

The CONGREGATIONAL CHRONICLE

Volume 40, No. 10

United Church of Christ

October 2017



Moderator's View



Why Pledge?

Being relatively new to pledging may make me an odd choice to address the surprising value of making a pledge commitment, but some members of our Stewardship Committee think that what I've learned from pledging might inspire some of you who haven't pledged in the past to begin doing so. And perhaps my words might also cause some long-time pledgers to think about pledging in a new way.

While I'd been a life-long member of my family's church in Charleston and had always put money in the offering plate whenever I'd been there or at any other church around the country that I may have attended, however erratically, over the years, I can't remember ever making an annual pledge until shortly after I joined First Congregational a little over five years ago. And I can't even remember exactly why I decided to pledge that first year, except that I liked the church and wanted to help it prosper. Perhaps God made me do it.

Somewhere around that same time was my prep school class's 50th reunion, and as I wrote a check for a few thousand dollars for my contribution to that year's alumni reunion class gift, it occurred to me that adding to my alma mater's billion-dollar endowment wasn't quite as significant as making a similar contribution to the sustenance of this little church that was starting to become an important part of my life. So when I was asked, I pledged. I pledged what seemed a reasonable amount for me, on a weekly basis roughly equivalent to a nice dinner out on the town for my wife Maralee and me, although truthfully some of our dinners out cost considerably more than that first year's weekly pledge amount. So even though it felt like I was doing something worthwhile by contributing to the church, I also knew that the amount I was pledging would-

Continued on next page

n't really hurt much, that I wouldn't really miss the money, and that if necessary we could just go out to dinner a little less often to free up that amount. And it felt right, too, because I knew that among the good work that First Congregational does with its annual giving is to share at least 10% of it with non-profit agencies that feed the hungry and in other ways answer the desperate needs of "the least of these" in Henderson County and elsewhere in the world.

What I anticipated about pledging was that it would commit me to doing more than just digging into my pocket or wallet during the offering and pulling out a reasonably-sized bill to put in the plate. First of all, that reasonably-sized bill is not usually as big as a fifty, thus not nearly enough to buy a nice dinner out. And also, what about those Sundays when I'm not in church? Would I pull out two fifties the next time, to make up for last week? Not likely. So one of the things that pledging does is to keep me on track to reach the giving intention that I set for myself at the beginning of the year, so that I won't be disappointed with myself at year's end.

What I didn't anticipate about pledging was that it would make me feel more a part of the church, that my commitment to giving regularly would soon translate into a feeling of belonging, that I actually had a stake in the game and a role in the life of this church community and its involvement in the life and well-being of the larger community. Next thing I knew, I was in discussion groups and on one or two Ministries, and thus putting down church roots for practically the first time in this rolling stone's life. It was a slightly surprising but very nice feeling. I guess that's what Jesus was getting at when he said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." By investing my treasure here, my heart apparently followed! And my heart now wants this church to grow and succeed.

And as important as that is, perhaps even more important is something much harder to explain--- that by committing myself to more consciously support the church and its good work, and by every year increasing my commitment, I am getting back something even more valuable--- a growing sense of connectedness with others and of doing a little bit of God's work, of making progress towards living up to the standards that Jesus set for us in his teachings, including his exhortations that we treat others as we would like to be treated, and not worry too much about holding onto our treasure.

While I realize and readily confess that I am a long way from giving as much as I could, the more that I do give the better I feel, and the act of giving helps free me somewhat from materialistic concerns and helps express my sincere gratitude for all the good things in my life, including being a part of this community. So, while it's crucial, of course, to help keep First Congregational Church in the black, to pay the salaries, and keep the lights and the air-conditioning running and the buildings and grounds

