

# Federation of Christian Ministries



## Newsletter

November/December 2019

VOL. 53 - Number 6



## IN THIS ISSUE

# Thanksgiving Blessings



If the only prayer  
you ever say in  
your entire life is  
**Thank You,**  
it will be enough.  
Meister Eckhart

<b>Forgiveness: A Matter of the Heart</b> Christy Howard-Steele, FCM Chairperson.....	Page 2
<b>The Good, Bad and the Ugly</b> Tom Cusack, FCM President.....	Page 3
<b>What Does It Really Mean To Be a Convention of Churches?</b> Christy Howard-Steele, FCM Chairperson.....	Page 4
<b>FCM Endowment</b> <b>Endowment Committee Exciting News</b> Tom Stricker, FCM Endowment.....	Page 5
<b>FCM 2020 National Assembly</b> Peter Strening, FCM Assembly Chair .....	Page 6
<b>FCM Members Website Listing</b> Antoinette Marold, FCM Communications.....	Page 7
<b>The Spiritual Side of Resilience</b> Carl Yusavitz, FCM Northeast V.P.....	Page 8
<b>Celebrant Training Program</b> Jean Conley, FCM/GMU.....	Page 9
<b>Mission to Jamaica</b> Margaret Brower, FCM & Anthony Ercolano, FCM.....	Page 10
<b>An Inclusive Ministry within FCM</b> Tom Stricker, FCM .....	Page 11
<b>El Paso Border Challenges Heart and Soul</b> Dave Pasinsky, FCM Northeast Region.....	Page 12
<b>Newly Endorsed Members at the July 2019 Circle Meeting</b> FCM Committee on Specialized Ministries.....	Pages 13-14
<b>Regional News</b>	
<b>Retreat &amp; Commissionings</b> <b>Northeast Region Gathering 2019</b> Carl Yusavitz, Northeast V.P.....	Pages 15-16
<b>Southern..Membership Has Risen</b> Diane Dougherty, Southern V.P.....	Page 17
<b>Great Lakes...Great Lakes Region News &amp; Commissioning</b> Ron Davis, Great Lakes V.P.....	Page 18
<b>Mountains &amp; Plains...An Important Lesson in Ministry</b> Richard James, Mts. & Plains, V.P.....	Page 19
<b>FCM Directory.....</b>	Page 20

Cover Photo: Antelope Canyon Arizona





# CHAIRPERSON

CHRISTY HOWARD-STEELE



## Forgiveness: A Matter of the Heart

"I forgive you." That's what 18-year-old Brandt Jean said to the former Dallas police officer, Amber Guyer, sentenced to 10 years in prison for murdering Brandt's brother, Botham, while he was sitting on his sofa in his own apartment eating ice cream. It is also what some family members said to an unrepentant Dylann Roof, less than 48 hours after he shot and killed 9 people in a South Carolina church after bible study. These unexpected acts of forgiveness are lauded by some and are a source of controversy for others. Botham Jean and the 9 people killed in South Carolina are black while Guyer and Roof are white. Why are black people the only ones doing the forgiving (or getting the media attention for doing so)?

As a person who is Christian, there is no controversy that I am called to forgive others. Forgiveness is a means of extending grace to one another. G-d and the bible are replete with instructions to forgive one another such as in the prayer that Jesus taught us: "Forgive us our debts and we also have forgiven our debtors." However, as a black Christian, I am concerned when forgiveness extended by black persons is used seemingly to excuse or lessen the impact of racist behavior, the need for accountability and change. In these circumstances, forgiveness is treated as a form of 'cheap grace.'

As I reflected on these matters, I began to wonder if it is easier to forgive someone that we perceive to be the same than it is someone we perceive to be different? For me, if I can imagine why someone did something; if I have a frame of reference; if I feel that the person has a frame of reference to understand the impact of their actions on me, it's easier for me to forgive. When I feel violated or betrayed by someone from a different race, ethnicity, faith tradition it is more difficult to imagine their frame of reference. I tend to ascribe the violation to the person's categorization rather than the person? This may make it easier to justify my own withdrawal from the relationship. However, if I don't work through my anger and forgive this particular person for this particular action, I become stuck. My injury becomes attached to the categorization, and it tends to become the lens through which I see everyone in that category as unforgiveable.

Recently, I felt betrayed by a white person. When I discussed the matter with the person, rather than acknowledging my feelings, the person justified their action through a frame I don't understand or resonate with. This only intensified my anger. Being able to work through my anger (which I had to do for my own wellbeing) to be able to say "I forgive you" has helped me to not look through the same lens of distrust at other white persons. It helps me to see each person in their humanity.

There is a renewed interest and discussion about reparations for blacks for the suffering and violations endured during slavery. Not surprisingly, according to a 2016 poll cited in the New York Times, a majority of black Americans supported reparations while whites rejected it by an overwhelming margin. I believe this is really at its core a request to acknowledge a moral, spiritual, social wrong and a refusal to do so. Stuck! The same pattern of moral, spiritual, and social wrong behavior is what recurs with immigrants, Muslims, etc. both now and historically. My interest is not in getting paid a reparation. I am interested in encouraging the authentic, heart-felt forgiveness necessary for all of G-d's people to move forward equitably. As we approach Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, let our gratitude reflect the many forms of grace we have received. As we prepare to celebrate the light coming into the world, let us explore our hearts to forgive people in categories that are different from us. Lastly but not least, let us celebrate and share G-d's love with family, friends, and stranger.

1 I also recognize the suffering and violations of Native Americans that also needs acknowledgement as a moral, spiritual, and social wrong.

