



NOVEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

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Text Message Updates
Text FCCTextMe to
(844) 467-1299

Weekly Schedule

Worship Service: Sun. 10:15am
Hybrid Worship in Person &
Streamed via Zoom and Facebook Live
<https://www.fcclc.org/worship>

Social Hours: Wed. 6:30pm
1st Wed: Crafters Group
2nd Wed: LGBTQ Group
3rd Wed: Adult Education Group
4th Wed: Book Discussion

Spiritual Practices: Thu. 9:00am
Every Thursday on Zoom
Some practices we do regularly:
Lectio Divina, Centering Prayer, Christian
Meditation, Bible Journaling, Scripture
Doodling, and more!

Announcements

- » On November 20 we will set aside time during worship to honor those who have passed from this life. Following service will be a potluck and decorating the sanctuary for the Christmas season. *For more information, see page 10.*
- » We have lifted all the Covid restrictions. The CDC has removed the Covid restrictions and rates of infection are low in the area. This means we do not require or request persons wear masks. It is up to your discretion if you wish to wear a mask. We are also returning to indoor coffee hour and potlucks.
- » We will continue to serve Communion at the front of the Sanctuary during our Sunday service.
- » We ask that participants form two lines at a safe distance, and keep masks on while in line and after being served.
- » Individual sealed communion elements are available if desired.
- » If you are unable to come forward, a deacon will serve you at your seat.
- » To limit the length of the newsletter, the FCC Board Meeting Minutes are published as a separate document, available at <https://www.fcclc.org/community/>

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WORSHIP COVENANT

In order to ensure that worship is a safe space for everyone who wants to return, we ask that you covenant with us to abide by the following safety guidelines:

- » While you may choose to wear a mask, they are no longer required or requested by FCC at this time. We may adjust this decision in the future based on the numbers.
- » When you enter, please take a bulletin, then find a spot to sit. We ask that all fellowship and mingling be done outside.
- » Worship leaders, musicians, and speakers are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated.
- » All who are able are invited to come forward for communion.
- » We ask that you wear your name tag or a disposable name tag, available by the front doors.
- » If you are not able to come forward, a deacon will serve you at your seat. Individual sealed elements are available if preferred.
- » Please maintain a six-foot distance between you and other members at all times when indoors.
- » After the final hymn please make your way outside, taking your bulletin and any trash with you. There will be trash cans by the sanctuary doors

NOTES

This covenant will change as recommended safety measures in our county change. We will communicate any changes through email blasts and in person announcements.

The livestream recording begins at 10:10 am. At that time, any sounds above a whisper may be heard on the livestream. Anyone who gathers near the front of the sanctuary may be visible on camera.

If you have any questions about the covenant, please contact Pastor Bethany.

CALENDAR

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Sun.	10:15 am	First Christian Church Worship
	10:15 am	St. John's Catholic Church Worship
Wed.	6:30 pm	FCC Social Hour (Parlor)
	6:30 pm	Mesilla Valley Swing (Sanctuary)
Thu.	9:00 am	Spiritual Practices (Zoom)
Fri.	12:00 pm	Al-Anon
	6:00 pm	New World Drummers / Dancers
Sat.	8:00am	HIV/AIDS Food Bank

SOCIAL GROUPS

11/2	6:30 pm	Crafters Group
11/9	6:30 pm	LGBTQ Group
11/16	6:30 pm	Adult Education Group
11/23	6:30 pm	Book Discussion Group

EVENTS

11/9	2:00 pm	Adult Education Conversation
11/19	10:00 am	Weaving for Justice Sale

MEETINGS

11/10	7:00 pm	Faith Action Committee
11/19	10:00 am	FCC Board Meeting
11/20	~11:30 pm	Worship Committee

BIRTHDAYS

11/15
Julia Bruner

11/21
Jennifer Luke

11/22
Karen Holmes

11/28
Ericka Maples

ELDERS & WORSHIP LEADERS

November, 2022

Sunday, Nov. 6 10:15 am

Sermon: *Giving Thanks to God*
Worship Leader: Melody Burns
Offering: Paul Cook
Communion: Kamy McKenzy-Shaw

