



The Rainbow Table

Fellowship, Faith, and Full Plates-Every Story Matters

Christmas in the Heart

By Paul Laurence Dunbar

Poem in the Public Domain

The snow lies deep upon the ground,
And winter's brightness all around
Decks bravely out the forest sere,
With jewels of the brave old year.
The coasting crowd upon the hill
With some new spirit seems to thrill;
And all the temple bells achime.
Ring out the glee of Christmas time.
In happy homes the brown oak-bough
Vies with the red-gemmed holly now;
And here and there, like pearls, there show
The berries of the mistletoe.
A sprig upon the chandelier
Says to the maidens, "Come not here!"
Even the pauper of the earth
Some kindly gift has cheered to mirth!
Within his chamber, dim and cold,
There sits a grasping miser old.
He has no thought save one of gain,—
To grind and gather and grasp and drain.

A peal of bells, a merry shout
Assail his ear: he gazes out
Upon a world to him all gray,
And snarls, "Why, this is Christmas Day!"
No, man of ice,—for shame, for shame!
For "Christmas Day" is no mere name.
No, not for you this ringing cheer,
This festal season of the year.
And not for you the chime of bells
From holy temple rolls and swells.
In day and deed he has no part—
Who holds not Christmas in his heart!





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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 January newsletter
by December 20th by emailing them to Liz in the front office at:**

lbrink@fcclc.org

Pastor's Ponderings

“Remember this and consider; recall it to mind, you transgressors; remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me, declaring the outcome from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, “My purpose shall stand, and I will fulfill my intention,” calling a bird of prey from the east, the man for my purpose from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have planned, and I will do it.” Isaiah 46:8-11, NRSVUE

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating, for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight. Isaiah 65:17-18, NRSVUE

Nostalgia, what is it good for? (Yes, I’m plagiarizing one of my own recent sermons. Not because I’m lazy, but because the conversation continues .)

After worship when I talked about nostalgia (literally “return home” + “pain”), one congregant mentioned the difficulty today between competing nostalgias. He thought of the Gaza situation and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem with how many different groups claim heritage and history with those lands. I was reminded of a Lakota TV reporter interviewing a woman who was being forced off her family farm by eminent domain and tearfully told about how her family had lived on that farm for over a hundred years. (There was not much sympathy on the face of the reporter.) We both thought about the nostalgias within powerful groups in this country and acknowledged that when we engage in nostalgia, we often don’t think of the cost (and who bore that cost).

It is especially appropriate to consider this as we enter the winter holiday season. “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas” expresses yearning for an experience that many of us in the southern states have never known (and might not again unless we address climate change). The perfect meals and showcase homes have a cost in money and stress. Trying to recreate a beloved recipe may come at the cost of grief in remembering the one who could make it without notes.

Pastor's Ponderings cont.

In our scriptures here, remembrance seems tied to hard times and lessons that we could/should have learned. Imagination of a new thing and expectant joy are the calling for those coming out of the hard times. When imagination fails, we are called to rest in the trust of the one who holds us still and continues to invite us to return home.

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 December

December 7 – Matthew 3:1-12 (2nd Sunday of Advent – Peace)

December 14 – Matthew 11:2-11 (3rd Sunday of Advent – Joy)

December 21 – Matthew 1:18-25 (4th Sunday of Advent – Love)

December 24 – Songs & Scriptures of Christmas Eve

December 28 – Matthew 2:13-23 (1st Sunday after Christmas)

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

As we enter the last month of this year and look to a new year on the horizon the Faith In Action Committee of First Christian Church Las Cruces would like you to consider supporting these UCC and DOC December special offerings with gratitude for the joys of 2025.

United Church of Christ Special Giving Opportunity “The Christmas Fund”

“...WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR, THEY WERE FILLED WITH JOY...”

For over one hundred years, The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. You are part of the community of The Christmas Fund, whether you donate at Christmastime, benefit directly from our grant or leadership programs, or simply believe in our mission to help secure the financial foundation of those engaged in the life of the church.

“It’s wonderful to feel cared for. The amount of the help is not as important as the fact that there’s a tangible way the collective church wants to strengthen your foundation.” From the many letters and stories the Pension Boards has received from those touched by gifts from The Christmas Fund, we share these words: Thanks to your generosity, last year The Christmas Fund provided over \$1.7 million in pension and health benefits, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired clergy and their families. Every gift came from people like you. This year, please give what you can to continue supporting those who have devoted their lives to serving others. - The Rev. Joan Smith Retired UCC minister, Christmas Fund giver and receiver. This Christmas, celebrate the blessings in your life by making a gift to our ministers, church workers, and their families. Please drop a check with a note stating The Christmas Fund” Or visit [christmasfund.org](https://pbucc.donorsupport.co/page/christmasfund2025) to learn more and donate online. <https://pbucc.donorsupport.co/page/christmasfund2025>

To donate by mail to the Christmas Fund, send a check payable to “The Christmas Fund.”

Mail to:

The Pension Boards-United Church of Christ, Inc.

