Issue No. 2| May 2025

The Rainbow Table

Fellowship, Faith, and Full Plates-Every Story Matters



Value of Life

So many regrets, dwelling on the past. What have I accomplished? Things that never got done. Projects failed, efforts never launched.

What do the dissembling mannequins on media say with their flawless hair and makeup? Rambling on, go big or go home! If you can't reach these there's something wrong.

No credit for the smile you brought to the teller's face, or the keys you picked up for one who couldn't bend down. Nor the light given to overcome the shadows gathered round.

No value from the authentic content for those without a million watching. They've become the unseen. They're just not good enough, not enough net worth. No prize of life, failure to see the tiny flower blooming in the dirt. A reflection of the starlight that first warmed the earth.

It is not the amount we earn, the goals we reach, that give us merit, or make us worthwhile. Breath is precious and deserves to be esteemed simply for the miracle of its existence in this universe we seek.

Paul Cook

2 April 2025

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

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 June newsletter
by May 20th by emailing them to Liz in the front office at:

lbrink@fcclc.org

Pastor's Ponderings

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. – Luke 24:28-29, NRSV

How do we practice resurrection? What could resurrection look like for us and our community?

Before moving to New Mexico, I don't recall experiencing any workplaces which gave Good Friday as a holiday. Outside of the liturgical calendar, I don't remember giving it much thought at all. (Well, there were the jokes at places that got paid every other Friday: payday was Good Friday, off-week was Passover.)

Perhaps some of that within my own life and within the lives of so many is due to the fact that Easter is so much brighter. Colorful decorations, new clothes, honey-baked ham, and enough candy to make the dentist swoon. Even with all of that, though, Easter is a tough time for many folks and often for the same reason as it was for the disciples on Easter morning. Grief, fear, and uncertainty held the fledgling community of faith in a tight grip.

There can be a sense of isolation for the grieving and the hurting when we fall into the cultural temptation to ride too quickly from Palm Sunday to Easter. And I have to wonder if The Empire isn't also more comfortable with the cheap grace of a painless resurrection. Perhaps we have to talk about the meaning of the death before we can talk about the meaning of Resurrection.

"When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist." – Dom Helder Camara. Why the poor have no food, why the marginalized are targeted, why certain groups are tortured, why "liberty and justice for all" seems to have an asterisk with the footnote "terms and conditions apply."

In the face of fear, grief, and uncertainty, the disciples enacted resurrection. Some experienced resurrection because they dared to enact it before they had seen it. Offering food to a stranger, leaning on friends, giving words of encouragement: these were some of the ways that were remembered from the first moments of new life for the family of faith. What are the things that would have helped when we were the ones stuck in the death-dealing ways of empire? How can we offer that same help to those around?

Christ is Risen! Are we?

Shalom,

Patrick

Pastor's Ponderings cont.

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.

Scriptures for May
May 4 – Revelation 5:11-14
May 11 – Revelation 7:9-17
May 18 – Revelation 21:1-6
May 25 – Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

No Wednesday Evening discussion group this month.



Palm Trees at Holy Cross Retreat Center

Palm Trees on Ethel



Psalm 191

I met Jesus
a few days ago

Early morning,
seated in my favorite chair,
cup of coffee in hand
and a book –
the ritual with which I begin
most days

The book's topic is Jesus,
an overworked subject
that nevertheless interests me

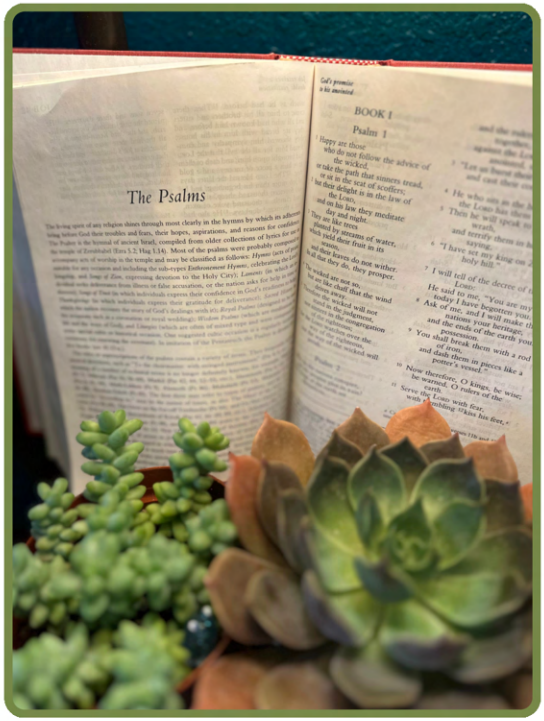
While reading I became aware
of a presence in the room.
It is Jesus standing behind me,
at the right arm of my chair

I lay the book in my lap,
sit quietly and listen
to the silence of Jesus

He does not ask if I am
born again or believe in God.
He does not ask to which church
I belong or if I am a Christian.
He does not ask if I recite
the creeds or read the Bible

This morning he is a presence,
palpable and unforgettable,
who asks no questions
and offers no answers
before he exits my living room
as silently as he entered

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.
Psalm 119:105



Psalms 151-300, by Charles H. Harper, 2018, pg. 41, used by permission of the author
Photo by Liz Brink

From the FCC Board

A couple of weeks ago, the Board participated in a Saturday retreat for spiritual renewal. We enjoyed food, fellowship, and several short talks about Grace. Having been on a few three-day retreats, I found it to be a refreshing reminder of God's grace and mercy.

In the coming weeks, members will be offered an opportunity to attend a Saturday retreat in the same theme, and I hope that many of you will be able to attend. We hope to offer the opportunity more than once, so if you can't make the first one, perhaps you can attend another. Keep this in mind as you plan your upcoming weekends. I know that renewal and refreshment is what we all occasionally need!

