Issue No. 3 | June 2025

The Rainbow Table

Fellowship, Faith, and Full Plates-Every Story Matters

In Honor of LGBTQIA2S+ Pride Month

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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 God's message for today through prayer, study, and discussion.

This newsletter is published monthly by First Christian Church. It is available free of charge to everyone. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform, 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, poems or photos of your own creation, etc. The editor reserves the right to edit for content and space. The due date for submissions each month is the 20th.

Submit items for the July newsletter
by June 20th by emailing them to Liz in the front office at:

lbrink@fcclc.org

Pastor's Ponderings

The tribes of Wrestles with Creator (Israel) celebrated another great feast called the Festival of Weeks or Pentecost, meaning "fifty," because it was celebrated seven weeks after the Passover festival, on the fiftieth day. This was a harvest festival when the people would bring the firstfruits of the harvest to Creator's lodge in the Sacred Village of Peace (Jerusalem) and give thanks for his provision. Creator was about to send the Holy Spirit, promised by Creator Sets Free (Jesus), to begin the time of the great harvest and gather people from all nations who would represent the Great Spirit. – Insert by translators of FNV at Acts 2:1

What has Pentecost meant to us in the past? What might it mean for today?

The ways that we mark special days within the life of the church are influenced by the meaning we find within them, and those ways then influence how we understand the meaning in the future. Pentecost has often been called "The Birthday of the Church" and so I've seen some congregations decorate with balloons and streamers. Others focus on the many languages that were understood and have parts of the service in other tongues. Others think of the streams of fire and break out the red paraments for their (often) only appearance in the liturgical year.

The insertion by the translator of the First Nations Version lends to a focus on seeing the disciples as the firstfruits of Jesus work – a harvest which has matured and is ready to nurture other seeds. These firstfruits have been nurtured in the soil of both grief and wonder, cultivated with both teaching and practice.

Whether our hearts are in need of a celebration connecting us with a community throughout time and space, a way of hearing and being heard, or a matchpoint to ignite something new, I pray that we find what we need – not only for our own hearts, but for the hearts around us who are hungry for ordinary miracles.

Shalom,
Patrick

If you'd like to have a pastoral visit or chat on the phone, you're welcome to call/text me at 575.635.6489 or email me at Rev.Patrick.Crocker@gmail.com.

Pastor's Ponderings cont.

Scriptures for June
June 1 – Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21
June 8 (Pentecost) – Acts 2:1-21
June 15 (Trinity Sunday) – Psalm 8
June 22 – Galatians 3:23-29
June 29 – Galatians 5:1, 13-25

- Wednesday Evening discussion group this month will happen by Zoom on June 25 at 6:30pm (use the Spiritual Practices link on the church website). We will discuss Apocalyptic literature (like, but not limited to Revelation).

- Our faith community is developing a Visitor Corps program. If you would like to help with visiting some of the people we don't see in worship on Sunday, please let me know. We have Communion kits available and will provide everything you need.

Representation Matters, Downtown Minneapolis

Photo by: Liz Brink

Note from your Board President

I absolutely love the warmer weather these days, I just wished the windy days were rather scarce. Tall order, I know.

Your FCCLC board has been very busy this year and lots of wonderful things are happening for our church. I wanted to highlight some updates that have been made, and things to look forward to in the next coming months.

Your Building Utilization Committee met last fall to compile a list of things that needed attention to make our church a safer and more inviting worship and meeting space for us and our guests.

In December, the back walls of the dais were painted after the old speaker openings were removed and repatched. New LED lights were replaced on the dais light fixtures as well.

In February, we hired an office administrator and property liaison, Liz Brink. Liz has made the office space inviting and welcoming to all visitors. Come by and visit when you get a chance. Liz has done an amazing job creating weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters. So many of you have commented how wonderful they are. She has been a great help and advocate for our ministry partners. She also updated our visitor packets. We are blessed by her dedication and creativity.

In March, Liz created some mock-ups of the exterior painting that you were all invited to vote for. Mock-up A was the majority vote. Painting and anti-graffiti coats will be taking place very soon.

