

Federation of Christian Ministries NEWSLETTER

2020

January/February 2020

VOL. 54 Number 1



Johnston

Happy
New Year!

2020

We pray that the
coming year
will bring you
Many Blessings and
Much Happiness

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**CHRISTY
HOWARD-STEELE**

Chairperson

A New Year Beginning

We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves.

The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day.

Edith Lovejoy Pierce

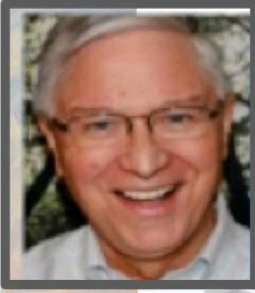
For many years, I made New Year's resolutions. In the beginning, I would create a list of very specific and tangible goals I hoped to accomplish during the year. These goals would cover multiple categories such as personal, professional, and financial; from exercising regularly to home improvement projects, to career development. Eventually I learned to narrow my focus to just one or two things. Experience taught me that it is better for me to focus on the one or two things that I could accomplish and also sustain rather than a long list that would eventually feel overwhelming and become discouraging. Over the years, as I have grown in grace towards myself and others, I tend to now think more in terms of my hopes for the year.

As 2020 begins, again I find myself contemplating my hopes for this new year. What do I hope for myself as person, wife/mother/grandmother, chaplain educator/minister, chairperson of FCM? What words do I hope to put on the pages on 2020? And what words or pictures do I hope we, FCM, will have the opportunity to put on 2020? As I reflect on 2019, I realize that though I had some specific things that I hoped for, the year was full of surprises. Things happened that I didn't expect and opportunities arose during the year that I could not have anticipated at the beginning of 2019 (such as choosing to make a job transition). I realize that identifying my hopes allowed me to take advantage of emerging opportunities that were consistent with my more general hopes. While hopes can seem kind of passive in comparison to action-focused goals, hopes are more spacious and allow flexibility as needed. Given my goal-oriented tendencies, I find thinking in terms of hopes lifts me from a focus solely on the concrete, invites me to imagine, and makes room for the Spirit.

What are your hopes for 2020? For yourself; for your ministry; for FCM?

I look forward to the February Circle meeting where we, the leadership Circle, will spend time contemplating our hopes for 2020 and beyond. One of my hopes for FCM in 2020 is that we make significant movement toward becoming even more of a community locally and nationally. Our endowment campaign is one way we are hoping to fund our future as a community. Realm is a tool we hope will facilitate our ability to connect with each other. 2020 is the year our national Assembly will be held in Chicago; an opportunity for us to gather face-to-face. I look forward and hope to see many of you there!

2020
Happy New Year!



TOM CUSACK

President

The Outer World and the Inner World

The Outer World

FCM is blessed in many ways. We have our great volunteer leadership team in place with years of experience and strong outreach to members. We have many new members coming to us due to our history and presentation as accepting and empowering inclusive faith communities and ministers. Our finances are strong, and our Endowment Fund is in a newly launched growth campaign (see the related article in this Newsletter). The 2020 Renewal is ongoing with some new online problems and many effective solutions. Our presence on Realm has proven to be an effective tool with a significant cost saving for FCM. FCM is in a good place.

However, we are situated in the USA and the world in 2019/2020. This outer world is experiencing huge challenges and dangers. Our planet manifests accelerating effects of the CO2 and methane increases in the atmosphere. Scientific organizations report worst-case developments of Arctic warming and melt down of ice packs and glaciers. Permafrost melting creates a vicious cycle of releasing more greenhouse gases to melt more permafrost. Humanity's efforts to roll back this catastrophe are ineffective at the moment. Significant areas of the Earth are moving dangerously to drought conditions that make some zones uninhabitable for humans (Australian outback).

In the USA our federal government is going through the trauma of the impeachment of the president. There are divisions and debates over what are facts versus what are opinions. These struggles move forward while important questions of policy and philosophy of governing are left unsolved. Migration north from Central America is continuing with its attendant human misery. The opioid crisis takes its victims. The legal status of DACA dreamers is a contentious issue without resolution. Artificial Intelligence is receiving little attention. Meanwhile mainline church attendance declines without evident meaningful responses from the denominations. It is a lot. What to do?

The Inner World

FCM is not the organization to solve all these problems. But we are a religious organization that can renew itself and those it touches. FCM can do this by each of its faith community members and individual members going into the Inner Silence. I suggest that this is our challenge. We members have the benefit of our supportive, inclusive community. To respond with gratitude to this wonderful FCM state of affairs, I believe our best response is to go continually into prayer and meditation as sources of spiritual nourishment and growth. When nourished by our own spiritual life, each of us gains inner guidance for the actions we must take to best cooperate with the Divine on earth. Access to the Inner Silence is readily accessible but not easy. It is access that requires steady effort to achieve. This access requires dedicated time and concentration. Each day. Every day. Many in FCM are already manifesting this pattern of effort in their daily lives. This Newsletter article is a reminder to keep our spiritual activity in the priority position. It is the driver of our best responses to the USA's problems and those of the world.

