MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

In spite of our building being closed due to Covid-19 since March, our church has been doing good things to help persons in our community who are struggling. Each of you who give to our church budget, and each of you who have participated in our Food Drive and our School Supply Drive (both terrifically led by our Service and Giving Team), have helped our church to be a beautiful witness of Love in our community.

Here’s a recap of what the people and friends of First Congregational have given to serve our community in the months since the pandemic began in March:

2,000 pounds of food to the Etowah Food Pantry, Calvary Church Food Pantry, and the Storehouse in Hendersonville; 900 pounds of fresh vegetables from the FCCH Garden Ministry, given to Interfaith Assistance Ministry and the 7th Avenue Mission;

$7,030 financial donation to Etowah Food Pantry, Calvary Church Food Pantry, Hunger Coalition, and the Storehouse so that they can purchase food in bulk; $8,050 financial donation to Interfaith Assistance Ministry for school supplies, and for the many other needs that this ministry addresses;

540 pounds of school supplies to Interfaith Assistance Ministry; 146 child sized masks, handmade by persons in our congregation, to local schools; $1,600 financial donation to Boys and Girls Club and Henderson County Education Foundation to address needs that children and families are facing in this pandemic time;

$7,800 financial donations to 14 community organizations that are helping to address the needs of people in our community, including Safelight, Free Clinics, Blue Ridge Health, Community Foundation, Thrive, Hendersonville Pride, Pisgah Legal Services, and others; Over 75 prayer shawls, made by members of our church, have been given away since March to comfort persons and to remind them of the presence of God in the midst of their struggles.

Thank you, beautiful people of First Congregational, for the wonderful way in which you are sharing Love in our community. You are making a difference in these challenging times!

Blessings and love,

Karla & Mark
Estrangement from your adult children and grandchildren is among the most painful of human experiences. The pain is magnified by the fact that it is difficult to talk about and, therefore, isolating. We are not alone! Two online Book Study and Discussion Groups will be offered this fall, one beginning in October, and a second in November.

The group resource is the book PEAK: Parents of Estranged Adult Kids, A Resource for Recovery, written by Fe Anam Avis. For more information, or to register for a group, please visit www.parentsofestrangedadultkids.com.

If you have questions, contact Fe Avis at 614-208-4090 or email him at fe@aseconnday.com.

Please remember the church building is closed, but we are not.
Your staff is working from home.
If you need our Administrator, please email sheryl@fcchendersonville.org.
If you need immediate assistance, or have a pastoral need, you can contact:
Karla Miller at 781-835-6893 (karla@fcchendersonville.org) or
Mark Acker 615-430-3506 (mark@fcchendersonville.org)
BOOK GROUPS BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER

Being a part of one of our Book groups is a great way to learn, to grow, and to meet others. These book groups will meet for 7 weeks on Zoom.

“SO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT RACE”

by Ijeoma Oluo.

Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. (75 minutes) for seven weeks, beginning September 17. We will read and discuss several chapters of this book each week, with particular attention to racial justice, white privilege, and the relationship between police and persons of color. This book study will be led by members of the FCCH Racial Justice Group. For more information, or to sign up, please contact John Ariatti jja28739@gmail.com. The book is available from Amazon ($10) or from a Black-owned bookstore (you can Google for a list) such as African Bookstore africanbookstore.net

“BREATHING UNDER WATER”

by Richard Rohr.

Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. (75 minutes) for seven weeks, beginning September 15. The introduction says: “We are all addicted in some way. When we learn to identify our addiction, embrace our brokenness, and surrender to God, we begin to bring healing to ourselves and to the world.” This book study will be co-led by Karla Miller and Mark Acker. For more information, or to sign up, please contact Mark Acker mark@fcchendersonville.org. Both the book and the companion journal are needed for the group ($31 for both from Amazon).
Reflections on the COVID-19 Pandemic

As we enter Month Six of this pandemic journey, I’ve taken some time to reflect on what I miss about being in church, and on what I hear others say they miss. There are some common themes - everyone misses the social contact - seeing each other, talking, hugging, and laughing together. The shutdown happened so suddenly, we didn’t even have time to say good-bye, and none of us realized how long this was going to go on. Sadly, we still don’t know.

There are also some specific parts of our worship that many are missing. We miss the music - singing hymns, hearing the organ, and listening to our wonderful choir. Some (and not just the kids!) miss Karla’s gathering time for our Sunday School children at the beginning of the service. Many have expressed the loss of just being able to sit in the sanctuary and feel its quiet peace.