Sunday, Nov. 13 10:15 am

Sermon: *Infinite Possibilities*
Worship Leader: Kamy McKenzy-Shaw
Offering: Rev. Richard Feyen
Communion: Paul Cook

Sunday, Nov. 20 10:15 am

Sermon: *What Do We Think We See?*
Worship Leader: Karen Holmes
Offering: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw
Communion: Rev. Richard Feyen

Sunday, Nov. 27 10:15 am

Sermon: *Keeping Watch*
Worship Leader: Karen Holmes
Offering: Deb Cook
Communion: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw

December, 2022

Sunday, Dec. 4 10:15 am

Speaker: Rev. Richard Feyen
Worship Leader: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw
Offering: Sandy Weber
Communion: Deb Cook

Sunday, Dec. 11 10:15 am

Speaker: Rev. Richard Feyen
Worship Leader: Eric Hays-Strom
Offering: Esther Devall
Communion: Sandy Weber

Sunday, Dec. 18 10:15 am

Speaker: Rev. Richard Feyen
Worship Leader: Hilda McKee
Offering: Scott Hays-Strom
Communion: Esther Devall

Sunday, Dec. 24 7:00 pm

Speaker: Rev. Richard Feyen
Worship Leader: Esther Devall
Offering: Patrick Crocker
Communion: Scott Hays-Strom

BOARD PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Scott Hays-Strom

IF YOU WANT TO CONQUER THE WORLD, CONQUER YOURSELF FIRST.
— FYODORY DOSTOYEVSKY

If you remember from my last couple of articles, I've mentioned that in our church life, it seems like it's one thing after another coming our way. Last month I shared a story about keeping our forks because the best is yet to come. As we continue our journey looking at where we are going as a church, and how we are going to get there, I was reminded of the story of the fork, because I do believe that God has a mission for us here in our city and county. This week in email I was given another example of that. But first, a story...

There once lived a powerful king who undertook an expedition to conquer foreign lands. His wise counselor asked him, "Great king, to what purpose do you set out on this endeavor?"

"To become master of Asia", the king replied.

"And then what?" asked the counselor.

"I shall invade Arabia", said the king.

"And after that?"

"I shall conquer Europe and Africa; and finally, when the whole world is under me, I shall rest and live at ease."

To this the wise counselor retorted, "But what keeps you from resting and living at ease here and now, if that is all you want? You could settle down this very day without the trouble and risks."

Do you have dreams of wanting to conquer the world like what the King had?

Ask yourself: Is this truly what I want out of life?

Once you conquer and truly understand yourself will you start to see the amazing life that is awaiting you.

When we look at our church history, you can see what an amazing life that we have had. Individually, even when it's one thing after another, God has always shown the path forward when we seek the guidance of the Spirit to show us the things we want to conquer and succeed at. One of the biggest difficulties is conquering the fears and other hurdles inside ourselves so that we can conquer our own world. We have a community that reaches out to those around us to bring light and life and overcome one thing after another. Keeping our forks, we will be able to see the best is yet to come.

What an amazing life that we have. God has given First Christian Church another opportunity to be part of a ministry that in our planning meetings we have recognized that God has been calling us to serve the student population at New Mexico State University. TO be an open and welcoming church for those who struggle with the more conservative churches that they grew up in. over the years we've had visitors who come to services seeking a new way of connecting with God. We've struggled with identifying How to do that. In an email this week, we have been invited to become part of restarting the Interfaith Council at NMSU!

So don't be afraid as a church community at the one thing after another that comes along. We can conquer those fears of what is coming next. As we complete our strategic planning, looking at where we will be going forward. As we look to see who our new pastor will be, we know that rest and peace from our fears will come. When we see the path that God has given us, and we follow the prompting of the Spirit, to keep and use our forks, We just keep moving ahead to conquer whatever is next.

