



# The Chalice News

First Christian Church is a member church of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): [www.disciples.org](http://www.disciples.org)

## FCC Naples continues its process of change

By Pastor Michael

As another scorchingly hot summer draws to a close, FCC Naples continues to evolve. With gratitude we bid a fond farewell to Tony DeLucia, Susan Owens, Alexis, Sydney and Dayna. While we're sad to see them go, we're also excited for this next phase of their journey, and pray for Godspeed as they travel to Pennsylvania and discern God's new activity in their lives. There will be new opportunities for Tony and his family to spread the Gospel message of love and compassion for all God's children, and the FCC message of unity through diversity.

Change is a continual process. God never stops acting, for the very nature of God is creative change. At FCC, we are a community that is incredibly open to God's activity, and exceptionally willing to explore new ideas and journey down new roads. I think this is part of the reason we're presented with so many new opportunities on such a regular basis. Rather than fighting the changes that are inevitable in any faith community, we have prayerfully embraced every moment God has offered, from selling the traditional building, to worshipping in a ballet studio (and at the beach, and at Mexican restaurants).

So often we miss the opportunities presented to us, because of daily distractions. It's been my experience, though, that we can only ignore God knocking on our door for so long. Eventually, God has a way of blowing down the door, embracing us, and leading us to a brand new place. This happens to people all the time, but to people who are used to this activity, and willing to embrace it as tightly as God embraces us, change is constant and welcome, because we know God is constantly changing everything. Including each of us.

As we go to press, we anticipate a congregational vote August 11 to call a new Associate Minister, Reverend Catherine O'Connell. Cathy has served as my seminary mentor the last couple of years, and has been attending FCC Naples regularly since she "retired" last year. Her call back into service with this progressive, caring and inventive community is a testament to God's continual process of change.

We are blessed that Martha Cecere and Dorothy Newton have volunteered to join our wonderful staff of office volunteers, including JB Goodan, who's been especially helpful with weekly music copying and organization. Thank you all for offering your time and talents. This church, our missions, and our worship are God-filled because of your willingness to serve.



**Church Office:** 1660 Trade Center Way, Suite 5 Naples, FL 34109

**Sunday Morning Worship:** 3285 Pine Ridge Road (Etudes de Ballet)

**Phone:** 239-514-5002 **Website:** [fccnaples.org](http://fccnaples.org) **Email:** [fcc@fccnaples.org](mailto:fcc@fccnaples.org)



## Farewell and Godspeed to those whom God calls dear

By Pastor Tony

August 11, 2013 will be the DeLucia family's and Susan Owens' final Sunday at FCC Naples. If you haven't already heard the news, we will be moving back to my old stomping grounds in Butler, PA. The decision to make this move was extremely difficult but I believe that God is calling me to travel away from my existing church family in the hopes that the message and church that has been created here at FCC Naples can be spread to other areas and to people who are trying to find the faith they've been looking for.

Originally the move was for primarily reasons having to do with family, it has since progressed into something more. I have been in conversation with the Regional Minister in Pennsylvania and he has informed me that Oak Hills Christian Church in Butler, PA has expressed interest in talking with a seminarian to be their pastor. I am very humbled and very excited at the prospect of this opportunity. Over the last five years I have had the great privilege of belonging to a true church at FCC Naples. One that is based in love, respect, and mutual appreciation for all the gifts that you all possess and the caring that you show for each other is truly uplifting and at times overwhelming as it is the reflection of God that is being witnessed. You are a family. Please never lose sight of that or of the love you have for each other. I started attending FCC because of conversations I'd had with Rev. Bruce Frogge. When I first started attending the church, it was mainly out of those conversations but also because I had finally answered the call to serve after many years of trying to run from it. I will be ever grateful that

the welcome that we had received by FCC Naples was one of warm hospitality and acceptance. I have never seen a church so readily accept new people as you accepted us and those that have joined the church community since then.