Please go into the 2x2 4 FCM pattern as a supplement to your spiritual devotions. Two minutes of prayer, two minutes of meditation each day for the benefit of FCM. The practice of Inner Silence will carry us toward peace for ourselves and those we touch. Perhaps it will even touch our troubled world.



FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

FCM President Nomination

Call to Service

It is time to submit nominations for the position of President of FCM. 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 requires a substantial investment of time. The term of office for this position is three years. The term will begin after the 2020 Assembly ends and conclude at the closing of the July 2023 meeting of the FCM Circle of Directors.

Members holding an office can be re-elected to that office for a second term and can only serve two terms.

President Tom Cusack is ending his second term and is not eligible to serve in that position in this election.

The President is responsible for:

- Acting as chief executive, overseeing existing programs and committees
- Initiating new programs in response to suggestions and needs of members
- Serving as chairperson of the Executive Committee
- Engaging in public relations and outreach to make the Federation visible and known
- Chairing the Membership Meeting at the National Assembly
- Chairing Vice Presidents meetings and overseeing the Vice President election process
- Appointing members to mid-term vacancies in Circle positions

To nominate an FCM member for the office of President, please email your nomination to:

Michaelita Quinn, FCM Nominations at quinnems@aol.com

and include "President Nomination" in the Subject line.

Or complete the Nomination Form below and mail to:

Michaelita Quinn, FCM Nominations
93 Post Road
Danbury, CT 06810-8367

Telephone nominations are not accepted.

All nominations must be received by **January 31, 2020**. The balloting for the election of President will take place in March and the results will be published when available.

NOMINATION FORM

FOR PRESIDENT:

I nominate: _____

Why I am nominating this member:

My Name: _____



FCM Endowment Fund

What does FCM mean to you?

BY TOM STRICKER

FCM's Endowment fund clearly is off to a great start toward the \$10,000 matching fund with **\$5,130** contributed to date. **We give our deep thanks** to those who have already contributed. For those who do not know about our Endowment Fund or are thinking about supporting it, the following are my thoughts for your consideration:

- Has FCM provided you with a supportive community where all are welcomed, and none are turned away?
- Has FCM given you the opportunity to continue to serve in ministry?
- Has FCM offered you the opportunity to serve *all* people?
- Has FCM been there in times of spiritual and emotional need and have you found FCM to be just the right companion for your spiritual journey?
- Have you been inspired by the messages sent out by FCM leadership?
- Do you want future generations to benefit from FCM as you have?

**The FCM Endowment is all about that future!
We are laying the foundation today for FCM to remain fiscally sound.**

At this point in the history of the Endowment Fund, we cannot use one penny of interest for any reason until the Fund reaches \$100,000.00. Once we reach \$100,000.00, we can focus on the following:

- Every year we have individuals who cannot afford their renewal fees. Many are retired or have limited income, but they want to continue to minister with the commissioning and endorsement of FCM. We would like to help make that possible.
- We have people who have been members for 40 to 50 years. We want to celebrate their commitment by assisting with their membership fees.
- Our FCM vice presidents and area representative operate on a minimal budget, often taking on the cost of travel to visit their region out of their personal finances. We want to help support the attendance of our vice presidents and area representatives at regional gatherings.
- Since 2013, FCM has been recognized by the IRS as a "Convention of Churches." There have been discussions about providing seed money for new communities. The Endowment Fund could give us the ability to award grant money to emerging communities.
- The Circle allotted funds for individuals who requested assistance in order to attend the 2018 National Assembly celebrating our 50th Anniversary. These funds came from gifts and annual membership fees. Potentially the Endowment Fund could be another source of assistance.
- Given the anticipated growth of the Endowment Fund, we could partially subsidize the regional gatherings, allowing more people to attend these very worthwhile functions.
- Finally, as we continue to grow as an organization, we are experiencing increasing costs to engage in ministry. The Fund could help us meet some of these expenses.

The Bottom Line:

We need to continue to grow the Endowment Fund so we can accomplish these goals as well as to meet other needs that may arise that we cannot fund at our current income level. Again, our deep thanks to those who have gotten us off to a great start for 2019. Can the rest of us get FCM to our Goal?

