



November 2023

Dear Members and Friends of FCCI,

Because of YOU our church changes lives.

Our church continues to be a vital progressive Christian voice in Ithaca and across our region because of your support. We are a leader in the community known for our inclusivity, openness, generosity, compassion, interfaith spirit, and care of immigrants. We are committed to loving *all* of our neighbors and we do extraordinary things together. We change lives.

Hope, Grace, Love, Justice

Our mission as a church is to bring positive change.

Motivated by hope, we trust that God’s spirit empowers each of us in our spheres of influence to make today better than yesterday and tomorrow better than today.

Inspired by grace, we see each other and every person as a beloved child of God regardless of who they are, what they do for a living, or how much they have accomplished or not in life.

Stirred by love, we agree with Martin Luther King Jr., who said that love is the way to live good, moral lives and improve the well being of all our human siblings in the world.

Driven by a passion for justice, we long for all God’s creatures to thrive – people and planet.

Hope, grace, love, and justice. These are what we value as a church. They enable us to *be* the change we want to see in the world.



FCCI’s ministries: Living into our values.

As we write this letter, our two pastors are working with their interfaith colleagues to organize an effort to bring healing to those traumatized by the shocking violence in Israel and Gaza. Our pastors are publicly representing the values we hold dear as a church – compassion, a healing presence in the world, peace, faith in God’s grace, and the hope of love.

This fall our church’s children and youth are learning the UCC’s “Be the church” campaign: “protect the environment, care for the poor, forgive often, reject racism, fight for the powerless, share earthly and spiritual resources, embrace diversity, love God, and enjoy this life.”

We live into these values as a church by housing sanctuary guests because we believe that loving our neighbors *includes* our immigrant neighbors. We also live into these values each Sunday when we hear

from the pulpit about God's unconditional love for us and for all people, and when our music and prayer ministries remind us that experiencing awe is a gateway to becoming more compassionate and faithful people. FCCI changes *our* lives.

We believe in these values. Our hearts are often filled with **joy** knowing that our pastors are publicly voicing what we value as a church. We often experience **awe** on Sunday mornings in worship. We are **inspired** knowing that **our children and youth are learning values that will shape their lives and bring change**. As a church, we strive to support what FCCI stands for and what it means for our world today. Through our commitment, FCCI will continue to improve our own lives, and further afield, lives of people in the Ithaca community, in our region, and in our world.

Supporting our mission and ministries

Our building is available to local community groups. We also host blood drives, Board of Elections voting events, Scouts, Community Nursery School, and other groups. Over the years we have developed a reputation for not only being a religious haven, but a strong community partner in times of need. You may not be aware, however, that in addition to supporting our ministries and programs, we also have a roof to repair, infrastructure and grounds to maintain, an organ to tune and repair, and staff and tenants to support.

We know how much it cost us to maintain the church and its ministries in 2023. Our finance team estimates that a single day costs over \$1,500 – a cost that will increase by about 4-5 percent in 2024. The unknown factor as we plan for next year's budget is revenue. Your pledge is crucial to the planning for and sustaining of our church.

Our church is filled with talented and caring people like you who do extraordinary things together. We're inspired to support our church and we hope you are too. FCCI stands for values that we all hold dear – values that change lives. If you cherish these values as much as we do, we ask you to make a pledge and support our ministries. Thank you for your commitment.

With grateful hearts from your Church Council,

Karin Silva
President, Church Council

Rev. Dr. David A. Kaden
Senior Minister

John Mazzello, Council Vice President
Len Johnson, Communications Coordinator
Bill Heffner, Facilities and Space Coordinator
George Hudler, Finance and Development Coordinator
Sue Eslinger, Congregational Support Coordinator
Melanie Weymer, Spiritual Growth Coordinator
Youth Team, Youth Council Representative
Jennifer Visscher, Church Clerk
Paul Viscuso, Church Historian
(ad hoc) Rev. Susan Fast, Associate Minister of Pastoral Care