The last couple years working with Pastor Michael have also been very rewarding and enriching. I could not have asked for a better pastor, mentor, or a better friend than Michael. He is, in my opinion, the best successor to Bruce's ministry and I believe that under Michael's shepherding, FCC will grow into an even more vibrant church, drawing in those who have

**“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”**

(Col 3:16 ESV)

become disenchanted with “church” and “religion.” Please continue to keep Pastor Michael in your prayers and uplift him at every opportunity as you continue this path as Disciples of Christ together.

Finally, I wish to simply say, “thank you.” Thank you all for the opportunity to serve you over the last few years. As a trustee, an elder, youth director, and finally as your associate pastor; it has been a wonderful experience. I feel that my time at FCC has definitely helped prepare me for the road ahead, wherever God may lead me. Thank you for opening up your hearts to my children. Thanks to what they have been taught

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## Fr. Richard Rohr's website offers terrific resources for spiritual development

*By Center for Action and Contemplation*

**The question for us is always "how can we turn information into transformation?" How can we use the sacred texts, tradition, and experience to lead people into new places with God, with life, with themselves? - Richard Rohr**



Richard Rohr is a Franciscan of the New Mexico Province, and an internationally recognized author and spiritual leader. Fr. Richard teaches primarily on incarnational mysticism, non-dual consciousness and contemplation, with a particular emphasis on how these affect the social justice issues of our time.

The Center for Action and Contemplation (<https://cac.org>) seeks to empower individuals to live out their sacred soul tasks in service to the world through educational programs and resources:

### **Farewell** *(continued from previous page)*

by all of you that Sunday is "church day" and look forward to going each and every week to see their extended family and to hear and learn the word of God.

Thank you again for everything. I will miss you all greatly and pray for continued health, happiness, and blessings for each of you as we go our separate ways. May God's peace and love shine on each of you, and may you reflect that love and God's grace to all you come in contact with. The peace of Christ is with you and a part of you all.

In Grateful Service,  
*Tony DeLucia*

- Conspire Symposia (Rohr Institute's seven year series of events in New Mexico)
- Online Education (self-paced, online courses featuring Richard Rohr and other master teachers)
- Living School (two-year program; the next application window opens July 1, 2013)
- CAC Bookstore (a comprehensive selection of Fr. Richard's books and recordings)
- Richard's Daily Meditations (free daily studies sent by email to over 70,000 individuals every day). Located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC) is the home of the Rohr Institute and its Living School for Action and Contemplation. The CAC's administrative offices and Bookstore have served people for over 25 years, supporting the ecumenical ministry of Richard Rohr, OFM. As founder of the CAC and Dean of the Living School, Fr. Richard's teachings form the basis of the organization's vision and ongoing work.

The CAC is dedicated to facilitating a universal awakening by providing educational materials, events, and curriculum that bear witness to the Christian tradition of contemplative practice and compassionate action.

*Reprinted from <https://cac.org/about-cac/>*



# Many from FCC attend General Assembly

It was a blessing to have the General Assembly of the Disciples of Christ in our own backyard this year. More than 20 of us were able to attend a variety of workshops. We were able to worship together, reunite with old acquaintances and make some new friends, too. Thank you to everyone who made the trip to Orlando!



### FCC Women's road trip!

Marie Reader, Donna Botma, Helen Carpenter, and Charlotte Adams drove to and from Orlando together and had a blast!



### Working in Leu Gardens

Our FCC youth worked at the Leu Botanical Gardens one day during Assembly. The property is used to educate people about indigenous plant life and sustainable harvesting. Other projects enthusiastically undertaken by FCC youth and leaders included spending a day with nursing home residents, and participating in a blood drive. There was a labor of blood, sweat, tears of compassion, and joyful laughter.





# Inspiring General Assembly celebrates diversity of our denomination

By Chalice News Staff

The 2013 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was a phenomenal experience. If you weren't able to attend, the disciples.org website has links to training sessions, workshops, and worship services. The theme of this year's assembly, "Lord, teach us to pray," was conveyed through worship, preaching, fellowship, and business sessions. In general, the mantra of the assembly (and we hope of the Disciples in general as we move forward) was "all means all."