2 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/23/business/economy/reparations-slavery.html>

3 <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/us-government-turned-away-thousands-jewish-refugees-fearing-they-were--nazi-spies-180957324/>



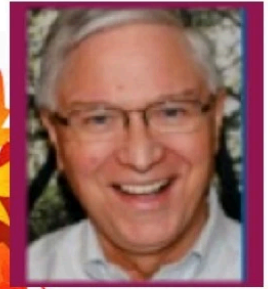
November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries



# PRESIDENT



## GOOD

Let's start with the **Good...that is FCM** and its current status strength and growth. The FCM Northeast Regional Conference took place October 11 – 13. There were about 30 members present. The program provided us all with *new information and ways to understand* our evolving cultural landscape so that we leaders, dedicated to Christ, might view and interact more effectively with the people we meet. The formal part of the weekend was very effective and helpful. But the time during which we had an informal structure was equally valuable. During our meals and free time, we were able to communicate informally with one another. This communication was so valuable in sharing experiences and gaining inspiration from others who are finding a safe home and refuge in FCM. The developing support that these informal friendships provide goes out into the future for each. With these relationships we have an enlarged number of people actively sharing our own values and experiences. We can talk with them and rely on them going forward. This network of friendship makes for a more satisfying and joy filled life.

During the conference, I was able to make a presentation about current events within FCM. I described our organizational strength from the standpoint of several factors. As the inclusive nature of FCM becomes more widely known our faith community and individual *membership numbers are growing*. We have the highest number of active individual members and faith community members in our history. *[Please tell people about FCM, for you are the FCM marketing organization.]* In addition, *our lack of dogma and doctrine* fits the younger portion of our culture. They recognize a personal responsibility to make sense of their own lives and their most significant values. FCM provides a safe harbor within which to do this deeply personal work. Our supporting individual spiritual growth may be our most important contribution to our culture.

TOM CUSACK

## BAD

**The Bad...** We are living in the United States of America as its political discourse and institutions are being tested as never before. I suggest it is our individual responsibility as good citizens to be knowledgeable, informed, and active in our political thoughts and involvements. We each should understand what is happening on our national and local levels. Then we should provide responsible informed citizen-input to our political leaders. They deserve to hear from us, who are spiritual people who have studied and followed Jesus in most cases for our entire lives. In addition, there are high levels of violence in our society as many follow the *Religion of the Gun* [please refer to my article in the September-October Newsletter]. There are also many who see the *alien and the stranger* as a threat. These mindsets erode the Judeo-Christian foundations of our culture: outreach to the displaced and the refugee. Our prayer, our meditation, and our communications to our political leaders can have an effect in turning the erosion around.

## U G L Y

**The Ugly...** Here I state awareness of the accelerating and deepening effect on our *climate and weather of the warming of the globe*. Glaciers in Switzerland have receded 10% in the last five years. The California utility company turns off the electricity to a vast region in hopes of avoiding the catastrophic wildfires that have swept through dry California, taking lives and property in historic measure. The ocean acidification cripples and kills the reefs on which so much ocean life depends for safe environments. The Arctic ecology is collapsing with the melting of the ice cap. Additional effects we cannot predict are occurring day after day. So, as committed ministers of the gospel and as dedicated followers of Jesus, we must consider carving out time and leadership in the area of climate activism. The new prophet, Greta Thunberg, calls us adults to step up and demand processes and ways to stop our injection of heat trapping gases into our atmosphere before it is absolutely too late. Many of us in FCM have children and grandchildren. They must be given the chance to look back at us earlier generations and say, "When the crisis came, our elders stepped up and did what they had to do to save civilization and our very lives. Bless their sacrifice."



Back to **The Good**: remember my daily formula of two minutes of prayer and two minutes of meditation for the benefit of FCM. Please make this a minimum FCM-oriented spiritual activity (2 x 2 for FCM). On Tuesdays, do *Tuesday 10 for FCM*. To address the **Bad** and the **Ugly** we need all our spiritual reserves to be allocated fully. In this, FCM can lead.

November/December 2019 VOL. 53 NO. 6

# Federation of Christian Ministries





# CHAIRPERSON

CHRISTY HOWARD-STEELE

## What Does It Really Mean To Be A Convention of Churches?

In 2010, FCM was recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a convention of churches. Other than the fact that you may have seen or heard an announcement about it, this change has been basically unnoticeable for most of us. What is a convention of churches? I'm so glad you asked! A convention of churches, also referred to as an association of churches, is primarily a term used in U.S. tax law to describe a cooperative endeavor among churches. In order to enhance the ability of its members to fulfill their purpose, the faith communities join together as part of a convention or association. The convention performs certain functions and/or provides certain services such as establishing strategic direction, setting ordination guidelines, providing endorsement for specialized ministries, negotiating contracts, etc.

What does it mean for FCM to be a convention of churches? Great question! It means first of all that FCM is a church and not an association of professionals whose purpose is to support themselves. Let that sink in..... This is not a change. Many FCM members are leaders in their faith communities. Many FCM members gather together regularly to worship and support others, some of whom are FCM members and some who are not members of FCM. As our mission statement states, FCM's purpose is to empower and nurture those inspired for inclusive ministries. Being a convention of churches means it is important to FCM's identity and legacy that we continue to create, grow, develop, lead, and gather in inclusive local communities of faith that become members of FCM.

Questions? Email me at [chairperson@fcmmail.org](mailto:chairperson@fcmmail.org).



November/December 2019

VOL 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries





# FCM ENDOWMENT FUND

BY TOM STRICKER

The Endowment Committee has some exciting news. We have an anonymous donor who is challenging the FCM membership with a \$10,000.00 match grant. If we can match individual donations equaling the \$10,000, the donor will donate the match.

