FCCH Congregational Chronicle

September 2024



Note from Mark

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the September issue of the Chronicle! Inside this issue you will find lots of information about what has been happening and what will be happening at our church. Thank you to Jo Freeman, our church administrator, who does a great job keeping us informed.

We've had a great summer of following the theme of pilgrimage. We've been inspired by amazing preachers like John Pavlovitz, Carter Heyward, Brian Combs, and Joan Saniuk. We've been moved by the stories from four of our members on two "This Is My Story" Sundays. We've had great experiences on our three Pilgrimage Walks. We've learned from three pilgrimage movies. We had meaningful experiences in two five week Story Feast Circles. We've learned and grown through three book groups discussing "The Gift of Years" by Joan Chittister. We had great food and conversation at our two Friendship dinners. And we've learned so much from our Forum presentations and discussions each Sunday morning, and we've supported our outreach projects like our just completed Backpack Drive for Upward Elementary School. Thank you to everyone who has led these various events, helped make worship meaningful, kept our committee work strong, and thank you to everyone who has participated in an event or group at the church this summer.

September brings our beloved Karla Miller back to us. Karla will participate in worship on September 1 and will preach her first sermon back on September 8. On September 8, we will also have a congregational lunch following church at which Karla will tell us about her sabbatical pilgrimage. I can't wait to hear about all that she has experienced. Reservations for the lunch must be received no later than Monday, September 2 by emailing jo@fcchendersonville.org. (There will not be a Forum on September 8).

It has been an honor to serve as Sabbatical Pastor the past three months. My love and appreciation for you and for this amazing church has grown in so many ways. Thank you to all of those who contribute in all sorts of ways to helping FCCH make a difference in our community and world.

With Love, Mark

Sweet Sunday School Scenes





Creating Welcome Back cards for Karla (clockwise):

- Matthew
- Aryella
- James

Pictures courtesy of Ginger Zemp zempvirginia@gmail.com

Pilgrimage Walk August 11th, 2024



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Gail Blate

After college I taught art, then went to graduate school in Special Education specializing in Visual Disabilities and taught blind and multi-handicapped children for a number of years. A few years after I met my late husband, I stopped teaching in the school system abd began helping him with our natural health education organization, teaching acupressure, EFT, vegetarian cooking and other self-health practices. I continued my love of art, and explored and taught

many different art expressions, but found my home in fabric collage Mandalas and SoulCollage(R).

Hobbies are spending time with family and friends, singing in the choir, dancing, making my art, all bring me much joy.

I really appreciate the inclusivity, acceptance and warmth of the people at FCC. I grew up in the Presbyterian Church, and beginning in college, embarked on a lifelong spiritual journey, studying all the major world religions, visiting sacred sites around the world, and finding a deeper understanding and appreciation of the truths underlying all faiths. Now I feel at home here.



Rich Dratz

Rich holds degrees from George Washington University and the University of Montana.

He loves music and is a member of the Hendersonville Community Band (trumpet), Hendersnville Chorale, and the Congregational Church Choir (bass). He also is called to play taps for funerals.

Rich loves language and speaks English, German, and Scottish Gaelic.

Rich is also into all sports, hiking & biking.



Nancy Wood

Nancy originally hails from Grand Rapids, Michigan where she was born, went to Hope College and married, raised two amazing kids and working for 30 years at MillerKnoll, an office furniture manufacturer.

Since 2016, she calls herself a slow traveling solo adventurer moving from Michigan to St George, Utah, then Fruita, Colorado, on to Travelers Rest, South Carolina, and now Hendersonville, North Carolina. Whew! Being a minimalist makes that easier! She's passionate about health and traveling the world, wanting to see it all.

Being on the board of the Friendship Force International's Western North Carolina club, a home host organization, helps make that dream a reality. When not traveling, she enjoys walking daily, hiking, reading historical fiction and getting tucked into a challenging puzzle.

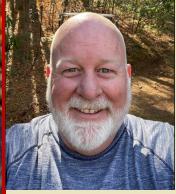


Ritch Yount

I am a retired college and university Registrar. I love working with clay, both utilizing a wheel and by hand.