We do that because we have an amazing life, and know that he best is yet to come.

INTERIM PASTOR'S LETTER

Rev. Richard Feyen

FINDING OUR NICHE

Jeremiah Wright, former minister at Trinity United Church of Christ on Chicago's south side and Michael Piazza, founding minister of The Cathedral of Hope, United Church of Christ in Dallas, have many things in common. They both grew their churches to be the largest UCC churches in the U.S. They are both good leaders and great preachers. And most importantly they both chose to claim their identity and know their niche "market" if you will allow that word in this church setting.

The one thing they both give credit to for the growth of their churches and the one thing they both have since "marketed" as the way to success for a church in the world today; is the same thing. And that one thing is for the church to know and proclaim what it's "One Thing" is. In other words ... know your niche.

The Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright proclaimed early on that Trinity was, "unabashedly black and proud." And Rev Dr. Michael Piazza started out early on claiming that The Cathedral of Hope would be ministering to and for the gay community in the Dallas Ft Worth area. Along the way both churches clearly understood their mission and vision and consciously decided to proclaim it with vigor and pride.

I remember a talk I attended many years ago where Michael Piazza was the presenter; there he told us that when he began in a movie theater he calculated that if the population of the Dallas Fort Worth area was 1.5 million people then given statistics at least 150,000 of them were LGBTQ. That, he said, was his "market". Today the church has a membership of approximately 4,000.

Besides proudly and loudly proclaiming their mission and purpose, both churches made the extra effort to become very visible in their communities. I remember Rev Piazza telling us of the mountain of school supplies piled up in the parking lot for people to see and striving to get press coverage for events they held.

The point is that today both churches still have clarity of mission and vision, pride in who and what they are in their respective communities, and if they closed their doors tomorrow they would be sorely missed.

What would Las Cruces miss if First Christian Church closed its doors?

If we don't have a clear answer to that question then we need to work together to come up with a ministry focused goal which sets us apart. We need to find our niche and fill it, ministering in love, with a progressive spirit, offering compassion and delivering something special and unique so that Las Cruces would truly miss First Christian Church if it closed its doors. That is the ministry we need to be doing. That is our calling to Be The Church.

There are a lot of "friendly" churches in town. There are other churches accepting of LGBTQ people. There are other churches that eagerly welcome newcomers. There are churches with better looking buildings and much better youth programs.

What can we proclaim proudly and loudly that will make a difference?

What will truly set us apart from the other churches?

What can we do better than anyone?

What is our niche?

Answering those questions and living them out with vision and mission will guarantee the existence of First Christian Church well into the future.

Blessings Friends

P.S. I do have an idea – but it's better if it comes from you.

REMEMBERING THE SAINTS

Pot Luck – And More . . .

On November 20 we will set aside time during worship to honor those who have passed from this life by naming them, ringing the singing bowl, lighting a candle and offering a moment of silence. Typically this is done for those who've passed in the last year but due to the nature of the past few years we will take the time to remember and honor anyone who has passed from this life during the COVID-19 years. (Essentially the last three years)

PLEASE – notify the office with the *name(s) and date(s) of passing* of those loved ones you wish remembered either through email, by dropping a note in the offering plate, or by calling the office. ALL names reported to the office will be listed in the bulletin that Sunday and on a slide on the screen as we scroll through them. There will also be an opportunity that Sunday for you to lift up a name of a loved not listed.

IN ADDITION . . . if you have a photo of the person and you would like it shown as we remember that individual please provide a digital copy of the image by November 15th, otherwise just their name will appear on the screen.

OFFICIALLY All Saints Day is November 1st and many churches use the first Sunday after that to celebrate those lives. I have typically celebrated those who have passed from life on the first Sunday of the New Year but that happens to fall on January 1st so it seemed better to celebrate those lives on the last day of the Church Year which for some reason falls on November 20. The First Sunday of Advent is November 27th and marks the beginning of a new church year.