Continued on page 4

Church Council Highlights September 13th



- Update on Emergency Plan-- ten members have volunteered to be trained and certified in CPR, Heart-saver First Aid, and AED use by BRCC as part of an Emergency Medical Plan for our church community. Council unanimously approved purchasing an AED and its accessories, and paying for the volunteers' training.
- Organ Renovation-- Mark Acker reported that half the organ pipes are out for repair, and when that's done, the other half will go. The entire project should be finished by March 1, after which there will a campaign celebration, including acknowledging the donations received (currently exceeding \$48,000 plus a Toyota van to be sold).
- Update on Acoustics—The Organ Task Force, Ministries of Physical Resources and of Finance will collaborate to determine how much carpet to remove and the modifications needed for the wood flooring, and will bring the proposal back to Council.
- Update on Labyrinth--Construction proceeding smoothly, thanks to Milton Stewart, Nick Pence, John Nobling, Ben Coonrod, and Roger Smith. Approximately 2,000 bricks installed the week of September 18 and thereafter. After the surface is completed, landscaping will follow, with help from the Ministry of Physical Resources. When the total project is complete, the church will hold a celebration of completion and dedication.
- Prayer Training Workshop--Romella reported that the 2-day retreat at the UCC Center in Blowing Rock, Sept 8-9, with 15 trainees, went very well. They will now meet on five subsequent Saturdays, from 9-12:30. The graduates will be commissioned on October 29 during worship service. After that there should be two chaplains on duty each week.
- Stewardship-- After the successful Organ Fund-raising Campaign, most of the Task Force is now leading the Stewardship Campaign. There will be Stewardship Minutes on Sundays, October 15, 22 and 29. Pledge cards to be mailed the week of October 30. November 5th will feature a Stewardship Sermon, and Dedication Sunday will be November 12th.
- Preliminary Budget for 2018-- Ron explained the proposed 2018 budget, approved by the Ministry of Finance and scheduled to be voted on at the Congregational Meeting on October 8. The major highlights about which members may have questions will be noted on a cover sheet. After discussion, Council unanimously approved the Preliminary Budget.

Continued next page

Moderator's View *Continued from page 2*

well-maintained and to continue the mission work of the church, it's even more crucial to give for the sake of giving, and for what it does for one's own soul. I've discovered, and am still learning, that giving purposefully is a commitment to living a more generous, more spiritual, less materialistic life, and thus a more meaningful and fulfilling one. And it feels surprisingly good. I hope you will think so too, especially those of you who may be new to pledging, as well as those of you who may be used to thinking of it as an obligation, rather than as a wonderful opportunity.

Roger Smith
Moderator

Church Council Highlights *Continued from page 3*

- New Member Growth—Council discussed the importance of getting to know new members and their names to facilitate their assimilation into the Church community. **All** (new and old) members should be encouraged to wear name tags at all times. David Kelly's "Two-Minute Rule" (seeing new people at coffee hour and speaking to them within two minutes) was effective and may be encouraged in future bulletins.



Mental Health Minute

When traumatic or stressful events occur, the natural rhythm of your nervous system can be thrown out of balance. The Community Resiliency Model (CRM) provides six techniques to distract you from negative sensations and feel like yourself again.

Technique #5: Help Now

These are specific actions that can reduce your focus on negative sensations. Examples include drinking a glass of water, naming six colors you can see, counting backwards from 20, noticing sounds, pushing your hands against a wall, and being aware of the temperature.

THE WALTER E. ASHLEY MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

presents

The Reverend Matthew Wright

October 20-22, 2017

**“Reclaiming Wisdom: How Christianity Is Evolving
in the Third Millennium.”**



A native of Murphy, NC and a UNC-Chapel Hill graduate, Matthew is now a student of Cynthia Bourgeault and a teacher for Northeast Wisdom. As priest-in-charge at St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church in Woodstock, NY he’s described as a gifted speaker and writer, expressing himself in both penetrating poetic language and extremely clear rational thought. His youth (31) adds a freshness of perspective; he is inspirational and dynamic. “I want to reclaim Christianity as a path of transformation and awakening,” says Wright. “So often it’s about believing — but at its heart, Christianity is a path.” He has explored a number of paths, beginning with his Pentecostal roots, then from Zen to Sufism, bringing a wide range of insights to his approach to inter-spiritual practice.

THE WEEKEND SCHEDULE

- ◆ **Friday, October 20**
**7 PM: *How We Lost Our Wisdom: Recovering the Christian
Contemplative Path and Reclaiming Jesus as Wisdom Teacher***
- ◆ **Saturday, October 21**
**10 AM: *The Gospels of Thomas and Mary: Restoring
Wisdom Texts and Teaching***
12 noon: Lunch
**1 PM: *Christianity in a Second Axial Age: Teilhard de Chardin and
Raimon Panikkar as Prophets of an Evolving Path***
- ◆ **Sunday, October 22**
9 AM: Adult Forum
10:30 AM: Worship Service, Rev. Matthew Wright - preacher

Single lecture: \$25; Weekend pass: \$75 includes 3 lectures and Saturday lunch.

Purchase tickets online at www.fcchendersonville.org or complete the reservation form included in the brochure. Pick one up at the church.

Focus on Forum

October 2017



October 1 – THAT’S LIFE! – ECCLESIASTES AND JESUS – TWO SAGES - Earle Rabb
This will conclude a two-part series on the similarities and differences of Ecclesiastes, an Old Testament wisdom teacher and Jesus, a New Testament wisdom teacher. Part One was given last Sunday, September 24.