What attracted me about First Congregational Church is the accepting, open, diverse mission that is socially and politically active in our community. It is a joyful and giving congregation.





Mark Mitchell

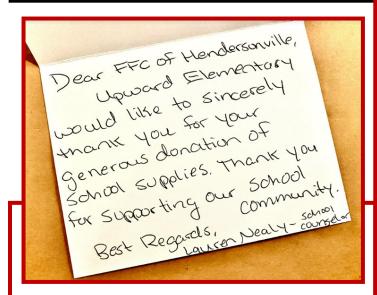
Having spent his childhood in Dallas, TX and the mountains of Western Colorado, Mark moved to Florida where he met his only true love, Maureen, and where they raised three beautiful humans. They both now live in Saluda and are very much at home in these ancient mountains and wholesome communities.

A career in the design of architecture and interiors has long been a part of the journey. Art, Cooking, Singing, Dancing, being in nature, and deepening spiritual practices are all places that call to Mark.

First Congressional has quickly become a community evident of love, openness, and inclusion which is proving to be exactly the place to thrive!



School Backpacks





Thank you, First Congregational!

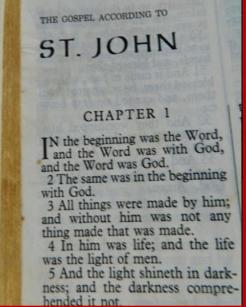
Thanks to YOUR generosity, First Congregational delivered some 250 NEW BACKPACKS, along with donated dollars, to Upward Elementary School for the start of this new year!. Special thanks also to Elle Travis, Julie Spalla, and Bill Shaffer for coordination and deliveries, and to Sheila Clendening for procuring school-color pencils we included for the students.

IN ADDITION, thanks to Romella Hart O'Keefe and Project Linus fellows, 23 handmade blankets (one for each classroom) and hundreds of pocket hugs were

delivered to supply classroom "Calm Spots" for kids in need of a comforting moment. Romella also donated the earnings from sale of dear Ed's book collection to further outfit these "Calm Spots."



Focus on "Bible Study, One Verse at a Time"





Un- der the guidance of Barbara Rathbun, this

Bible study group has been meeting for many years, with an ever-changing cast of characters. But it's not your grandmother's, or even your mother's Bible study!

The group specializes in asking questions, expressing a wide variety of opinions (often one or two more opinions than there are members present), and sometimes even occasionally coming up with somewhat reasonable answers. And we have fun while we're doing it.

The Bibles pictured are the ones used by the group – such a variety. We just started on the gospel of John. AND – you can jump in any time. Most members pop in and out, as they meet other life commitments. The group meets on most Thursday afternoons at 4 pm – moving to 3 pm when the days get shorter.

Everyone is invited! Contact Barbara at bmrathbun@bellsouth.net for more \ information.



Happy Scenes from August

Mark puts the finishing touches on the Resource Center

HARE THE LOVE SHORT TOUR 2013

URCE

Circle of Friends



Beautiful weather, good food, great conversation and wonderful people who love and care for each other. That sums up our small group meeting on Thursday, August 23rd, at Blue Ruby in Flat Rock.

We had conversations on trips to London, adapting to tiny houses, friends and firewood, Little League World Series, upcoming travel, and some health issues, as usual.

Chris (who took the photos) found a coverlet in the car so we even had our own tablecloth!

This amazing group consists of Dody & Sharon Schultz Pratt, Alice & Mike Tenold, Phyllis Rhinehart, Susan Jahnke and Chris and Sherry Carmichael. Everyone in our group was present. YEAH!!



Article & pictures courtesy of Sherry Carmichael ccarmitaly@gmail.com

Service & Giving Volunteer of the Month - Kay Davis



Kay Davis grew up in rural Maine where helping each other was essential to survival, and you shared what you had. Her adult life took several twists and turns! After high school, Kay joined the Catholic Foreign Mission group *Maryknoll*, serving in Paterson NJ and then in Santiago, **Chile**. Kay says, "Community organizing in Chile taught me that service means lifelong learning. My neighbors taught me kindness, generosity, humility, patience and that my role was to be their cheerleader, coach, and ally."