Donate to the FCM Endowment Fund

Help us to reach our match goal of \$10,000

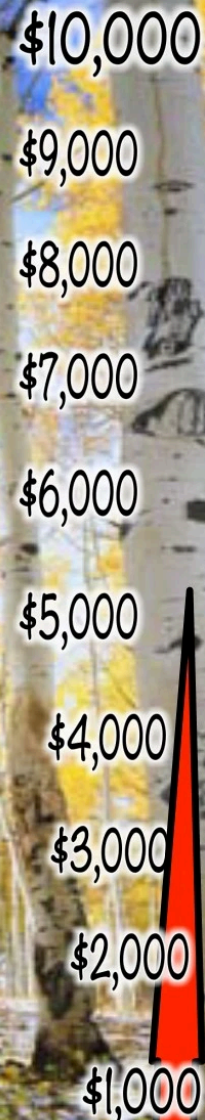
The Endowment Committee has some exciting news. We have an anonymous donor who is challenging the FCM membership with a \$10,000.00 match grant. If we can match individual donations equaling the \$10,000, the donor will donate the match.

We need everyone to get involved. No donation is too small.

Go to the [FCM website](http://www.federationofchristianministries.org) www.federationofchristianministries.org or go to your personal account on [Realm](http://www.onrealm.org) 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"

For additional information contact: Tom Stricker
tomstricker2009@gmail.com or 937-477-0139



DONATED TO DATE: \$5130.

FCM Endowment Fund Climbing to Our Success

FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

SAVE THE DATE!



FCM National Assembly
July 17-19, 2020

HOLIDAY INN CHICAGO O'HARE
5615 N. CUMBERLAND - CHICAGO, IL

Assembly & Hotel Information
Available February 1, 2020



Assembly Chairperson: Peter Strening...specmin@FCMmail.org



FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

2020 National Assembly

July 17-19 2020

Chicago, Illinois



Friday, July 17

KEYNOTE

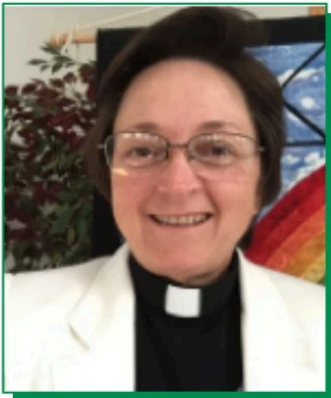
Missionary Discipleship and Our Baptismal Vocation

Dr. Timone Davis
Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology
and Black Catholic Theology
Institute of Pastoral Studies
Loyola University, Chicago



Saturday, July 29

KEYNOTES



21st Century Theological Challenges
and Opportunities

Rev. Dawn Hutchings
Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church,
Newmarket, Ontario, Canada



No Time For Ordinary: Daring to be Prophetic

Jan Phillips
Writer, Storyteller, Workshop Facilitator
Executive Director, Lovingkindness Foundation

HOLIDAY INN CHICAGO O'HARE - 5615 N. CUMBERLAND - CHICAGO, IL



Keynote Speakers

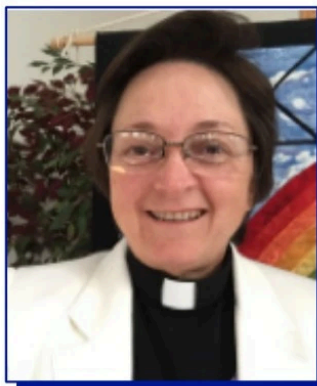


Dr. Timone Davis Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University Chicago
 timone davis is a cradle Catholic who was a “pewster” until she discovered that the uselessness of the Church was because she wasn’t giving anything of herself. After committing to do something, her life changed. Her first ministry was with the RCIA, where she not only welcomed others into the Church, but also revitalized her own spirituality.

After working for the Archdiocese of Chicago as the coordinator of ReCiL – Reclaiming Christ in Life Young Adult Ministry, timone launched PEACE centered WHOLENESS with her husband Orlando, where they are blending clinical counseling and spiritual companioning.

In addition to running a business, timone is an assistant professor in the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University Chicago. In her spare time, she serves as the treasurer of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium.

timone’s dynamic energy and deep spirituality enhance her brand of teaching that engages one’s spirit through the use of storytelling. No matter the occasion, timone’s mission is to help others open their hearts and minds to the soul-saving power of God’s Grace, Love and Mercy.



Pastor Dawn Hutchings engages in public theology at a small suburban parish and through the internet since 1999.

Dawn has journeyed with the people of Holy Cross Lutheran Church. Together, they have transformed from a “traditional” Lutheran community, to a fully inclusive progressive community. Along the way, this small parish has played a pivotal role in the transformation of policies on both a synodical and national level with regard to the full inclusion of the LGBTQ community in all aspects of life in the the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Holy Cross has embraced both the challenges and blessings of its vision of being a church that is “Progressive in Approach: Christlike in Action!”

