Beloved FCCH Community:

When you read this, the FCCH staff and our moderator, Phil Taylor, will be taking a much needed Sabbath from church business. Since the church closed the building, Sheryl, Mark, and Phil have been attentive and responsive pretty much seven days a week facing the challenges of the constant changing landscape of life lived in COVID-19.

I don’t need to tell you that everything has changed. We are being church in completely different ways than we were three and a half months ago. We have stumbled our way into Zoom for meetings and small groups and connections. We are considering how to be love and justice and compassion to our neighbors (e.g. Drive By Food Drive and Prayer Shawl Giveaway!) and beyond. Phil, Sheryl and Mark have risen to the occasion in support, listening, engaging and beyond. And still, there is much more to do and address.

Author Wayne Muller writes, “Sabbath requires surrender. If we only stop when we are finished with all our work, we will never stop, because our work is never completely done. With every accomplishment there arises a new responsibility... Sabbath dissolves the artificial urgency of our days, because it liberates us from the need to be finished.”

Even in what feels urgent in these times, it is important to surrender to Sabbath. I know you will join me in supporting Sheryl, Phil and Mark as they step away from church business to rest, reflect and renew. I urge each of you, as well, to find space to move into sacred sabbath time away from whatever is occupying your heart-space, keeping you away from the presence of the Holy. Surrender those things to God’s hands while you move into your own practice of Sabbath.

Peace and love,

Karla
As I write this in late June, the COVID-19 pandemic is still foremost on my mind. Masks are now mandatory in North Carolina, and we’ll continue in Phase II through July 17th. When are we going to come out the other side? What will “church” be like then? What do we do in the interim?

These are great questions, and I don’t have answers – except that “church” will be different in the future, both near- and far-term. I believe First Congregational will be permanently changed going forward. How? A few thoughts:

• Many of our members and friends are in the “higher risk” category because of age, health conditions, or status of family members. Some of these folks may never feel safe returning to a worship service where we sit closely together, sing loudly, and hug each other. We’ll need new ways of connecting with each other.
• How do we “feed the different needs” of our people in the near future, while indoor events are not safe? We’re already doing some new things, like virtual meetings, prayer sessions and book studies. The Reopening Task Force is looking at ways to do outdoor worship in smaller groups. What about more outdoor events, like the recent Food Drive? We’re exploring ways to offer communion safely. We’ll need different ways of celebrating and worshipping.
• How do we appropriately support our pastor and staff during this difficult time, as some of them are also in the higher risk group? We’ll need new ideas on how to be a just and compassionate employer.

Some thoughts from the National UCC:

“We will hold the hope of gathering again, one with another. … We value life and are our neighbors’ keepers. In that, the Church commits itself to taking actions to protect and preserve health. … The next several months will entail a gradual ability to gather with significant changes to “how we’ve always done it.” It is important to remember that there are no absolute safe ways to gather in mixed groups, only safer ways. … Life with Covid-19 is challenging society in many unanticipated ways, and the Church is not exempt from that. And yet, the Church continues, adapts, re-imagines, and engages in faithful ministry even in this time. While our buildings may be closed, the Church is wide open.”

Thanks for reading,
Phil Taylor, Moderator
**COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS**

* On-Line Council votes since our March meeting were reviewed. These primarily related to building closure and MCC rent deferment, approving the Reopening Task Force as a Council advisory group, adjusting Karla’s housing allowance/salary split, opening Fellowship Hall for the Primary Election, and supporting signage saying “Black Lives Matter.”

* Ron reported that church finances are doing better than expected considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We may need to draw from the Heritage Fund earlier than usual this year, but that has not been needed as yet.

* The Reopening Task Force reported that no changes are expected regarding building closure in the foreseeable future as both virus cases and hospitalizations are increasing locally and statewide.

* Karla and Mark reported on ways they are connecting to members and friends during the pandemic - including the worship videos, a weekly postal mail sent to those who are not connected electronically, a phone chain that reaches 60 people, and parking lot events like the upcoming food drive.

* A motion from the HRM was approved to suspend the revised personnel policy for departing pastors to allow a conflict mediation process to occur – one guided by a professional organization knowledgeable in church conflict mediation to lead the church through a process of assessment, dialogue, transformation, healing, and reconciliation.

* Mindy reported that the new dishwasher was installed in the kitchen, the garden is proceeding well, and the atrium/pet memorial work has been completed.
“Come to the well” is a metaphor for renewing our purpose. Our purpose gives us motivation to live completely. Forgetting our purpose brings boredom and ennui to our day-to-day lives. Re-establishing our purpose brings renewed energy.

