Advent Blessings, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Beloved FCCH,

As you read this we will be in the first week of Advent, a sacred time of waiting and anticipating for the wonder of Christmas to be born again in our world. We know these holidays will be like no other we have experienced before. Even as I write this, the darkness seems thicker and denser than ever, and the lights in the shadows feel tiny but strong. The scourge of the pandemic is heightening, and yet, there is hope looming in recent developments regarding viable vaccines.

We will be church through it all, albeit from a distance. On Tuesday, December 1st, you are invited to dress our church for Christmas. Especially, more lights will be added outside to offer hope to our community in these challenging times. Dawn Kucera is leading this effort, and is being funded by a gift from her mother’s estate. Thank you Dawn!

I hope you will join us in our Drive-By Cornucopia of Giving on Saturday, December 5, sponsored by Service and Giving. We will continue to record Advent Worship services, and on December 20, we will have our Longest Night Quiet Service by Zoom. On Christmas Eve, we will have a Drive-By Christmas Communion from 5pm to 6pm. On Sunday, December 27, we will have a guest preacher, Rev. Guy Sales, in our video worship. And, we will celebrate Epiphany on January 3.

On behalf of the FCCH staff—Sheryl Tellier, Mark Acker, Charles and Dora Littleton, Dede Walton and Ginger Zemp, we wish everyone the deepest of blessings in this season. And, I want to take a moment to thank this exceptional group of colleagues for serving FCCH with such grace, commitment and care during these most challenging ten months of this pandemic.

Advent Blessings, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year,!

Karla
Dear Members and Friends,

Well, the holiday season is upon us, and it's going to be one like none of us have ever experienced. We live in times now that no one could have imagined a year ago. In one sense, it seems like the world has pushed the pause button. And yet, life goes on, kids still get educated, we still had a national election. Folks have found new and creative ways to live their lives and do all the things that need doing.

And so it is with the holidays. We will still be doing the holidays, just differently. I imagine some families will still gather, but perhaps in smaller groups. Or they may stay home and visit, eat Thanksgiving dinner and open Christmas gifts “together" via Zoom.

It is a season of helping others — in this new way of doing things; First Congregational has perfected the donation drive-by - this season with our Cornucopia of Giving. The church is decorated — mostly you will get to see that in the worship videos Karla and Mark make. But you can see it person too. I invite you to come on Prayer Wednesday, to spend time in the sanctuary in prayer and contemplation.

We’re taking decorating to a whole new level. Since we can’t come inside to the decorations, we’re taking the decorations outside. Look for our church to sparkle with nighttime lights, a beacon of hope and a gift of light to the whole community. I hope you will drive by sometime after dark and enjoy it. Maybe even pull into the parking lot and say a prayer.

And while HOW we celebrate this holiday season will not be the same, WHAT we celebrate is unchanging. Thanksgiving is a time of gratitude for what we have, even in the midst of a pandemic. Advent is a time of waiting and anticipation for the joy to come. And Christmas is a time to celebrate the hope and promise of the world, as we honor the arrival of the Christ Child.

On so many levels, it has been a difficult year. But I am so hopeful for better things in the year to come - for our church, our community, our country, the world. I wish each of you, and your families, a healthy and joyous holiday season.
COUNCIL OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS

Administrative
1. Phil welcomed Dawn Kucera as the new Clerk, following Nancy Keswani’s resignation.
2. Three on-line votes: 1) Approve Dawn as the new Clerk; 2) Repeal the departing pastor policy; 3) Approve the Nominating Committee of Sheryl Mendenhall, Ken Whitney and Mark Acker.
3. Nadine Spear has left a bequest to the church, which will be deposited in the Heritage Fund.

Financial Report
We are in pretty good shape. Income is down, expenses are down even more, so we are a bit ahead.