Following a military coup in Chile, Kay and her husband returned to **Maine** where they reared eight children – three "homemade" and five adopted of various ages, races, nationalities. With a master's degree in Social Work and LCSW specializing in adoption and foster-care mental health

therapies, Kay worked as Director of a special-needs adoption agency. And as volunteer Bible Study leader at the county jail, Kay learned a lesson she says she's always remembered. When asking a group of inmates, "Where would you find Jesus today?," one answered, "Jesus hung out with drunks, druggies and whores; he'd come here if he was around today."

At age 71 Kay found herself widowed, children grown, and "not feeling useful." Her solution? She applied and was assigned as a **Peace Corps** volunteer in a Mayan community in **Guatemala**. There she worked with pregnant women and new mothers with little formal education and with hungry, malnourished children. And Kay says she once again set aside her former worldview to appreciate how taking care of each other, sharing what you have, listening to others' wisdom, and being their ally could make changes.

Flat Rock's **Tiny Home Village** and **First Congregational Church** are two places Kay now finds community and purpose. Of FCC, where she loves being an occasional liturgist, Kay says, "I love the spiritual diversity and freedom to grow, learn new ways, change, be messy, and meet kindred spirits." In addition to having been a volunteer tutor at **Literacy Connection**, Kay cares for the **Sandburg** goats most Saturdays, is an **Elections Board** poll worker assisting curbside voters, runs a small part-time **errands service business**, and her very-affordable **sourdough bread** became much sought-after treat during the Pandemic and since!

Service & Giving Agency of the Month - Literacy Connection



Service & Giving hopes you enjoyed our Aug. 25 Forum with Kelly Hart, Executive Director of the **Literacy Connection**, as our speaker. Kelly shared that he non-profit's purpose is to transform lives by cultivating literacy skills to promote

economic and social success – including programs designed both for adults learning English as a new language, and for native English speakers.

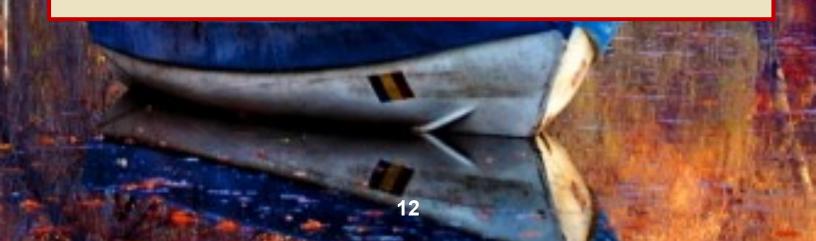
One important goal for many of the participants is to prepare for and earn United States citizenship. Ms. Hart emphasized that **volunteer literacy tutors are always needed at the Literacy Connection.** Interested? Checkout the details at: https://www.litconnection.org/become-a-tutor

GROCERY LOYALTY CARDS THAT SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Secondly, Service & Giving reminds you that this is the time of year to renew (or begin) to support area public schools through your grocer's loyalty card. This is an easy way to direct a portion of what you already spend on groceries to your preferred public school! Here are the direct links to activate your loyalty card:

- Ingles Tools for Schools, https://www.inglestoolsforschools.com/ where First Congregational's community partner, Upward Elementary is # 11025. Or, you can use the pull-down menu to choose another school to support.
- Harris Teeter Together for Education, https://tie.harristeeter.com/together-in-education
- **Publix Partners** requires no renewal but you must create a profile at https://corporate.publix.com/community/corporate-campaigns/publix-partners/supporters.

Thank you!



Forum Agenda for September

- September 1 Larry Anderson leads us in a discussion on "Magic, mystery and mystics."
- September 8 NO FORUM (We have a box lunch after church instead!)
- September 15 Liz Hill leads us in an exploration of spiritual direction and writing.
- September 22 Joel Helfand presents "Band of Survivors," which is about a Holocaust band that plays Klezmer music; Joel will also play some music.
- September 29 Karla Miller and Mark Acker lead us in a conversation about the joys and challenges of aging.