Also in March, we hired a contractor to paint the west interior walls of the atrium. He repaired and painted the kitchen walls and doors. He painted the hallway at the bathroom entrances. He repaired and painted the bathroom walls and stalls. New sinks were installed. The walls are also beautifully decorated in both the women's and men's bathroom. A big shout out to those of you who helped with the completion of this successful project.

On April 5, we held a church board retreat in the Parlor room. We spent the day in meditation, prayer, fellowship, and hope for our future. We focused on Grace.

Note from your Board President cont.

We hope to share a very similar day with all of you in early fall. Please continue to read and hear about the board's experience from that day.

What's next? Glad you asked. We are working on our next projects. The first one is reviewing and continuing with an electrical engineer to make upgrades to our campus. Next, is to make upgrades and replacements to adult fixtures in the south-wing restrooms.

We will see xeriscape improvements to the atrium planter. As well, we will begin a project to repair and/or replace the building soffit and fascia. As always, your board is always here to serve you and we welcome feedback and questions any time.

-Zanté García, zgarcia@fcclc.org

Image by: Liz Brink

From the Board Retreat

Back in April, the Board met for a "Board Retreat." Rather than being a rehashing of the mission, vision and values of the organization with a focus on the strategic plan, it turned out to be a guided study on different aspects of "grace." The workshop was led by Zante and Debby drawing from many experiences they have had with other congregations. I learned a lot about grace and came away with a renewed sense of calm and purpose. Here is one of the notes I made to myself during one of the breaks for meditation and reflection: "We are all part of the same river of humanity. While we may travel independently we will end up in the same place. Open the eyes of my heart to see those flowing in the river with me." Similar workshops will be offered to the congregation in the coming months. Please watch for these and sign up early.

-Donald Wilson, Board Treasurer

Faith In Action Committee

The mission moment for May covered the denominational giving opportunities we are provided each year by the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ national offices. Click on the links after each special offering for more information on what the money will do for the church and the wider community. You can give directly through their website or you can give your donation to First Christian Church and the full amount will be passed on to the correct denomination. Please mark your donation clearly as to which giving opportunity you want it to go to. The DOC provides our church with a large number of envelopes each year with all of their opportunities listed. Please grab an envelope from the podium in the Atrium as you enter the Sanctuary, circle the effort you desire to give to or cross them out and write in the UCC offering name and circle it. Write your name on the envelope if you want the donation to be included on your giving statement. Future Mission Moments and newsletters will have more information on four of these opportunities that we want to promote this year. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ. Congratulations is in order for your recycling efforts! Recycling does help our planet and everything living on it. We have been recycling blue jeans through Blue Jeans Go Green for less than a year. In that time FCCLC was able to collect, sort and send out 2 boxes of jeans.

Faith In Action Committee cont.

The first had 15 worn out pair that went to be turned into insulation for houses, 2 still usable pairs were redistributed and there were 3 that were not 90% cotton and had to go to the landfill. Our efforts kept 17 from going in the trash. The second box was just sent out and had 13 pair shipped, 5 redistributed and just 3 that went into the landfill instead of all 21. When talking with your family, friends and neighbors please ask them to give you any blue jeans that the plan to throw out. Bring them to church and place them in our bin. There is a list of other items that we are collecting, and you can get them from those people as well. These are items not recycled through most city collections.

National statistics from Blue Jeans Go Green

Denim diverted from landfills: 2,832 + tons
Pieces of denim recycled: 5,600,000 +
Square feet of insulation produced: 10,900,000 +

The Blue Jeans Go Green effort has been going strong for almost two decades and creates home insulation from the cotton material. More than 80% goes into Habitat for Humanity homes. Some of the insulation is used by companies that pack and ship frozen meals around the nation. If you receive these meals with this bule insulation it can be brought to our recycling bin to be re-recycled with the worn-out jeans. Padding for pet beds is also created from this reusable material. Recycling this cotton material not only saves landfill space but reduces the need to grow more cotton saving water and energy.
Faith in Action Committee meets on the second Thursday of each month via Zoom. The link is available at FCCLC.org on the community page under meetings.