Conflict Resolution Progress
A volunteer team met to consider the best way forward, looking at the three options in the consultant’s report. They were: lay-led, lay/consultant-led, and consultant-led. The group recommended the effort should be lay-led. Council unanimously approved this recommendation. The next step is the formation of the team of trusted people to lead this process.

Karla’s Report
◇ The Sunday outdoor services are averaging 50 attendees. They will continue as long as weather permits.
◇ She praised Mark for gathering the choir to film some hymns, two recent Zoom book groups, and the Compassionate Action Group for the success of the “With Malice Toward None” Zoom vigil.
◇ For Christmas, we’ll be decorating the church grounds with lights, to be a beacon of hope for the community.
◇ We are facing the challenge of “how to be church” as we head into the post pandemic world. She’s looking at various ways to do that.

Ministry Reports
◇ Larger Community -This is the time of year for the Service and Giving program where we donate to our favorite charities, and get matching funds. We are urged to donate generously, as our community has serious needs.
◇ Financial Resources -The Stewardship campaign is underway, via a first letter that was sent out, which included pledge cards. Everyone is urged to respond as quickly and as generously as they can.
◇ Physical Resources -Re-roofing of the back part of the church will start on November 16.

Comments for the Good of the Order
Several people have asked Phil Taylor to stay on as Moderator for one more year. Comments from Council members and guest attendees strongly support this notion, given the dual pandemic/conflict crises and his mastery of both topics. Phil is willing. This will require a waiver vote from the Bylaws restrictions.

Dawn Kucera, Clerk
TELL ME MORE ABOUT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HENDERSONVILLE

Are you interested in becoming a member or know more about FCCH?

Please join Karla Miller for a "Tell Me More" session on Zoom on Sunday, December 6 at 1:00 p.m.

If you are interested in attending this Zoom meeting, please contact the church administrator, Sheryl Tellier, for more information. Unfamiliar with Zoom? Ask Sheryl for a private training session (sheryl@fcchendersonville.org).

Welcoming new members and friends will take place during the worship video on Sunday, December 27.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP GROUP

One of the quiet and unusual activities happening at FCCH has been the “adoption” of the small stream on the Eastern edge of our church property. After crossing 5th Avenue, this stream, known as Wash Creek, flows through downtown Hendersonville and eventually joins the French Broad. The Environmental Stewardship Group (ESG) has been clearing trash and eliminating invasive, non-native, plants from the creek and started working on stabilizing the eroding banks.

In March, several members of the ESG participated in a training provided by Mountain True. We were trained to participate in a program called SMIE or Stream Monitoring Information Exchange. This program monitors the health of streams by sampling the small bugs that reside in the streams.

Last month several members of ESG picked up our sampling kit from Mountain True and, while observing pandemic precautions, collected macroinvertebrates (bugs) from under rocks in the waters of Wash Creek. Because identification of the bugs is a difficult, learned process, our samples were preserved in alcohol and returned to the Mountain True experts. In April we’ll repeat the process and will then have a baseline to continue the monitoring. Once we’re able to meet in person we’d love to have additional interested members join this great project. For more information, contact Bill Shaffer (wdsiii333@gmail.com).
Our Advent devotional guide this year is "Low: An Honest Advent Devotional" by John Pavlovitz, available from Amazon ($5.99) and on Kindle. Devotional readings for each day of Advent will guide our thoughts during this holy season. Our discussion group, led by Karla Miller and Mark Acker, will meet each Thursday in Advent at 1:00 p.m. (beginning December 3 through December 17 on Zoom). To sign up for the small Zoom group, please email Mark Acker (mark@fcchendersonville.org).
MATCHING GIFTS

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, our church has designated $7,000 for this year's matching gifts project.

Simply make your check out to FCUCC with the memo line "Matching Gifts" up to $500 per household, and indicate the agencies (up to three) of your choice from the list below (these are the agencies that our Service and Giving Area is supporting during this unique pandemic time).