Christmas Fund

75 Remittance Dr., Suite 1637

Chicago, IL 60675-1637

Disciples of Christ Special Giving Opportunity “Christmas Offering” The Christmas Offering supports regional ministries. In 31 regions across the United States and Canada, ministers are nurtured and congregations are provided opportunities for work and worship.

Faith in Action

Often recognized for the ministries of camps and conferences, regions also play a critical role in the preparation and authorization of ministerial ordination. Both are key to church leadership and development. Regions partner with congregations to support the work required to call a new minister. Our gifts support the work of regional ministries this Christmas. Your regional ministry works to:

- Connect congregations to each other
- Foster faith development
- Gather Disciples in camps, conferences, and assemblies
- Nurture the development of a new generation of pastors
- Assist churches in calling new ministers
- Interpret the global mission of the Church
- Represent the Church in ecumenical gatherings
- Counsel and pray with those who are troubled of spirit
- Lead the Church to address racism
- Inspire leaders to experiment and create
- Witness to the power of God to make things new Please Donate at church with a note DOC Christmas Offering or go to the Disciples Donation Page and select “Christmas”.

Faith In Action Needs Your Help

As we close out 2025 and look to 2026 on the horizon, your Faith In Action Committee is busy putting together speakers for our Mission Moments which happen on the second Sunday of each month. January we will be hearing about the Las Cruces Sister Cities Project. If you have a community organization that may be of interest to other members of our congregation or any ideas for how we can help our community in 2026 please attend a Faith In Action meeting on the second Thursday in January or February at 7 PM via the Zoom link on the fcclc.org web site on the Community page under “Meetings”. We are also putting together an opportunity for members to learn about the UCC program “Join the Movement”. You can check out the movement here and let us know if you would like to help bring FCCLC members into this program. Please attend our meeting in January or talk with Pastor Patrick or Ralph Holmes.

Ralph Holmes
Faith In Action Facilitator



Celestial Sounds

Celestial Sounds invites you to a Christmas Concert, December 7th at 3 pm, at First Christian Church. We have some wonderful Christmas music to share! The concert will be followed by a reception. Donations taken at the door.



Special Events



Event: Celestial Sounds Christmas Concert

Date: Saturday, December 7th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 3pm concert with reception to follow



Event: FCC Annual Congregational Meeting

Date: Sunday, December 14th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: After Worship Service



Event: Weaving for Justice Monthly Sale

Date: Saturday, December 20th

Location: First Christian Church

Time: 10 am - 3 pm



Special Events



Event: Toad Hall Production-It's a Wonderful Life Radio Show

Date: Saturday, December 20th @ 7pm

&

Sunday, December 21st @ 2pm

Location: First Christian Church

(Auditions on December 10th & 11th @ 6pm at FCC)



Event: Indivisible Project Las Cruces - Monthly Meetings

GENERAL MEETINGS

2nd & 4th Sunday of each month

2pm - 3:30pm

!NO EVENT ON DECEMBER 28th!

EDUCATION NIGHTS

1st Thursday of each month

6pm - 7:30pm

POLITICS AND PEACE OF MIND

1st & 3rd Thursday of each month

2pm - 3:30pm

PROTEST POSTER MAKING AND POSTCARD SIGNING

2nd & 4th Thursday of each month

!Postcards only on December 11th 2-5pm!

!NO EVENT on December 25th!



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. All proceeds from our sales go back to the collectives.

www.weaving-for-justice.org

Weaving for Justice cont.



In early November, a group of Weaving for Justice volunteers traveled to Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico to assist two weavers from Chiapas at the **Feria Maestros del Arte** (Fair of Master Artists). Juana María and Verónica arrived after 26 hours on a bus with several other artisans from Chiapas. They came to sell weavings made by members of their collective, Tsobol Antsetik (Women United). Juana María, who is monolingual in Tsotsil, a Mayan language, had never left the highlands of Chiapas before this trip. The collective selected her to represent them as their master weaver. Verónica speaks Spanish and was able to speak with customers and translate for Juana María. Both women learned to use the CLIP machine for credit card sales. This was no small feat, for even some of us volunteers! The women faced many challenges during the Feria, but did so with grace and good humor. They sold \$7,028 of textiles for their collective, including weavings that didn't sell at the Feria which we brought back to Las Cruces. Earnings from the Feria will be a great help for the 28 women and their families in the collective to meet their basic needs.

On the last day, November 9th, Verónica let us record her speaking about her experience:

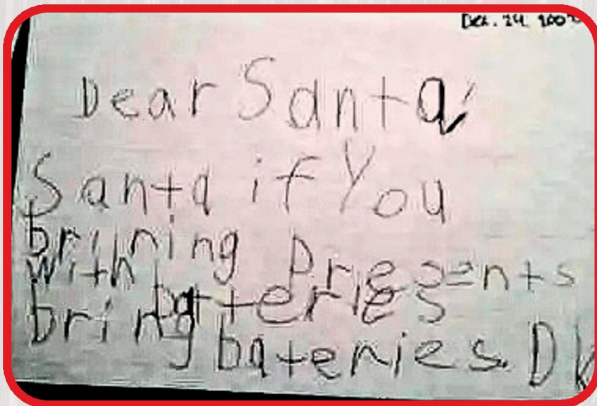
"I live in Chiapas, but I am happy to be here in this place with our compañeras from the United States selling for the women of Tsobol Antsetik. I hear that you work a lot for us, the women of Tsobol Antsetik. Thank you for supporting us...We continue to weave a lot on the backstrap loom because where we live we suffer to fill our basic needs for our families and our homes. That's why I want to say to you, our compañeras in solidarity in the United States, thank you for listening to me and I hope you will not be discouraged and will continue to support us to feed our families."