Friendship Dinner Tuesday, September 17

We gather at 5:00 p.m., and we eat at 5:30 p.m.

Friendship Dinners are a great way to get to know the great people in our congregation.

Bring a main dish, salad, vegetable or dessert to share, and bring your own tableware and silverware.

We need five people to help set up and clean up (30 minutes early and 30 minutes afterwards).

If you can help, sign up on the Friendship Dinner bulletin board in the office hallway.

Hunger Walk Sept 28th - Mark your calendars!







Join First Congregational in raising \$\$ to feed the hungry in our community

Become a Hunger Walker by collecting funds from friends, neighbors, and associates. Then, walk on 9/28.

- OR -

Offer a personal donation and give that to any First Congregational fundraiser / Hunger Walker.

Every \$ that you Collect or Donate - to the penny, goes directly to vetted agencies for purchasing food to feed the hungry in Henderson Co.

In 2024 these are:

Blue Ridge Health Center Calvary Episcopal Food Pantry Community Food Pantry, Edneyville Council on Aging / Meals on Wheels Fishes & Loaves UMC, Etowah Interfaith Assistance Ministry + Mobile Pantry Hville Rescue Mission - 42k meals annually Safelight, Inc., violence/abuse shelter+pantry The Salvation Army - food boxes/groceries The Storehouse - Food Pantry St. Vincent De Paul Society

For more information, inquire of our FCC Hunger Walk 2024 leader. Dennis Maloy - or any member of the FCC Service & Giving team.

Thank You!



Tuning Forks Stress Relief Program

On Sunday, September 15 and 22, 2024, after church service, Kathleen Vard will be offering mini energy tunings to benefit the Hunger Walk. Weighted and unweighted tuning forks will be applied directly to the body and within the auric field of the body to release the stress and static accumulated in everyday life. Breathwork will be encouraged during the session. A love donation in any amount will be greatly appreciated.

Calm Spots for Upward Elementary School

During deliveries of Backpacks that you gifted to Upward Elementary school students, Ellie Travis learned about the schools' need for a "calm spot" in every classroom.

In the past several years, we have become aware of children experiencing more anxiety and stress than ever before, and the need to address this issue before that stress leads to the child becoming disruptive in the classroom seems urgent. The calm spot is a place where a student can take a 5-minute break for a bit of respite using tactile materials at hand that help restore a sense of calm and comfort so that the child can return refreshed, ready and able to learn.

We were delighted to make sure that each of the 23 classrooms has a calm spot. Each corner calm spot has a variety of calming "tools". \$604., donated from the Ed O'Keefe book sale, will provide small tactile items. Additionally, each calm spot has a handmade blanket for comfort- 18 from Project Linus and 5 from our Prayer Shawl ministry, as well as some FCC pocket hugs!

Thanks to all the blanket, prayer shawl and pocket hug makers for your help with this project.

Romella Hart-O'Keefe

Article courtesy of Romella Hart-O'Keefe (edrookeefe@gmail.com)

AGING GRACEFULLY: THE MEDICARE MAZE

Medicare, Medicare Advantage or Medicare
Supplement? How do I evaluate and choose?
What is a formulary? How hard is it to change
my plan? Age may bring wisdom, but it also
brings a lot of new, confusing questions. To
help us work through this maze, Abby Landry,
Medicare Program Manager with Council on
Aging of Buncombe County, will join us.
Lunch will be provided. Contact the office if
you would like to attend!

Grace Lutheran Church 1245 6th Avenue West Hendersonville, NC 28739 (828) 693-4890

Grace Lutheran Church

will host a free talk on Medicare.

Lunch will be provided free of charge.

Please let Grace know by Sept 8th if you are coming so that they can plan for the number of plates needed by calling (828)693-4890





Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
Suicide Prevention Community



September is suicide prevention month.

Suicide is a major public health problem in the United States, especially among older adults.