I have always liked the statement of purpose by author Roy Eugene Davis because it not only features how we act but how we think. “Remember, we are not on Earth for ourselves; we are here to express our innate beingness and to make a useful contribution to our world. We are here to assist others and to assist in maintaining planetary health… The thoughts we think and the feelings we radiate actually influence our environment. People we may never meet or know will be influenced by our present decisions, agreements and actions.”

What is your purpose in life? It may change as you get older. It may change as you get wiser. At any rate, wise men and women tell us that periodically examining our purpose in life renews our soul.

Ed O’Keefe

For words of encouragement, appreciation, hope, caring, gratitude and love, just take a breath, pick up the phone and call:

Ben Coonrod 828 284-0695
Helle Gylling 623 282 5528
Nancy Keswani 617 833-2819
Ed O’Keefe 828 890-4889
Joady Perrett 828 243-3337
Sammye Whitney 570 664-1141

Diane Rhoades 828 696-9969
Susan Huff 828 217-5944
Judith Nourse 828 606-2558
Romella Hart-O’Keefe 828 890-4889
Jim Rash 828 450-0986
NEED TO TALK? Karla and Mark are available if you need to talk, and our prayer chaplains are available for individual prayers. Please email Karla or Mark (karla@fcchendersonville.org; mark@fcchendersonville.org). We are here to help in any way that we can.

ZOOM GROUP OFFERINGS

MORNING PRAYERS - A brief time (less than 30 minutes) of centering, reflection, and prayer on Zoom will be offered. To sign up and to receive the Zoom link, please email Sheryl (sheryl@fcchendersonville.org).

FCC SALON - Salon, says the dictionary, is a gathering of persons for discussion. Weekly, we will view a short film or TED talk and discuss it via Zoom. Karla and Mark will lead the gatherings. Please sign up by emailing Sheryl (sheryl@fcchendersonville.org).

COFFEE HOUR meets on Zoom every Sunday morning at 11 o’clock. This is a wonderful way to stay connected with your church friends.

MINISTRY MEETINGS are always available for you to join in. Click here to view the church calendar for opportunities.

If you have any questions or difficulties accessing any of these meetings, please contact your Administrator sheryl@fcchendersonville.org for assistance.
**FOOD DRIVE**

On a gorgeous, sunny, Saturday, June 20, from 12-2 pm we had our first contact-free food drive benefitting Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry in Etowah, Calvary Episcopal Food Pantry in Fletcher, and Hendersonville’s Storehouse of Henderson County, all of which are especially stressed now.

Many church members & the public wore masks and practiced social distancing while also enjoying being “together” again, after dropping off items in the church parking lot

Participants delivered requested items like cereal, all proteins, including peanut butter, canned beans, tuna and chicken, ramen noodles, soups, and other non-perishable items. Both canned and fresh fruit were also welcomed. The Storehouse received toiletries for senior clients. All donated items were sorted into three minivans and delivered by FCC members to the three pantries which were overwhelmed by and grateful for the amount of supplies.

Generous donors also contributed about $6,000, which will go further than tangible items with these agencies’ purchasing power. Hand-crafted, colorful prayer shawls made by FCCers were also available to those in need. Everyone’s support was critical and much appreciated.

In other news, the S & G team allocated $3500 to the Dream Scholarship, Thrive, Hendersonville Pride, IAM, and UCC LGBT Coalition and the Hunger Walk. For more information about the Service & Giving team, for which new members are always welcome, contact co-facilitators Linda Laderach lladerac@mtholyoke.edu or Bill Shaffer, wdsiii333@gmail.com.
This year's Hunger Walk will be quite a challenge. Therefore, Ken Whitney would like to invite you to commit early and start soliciting your friends, family, neighbors, medical providers, business associates and virtual contacts now. New ideas and teams can inspire us all. Be sure to share them along with your success stories. This year's walk will be different but our neighbors in need continue to struggle.

If you have any ideas or questions, please reach out to Ken whitneykenneth9@gmail.com
Stay safe and spread love.

