

# The CONGREGATIONAL CHRONICLE

Volume 43, No. 2

United Church of Christ

March 2019

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Beloved,

It is beyond me that we have shared in life together for just over a month. I want to say thank you, again, for the beautiful welcome you have showered upon me and Liz, and for the many ways in which you have invited us into the community of First Congregational. I also want to thank the Search Team and Transitional Team for their dedication, careful attention and integrity as we have transitioned to this new place in this story of FCCH. I am grateful to be on the journey with this amazing community of faith and wonder.

As I write I am mindful that we are entering into the liturgical season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday on March 6th, where we will have a contemplative service of Imposition of Ashes. Our theme for Lent is “The Journey is Our Home”, and Mark Acker and I are exploring together how that theme will be woven into our Sunday worship in the Sundays of Lent. Just think of all the ways we journey~~we wander, we sojourn, we migrate, we meander and roam and ramble. How will you journey this Lent?

Ash Wednesday is a powerful way to begin the Lenten Journey. I love being reminded that we are earth creatures, made from the very ground of our earth home, and that we return to it, belonging to the earth and our Creator. And that earth is stardust! We are stardust! Quantum theory reminds us of this. Remember back in 1980 when Carl Sagan pronounced, “We are a way for the universe to know itself. Some part of our being knows this is where we came from. We long to return. And we can, because the cosmos is also within us. We're made of star stuff.”

I look forward to our Lenten Pilgrimage together.

Peace and Blessings,

Karla

## **A NEW BEGINNING Continues ...**

In the February Chronicle, Linda Simpson wrote about the arrival of Karla Miller as our new pastor and what that might mean for First Congregational in the future. This month, I would like to expand on those thoughts as your new Moderator for 2019. There are a couple of goals that I would like to propose for us this year, as well as a communication request. But first, a quick history lesson. The last 12 to 18 months have been very eventful for our church. Some of these events were:

- ◆ Richard announcing his resignation effective in 6 months
- ◆ Appointing the Transition Leadership Team
- ◆ Appointing the Search Committee
- ◆ Completing the Congregational Survey
- ◆ Celebrating Richard's ministry with us
- ◆ Hiring Pastor Mike as Interim Pastor
- ◆ The retirement of Linda as Administrator, and the hiring of Sheryl as her replacement
- ◆ Completing the Local Church Profile
- ◆ Revising the church Bylaws
- ◆ Replacing the Parish Advisory Council with the Human Relations Ministry
- ◆ Calling Karla as our new Pastor
- ◆ Celebrating Pastor Mike's ministry with us

I have probably forgotten some events, but as you can see – it has been a very busy time for our church. And an exciting one, as we have continued to grow in both number and enthusiasm. Our average attendance increased from 131 in 2017 to 145 in 2018 – an increase of over 10% during a time of transition! So how do we connect with all our new members and visitors? Read on ...

In looking forward in 2019, I would first like to thank all of you for the confidence and trust you have placed in me as your Moderator. This year will probably continue to be a time of transition as we grow both in number and in love and support for each other. My proposed 2019 goals are as follows:

**My first goal is that we would get to know Karla and allow Karla to get to know us.** This will be important in building a base for our future work. It is also intended to help develop our Spiritual connections with Karla and with each other. And here I would recommend that everyone sign up for one of the small gatherings where you can meet Karla in a small and contemplative group. I have been privileged to act as facilitator for a number of these groups, and they have been truly excellent forums for the sharing of hopes and dreams as well as where we are on our spiritual journeys. The Startup Team will continue to add more dates for these gatherings as long as there are members and friends who wish to attend.

**My second goal is to work toward getting more people involved in the many activities of our church,** that is - drawing the circle wider and wider. This is important both for helping members connect with their church in a positive way and for not reusing the same few people over and over. New people (to any activity) bring new ideas and enthusiasm, and I believe we should value that. So please send me your ideas for improving our communication with members and friends – to help everyone learn what all these ministries, groups, and sub-groups do and where they best fit into the work of the church. I have some ideas already, but more would be welcome.