From left to right, Juana María Arias Pérez, Verónica Arias Pérez, with Weaving for Justice volunteers, Lorena Cabatic, and Sheryl Williams

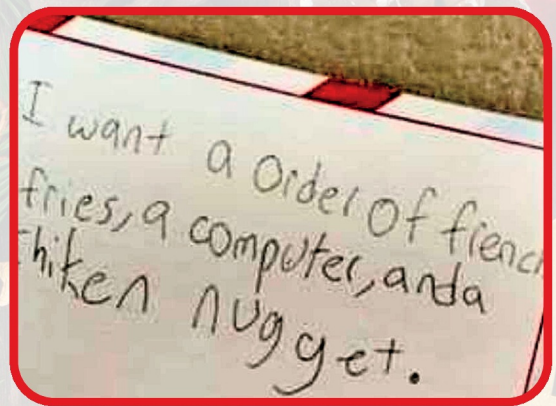
Holiday Humor

Letters to Santa:

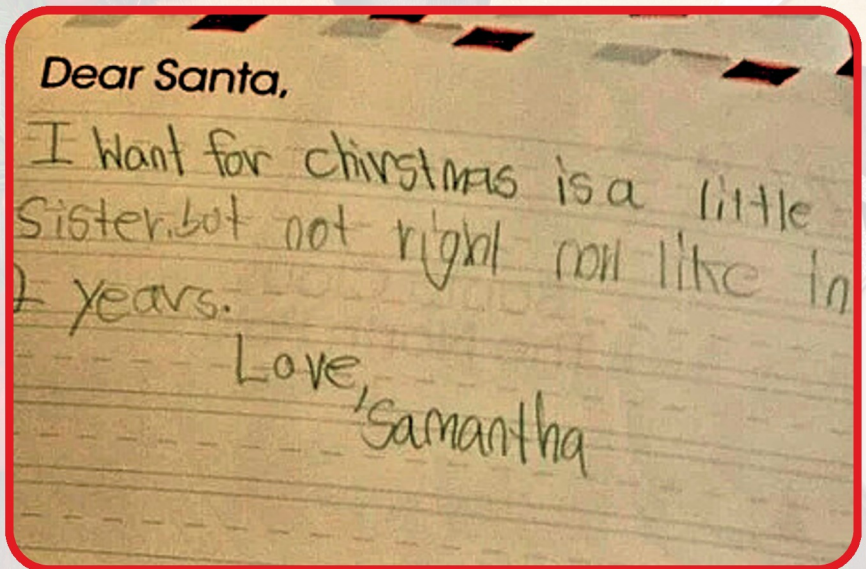


“Dear Santa,
Santa if you bringing presents
with batteries bring batteries.

-DK



“Dear Santa,
I want a order of french fries, a
computer, and a chicken nugget.”



“Dear Santa,
I want for Christmas is a little sister but not right now like in 2 years.”

-Love Samantha



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays



December 15th - Jerry Romero

December 16th - Lesa Wilson

December 17th - Ginny Rice

December 19th - Deb Cook



Anniversaries

December 18th - Mike & Rita Bureman

December 22nd - Charlotte & Phillip Brooks



Elders & Worship Leaders

December 7, 2025

Worship Leader: Hilda McKee

Offering Elder: Zanté García

Communion Elder: Debby Johnson

December 14, 2025

Worship Leader: Esther Devall

Offering Elder: Scott Hays-Strom

Communion Elder: Zanté García

December 21, 2025

Worship Leader: Karen Holmes

Offering Elder: Deb Cook

Communion Elder: Scott Hays-Strom

December 28, 2025

Worship Leader: Eric Hays-Strom

Offering Elder: Karen Holmes

Communion Elder: Deb Cook

December 24th, Christmas Eve Service-6:30pm

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@fcccl.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

Monthly Schedule

Celebrate Birthdays of the Month.....First Sunday, 11:30 AM
Contemplative Worship.....First Sunday, 6:30 PM
Potluck.....Third Sunday, 11:30 AM
Brown Bag Lunch.....Third Wednesday, 11:30 AM



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

Winter

Snow-by G.C.

We revel in ashes
Of the miraculous
Salvation of snow.

It is everywhere, and
Looking down upon us,
Sits December, smiling
At her handiwork

And at us lowly creatures
Who simply exist, in euphoria,
Amazingly ignorant
To her true intention

Which is as such:
To pass through
Time and Tempest
And Trepidation.

Winter Berry



Photo by Liz Brink

Contact Information

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