We live wholeness when we remember our story and, through it, experience a deeper sense of being part of a greater whole. We live wholeness when we know we belong—to people, to a place, to a community and tribe, to earth, to God (however named), and to the cosmos. . . . We live wholeness when we know that what we already have is enough and that all we need is to be resourceful with it. (Richard Rohr, Daily Reflection, 5/25/21)

Beloved, like many of you, as we emerge from the cocoons of isolation, newly vaccinated, I have had “all the thoughts” about what I have learned in the past 16 months, how I have changed, and what it means to be living in our new reality. What keeps coming back to me is the question, “what does wholeness mean?”—because really, isn’t this what we are yearning for? A sense of the belonging, the grounding, the connections that helped make sense of our lives pre-pandemic.

Our outdoor parking lot worship services have helped remind us of the connections we have as a church family. When we finally are able to gather in our blessed sanctuary, sitting together in the pews, marveling at the presence of the Spirit around us and within us and between us, we will feel even more strongly the gift of being community and the bonds we share.

And, we will be different. Some of our congregation will not return—for a myriad of reasons. We will encounter changes that may startle and remind us of the grief we might be holding because of those changes.

And yet, we will be what and who we are in the wake of the past year, in beauty and shambles, and because we are rooted in a common faith, it will be our wholeness. May we draw closer together, in that wholeness and holiness, with care and compassion for one another.

Yours on the journey,

Karla
This report is to let you know that the Team is still meeting, and to report on our recent activities.

We’ve received numerous emails from a quite a number of people, with some suggestions and expressing a wide variety of opinions. We have been pleased to receive them, and to the best of our knowledge, have answered all of them.

Several people have asked about the current stand of the Committee on Ministry about various aspects of the Departed Clergy situation, given they are one of the central players. It seemed an appropriate time to update them on our status. So we have done that, and also forwarded to them The Important Message to the Congregation paper that we distributed a couple of weeks ago. We asked them for any information they could provide on where things stand with regard to Rev. Richard Weidler.

We don’t know what they will be able to tell us, given the confidentiality to which they might be bound. However, we will report anything we hear from them.

We have begun to look to the future, and are working on a set of recommendations that we feel will benefit First Congregational going forward. Many of them were drawn from the consultant’s report we received last October. These cover a wide range of activities and ideas. Our Team does not have authority to start any of them, or make decisions, but we will be sending our recommendations to the appropriate groups within the church.

If you have any comments or questions, please write to FCCRRTeam@gmail.com.

Ann Allen
Ed Argue
Dawn Kucera
Linda Laderach
Bob McLendon (Chair)
Karla Miller
Phil Taylor
The good news is, we are getting to actually do the first part of our name! We have started the re-opening process, and it has been going well. Sheryl Tellier has come back to the office, and we have a few people coming in to assist. Sheryl is recruiting people to volunteer for projects when she is in the office, so if you are interested, please contact her (sheryl@fcchendersonville.org) or call the office.

At its May meeting, the Council approved Phase II of re-opening - allowing small groups to begin meeting in the building. Groups of four or less can use the parlor or library, wearing masks and keeping proper distance. Groups up to 15 people will meet in the Fellowship Hall.

We were absolutely delighted to receive 132 responses to the recent Re-opening survey. We saw data that gave us some clear direction in planning for reopening for indoor worship. Stay tuned for more details to come soon. If you would like to see the actual survey results, you can click on this link:

SURVEY RESULTS

The important message we want to convey is how eager Karla and Mark are to begin indoor worship services. There are a number of details to be worked out, and we’ve started working out the kinks and we’re re-building the worship teams needed to make it happen. If you’d like to be part of that, please contact Mark Acker (mark@fcchendersonville.org).
Notes to all FCC Members and Friends

- Council Meetings are always open to everyone. Notify Phil Taylor (pntaylor1234@yahoo.com) if you would like to attend.
- We expect/hope Council will meet in person in June.

Treasurer’s Report
We are still operating within the budget. Will probably need to draw on the Heritage Fund soon. Investments are doing well.