In future Moderator columns, different Ministries and larger groups that serve under the Ministries will be featured each month. I hope this will provide everyone with more information about what all these programs are doing and will also inspire those reading to check out any that they think might be of interest to you. All these groups and Ministries are open to any member or friend to visit and to become involved – no invitation required.

**And last, a communication request:**

I would like to encourage everyone to send me your thoughts on these goals and ideas at any time, as well as any other ideas or suggestions about things you think our church should be doing (or should not be doing). My e-mail address is [pntaylor1234@yahoo.com](mailto:pntaylor1234@yahoo.com). Or you can drop a note in the Moderator's mailbox, found on the right wall as you approach Fellowship Hall from the reception desk. Or stop me at Coffee Hour, in the hallway, before or after worship, or anywhere you find me – to tell me about what you would like First Congregational to do or consider. I do truly welcome your comments.

Thanks for reading,

Phil Taylor, Moderator

**Know a DREAM candidate?**

For seven years **DREAM Scholarships** (\$2500/year) have made the dream of higher education a reality for deserving undocumented students and workers in Henderson County. Started by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in 2012 after the DREAM Act of 2010 failed and quickly joined by St. James, Immaculate Conception, First Congregational and Holy Family, these life-changing awards totaling over \$90,000 so far, have been given to 23 scholars, including this year's four recipients. This year's deadline is **Friday, March 29 at 5 pm**. Annual fundraising breakfast on Saturday, **April 27 from 9-11**. Details to follow. Any questions on any of these items, contact Pat, [pkargue@gmail.com](mailto:pkargue@gmail.com) or Ed Argue, [edargue@aol.com](mailto:edargue@aol.com), 891-4521.

## Church Council Highlights

### February 2019



The Church Council conducted its first meeting with the new Council members and Karla on Wednesday, 13 February. Since there were so many new people, all members introduced themselves and identified their role within the church leadership.

Karla expressed her deep appreciation for the very warm welcome First Congregational has given her. She is finding great value in the small group meetings she's been in so far.

The Council conducted the following major pieces of business.

1. Approved Pisgah Legal Services request to use the Fellowship Hall for a non-profit luncheon on 27 March. Sponsored by the Compassionate Action Group.
2. Fe Anam Avis spoke about his initiative concerning Parents Estranged from Adult Kids (PEAK). He has written a book and is developing an eight-week, 12-step-like program. Council approved supporting his efforts by providing a meeting place when the program starts.
3. Treasurer's Report. Early in the year, all things are normal.
4. The roof repair has not started yet because of continuing bad weather.
5. Karla provided information about Hendersonville's first Pride Celebration, coming in June. Since the organizers are associated with the Democratic Party, FCUCC cannot formally endorse it, given its strict non-political policy.
6. **Retreats.**
  - a. The Council will have a retreat this summer for the purpose of relationship building, planning, and increasing cooperation among the Ministries.
  - b. There will be an all-church retreat in the fall. Karla, Mark Acker, and the facilitators of the Ministries of Worship and Members will lead the planning.
7. The following ministries made reports.
  - a. **Members and Friends.** John Bodamer reported there are now 11 kids in the Sunday School.

b. **Physical Resources.** Mindy Myers reported that the roof repair has been delayed, Fellowship Hall carpets have been cleaned, the brass edgings on the chancel steps are installed, and she is undertaking a thorough review of storage space and what overall repairs are needed. The parking lot is a consideration, but will be expensive.

c. **Worship.** Dawn reported she has ordered Lenten devotionals. An artificial Christmas/Crismon tree was ordered, has been received, and will be used next year. In the Easter season, there will be services for Ash Wednesday, Tennebrae (Maundy Thursday), and Easter. Also, there will be a Seder meal event.

d. **Human Relations Ministry.** Nolleen Kelly reported that this new group has met and she will be the Chair.

