



## SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

### *Contact Information*

1089 El Paseo Rd,  
Las Cruces, NM, 88001

**Phone:** (575) 524-3245  
**E-mail:** [office@fcclc.org](mailto:office@fcclc.org)

**Visit the Website**  
<https://www.fcclc.org>

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(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  
3rd Wed: Adult Education Group

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

## Announcements

- » 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.
- » The Pastoral Search Committee has finished collecting responses to measure the congregation's priorities for a long term pastor. They will now be analyzing the results to better inform their search moving forward.
- » 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.
- » Worship leaders, musicians, and speakers are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated.
- » We ask that you wear your name tag or a disposable name tag, available by the front doors.
- » Please maintain a six-foot distance between you and other members at all times when indoors.
- » When you enter, please take a bulletin, then find a spot to sit.
- » The Communion bread and wine are served row by row. Please accept the elements and pass the trays to your neighbor.
- » 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 Rev. Patrick..

# CALENDAR

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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

## ANNIVERSARIES

**9/6**  
Bruce & Sandy Weber

## BIRTHDAYS

**9/6**  
Charlotte Brooks

**9/9**  
Kamy McKenzy-Shaw

**9/16**  
Reuben Mason

**9/27**  
Esther Devall

## SPECIAL SERVICES

9/3            6:30 pm    Contemplative Worship (Chapel)

## SOCIAL GROUPS

9/6            6:30 pm    Crafters Group  
 9/20          11:30 am    Brown Bag Lunch  
 9/20          6:30 pm    Adult Education Group

## EVENTS

9/1            5:30 pm    Food Pantry Support Group  
 9/15          5:30 pm    Food Pantry Support Group  
 9/16          10:00 am    Weaving for Justice Sale  
 9/17          5:30 pm    Mesilla Valley Jazz & Blues

## MEETINGS

9/11          6:00 pm    Pastor Search Committee (Parlor)  
 9/16          10:00 am    FCC Board Meeting  
 9/25          6:00 pm    Pastor Search Committee (Parlor)

# ELDERS & WORSHIP LEADERS

*September, 2023*

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**Sunday, Sept. 3 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Hilda McKee  
Offering: Sandy Weber  
Communion: Scott Hays-Strom

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**Sunday, Sept. 10 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Karen Holmes  
Offering: Kamy McKenzie-Shaw  
Communion: Sandy Weber

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**Sunday, Sept. 17 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Sue Stefford-Grey  
Offering: Paul Cook  
Communion: Kamy McKenzie-Shaw

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**Sunday, Sept. 24 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Kamy McKenzie-Shaw  
Offering: Rev. Patrick Crocker  
Communion: Paul Cook

*October, 2023*

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**Sunday, Oct. 1 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Zanté Garcia  
Offering: Deb Cook  
Communion: Rev. Patrick Crocker

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**Sunday, Oct. 8 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Melody Burns  
Offering: Scott Hays-Strom  
Communion: Deb Cook

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**Sunday, Oct. 15 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Deb Cook  
Offering: Sandy Weber  
Communion: Scott Hays-Strom

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**Sunday, Oct. 22 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Debby Johnson  
Offering: Melissa McKenzie-Shaw  
Communion: Sandy Weber

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**Sunday, Oct. 29 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Hilda McKee  
Offering: Paul Cook  
Communion: Melissa McKenzie-Shaw

# NEWS & LETTERS

## CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP SERVICE

*Deb Cook*

**When:** 1st Sunday of the month at 6:30pm  
**Where:** FCC Chapel  
**Why:** Let us find out together

Paul and I came to the Aug Contemplative Worship. I came because I was curious... What is Contemplative Worship? It was a time we gathered with other believers. There was a Bible passage read and brief discussion. Then there was quiet! When did you last sit quietly and think about a Bible passage? Maybe how it applies to you, what image it brought to mind, imagining yourself there, or something else? We lit candles and sang songs. Those who wanted to share part of what they thought about were given the opportunity. I felt no pressure to have to share. It was nice to have time to be still and listen. I look forward to trying it again, and invite others to check out contemplative worship.

## BOARD PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*Esther Devall*

### ACTIVE SHOOTER TRAINING

Officer Estrada from the Las Cruces Police gave an informative training about how to respond to an active shooter situation. Shootings at churches are relatively rare; 50% occur at businesses and 20% outdoors. In almost 60% of cases, the shooter has no connection to the location. The number of deaths depends on police response time and the availability of targets. While the average police response time nationally is 3 minutes, Officer Estrada indicated that Las Cruces Police would usually respond within one minute to our location.

When faced with a crisis such as an active shooter, people go through 3 stages – denial, deliberation, and decisive movement. It’s important to react quickly to sounds of gunfire instead of thinking that it might be firecrackers and ignoring it. Under stress, our blood pressure increases dramatically and a deterioration in our motor and cognitive processing skills often occurs. This makes it hard to dial a phone number, open a door, and other critical behaviors for escaping. Taking a few deep breaths and shifting our emotions from fear to anger can help us take action. Having a plan and rehearsing it regularly encourages decisive movement.

