



# The Chalice

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
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Heart Shapes – December, 2017

## How Do We Move from Pentecost to Advent?

The sixth season in the church year is Pentecost. It begins 40 days after Easter Sunday and shapes our summer and fall days. The season of Pentecost begins with the excitement of strong wind and dancing tongues of fire and multi-languages among traditional worshippers who are all gathered together in one place. Each miraculous event on that first day of Pentecost is a signal of a new beginning with the community of faith.

Pentecost calls believers to be motivated to willingly engage in their faithful walk, learning as they go with the prospect of seeing more clearly God's presence through us in the world. The long season provides time where each day is possibility for deepening our relationships with each other and with God. At the end of the season, we should be re-shaped and renewed in our faith. Pentecost has ended and now we move into Advent.

Here is the problem: I don't feel mature in my faith nor re-newed nor ready to enter into the season of Advent with anticipation for new birth,

new beginnings, new life nor energy to start.

The reality is that the last half of Pentecost was difficult, impossible, sad, hurtful, lonely, confusing, chaotic, shocking, tiring, demanding, difficult, numbing, dark.

From July thru November, 2017, our community of faith experienced the deaths of six beloved, engaged members of our congregation. I have heard more than one person say, "It is all I can do to drive in the parking lot of the funeral home. We have been here too many times. This has got to stop" Our tender hearts overflowed with tears down our cheeks. Our tears are the first steps toward hope and healing. We acknowledge what we have experienced. We try to move on, but we linger with our memories and our questions.

Some deaths were expected having lived long lives although their bodies could no longer support their will to live. Some deaths shocked us, unexpected and undeserving, leaving us with unanswerable questions and puzzled anger. Some deaths resulted from disease that robbed us of their presence, leaving us with memories to comfort us and a seed of courage to carry on. And carry on, we will.

Parker J. Palmer writes in his book, A Hidden Wholeness: "The deeper our faith, the more doubt we must endure; the deeper our hope, the more prone we are to despair; the deeper our love, the more pain its loss will bring: these are a few of the paradoxes we must hold as human beings. If

we refuse to hold them in the hopes of living without doubt, despair, and pain, we also find ourselves living without faith, hope, and love.”

It is not an easy path ahead of us. But here is what I prayerfully claim: We do not travel down this path alone nor without faith, hope and love. Our wounds are surface in comparison to the depth of faith, hope and love that has been bestowed - - - even on me, on you, on us. I would rather look back on my life and these difficult times and say – I had faith, I kept hope and I loved deeply because I have been loved. The difficulty thins out when I re-claim that the depth of brokenness is measured against the depth of faith, hope and love. As on Pentecost, the Great Comforter will come when we are together, sharing our experiences, finding words for the difficult to speak. In our humanity, God meets us and holds us with the real arms of one another until we are well enough to reach out to others again.

FCCW Family and Friends, Thank you for your monetary gift during Ministers Appreciation Month this year. It is with great appreciation for each and every one of you that I say thank you. Since 2013, when I first came to this position of ministry, I have enjoyed our time together as we discern God’s calling as a community of faith. Our time together is enriching as we continue to learn new ways of sharing the Good News of Christ. I look forward to the next year ahead.

Peace for the day, Sheila



Office hours: The FCCW church office is open with the church secretary, Elaine McTyre, on most Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM. The FCCW minister, Sheila Hunter, is in the office on most Sundays – Thursdays, with office hours, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM, and often later in the day. Sheila has an “open door” invitation to come and visit at the office or invite her to meet at other times. The coffee pot is always on!



Wishing each of you and your families and friends a special Merry Christmas and a happy New Year! With peace and love from the FCCW team: Sheila Hunter, Elaine McTyre, Amy Baxter, The Music Leadership Team of Patty Wagner, Spence Rees and Bill Hunt.



**theology at the table**



[ 2nd & 4th Thursdays ]

For all Young Adults (19 years and older) who seek friendships, faith development, fun – our next meeting time is Thursday, January 11 at 8:00 PM. We will meet at Catch 22! Bring your friends!!



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—Parker J. Palmer

*A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward  
An Undivided Life*

CENTER FOR  
**Courage  
& Renewal**

FCCW Elders provide times of prayer and services of healing for those who request their support. Our sanctuary provides a welcoming space for individual and communal prayer. The Elders meet on fourth Sundays at 8:30 AM.



FCCW WWC Dinner Group enjoying the holiday season around table of friendship and food at Bella Noche. Delicious way to visit with one another. Our next WWC Dinner Group will be January 16, Tuesday, at 6:00 PM. Destination to be decided!! Come and join in!



Our Disciple Women group helped to make Christmas special for six seniors. We took their list and shopped just for them! Great project with SOS, Support our Seniors.



FCCW volunteers of all ages and talents made and sold the annual chicken mull – organized by our own CMF men’s group. All proceeds from the mull are given and shared with local and regional charities.

The next meeting of the CMF Breakfast Group is Sunday, December 17 at 8:00 AM and in 2018 – every first Sunday of the month at 8:00 AM. Come and join the fellowship.



The Handbell Choir performed at the annual Watkinsville Christmas Parade. The theme was "Joyful Noise".



FCCW Hanging of the Green service includes the whole church at worship. The Chrismos are hung on the tree; the songs are sung with tenderness; a special ornament of a musical staff was given by Eddie Cobb to remember our loved one and music director, Teresa Guthrie.