November 20 will be a special day for a number of reasons. Be sure to mark it on your calendar and be with us that day! It has been a few years since we have been able to be together for these special events so please make it special and join us!

- » Remembering the Saints who've passed
- » Pot Luck luncheon after church
- » Hanging of The Greens (decorating the church for Christmas).

FAITH ACTION COMMITTEE

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Disciples of Christ Higher Education and Leadership Ministries

The Disciples of Christ designates the month of November to support the Higher Education and Leadership Ministries.

This is a description of the Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) taken from their website. HELM offers several opportunities to develop and nurture individuals who continuously aim to guide and transform our churches and communities. In collaboration with numerous higher education and theological institutions, various ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and other ministry partners, HELM sponsors and develops programs providing necessary resources to create positive and influential changes in our world. HELM's programs challenge undergraduate students, ministerial students, clergy, and lay ministers to be active agents in our constantly evolving contexts.

More information will be available with an insert in the Sunday bulletins during November.

The Faith Action Committee recognizes and commends Sandy Weber for leading many charitable programs in our church – among them are the “Sock Ministry” and “Change for Casa de Peregrinos”. Thank you Sandy.

Backyard Farms

Exciting things are happening at Backyard Farms and Rachael Ryan is going to update us on all the new ventures. You will not want to miss her talk during our Sunday Service on November 6th.

An Update on the New Mexico Health Security Act

Again, the design process for the NM Health Security Plan is at a roadblock with no action although funds are available to design this plan.

ACTION ITEM!

If your legislator is on the Legislative Health & Human Services Committee, please call, email, or write to them and ask them to support legislation to create a Health Security Plan design board. Let's continue to work to create a system that addresses the access and cost issues that New Mexico residents face.

Committee Members are:

Rep. Christine Trujillo, Chair

Rep. Kelly K. Fajardo

Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino, Vice Chair

Rep. Miguel P. Garcia

Rep. Gail Armstrong

Sen. Siah Correa Hemphill

Rep. Joanne J. Ferrary

Rep. D. Wonda Johnson

Sen. David M. Gallegos

Sen. Linda M. Lopez

Sen. Martin Hickey

Rep. Tara L. Lujan

Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez

Rep. Marian Matthews

Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson

Rep. Roger E. Montoya

Rep. Phelps Anderson

Sen. Shannon D. Pinto

Rep. Karen C. Bash

Sen. Nancy Rodriguez

Rep. Rachel A. Black

Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero

Rep. Micaela Lara Cadena

Sen. Gregg Schmedes

Rep. Gail Chasey

Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

Rep. Rebecca Dow

Sen. Bill Tallman

Sen. Katy M. Duhigg

For more information please go to the website:

<https://www.nmhealthsecurity.org/>

FROM THE COMMUNITY

CENTERING MEDITATION

Paul Cook – Oct. 19, 2022

Inspired by a texting conversation with Sue Stefford-Grey

Being in the moment, shifting our mindset. Being grateful to be here, now. Appreciating the gifts around us. Leaves changing colors on a tree, sunbeams shining through the branches, reflections of trees on the surface of a pond. Things easily missed when our minds are elsewhere. God surrounds us with blessings every day, but we can easily miss them when we allow ourselves to be distracted by the noise of the world. Do we hear the noise of traffic going down the road, or the morning serenade of a bird outside our door?

A LIGHT IN THE SNOW

Paul Cook – Oct. 2, 2022

In a world unknown,
Pandemic beyond control,
Bethany happened.

A ray of sunshine,
New viewpoint to consider,
Laughter bursting forth!

Fellow traveler,
Walking with us on the road,
Spirit brightening.

Guiding us forward,
Looking past grief and sorrow,
Spreading joyful news to sow.

We will be thinking of you and praying for you on your journey ahead.