Your check should be mailed to: FCUCC, 1735 Fifth Avenue West, Hendersonville, North Carolina 28739; checks must be received by December 13th.

Here are the Agencies to choose from this year:

SERVICE & GIVING REPORT

The November meeting was focused on year-end drive-in activities and matching funds.

Thanksgiving meals will be delivered to those who requested them.

We will have a drive-in collection event for Christmas on **Saturday, December 5th from 10-12.** We'll be collecting items in the church parking lot to help others less fortunate during this difficult holiday season. We'll have several ways for you to participate.

As in years past, there will be a giving tree upon which you can place new hats, mittens and scarves. We’re also collecting new, unwrapped toys for younger children or cash/check (Boys & Girls Club, memo Santa's Workshop) that will buy toys or gift cards for teenagers that will be handed out by the Boys and Girls Club.

We will also have Angel Tree request cards from the Council on Aging that specify requested gifts for older residents. We’re encouraging church members to take a card, purchase the requested gifts and then deliver them to the Council on Aging 105 King Creek Blvd who will get them to the appropriate older person.

Our past events have allowed us to interact safely with each other as well as demonstrate the generosity of our FCCH community. As we complete a stressful fall and prepare for a COVID Christmas season, please take this opportunity to say hello to your church friends and help others in our community.

**Matching Gifts 2020 – Due by December 13**

Here are the guidelines for this most unusual year:

Make your check, up to $500 per Household, to FCUCC with the memo line MG and the amount for each agency (up to three) of your choice.

Pick from the listed agencies, all local groups helping people to survive during the pandemic and mail to:

First Congregational Church
1735 Fifth Avenue West, Hendersonville NC 28739

continued next page…….
AGENCIES:

Boys and Girls Club
Henderson County Hunger Coalition,
Council on Aging
Hendersonville Rescue Mission
Homes for Youth
Thrive (Homelessness)
Calvary Episcopal Food Bank
Loaves and Fishes Food Bank of Etowah
Community Food Pantry of Edneyville
IAM
Free Clinics

Because you have continued to support your church with your tithes and offerings, your church will match 100% of your gift to the agencies of your choice—no more than three, up to $500 per Household.

The next Zoom meeting is December 10 at 10:00. All are welcome. Please contact Linda Laderach lladerac@mtholyoke.edu or Bill Shaffer, wdsiii333@gmail.com, for more info. Everyone’s support is critical and much appreciated.

BEST EVER WORSHIP DIRECTORS!
WINTER SCENES

Courtesy of Dawn Kucera
WINTER SCENES

Courtesy of Dawn Kucera
HOW OUR BUILDING & GROUNDS SURVIVE A PANDEMIC
by Mindy Myers, Physical Resources Facilitator

God has blessed FCCH with the faithful members of the Ministry of Physical Resources and other volunteers who have been busy at our church since March to keep things maintained during COVID-19, despite the building being closed. Our vegetable garden volunteers have worked as much as 6 days per week. They include Milton Stewart, Nick Pence, Jon Nobling, Carolyn Wilson, Mindy Myers, John Caldemeyer, and Susan Holt. Ron & Jayne Miller have been busy keeping our Memorial Garden beautiful. Lin Stogner continues to keep the Atrium looking amazing with help from her husband, Craig. Jayne & Ron, Mindy Myers, and Dawn Kucera have helped with other landscaping chores such as weeding, trimming, and cutting out dead or overgrown trees and shrubs. Nancy Irving is our queen of painting and power-washing. With help from Dawn, she sanded and painted all the black wrought iron railings. Steve Hogenboom and Mindy have met vendors at our building for repairs/maintenance. Hank Federlein helped to obtain our new outdoor speaker system. The Labyrinth gets some good use and looks its best, thanks to Ben Coonrod and helpers. We can’t leave out Phil, Karla & Mark who do lots to help. Many have walked the building to assure that doors are locked and to check for leaks or other problems.