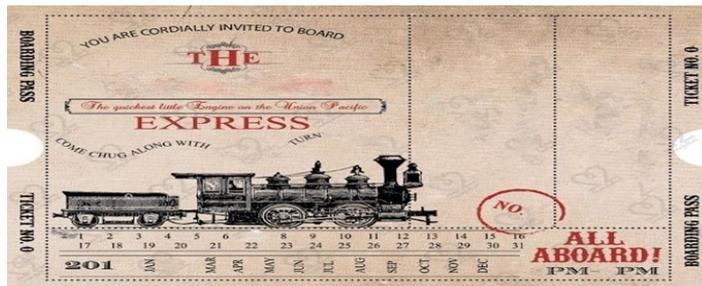
Written By: Dawn Kucera, Acting Clerk

## Save the Date

Our 90's (plus) Luncheon

April 24

Stay tuned for details in the coming weeks!



Hosted by your  
'Connections Ministry'

# Focus on Forum

March 2019



## **March 3-** Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body-Part 2

Ralph Miller

In this presentation, we will discuss some strategies to age well in the areas of physical health and exercise, diet and nutrition, cognitive activity, and social engagement. Also, you will have the opportunity to start to make your own personal plan for healthy aging.

Ralph Miller is a believer in life-long learning. He has completed graduate work in business, philosophy and education. He has worked in technical industries at both the corporate level and as an entrepreneur.

Ralph had earlier careers in the telephone industry and owned a catering business. He also founded a non-profit organization that focused on integrative health education to the community.

Currently, he is the Director of Marketing at Sunny Creek Farm, a hydroponic sprout and specialty produce farm in Tryon, North Carolina. Sunny Creek firmly believes in its motto: “Eat Well to Feel Well”, and wants to help ensure that people are fully informed about the health benefits of food. Remembering the time-honored saying of Hippocrates, “Let thy medicines be thy foods, and thy foods be thy medicine”, Sunny Creek Farm participates in various community activities to support this holistic health philosophy.

## **March 10-** “Hollywood Lights: Witness”

Kelly McGillis

A member of our choir, Kelly had a leading role in the well-known 1985 movie “Witness.” She will cover some highlights of the movie craft in the presentation. Kelly has had a full acting career appearing in many films including “Top Gun” and “The Accused.” **Please note:** Saturday, March 9, 2 PM: Special showing of the film, “Witness” in the Fellowship Hall in preparation for the Forum on March 10 with Kelly McGillis. You won’t want to miss it and the Forum will be more meaningful for you. Admission is free.

## **March 17-** The Epicurean Jesus: Part I

Earle Rabb

We will explore the relationship of Jesus and the Greek philosopher, Epicurus, and what that means for Christianity in today’s world.

Dr. Earle Rabb is a retired United Methodist minister. He is an Associate Member of the Jesus Seminar, and author of the book, *The Case of the Missing Person: How Finding Jesus of Nazareth Can Transform Communities and Individuals Today.*

**March 24-**“The Epicurean Jesus: Part 2

Earle Rabb

We will continue to explore the relationship of Jesus and the Greek philosopher, Epicurus, and what that means for Christianity in today’s world.

**March 31-**Global Warming: Part IV

Jim Nourse

In conversations about social and environmental change, we frequently hear of the need for raising consciousness. This is in keeping with Einstein’s observation that no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it. This discussion will examine consciousness as a universal factor, its non-local nature, and how it may be navigated and increased to higher levels so that our actions in the world are maximally harmonious and effective. This discussion is the fourth in a series of FCUCC Adult Forums inspired by Matthew Fox’s recent book, *The Order of the Sacred Earth*.

Dr. Jim Nourse is a spiritually-oriented psychologist and acupuncturist with a long standing interest in Eastern and ancient approaches to understanding and addressing human conditions. He has been in practice 44 years and sees clients in Hendersonville and Brevard. He has written two books-*Simple Spirituality: Finding Your Own Way* and *Aloha Mind: Healing Self, Healing the World with Ho’oponopono*.