From your friends at First Christian Church In Las Cruces,



ATRIUM BEAUTIFICATION

Karen Holmes – Oct. 18, 2022

I hope everyone has had a chance to admire our church atrium. Thanks to the hard work done by a team of people we now have a more welcoming entrance. Another big plus it is easier to pin items on the new bulletin boards and they don't blow off as easily when the doors are opened.

It takes many people doing different tasks to remove the old carpet from the wall and replace with cork board. In addition, others filled in so persons could work on the atrium. Special thanks to Ralph Holmes for planning the work and ordering the supplies so we were prepared and ready to go.

Melissa McKenzy-Shaw

Ralph Holmes

Dave Wofford

Deb Cook

David Rice

Scott Hays-Strom

Paul Cook

Steve Blinks

Rev Richard Feyen

Pat and Linda Weathers

Thanks to Sue Stefford-Grey for painting the low garden wall in the atrium, which was completed earlier.

Pictures on opposite page show the progression of the work done.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES HAIKU

Paul Cook – Oct. 19, 2022

Sitting in tall grass,
Birds singing their morning songs.
Trees shading the ground.

Patches of sunlight,
Trees waving leaves in the breeze.
Tortoise chomping grass.

A pond of water,
Surrounded by trees waving.
Laughter in the wind.

Silence in the room,
Sun shining through the window.
Golden Retriever.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

by Aletta Wilson & Melody Burns

How many of you can guess the name of Our Friend who has been worshipping with us for five years with his wife? Here are some clues.

Our Friend was raised in a conservative ranching family in East Central New Mexico, an area extending into the Texas Panhandle called Llano Estacado. He loved to read the Bible. His father taught him carpentry skills and he took Manual Training classes in high school. He attended McMurry College in Abilene, Texas where he met the girl he would marry and spend 70 wonderful years with until her sudden death just weeks ago after celebrating their anniversary with family and friends. We all miss her lovely spirit. Joan Wurgler was the daughter of Rev. Nelson Wurgler, the pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church. The church with the copper top roof was built under his watch.

While a college student, Our Friend met a young black student, Cecil Williams, at a church conference and they became good friends. In 1952, Our Friend was instrumental in the integration of Williams and five other black students into the Perkins School of Theology, a part of Southern Methodist University where Our Friend was now a student. The football coach soon followed up by integrating the football team with black players. Cecil Williams went on to build up and pastor the failing Glide Memorial Methodist Church in the Haight Ashbury District of San Francisco, making it a congregation of 4,000 people. He did this by reaching out to the street people, LGBTQ+, and welcoming them into the church. (Melody googled Cecil's name and brought up wonderful information about this remarkable church.)

Our Friend's first church as pastor was the Tularosa Methodist Church where he also sanded and varnished the old wood floors. Also in his spare time, he connected with an old deserted Baptist Church in High Rolls and was able to start the Methodist Church which still has 150 people attending services. The next door neighbor of the church was a radio announcer who started his Sunday morning broadcast with the church's 9:15 service and then took his equipment to Tularosa to air the 11:00 service. He must have loved Our Friend's preaching and singing voice as we have come to love.

From there Our Friend was sent to Portales where he worked with the Wesley Foundation students and was a professor of Philosophy and Religion at Eastern New Mexico College. The Bishop realized what a gem he had in this young man and after three years he sent Our Friend to struggling Methodist Churches in Oklahoma which needed a pastor who could restore or build a facility. THE Henrietta Methodist Church had been built in 1928 over a mine shaft and was constructed with steel framing and overhead cables to keep the building from collapsing. By five years, Our Friend had raised Memorial funds from members and friends of the church to build a new church on solid ground. Our Friend's second son James is still a trustee of that church.

In all, Our Friend served 8 churches in Oklahoma. In Oklahoma City, as he had done everywhere else, he was involved with Habitat for Humanity. THE Restore there was a big project that he worked on. He was also involved in the Federal Program which distributed food from warehouses to Senior Centers. He continued to be active in Kiwanis projects.

