



OCTOBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Contact Information

1089 El Paseo Rd,
Las Cruces, NM, 88001

Phone: (575) 524-3245
E-mail: office@fcclc.org

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<https://www.fcclc.org>

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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>

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.
- » 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.	12:00 pm	Al-Anon Lunch Bunch (Parlor)
	6:30 pm	Celestial Sounds (Sanctuary)
Tue.	6:30 pm	Singing Out Las Cruces (Sanctuary)
Wed.	6:30 pm	Mesilla Valley Swing (Sanctuary)
Thu.	9:00 am	Spiritual Practices/Book Club (Zoom)
-(1st, 3rd)	6:30pm	Singing Out Las Cruces (Sanctuary)
Fri.	12:00 pm	Al-Anon (Parlor)
	6:00 pm	New World Drummers / Dancers
Sat.	1:00pm	HIV/AIDS Food Bank

BIRTHDAYS

10/4
David Wofford
10/15
JoAnna Smith
10/27
Melissa McKenzie-Shaw

SPECIAL SERVICES

10/6	6:30 pm	Contemplative Worship (Chapel)
10/13	10:15 am	Monthly Cake Celebration
10/13	10:15 am	Church Family Potluck

ANNIVERSARIES

10/6
Steve & JoAnna Smith
10/14
David & Lyn Wofford
10/18
Carol Buschick & Joy Eby

SOCIAL GROUPS

10/2	6:30 pm	Crafters Group
10/16	11:30 am	Brown Bag Lunch

EVENTS

10/4	5:30 pm	Food Pantry Support Group
10/18	5:30 pm	Food Pantry Support Group
10/19	10:00 am	Weaving for Justice Sale

MEETINGS

10/19	10:00 am	FCC Board Meeting
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ELDERS & WORSHIP LEADERS

Sunday, Oct. 6 9:00 am

Special Event: Blessing of the Pets
Leader: Karen Holmes
Offering: Deb Cook
Communion: Paul Cook

Sunday, Nov. 3 10:15 am

Leader: Eric Hays-Strom
Offering: Kamy McKenzie-Shaw
Communion: Zanté Garcia

Sunday, Oct. 13 10:15 am

Leader: Jeanne Knotts
Offering: Esther Devall
Communion: Zanté Garcia

Sunday, Nov. 10 10:15 am

Leader: Zanté Garcia
Offering: Paul Cook
Communion: Kamy McKenzie-Shaw

Sunday, Oct. 20 10:15 am

Leader: Karen Holmes
Offering: Scott Hays-Strom
Communion: Esther Devall

Sunday, Nov. 17 10:15 am

Leader: Kamy McKenzie-Shaw
Offering: Debby Johnson
Communion: Paul Cook

Sunday, Oct. 27 10:15 am

Leader: Esther Devall
Offering: Zanté Garcia
Communion: Scott Hays-Strom

Sunday, Nov. 24 10:15 am

Leader: Sue Bogart
Offering: Melissa McKenzie-Shaw
Communion: Debby Johnson

NEWS & LETTERS

PASTOR'S LETTER

Rev. Patrick Crocker

“One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, ‘Which commandment is the first of all?’” – Mark 12:28 (NRSV)

What commandments do we consider the most important or most authoritative over our hearts and lives?

The question arose because the church recently received a pamphlet from a group which, among other things, offers a “free faith kit” including a booklet entitled “Tolerance Is Not a Commandment” (featuring a black & white illustration of Moses descending the mountain). The title and visuals are arresting – as well as making me think that whoever dropped off the pamphlet didn’t know much about our congregation.

As I think about the title of that booklet, simplistic as it may be, I hear the words of my father, “Let’s unpack that.” (Or my own, “Well, ...” which a friend notes has a direct correlation between the length of time I spend saying “well” and how many objections I have.)

Certainly, the Bible has a difficult relationship with tolerance. Some scriptures seem to have been written by people trying to justify their xenophobia by putting it in the mouth of God. Other scriptures lift up the oneness of creation and the love of God beyond boundaries (as when Jesus talks about sheep from other pastures that the disciples know nothing about or when Paul’s vision tells him, “What God has made clean, you must not call profane” – Acts 10:15).

The Gospels tell us the one greatest commandment in two parts (though whether Jesus speaks them or affirms someone else’s discernment varies by writer). “Jesus answered, ‘The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.’” Mark 12:29-31 (NRSV)

I'm not sure how you can love a neighbor without a base level of tolerance, but I don't think tolerance is enough. Whenever we sing the hymn "Help Us Accept Each Other", I think of how it might be deepened by considering a song I had on repeat in my teen years (as much as a song on a vinyl album can be on repeat): "Cherish" by The Association. Perhaps the prayers of our hymns might lead us through toleration and acceptance, into appreciation/cherishing/love.