- Suicide is the third leading killer of teenagers, and the second leading killer of young adults. A person under the age of 25 kills themselves every 2 hours and 11 minutes.
- However, the highest rates of suicide are among older adults. Women's suicide rates peak around 50 years of age, but men's suicide rates continue to climb as they age.
- Older adult men over the age of 85 are killing themselves at four times the rate of teenagers. White males die by suicide at a higher rate than any other racial group.

Find out how you can save a life at a **FREE** training. September 13, 2024
Friday, 2 PM

https://forms.office.com/g/Gg70pHRrK6

Henderson County Department of Public Health 1200 Spartanburg Hwy, Suite 100 Hendersonville, NC 28792

"Do not harm yourself. We are all here." Acts 16:28



Mental Health First-Aid

Saturday, September 28 8:30 am - 4:30 pm VFW Hedrick - Rhodes Post 5206, 900 N. Maine St., Hendersonville NC

An evidence-based, early-intervention course.

Most of us would know how to help if we saw someone having a heart attack — we'd start CPR or call 9-1-1. But too few of us would know how to

respond if we saw someone having a panic attack or showing signs of alcohol use disorder.

Just as CPR helps you assist an individual having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches you how to assist and support others who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

This evidence-based, early-intervention course, administered by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, is available virtually and in-person and uses community-specific scenarios, activities and videos to teach the skills needed to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges as well as how to provide initial support until they are connected with appropriate professional help.

More than 3 million people across the United States have been trained in MHFA by thousands of certified Instructors. Join the next 3 million and be prepared to provide support for those around you who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

What It Covers

- Common signs and symptoms of mental health challenges.
- Common signs and symptoms of substance use challenges.
- How to interact with a person in crisis.
- How to connect a person with help.
- Expanded content on trauma, substance use and self-care.

Class is free of charge. Books and lunch also provided. Go here to register (right click on the underlined portion, and choose "Open Link":)

https://www.eleoonline.net/Pages/WebForms/Mobile/ShowFormMobile.aspx?id=5a3b435b-e740-4d40-aa68-cd7709dc59b6&linkto=1731

Courtesy of Sheila Clendenning bsheila.nc@gmail.com



Faithful Voter Reflection Guide

Click here to read:

https://ncchurches.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Printe-Friendly-Voter-Guide.pdf

This site also confirms your precinct, polling location, sample ballot (not yet posted, but will be soon, voter history).

https://www.ncsbe.gov/registering/checking-your-registration

Please remember to glance at your driver's license to make sure it hasn't expired!

Upcoming events further out

Rummage Sale Saturday, October 19th

Project Linus provides love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized or otherwise in need through gifts of new, handmade blankets, lovingly created by volunteer "Blanketeers". There will be a one day sale to enable the purchase of batting and other materials to make the blankets.



If you would like to help with this special event, we will be setting up on Friday, October 18th, from 8 am to 1 pm in the Fellowship Hall (drop off any items for the sale at this time). Donations of knickknacks, books, kitchen/dining wares, hand tools, jewelry, notions, decorations, toys, etc. gladly accepted. (Sorry, no clothing, machinery, or furniture). From more information, contact Romella Hart-O'Keefe at edrookeefe@gmail.com, (828)290-6197.





Calling All Writers

What do you write? Poetry, flash, non-fiction, short story, memoir, novel? Choose a sample and share your creation in an Open Mic format. No critiques. Just applause. A safe place for new writers. Listeners, we need you! Please time your reading up to four minutes. We can't wait to hear what you wrote. Join Darcy for this engaging experience.