For specific information about the United Church of Christ Special Offering throughout the year visit our website community Page where you can read the full article by the Faith In Action Committee.

Special Events

Event: Celestial Sounds First Rehearsal
Date: June 2nd
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 7pm

Event: Indivisible General Meeting
Date: June 8th
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 2-4pm

Event: No Kings Protest (Indivisible Project)
Date: June 14th
Location: North Main & Picacho
Time: 10am-12pm

Event: Indivisible Educational Meeting-Resistance Lab Training “Organizing for Justice. A training to give you tools, ideas, and a fresh perspective on how to take action.
Date: June 19th
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 6-7:30pm

Event: FCC Board Meeting
Date: June 21st
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 9 am

Special Events

Event: Weaving for Justice Sale
Date: June 21st
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 10am - 3pm

Event: Indivisible General Meeting
Date: June 22nd
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 2-4pm

Event: Singing Out Las Cruces Concert
Date: June 28th
Location: St. Paul's United Methodist Church- 225 W. Griggs Avenue
Time: 7pm

Event: Singing Out Las Cruces Concert
Date: June 29th
Location: St. Paul's United Methodist Church- 225 W. Griggs Avenue
Time: 3pm

Event: Celestial Sounds Performance
Date: June 30th
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 7pm

The Labyrinth, Path of Life

A few of us from the spiritual practices group met the other day to walk the labyrinth. There was some discussion about what people do when they walk the labyrinth, whether they sing, repeat a mantra, or simply pray. There is no one right way to do it. What do you do when you walk the labyrinth? Do you walk it alone, or with others?

This is one of the few times that I've walked the labyrinth with others. It creates a different awareness when you walk it with other people. Not only an awareness of others on the path with you, but an awareness of people outside the path. It brings up questions about what other people walking the path are thinking as they walk. What is their approach to walking the labyrinth? How do they view it? I can't answer that question for others, only for myself.

I appreciated being able to walk the path with other people, knowing they were there with me as I walked. Someone pointed out that there were a few ants that walked along side us for part of the journey as well. Perhaps they were seeking their own enlightenment. I noticed a number of things as we walked, people going by on sidewalks, engrossed in their own thoughts, traffic noise from cars driving buy, and perhaps most unexpectedly, the melodious voices of birds breaking through everything else. Maybe it was to remind us of the blessings that happen all around us every day. What do you notice when you walk the path?

All of this went through my mind as I reflected on the path we walked. A path that was not perfectly level. A path marked out by stones that squeezed the way narrower in some places and widened it out in others. Stones that almost disappeared in the dirt at times.

They frequently seem to be in a battle of becoming overgrown by grass, weeds, and other plants, were it not for the efforts of people to maintain and clean up the path.

A path that bends back on itself, often taking us out into the bright sun and then back into the cooling shade. And even though it is laid out in front of us, frequently confounding us on where it is taking us. Though that destination is not nearly as important as the act of the journey itself and the conversations that it enables, conversations with God, with our own consciousness, and with our fellow travelers.

What is it we seek on this journey of life, knowledge, understanding, compassion, meaning? As we occasionally stumble on the edges of the path we walk, what is it that we're reaching for? Are we tempted to step across the boundaries so that we can reach the center more quickly, only to discover that we've taken ourselves further away?

The Labyrinth, Path of Life cont.

Do we see our fellow travelers along the way? Are we open to conversations and understanding with ourselves, with others? Do we carry baggage with us that makes it more difficult to navigate the path? Do we share grace with our fellow travelers as we seek out a fuller understanding of our own existence? Do we make the path easier for those who struggle to walk with us along this journey?

-Paul Cook
28 April 2025

*Photo taken during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Printed with permission from Paul Cook

Weaving for Justice

Weaving for Justice is honored to be in solidarity with eleven Maya women's weaving collectives in Chiapas, Mexico. We take strength from their commitment to stand up for the dignity and freedom of all people. The weavers participate in what they call "the resistance." By this they mean they resist the efforts of powerful governmental and non-governmental entities to strip them of control of their lands, resources, and communities. The resistance movement was inspired by an uprising in 1994 in which indigenous people demanded rights long-denied them. From the beginning, they have wanted their movement to be for all: 'Para Todos Todo, Para Nosotros Nada' ('Everything for Everyone, Nothing For Us').