Here are just a few more examples of what’s been done to FCCH during the Pandemic:

◊ New Parlor tables delivered, new blinds and coat rack installed
◊ New Dishwasher installed
◊ Supervise 2 elections for Laurel Park precinct in Fellowship Hall
◊ Hired vendor to repair, clean, and power-wash gutters
◊ Accompanied fire inspector for our annual inspection and replacing some emergency and exit lights per their requirements
◊ Dead junipers in front of church removed and old stump ground to make way for the planting of a new Serviceberry tree in honor of Karla’s FCCH installation.
◊ Hired roof contractor to replace back of roof
◊ Getting ready to decorate for Christmas with Ministry of Worship and more volunteers

A huge thanks to you all! We appreciate all you do!
A SHARING ON THE VEGETABLE GARDEN
from Carolyn Wilson

The garden crew harvested the last of the remaining vegetables in the church garden the week before Thanksgiving. 98 pounds of turnips, butternut squash, sweet potatoes, and collards were delivered to IAM. The sweet potato patch did not yield as much as last year but the one butternut squash plant - which was a volunteer that grew in the compost pile - yielded well over 100 pounds! The total for the year came to 1300 pounds delivered to IAM, the Mission, and the Dandelion Restaurant.

Even though the harvest is complete, there are still many projects to tend to during the winter...the addition of a raised bed or two, the painting of the new tractor shed, continuing the work on improving the drainage from the increased rainfall we experienced this year, and additional fencing to keep out our four-legged friends (who enjoyed collards, rutabaga, and zinnias), and more.

Carolyn says, “We are so blessed to be able to provide fresh produce to those in dire need of food during the pandemic. It is so gratifying to work in the garden and so much fun to spend the mornings with the garden crew!”

This beautiful pile of black soil that will be plowed into our FCCH Vegetable Garden is from the compost bins that FCCH members & friends faithfully contribute!
Sunday School Monthly Report - November
Ginger Zemp, Sunday School Teacher
Dede Walton, Nursery Teacher

Monthly Theme: Learning About Different Religions

This month the children completed their exploration of different faiths by learning about Buddhism and reviewing the different religions we have explored. They completed a mind map linking the important themes they discovered in Christianity, Native American Spirituality, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. They recognized the central theme of the Golden Rule in all these faiths.

As the demands of online and in-class school work increased for children and families, we learned that they needed a break from Zoom Sunday School classes. After consulting with Karla and Mark we decided to take a break and return to Zoom Sunday School sessions in December. We kept in touch with the children and their families via e mail, and we look forward to seeing them again soon!

If your church can help you in any way, whether through providing a listening ear or picking up a prescription, we are here for you.

Please email Karla or Mark:
karla@fcchendersonville.org
mark@fcchendersonville.org

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!!
Did you know?

There are many things of interest on the website (fcchendersonville.org)

*click on links below*

CHURCH CALENDAR (Activities)

WEEKLY SUNDAY SERVICE VIDEO (Sunday Worship Videos)

CURRENT WEEK’S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Members page)

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES (Members page)

CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT (Members page)

CHURCH DIRECTORY (Members page)

The church directory is password protected.

If you don’t have the password or have other questions, please contact sheryl@fcchendersonville.org

We are looking for volunteers to help in our Church Mission of serving the meals at the Hendersonville Rescue Mission. We serve every second Saturday, third Sunday and fifth Tuesday. We only serve the meal and it takes less than an hour. Masks are worn and it is safe. Any questions, please call Roger Woolsey at 828-989-9092.
Drive-Thru Christmas Cornucopia of Giving!

