

Announcements:

Our next Friendship Dinner is Tuesday, August 18th! Doors open at 5:00 pm, and we will eat at 5:30 pm. Please bring a dish to share, a serving utensil, your own plates and utensils, and your own drink, including beer or wine, if desired. This is a fun event to get to know your church community, and also to invite a friend or neighbor. Join us!

Next Sunday, August 23, John Pavlovitz will be our featured speaker in Forum at 9 am, and Worship at 10:30 am. Spread the word, and invite your neighbors!

Join the Choir! We have begun a new choir season, and you are invited to join! If you have experience singing and are looking for a wonderful group of people to sing with, please join us! For more information, contact Mark Acker at mark@fcchendersonville.org.

Our Sunday School Assistant, Emily Gill, is available for odd jobs! Anything you've been putting off because it's a bit too hard - Emily can do it! Organizing, cleaning, yard work, decorating for holidays, and more. Emily is putting herself through graduate school to become a social worker and better help our community; these odd jobs are one of the ways she can help our community and earn a little money for school along the way. Contact her at egracegill@gmail.com or at 843-309-7597.

We will welcome New Members into our FCCH church family on Sunday, September 13! If you are interested in joining the church or would like to speak to Karla before doing so, please contact Jennifer in the church office at office@fcchendersonville.org or by calling 828-692-8630.

Happening at FCCH this week:

Mon, 8/17	10:00 am: Community Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall 11:30 am: Blooms of Kindness, Fellowship Hall
Tues, 8/18	4:00 pm: Community Meditation, Library 5:00 pm: Friendship Dinner, Fellowship Hall
Wed, 8/19	10:00 am: Sit & Stitch, Library 3:15 pm: Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
Thurs, 8/20	10:00 am: Blue Ridge Chpt Ikebana Meeting, Fellowship Hall 1:30 pm: Crone Talk, Fellowship Hall 7:00 pm: Buddy K Rehearsal, Fellowship Hall

Save these Future Dates:

August 23 – John Pavlovitz speaks in Forum and worship

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please remember these people in your prayers this week

- Phyllis Rhinehart is having ear surgery on Tuesday, August 18.
- Hilarie Glasgow and family of Jean Hawkins, her wife, who died last Saturday.
- Lori Garrison, and the recipient of her donated kidney, from surgery last week.
- Jeannie Stewart had knee replacement surgery this week.
- Gail Blate had back surgery this week.
- Kay Davis is receiving chemotherapy in Florida.
- Ericka Fagerlin is in rehab to gain strength.
- Reba Austin, Jennifer Austin-Janssen's mother, fell last week, had surgery to repair a fractured wrist, and is in rehab.
- George and Linda Hemingway, friends of Bruce Mills and Jim Hollingsworth, are dealing with the difficulties of ALS that George has.
- Danielle, dear college friend of Sheri Wilson, has Stage 4 cancer and despite all treatments and a positive attitude the cancer is winning.
- Mindy Myers is dealing with health issues and treatments.

Birthdays this week:

Kevin Tierney	8/16
Helen Miller	8/18
Pete Hueberger	8/18
Ruth Howe	8/20

To Our Visitors and Guests:

We are so glad you are here today! If you are interested in learning more about our congregation, denomination or membership, Karla or Mark would love to talk with you.

MINISTERS
All of the Congregation

Rev. Karla Miller
Pastor
karla@fcchendersonville.org

Ms. Jennifer Austin-Janssen
Church Administrator
office@fcchendersonville.org

Mr. Mark Acker
Minister of Music
& Pastoral Associate
mark@fcchendersonville.org

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Welcome Home

First Congregational Church welcomes persons of all ages, races, gender identities, sexual orientations, theological beliefs, and mental health conditions. In our diversity, we find strength and a way to understand the inclusiveness of God. No matter where you've been, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome and needed here.



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH • HENDERSONVILLE**

August 16, 2026

Justice*Compassion*Belonging

Order of Worship

Welcome

Karla Miller

Gathering Song

Blessed are you who hunger, blessed are you who thirst.
Blessed are you who mourn and feel no power on this earth.
Blessed are you who are poor in spirit and don’t know what to do,
Oh child of God, blessed are you. Blessed are you,
Oh blessed are you, Oh child of God, blessed are you.

A Time of Centering

Voluntary

The Prayer
David Foster
Ben Smith, cello

Opening Words

This is a thin place where earth and heaven embrace.

Where past interweaves with future, where we gather expectantly.

This is a thin place where hopes are renewed,

Where faith is restored, where peace is revived, where love is refreshed.

This is a thin place. Love about us.

Love beside us. And love within us.

Grace revealed as we worship together.