Peace and blessings,
Debby Johnson

From the Faith In Action Committee

Tuesday, April 22nd , will be a new beginning of FCC members, along with some others, of once again preparing and serving the meal at the soup kitchen on the 4th Tuesday of each month. This FCC tradition started many years ago and some of us wanted to start it anew. On April 22nd 13 volunteers, half of whom are FCC members, will begin the tradition once again. If you are of a mind to do so, please feel free to join us on the 4th Tuesday of each month. You will never regret it. It is a most humbling and rewarding experience.

-Mike Bureman

Special Events

Event: Indivisible General Meeting
Date: May 11th
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 2-4pm

Event: Indivisible Educational Meeting
"What the end of the U.S. Department of Education means to you"
Date: May 15th
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 6-7:30pm

Event: FCC Board Meeting
Date: May 17th
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 9 am



Event: Weaving for Justice Sale
Date: May 17th
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 10am - 3pm

Event: Indivisible General Meeting
Date: May 25th
Location: First Christian Church
Time: 2-4pm

Singing Out Las Cruces

April was quite the month for Singing Out Las Cruces (SOLC). With rehearsals for our upcoming concert, 2 different outreach events, a yard sale, and our participation in Southern New Mexico Giving Day it has been busy but productive!

First of all we would like to say thank you to FCC for letting us host our Yard Sale here. Not only was it a great fundraiser but also a moment that showed the strength of community we have here as so many people volunteered their time and energy to make sure this event could happen. Thank you also to those of you who came out in support to shop! SOLC was invited to sing at the Pride Season Drag show at NMSU hosted by their very own LGBT+ Programs, and was able to perform alongside so many amazing local drag performers. What an honor! We were also invited and absolutely thrilled to perform at the Power to the Pantry Fundraiser at the end of April. SOLC was so proud to be a part of supporting a cause that is near and dear to our hearts. We also participated in Southern New Mexico Giving Day through the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico. While we didn't reach our fundraising goal we could not be more grateful for the love and support our patrons showed us! We are so proud to live in a community that supports us, the LGBTQIA+ Community, and knows that the world we live in is a better place when it is filled with music. Thank you all for helping us continue to provide a safe and inclusive space to make music!

-Liz Brink, Singing Out Las Cruces Media Manager



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.



One of our volunteers, Bonnie Hudgins, modeling a blouse from a collective of weavers in Aguacatenango, Chiapas, a Tseltal-Maya speaking region.





The women in the photos are weavers in Tsobol Antsettik (Women United), one of collectives we work with in Chiapas.

Messages from Ministry Partners

From the Food Pantry:
Thank you to everyone that came to the Power to the Pantry Fundraiser. It was a great success!

From Indivisible Project:
Thank you to all who came out to our rally in support of immigration reforms "Communities Not Cages", we had over 100 people attend.

Kitchen and Restroom Renovation

On Monday April 21, a crew of 3+ workers from HD Home Plus began work on patching and painting the kitchen and the two restrooms. They patched 29 cracks, gouges, and holes in the walls and refinished all 10 doors as well as the partitions in the restrooms. Everything was then repainted with two coats of commercial grade paint. In addition, they patched and repainted the walls above the bulletin boards in the Atrium. They also, as a contribution to the church, repainted the hallway between the parlor and the kitchen, which was not in their contract. The kitchen and all the other spaces now look fresh and bright, a beautiful improvement.

A huge thank you goes to Donald Wilson, Paul Cook, Ralph Holmes, Scott and Eric Hays-Strom and our Sexton Jerry Romero for giving up their Easter Sunday evening to prep for the contactor to begin on Monday. This work involved removing the old sinks, all soap and towel dispensers, and everything else from the walls. Another huge thank you goes to Donald Wilson, Ralph Holmes and again Jerry for spending most of the day on Friday April 25 putting everything back together. This involved installing the new sinks, remounting all dispensers, and moving everything else back that had been stored out of the way. Through their work, everything was ready for the Food Pantry fund raiser on Saturday. Additional appreciation to Zante Garcia and Dave Wofford for selecting the new sinks, and to Bruce Weber for coordinating with the contractor.

So if you haven't already, look up at the Atrium wall (the blue matches the blue in the Sanctuary behind the piano) and walk through the kitchen and restrooms. The contractor and our FCC volunteers did a marvelous job.

Birthdays & Anniversaries



Birthdays

6th-Jack Le Sage
8th-Mary Lou Pendergrass
12th -Steve Blinks
21st-Julie Wojtko
31st-Bruce Weber

Anniversaries

25th-Doug and Sue Bogart



Elders & Worship Leaders

May 4th, 2025

Worship Leader: Melody Burns
Offering Elder: Zanté García
Communion Elder: Paul Cook

May 11th, 2025

Worship Leader: Sue Bogart
Offering Elder: TBD
Communion Elder: Zanté García

May 18th, 2025

Worship Leader: Debby Johnson
Offering Elder: Scott Hays-Strom
Communion Elder: TBD

May 25th, 2025

Worship Leader: Melody Burns
Offering Elder: Debby Johnson
Communion Elder: Scott Hays-Strom

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

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

The Nest

Light on the porch, a nest snuggled in, soft grasses, strings, and scraps, woven together. A sanctuary for life, birds resting, making music, spreading joy. A melodic sound, propagating warmth and laughter, sharing their soul in the world. Notes tickling our consciousness, with an invitation to join, to touch and be touched with the voice of stars shining their light through the heavens to let us know, we are not alone.

Paul Cook
27 March 2025



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