Followers from all over the world have engaged Dawn’s work through her blog pastordawn.com as well as her articles and sermons on the [progressive christianity website](http://progressive.christianity.website).

Dawn holds a B.A. in Religion from the University of British Columbia; M.Div. from Waterloo Lutheran Seminary



Jan Phillips is a thought leader who uses the arts to evoke original thinking and deep feeling.

As a videomaker, writer, poet, and musician, she connects the dots between evolutionary creativity, spiritual intelligence and social action. Jan has authored ten award-winning books, taught in over 25 countries, and shared a stage with Pete Seeger and Jane Goodall. Her own spiritual quest has led her into and out of a religious community, across the U.S. on a Honda motorcycle, and around the world on a one-woman peace pilgrimage.

Jan teaches throughout the United States and Canada, leading retreats and workshops for organizations and individuals committed to evolutionary spirituality.

She is founder and director of the Livingkindness Foundation, which has built the Livingkindness Centre for Learning in Nigeria and provides scholarships in the US to diverse women demonstrating creative approaches to social activism.

She is also co-founder of Syracuse Cultural Workers, publishers and distributors of artwork for social justice. As an artist/activist, Jan’s commitment to spiritual healing and social justice resonates in her work. She weaves music, humor, imagery, and stories into presentations that provoke thought and action.



FCM Assembly Quick Look



for the 21st century
FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES
National Assembly • July 17-19 2020 • Chicago IL

Friday - July 17, 2020

2:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Registration
6:00 p.m.	Welcome and Reception - Hors d'oeuvres and Cash Bar
7:00 p.m. Keynote - Dr. Timone Davis	
8:30 p.m.	Community Time

Saturday - July 18, 2020

7:00 a.m.	Morning Meditation
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m. Keynote - Rev. Dawn Hutchings	
10:30 a.m.	Workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Moral Injury and a Ministry Response" - Linda McKnight• "Bending, Breaking and Blending Marriage in America: Are These Trends Remaking Christian Marriage?" - John E. Haag• "Ministering to the Lonely and Isolated" - Bill Lonneman, Bea Broder-Oldach, Justin Ferko, Tom Stricker	
12:00 noon	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "That Which Shall Not Be Named: Journeying with Patients and Caregivers through the "Swampland of the Soul" - Rev. Richard Cruse ThM, BCC• "People of God - Religion and Suicide for LGBTQ+ Youth" - Ron Davis• "How Do We Create the Communities We Want to Belong To" - Ginny Cusack, Coordinator, Faith Communities Marita Grudzen Chairperson, Faith Communities - Moderator, Rev. Christy Howard-Steele, ACPE Certified Educator & APC BCC	
3:15 p.m. Keynote - Jan Phillips	
4:30 p.m.	Break - Cash Bar
5:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 p.m.	Commissioning and Endorsement Services
8:00 p.m.	Dessert Reception and Community Time

Sunday - July 19, 2020

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Membership Meeting
10:45 a.m.	Leave Taking Ritual
11:30 a.m.	Assembly Ends

FCM 2020 ASSEMBLY - JULY 17-19, 2020
HOLIDAY INN CHICAGO O'HARE - 5615 N. CUMBERLAND - CHICAGO, IL



ANTOINETTE MAROLD

Communication

Beware of Internet Fraud

A few weeks ago several FCM members who are Wedding Officiants received emails requesting their services to officiate a wedding. Following is an example:

*Hello,
How are you doing today, i want to know if you will be available to officiate the wedding between me and my adorable fiancée which will take place at a private home in your **Monmouth Junction NJ** on December 19, 2019 by 4:pm Please let me know if you are available and how much will you charge to officiate the wedding.*

*Hope to read from you as soon as possible
My Regard*

I personally have had this type of request come through popular wedding websites like the Knot.

An email was sent out to our members alerting them of these fraudulent emails. Thank you to many of our members who responded and shared their experiences.

One of our members received a check from the scammers. He was suspicious and took it to the bank to confirm his suspicions. The bank told him that when you make a photo copy of the check it should be copy protected, the copy should indicate that it is a copy and not the original, that is how they knew it was fake. A copy of the check follows, it certainly looks authentic. Our member was told by the sender to cash the check take his fee and send the rest to the DJ. Of course he did not follow their instructions.



FCM website listings under FIND A MINISTER

When you completed your 2020 renewal form, you had the opportunity to have three (3) of your ministries listed under the FIND A MINISTER tab on the FCM website.

If you renewed and requested a listing by October 31, 2019, you should see your listing on the website by the time you receive this newsletter. If you requested more than 3 listings only 3 were listed. Listings were added daily so it is important for you to erase your computers history and reload the page if you do not see your listing.

Requests for listings made on renewals after October 31 will be available on the site by February 2020.