*Hymn

God, You Hear Our Weary Praying

God, you hear our weary praying, and you know that we lose heart. All around we see the suffering of a world that's torn apart. We see leaders of the nations filled with arrogance and greed. We see friends and family hurting, facing overwhelming need.

God, we're sometimes filled with wonder: Do our prayers do any good? Do they change the nations' leaders? Do they change our neighborhood? Why do loved ones keep on suffering when they're in our constant prayer? But we trust you hear our longings. You are listening. You are there.

There is love in your compassion! God, you're goodwith love to v share. We will lift to you our sorrows and the burdens that we bear. We will pray, for you are with us! We will pray, for you are kind! May we trust that you will guide us, and with goodness, all will shine.

Scripture Readings

Philippians 4: 6-7
Luke 5: 15-16

Gracen Duffield

Music

Centering Prayer
Eichelberger / Chambers / Buett
Rob and Karen Monks, soloists

I wanna be where my feet are. I wanna breathe the life around me. I wanna listen as my heart beats, right on time. I wanna be where my feet are. I chase my worries. I flee my sorrows. But what you give me is now. So take my burdens and my tomorrows. I wanna be where my feet are. I run to capture the next horizon. But what you give me is here. I get no farther and still I find you. The ground below me is how you hold me. I wanna be where my feet are.

Contemporary Reading

I No Longer Pray
Chelan Harkin

I no longer pray—
now I drink dark chocolate
and let the moon sing to me.
I no longer pray—
I let my ancestors dance
through my hips
at the slightest provocation.
I no longer pray—
I go to the river
and howl my ancient pain
into the current.

I no longer pray—
I ache, I desire,
I say “yes” to my longing.
I no longer pray as I was taught
but as the stars crawl
onto my lap like soft animals at nighttime
and God tucks my hair behind my ears
with the gentle fingers of her wind
and a new intimacy is uncovered in everything,
perhaps it's that I'm finally learning
how to pray.

Sermon

Is Prayer a Waste of Time?

Mark Acker

A Time for Reflection

Prayers of the People

Loving God, hear our prayer.

A Prayer for Peace adapted by Greta Vosper

As I live every day, I want to be a channel for peace, may I bring love where there is hatred and healing where there is hurt; joy where there is sadness and hope where is there is fear. I pray that I may always try to understand and comfort other people as well as seeking comfort and understanding from them. Wherever possible, may I choose to be a light in the darkness, a help in times of need, and a caring, honest friend. And may justice, kindness, and peace flow from my heart forever. Amen.

Response

All shall be well. All shall be well. All manner of things shall be well. All shall be well.

Invitation to Offering

Offertory

Think On These Things
Mark Patterson

FCCH Choir

Whatever is pure, whatever is true, whatever is noble and just and good; think on these things, live by these things, rejoice together in thee things, and the God of peace will be with you. All that's pure, all that's true, all that's noble and just and good; think on these things, live by these things, rejoice together in these things, and the God of peace will be with you. When the cares of life surround you, when the storms of doubt sweep in, turn to God with all things in prayer, and a peace beyond all knowing will guard you and guide you.

*Doxology

Halle, halle, halle-lu-jah. Halle, halle, halle-lu-jah. Halle, halle, halle-lu-jah. Halle-lu-jah, hallelujah.

*Prayer of Blessing

God of all creation, we offer these gifts so that your love may be magnified. Amen.

*Hymn

In the Quiet, God, I Listen

In the quiet, God, I listen to the music in my soul; You have placed a song within me, for your grace has made me whole. There is so much to distract us that would block the gentle sound; Yet I listen for the singing of your music all around.

You are present in the places that I give to silent prayer. In my resting, in my waking, in my asking — you are there. As I think about my journey — what has been and what might be — God, I hear your words of mercy; and your love song strengthens me.

God, I pray I'll keep on listening even though these times are tough, And I pray that I'll be open to the wonders of your love. You're the Writer and the Singer, you're the Love that rises strong. God — Creator, Christ and Spirit — let me answer to your song.

Intentions and Benediction

Postlude

Hornpipe (from Water Music)
G. F. Handel
Ben Smith, cello

The light of Christ is carried into the world.

*Please rise in body or spirit

Worship Notes

Prayer cards are in the pew racks; completed cards may be placed in the offering plate or at the candle table.

You are invited to light a candle at the candle table.

The Prayer Wall hangs on the lectern. Paper hearts are provided on which you may write your prayer and attach it to the wall.

Copies of today’s sermon are available in the narthex and on the front pew, and will be posted on our website tomorrow.

Altar Artist: Joann Coonrod Acolyte: Marcella Leshner

Cover art: “Reaching for Light” from StockCake