto:pleasantword@sonic.net)



Thanks once again to **Scott Bennion** will host our popular *region-wide Zoom Gatherings*. This bi-monthly get-together gives members the opportunity to enjoy one another's fellowship for as long as they like during the one-hour period and takes place on the first Saturday of even-numbered months beginning at 5 pm Arizona time: February 2, April 6, June 1, August 3, October 5 and December 7. You can use your laptop or mobile device and don't worry if you haven't used Zoom before. Just go to Zoom.com and "join a meeting." The meeting ID # is 453374117. You will then be connected. Hope to see you there.



## ATTENTION

**All FCM members who preside at BAPTISMS**  
You are required to register the Baptism with the FCM Registry Office.  
The registry form is available on the FCM website.

- ▶ Go to [www.federationofchristianministries.org](http://www.federationofchristianministries.org)
- ▶ Login to the Members Only area of the site.
- ▶ Click on the Members Only link on the top right of the page.
- ▶ Click on the Baptism Registry Form
- ▶ You can complete the registry ONLINE or download a PDF form and mail it to the registry office  
The address is on the form.

Questions? Please email [registry@FCMmail.org](mailto:registry@FCMmail.org). Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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# Federation of Christian Ministries



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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](mailto:newsletter@FCMmail.org) by the 15th of each month (February, April, June, August, October and December).

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### FCM CERTIFICATES

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

## FCM Membership & Realm

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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 twice yearly. Endorsement application materials are available for downloading on the FCM website at: [www.federationofchristianministries.org](http://www.federationofchristianministries.org)  
Inquiries may be made at: [specmin@FCMmail.org](mailto:specmin@FCMmail.org)

### GLOBAL MINISTRIES UNIVERSITY

GMU offers degree completion programs and individual courses online. FCM members are eligible for a 5% discount on degree programs. **For more information, visit the web site:** [www.globalministriesuniversity.org](http://www.globalministriesuniversity.org) Email: [GMU5053@aol.com](mailto:GMU5053@aol.com)  
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