We need everyone to get involved. No donation is too small. Go to the [FCM website www.federationofchristianministries.org](http://www.federationofchristianministries.org) or go to your personal account on [Realm www.onrealm.org](http://www.onrealm.org) and make your donation.

1. Sign in to [Realm](http://www.onrealm.org) 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
6. On the "memo" window and write "Endowment Matching Grant"

**"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you."  
Mother Teresa**

As we enter this holiday season, remember and celebrate the universal and the particular ways G-d has shown G-d's love for each and every one of us. Love is revealed as our unique gifts and special talents are recognized and valued. In this Spirit of love, I want to thank you for the many "Christmas" encounters you have given in your ministries as you let God love others through you.

Wishing you many blessings in and beyond this holidays.  
May your time spent with family and friends be rich with love, joy, and peace!

Christy Howard-Steele  
Chairperson



November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries





PETER STRENING



# FCM 2020 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Spirituality and Service for the 21st Century  
Chicago, IL -- July 17-19, 2020



To Our "Next Generation" FCM Members:

We are writing to you specifically, as recently commissioned and younger members of the Federation. Our committee is planning for the 2020 National Assembly to be held next July 17-19 in Chicago. We would like to make the Assembly appealing to our newer and younger members and we are seeking your input on the workshops that will be held. Our Assembly theme is "Spirituality and Service for the 21st Century." The committee has discussed some general workshop themes, which are listed below.

We would like to hear from you: what workshop sessions would you be most interested in, excited about attending? Can you propose a few specific workshop ideas, perhaps related to the themes presented here? Would you know any FCM members or colleagues (how about you!) who would be able to help lead a workshop?

1. Chaplaincy
2. Social Justice ministries
3. Building of faith communities
4. LGBTQ+
5. Climate change / environment
6. Ministry to the lonely and isolated
7. Spirituality practices
8. Chaplain educators
9. Ministry around mental health
10. Micro-aggressions

Please forward your comments and suggestions to Peter Strening at [peterstrening@comcast.net](mailto:peterstrening@comcast.net).

Thank you for your thoughts and creativity! We look forward to your input and seeing you next year in Chicago!

FCM 2020 National Assembly Planning Committee

November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

## Federation of Christian Ministries





# Communication

ANTOINETTE MAROLD



## FCM Members Website Listing

### LISTING YOUR MINISTRY ON THE FCM WEBSITE

You may have noticed when you renewed your 2020 membership, there was an area for information regarding your ministry, if you wanted to be listed on the FCM website under FIND A MINISTER. This is one of the benefits of FCM membership.

You may request to be listed under 3 categories. If you requested more than 3 categories, only the first 3 will be listed. If you are an FCM Faith Community member you will also be listed under the Faith Community Dropdown on the website.

You must be a Commissioned Member of FCM to be listed under the Wedding Ministry tab.

This request must be made by you every year at renewal time.

If you have renewed your 2020 membership and did not complete the request you can complete the form at [FCMregistry.org](http://FCMregistry.org)

Look for the additions and changes to be made during and after the renewal period.

### REMINDER REGARDING BAPTISM & WEDDING REGISTRY

All FCM members who preside at a Baptism MUST record the Baptism with FCM.

The registry form can be found at [FCMregistry.org](http://FCMregistry.org)

Marriage registry forms can be found on the same site. Registering a marriage is not mandatory but suggested.

### FCM CENTRAL OFFICE

**Please make a note of the following changes:**

The FCM Central Office phone number has been changed to 216.571.7698 their address remains the same except for the suite number is now #1.

The email address remains the same [centraloffice@FCMmail.org](mailto:centraloffice@FCMmail.org).



November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries





# The Spiritual Side of Resilience

NORTHEAST VICE PRESIDENT...CARL YUSAVITZ



I recently attended the graduation of two members of our "REACH" program here at Penn Foundation, where I minister. REACH is an intensive psychiatric rehabilitation program that assists adults living with mental illness and co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders to achieve their personal goals. In other words – to gain the "tools" necessary to live a richer and more fulfilling life – "an abundant life" John's Gospel calls it. The hard work our REACH clients do is intensive and can last for up to two years. The word I would use to describe each of our REACH graduates is "resilient."

Resilience is a word we clergy borrow from positive psychology. Old-timers like me used to call it "grit." The Bible calls resilience by another word: "perseverance." It appears 13 times in the New Testament (NIV).

A working definition of resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, threats, or even significant sources of stress – such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace or financial stressors. In a word, resilience is not about how we fall down. It's about how we get up!

The Bible tells us this about our capacity for resilience in passages like these:

- > We are all created beloved in God's image (Gen. 1:27 & 5:3)
- > God seeks the best for us (Jer. 29:11 & Psalm 20:4)
- > We always have the capacity to hope for things unseen in the present moment (Rom. 12:12, Eph. 1:18, Heb. 6:19 & 10:23)

No two people are resilient in the same way, but each person needs a personal strategy to "bounce back," another metaphor for resilience.

God's creation can also teach us something important about resilience too. Consider the paradox of flexibility: "The oak tree breaks, while the willow bends."



Resilience also holds these paradoxes as true:

- > Let yourself experience strong emotions – while also realizing you may need to avoid experiencing them at certain times in order to continue functioning
- > Step forward and take decisive action to deal with your problems – while also stepping back to rest and reenergize yourself
- > Spend time with loved ones to gain support and encouragement – while also learning how to nurture yourself
- > Rely on others – while also learning to rely on yourself

To paraphrase the "Serenity Prayer," resilience teaches us to know the difference between the things we need to accept and the things we can actually change. May we all enjoy a resilient life!

