



The Rainbow Table

Fellowship, Faith, and Full Plates-Every Story Matters

Trees

by Alfred Joyce Kilmer



Loring Park, Minneapolis
Photo by Liz Brink

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

(Poem in the Public Domain)

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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 September newsletter
by August 20th by emailing them to Liz in the front office at:

lbrink@fcclc.org

Pastor's Ponderings

Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God. 1 John 3:8-9 (NRSV)

What comes to mind and heart when we think of The Devil? What quotes, songs, poems? What activity do we ascribe to The Devil?

A social worker told about a client who had asked if the Devil could put thoughts into someone's head. Being a good social worker, she responded, "Do you think the Devil can put thoughts into someone's head?"

When told the story, I thought about the direction I'd been given: "The Devil is like a custodian. He can open doors, but it's up to us to walk through them." And, "Saying, 'The Devil made me do it,' has been a way for people to avoid taking responsibility for their own actions for time out of mind." Or even Chesterton's cynical quip, "Hell must be empty, for all the devils are here." (This does not dismiss the challenge some of us have with intrusive thoughts. Whether help is sought in the medical realm or the spiritual, help is often needed.)

1 John has some troubling aspects in the worldview of "Children of God" vs. "Children of the Devil." Not only does it make for challenging reading for those of us who recognize both our slips and our successes, but it also makes it easier to fall into the twin sins of self-righteousness ("I've been born again, so it's impossible for me to sin") and other-damnation ("They are obviously sinning, so that must mean they're children of the Devil and beyond redemption.") Admittedly, there are some folks I wish would meet me half-way in my attempts to see their child-of-God selves being redeemed and healed in this life.

I sometimes wonder how helpful it is to imagine a personified intelligence behind evil. It makes for a good story, but whether I am challenging an individual with an army or I am simply challenging a lazy and self-centered world-view (that has often made its way into law & custom), my call is to bandage the wounded and

Pastor's Ponderings cont.

shield them from further wounding, to sing hope into despair and preventing further desperation, to join all Creation in the co-creation of justice/love/peace. I hope to see you on the journey.

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

Scriptures for June

August 3 – Colossians 3:1-11

August 10 – Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

August 17 – Hebrews 11:29-12:2

August 24 – Hebrews 12:18-29

August 31 – Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Wednesday Evening discussion group will be on pause for August.

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.

Faith In Action Committee

July 2025 Report

The Faith In Action Committee has completed the Mission Moments Calendar for 2025 with a speaker from Community of Hope in August, a presentation about our mission partners in September, a speaker about the Las Cruces Pride Month in October and in November special giving opportunities for the holidays. Requests we have for feedback from the board are:

1. Committee members would like to create a matching fund to help Mother Sarah's Orphanage get its well sooner. Would the church have funds to match contributions from members? If not, the committee would like to check for a possible grant through our denominations for funds. Faith In Action would publicize it through our newsletter and announcements in church to get contributions.

2. In an effort to make our building more environmentally friendly there is a program where we can buy solar through a community solar farm at a cheaper rate than El Paso Electric's rate. Would someone from the board be able to research the program to make sure it will benefit the church?

3. How might we serve our new neighbors as they begin to move into the apartments next door. Maybe a door-hanger with information about First Christian and our mission partners along with an invitation to join us on Sunday mornings? Find some way to provide a schedule of events going on at FCCLC. In their lobby or other? Will they have a bulletin board, physical or digital for their renters to see?

Ralph Holmes

Facilitator, Faith In Action Committee



Opportunity For New Glasses

Dona Anna Council of Lions Clubs and ONESIGHT EssilorLuxottica Foundation
Presents

CHANGING LIFE THROUGH LENSES

**FREE GLASSES DAY FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS & LIONS MEMBERSHIP
DRIVE**

August 16th 2025

10 AM to 2 PM

All are welcome but you must have a current copy of the glass's prescription.
(no expired prescriptions will be accepted) There are no income or other eligibility
requirements.

Only single vision lenses and lined bifocals are available.

No progressive or transition lenses will be available.

Location: Las Cruces Village (formerly Good Samaritan)

Social Center – Creative Arts Room

3011 Buena Vida Circle

Las Cruces, NM

If you do not need glasses but know of someone that can use a free new pair,
please pass this information to them.

Faith In Action will be adding a collection box for your old glasses with our
current recycling bins. Please bring any glasses that you no longer need. The
glasses collected will be delivered to the Lions Clubs for use in their programs.

Indivisible Project Las Cruces

Thank you to all who came to our No Good Trouble Protest on July 17th. We had 300 people show up and I met a few people from FCC. Appreciate your support.



Photo by Pam Hett (crowd photos)



Photo by Bill (Overpass)



Sacred Space

Evening sun filtered through the stained glass. Pyramidal shapes in soft hues of pink, green, blue, and gray. Filtering in just enough light to keep the small space from being dark. Like a delicate blanket wrapping around the wounds of life in soothing comfort, a gentle hug from an old friend. As the soft tones of the singing bowl fade away into the room with a healing touch of the Comforter's hand. Resonating prayers for peace in hearts so often surrounded by hate, threatening to overcome our world. A luminous cloud of peace building in the space, reinforced by the petitions of all those longing for a better world. Ready to break forth and illuminate the path for a more serene journey tomorrow.