**April 4-** Writers Forum

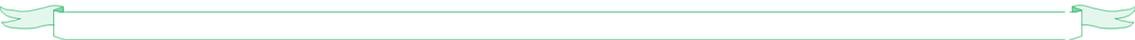
Rand Bishop

Four times a year the Writers Roundtable, composed of church members and community folks who meet monthly, will offer their work at the Adult Forum. Writers-whether church members or not-are invited to attend and read their work (any genre). Listeners are of course very welcome. To sign up to read or if you have questions, contact Rand Bishop [randsemail@yahoo.com](mailto:randsemail@yahoo.com) or 828-697-0090.



### **Interested in knowing more about FCUCC?**

For anyone considering becoming a member or getting more involved in our church, there will be an inquirers’ class on Sunday, March 17th immediately following worship service. New member Sunday will be celebrated during worship on March 31st.



## Come To The Well

Of the four types of prayer Ed and Romella teach in chaplain training, my favorite is conversational prayer. I've read many times in many different sources that God wants a relationship with me. That God loves me and wants me to love God back. That God is always there to listen to and commune with me. As the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 7, 7- 8 says

***Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened.***



Step 11 of the 12-Step program I'm in calls for improving our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation. When I get on my knees each morning and evening, I carry on a verbal conversation with God. We talk about the challenges I'm facing, and I ask for God's help. It amazes me (though it shouldn't) that God always has answers to my questions and direction for what I do next. The thoughts that enter my mind are not mine; they are put there by God. This guidance takes me beyond my self-centered ego into a realm of the Spirit driven by the greater good. Each conversation is a revelation, leaving me joyous and inspired. What's more, this "conscious contact" is available to me at any time. All I need do is think of God and our relationship to feel nourished and refreshed, and to bring a smile to my lips. I check in to say "hi" several times a day. Each time I do, it feels wonderful. And it's so comforting to know that I'm never alone.

All I have to do is reach out, and God is always there.

Nancy Keswani  
Prayer Chaplain

You are also invited to call a prayer chaplain for one-on-one prayer via the telephone.

Ben Coonrod-803-378-8760  
Joanna Coonrod-828-284-0695  
Romella Hart-O'Keefe-828-890-4889  
Susan Huff-828-217-5944  
Nancy Keswani-617-833-2819

Judith Nourse-828-606-2558  
Ed O'Keefe-828-890-4889  
Joady Perrett-828-243-3337  
Diane Rhoades-828-696-9969  
Sammye Whitney-570-664-1141

## Transition Leadership Team Final Report

With the arrival of our new settled pastor, Karla Jean Miller, the Transition Leadership Team (TLT) has accomplished all that it was tasked to do and has officially disbanded. We've written a final report for the Archives and to be used for the future. Here is a brief summary of that report.

The TLT was convened to oversee the various elements of the transition once Richard Weidler announced his impending retirement. Following the congregation-wide survey conducted by Fe Avis and Holy Cow!, Fe developed a detailed description of our church characteristics, and a list of recommended actions the church should take to successfully navigate the transition period.

Many of these actions fell to the TLT. Among our major accomplishments were: Arranging the farewell dinner for Richard; guiding a series of Days of Prayer to strengthen us spiritually as we began the process; recruiting and hiring Pastor Mike Cleland as our interim pastor; performing an exhaustive review and revision of the Bylaws – which were approved by the congregation at the 2019 annual meeting; doing a preliminary review of the church's Personnel Policy document; and with the Search Team, conceiving of, and writing a Charter for a Human Relations Ministry, which provides a structure for staff evaluations and care and support for the staff and lay leadership. The HRM is staffed and has begun its work.

We'd like to thank the many members of the congregation for stepping up to help with all these activities when we asked, and we greatly appreciate all the support we received throughout this vigorous, challenging, and rewarding process.