*God,* Grant me  
 the Serenity to accept  
 the things  
 I cannot change,  
  
 the *Courage* to  
 change the things I can  
 and the  
  
*Wisdom* to  
 know the difference

November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries





# Celebrant Training Program

JEAN CONLEY



## Celebrant Training Program Offered to FCM Members

Global Ministries University offers a [Celebrant Training Program](http://www.globalministriesuniversity.org/celebrancycertificate/programoverview.html)

<http://www.globalministriesuniversity.org/celebrancycertificate/programoverview.html> that is completely online and self-directive, which gives students the flexibility to work at their own pace. The program was founded and first offered in 2011 by Jean Conley, when she was serving as GMU Vice President for Operations and Development. Jean and her husband, Mike, were also serving as Development Directors of the Federation of Christian Ministries. It was while holding the position of Development Director that the need to offer celebrant training to FCM members was brought to her attention.



It took a few years of experimentation, but Jean eventually put together a program that would work for individuals with various needs. There are two tracks: (1) Weddings and Other Commitment Ceremonies; and, (2) Funerals and Other Rites of Passage. The program is effective for those who want to become celebrants, but it is also beneficial for those who already conduct ceremonies and/or services but would like formal training.



FCM member, Antoinette Marold, who is currently in charge of FCM Communications; previously, she served as the FCM National Chairperson from 2007 - 2013, is the instructor of the Weddings track. Professionally, Antoinette is a **professional celebrant** [www.eleganteventsbyantoinette.com](http://www.eleganteventsbyantoinette.com) who has conducted hundreds of ceremonies for persons coming from various cultures and faith traditions, as well as those with no religious affiliation.



Mike Conley (D.Min.), who has been an FCM member since 1989, is the instructor of the Funerals track. He has conducted numerous services as a former Roman Catholic priest as well as conducting many services after he left the priesthood.



Upon completion of program, celebrants will receive a certificate granted by Global Ministries University. For more information about this program, email Jean Conley at [celebrancytraining@gmail.com](mailto:celebrancytraining@gmail.com).



# Mission to Jamaica

MARGARET BROWER & ANTHONY ERCOLANO



Having participated in and directed Mustard Seed Communities (MSC) groups to Nicaragua for nine years, FCM members **Margaret Brower** and her husband **Anthony Ercolano** were looking forward to leading another mission team there this year. However, when it became clear that, due to the volatile political situation in Nicaragua, they would not be able to return, Margaret proposed that they visit Jamaica, the place where Mustard Seed was founded. Having settled on dates and a destination, they spoke at all the Masses in their New York parish one weekend in April to invite members to accompany them.

The weekend recruitment appeal resulted in several volunteers, who were eventually unable to participate. This left Margaret and Anthony as the only two members of this year's team. There are 13 Mustard Seed sites in Jamaica, and six of them welcome volunteers. With that in mind, MSC proposed that they tour the six Jamaican mission sites. Prior to the mission, friends, relatives, parishioners, and FCM supporters helped raise almost \$18,000 for the missions in Jamaica and Nicaragua.

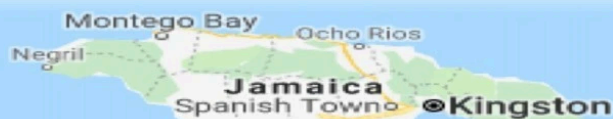
Upon their arrival in Jamaica on August 24th, Margaret and Anthony were welcomed by Leroy Palmer and Hugh Hanson, who accompanied them and provided background (and delightful company) at each of the visited sites. They were also introduced to each site administrator, who told them of each site's unique challenges in caring for its specific clientele. While most of the facilities focused on abandoned, disabled children and young adults, some residences specialized in caring for unwed mothers and their babies or individuals who are HIV positive.

Each MSC site strives for self-sufficiency by growing its own vegetables, raising farm animals, selling excess eggs to local markets, and many other initiatives. Self-sufficiency is also a goal for the residents, who sell the products they create, and participate in computer, sewing, and food preparation classes, taking into account their various levels of aptitude.

Because of minimal governmental support, MSC is totally dependent on the money raised by visiting mission teams from the U.S. Additionally, many of the visiting groups live out of their carry-on luggage for the week so that each missionary can check one 50 pound suitcase filled with donated clothing, toiletries, and medical supplies for the residents.

While there are many worthy charities, what distinguishes Mustard Seed is its transparency – welcoming volunteers to interact with residents, helping with work on their expanding facilities, and seeing in person the difference their contributions make. For suggestions on how you might help support Mustard Seed Communities, you may contact Margaret at [mmbrower1@yahoo.com](mailto:mmbrower1@yahoo.com).

Mustard Seed is committed to caring for abandoned, developmentally challenged infants, children and adults in Jamaica, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Zimbabwe, and Malawi. MSC is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization initially established by Msgr. Gregory Ramkissoon in 1978 as a home for children with disabilities on the outskirts of Kingston, Jamaica.



November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries

Map data © 2019





# An Inclusive Ministry within FCM

The **National DignityUSA Board** meeting was recently held in Dayton Ohio. The **Living Beatitudes Community (LBC)**, an **FCM Faith Community Member**, provided the meals for the National Board. LBC provided an outdoor liturgy and meal for this gathering that included many LBC members as well as Dignity leaders from Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton. The liturgy was led by four of the LBC celebrants. Tom Cruse, a commissioned FCM member, preached the homily for the service. Over 50 people attended. It was a

wonderful celebration that serves as an example of how FCM is living its mission and vision. FCM responds to the Divine call by empowering and nurturing those inspired for inclusive ministry. FCM envisions a future in which inclusive ministry transforms society.