Faith Communities

2020 Faith Communities Zoom Networking Discussions

SUBMITTED BY GINNY CUSACK FAITH COMMUNITIES COORDINATOR
AND MARITA GRUDZEN, FAITH COMMUNITIES CHAIR

We are delighted to present the following topics and dates for FCM's 2020 Faith Communities Zoom Networking Discussions. All FCM members are welcome to join in the meetings whether you are in an FCM faith community or not. Also, any member of an FCM faith community is encouraged to attend this series. Look for the Zoom links in the announcement notices sent to FCM members a month prior to each Zoom meeting.

If you have not used Zoom previously, please contact Ginny at Cusack.g@gmail.com or call at 732-267-5372 for assistance. All meetings are held from 7-8 pm EST.

February 2 Topic: Leadership in Ministry: Who do We Choose to Be?

How do we conceive of leadership in our faith communities? Is there one leader, many leaders, or does the community lead itself? What is the function of leadership in our faith community? What do we want in our leaders, in ourselves so we step up to our mission? What would we see in the leaders we admire in ministry?

Resource: Book by Margaret J. Wheatley, *Facing Reality – Claiming Leadership – Restoring Sanity*. Wheatley puts forth an identity as a “warrior for the human spirit,” a name that is large enough to contain all of her and one that draws her and potentially others forward. She speaks of insight and compassion as being characteristics of a leader.

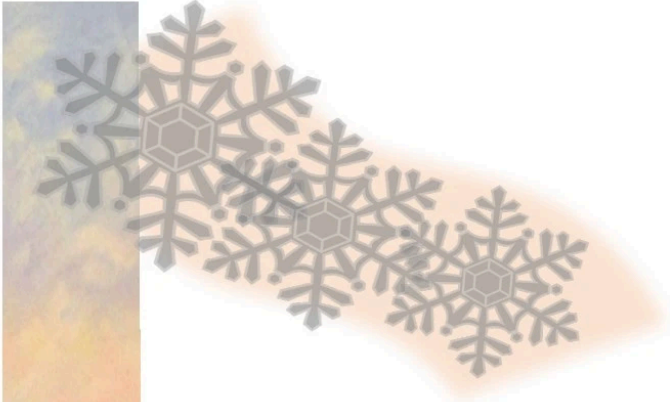
March 1 Topic: Racism

If we all have the responsibility to create a just society, what can and are we doing to acknowledge racism and work toward a just society? The culture of racism is the shared beliefs and assumptions that undergird the economic, social, political disparities experienced by different groups. The incidents of racial trauma are continuous and chronic as we observe increased police killings of unarmed black people, hate crimes against Muslims (or those who are assumed to be), assaults and killings of transgender, people of color or indigenous (POCI), violation of indigenous lands, and the dehumanization of immigrant communities.

“America’s Original Sin” That’s how Jim Wallis speaks of racism in his book by the same title. Wallis is founder and director of Sojourners, a global network that puts faith into action. Bryan Stevenson, founder of Equality Justice Initiative speaks to the fact that, unlike South Africa, we in the U. S. haven’t done our truth and reconciliation process. Black communities knew the ‘terrorism’ of lynching in their communities of the South long before 2001 when we as Americans claimed the experience of terrorism.

Resource:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/healing-through-social-justice/201911/radical-self-care-in-the-face-mounting-racial-stress>

References Suggested for Further Reading:
Wallis, Jim. 2016. *America’s Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America*. Brazos Press, Grand Rapids MI.
Diangelo, Robin. 2018. *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. Beacon Press, Boston MA.



2020 Faith Communities Zoom Networking Discussions cont'd.

April 5 **Topic: Non-Violence and Peace Building**

Resource : Pax Christi International focus is on active non-violence. You can view the documents on their website, <https://paxchristi.net/> Here is one of several questions for reflection in the documents:

What does the sentence starting, "In this context of normalized and systemic violence" mean for you, your local church, and the global church?

May 3 **Topic: Evolutionary Spirituality**

In the Catholic tradition, this expression of Christian spirituality is rooted in Teilhard de Chardin's experience of Christ as the Alpha and the Omega, first incarnate in the birth of the universe, and ever moving toward a full embodiment of Christ. Religion and science become windows through which we can better understand the convergence of matter and spirit in the unfolding of human history and that of the whole universe. We will discuss the interaction of spirituality with cosmology which shows that our human journey can be seen as part of the whole cosmic evolutionary process. Ilia Delio and Ursula King are theologians who are leading us in understanding this evolutionary spirituality.

June 7 **Topic: Stewardship of Our Common Home**

How do we respond in our faith communities to the social (climate refugees) and climate (geophysical) crisis of our present time? Many leaders say most important thing we can do is to join with others in a clear response to our situation.