Dr. Earle Rabb is a retired Methodist minister. An experienced leader of workshops and seminars, he is also the author of The Case of the Missing Person: How Discovering Jesus of Nazareth Can Transform Individuals and Communities. An active member of the Jesus Seminar, Earle has spoken to our Forum several times. He and his wife, Ann, reside in Brevard where they are members of the Transylvania Unitarian Universalist congregation.

October 8 – WRITERS’ FORUM

Four times a year we conduct the FCUCC Writers’ Forum to salute the art of writing and to encourage our church’s many writers. If you love to write, church member or not, and would like to read from your work (any genre), you are asked to register in advance with our Writers’ Workshop Coordinator, Rand Bishop. (697-0090 or randsemail@yahoo.com)

October 15 – PREPARATION FOR LECTURE SERIES

- Larry Anderson

In preparation for next weekend’s Distinguished Lecturer, Rev. Matthew Wright, our own Larry Anderson will lead us in a discussion on what we may expect next Sunday.

A former minister and retired psychologist, Larry Anderson is a frequent Forum presenter.

October 22 – DISTINGUISHED LECTURER

- Rev. Matthew Wright

FOR THIS SUNDAY ONLY, THE FORUM WILL BE HELD IN THE SANCTUARY. The theme for all the weekend lectures (one on Friday evening, two on Saturday, two on Sunday) is “Reclaiming Wisdom: How Christianity is Evolving in the Third Millennium”. Rev. Wright will also preach the sermon during the Sunday service which begins at 10:30. There is no charge for the Sunday talks.

Reverend Matthew Wright, this year’s Walter E. Ashley Memorial Lecturer, is an

Continued next page



Prayer Shawl Ministry

See you on the first
Tuesday in October at
10:00 am in the Parlor.

Fall Congregational Meeting October 8th

On Sunday, Oct. 8th we will hold our Fall Congregational Meeting in the Sanctuary immediately following the worship service. The agenda will include discussion and passage of our proposed 2018 Church Budget. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

FCUCC Book Group Tuesday, October 10, 2pm

The FCUCC Book Group will meet in the church library to discuss the book *Rosemary, The Hidden Kennedy Daughter*. The author, Kate Clifford Larson, delivers an engrossing portrait of Rose and Joe Kennedy's tragic misunderstanding of their oldest daughter's capabilities and of how her fate changed the Kennedy family forever. A fascinating glimpse at a family whose public story was carefully cultivated and managed. This book will serve not only Kennedy fans but also those curious about the history of disabilities in the U.S. Discussion will be led by Maralee McMillan. Everyone is invited. For more information about the book group, contact Joanne Kimmell at 891-9816.



THE WRITERS' ROUNDTABLE

The Writers' Roundtable will meet on Thursday, Oct. 26 at 11:30 AM, in the Church Parlor. All writers (poetry, fiction, drama, non-fiction) are welcome. Listeners are also welcome. Writers are encouraged to bring multiple copies of their writing to distribute to help facilitate discussion. Queries? Contact Rand Bishop. We would love to see you on the 26th!



Fellowship Supper
Tuesday, October 17
Social time at 5:30
Dinner at 6:00



Join us for a potluck supper followed by a fun program planned by Martha Hogenboom. Entertainment will be provided by the "Heck, We'll Give It a Try, You'll Love It" Players. Martha has recruited assorted "hams" to entertain and delight you. Music? How about solos from "Carousel" and "Fiddler on the Roof" and a duet from "South Pacific"? Poetry? Luther Dowdy and Richard Brantley will provide them. Funny skits? Six of our actors and actresses will make you chuckle. Come for a good meal and a good time! The social hour starts at 5:30 and the potluck supper at 6:00. Bring your own plate, utensils, and a cup for coffee or tea. Don't forget to bring a non-perishable food item to donate to the Interfaith Assistance Ministry.



SING WITH THE CHOIR FOR CHRISTMAS...

Even if you can't sing with us all year, we would love to have you join us to sing for Advent and Christmas. Our choir is an amazing community, and you will love being a part of our choir family. We will begin rehearsing Christmas music in October, and we will be in full Christmas rehearsal mode beginning November 1.

Please contact Mark Acker (615-430-3506 or markackerhendersonville@gmail.com) for more information.

Sixth Annual
Holiday Cookie Sale

Saturday, December 2, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

The 6th annual holiday sale date is fast approaching. **Mark your calendar for this special day.** Homemade holiday cookies and gift baskets will be available. In the past, church members baked about a zillion cookies and hopefully bakers are getting ready to outshine themselves this year. Batches of traditional and delicious holiday cookies will be on hand, displayed in a cookie labyrinth of tables in the Fellowship Hall. People will be invited to take a recyclable container and fill it with cookies for a small charge. Gift baskets will be displayed. Raffle tickets will be sold, and lucky ticket holders will win baskets.