Reconciliation and Renewal Team Update
- The team continues to meet. They have written to the WNC Association Committee on Ministry for an update. Congregation will be notified of any reply.
- Working on a list of recommendations to pass on to other church entities.

Live Streaming
A group has been formed to look at live-streaming our indoor services. These would also be recorded. This team will investigate replacing our sanctuary sound system.

Windows
Council approved a bid to replace the 20 windows in the Fellowship Hall and Parlor. Will install double pane windows with screens that will be able to open. Window World will do the work. Their bid is about $7,800. Funds are available.

Reopening Plan—Phase II
Council approved Phase II of the Reopening Plan. This will allow small groups to resume meeting in the church. 3-4 member groups can meet in the Parlor or Library, up to 15 members can meet in Fellowship Hall.

Pastor
Karla announced that FCC will be part of an ecumenical group of churches that will meet to plan for “post-pandemic” church. She will be a part, as well as some lay members. Contact me (dawnkucera@mac.com) if you would like to see a complete write-up of the proposal.

Karla expressed great gratitude for the time off, and is grateful to be back.

Worship Team
Mark Acker announced the formation of a new worship team. Contact him (mark@fcchendersonville.org) to get involved.

Dawn Kucera,
Clerk

A REMINDER: Council Meetings are open to all congregation members and visitors are welcome
SERVICE & GIVING REPORT— MAY

At this month’s meeting the team approved three contact-free, drive-thru, thematic donation events, including these dates and themes, so mark your calendars.

Saturday, **June 12** will be Baby supplies for the Children & Family Resource Center (ChildrenandFamily.org), **August 14** will be School Supplies and **October 2** will be a Food Drive. Rain dates will be the next days, Sundays from 12-2. Be sure to see the “Baby” flyer in this issue and the bulletins to learn all the needed items and the new method for writing check donations.

After much deliberation, the team allocated $3000 to eight vetted agencies, five dealing with Inclusivity and three dealing with the Environment. In June, Healthcare agencies will be discussed. Once again this year, the Hunger Walk in September will be virtual and we will be a sponsor.

Now that the our world is opening up a bit, we know folks are looking for productive ways to help others. Everyone should remember the volunteer opportunities directory in the Members section of our website, www.fcchendersonville.org. The Henderson County United Way also has a good directory: [https://liveunitedhc.galaxydigital.com/](https://liveunitedhc.galaxydigital.com/).

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. Next meeting is **June 10 at 10** via Zoom or possibly live.

Written by:

Pat Argue, Secretary
The garden is coming alive! April was quite a soggy month for the garden due to all of the rain, but with the help of the tractor and garden crew much of the standing water was drained. This allowed the area to be dry enough for us to plant squash seedlings and bush bean seeds. Sixty-some tomato plants were planted in the raised beds as were about 100 onion sets.

Fifty sweet potato “slips” will be planted when the soil is a bit warmer, probably the first week of June. The cooler weather has been wonderful for the collards, which we’ll begin to harvest in the next few weeks to take to IAM.

You are always welcome to come by for a closer look at the garden. We are there Monday through Thursday from 8am til noon. If you can’t stop by, honk at us as you drive by!
You probably have noticed a change at the church’s east side entrance area.

This project has taken place over the last year or so. It all started, over a year ago, with the removal of 6 large evergreen trees near the mail box.

Last fall several overgrown shrubs and trees were pulled out along the left side of the sidewalk, using the garden tractor.

This spring the 20 foot evergreen tree on the right side of the sidewalk was removed.

Then, all of that area was trimmed and prepared and new azaleas, roses, lilies, daisies, and hostas were planted.

Mulch was spread and several accent rocks from the garden were placed in the area.

This project was a collaborative effort of many church members including Milton, Dr. John, Nick, Jon, Mindy, Carolyn, Ron and Jayne.

We hope you enjoy this peaceful area.
Such brilliant colors this year!—here in full bloom
Captured by Dawn Kucera
FROM YOUR PHYSICAL RESOURCES MINISTRY

A Reminder to our Congregation:

Any gifts of items for inside or outside the church must first be presented to and approved by the Physical Resources Ministry.