November/December 2019  
 VOL. 53 NO. 6  
**Federation of Christian Ministries**



**DIGNITYUSA BOARD MEMBERS**



**MUSIC - TOM STRICKER**



**FOUR EUCHARISTIC CELEBRANTS SHARE THE SERVICE**



**HOMILY AND SETTING**

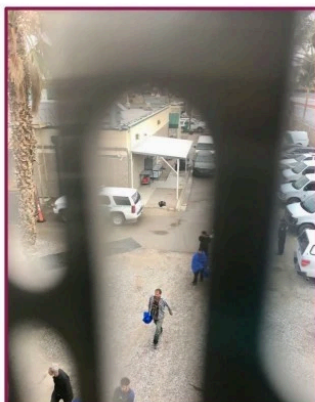


**KEEPING WARM**



# El Paso Border Challenges Heart and Soul

BY DAVE PASINSKI, FCM NORTHEAST REGION



LOOKING THROUGH THE FENCE AT THE JAUREZ-EL PASO DETENTION CENTER



MARIAH PREPARING SANDWICHES - LINING UP DINNER

During the past summer, my family – Geri Hall, my daughter, Mariah, and my son, Micah, and I worked with refugees in El Paso, Texas through Annunciation House—a 40-year-old Ministry by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia. As we all know, the border is a confusing and conflicted scene and the policies of the United States and the experiences of refugees are in our daily news and, by the time that this is at the press, the situation may yet again change dramatically.

For our part, we had the opportunity to work with up to a dozen volunteers at one time at one of the four sites of this ministry. Ours was in an old motel in which 3/4 of the property was used for housing volunteers and refugees and for our first week there we would see perhaps 100 new refugees a day who had been already in detention but were now released with papers to petition “asylum” to their family contacts in the United States and with the order to report to a certain court on a certain date. In our experience, we saw individuals and family units who were fleeing from various forms of violence and intimidation as well as grinding poverty. It was for all of us an extremely moving experience and, since we each speak Spanish, we were able to interact quite a bit with the refugees in the 24 to 48 hours they would spend with us before their departures.



We each had our own roles and one of mine was to conduct some reflection/religious services a few evenings in which perhaps 30 or more people took part with prayers, songs, and expressions of hope and gratitude. These, naturally, were very emotional moments for many. Also, my wife, Geri, experienced attending to many dehydrated persons and listening to their confidences sometimes moved her to tears. Likewise, my daughter Mariah, 24, and my son Micah 22, were extremely affected in attending to the needs of the refugees and in meals, to the children's needs, and in helping them prepare for their journeys all over the country.

We all know that our national immigration policies are inconsistent and a moral disaster and the inhumanity to so many refugees – and especially the children that have been separated from their families – enrages all of us and inspires us to greater service, advocacy, and prayer. This following prayer summarizes some of my own heart wishes in our beautiful and moving opportunity to connect with these lovely and often deeply oppressed peoples.

*“O Lord, these torrid days are filled with both hope and despair. My family and volunteers from all over greet tired faces exiting government buses with only the clothes on their backs and a few items. These men, women, and children at our southern border are stripped of their shoelaces, hair-ties, medicines and treasured papers. Lord, you knew about being “stripped and scourged.” Some report rough handling, yet, like you, their humanity is preserved despite this stripping.”*

November/December 2019  
VOL. 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries





# Newly Endorsed Members at the July 2019 Circle Meeting

## GREAT LAKES REGION

### **Staci A. Striegel-Stikeleather, MA**

Staci became a member of FCM in 2015, and was commissioned in 2016. She received a BA from Marian University in 2008 and a MA in Theology from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago in 2011. Staci has been serving as the Palliative Care Chaplain at Indiana University Health, in Indianapolis, Indiana, for the past 2 ½ years. Staci is married to Donald, who is a Buddhist chaplain and they have a three year-old son.

### **William D. Grinstead**

Rev. Will Grinstead, MDiv, ThM, serves as Palliative Care Chaplain IU Health Ball Memorial in Muncie, Indiana. He is honored to serve his hometown in this way and uses his position to advocate on local mental health and social justice issues. Over the past two years he has been prioritizing a multifaceted approach to self-care and celebrated this by finishing his first marathon and an Olympic distance triathlon in 2019. He has presented to various groups on intersections between faith and mental health, self-care, and clinical ethics. He is excited to see where ongoing research into professional spiritual care and the practice of interfaith hospitality will lead the chaplaincy profession in the coming years.

## NORTHEAST REGION

### **Ronald Cyktor, Jr.**

Ron has been a member of FCM since August 2018 and was Commissioned in January 2019. He is currently a staff Chaplain with Geisinger Wyoming Valley Hospital in Wilkes Barre, PA. Ron has a BA from Gannon University and an M.Div. from the University of Saint Mary of the Lake. Ron resonates with the mission of FCM to "empower and nurture those inspired for inclusive ministries," and understands endorsement as a way of empowerment to live out his calling and a way of nurturing as he intends to meet regularly with local FCM members.

### **Alisa Cramer**

Alisa Cramer was both endorsed and commissioned by FCM this summer. She recently finished a year-long CPE residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA. She has a B.S. in Counseling from Geneva College and a Th.D. from the International Christian University/Jameson School of Theology. Alisa's husband also is a CPE student, they have four preteen and teenage children, all still living at home. Alisa has been an active member of her non-denominational Baptist church, Church of the Living Word in Wilmington, DE, which supports her call to specialized ministry as a chaplain. Alisa was attracted to FCM because of our unique history and our welcoming/inclusive mission.