Co-chairs: Mark Fagerlin and Ed Argue

Members: Mark Acker, Ann Allen, Nancy Irving, Dawn Kucera, Judith Nourse, Joady Perrett, Roger Smith (in memoriam)



**The FCUCC Bookclub** will meet at 2:00 on Tuesday, March 12 in the church library. We will be discussing “SingUnburied Sing by Jesmyn Ward. Winner of the National Book Award in 2017 and N.Y. Times Top 10 Best Books, the book gives us a journey thru Mississippi -past and present. The author grapples with the ugly truths of the American Story and the power and limitations of the bonds of family. The discussion of this important book will be led by Bob Miles. All are invited.

## Fellowship Supper Tuesday, March 19



### “Draw the Circle Wide”

Our circle has grown wider with the arrival of our new settled pastor and the addition of new members and friends to our congregation. The March Fellowship Supper is dedicated to this widening circle with an opportunity to fellowship with our new pastor, Karla Jean Miller and our expanding family. Since March is “Pi Month” and Pi is the symbol used in mathematics to represent the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter (approximately 3.14159), this year’s actual “Pi Day” is March 14 (3/14/2019) and we will celebrate “circle/pi day” at Fellowship Supper on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

In keeping with our pi/pie/circle theme, we would suggest for fun that you consider bringing food that start with “pi” i.e., pineapple, pickles, pizza, shepherd’s pie, pot pie, a dessert pie or any food placed in a pie shaped serving dish for celebrating Pi Day. Feel free to be creative!

We hope everyone will consider joining this circle and enjoy the fun, fellowship and program. Please remember to wear your name tag and bring your own dinner plate, utensils and tea/coffee mug.

Social time begins at 5:30. Dinner will start at 6:00 and the program will begin at 6:45. Sign-up sheets for dinner and your choice of food to bring will be available at the reception desk beginning March 3.

**Ash Wednesday** - We will have an Ash Wednesday service on March 6th at 6:30 pm. There will be distribution of ashes for those wanting to participate.

## Sunday School Monthly Report, January, 2019

### *January Theme: Gratitude for Special People*

In January we celebrated special people in our lives; Martin Luther King, Jr. and Karla Miller, our new Pastor.

To celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, we learned about his work to expand social justice, and we baked cookies to distribute to local firemen.

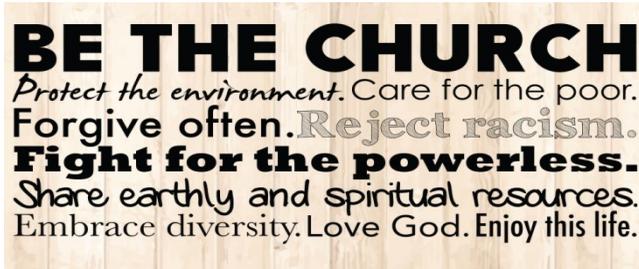
To celebrate the coming of our new pastor, Karla Miller, we decorated a Welcome Poster, including pictures and drawings from each child, and we talked about how to make her feel more welcome.

Three new children have enrolled in our Sunday School Class in January. We now use the Fellowship Hall for some of our activities since we have outgrown the classrooms.

Ginger Fisher, Sunday School Teacher  
Dede Walton, Nursery Teacher

### **Friday Morning Video Series-Winter Term**

We will continue our series of video courses that began in February. This series features the familiar (to us) Amy-Jill Levine of Vanderbilt University. She will be lecturing on "Great Figures of the Old Testament". Those of you who attended "Great Figures of the New Testament" know that she researches her subjects thoroughly and supplies some new and intriguing insights. These lectures will begin at 10 am in Fellowship Hall and conclude by noon. The eight sessions will be held weekly (weather permitting) concluding on March 29. All are welcome and encouraged to bring a few goodies for the snack table. Coffee and tea will be provided.