Some of the business sessions included controversial topics, so presentations and speakers at the General Assembly also focused on the Disciples' ability to have "faithful conversations," discussions which may conclude by agreeing to disagree, yet still moving forward as healing forces for unity in a

fragmented world. Unity does not mean conformity.

Some principles to guide faithful conversations were formed, including: Participants in a conversation should be heard, not judged; Different positions are offered and accepted by all; Expert knowledge is presented; People see God's image in each other, and

**Videos from General Assembly:**

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL19D155B57EFB7E73>

**Photos from General Assembly:**

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/christianchurchdoc/sets/>

**Assembly Toolkit**

<http://www.disciples.org/GeneralAssembly/Toolkits/tabid/>

participants receive resources to use in their congregations and communities. As we retain the historic idea of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a movement rather than a denomination, being able to move forward in faith while disagreeing about particulars, makes us a stronger voice for a compassionate world by showing that *we practice what we preach*.

General Minister Sharon Watkins says, "Our Disciples mission is to be and to share the good news of Jesus Christ. We're a pragmatic, active people who partner easily with others to make life better for our neighbors. As a movement for wholeness, we extend God's welcome to all at the Lord's Table. We're people who like to 'do' as we extend welcome and seek wholeness. Sometimes, though, we get too busy. Sometimes we are active in our community out of muscle memory (knowing we should and knowing how, but neglecting the "why"). We get a bit disconnected from God and from each other. Eventually our commitment to mission lags. Our motivation for action comes from our vital relationship with the living Christ. Our energy for mission comes from the Spirit of God. We are fueled for our mission by a life of communicating with God through prayer."



Sharon E. Watkins



## CFG creates a culture of generosity

By Pastor Michael

The Center for Faith and Giving is a Disciples organization that uses a biblical foundation to speak to the church about stewardship. Their website, <http://www.centerforfaithandgiving.org> is a tremendous resource for individuals and congregations.

Among the many study offerings, there are a series of video courses that have been taught around the country. Most of these are multi-part lessons, for use individually or in Christian Ed classes. They're all accessible from the website and free to use. The lessons are taught by leading Biblical scholars and present stewardship messages from Genesis, Luke, Matthew, John, and many other biblical sources. These often overlooked resources are available to all of us at no charge.



Bruce Barkhauer is the center's director, and has been one of my professors at LTS. Bruce understands generosity as one of the key themes in the Bible, especially as it relates to God's relationship to humans. As God is incredibly generous to all humankind, we should reflect that gift to each other. For Bruce and the CFG, stewardship isn't about maintaining buildings and parking lots, but is instead about radically changing our culture, about "turning society on it's head." Part of the way we do that is by being generous people every moment of our lives.

As society continues to condition us to only care about ourselves, we move farther and farther away from Jesus' message of universal communion. One would think that as global financial institutions and the entire worldwide economy collapses, we might be looking for alternative ways to share goods and services with each other. The Bible presents such a way, but its solution is often derided or misrepresented. Throughout the Bible, we see communities of people who, instead of getting caught up in the material ways of Empire, generously care for each other.

Stewardship is about generosity, and the many ways we can be generous. We give money and time to organizations we care about, but being *involved* in the political system, as well as experimenting with new ways to share goods and services, are increasingly important forms of stewardship.

**“The Center for Faith and Giving is committed to understanding and proclaiming the biblical and theological witness as it speaks to the church about stewardship. We desire to help the whole church understand stewardship as a spiritual discipline, utilizing and creating materials that teach and advance the practice of stewardship with theological integrity.”**

CFG Mission Statement



# Reza Aslan and Jessica Jackley: A Muslim and Christian Interfaith Family

By Susan Katz Miller, reprinted from *The Huffington Post*



Reza Aslan's book, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, had already reached the bestseller list when a video clip of the author went viral this week. When the religion scholar appeared on Fox News to explain his latest work, the host repeatedly and outrageously questioned why a Muslim would be writing a book about Jesus.