November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries





# Federation of Christian Ministries

NEWLY ENDORSED MEMBERS AT THE JULY 2019 CIRCLE MEETING ...CONT'D

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019 VOL 53 NU 6

## MOUNTAINS AND PLAINS REGION

### **Cynthia Anderson-Bauer**

Cynthia has been a member of FCM since 2018 and was Commissioned in February of 2019. She is currently serving as Associate Chaplain at the Fairview University of Minnesota Medical Center. Cynthia earned a B.A. from Colby College in 2009, and an M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School in 2015. Cynthia sees a parallel between her approach to ministry and the mission of FCM. Especially important to Cynthia is her commitment to a pluralistic, inclusive ministry that is open to all. Cynthia is a partner to Sean Driedger.

### **Rev. Dr. Micheal A. Smith**

Micheal has been a member of FCM since January of 2019 and was commissioned earlier this year. He is currently serving as the Bishop Anderson House Chaplain Fellow at John Stroger, Jr. Hospital in Chicago, IL. Micheal earned a BBA from Howard University (1987), a J.D. from Case Western University School of Law, and an M.Div. (2004) and a D.Min. (2008) from Ecumenical Theological Seminary. Micheal is married to Mishca, and is the proud and grateful father of Malcolm and Marcus.

## PACIFIC REGION

### **Lian JM Stout**

Lian is currently employed as a Chaplain Fellow with the Veterans Administration Healthcare system in Portland, OR. Lian has asked people to use gender neutral, they/them/their when referring to them. Their position includes duties in the acute medical center as well as in hospice, palliative care and addiction recovery. Lian is a former military police soldier, a Veteran Service Representative. They hold an M.Div. from Marylhurst University and has recently completed their second year in CPE.

### **Steven Stitely**

Steven Stitely is currently employed with Pacific Health Ministry in Honolulu, Hawaii. He has held the position of staff chaplain for two years. Steven and his wife, Mary Beth Jones, moved to Honolulu for CPE. Both Steven and Mary Beth did a year-long residency and Steven continued for a second year of CPE training. Steven's denominational home is the ELCA, however he is a member of FCM and commissioned since 2017. Steven seeks endorsement with FCM because it is the faith community in which he experiences the greatest personal and professional support.

### **Nicole Raquel Saxon**

Nicole is currently a chaplain resident at Marion VA Medical Center in Marion, Illinois. She is passionate about issues of moral injury, mental health and sexual trauma in general, and in particular, within the context of providing spiritual care for Veterans. Her syncretic spirituality (a womanist centered Christianity that holds African derived religions in high regard) plays a role in reconciling the "sacred" with the "profane" in her work as a chaplain. She sees her ministry as one that allows her to partner with those in her care, their loved ones, and staff to honor their sacred processes while walking alongside them through the difficult spaces they encounter while in the hospital. Nicole earned a BA from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA and a M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, MA. She has previously worked as a chaplain in Colorado, Georgia, and Hawaii.

### **Grace Lee**

Grace has been a member of FCM since February, 2019. She graduated with an MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary in 2016. Grace is currently serving as interim staff chaplain at the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children through Pacific Health Ministry (PHM). She has been in this position since April of this year, and for the previous two years, served as Chaplain Resident and then Chaplain Fellow, also at the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. Community is important to Grace, she values the growing FCM community in her area and looks forward to building relationships with FCM members.

### **Lena Ann Ewalena Keanu-Reichel**

Lena is a native Hawaiian who earned a BA in music from the University of Hawaii. It was here that she found community among the Baptist Collegiate Ministry students, and it was also here that she met her husband, James. Lena's connection with the Divine through music, her community and the Scriptures led her to study at Golden Gate Theological Seminary where she received an M.Div. Lena currently is employed by Pacific Health Ministry (PHM) and serves as a staff chaplain on the hospital Palliative Care Team.





# Northeast Region

VICE PRESIDENT...CARL YUSAVITZ



## Retreat & Commissionings

Since our beginnings, FCM has been more than an association of individuals. We've always been a much wider community, one supporting multiple communities of faith and pastoral practitioners. Since 2010 we have been officially (in the eyes of the IRS) "a convention of churches." So, it is with gratitude that I acknowledge the number of small gatherings that took place in our Northeast region this past summer. Some were indeed small (2 or 3 members). Some much larger (with over 20). All gatherings responded to the call to know and be known by others as "kindred spirits," if you will. **THANK YOU** to those who organized these small gatherings. More gatherings are encouraged this fall and winter, as we eagerly await our larger national gathering in Chicago next year on July 17-19.

Over 34 Northeast members participated in our regional retreat from October 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>. This was the first year we were at The Eddy Farm Retreat Center in the Autumn and the "fall" colors were great! From all reports, the retreat this year was a good mix of FCM community-building, time for personal reflection and prayer, communal worship, and pastoral education. I've included a few pictures from the retreat.

A big **THANK YOU** to our regional retreat planning committee: **Tom Cusack, Dan Pellegrin, Mary Ann Crilly, Margaret Gering, Ron Cyktor, Mary Atkay,** and **Jack Wentland**. Also, **THANK YOU** to those who could not make the retreat this year, but made financial donations to help people who could, but needed some help. Your generosity was a perfect example of what St. Paul meant by "bearing one another's burdens" in Galatians 6:2.

Please read in this Newsletter FCM New York member **Dave Pasinski's** inspiring article and pictures from a recent service trip he and his family made to El Paso this past summer.

Accompanying this report are pictures of our recent commissioning services for **Norman Simmons** (pastoral care provider and Eucharistic presider at Dignity, Philadelphia Chapter) and **Karynjean Dickhoff** (hospice chaplain with Liberty Lutheran Services in Southeaster PA). Norman's service was held at an Episcopal Church in Philadelphia and Karynjean's on the banks of the Schuylkill River. Pictured are Norman and Karynjean with their friends and FCM partners.