Zapatismo, remains a driving force behind the everyday struggle for life with dignity in Chiapas, as well as an inspiration and galvanizing source of international solidarity throughout the world. It is often theorized as seven principles:

Obedecer y No Mandar (To Obey, Not Command)
Proponer y No Imponer (To Propose, Not Impose)
Representar y No Suplantar (To Represent, Not Supplant)
Convencer y No Vencer (To Convince, Not Conquer)
Construir y No Destruir (To Construct, Not Destroy)
Servir y No Servirse (To Serve Others, Not Serve Oneself)
Bajar y No Subir (To Work From Below, Not Seek To Rise)

Adapted from "The Concept of Zapatismo" by Levi Gahman

May these guiding principles strengthen us in our efforts to defend the rights of all, in our nation and throughout the world.

Weaving for Justice holds sales of hand-woven, embroidered and felted textiles from weaving collectives in Chiapas in the Atrium of First Christian Church on the 3rd Saturday of each month from 10-3. Our next sale is May 20th. The photo of the owl below shows one of the many little felted animals made by a collective in Chamula, Chiapas. All proceeds from our sales go back to the collectives. www.weaving-for-justice.org

Weaving for Justice cont.

On Saturday, May 24th in the First Christian Church Atrium, Weaving for Justice volunteers Christine Eber and Flora Graham (wearing a Chiapas blouse on the right in the photo) welcomed a group of high school students from Menlo School in Menlo Park, California. They came to learn about immigration and the border as part of an immersion program organized by the Border Servant Corps. We shared with them our work selling woven and embroidered work by Maya women in Chiapas. We also shared efforts to raise funds for scholarships for Maya youth to give then a chance to continue on in school and give back to their communities. Although most of what the students heard was new to them, they asked some really good questions and seemed to have a lot of fun buying animalitos and other woven pieces to take home. One young man, Rafe, (in the front in the photo) is wearing a caftan that Amy Carpenter donated to us to benefit scholarships for Maya students. Amy wore it during her swearing in ceremony as a Peace Corps worker in Rabat, Moracco in 2016. (Although we mostly accept donations from Latin America, we made an exception with this caftan.) We are so grateful that Rafe can now enjoy wearing it!

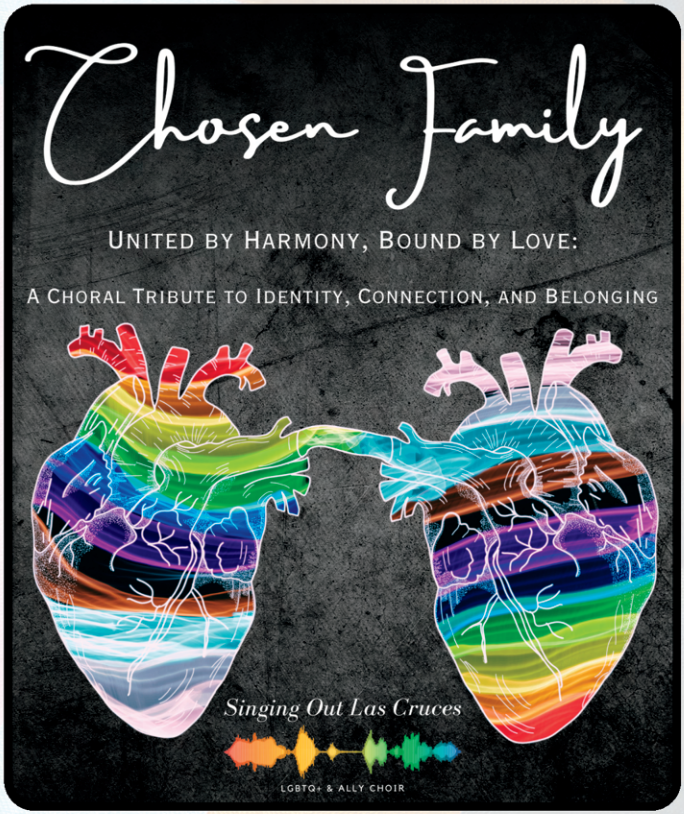
Celestial Sounds

We are learning new music beginning June 2 at 7 pm. Any women who love to sing are welcome. Our performance will be June 30th at 7 pm and will include Americana music with a sing along portion for the audience. We expect it to be lots of fun!