Resource: Discussion of *Laudato Si'*, the Catholic Climate Covenant: US Catholic Climate Action Campaign, NCR's Earthbeat: Stories of climate crisis and action.



PETER STRENING
CO-CHAIR

The Federation of Christian Ministries offers the Committee on Specialized Ministries as a resource for individuals engaged in spiritual care, counseling and education. Frequently those in these ministries are required by employers or certifying organizations to have a faith-group endorsement. Endorsement assures that those in the ministry of spiritual care are accountable to the mission, values and ethical standards of FCM.

Committee on Specialized Ministries

In my role as a regional liaison for the Committee it is my privilege to offer support and guidance for our members seeking Endorsement. The greatest gifts I have received from this role are that of the stories of those pursuing the process. Again and again I have been inspired by the vision, courage and resilience of FCM members responding to their call to ministry. Coming from the widest range of life circumstances, our colleagues are finding their way to service for others. It is beautiful to behold their journeys and an honor to walk with them.

What inspires me in particular is the way that our Endorsed members have drawn on the challenges of their own lives, and have integrated these challenges to strengthen their identity in ministry. Some examples (with gratitude to those who I have come to know in the work of Specialized Ministry):

> Several of our endorsed members are providing spiritual care to members of our military, and to veterans who are receiving medical and mental health care in Veterans Administration hospitals and clinics. Many of these spiritual care providers have served in the military, and have experienced first hand how the heart and soul can be wounded; some continue to live with wounds of their own. With empathy and humility they have decided to pursue the vocation of accompanying their comrades on a journey of healing. For those already attuned to a life of service to others, new opportunities arise in the form of spiritual care and counseling.

> Our endorsed members are often individuals who come from non-dominant and non-privileged communities. They have lived the experience of racism, sexism, gender discrimination, and other instances of prejudice and discrimination. They have been hurt and in many cases harmed. But they are not broken. Rather, they are inspired (literally I believe, filled with the Spirit) to step forward and to reach out, especially to those in their communities, to bring care, strength and comfort. They are FCM's witnesses to inclusion, acceptance, and affirmation.

> Many of our endorsed members have transitioned into ministry from successful careers in other professions: law, education, business and others. They have known what it means to achieve. They bring their accomplishment, skill, wisdom and savvy with them as they respond to their call to ministry. While their journey may be new, they do not forsake the gifts that they have nurtured. They find new places and spaces to share those gifts.

> A common characteristic of almost all those seeking Endorsement is that they are seeking a community that is open enough and welcoming enough to embrace the breadth and depth of God's holy creation. Many endorsed members come from communities of faith that are dear to them. At the same time, they are drawn to FCM because they perceive FCM as being a community where they can belong, and those like them can belong, and those they serve can belong. Our endorsed members bring with them a spirit of inclusion which motivates their care for others.

The Endorsement process requires applicants to examine their journey toward ministry in depth, identify the credentials that demonstrate their readiness to serve others, and to engage the support and recommendation of others who can acknowledge their gifts. It is a challenging process, and at the same time it provides an opportunity for those seeking Endorsement and those who support them to acknowledge and celebrate the gifts for ministry that they are called to share.

The process of Endorsement with FCM provides our members with a community that will walk with them as they realize their transformation into providers of spiritual care, counseling and education. Transformation – isn't this what all of our ministries are about? FCM's Mission Statement reminds us of what we are being led to do day by day: "Responding to the Divine Call by empowering and nurturing those inspired for inclusive ministries".

January/February 2020

VOL. 54 Number 1

Federation of Christian Ministries





TOM LEONHARDT



More On Forgiveness

A word of thanks to Christy Howard-Steele for her excellent article [1] *Forgiveness: A Matter of the Heart*. As Christy notes, there is ample evidence in Scripture of the need to forgive. A person genuinely offering forgiveness has done all she or he can do. That is not, however, the end of the process. Christy wrote of the importance of accountability, which is a critical element in the process of forgiveness. What moves the process of forgiveness forward is:

1. Ownership on the part of the offender that the offense did indeed occur;
2. Self-forgiveness on the part of the offender.

No CHEAP GRACE here! Challenging personal work is required. Genuine forgiveness is given through the pain of deep reflection, neither excusing nor denying. Self-forgiveness opens the gate to receive the flow of forgiveness given by the one offended as well as to the ever-present, unconditional forgiveness of G-d. Forgiveness takes time.

Sheila, Dennis and Matthew Linn wrote a book titled: *Don't Forgive Too Soon* [2]. A person who has been hurt needs to take the time and do the work required to choose to forgive the offender, working first through the pain caused by the offence. Christy spoke of the appearance of "cheap Grace." Such illusion on the part of the offender or the public is the result of not grasping the process of forgiveness noted above. The element of ownership is clearly demonstrated in the Gospel of Luke 15:11-ff., the story of the Prodigal Son.