**Do you volunteer in our community?** The Missions & Service group is revising our 2017 directory of volunteer opportunities. We know that FCUCC members are generous, energetic and involved with MANY worthy local causes. Can you tell us about the project(s) and activities close to your heart so that we can encourage other congregants to join you? Please email pertinent details (group's website, phone number, address, volunteer contact person's name, description of how you are personally involved, etc.) to Sheila Clendenning ([bsheila.nc@gmail.com](mailto:bsheila.nc@gmail.com)) by March 12.

At our February meeting we welcomed visitor Alan Ramirez, representing S.O.N.G., (Southerners On New Ground, "... a beloved community of LGBTQ people in the South who are ready and willing to do our part to challenge oppression in order to bring about liberation for ALL people". Website is: ([southernersonnewground.org](http://southernersonnewground.org)). Alan alerted us to recent training and awareness sessions in response to ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) activity in Western North Carolina. S.O.N.G. works closely with Compañeros Inmigrantes de las Montañas, an Asheville-based immigrants' rights organization. ([cimawnc.org](http://cimawnc.org))

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, March 14, 10 a.m. Please plan to attend to hear presentations about local "Adopt A Stream" project, International Rescue Committee, Doctors Without Borders, Pisgah Legal Services, Blue Ridge Literacy Council, and Boys and Girls Club Scholarship.

## PRAYER LIST

Jo Ann Ashley  
Lynne Cigal (friend of the Tierney's)  
David Conner (friend of Anne Cain)  
Barbara Dexter (mother of Angie Yates)  
Al & Joan Diaz  
Sue Easton  
Mildred Gardner  
Donna Gross  
Sherry Haagenon  
Sharon Johnson  
Mike Kirkman (friend of Annie Fritschner)  
Marty Kirkner ( friend of Joan Jaeger)  
Trisha LaGrange  
Jeannie Myers (friend of Diaz's)  
Joady Perrett  
Jim Rash  
John Sams  
Victoria Tatum  
Eve Teerlinck  
Bud Werdelin (friend of Kevin & Joyce Tierney)  
Paul & Sandy Westin



***Thank you for letting us know of people who need to be added to our prayer list as well as those that are ready to be taken off.***

## March Birthdays

- 1: Shirley Retzsch
- 3: David Vandre
- 4: Roy Harris
- 8: Jean Raymond
- 9: Linda Welch
- 9: Judy Cyphers
- 17: Bob Miles
- 22: Jo Ann Ashley
- 24: Jim Tatum
- 25: Melissa Melum
- 26: Linda Simpson
- 26: Ray Stone
- 26: Jim Rash
- 27: Ron Miller
- 28: Barbara Worcester
- 28: Roger Haagenson
- 29: Dawn Kucera

## March Anniversaries

- 06: Chris & Kirsten Cone
- 07: Richard & Dona Tyler
- 08: Ron & Claudia Schopper
- 09: Jim & Judith Nourse
- 29: Larry & Alyce Poe

## March Lectionary

### Last Sunday after Epiphany

#### March 3

Ex 34:29-35

Ps 99

2 Cor 3:12-4:2

Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)

#### *Astounding Glory*

### First Sunday of Lent

#### March 10

Deut 26:1-11

Ps 91:1-2, 9-16

Rom 10:8b-13

Luke 4:1-13

#### *Wilderness Companions*

### Second Sunday of Lent

#### March 17

Gen 15:1-12, 17-18

Ps 27

Phil 3:17-4:1

Luke 13:31-35 or Luke 9:28-36, (37-42a)

#### *Strong and Tender*

### Third Sunday of Lent

#### March 24

Isa 55:1-9

Ps 63:1-8

1 Cor 10:1-13

Luke 13:1-9

#### *Open Invitation*

### Fourth Sunday of Lent

#### March 31

Josh 5:9-12

Ps 32

2 Cor 5:16-21

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

#### *Embracing Love*

## ATTENDANCE

Worship	Children's Sunday School
02/03 - 144	6
02/10 - 199	10
02/17 - 149	2
02/24 - 162	5

Average Worship Attendance: 164

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Dora & Charles Littleton, Custodians  
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***Next Chronicle deadline  
March 21, 2019***

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**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