If you have not renewed your FCM membership with Realm or on the FCM website, please do so ASAP. It's real easy and saves all of us time and trees. **THANK YOU!**



KARYNJEAN DICKHOFF COMMISSIONING

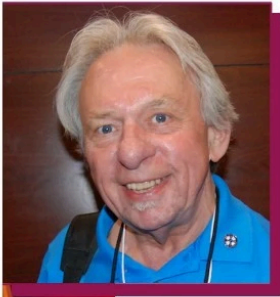
NORMAN SIMMONS COMMISSIONING

November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

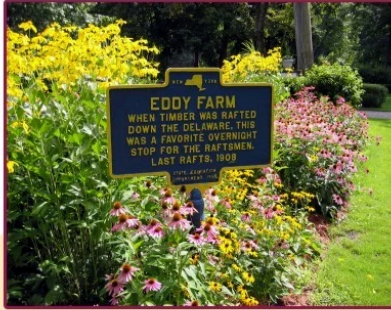
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# Northeast Region 2019 Gathering

VICE PRESIDENT...CARL YUSAVITZ

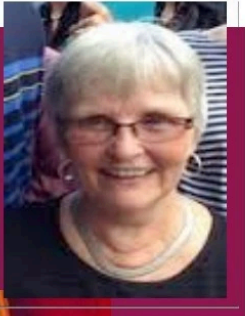


November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries





# Southern Region

VICE PRESIDENT...DIANE DOUGHERTY



## Membership Has Risen

The Southern Region has had a busy year this year. The membership has risen from 75 members in April to 93! The recent commissioning of **Jim Andrews** completes the commissioning celebrations we have had for twelve members in the Southern region this year. Thanks to our other members and the families of the celebrants for their making these celebrations a special time for each one.



Welcome to new FCM members whose ministry journeys have begun with us. **Evelyn Hahn** from Apex, NC, is called to Pastoral Care chaplaincy and spiritual counseling, as well as to serving others through providing special service leading. **George Francis** of Port Richey, FL is called to chaplaincy training and ministerial fellowship and support capacity. **Lacey Kellin Kumanchik** of Norfolk, VA is currently finishing her residency fellowship with a goal of serving as a trauma chaplain. **Joseph Musco** of Dunedin, FL is pursuing chaplaincy training at the Morton Plant Hospital in Clear Water, FL. Finally, **Wanda Thomas** of Raleigh, NC is completing her MDiv degree with certifications in Chaplaincy and in Pastoral Counseling.



EVELYN HAHN..GEORGE FRANCIS..LACEY KELLIN KUMANCHIK..JOSEPH MUSCO..WANDA THOMAS

In other **news from the Southern Region**, we have completed our member survey work. Conversations will begin with Zoom meetings, conference calls and email chats planned regarding the Survey Results. Discussions on how our mission and vision best support our members' vision and mission based on the survey will now begin.

The **People's Catholic Seminary** (<https://pcseminary.org/>) is open for anyone seeking help for ongoing formation and theological updates. This link explores topics our members might wish to explore. Finally, a **Retreat in Clermont** given by commissioned member Beth Knight on "Exploring the Grace of Now: Living in God" is open to all. <https://audirespiritualdirection.org/personal-spiritual-deepening-program/>.

November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

# Federation of Christian Ministries





# Great Lakes Region

VICE PRESIDENT...RON DAVIS



I begin this day with a smile on my face—fully grateful for how things are moving forward in the Great Lakes Region of FCM. We are having wonderful times of sharing, caring and growing together as we move out in our ministries.



Labor Day weekend began with an ordination service for **Steve Wendler**. I was able to travel to Mishawaka, Indiana for this ordination service at Heart Hospice, Mishawaka, Indiana. From the moment I walked through the front door, I could see that Steve works with a team that loves their work and one another. The service was very spiritual, personal and an intimate time shared with Steve's staff, friends, and family. It was a treat to be there with him on this day when he celebrated being called out by God to Christian service.

The Louisville group continues to meet quarterly for spiritual support and care. They gathered together on Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at Mary Jo Krueer's home. This was their third meeting of the year. On this same weekend, we held the Great Lakes Region's Retreat at Maria Stein's Retreat Center, Maria Stein, Ohio. Maria Stein is in the heart of farming country settled by German immigrants in northwestern Ohio. Well cared for farms surround the Retreat Center—a place where we are able to watch the most beautiful sunrises, rest, share fellowship, and eat delicious meals prepared by the center's staff.

The weekend was a tremendous time for the gathered community. My favorite moments from the retreat are as follows: On Saturday morning, we celebrated the ordination of 4 members—**Rev. Austin Schafer**, **Rev. Denise Woods**, **Rev. Tressalyn Reed** and **Rev. Dale Lykins**. Each one personalized their vow and we were moved as they spoke words of commitment to God. We prayed for each one individually. Also, **Rev. Melody Carpenter** led the community in worship during this special service and we had a great time looking up and out amongst one-another.

This was that odd weekend where 3 of our scheduled presenters could not make it to Maria Stein due to unfortunate circumstances. This was not a problem for us. There is a lot of great talent in the Great Lakes Region. I am thankful for **Shannon Queenan** and **Ellen Corcella** who were not on the schedule, yet they came prepared to present. When asked, they brought forth quality presentations which were helpful to all of us. The other presenters were engaging as well: **Chris Young**, **Dale Lykins** and **Ron Davis**. We ended our Sunday with a Eucharistic Service led by **Tom Stricker**. The Spirit was sweet and we left there longing to stay connected on a more frequent basis. Several people left the weekend saying that it would be wonderful if we could get together more frequently. I hold that word dearly and will work towards that end.