-Deb Cook

Singing Out Las Cruces

Join us for our June concerts "Chosen Family" on Saturday, June 28th at 7pm, or Sunday, June 29th at 3pm. We will have great music, fellowship, a silent auction, and a 50/50 raffle. You can purchase tickets now by scanning the QR code below with your phone camera or by going to our website: www.singingoutlascruces.org



SCAN ME

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

June 2nd - Sue Bogart
June 2nd - Sherry Woods
June 5th - Eric Hays-Strom
June 14th - Sandra Weber

Anniversaries

June 5th -Peggy & Richard Feyen
June 13th- Deb & Paul Cook
June 13th- David & Ginny Rice
June 17th- Lynn & Ric Brightman
June 26th- Debby Johnson & Zanté García

Elders & Worship Leaders

June 1st, 2025

Worship Leader: Jeanne Knotts
Offering Elder: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw
Communion Elder: Debby Johnson

June 8th, 2025

Worship Leader: Deb Cook
Offering Elder: Paul Cook
Communion Elder: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw

June 15th, 2025

Worship Leader: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw
Offering Elder: Deb Cook
Communion Elder: Paul Cook

June 22nd, 2025

Worship Leader: Hilda McKee
Offering Elder: Esther Devall
Communion Elder: Deb Cook

June 29th, 2025

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

July 6th 2025

Worship Leader: Esther Devall
Offering Elder: Zanté García
Communion Elder: Scott Hays-Strom

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. Masks are available if you would like one.
- 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 use the stickers available to show your comfort level with personal contact. Green: welcomes hugs and handshakes; Yellow: Ask first; Red: No hugs or handshakes, please. You are welcome to change stickers as needed.
- Please be mindful of personal space and offer greater amounts to those who are masked."
- When you enter, please take a bulletin, then find a spot to sit.
- Communion bread and juice is served at the front. Directions will be provided at that time. If you prefer to remain seated, elements will be brought to you.
- After the final hymn please make your way outside, taking your bulletin and any trash with you. There will be trash cans by the front 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 Patrick at pastor@fcclc.org

Regularly Scheduled Events

Weekly Schedule:

Bible Study.....Sunday, 9 AM
First Christian Church Worship Service.....Sunday, 10:15 AM
Hybrid Worship in person & streamed via Zoom & Facebook Live
www.fcclc.org/worship
St. John's Catholic Church Worship.....Sunday, 10:15 AM
Men's Breakfast (at University IHOP).....Wednesday, 9 AM
Spiritual Practices.....Thursday, 9:00 AM
Al-Anon Meeting.....Friday 12:00 PM
HIV/AIDS Food Pantry.....Saturday, 1-3 PM

Monthly Schedule

Celebrate Birthdays of the Month.....First Sunday, 11:30 AM
Contemplative Worship.....First Sunday, 6:30 PM
Crafter's Group.....First Wednesday, 6:30 PM
Potluck.....Third Sunday, 11:30 AM
Brown Bag Lunch.....Third Wednesday, 11:30 AM
Discussion Group.....Fourth Wednesday, 6:30 PM

To limit the length of the newsletter, the FCC Board Meeting Minutes are published as a separate document, available at www.fcclc.org/community

Love Astounding

Love astounding, Love confounding
limits fearful minds impose.
Love renewing, Love pursuing
every heart until it knows
Love's transforming, healing goodness,
Love's abiding gentle grace,
Love's endurance, Love's assurance,
Love's consoling strong embrace.

Printed with permission under One License #A-742449,
from Songs for the Holy Other: Love Astounding, Verse 1
Hymn by: Jeannette M. Lindholm

Photo by: Liz Brink

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