Our Friend and his wife Joan retired in 1993 and on the spur of the moment decided to move to Good Sam in Las Cruces taking an apartment two doors down from Joan's sister Jeanne. In 2007 Rev. Grady McCullough and his wife Joan were recognized by the mayor of our city for their years of service to our city and its people. There were so many organizations that he worked with. He was the Director of Habitat for Humanity and was responsible for securing funds to establish the Restore that makes it possible to build four homes a year. He worked hard to find funding for furnishings, ceramic ovens and lapidary equipment for Munson Senior Center. Through his work with Kiwanis he was involved with getting food into the schools for students. He is still active with these organizations.

Rev. Grady McCullough has three sons and a daughter who he is very proud of. John lives in Las Cruces, James in Henrietta, Joe in Kentucky, and Jeanne in Oklahoma City. The family will all be here to join their father during the Christmas holidays. We welcome them.

Did you guess right?

SAVANNAH THE TORTOISE

Savannah is our Sulcata tortoise. When we got her she was smaller than the palm of my hand. She transitioned from a ten gallon aquarium to a fifty gallon aquarium, to a four foot by four foot plywood box. She loves to spend her days in the backyard munching on weeds and grass. She has gotten so big now (about 33 pounds) that we recently had to install a drawbridge (really just a ramp door) on the side of her box so we can get her in and out. Before that we were having to pick her up and turn her vertical to get her in and out of the box. And we have trouble lifting her now. She really doesn't like being held vertically. She starts swinging her paws around when you put her vertical.

When she has been roaming the backyard and I go out there to do something, she walks up to me to see what's going on. She always seems to be very curious about what I'm doing. She has on a few occasions pushed a tennis ball around a little bit. Her diet is supposed to be 70 percent grass, but we've noticed that after things have bloomed out she seems to gravitate to the weeds, and prefers them over the grass. But she still eats a lot of grass as well. She also loves hanging out under the sprinkler on the hotter days while she's munching grass. We have to keep her in during the winter. Her species is from Africa and they generally enjoy 80 degree temperatures year round where they're native. They don't hibernate like other tortoises, so we have to keep her warm inside.



STAR WORDS MEDITATION

November 2022

How has your star word inspired thankfulness in you this year?

If you do not have a Star Word focus for the year,
please select one from the list below:

ability, abundance, accept/acceptance, action, adoration, affection, alert, amaze/amazement, anticipation, aspire, astonish, awake/awakening, aware, balance, beauty, beginning, blessed, boldness, breathe, brilliant, calling, caring, celebrate, challenge, change, charity, cheerfulness, complete/completeness, courage, create/creativity, dare/daring, dazzle, delight, determination, devotion, discipline, dream, embracing, energy, enlightenment, excellence, expectant/expectation, explore/exploration, exuberance, faith, festivity, forgiveness, gentleness, glory, gratitude, harmony, holy/holiness, hope, humility/humble, imagination, invitation, Joy, knowledge, laugh/laughter, liveliness, maturity, meaning, memory, mercy, miracle, mystery, nourish/nourishment, offering, opportunity, overflowing, passion, patience, perception, perspective, plenty, possibility, precious, promise, provide, quietness, radiant, ready/readiness, receive, recreate, refine, release, renewal, restoration, sacred, satisfaction, seeing, service, simple/simplicity, sincerity, sparkle, stillness, surrender, teaching, tenderness, testimony, thanksgiving, thoughtful, together, triumph, trust, understanding, vision, whole/wholeness, wisdom

WHO ARE WE?

First Christian Church affirms the Good News of Jesus the Christ as revealed through Scripture, tradition, experience, scholarship, and reason. Within the community of faith, we are called to discern through prayer, study, and discussion God's message for today.



The Newsletter is published monthly by First Christian Church. It is available free of charge to members and friends of FCC. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform and to inspire, and to invite participation in the life of the congregation, the community, and the world. Submissions are welcome, including announcements of activities of interest to members, prayer concerns, thank-you notes, directory updates, etc. The editor reserves the right to edit for content and space. The due date for submissions is each month on the 25th.