Event Forum Day Sunday

Date October 6

Time 9:00-10:15am

Host Darcy

Our Wonderful Groups Facilitator Group Day Contact bmrathbun@bellsouth.net Barbara Rathbun Bible Study: 1 Verse at a Time 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 4:00 Karla Miller 1st Mon, 1:30 pm karla@fcchendersonville.org Carolina Village Mark Acker Choir Rehearsal Every Wed 3:15 pm Mark@fcchendersonville.org Bob McLendon Church Council 2nd Tues 3:30 captainbob.bm@gmail.com Krista Kaufman Circle of Friends - ongoing small Each circle schedules kristakaufman41@gmail.com groups Fe Avis Elder Resources / PEAK (Parents Saturday, beginning April fe@aseconddav.com of Estranged Adult Kids) 20th, 8:30 am - 9:45 a.m. Mark Fagerlin Ministry of Finance 2nd Tues of each month b4 mfagerlin@gmail.com Council 11:00 Karla Miller Sunday Forum Sunday, 9:00 am karla@fcchendersonville.org Every Tuesday, 4:00 pm Joyce Tierney & Meditation Group oycie47@gmail.com John Fuller fullerjohn@me.com Stephanie Lowder Service & Giving 2nd Thurs, 10 am slowder@rarebirdcreative.com Mindy Myers Ministry of Physical Resources 3rd Wed. 10:00 am mindy7myers@gmail.com Ministry of Worship (acolytes, Contact to volunteer Linda Laderach lladerac@mtholyoke.edu ushers, etc.) Barbara Rathbun 1st Tues, 10:00 am Prayer Shawls bmrathbun@bellsouth.net Patti Clav Racial Justice Task Force 3rd Tues, 12:00 am pclay51@gmail.com Sukey Pratt Fridays at 10:00 am Stitchaway sukeys@yahoo.com Patti Clav Virtual Circle of Friends Last Tues of the Month, 2:00 pclav51@gmail.com Please note: some groups may be on summer hiatus. Please check with the facilitator listed. Heather Fitzwilliam 09/01

Aug attendance

Aug	Total	Sermon
4	143	Heyward
11	121	Heyward
18	123	Acker
25	109	Saniuk

Alice Pfirmann 09/01 Cat Oaks 09/01 Karla Miller 09/03 Lorrie Wilson 09/04 09/04 Jairo Aguilar Ann Allen 09/04 **Ingrid Perry** 09/06 09/08 Kay Davis Yvonne Kvker 09/09 Maureen Mitchell 09/10 Nancy Pew 09/13 **Betsey Parker** 09/13 09/15 Nolleen Kelly Jacqueline Green 09/16 Joel Matthews 09/18 Cathy Sadler 09/19 Marjorie Richards 09/21 Alice Tenold 09/22 Powell Cotter 09/22 Mandy Henderly 09/23 Alfred Diaz 09/25 Susan Bonk 09/27

Quote for the Month / To Make You Smile

"When someone tells me 'no,' it doesn't mean I can't do it, it simply means I can't do it with them." — Karen E. Quinones Miller

"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot." — Michael Altshule



My wife accused me of being immature. I told her to get out of my fort.

iustsomething.co

A man goes to a psychiatrist and says: 'Doctor, I'm very worried. Every time I go to bed, I think there's somebody under it. I'm scared. I think I'm going crazy.'

The doctor says: 'Just put yourself in my hands for one year. Come talk to me three times a week and we should be able to get rid of those fears.'

The man says: 'How much do you charge?'

The doctor says: '\$200 per visit.'

The man says: 'I'll sleep on it.' Six months later, the doctor meets the man on the street. He asks: 'Why didn't you come to see me about those fears you were having?'

The man says: 'Well, \$200 a visit, three times a week for a year, is \$31,200. A bartender cured me for \$10. I was so happy to have saved all that money that I went and bought me a new pickup truck.'

The doctor says: 'Is that so? And how, may I ask, did a bartender cure you?'

First Congregational Church 1735 Fifth Avenue West Hendersonville, NC 28739 Phone: (828)692-8630

Email: office@fcchend

Staff:

 Pastor: Reverend Karla Miller (karla@fcchendersonville.org)

 Minister of Music / Pastoral Associate: Mark Acker (mark@fcchendersonville.org) I told my doctor that I broke my arm in two places.

He told me to stop going to those places.

- ◆ Administrator: Jo Freeman (office@fcchendersonville.org)
- Custodian: Dora Littleton