The challenges of tolerating/loving neighbors who do not tolerate/love us, how to stand up to/refuse to tolerate actual evil without using the habits/tools of evil, and how to discern what is evil compared to what was simply distasteful to an ancient author – these are what we live out and work out with prayer and trembling, humility and love.

Shalom,
Patrick

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.

INVITATION TO SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Rev. Patrick Crocker

Beginning September 1 st , a small group for faith discussion will begin at 9am on Sundays. For the month of September, we will focus on "covenant" and what it means to be people of covenant. Please have a Bible handy (whether paper or digital).

We will have a separate discussion group on the 4 th Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm. Topics will include Baptism (for September), Communion, Evangelism, Mysticism, Spirituality of Aging, and What to Do About Clobber Verses.

You are welcome to join either or both of these groups and bring questions/hopes/dreams for how we might enrich our own spiritual journeys and those of our communities of faith and geography.

Shalom,
Patrick

FAITH ACTION COMMITTEE

MISSION MOMENTS

Ralph Holmes

Faith action has shifted some of the mission moment topics through the rest of this year.

- » **September:** Kickoff to FCCLC's Recycling efforts & DOC Reconciliation Fund special offering
- » **October:** UCC Join the Movement
- » **November:** Neighbors in Need UCC special offering & Other?
- » **December:** Holiday donation drives which may include Socks, Winterwear, Blankets or other items, planned and carried out by congregation members.

Next year's planning has begun, which will include more of our local mission partners, in the building and beyond. If you have a group that could present to our members, please contact us or attend our 7 PM Second Thursday Zoom Meeting.

Faith Action will be putting together information flyers and ways for the community to support our recycling programs through the booth space at the Las Cruces Farmers and Crafts Market. We welcome any input you have for our plans and would like to begin in October.

The Faith Action Committee is made up of a few people that attend our meetings but includes all members and friends of FCCLC. I facilitate the meetings coming together but we are all leaders. Please join us when you can by providing input and/or action.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Ralph Holmes

Is it time for First Christian Church of Las Cruces to Join the Movement?

About Join the Movement

Join the Movement toward Racial Justice is an invitation to demonstrate God's love and to partner with others who are working for the transformation of racism in our world so that we might foster flourishing lives for all.

As evidenced in the wake of the May 25, 2020 murder of George Floyd, and numerous attacks on our siblings of color across the nation, the movement for racial justice cannot be separated from faith commitments to do justice and love our neighbors. As divides deepen across our country and world, we are being called to grow our capacity for interdependence and nurture connections that value difference and promote equity.

Every setting of the UCC, from local churches to global partners, has a role to play in expanding our practices of antiracism and strengthening our capacities as partners and participants in the burgeoning racial justice movements of our time. In this effort, story-sharing is a key component. Our stories show us not only who we are, but also inspire who we may become. Providing opportunities to encounter the antiracism journeys of others, Join the Movement will be a hub of story-sharing that draws others to participate and opens hearts to new possibilities and practices of racial justice.

The Christian church began as a movement towards a just world through the teachings of Jesus. As followers of Jesus, we believe it is our mandate to work for and seek justice, love, and compassion, as we join with and become our own Spirit-led movements toward racial justice.

At the UCC General Synod in 2021, Join the Movement toward Racial Justice was introduced as a new initiative of the denomination, inviting UCC congregations, members and friends to answer God's call to be on the journey of becoming an antiracist church. "Movements ignite feelings of belonging to causes bigger than ourselves," describes Rev. Dr. Velda Love, the JTM Lead and UCC Minister for Racial Justice. "We hope to ignite and invite each of us to join the movement and carry on the work of racial justice." In this effort, story-sharing is a key component. Our stories show us not only who we are, but also inspire who we may become. Providing opportunities to encounter the antiracism journeys of others, Join the Movement is a hub of story-sharing that draws others to participate and opens hearts to new possibilities and practices of racial justice.

In 2022 the United Church of Christ launched a Capital Campaign for Join the Movement toward Racial justice. Now we are specifically inviting local churches to invest in this ministry. Joining the Movement is an invitation to demonstrate God's love and to partner with others who are working for the transformation of racism in our world so that we might foster flourishing lives for all. We believe every congregation

of the United Church of Christ will want to be a part of this work and invest in our ongoing efforts end racism.

Join the Movement and make antiracism your spiritual practice!

Why join the movement?

Movements are ignited by people of faith rooted in love, committed to civil and human rights, and utilizing their resources for the common good. Find inspiration from others who are answering the call to **Join the Movement!**

Practice Antiracism. Become A Movement-Maker

Christianity began as a movement of revolutionary love. We have a chance to continue in these humble paths of lovingkindness as we join the movement toward racial justice.