Aslan -- whose previous book *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution and Future of Islam* was much acclaimed -- demonstrated extraordinary grace and patience on the show, explaining over and over that religion scholars write as academics, not as adherents. He also mentioned that his wife and mother are both Christians.

Coincidentally, I tell the story of this high-profile interfaith family in my forthcoming book *Being Both: Embracing Two Religions in One Interfaith Family*. About a year ago, Aslan tweeted: "I'm in a blissful interfaith marriage with my Christian wife. We are raising our children to respect all faiths and choose 1 for themselves." When I read that tweet, I contacted him, and he and his wife agreed to be interviewed for my book chapter entitled "Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists: The Next Interfaith Wave."

Aslan's wife Jessica Jackley is prominent in her own field, as the co-founder of Kiva, the pioneering microfinance non-profit. But Aslan's engagement with Christianity did not begin with marriage. In *Being Both*, he describes his own journey as the child of a "culturally Muslim" Iranian refugee family, to a period of evangelical Christian zeal beginning in high school (during which he converted his own mother to Christianity), and finally to rediscovery of Islam while a student of religions.

One of my themes is how being part of an interfaith family can inspire deeper understanding of one's own religion(s), in a partner's religion, and ultimately, in the religions of the world. In chronicling their courtship and marriage, Jackley, who comes from an evangelical Christian family, told me, "He knows the Bible better than I do. He's writing a book right now on Jesus. He understood my life better than most Christians." That book became *Zealot*.

Aslan and Jackley are now raising their twin sons with the shared values of their two family religions, and with stories from diverse traditions. "What we're going to teach our kids is the values, the beliefs, the activism, the worldview," Aslan told me. "And when it comes to the stories, we'll give them all of them."

*Being Both* includes more on the marriage of Aslan and Jackley, the reaction of their interfaith families, and how they are raising their sons. They are just two, perhaps the most prominent two, out of the hundreds of people who entrusted me with their interfaith family stories. Aslan, who received an advanced copy, calls the book, "A gorgeous and inspiring testament to the power of love to not only transcend the divides of faith and tradition, but to bring faiths together and create wholly new traditions."



### August Serving Schedule

Aug 4 Greeters: Beverly & Joe Krepel  
Elders: Mary Brown & Lynn Clarke  
Communion Prep: Charlotte Adams  
Counting: Mary & Luis

Aug 11 Greeters: Barry & Sharon Ardrey  
Elders: Mary Brown & Lynn Clarke  
Communion Prep: Dorothy Newton  
Counting: Mary & Martha

Aug 18 Greeters: Kelly & Luis Occhiuzzo  
Elders: Mary Brown & Lynn Clarke  
Communion Prep: JoAnn Aycock  
Counting: Mary & Luis

Aug 25 Greeters: Esther & Phillip  
Elders: Mary Brown & Lynn Clarke  
Communion Prep: Martha Cecere  
Counting: Mary & Luis



### Aug-Sept Birthday Celebrations

- Aug 4 - Nancy Mason
- Aug 6 - George Burriss
- Aug 14 - Pat Burriss
- Aug 15 - JB Goodan
- Aug 19 - Joseph Krepel
- Aug 29 - Ray Cecere
- Sept 1 - Sebastian Arago
- Sept 2 - Dave Tanner
- Sept 10 - Donna Botma
- Sept 13 - Rosi McArdle
- Sept 17 - Catherine Broadhead
- Sept 19 - Luis Occhiuzzo

### Finance Report

#### June-July giving:

Sunday Worship Offering: **\$13,413.00**

Other Income: **\$13,348.83**

Worship space setup: **\$95.00**

Care Team: **\$650.00**

General/Local Outreach: **\$479.00**

**Total: \$28,985.83**

