



## JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

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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>

**Contemplative Worship Service**  
1st Sunday of the month, 6:30pm  
In-person only at this time.

**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 (Parlor)
	6:00 pm	New World Drummers / Dancers
Sat.	8:00am	HIV/AIDS Food Bank

## BIRTHDAYS

**1/5**  
Lynn Brightman

**1/9**  
Melody Burns

**1/14**  
Debra Darmata

**1/30**  
Allison Mason

## SPECIAL SERVICES

1/07      6:30 pm      Contemplative Worship (Chapel)

## SOCIAL GROUPS

1/03      6:30 pm      Crafters Group  
1/17      11:30 am      Brown Bag Lunch  
1/24      6:30 pm      Book Discussion Group

## ANNIVERSARIES

**1/4**  
DeAnna & Perry  
Steinman

## EVENTS

1/05      5:30 pm      Food Pantry Support Group  
1/19      5:30 pm      Food Pantry Support Group  
1/20      10:00 am      Weaving for Justice Sale  
1/21      5:30 pm      Mesilla Valley Jazz & Blues  
1/21      11:15 am      Congregational Meeting

## MEETINGS

1/01      6:00 pm      Pastor Search Committee (Parlor)  
1/15      6:00 pm      Pastor Search Committee (Parlor)  
1/20      10:00 am      FCC Board Meeting

# ELDERS & WORSHIP LEADERS

## January, 2024

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**Sunday, Jan. 7 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Hilda McKee  
Offering: Scott Hays-Strom  
Communion: Deb Cook

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**Sunday, Jan. 14 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: Debby Johnson  
Offering: Melissa McKenzie-Shaw  
Communion: Scott Hays-Strom

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**Sunday, Jan. 21 10:15 am**

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

**Congregational Meeting right after service.**

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**Sunday, Jan. 28 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: \* Melissa McKenzie-Shaw  
Offering: \* Rev. Patrick Crocker  
Communion: \* Paul Cook

## February, 2024

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**Sunday, Feb. 4 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: \* Eric Hays-Strom  
Offering: \* Esther Devall  
Communion: \* Rev. Patrick Crocker

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**Sunday, Feb. 11 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: \* Melody Burns  
Offering: \* Scott Hays-Strom  
Communion: \* Esther Devall

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**Sunday, Feb. 18 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: \* Esther Devall  
Offering: \* TBD  
Communion: \* Scott Hays-Strom

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**Sunday, Feb. 25 10:15 am**

Worship Leader: \* Karen Holmes  
Offering: \* Kamy McKenzie-Shaw  
Communion: \* TBD

*\* Subject to change pending Worship Leader / Elder elections*

# NEWS & LETTERS

## BOARD PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*Esther Devall*

### END OF YEAR REFLECTION

As my term as Board President comes to an end, I want to thank the congregation and all the Board for their support and hard work this year. It has been a pleasure to work with all of you. Here are just a few of the things our congregation accomplished this year:

- » *Stable extended pulpit supply as we engage in the ministerial search process.*
- » *Active ministerial search committee who conducted surveys and completed our church profile.*
- » *Reading and discussion of Christianity for the Rest of Us.*
- » *Monthly contemplative worship service.*
- » *Monthly Brown Bag luncheon.*
- » *Supper clubs (Dinner 6 or 8) during the spring and fall terms.*
- » *Regular review of strategic plan and development of action steps.*
- » *Establishment of finance and safety committees.*
- » *Updated safety measures, including additional outdoor solar lights and cameras.*
- » *New safety procedures, including emergency evacuation drill and locking of front door after worship or meetings start.*
- » *Six people trained in mental health first aid.*
- » *Continued efforts to serve those in need in our community through monetary gifts and donations of socks, blankets, hats, and gloves.*

Please forgive me if I left something off this list. Although our congregation is small, we have many committed individuals who contribute their time and talents to strengthen our church and better serve the community. While many churches faltered and closed during and after the pandemic, First Christian Church continues to thrive. Our finances are stable, we are gaining new members, and we have new individuals stepping up to serve in leadership positions. I look forward to seeing what we can do together in 2024!