We will gladly continue to accept donations for Migrant Workers, Books for Good and Interfaith Assistance Ministries in the baskets in Reception area.

For more information, please contact Mindy Myers mindy7myers@gmail.com or Jayne Miller jaynemiller1958@yahoo.com.

Thank you for your Support!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO UPDATE YOUR CHURCH DIRECTORY PHOTO?

If your photo has been in the church directory for a while and you would like to have it updated, please send to Sheryl (sheryl@fcchendersonville.org) and she will update the directory for you.
Hummingbirds are arriving now! Have you filled your feeders?

Photo compliments of Dawn Kucera
Contact-free Drive Through Collection

Saturday, June 12, 2021
10:00 -- 12:00 noon
[Rain date = Sunday June 13, noon--2:00 p.m.]

Collecting Baby Supplies of all sorts and Cash Donations
bottles, blankets, baby dishes, toys (new or gently used) and diapers, diapers, diapers ..... Please make checks to Children and Family Resource Center

First Congregational United Church of Christ
1735 Fifth Avenue West
Hendersonville, NC 28739

Donations will go to benefit:

Website: childrenandfamily.org
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.

BETWEEN FRIENDS

GOT NEWS?

If you have news you want to share with members and friends, we are now updating the bulletin board outside the Fellowship Hall.

Just send your news to fccinfo@fcchendersonville.org to be added.

Any questions? Contact Sheryl
sheryl@fcchendersonville.org)
828-692-8630
PRAYER LIST

Kay Davis
Al & Joan Diaz
Sue Eastin (friend of Becky Rowland)
Hilarie Glasgow-Hawkins
Joy Greenfield (friend of Trisha LaGrange)
Ruth Heckman (friend of Kevin & Joyce Tierney)
Esther Jillson (friend of Becky Rowland)
Elizabeth Kamis
Steve Kazmierski & family (Nancy Kaczor’s brother-in-law)
David Kelly
Rob Kievit (son of Nancy Irving)
Yvonne Kyker
Trisha LaGrange
Sympathy to Dora & Charles Littleton in the loss of their beloved dog, Emmi
Carol Marra (friend of Kevin & Joyce Tierney)
Kathleen Martini (friend of Carol Woeppel)
Patsy McCurry
Betsey Parker
Gerry Pasternack (friend of Ed & Pat Argue)
Joanne Schenck (friends of Al & Joan Diaz)
Becky Stepp (friend of Al & Joan Diaz)
Richard Tyler
Phillip Wiles (friend of Al & Joan Diaz)

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  
Joady Perrett  828-243-3337  
Romella Hart-O’Keefe  828-890-4889  
Ed O’Keefe  828-890-4889  
Sammye Whitney  570-664-1141
June Birthdays

01: Ed O’Keefe
03: Janet Bostwick
04: Jan Kelly
06: Tony Simpson
06: Sheryl Tellier
07: Lilian Dashner
08: Barbara Rathbun
10: Clay Eddleman
16: Joan Nobling
17: Mark Cigal
18: Ellen Brazauskas
19: Melissa Fleig
19: Donna Jones
23: Jace Kahn, Sr.
24: Kitty Howell
25: Gary Cyphers
28: Barbara Major
28: Craig Stogner
29: Pam Rogers

June Anniversaries

03: John & Sandra Ariatti
04: Reid & Deborah Barwick
06: Joel & Anna Helfand
08: Ken & Sammye Whitney
09: Jim & Donna Jones
10: Chris & Sherry Carmichael
12: Richard & Ruth Howe
16: Ed & Romella O’Keefe
21: Becky Rowland & Nancy Kaczor
26: Mike & Virginia Erwin
29: John & Carol Towle
29: John & Janice Walters
May 2021
Worship

YouTube Views Sunday School & Outside Worship

04/25: 205
05/02: 152
05/09: 206
05/16: 163
05/23: 152

The Congregational Chronicle is published monthly, except for December/January and June/July issues, by First Congregational UCC 1735 Fifth Ave. West Hendersonville NC 28791-4013 Phone: 828.692.8630 E-mail: fccinfo@fcchendersonville.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
July 22, 2021