



Greetings,

Our annual Giving Campaign is critically important to us in these trying times, and we are looking forward to your participation. Pledging and giving allows us to carry on our exciting and life-changing ministry here at the FCJ Christian Life Centre.

We want to begin by saying “thank you.” We wish to express our gratitude to those who make this ministry possible. You consistently and substantially support the FCJ Christian Life Centre with your generosity. We now once again encourage you to prayerfully consider your intentional gift for the coming year.

It has been a defining period of change throughout the world, and it is with awe that we at the FCJ Christian Life Centre, see your great resilience in a highly dynamic situation. Through it all we have witnessed a sense of standing together as a community, friends, and neighbors united by a shared belief in our reliance on a loving creator.

“We are a Center of Hospitality and Hope Where God can be found in a changing world”

These are timely words for The FCJ Christian Life Centre as we launch our 2020 Annual Giving Campaign. We believe strongly in what we do, in offering a quiet, safe, and welcoming environment that renews people’s sense of Hope in a sometimes-disturbing world. In an increasingly unsettling world, the FCJ Centre is a quiet place apart where people come to pray, meditate, and find spiritual nurture. We help people reconnect with themselves, with others, with creation, and with God in a variety of ways.

As a Centre of Hospitality and Hope, we are embracing these trying times to reflect on what we do and how we do it. Our current situation presents us with a unique chance to rethink old approaches, identify new opportunities, look at processes with fresh eyes, and build on achievements. We have been by our patron’s side, safeguarding the things that matter most, for 40 years. And we look forward to doing so for many more.

When the Coronavirus struck, the Centre slowly shut down during the month of March. Many of our full- time staff and all our part time staff were laid off. The government in the month of April came out with the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) which our employees were encouraged to apply for. Also, in late April the government offered employers the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) for their staff. This wage subsidy enabled us to re-hire workers previously laid off because of COVID-19, and better positioned us to resume normal operations following the crisis.

In early May the government provided a 3 stage re-opening strategy which allowed the Centre to open on May 14 with restrictions. During stage one the Centre was officially reopened on May 19, 2020. Staff are at present working a 6hr. day. We **need your help** to reestablish them to an 8hr. day.

Your health and safety, and that of our staff members, is our absolute priority. We are in an unprecedented time and it is now more important than ever that we come together as we face a global pandemic.

How are we taking care and staying safe?

We are practicing leading health and safety precautions as outlined by Alberta Health Services, to ensure the safety of our FCJ Retreat and Conference Centre patrons and employees.

Our new health and safety measures include:

- ❖ Practicing physical distancing.
- ❖ Our employees wear masks, and we encourage our patrons to do the same.
- ❖ Limiting our conference room capacity.
- ❖ Enhanced cleaning protocols, including regular disinfecting and sanitizing of high touch surfaces and equipment.
- ❖ Providing hand sanitizer and encouraging patrons to use it upon entrance and throughout the Centre.
- ❖ Using an acrylic protective shield at the reception desk.
- ❖ Our dining rooms are open with restrictions:
 - We operate at no more than 50% seating capacity.
 - Tables and chairs are arranged so that a 2-metre distance is maintained between each dining party.
 - We use rolled silverware and tables are not preset
 - All meals are served. There are no self-serve meal options

COVID 19 has not stopped us from moving forward although the **financial burden** is heavy. Enhanced hygiene and social distancing rules, have compelled us to purchase hand sanitizers, disinfectants, gloves, masks etc. As well, we are in the position now to have to hire additional staff for housekeeping, to prioritize deep cleaning, and kitchen staff to enforce social distancing in our dining rooms

We can and are moving forward because of your support. We are so very grateful for you supporting us when we closed Centre doors in late March, for standing with us when we worked remotely to help flatten the curve, and for believing in us now as we embark on a journey into uncharted waters. There will be obstacles, and things will not always go smoothly, but you can rest assured we will never give less than our best. It is what you deserve.

This is not an easy time for anyone, and there is a lot that feels outside of people's control. What is in our control, however, is the way we interact with one another. I remind myself often of the need to be patient and most especially, kind. Stress is high as we grapple with the outbreak's effects on our families, our jobs, and our communities. But this I know: we will get through it. Together.

We invite you to come from east and west, north, and south to offer your very best. If you feel that you have offered all that you are able, we thank you for your generosity. If you believe that you are able to offer more, we invite you to consider a gift of one extra month of your regular offering or a one-time gift of \$50, \$100, \$500 or more. Each gift no matter the size will help us to enhance the exceptional ministry that occurs at the FCJ Centre and beyond.

Annual giving is the lifeblood of all we do here. We ask those who know and love this place to renew their commitment. The mission of the FCJ Sisters, the FCJ Christian Life Centre and the mission of Christ are possible only because of your generosity. We need your continued financial support more than ever, and as much as you are able, to increase that support for the coming year.

At such a profoundly challenging time it is very important that we help to relieve the isolation that many are feeling because of the Coronavirus.

We ask you to prayerfully consider this request. We have enclosed an intention card to help guide you in this endeavor.

***God of love and hope,
you made the world and care for all creation,
but the world feels strange right now.
The news is full of stories about Coronavirus.
Some people are worried that they might get ill.
Others are anxious for their family and friends.
Be with them and help them to find peace.
We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists,
and all who are working to discover the right medicines
to help those who are ill.
Thank you that even in these anxious times,
you are with us.
Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe.***

Amen

In Christ, with you on the journey

Denise DeNeve
Director, FCJ Retreat and Conference Centre