HUNGER WALK - SEPTEMBER 2020

Sunday School Monthly Report

Ginger Fisher, Sunday School Teacher
Dede Walton, Nursery Teacher

Monthly Theme: Learning More About Prayer

June’s Zoom sessions provided a variety of activities focused on prayer. The children explored why, how, and when we can talk with God, and they shared how prayer makes them feel. Their insights were both refreshing and profound.
PRAYER LIST

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.
Please contact your Administrator (sheryl@fchendersonville.org)

David Connor (friend of Anne Cain)
Norma Daly (friend of Anne Cain)
Jackie Green
Sympathy to the family and friends of Denise McDorman
Ed O’Keefe
Karene Passmore (friend of Becky Rowland)
Cathy Smith, Joanne Shenk, Family of Barbara Musy (friends of Al & Joan Diaz)
Prayers for the family of Scott Schopper, 39, who passed away June 14th
(son of Ron and Claudia Schopper)
Judy Smith (friend of Dawn Kucera)
Cathy Smith, Joanne Shenk and Family of Barbara Musy (friends of Al & Joan Diaz)
Glory & Fred Stack (friend of Mills/Hollingsworth)
Victoria Tatum
Patsy Thurston (Liz Thurston & Karla Miller’s sister-in-law)
Richard Tyler
David Vandre
Patti Woeppel (sister of Carol Woeppel)

And for those names of persons being impacted in any way by this pandemic that we hold in our hearts as a church community:

Debbie Callis - nurse at a nursing home
Helene Cohen - wife of Bob Rhue, Administrator of Medical Practice at Transylvania Hospital (friend of Ed & Romella O’Keefe)
Ruth Colwell - 97 years old in a nursing home in Connecticut where the number of infected patients is doubling weekly (mother of Jane DuBois)
Alison Federlein - medical staff (granddaughter of Hank & Pamela Federlein)
Geoffrey Flick - whose mother died from COVID-19 in Chicago (friend of Linda Laderach)
Friends and Family of Dona Harmon - died from COVID-19 on April 30 (friend of Anne Cain)
Joshua Inman - ER Charleston (relative of Carol Inman)
Those impacted by pandemic continued…..

**Jawid Family** - out of work (friends of Kevin & Joyce Tierney)

**Nancy Keller** - in assisted living facility in Tucson, AZ (friend of Linda French)

**Cindy Kemp** - hospice care provider (sister of Sheryl Tellier)

Friends and students of **Charles Krigbaum**, who died April 30 from COVID-19 (friend of Linda Laderach)


**Patsy McCurry** - moved from Hendersonville to Alabama

**Andrew Neck** - ER physician (friend of Mark Acker)

**Liam O’Neill** - who was intubated on May 8th at hospital in Ireland with COVID-19 (friend of Glenn and Donna Gross)

**Nicki, Jill, Deborah** - out of work (friends of Kevin & Joyce Tierney)

**Joe O’Keefe** - visiting nurse in Worcester, MA presently under a Coronavirus quarantine (son of Ed O’Keefe)

**Sandy Rowland** - nurse (niece of Becky Rowland)

**Allison Ruhe** - Physician Assistant in a COVID-19 ward at Boston Hospital and her fiancé, **John Harris**, PA who is in charge of a COVID-19 tent for the Homeless in Boston (friends of Ed & Romella O’Keefe)

**Greg Santini**, FDNY Fire Marshall in Nyack, NY returning to work in the city after testing positive and spending 3 weeks in quarantine (son-in-law of Chris & Sherry Carmichael)

**Heather Santini** and grandchildren, Athena and Neil. Pray they will continue to stay healthy in Nyack, NY as Greg starts work again (daughter of Chris & Sherry Carmichael)

**Family of Alan Schmalz** - who died from the virus (husband of Carolyn Schmalz)

**Carolyn Schmalz** - recovering in nursing home from the virus

**William Spencer** - EMT Paramedic (cousin of Donna Gross)

**Angela Williams** - ER nurse (friend of Mark Acker)
July Birthdays

1: Frances Yoder
04: Hilliard Staton
06: Lydia Gossett
07: Mindy Myers
09: Kelly McGillis
11: Patsy McCurry
12: Dede Walton
13: Bal Goleman
14: Roger Dashner
14: Cary Battle
16: Catherine Fairbanks
18: Bob McLendon
19: Hank Federlein
19: Louise Vier
21: Joan McKinney
22: Mike Sollom
24: Marilyn Brain
25: Phil Taylor
25: Jenny Brown
26: Roger Woolsey
26: Fe Avis
27: Lorraine Cochrane
28: Lynn Conchado
30: Susan Huff

July Anniversaries

2: Roger & Sherry Haagenson
2: Ron & Jayne Miller
4: Susan & Bob Huff
5: Bruce & Sarah Jayne
6: Bill Shaffer & Ann Twiggs
7: Nick & Marjorie Pence
8: Barbara & John Rathbun
11: Carl & Jean Schoendorfer
20: Lester & Louise Vier
23: Fred & Linda Yopps
28: Mark & Ericka Fagerlin
29: Angie Yates
Did you know........

Sunday sermons are available to view to on our website. Go to fcchendersonville.org and click on Sunday Sermon or view from Home Page.

Next Chronicle deadline
July 23, 2020