We can’t fix all of this - but we are finding new ways to “do church.” We are doing drive-by donation events and using Zoom to have meetings and engage in activities like morning prayer, Ted talk discussions, and book studies.

Another ritual many are missing is being able to take communion. The good news is - we’ll be offering drive-by communion in September. Look for details elsewhere in this edition of the Chronicle. Later in September, we’ll be having a virtual edition of the Hunger Walk - which our church supports so enthusiastically. Look for more information coming on that as well.

We are living our motto: Our church is bigger than the building. We’ve had several events - from car parade birthday celebrations to major donation drives - that speak our values and give us the opportunity to serve our community. I want to personally commend all the energetic and committed folks in our church community who continue FCUCC’s work and outreach. Someday, we will be coming out on the other side of this pandemic. And because of their work, I believe we will be stronger than before.

Please, everyone, be safe and stay well. Stay connected to each other, and especially, be kind to everyone.

Thanks for reading,
Phil Taylor, Moderator
OUTSIDE COMMUNION ON SEPTEMBER 13TH

There are many things we miss about not being able to gather for worship, and for some people, taking communion is one of them. We're happy to announce that First Congregational will be offering an opportunity for outdoor communion in September. We'll be putting out more details as the time comes closer, but in general, here's what we're planning.

The date will be September 13th, and communion will be offered from 10.30 to 11.30 am. The hour that, in normal times, we would be in our sanctuary for worship service. For safety, we have self-contained individual communion sets. Gluten-free wafers will be available for those who want them.

There will be two ways you can participate. One is that you can simply drive by the entrance of the church and receive your communion cup offered on a tray. Or you can come to a table that will be set up on the labyrinth and pick up your cup. Karla will preside at one location, Mark at the other.

Now, the bonus! After communion, you’re invited to an in-person coffee hour in the parking lot. Folks can bring their own chairs, coffee and snacks, and visit in person, maintaining social distancing in small groups.

Everyone agrees that the best part of the drive-by events we’ve had so far is simply getting to see and talk to each other. This is another opportunity.
After two years in the making, our **labyrinth** has become a special place for our church. Ron Miller shares his recollection.

Church member Catherine Fairbanks, who had experience with labyrinths at previous churches, suggested that our church have a labyrinth. The idea was kicked around in various church meetings and gained a foothold.

Earlier, our church member, Jean Ennis, had passed away. In discussions with Jean’s sons after her memorial garden service, the Ennis sons said the family would like to contribute money to the church for a specific purpose to honor Jean. Rev. Weidler mentioned that the church was thinking about building a labyrinth. The Ennis sons immediately liked that idea and offered to help fund the construction.

Planning began in early 2018. A labyrinth committee was formed and met several times to discuss the size, design, location, materials, and projected costs. A consensus was reached and a church membership meeting was convened where the proposed plans and location for the labyrinth were presented to and approved by the membership.

Construction began in June of 2018 with the removal and disposal of a large section of asphalt paving from the back driveway, site excavation, drainage stone, weed-block fabric, and fine crushed stone was placed on top of the drainage stone to form the base for walking.

Soon it was discovered that water from White Pine Drive, running across the back parking lot, was causing erosion on the labyrinth surface, resulting in the installation of two French drains to eliminate the problem.

In the fall of 2018 a group of church volunteers made up of Milton Stewart, Nick Pence, Jon Nobling, Roger Smith, Ben Coonrod, and others, and using the landscape design expertise of Ben Coonrod, began the back-breaking process of placing, one by one, the 1,800 brick pavers that form the labyrinth walking paths!
In early 2019 the large metal railing along the creek bank by the railroad was removed to provide more area for landscaping. Garrett Landscaping was retained to bring in fill dirt, mulch and sod. Plantings were also installed to make the area surrounding the labyrinth more aesthetic. Church member Nicholas Aguilar volunteered, as an eagle scout project, to make 2 benches that have been placed around the labyrinth perimeter.

A bronze plaque has been installed at the labyrinth entrance to honor Jean Ennis. Jean’s son has stopped by the church on his way north from Florida on at least 2 occasions to view the progress of construction and seemed pleased with the result.

Thanks to all the love, devotion, and generosity, church members and people in the community enjoy spending time using this beautiful space!