“Justice is what love looks like in public.” – Cornel West

Becoming an Antiracist Church, Building an Antiracist World:

We find ourselves living in a time where increasing numbers of individuals, organizations, and communities are actively building and amplifying our collective power to move toward racial justice. This movement is not new. We build on the revolutionary work of our freedom-making ancestors. But this particular moment offers us unique opportunities to cultivate intersectional movements with healing and repair at the center, as we align with the movement of the Spirit toward justice.

By Joining the Movement, you will have access to stories, resources and reflections on current events in the movement toward racial justice. Our newsletter for subscribers will highlight movement-makers across the denomination and actions to participate in. You'll also have access to workshops, retreats and movement-maker convergences as you become more involved.

Get to know UCC's Join the Movement toward Racial Justice

<https://jointhemovementucc.org/>

FCCLC HAS BINS FOR RECYCLING

Ralph Holmes

In September the FCCLC Faith Action Committee is kicking off a new recycling opportunity for members and our community. There are bins located in the Atrium of First Christian Church with signs showing what to place in them. There is a list next to the bins that can be taken and posted on your fridge and given to friends and neighbors to help spread the word and increase the amount of waste recycled. Whatever amount we recycle lessens the need to create more landfills and keeps these raw materials in use so less new material is needed. There are other items we can expand to include but this is a start.

Through bluejeansgogreen.org you now have a place for those old Blue Jeans that are torn or stained that no one would want to wear. The blue jeans will be turned into home insulation where the cotton material will continue being useful for a long time. The metal parts, zippers and buttons are also recycled by this company.

We are also joining with Terracycle to collect a few items that are not recyclable locally.

Current Programs through Terracycle;

1. Worn-out kid's clothes. That means any brand of kid's clothes that have tears, holes and/or stains, so would not be wearable or donatable. We cannot take adult clothes at this time other than worn-out blue jeans. This is sponsored by Carter Kids Clothing Company.
2. Any brand air fresheners and home cleaning plastic pump spray bottles, trigger sprayers, mist spray heads, plug in air fresheners and the cartridges. We only want the empty bottles and parts to be recycled. If the bottle can be recycled in your city recycle bin, please just bring the pump heads that cannot be recycled with the city. Febreze is sponsoring this program.
3. Any brand safety razor shaving blades, single use plastic handle razors and the plastic packaging that they come in. Gillette is the sponsor of this program.

All items should be clean and dry before putting them in our bins.

If you have questions or ideas for expanding our program, please contact Ralph Holmes at riholmes@comcast.net or join our Faith Action Committee meeting the second Thursday of each month at 7 PM through a Zoom link on our [church website](#). Working together we can be good stewards of God's creation as he requested.

RECONCILIATION MINISTRY

Ralph Holmes

*“Gracious God,
you show us the meaning of reconciliation in the life of Jesus Christ
In His touch, His words, His actions,
Jesus reconciled people to God and to the community.
We gather to renew ourselves that we, too, might reconcile others
with a touch, a word, or an act.”* Chalice Worship (177)

Wildfires, flooding, intense heating of the earth and the tensions between her people demonstrate how the whole of creation is groaning for the revealing of the beloved of God. We are God’s children, beloved and entrusted with the sacred responsibility to cocreate with the Divine. Out of nothing, the Creator of heaven and earth breathed life into a void and that which was separated or broken was now connected. As God’s beloved, we inhabit the breath of the Divine giving us the same power and authority to connect that which has been separated. In March 2022, your generous giving to Reconciliation Ministry helped fund the Kirkpatrick Lecture Series of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. Over 250 people were able to participate in the conference and most received generous support to be in attendance virtually or in-person. Participants gathered for this conference under the theme “Visions of Wholeness: Systemic Racism, Antiracism, and Reconciliation in Our Shared History and Tradition.” The presentations and the conversations that ensued during the conference were as challenging and hopeful as the conference’s title. We wrestled with the truth of our brokenness and our need for healing of our fractured humanity. Reconciliation Ministry strengthens our capacity to be re-membered, reconnected, and restored as God’s beloved by disrupting racism and oppression. Your generosity funds grants and education that promote restoration and healing, revealing the children of God. Your financial gifts allow the whole mission and ministry of our Church to realize Visions of Wholeness because you are the beloved that God is waiting for!

For more than 40 years, Disciples have had a visible ministry to address racism in society. Gifts to [Reconciliation Ministry](#), through this Offering or throughout the year, support programs and initiatives aimed at dismantling racism. Reconciliation Ministry is not supported by Disciples Mission Fund.

The Reconciliation special offering will be taken at First Christian Church in Las Cruces on September 29, 2024, and October 6, 2024. Your advocacy and financial support are much appreciated.

If you would like to donate directly to this fund please go to this site of the [Disciples of Christ](#).

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.