Consequences of hurtful, destructive behavior are what the Roman Catholic tradition attempted to address with penances, purgatory, hell, externally inflicted punishments by the Church, or punishments by G-d. These are an affront to the infinite, unconditional, boundless, mercy and compassion of G-d.

My experience in the 70's of some Christians was that the importance of forgiveness was accepted but was abused in some public cases. These were when someone did something hurtful or destructive and then tried to manipulate the offended person into forgiving the perpetrator simply because followers of Jesus are to be forgiving people. This is an expectation of "cheap grace" on the part of the offender. It is a dead end!

The following is an example of a healthy process of forgiveness: Person "A" shoots person "B." During the time of physical healing, pastoral counseling and psychological and spiritual struggling on the part of person "B," person "B" chooses to forgive person "A." Person "A" eventually seeks out person "B" and says to person "B:" I am sorry and I regret that I caused you physical and emotional trauma. I ask you to forgive me if you are ready and able." Person "B" responds: "I have already forgiven you and I do forgive you now. Please forgive yourself so that my forgiveness is honored and released to you. Thus, you will also honor and receive G-d's forgiveness which has already been given and waits to flood your being." The truth is that self-forgiveness is an act of gratitude to others and to G-d for forgiveness given.

[1] **FCM Newsletter**, November/December 2019, Vol. 53 (6)

[2] Anon. Paulist Press, 1997



CARL YUSAVITZ
VICE PRESIDENT

Northeast Region

News from the Northeast Region

Our region currently has four candidates applying for FCM Commissioning this February. Hopefully, FCM will become a solid spiritual home to nurture their many gifts of ministry.

During our fall regional retreat, we noticed that only a few members from (northern) New England were able to join us. Since we are a large region with multiple metropolitan sites, we are now trying to organize a 1-day FCM retreat in the Boston area. New Englanders, please stay-tuned! We are hoping to meet for lunch and conversation on a Sunday, followed by a liturgy in early spring.

Since we are beginning a New Year, I thought a few reflections on the “resolutions” we often make at this time of the year might be appropriate.

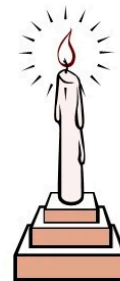
Every holiday season, between Thanksgiving and Christmas, no matter where we live in the region, we are all subjected to multiple TV, newsprint, and electronic billboard advertisements about getting more exercise or losing weight during the upcoming New Year. With that, many of us make “resolutions.” We call them resolutions because we are “resolute” in carrying them out – at least initially. I came across these resolutions that have more to do with relationships than exercise, food, or losing weight. Hopefully, you will find them both reasonable and doable this New Year.

- 1. **Take tender care of the relationships that feed your soul.** Ministry is all about giving AND receiving. So, this year be more intentional in receiving what nourishes your soul well.
- 2. **Pay closer attention to what you treasure in your heart.** As Luke’s Gospel says about Jesus’ mother Mary: “She treasured all these things in her heart” and in Matthew’s Gospel: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Not only guard but share your treasures freely.
- 3. **Use your “free” time wisely.** Think of “time” as how we measure and prioritize the most important things in our life. Try to keep the balance and boundaries between work and rest both healthy and secure.
- 4. **Control your tongue** – a tough one for our public officials these days! As the Book of Proverbs reminds us - once something is out there, it’s almost impossible to get back. So, stop/look/listen before you speak.
- 5. **When you say, “I’m sorry,” make sure you mean it.** Remember that “forgiveness work” is at the very heart of Jesus’ radical teaching and so much of the ministry we do in his name.

- 6. **Find your happiness in small, seemingly insignificant things.** This resolution is about seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary. May this New Year be a new way of seeing for you.
- 7. **Let go of habits and relationships that aren’t very healthy.** As we say in the Serenity Prayer:

Serenity Prayer
Lord, give 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.

- 8. **Be more at peace with yourself – as you are.** At some point, we all need to stop trying to become someone else and become the beloved child we already are in God’s eyes! Experience your belovedness this New Year.



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RON DAVIS
VICE PRESIDENT

Great Lakes Region

Greetings FCM Community!

Year end is always a busy time. Time is given to follow up on renewals for the upcoming year. Then, there we give time to meeting with people to move processes forward for commissioning and endorsement candidates. Then, if we have more time, we give time to hosting and going to gatherings in our given regions. I will admit to you that all of my time has been devoted to the first two challenges.

With this in mind, connection will be a first priority in the early months of 2020. I would like to connect with our Michigan members to discern who will be the new area representative in Michigan. A similar conversation will happen with our Indiana members to reach the same ends. Then, I will talk to the area representatives in the other city centers to schedule gatherings and zoom conversations.