**Sunday School Monthly Report**

Ginger Zemp, Sunday School Teacher  
Dede Walton, Nursery Teacher  
Maralee McMillan, Substitute Teacher

**Monthly Theme: Learning About Different Religions**

In August the children started to explore how children of different faiths see the world and talk to God. We learned about the beliefs and traditions of Native Americans and Jewish boys and girls. Art and music projects provided a creative outlet for their developing insights and deepened their understanding of the similarities and differences among children with other religious traditions.
The August meeting was centered on orchestrating logistics for the next contact-free **FOOD DRIVE AND HUNGER WALK JUBILEE - Saturday, September 19, 10:00 a.m. to Noon.** Please bring food (cold cereals, non-refrigerated juice, canned soup and vegetables, peanut butter, other non-perishable foods and quart & gallon sized freezer bags) for the Edneyville Food Bank and your checks for the Hunger Walk (make checks payable to Henderson County Hunger Coalition). Ken Whitney will also have beautiful pottery for sale (all proceeds go to the Hunger Walk). Prayer shawls will be available and always free. Participants should drop off items in the church parking lot, wear masks and practice social distancing. All donated items will be sorted and delivered by our members. Anyone wishing to assist at drive are welcome & should contact Linda Laderach lladerac@mtholyoke.edu or Bill Shaffer wdsiii333@gmail.com. Everyone’s support is critical and much appreciated.

While most of the meeting was devoted to planning, we also reveled in the success of the school supply which collected 540 pounds of supplies, 146 children’s masks and $4,070 contributed by members and friends of the church. Thank you to everyone who contributed for your faithfulness in supporting our church financially.

Your regular pledging enables our church to continue financially supporting many non-profits in our community that serve those in need. In August we divided the $3,500 monthly allocation between Pisgah Legal Services (PLS), Boys and Girls Club, Children and Family Resource Center (CFRC) and Henderson County Educational Foundation.

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**SERVICE & GIVING REPORT - AUGUST**

The August meeting was centered on orchestrating logistics for the next contact-free **FOOD DRIVE AND HUNGER WALK JUBILEE - Saturday, September 19, 10:00 a.m. to Noon.** Please bring food (cold cereals, non-refrigerated juice, canned soup and vegetables, peanut butter, other non-perishable foods and quart & gallon sized freezer bags) for the Edneyville Food Bank and your checks for the Hunger Walk (make checks payable to Henderson County Hunger Coalition). Ken Whitney will also have beautiful pottery for sale (all proceeds go to the Hunger Walk). Prayer shawls will be available and always free. Participants should drop off items in the church parking lot, wear masks and practice social distancing. All donated items will be sorted and delivered by our members. Anyone wishing to assist at drive are welcome & should contact Linda Laderach lladerac@mtholyoke.edu or Bill Shaffer wdsiii333@gmail.com. Everyone’s support is critical and much appreciated.

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**www.childrenandfamily.org**

Diaper Drive-Thru: Diapers, wipes & formula
–donations accepted & disbursed–
at CFRC, 851 Case St. Hendersonville, NC 28792
September 4, 11am - 1pm
September 15, 5:30 - 7:30 pm
On a sunny Saturday in August, masked and socially distant generous church members and the wider community provided about $4,100 and 540 pounds of needed school supplies including backpacks, pencils, pens, crayons, markers, paper (lined & unlined), glue (sticks & bottles), tissues, wipes, and hand sanitizers. New athletic shoes, socks and underwear (sizes 4-adult) were also collected.

Buying these supplies severely impacts a family’s income which is now already stretched to the limit. Filling a backpack with many of these items can cost over fifty dollars. Vans loaded with filled backpacks and other supplies including 146 handmade, child-sized masks were distributed to school-age children in Henderson County.
On Saturday, September 19 from 10:00 a.m. to Noon, you can bring your checks and see your FCCH friends on this special morning!

If you want to be a "virtual" walker and secure contributions from neighbors, friends and other church members, please sign up on the Henderson County Hunger Coalition website: www.hendersoncountyhungercoalition.org or click on the link below. If you want to make a donation to the Hunger Walk, you can also do that on the website/link.

Saturday, September 10 a.m. to Noon

Click here to register or donate

FOOD DRIVE AND HUNGER WALK JUBILEE - Saturday, September 19, 10:00 a.m. to Noon - Bring food for the Edneyville Food Bank and your checks for the Hunger Walk (make checks payable to Henderson County Hunger Coalition). Ken Whitney will also have beautiful pottery for sale (all proceeds go to the Hunger Walk). Prayer shawls will be available and always free.

