Announcements:

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.

Support the upcoming Hunger Walk on September 19th! There many congregants collecting donations for the walk, and our Service & Giving team can provide a donation packet with registration information. See Dede Walton or Sheila Clendenning today!

Handcrafted necklaces of Catherine Fairbanks will be available the next couple of Sundays in the Fellowship Hall after worship. The proceeds will go to the Hunger Walk. Suggested donation is $20.

Happening at FCCH this week:

Mon, 8/31	10:00 am:	Community Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall
Tues, 9/1	10:00 am:	Prayer Shawl Group, Parlor
	4:00 pm:	Community Meditation, Parlor
	6:00 pm:	PFLAG Meeting, Fellowship Hall
Wed, 9/2	10:00 am:	Physical Resources Committee, Choir Room
	10:00 am:	Sit & Stitch, Library
	3:15 pm:	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
Thurs, 9/3	10:00 am:	WNC Quilters Meeting, Fellowship Hall
	1:30 pm:	Crone Talk, Parlor
	7:00 pm:	Buddy K Rehearsal, Fellowship Hall

Next Sunday, 9/6, for Forum: Meaningful Books - led by Karla and Mark: We're beginning a new sermon series based on books that have been meaningful to Karla and Mark. So, Forum this week is a time for everyone to share a book (fiction or nonfiction) that has been meaningful to you. Please offer a brief summary, tell us how the book has been meaningful to you, and how this book has impacted your life. We can't wait to hear about your favorite books!

Sermon Next Sunday: The Four Agreements

Save These Future Dates:

Sept 15 -- Friendship Dinner
Oct 20 -- Friendship Dinner
Nov 26 -- Thanksgiving Potluck
Dec 14 -- Christmas Music Sunday

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please remember these people in your prayers this week

-Our friend Susan Howard had knee replacement surgery this week.
-Anna, FCCH friend who fell and is in an induced coma at Mission for treatment. Prayers for her sons, Oscar & Alberto as they care for her.
-Phyllis Rhinehart had surgery on her ear recently.
-Hilarie Glasgow and family of Jean Hawkins, her wife, who died recently.
-Lori Garrison, and the recipient of her donated kidney, from surgery recently.
-Jeannie Stewart had knee replacement surgery recently.
-Gail Blate had back surgery recently.
-Kay Davis is receiving chemotherapy in Florida.
-Ericka Fagerlin is in rehab to gain strength.
-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:

Heather Fitzwilliam	9/1
Karla Miller	9/3
Jairo Aguilar	9/4
Kim Villanti	9/4
Carolyn Maloy	9/5

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

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

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

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Welcome Home

First Congregational Church welcomes persons of all ages, races, gender identities, sexual orientations, theological beliefs, and those living with mental challenges. 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 30, 2026

Justice*Compassion*Belonging

Order of Worship

Welcome

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 Deep River
Moses Hogan
Linda Laderach, violin

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** Sing a New World Into Being

Sing a new world into being, sound a bold and hopeful theme.
Find a tune for silent yearnings, lend your voice and dare to dream.
Dream a church where all who worship find their lives and loves belong. Sing a new world into being, sing as Christ inspires your song.

Sing a new world into being, where each gender class and race.
Brings its rainbow gifts and colors to God's limitless embrace.
Where the lines that once divided form instead the ties that bind.
Sing a new world into being, Risk transforming heart and mind.

Sing a new world into being, where the homeless find a home.
Where no children ever hunger, but are filled with God's shalom.
Where all people work for justice, where all hate and vengeance cease. Sing a new world into being, raise the harmonies of peace.

Scripture Reading Revelation 21:1–8 Ann Twiggs
(a paraphrase based on the World English Bible & NRSVUE)

Contemporary Readings

The Faithful Who Have Chosen Not to Wait
C.B. Anderson

He rose and told us He would come again
To supervise a world of righteous men
And women who believed in what He'd said,
That both the living and the wakened dead
Should nevermore of chrism be bereft.
But what of those who say He never left?

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'"Heaven"—is what I Cannot Reach'"
Emily Dickenson

'Heaven'—is what I cannot reach!
The Apple on the Tree—
Provided it do hopeless—hang—
That—'Heaven' is—to Me!

The Color, on the Cruising Cloud—
The interdicted Land—
Behind the Hill—the House behind—
There—Paradise—is found …

Music Peace
Ed Cash
Dee Shuttlesworth and Sherie Wilson

When my mind is like a battlefield and my heart is overcome by fear and hope seems like a ship that's lost at sea, my enemies on every side, and I'm tempted to run and hide; your gentle whisper reaches out to me. Peace holds me when I'm broken, sweet peace that passes understanding. When the whole wide world is crashing down, I fall to my knees and breathe in Your peace. Fiery arrows whistling, the terror of the night sets in; but I can feel Your angels all around. I am resting underneath the shelter of Your mighty wings. Your promises are where my hope is found. I remember who You are. You're the God who's never far. So I will not be afraid. God, You always keep me safe in Your arms. I breathe You, I breathe You in take a deep breath and be still and know that You are God alone.

Sermon How to Get to Heaven, or At Least, How to Stay Out of Hell Karla Miller

A Time for Reflection

Prayers of the People

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

Congregational Prayer

Loving God, Source of Life, Breath of Compassion, and Spirit of Justice, we gather in gratitude for Your presence among us. You are Wisdom that guides, Mercy that restores, and Love that welcomes all. Open our hearts to one another and to the work of peace, healing, and hope in the world. May we reflect Your kindness, seek Your truth, and walk together in courage and grace. 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 City Called Heaven FCCH Choir
Josephine Poelinitz
George Evans, soloist

I am a pilgrim of sorrow, I'm left in this wide world alone. I ain't got no hope for tomorrow. I'm trying to make heaven my home. Sometimes I'm tossed and I'm driven, Lord. Sometimes I just don't know which way to turn. I'm trying to make heaven my home.

*Hymn God, Whose Love Is Always Stronger

God, whose love is always stronger than our weakness, pride and fear, in your world, we pray and wonder how to be more faithful here. Hate too often grows inside us; fear rules what the nations do. So we pray, when wars divide us: Give us love, Lord! Make us new!

Love is patient, kind and caring, never arrogant or rude, never boastful, all things bearing; Love rejoices in the truth. When we're caught up in believing war will make the terror cease, show us Jesus' way of living; May our strength be in your peace.

May our faith in you be nourished; May your churches hear your call. May our lives be filled with courage as we speak your love for all. Here on earth, as in the heavens, may the One who gives new birth, Give us love, that we may share it Till your love renews the earth!

Intentions and Benediction

Postlude I Will Always Love You
Dolly Parton
Linda Laderach, violin

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: Dawn Kucera **Acolyte:** Joe Streer

Cover art: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell by Keith Haring, 1984
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