## *FAITH ACTION COMMITTEE MOMENT*

Faith Action Committee meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 PM to determine what social justice information and opportunities from our local community and around the world should be shared with our congregation. We might also create our own event for the members of First Christian Church and our neighbors. Please join us via Zoom from the <https://www.fcclc.org/community/meetings/> web page and click on the “Join Faith Action Committee” button.

Faith Action would like you to participate in a New Years Resolution to conserve our freshwater resources. All life needs clean, fresh water to survive. The earth creates more every day but is it enough and is it where we need it? Please look over your day to see when and where you use water. Each day many people take a shower. Most of us have been taught when brushing our teeth to wet the brush, turn the water off while brushing and turn back on to rinse. This has saved a lot of water over the years. You can do the same routine when showering. Turn the water on to get wet and then off. Soap up your hair and body then turn the water back on to rinse off. This can change 10 to 20 minutes of water running into 2 minutes each shower. Most modern shower heads allow 2 ½ gallons of water to flow each minute so you could change from using 25 to 40 gallons to only 5. If your hot water takes a while to get to the shower you can catch the cold in a bucket and save it to use to flush the toilet. For my shower, the first 40 seconds of running water is cold and is collected in a bucket. I average 70 seconds of hot water for my shower and use the bucket to save 1 toilet flush. None of these changes will cost you money and will actually save some. Water costs money and heating it costs even more so the less you use the more you save. Everyone's needs are different so you may have to run the water more but making any change will help. There are pumps you can have installed to push the first cold water back into the cold water side of the faucet until the hot arrives. You can also have a grey water tank installed to collect all of the drain water from your bathroom sinks tubs and showers to reuse to flush toilets. You may not save enough money on your water bill to pay for these changes, but you are saving water for the future. There are other ways to save water that don't cost money. You don't have to flush the toilet every time you use it, how you water your landscape and what type of plants you have in your landscape are some of them. Do you need more information about these or have other ideas for saving water? Please bring those questions or ideas to our Faith Action meeting.

Ralph Holmes

Acting Chair, Faith Action Committee

# *Pastor's Letter*

*Rev. Patrick Crocker*

One recent seeker of guidance in the realms of the written word (read: customer at the bookstore) was looking for help in finding the right gifts for her family. She talked about her frustrations with excess and how her family had developed a rule that the Christmas Wish List could only consist of 4 items: 1) a want, 2) a need, 3) something to wear, 4) something to read. (Allowances were made for one child who didn't think they enjoyed reading but perked up at the idea of a magazine subscription filling that slot.)

I shared with her my own experiences related to the spiritual movement known as Advent Conspiracy. Started by some pastors who had similar frustrations, they wanted to reclaim the need for learning to wait. They also championed meaningful and personal gifts, though they noted that "hand-made by the giver" didn't necessarily mean "less expensive." What they taught about our culture needing to learn to wait stuck with me and it's one of the reasons that I prefer to listen to Advent songs before December 25, while holding the Christmas songs/hymns for December 25 to January 6 (the twelve days of Christmas). Their critique of the culture has only seemed to intensify as Christmas decorations and music in retail establishments seems to push earlier and earlier by the year.

As we pass through the season of Christmas, we often think about our waiting and our wanting and our needing. Some of us will think about our reading as well, as we consider New Year's resolutions (if any). What do we want; what do we need; what shall we wear; what shall we read? And how do we nurture our kin-dom of God selves in the waiting?

Has this past Advent taught us anything about what inspires us to hope beyond passive wistfulness, peace beyond bland inoffensiveness, joy beyond surface happiness, love beyond Hallmark sappiness? Have we learned anything about what these vibrant spiritual practices further inspire us toward?

Each day is a new opportunity to listen. Prayers to the Lord for help in opening our ears, hearts, and arms.