Praying that God's Richest Blessings will be on you and your ministry,




BAPTISM

All FCM members who preside at BAPTISMS

You are required to register the baptism with the FCM Registry Office

You will find the form at www.FCMregistry.org

Questions? Please email registry@FCMmail.org



RICHARD JAMES
VICE PRESIDENT

Mt. & Plains Region

Valley of the Shadow of Death

First, let me share my sense of the phrase “valley of the shadow of death.” The valley of the shadow of death is a place and season along life’s journey, overshadowed by a looming threat or the reality of significant loss, even death, and its aftermath. While the shadow’s reach presents darkness suspense and danger, through the lens of one’s faith, it is an opportunity to advance toward and embrace the hope of new promised land, of peace, still waters, and green pastures or at least a new normal.

Here I define hope as is a life-sustaining resource that is “characterized by a confident yet uncertain expectation of achieving a future good which, to the hoping person, is realistically possible and personally significant and meaningful.” Psalm 23 is an expression of confidence in God’s providential presence and care, as a shepherd cares and hosts sheep. This Psalm suggests that somehow and, in some way, no matter where we might find ourselves amid our faith pilgrimage, God will show up, comfort, guide, and provide for us in any circumstance.

What follows in my full-length article is a visit the Hospital’s Emergency Trauma Room, the Quiet Room, and the Southside of Chicago and a story of a “14-Year Old Male GSW (Gun Shot Wound) to the Chest,” as my beeper message relays the emergency. My first thought: “Will another teenager fall victim to senseless violence due to gunfire?” The reality of this visit shows me again the impact of violence on those who serve in trauma centers, especially in major cities. Further in my full-length story is the experience of being a pastor in that community and the violence I witnessed in my community that also put my life at risk. But, it is also a story of hope and I encourage you to read this vital personal essay “Hope in the Valley.” on www.FCMblog.org



Family and friends enjoyed a beautiful day and agape meal service at the OSB monastery surrounded by the Black Forest community north of Colorado Springs.

I write also to report on an FCM member’s Commissioning Service. The **Rev. Camille Marie Harrison** was commissioned on November 2 by **Sr. Mary Colleen** (Celebrant) at the Benet Hill Monastery in Colorado Springs, CO.

Rev. Camille is in her last year of studies for the Master of Divinity Degree at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver CO. Her hope for the future is to extend her ministry of Spiritual Direction, certified by the Benet Hill Monastery in 2018, to chaplaincy with FCM endorsement.

St. Louis Area Gatherings

When: **January 11, 2020 and February 29, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.**
Location: Home of Marybeth McBryan...3914 Burgen Street ... St. Louis, MO 63116

Agenda for January: Marybeth will lead the discussion...Ann Todd will provide refreshments
Agenda for February: There will be a discussion and simple eucharist.

Please respond to Marybeth at 314.277.3212 or email mmbcbpriest@yahoo.com if you are planning to attend.

ALL ARE WELCOME

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TRACY PETERSON
VICE PRESIDENT

Gathering, Commissioned, Endorsed

The Pacific Region has been very active in terms of commissionings and endorsements the past few months. Here is our update from two issues ago.



Several FCM members from Oregon gathered to enjoy an outing at the Lan Su Chinese Garden in Portland on October 26th. We had a lovely time conversing with exotic tea and light snacks in the tea house. Left to right, **Chi Lee, Sarah Wolf, Hailey O'Keif and Donna Schreiber**



Chad Kaminski was commissioned recently by **Tracy Peterson**, the new Pacific Vice President.



The Pacific region is growing by leaps and bounds. Here is our Hawaii group who were commissioned recently and several have now been endorsed. Left to right: **Steve Stitely, Grace Lee, John Herberger, Donna Schreiber, Puanani Lalakea, Lena Ann Ewalena**



Our Deepest Sympathy to Tracy Peterson and her family on the recent passing of her mother. Tracy can be reached at: pacificvp@FCMmail.org



Newsletter Editor...Tom Cruse
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The FCM Newsletter is published bi-monthly by the Federation of Christian Ministries, a non-profit religious body. As the informational publication of FCM, its mission is to keep members current with the organization and its activities, to provide ideas to further ministry and to promote community building among local FCM groups and the national organization. All current members receive a copy. Articles and feedback are welcomed and can be sent to : newsletter@FCMmail.org by the 15th of each month (February, April, June, August, October and December). FCM member-submitted articles should aim for 500 words and 2-3 selected photos in MS Word and JPG formats.

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FCM CERTIFICATES

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

FCM Membership & Realm

REALM ADMINISTRATOR & MEMBERSHIP

Amy Simpson Bennethum

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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
Inquiries may be made at: specmin@FCMmail.org

GLOBAL MINISTRIES UNIVERSITY

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