

Announcements:

Look for the table in the Fellowship Hall today where you can learn about and register for the Circle of Friends small groups. These groups will meet monthly from September 2026 through May 2027. This is a great way to connect with others in the congregation. There are also forms available in the church office. Fill one out and leave it in the basket prior to August 5th.

This afternoon we have another Ice Cream Trail social at Celtic Creamery Ice Cream from 2-3 pm. Come have a cool, tasty treat and fellowship with others!

“Asking for a Friend – Questions from the Congregation” is the August sermon series that Karla and Mark have agreed to do! Please submit your questions as they create a sermon series from your questions. There are pink slips of paper in each pew and at each door to the sanctuary. Leave them in the offering plate or in the church office!

On Sunday, August 2, we will have a “Tell Me More!” after worship. If you are interested in learning more about our church, the UCC, or becoming a member, please join us in the Parlor (just off the Sanctuary) for information from Rev. Karla.

Happening at FCCH this week:

Mon, 7/13 10:00 am: Coffee and Conversation, Fellowship Hall

Tues, 7/14 4:00 pm: Community Meditation, Parlor

Wed, 7/15 10:00 am: Sit & Stitch, Library

Thurs, 7/16 1:30 pm: Crone Talk, Parlor

Save these Future Dates:

August 1 – Bearwallow Mtn hike with Karla
August 11 – Ice Cream Trail: Whitt's Custard
August 13 – Game Night, Fellowship Hall
August 18 – Friendship Dinner, Fellowship Hall
August 23 – John Pavlovitz speaks in Forum and worship

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: Fern Carter **Acolyte:** Joyce Tierney

Cover art: More bananas off the interweb

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please remember these people in your prayers this week

- We offer our deepest love and sympathy to the family and friends of Rachel Crisp, who passed away on July 2, especially to her parents, Ann and Bill Crisp, and to her partner John.
- Carol and Jennifer Austin-Janssen, on the death of Carol's dear sister, Lois Sanchez.
- Virginia Gambill is home recovering from pneumonia.
- Julius Pratt broke his hip & had a hip replacement. He is now at Hendersonville Rehab for healing.
- Emory Gill has had multiple surgeries after a very bad fall, and now recovering at home from the latest surgery.
- Long-time congregant Carolyn Schmalz died recently. Please pray for her family.
- Jesse Pearson, son of Sharon Pearson and Richard Vickers, has been diagnosed with significant heart issues.
- Peggy Vickers, sister of Richard Vickers and Sharon Pearson, is newly diagnosed with breast cancer after being hospitalized after a fall.
- Ken Whitney is home after a hospitalization for a respiratory illness.
- Long-time congregant, Jon Walters, on the death of his wife, Jan.
- Prayers for LGBTQIA+ who feel unsafe or unwelcome because of religious trauma or world events and the social environment in which they live.
- Genie Murphy, sister of Ann Twiggs, had surgery on her lung due to cancer diagnosis.
- Kay Davis is receiving chemo treatments for her cancer.
- Mindy Myers is dealing with health issues and treatments.
- Ericka Fagerlin is dealing with various health issues.
- Prayers for the people of Iran and Lebanon experiencing the ravages of war.
- Prayers for our military who may be experiencing mixed feelings, prayers for safety.

Birthdays this week:

Dede Walton	7/12
Bal Goleman	7/13
Gail Blate	7/13
Sharon Schultz-Pratt	7/13
Roger Dashner	7/14
Mary Rather	7/15
Catherine Fairbanks	7/16
Bob McLendon	7/18

MINISTERS All of the Congregation

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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**

July 12, 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

Wade In the Water
Spiritual, arranged Mark Hayes

Opening Words

People of God, look around you now and see the faces of those we know and love --

Neighbors and friends, siblings in spirit, a community of kindred hearts.

People of God, take a moment now to look around you and see the faces of those we hardly know --

Strangers, sojourners, forgotten ones, those who need an outstretched hand.

People of God, members and friends, newcomers and guests, take a moment now to look around you and see all the images of God assembled here.

God's spirit shines in me, in you, and in every person and creature on earth.

*Hymn

Faithful God, You Sent Your Spirit

**Faithful God, you sent your Spirit long ago for all the world.
You gave life and said to share it, all as one, within your love.
May we see your wondrous blessing when your people everywhere
Work together, all proclaiming love that binds us, love to share.**

**God of hope, you daily nurture those who seek to follow you.
You're not bound by any culture; You love rich and poor ones, too.
In an ever-changing nation, may your churches welcome in every
child of your creation, giving hope to all again.**

**God of love, may we in worship welcome all diversity.
May we reach in trust and friendship to the poor and refugee.
May we seek Christ in the stranger, breaking bonds of hate and
fear. By your Spirit, may we offer glimpses of your kingdom here.**

First Reading

Numbers 22:21-39

Dee Shuttlesworth

Second Reading

"Messenger"
Mary Oliver

My work is loving the world.
Here the sunflowers, there the hummingbird— equal seekers of sweetness.
Here the quickening yeast; there the blue plums.
Here the clam deep in the speckled sand.
Are my boots old? Is my coat torn?
Am I no longer young, and still half-perfect? Let me keep my mind on what matters, which is my work, which is mostly standing still and learning to be astonished.
The phoebe, the delphinium.
The sheep in the pasture, and the pasture.
Which is mostly rejoicing, since all the ingredients are here, which is gratitude, to be given a mind and a heart and these body-clothes, a mouth with which to give shouts of joy to the moth and the wren, to the sleepy dug-up clam, telling them all, over and over, how it is that we live forever.

Sermon

The Donkey Never Just Stops

Karla Miller

A Time for Reflection

Prayers of the People

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

Congregational Prayer

God of amazing mercy, we thank you for love that refuses to stay in the places we expect. You surprise us with grace spoken through unfamiliar voices, kindness offered by unlikely hands, and hope rising from corners we once overlooked. Open our eyes to see Your image in every neighbor. Open our hearts to welcome wisdom from those we have misunderstood. Open our lives to receive love from strangers, from the margins, from the least and the last. May we become a community that not only receives unexpected love, but embodies it— crossing boundaries, widening tables, and reflecting Your boundless grace in word and deed. In the name of the One who taught us that love is stronger than fear, 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

If I Can Help Somebody
Alma Andruzzo
Bruce Mills, soloist

If I can help somebody as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a word or song, if I can show somebody who is traveling long, then my living shall not be in vain. Then my living shall not be in vain. If I can love all others as I'm called to do, if I can bring back beauty to a world unwrought. If I can spread love's message that we need to live, then my living shall not be in vain.

*Doxology

**Halle, halle, halle-lu-jah. Halle, halle, halle-lu-jah.
Halle, halle, hall-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 Space I Listen

In the quiet space 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 now your song.

Intentions and Benediction

Postlude

Voluntary on "St. Denio"
Michael Burkhardt

The light of Christ is carried into the world.

*Please rise in body or spirit