Shalom,  
Patrick

PS: If you'd like to have a pastoral visit or chat on the phone, you're welcome to call/text me at 575-551-1717 or email me at [Rev.Patrick.Crocker@gmail.com](mailto:Rev.Patrick.Crocker@gmail.com).



# CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

*January 21, 2024*

Please join us Sunday, January 21, 2024, for our 2023/2024 Winter Congregational Meeting. We'll start this meeting right after our normal 10:15 am Worship. If you join us via Zoom, just remain in the worship meeting for a bit while we get ready to start. Or, if you are joining us just for the Congregational Meeting, click the red button below. It will take you the same place as if you were joining our Sunday Worship.

At this Congregational meeting, we will be covering the following Agenda. Please contact Karen Holmes prior to January 20, 2024 at [kholmes@fcclc.org](mailto:kholmes@fcclc.org), if any other committees wish to speak at the meeting, i.e., Worship, Security, etc.

1. Congregational Meeting Reports
  1. Pastor Search - Ralph Holmes, Chair
  2. Faith Action Group - Ralph Holmes, Chair
  3. Event Committee - Eric & Scott Hays-Strom
  4. Property Liaison - Karen Holmes, Property Liaison
  5. Property Maintenance - TBD
2. Budget - Bruce Weber, Treasurer
3. Elections - Esther Devall, board president
4. Status of the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan - Scott Hays-Strom
5. Click on the Blue Strategic Plan button to review the status plan.

# COMMUNITY

## *THE FORLORN CHRISTMAS WREATH*

*Zanté Garcia*

The Christmas tree is up, fresh, tall, shining bright, and adorned with presents.

However, where is the Christmas Wreath?

The Christmas Wreath is made out of evergreen leaves that have survived the harsh winter.

Its circular shape has no beginning and no end. It's divine perfection.

A representation of a crown of thorns, and the berries, drops of blood.

A representation of eternal life.

An invitation for Jesus Christ and the Spirit of Christmas to enter a home.

An invitation to prepare for Christ's PRESENCE



## *BROWN BAG LUNCH*

*Sandy Weber*

Brown Bag reminder for January 17, 2024 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Bring your brown bag lunch and enjoy some fellowship time together.

Let's start 2024 with a new tradition.

# CONGRATULATIONS RACHAEL RYAN

## *2023 NMSU Entrepreneur Hall of Fame Inductee*

Congratulations to Rachael Ryan, owner of Backyard Farms, who became the 2023 NMSU Entrepreneur Hall of Fame Inductee. She is a tenant of First Christian Church and maintains the fields behind the church and has hydroponics in the classroom wing. In the past she has had classes on our campus for high schoolers and the community to learn more about growing their own food.

The mission statement for Backyard Farms is Backyard Farms is dedicated to reforming our local food system by empowering small and medium farmers, reducing food waste, and encouraging the use of Regenerative Agriculture Practices to increase access and availability of nutritious healthy foods for vulnerable populations while being responsible stewards of the earth.

Currently, she is focused on freeze-drying foods. She experienced small farmers with produce at its peak taste and nutrition that was unsellable for multiple reasons and loaded into landfills. This is a huge loss of income for these farmers and food waste. In addition, there is food insecurity in our state for those in schools, senior centers, tribal areas, etc. She saw the problems and changed them into an opportunity. She is filling the gap between the farmers and those in need of healthy foods. The freeze-drying process turns the food from the farms into fruit and vegetables packs. These packs are shelf stable, full of nutrition and light. The food packs have been given to the refugees and asylum seekers at El Calvario so they have something healthy to eat while they travel to their sponsors. Many of the poor in New Mexico live in rural areas without electricity. That makes these food packs ideal because the ingredients can be rehydrated for use in meal preparation.

She is using grants to fulfill her mission instead of large scale marketing in store chains. This allows her to focus on helping the farmers and the people in need in our state. Because of those endeavors she has been recognized by both the State and Federal Departments of Agriculture. FEMA and other federal agencies are also watching her work for possible future use.

Again Congratulations to Rachael from all of us at First Christian Church!

# 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.**