Officer Estrada stated that “Hide and Hope” is not usually an effective strategy. Instead, he recommended these 3 steps:

- 1. Run** – escape the situation as quickly as possible. Know all available exits, not just the one where you entered the room.
- 2. Hide** – if you cannot leave the building, try to lock yourself in a secure room. Turn out the lights, get out of sight, silence all electronic devices, and use a doorstop, belt, or rope to keep the door from being opened.
- 3. Fight** – if the shooter approaches you and you cannot escape or hide, use objects such as chairs and fire extinguishers to hit the shooter and disarm him. You can also try to distract his aim by throwing hymnals, offering plates, purses, or other objects.

We will be developing a safety plan and a safety committee. Please let Esther know if you would like to participate in this process. We will share the results with the congregation once they are reviewed by the Police and approved by the Board.

One simple step we will take right away is locking the front doors at 10:15 when the service begins. Someone will be stationed near the doors to let in late arrivals. Having some control over who enters our building can help keep us safe and is not meant to be unwelcoming. Please be patient with us as we develop and try out strategies.

# *Pastor's Letter*

*Rev. Patrick Crocker*

What are the words of faith that nourish us? What are the words with which we struggle? And how do we live out those words so that the Word becomes flesh and pitches tent among us?

Part of my fascination with language is the roots of the words we use. It's fitting as someone from a tradition that sought to restore New Testament Christianity and New Testament Christian worship. When I encounter words of faith, I enjoy looking at the roots (sometimes to the neglect of the branches, leaves, and fruit that it has become).

Salvation is one with which I struggle. While the meso-culture of the State in which I lived took it as all about whether an individual gets into heaven, the micro-culture of my family taught that salvation came from the same root as the word salve, so was more about healing or wholeness- both in this life and the next. (More recent research on my own has indicated that it's more complicated than that, but the argument still holds.) Thus, my own preaching and thinking tends to use "healing" more than "saving".

Peace is another word with which I struggle. Not that I think peace is a bad thing. Rather, peace has often been co-opted by empire to be a blander version of what it could be.

"Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This kind of power, love, justice, peace, health, wealth, and more are implied in the Hebrew word Shalom. More than just a simple, "I hope nobody fights with you today," Shalom is a prayer and a covenant. It is a prayer for all the best of God's Blessed Community and also a covenant to live out our part in such a vision of healing and wholeness for all of Creation. Thus, it is with a heart full of hope (and perhaps at least a tiny bit of anxiety) that I sign off for now with-

Shalom,  
Patrick

PS: If you'd like to have a pastoral visit or chat on the phone, you're welcome to call me at 575-551-1717 or email me at my new email address

[Rev.Patrick.Crocker@gmail.com](mailto:Rev.Patrick.Crocker@gmail.com).



# COMMUNITY

## *UNTIL THEN*

*Zanté Garcia*

Nothing hurts more than to see you cry,  
To see you suffer when your body says enough.  
It hurts to watch you go from glory to defeat, from bubbly to quiet,  
from powerful to surrender.

All along I know this is all in God's plan for you.  
I can't help but feel every ounce of your departure deep in my heart.  
I wished I could take it all away for you, but I know not to interfere with her plan.

I know all too well your wonderful accomplishments, your gumption and tenacity,  
your power and strength, your goodness and kindness,  
and your devotion and faithfulness to your Jesus.

I guess that's why you had to go when she called you home. She had a wonderful place  
assigned just for you, with all the other angels and saints. I'm sure she needs you there  
at her right hand to continue the journey of love from where you're at.

I miss you greatly. I miss your "I love yous." I miss your laughter. I miss those  
spectacular smiles. I miss seeing God in your eyes. I miss the warm hugs. I miss the  
moments we saved each other through scripture and countless hours of prayers and  
discussion. I miss saying "you're my best friend, sissy."

Without your love, your patience, and your prayers, I would have not believed that God  
could heal all my wounds. You loved me to my higher power. I love Jesus as you did. I  
look for God in everything and everyone as you did. From the depths of my heart, know  
that I can't wait to be with you again. Until then.

# BROWN BAG LUNCH

*Sandy Weber*

**An opportunity to gather with friends to enjoy fellowship and conversation.**

**When:** Every third Wednesday of the month from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm (people may come and go as their own time permits).

**Where:** We will gather in the back of the sanctuary at First Christian Church.

**Mission:** To create a space for sharing, caring, and enjoying time together.

**Expectation:** Bring your own lunch, napkin, drink (none provided) and anything else you need. Nothing will be provided except a trash bag. And please:

- » *If you forgot a spoon, glass, etc., you may borrow it from the kitchen, but use it, wash it, and return it.*
- » *If you spill something, clean it up.*
- » *If you pulled up a chair, put it back.*

**Conversational Flow:** “May I Speak” flags will be on the table.

If there is too much talking and over-talking going on, and you wish to speak, simply pick up a flag. To those talking when a flag is raised, please be respectful and acknowledge that someone wishes to speak.

**Door keeper:** Sandy Weber has accepted responsibility for opening and closing the building.

# 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.**