FCCH member, Fe Anam Avis, has published a new book titled The Pattern: How the Journey of Jesus Repeats Itself in Ours.

“Fe’s psychological and sociological approach to the historical Jesus humanizes the gospels without distorting their religious significance. I know of no better application of biblical understanding to the stages and crises of individual lives in the twenty-first century.”

--Richard E. Brantley, Professor of English, Emeritus, University of Florida, Gainesville.

The Pattern is available on Amazon for $14.95. However, friends and members of First Congregational Church can order the book at a discount for $9.95 (plus postage) by clicking on this PayPal link:

https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=ARPQZ9N7RG2FU
PRAYER LIST

Rand Bishop
Angela Cole (daughter of Lynn Conchado)
Nancy Colvin (friend of Ann Twiggs)
Norma Daly (friend of Anne Cain)
Al & Joan Diaz
The family of Cathy Dunn (friend of Joan Diaz)
The family of Joyce Heaton (mother of Dawn Kucera)
Carol Inman
Trisha LaGrange
Patsy McCurry
Ed & Romella O'Keefe
Betsey Parker
Johnny Ramsey (friend of Becky Rowland)
Cindy Royce and spouse Barb Gingrich (friends of Ann Twiggs)
Lenore Schultz (friend of Becky Rowland)
Cathy Smith, Joanne Shenk, Family of Barbara Musy (friends of Al & Joan Diaz)
Judy Smith (friend of Dawn Kucera)
Patsy Thurston (Liz Thurston & Karla Miller’s sister-in-law)
Richard Tyler
David Vandre
Diane and Jeff Wejcman (sister and brother-in-law of Nancy Kaczor)
Carol Woeppel

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       Diane Rhoades 828-696-9969
Helle Gylling  623-282-5528     Susan Huff 828-217-5944
Nancy Keswani 617-833-2819       Ed O'Keefe 828-890-4889
Joady Perrett  828-243-3337     Sammye Whitney 570-664-1141
Romella Hart-O'Keefe 828-890-4889

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September Birthdays

01: Alice Pfirrman
01: Heather Fitzwilliam
03: Karla Miller
04: Paul Westin
04: Jairo Aguilar
04: Ian Santiago Anaya
04: Ann Allen
05: Richard Howe
05: Lucy Johnson
06: Ingrid Perry
08: Marian Soss
08: Kay Davis
09: Yvonne Kyker
13: Betsey Parker
13: Nancy Pew
14: Dona Tyler
15: Nolleen Kelly
16: Joanne Kimmell
16: Jacqueline Green
18: Joel Matthews
19: Cathy Sadler
21: Marjorie Richards
22: Karen Jackson
22: Powell Cotter
23: Mandy Henderly
25: Al Diaz
26: Mildred Gardner
27: Susan Bonk
28: Janice Bullard
29: Clare Willey

September Anniversaries

01: Connie Knight & Richard Johnson
09: Glenn & Donna Gross
11: Hilliard Station & Suzie Edell
12: Mindy & Bill Myers
12: Bruce Mills & Jim Hollingsworth
15: Tom & Joanne Kimmel
16: Susan Bank & Becky Evans
21: Phil & Estelle Taylor
30: Ben & Joanna Coonrod
ATTENDANCE

August 2020
Virtual Worship

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Did you know....... Sunday worship services are available to view on our website. Go to fcchendersonville.org and click on Sunday Sermon or view from Home Page.

The Congregational Chronicle is published monthly, except for December/January and June/July issues, by First Congregational UCC 1735 Fifth Ave. West Hendersonville NC 28739-4013 Phone: 828.692.8630 E-mail: fccinfo@hendersonville.org Website: www.fcchendersonville.org

Rev. Karla Miller, Pastor (karla@fcchendersonville.org)
Mark Acker, Minister of Music/Pastoral Associate (mark@fcchendersonville.org)
Sheryl Tellier, Administrator (sheryl@fcchendersonville.org)
Dora & Charles Littleton, Custodians
Rev. David G. Kelly, Jr., Pastor Emeritus

Next Chronicle deadline September 23, 2020
First Congregational UCC
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Hendersonville NC 28739-4013

Justice, Compassion, Inclusion