Saturday, December 5
10 a.m.-noon
First Congregational UCC
1735 5th Ave. W.
Hendersonville
(masked, socially-distanced)

DONATION OPTIONS:

🎄 New hats, mittens, gloves, scarves for our Giving Tree

🎄 New, **unwrapped** toys for younger children
**AND/OR** cash/checks (payable to BGC Henderson Co, earmarked “Santa’s Workshop”) to fund older Boys’/Girls’ Club members’ shopping trip

🎁 **Wrapped** gifts for Council on Aging senior clients
(you **must** pick up Santa Wish cards Sun., Nov. 15 or 22 at Parking Lot Prayer service 11 a.m.-noon. Even if Prayer Service is cancelled, Santa Wish cards will be available those days)

We wish you a VERY BLESSED HOLIDAY SEASON, and look forward to seeing lots of smiling, generous eyes behind our still-necessary masks! Thank you for your support of our 2020 FCC Drive-Thru events!

[www.fcchendersonville.org](http://www.fcchendersonville.org)
PRAYER LIST

Janet Bostwick
Maryett Carl
Nancy Colvin (friend of Ann Twiggs)
Norma Daly (friend of Anne Cain)
Shakine Davis (son of Kay Davis)
Al & Joan Diaz
The family of Cathy Dunn (friend of Joan Diaz)
Sue Eastin (friend of Becky Rowland)
Betty Gilliam (sister of Frances Yoder)
Joy Greenfield (friend of Trisha LaGrange)
MJ Heubach (friend of Jace Kahn)
Ellen Honea
Carol Inman
Esther Jillson (friend of Becky Rowland)
Geit Johnson (aunt of Liz Thurston)
Trisha LaGrange
Gary Lowder (Stephanie Lowder's husband)
Patsy McCurry
Juliana Miller (friend of Dawn Kucera)
Joseph Orost (son of Jean Glasgow-Hawkins)
Ed & Romella O'Keefe
Betsey Parker
Cindy Royce and spouse Barb Gingrich (friends of Ann Twiggs)
Heather & Mike SharpMack (daughter & son-in-law of Mindy Myers)
Cathy Smith, Joanne Shenk (friends of Al & Joan Diaz)
Eve Teerlinck
Richard Tyler
David Vandre

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
Ed O'Keefe  828-890-4889
Sammye Whitney 570-664-1141

Diane Rhoades  828-696-9969
Susan Huff  828-217-5944
Joady Perrett  828-243-3337
Romella Hart-O'Keefe  828-890-4889
December Birthdays
01: Mark Ray
01: Roderick “Roddy” Crum
02: Jim Luzadder
02: Ericka Fagerlin
02: Ian Zimmerman
03: Liz Brennan
03: Carol Inman
04: Kinsey Jenkins
04: Nicolas Aguilar
04: Jane Eble
07: Donna Gross
07: Sage Crum
07: Debbie Cope
12: Linda Laderach
15: Richard Tyler
16: Sherry Carmichael
16: Charles Littleton
17: Becky Rowland
18: John Ariatti
21: Jimmie Harris
22: Donnavan Ali Anaya
23: Lyndsey Simpson
25: Martha Hogenboom
27: Doreen Jenkins
31: Charley Rogers

December Anniversaries
06: Mark & Lynne Cigal
18: Bob & Cary Battle
27: Bob & Sharon McLendon
28: Jace Kahn & Cynthia Bright
28: Bob Miles & Diane Swift

January Birthdays
02: Jayne Miller
03: Bill Shaffer
07: Kathy Kircher
07: Josie Crum
10: Emery Gill
13: Bob Palmer
13: Bev Ward
16: Carolyn Schmalz
16: Larry Anderson
16: Mark Acker
17: Ellen Honea
20: Diane Rhoades
22: Pat Argue
22: Laura Nelson
29: Cynthia Bright
29: Ann Twiggs
29: Becky Evans
31: Liz Thurston

January Anniversaries
21: Fe Avis & Shawn Kelly
22: Richard & Diana Brantley
23: Lyndsey & Tony Simpson
The Congregational Chronicle is published monthly, except for December/January and June/July issues, by First Congregational UCC
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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
January 22, 2020

November 2020
Virtual Worship

Service Zoom

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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.