Paul Cook

2-Jul-2025



Photo by Paul Cook

Special Events



Event: Indivisible Project Las Cruces-General Meeting

Date: Sunday, August 10th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 2-4pm



Event: Singing Out Las Cruces-Open Rehearsal

Date: August 12th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 2-4pm



Event: FCC Board Meeting

Date: August 16th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 9 am



Event: Singing Out Las Cruces-Open Rehearsal

Date: August 19th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 2-4pm



Event: Weaving for Justice Sale

Date: July 16th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 10am - 3pm



Event: Indivisible Project Las Cruces-Relaxation in Resistance with Nikki Kamp

Date: Thursday, August 21st

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 5-8pm

Special Events



Event: Indivisible Project Las Cruces-General Meeting

Date: August 24th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 2-4pm



Event: Singing Out Las Cruces-Open Rehearsal

Date: August 26th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 2-4pm



Event: Indivisible Project Las Cruces-Political Conversation

Date: August 28th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 10:30am-12pm



Event: Indivisible Project Las Cruces-Sign making & Postcard signing

Date: August 28th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 1-7pm



Event: Singing Out Las Cruces- LAST Open Rehearsal

Date: September 2nd

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 2-4pm



Singing Out Las Cruces

Singing Out is getting ready to begin its 15th Season! We will start on Tuesday, August 12th and will have open rehearsal the first 4 weeks. If you are interested in joining you can come to a rehearsal during that time and see what Singing Out is all about. You don't need to have choir experience or be able to read music to join.

The concert we will be preparing for this season is "We're Here, We're Queer, Get Used to it!". It will be a powerful choral concert rooted in the lived experiences, stories, and collective strength of the LGBTQIA+ community. Through Music, we will uplift queer voices and affirm that living and loving authentically is a radical act of resistance. In a world that often seeks to silence or erase queer identities, this concert gives voice to our community. From anthems of protest, to songs that honor the queer experience; this program explores the roots of queer resistance, how our identities challenge systemic norms, how our joy disrupts the narratives of shame and how love is liberation.

This is more than a concert, it's a declaration; a communal act of resistance through song. It is an affirmation that queerness, in all its forms, are not only valid but vital. It is a confirmation that lifting our voices as one is a radical act of hope.



Other World

Mountains in the distance, standing silent. While a swirl of clouds over head open the portal in a pond below. A fleeting mirror transforming the grime of selfishness and hate washed away by the downpour in the night. A temporary reprieve, giving us a glimpse of a more beautiful world that could be. A reminder to focus on the quiet melody of bird's singing for peace. Exploring the edges of the pool, surrounded by serenity. Skirting the boundary of the passage to understanding, as the transit evaporates away. The path fading like the trail of a shooting star dimming in the night, leaving us longing for more. Waiting for the next storm to open the door.

Paul Cook
23 July 2025



Photo by 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.

Weaving for Justice held a sale in the Atrium on July 19th and we were blessed with a huge turnout, despite the heat. Thanks to all who came, we brought in \$2,839.30 for eleven weaving collectives in Chiapas, Mexico and Maya scholarship students in Belize, Guatemala and Chiapas. We're so grateful to our friends in First Christian Church for enabling us to use the beautiful Atrium to showcase and sell the work of the weavers. Folks came to the sale from El Paso and Alamogordo as well as Las Cruces. In this photo, Sandy Mutchnick of Las Cruces kindly posed in an embroidered huipil (blouse) that she purchased from a collective in Aguacatenango, Chiapas. As you can see, it's perfect for these hot summer days!



Photo by Christine Eber

Mother Sarah's Orphanage

To our friends in Christ at First Christian Church in Las Cruces, from the children and staff at Mother Sarah's Orphanage and from Joseph Byarugaba, greetings in Jesus name!

Today, I write you the news that we have been hit by an outbreak of typhoid here in the orphanage. Also, many of the villagers who help us gather water from so far away have also been struck with typhoid, all due to the poor quality of water that we can gather.

I think I told you last time that cattle often get to the water before we do, and they wade through it, and defecate in it. We do our best to filter and boil all water, but it is just so bad.

We focus all our prayers, now, on finding funds to dig a well on our property with which we will take care of the children's needs as well as the needs of our entire community. This will be kept safe from the livestock and wildlife in our area.

We begin to dig already with every little contribution we receive. Every penny, every dollar that we are given is a gift from God and we put it to use digging the wells. We still need \$2,500 or UGX (Uganda Shillings) 9,000,000.

Well, this month our letter is very short. We pray you are all well. We, all of us at Mother Sarah's Orphanage in Uganda, wish your joy and health in the name of our Lord.



-Joseph

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

August 5th - Debby Johnson
August 15th - Scott Hays-Strom
August 16th - Steve Smith
August 21st - Lyn Wofford
August 26th - Charles Harper
August 28th - Donald Wilson
August 31st - Ric Brightman



Anniversaries

August 4th - Chris & Julie Wojtko
August 9th - Eric & Scott Hays-Strom
August 13th - Kamy & Melissa McKenzy-Shaw
August 18th - Donald & Lesa Wilson



Elders & Worship Leaders

August 3, 2025

Worship Leader: Sue Bogart
Offering Elder: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw
Communion Elder: Debby Johnson

August 10, 2025

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

August 17, 2025

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

August 24, 2025

Worship Leader: Jeanne Knotts
Offering Elder: Esther Devall
Communion Elder: Deb Cook

August 31, 2025

Worship Leader: Deb Cook
Offering Elder: Paul Cook
Communion Elder: Esther Devall

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@fccllc.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, 9:00 AM

Spiritual Practices.....Thursday, 9:00 AM

Al-Anon Meeting.....Friday 12:00 PM

Al-Anon Meeting.....Monday 12:00 PM

HIV/AIDS Food Pantry.....Saturday, 12-2 PM

AA Meeting.....Sunday, 9:00 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

Welcome to our newest group: We Are Not a Cult (Sunday Night Live) AA Meeting!

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

Office Update

While there is still painting and repairs to do, I have been able to hang up some things to help make sure people coming in know that this is a safe inclusive space.



Photos by Liz Brink

Contact Information

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