The Planning Committee is working diligently to make this event one that will be enjoyed by all. Advertisements in various publications will announce the sale to the community with the hopes that many will attend to not only buy cookies but also to see our wonderful church.

The money raised at this sale will go to the “Needs of the Church” fund. This fund has been used to buy the refrigerator, a new projector and Blue Ray disk player for the Fellowship Hall, two utility carts, table cloths, shelving for the kitchen and storerooms, picnic table for the Sunday School children, and materials for a re-do of the kitchen cabinets. Money has also been given to support the church garden and to support the music program. Currently the money that is in the fund is being used to buy 40 new chairs for the choir room and two new coffee urns for the kitchen.

So, if you are willing to make one, two, or more batches of holiday cookies, **YOU ARE NEEDED** to make this year’s sale spectacular! Contact Claudia Schopper, chairperson, at 697-1569 or rcschopper85@gmail.com with questions.

Come to the Well

On Sunday, October 29 we will have the commissioning of the first class of Prayer Chaplains. After a 30-hour training program, the candidates will decide whether or not to make a year's commitment to the Prayer Chaplain Program.



The role of the Prayer Chaplain is to:

1. Set intentions for the greater good of all involved.
2. Hold sacred space, i.e. an awareness of the presence and love of God – right here, right now.
3. Compassionately listen to the prayee's concerns.
4. Pray with the prayee.
5. Hold everything in strict confidence. (Confidentiality is of primary importance for Prayer Chaplains.)

What does a Prayer Chaplain (PC) do? The PC program may develop further, but initially, beginning on Sunday, November 5, several chaplains will be available for one-to-one prayer in the Sanctuary following each Sunday's worship service.

What does this mean? Two PCs, wearing distinctive stoles, will sit in two designated areas (one in the front choir area and one in the back of the church). Immediately after the service the PC may be approached by any person who desires to be joined in prayer for his/her intention. The one desiring prayer ("the prayee") and the PC will sit together and pray – with words or silently - for a few minutes.

Some people, although they may be a little embarrassed at first and leery about publicly praying, find great solace in 'paired prayer' when they try it.

What will you pray about? It could be a problem, a death, a sickness, a fear or anxiety ... or a thanksgiving, a gratitude, a rampage of appreciation, a cascade of praise ... help with future hopes and objectives, help in forgiving someone, peace of mind, ETC.

Many churches have Prayer Chaplains; FCUCC is about to join them. You are invited to have an open mind about one-to-one prayer, especially if it's a new concept to you. There is, of course, no pressure to use this new service at our church. On the other hand, **IF YOU TRY IT, YOU MAY LIKE IT!**

Let Your Views Be Known

The Compassionate Action Group has been having success contacting our elected officials to share viewpoints on legislation. A recent case was the effort to repeal and replace the ACA, when emails and phone calls were used. We thought it might be helpful to share with the congregation what we have learned about how best to “get through to” our legislators.

A February article in *USA Today* was entitled “Survey: Congress does care what voters have to say.” The Congressional Management Foundation reported on a series of surveys of congressional staff, who confirmed that “constituents are the most important factor especially when it comes to undecided lawmakers.” Below are the percentage of staff who believe the method has influence:

94% for in-person interviews

92% for individualized email messages (not canned language)

88% for individualized letters

87% for local editorials, or comments during a telephone town hall

84% phone calls

While personal interviews are difficult to obtain and town halls are rare, individualized emails, letters and phone calls are very easy. The survey also found that impersonal emails – mass email campaigns that you “click here to send” were far less effective than any other type of outreach.

In order to make it easy for you to contact your congressman, here is the key information:

Rep. Mark Meadows – 1024 Longworth HOB, Washington, DC 20515

DC phone: [202-225-6401](tel:202-225-6401); website/email portal: meadows.house.gov

Sen. Richard Burr – 217 Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510

DC phone: [202-224-3154](tel:202-224-3154); website/email portal: burr.senate.gov

Sen. Tom Tillis – 185 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510

DC phone: [202-224-6342](tel:202-224-6342); website/email portal: tillis.senate.gov

Regardless of your viewpoints on any given issue, our elected officials do care about what we think. Using a quick personal email or phone call is a great way to let your views be known.

Gary Cyphers, co-chair of Compassionate Action Group



A NOTE FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE...