Perhaps the most gripping and heartfelt thing that I have been faced with over the last three months is the preciousness of life—our lives. Most every week I have received news of members and their families living in the face of major health concerns and/or death. The prayer list is long and is growing. I want you to know that I do pray for each and every member in the Great Lakes Region regularly. And when special concerns come my way, I give special time to those specific prayers. I will also say that when you remember FCM in prayer, pray that Jesus will shepherd this body of believers, that he will keep us held in the palm of his hands, and that he will afford us grace and peace as we move through life. He knows the details of all of our needs. He hears and answer all of our prayers.

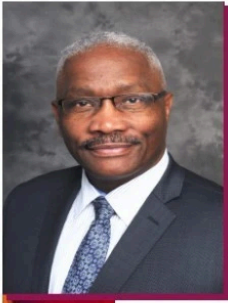
God Bless You,



November/December 2019  
VOL. 53 NO. 6

## Federation of Christian Ministries





# Mt. & Plains Region

VICE PRESIDENT...RICHARD JAMES



## An Important Lesson in Ministry

For the last twenty years, I have provided educational support to the medical students of the Advocate Medical Group's Family Practice Medical Clinic. I accomplish this via a program called "Shadow the Chaplain at Work." The purpose of this experiential learning opportunity is to deepen the medical student's appreciation for the challenges and needs of patients, families, and medical staff, and how the chaplain offers meaningful pastoral/spiritual support, in a manner that enhances the medical student's perspective as a Doctor. The program provides the opportunity for the Medical Students to witness first-hand crisis ministry in the Emergency Department, STIC, NCCU, and various pastoral care issues. Students also encounter via discussion the mission, philosophy, and the theological/theoretical perspective concerning the role and function of the chaplain as a pastoral/spiritual caregiver. Each student spends four hours on a Friday morning shadowing the chaplain. The vast majority of students often report this activity as a unique experience during their training and a meaningful experience regarding their development as doctors. The program has averaged about 100 Community Benefit Hours completed per year.

Recently, a Family Practice Medical Student asked me, **"What is the most important lesson that you have learned regarding cultural competency?"** I responded likewise.

"When I think about spiritual care and what it means to be respectful to all persons, the virtue of "humility and curiosity to learn in-the-moment" is essential." It is a noble quest to learn and understand all that one can know about the many and various spiritual and religious traditions. However, all of that knowledge can be meaningless and even dangerously harmful if one does not possess the virtue of "humility and curiosity to learn in-the-moment." That is to say, no matter how much I think I know, it is better to suspend that which might be judgmental bias, so I can learn and make sense anew. It is the virtue of "humility and curiosity to learn in-the-moment" that helps me to sensitively engage persons, whether they are patients, family members, or team members.

I became a chaplain because each day, it affords me the opportunity to be with people in the valley of the shadow of their crisis/illness journey and to answer the Divine call to serve humanity. I enjoy and love my work because it's both challenging and rewarding; it takes place within a spiritually pluralistic and multicultural context of the hospital.

As a Chaplain I serve a diverse population, providing spiritual care to hospital patients, visitors, and associates, offering support through non-anxious pastoral presence, faith, and prayer while remaining sensitive to religious and cultural traditions. My belief in God's providential presence is the grounding conviction and germinating seed of my ethic of Divine benevolent intent, an inspired concern, and respect for the dignity, worth, and well-being of all persons, regardless of spiritual perspective, ethnicity, class or sexual orientation.

The "humility and curiosity to learn in-the-moment" helps me to engage persons by offering an invitation to connect regarding their plight. Humility and Curiosity to learn in-the-moment" helps me to plumb the depths of circumstances, to know how people are suffering, what is their hope, and what is life-sustaining for them. A "humility to learn" is often the first step in developing and expressing empathic connection

I take great pleasure in moments when a patient and their family, in addition to their interdisciplinary team, use resources to strive to relieve physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering to embrace healing.

One of my favorite examples of this occurred in the Emergency Department. A very young girl had burned most of the front of her body after pulling a pot down from the stovetop. I remained at the child's bedside with her parents until her pain was too much for them to bear, and we would take a break in a designated quiet room. The child constantly cried for her mother, but her eyes were so severely burned shut that no tears fell. Her parents felt helpless, as her excruciating pain overwhelmed them, and they were unable to help her. But my "humility and curiosity to learn in-the-moment" guided me. I asked the parents if they ever sing to their child, to which they informed me that they do all the time. I whispered to them, "perhaps you could sing to her now?" I remember the young girl's parents singing through their tears, and the child beginning to respond to their words. She no longer cried out for her mother, now feeling their presence. I, too, began to cry, because the child and her parents were so connected – touching without touching. In the midst of trauma, we were smiling through our tears. I like to think that we all knew God was with us, and that place of pain was also Holy Ground. Each day's challenges – including days such as the one described above – are a myriad of spiritual care circumstances as complicated yet as beautiful as the sun shining through a stained-glass window.

So, I ask the medical student, the same question, that I now pose to you the reader, "So what do you think that I learned in-the-moment that assisted my intervention?"

November/December 2019

VOL. 53 NO. 6

Federation of Christian Ministries





**Newsletter Editor...Tom Cruse**  
Email: [newsletter@FCMmail.org](mailto:newsletter@FCMmail.org)

The FCM Newsletter is published bi-monthly by the Federation of Christian Ministries, a non-profit religious body. As the informational publication of FCM, its mission is to keep members current

with the organization and its activities, to provide ideas to further ministry and to promote community building among local FCM groups and the national organization. All current members receive a copy. Articles and feedback are welcomed and can be sent to : [newsletter@FCMmail.org](mailto:newsletter@FCMmail.org) by the 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.

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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)  
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### GLOBAL MINISTRIES UNIVERSITY

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