Online giving: We are now able to receive your donations on our website! Just go to fchendersonville.org and click on the “Give” option on the menu and follow the instructions given. Using your personal credit or debit card or with PayPal, you can direct where you would like your gift to go (*regular pledge, special offering, Memorial Flowers, etc.*). Be sure to enter the information in the box that says, “This donation is for...” If you would like assistance, please contact Linda in the church office or Ron Miller. *Note: Ashley Lectures reservations should continue to be made on the “Ashley Lecture” page of the website.*

Online church directory: Look for the blue “Members” button located on the bottom right-hand corner of each page on the website. Use the common password for our church: **Luke1**. Once you have entered the password you will see the two options available: “Online Directory” and “Connections List”. If you choose the directory, you will be prompted to enter the password for it: **fcucc2016**, which then allows you to open the online directory containing the latest contact information for church members and friends, including photos of most. This information is kept up-to-date.

Facebook page: You do not have to be a member of Facebook to see what is posted there. At the bottom of each website page is the Facebook icon  Click on it and it will take you directly to First Congregational’s page. Thanks to Stephanie Lowder, John Parris, and Sammie Whitney, you will be able to stay up-to-date with photos and postings about church events and activities.

A great deal of effort goes into these online resources that put our church on the “map.” Please show your support by visiting the website and “friending” the Facebook page and when there, be sure to “Comment”, “Like”, and “Share” what you see and read!

Need help? Contact either Linda Welch in the church office or Nancy Keswani.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays - October 2017

- 1: Philip Wiehe
- 1: Virginia Gambill
- 2: Greg McKinley
- 2: Susan Palmer
- 6: Stephanie Lowder
- 7: Kirsten Cone
- 13: Claudia Schopper
- 13: Mark Raymond
- 16: Diana Brantley
- 16: Chris Cone
- 17: Ed Argue
- 21: Romella Hart-O'Keefe
- 21: Pamela Federlein
- 25: Richard Weidler
- 27: Ellen Shaw
- 29: Dottie Koopman
- 31: Margie Pence

Anniversaries - October 2017

- 7: Ed & Pat Argue
- 11: Mary Burson & Carole Kaiser
- 21: Steve & Martha Hogenboom



ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER

AT FCUCC

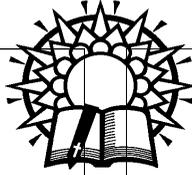
2:00 PM on NOVEMBER 23, 2017

Fellowship Hall

This will be a pot-luck with traditional
Thanksgiving foods

Sign-up sheets at the reception desk





October Lectionary

**17th Sunday after Pentecost
World Communion Sunday
October 1**

Ex 17:1-7 • Ps 78:1-4, 12-16 OR
Ezek 18:1-4, 25-32 • Ps 25:1-9
Phil 2:1-13
Matt 21:23-32

God's Sustaining Presence

**18th Sunday after Pentecost
October 8**

Ex 20:1-4, 7-9 • Ps 19 OR
Isa 5:1-7 • Ps 80:7-15
Phil 3:4b-14
Matt 21:33-46

Wisdom for the Way

**19th Sunday after Pentecost
October 15**

Ex 32:1-14 • Ps 106:1-6, 19-23 OR
Isa 25:1-9 • Ps 23
Phil 4:1-9
Matt 22:1-14

Praiseworthy Living

**20th Sunday after Pentecost
October 22**

Ex33:12-23 • Ps 99 OR
Isa 45:1-7 • Ps 96:1-9, (10-13)
I Thess 1:1-10
Matt 22:15-22

Living Messages

Continued next column

**21st Sunday of Pentecost
Reformation Sunday
October 29**

Deut 34:1-12 • Ps 90:1-6, 13-17 OR
Lev 19:1-2, 15-18 • Ps 1
I Thess 2:1-8
Matt 22:34-46

The Compassionate Life

ATTENDANCE

September 3: 123
September 10: 154
September 17: 128
September 24: 146
Average Weekly: 138

The Congregational Chronicle
is published monthly,
except for December/January issue,
by First Congregational UCC
1735 Fifth Ave. West
Hendersonville NC 28739-4013
Phone: 828.692.8630

E-mail: fccucc2@bellsouth.net

Website: www.fcchendersonville.org

Rev. Dr. E. Richard Weidler, Pastor
Rev. David G. Kelly, Jr., Pastor Emeritus
Mark Acker, Minister of Music
Linda Welch, Administrator
Charles & Dora Littleton, Custodians

***Next Chronicle deadline is
October 20!***

First Congregational UCC
1735 Fifth Avenue West
Hendersonville NC 28739-4013



An Open and Affirming Congregation



Church Office Hours
Closed on Monday
Tues thru Fri 9-3:30