

Announcements:

The used-technology drive is next Saturday, August 1st!
FCCH's Social Justice Team is hosting the drop-off drive from 10 am - 1pm in the church parking lot. Drive up and drop off your old cords, connections, monitors, cell phones, etc. Dig into those drawers and boxes for the items no longer used in your home so they can be repurposed by "Through the Trees".

The Bearwallow Mountain hike is next Saturday, August 1st. We will meet at the church at 8 AM to carpool to the trailhead, which takes about 40 minutes to get to. There is very limited parking, so the fewer the cars, the better. There are two choices to go to the top, where there are lovely views and COWS. One is wide and accessible to all levels of walkers, and one is more challenging. You can decide which one to tackle when we get there. Everyone should wear sturdy shoes, and hiking poles are always recommended for knees and balance. Bring water, and a snack. It is so beautiful at the top. We will ALL walk down the gravel road at the end.

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.

‘Visio Divino’ is Latin for ‘divine seeing’ and it is about allowing the Spirit to speak to us through visual art. At our Forum on August 9, we will focus on art as a means of spiritual connection. FCCH artist Connie Knight will discuss her art that is now hanging in our gallery hall, including her series on the Creation story. We also invite other visual artists to bring one or two of your works and to tell us about it. And, if you are not an artist, but are an art lover, you are invited to bring a piece of art that you own and to share its meaning with the group. Please join us for a very special morning!

Happening at FCCH this week:

Mon, 7/27	10:00 am: Community Coffee Hour, Fellowship Hall
Tues, 7/28	4:00 pm: Community Mediation, Parlor
Wed, 7/29	10:00 am: Sit & Stitch, Library
Thurs, 7/30	1:30 pm: Crone Talk, Parlor 7:00 pm: Buddy K Rehearsal, Fellowship Hall
Sat. 8/1	9:00 am: Bearwallow Mountain Hike with Karla 10:00 am: SJT Used Technology Drive, FCC parking lot

Save these Future Dates:

- August 1 – Bearwallow Mountain 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

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please remember these people in your prayers this week

- Julie Muehe fell and fractured her shoulder and is awaiting corrective surgery.
- Kathy Martin, partner of Pete Heuberger, has had to have knee replacement postponed due to more emerging health concerns.
- Kay Davis is (temporarily) moving to Florida to receive more aggressive treatments for her cancer.
- Pam Hamilton, friend of Ann Twiggs, has multiple broken bones after a fall, and in ICU in Savannah, and facing multiple corrective surgeries.
- Ann and Bill Crisp, on the tragic death of their daughter Rachel, and to her partner John.
- Carol and Jennifer Austin-Janssen, on the death of Carol's dear sister, Lois Sanchez.
- 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 recovering at home from the latest surgery.
- 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.
- Prayers for LGBTQIA+ who feel unsafe or unwelcome because of religious trauma or world events and the social environment in which they live.
- Mindy Myers is dealing with health issues and treatments.
- Ericka Fagerlin is dealing with various health issues.

Birthdays this week:

Fe Avis	7/26
Ritch Yount	7/27
Helen Vennard	7/28
Lynn Conchado	7/28
Susan Huff	7/30
Catherine Lynch	8/1

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

First Congregational United Church of Christ
1735 5th Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC. 28739
828.692.8630 / www.fcchendersonville.org



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

July 26, 2026

Justice*Compassion*Belonging

Order of Worship

WelcomeKarla 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

VoluntaryHear to the Heart of God
Brant Adams
Joel Helfand, soloist

Opening Words

God of the journey, we come together from different places.

We come seeking a community of siblings and to find companionship for the journey.

We yearn to live fully, and to celebrate the diversity of God's human family and the unity of our call to love and justice.

May our journey help us to reconnect to the Holy so that we may be vessels of love for all creation.

*HymnGod of Love

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 kin-dom here.

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 peace, you send your spirit each and every day for all. You give life and say 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, peace to share.

Scripture ReadingsEzekial 37:1-14
Matthew 27:51-54Marcella Leshar

Contemporary ReadingDreams
Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

SermonDry Bones & ZombiesKarla Miller

A Time for Reflection

Prayers of the People

Loving God, hear our prayer.

Congregational Prayer

Holy One, we lift our eyes beyond what overwhelms us, beyond the noise, the fear, the unfinished work. Our help comes from You — the Source of love, justice, and life itself. You are with us when the path feels uncertain and when the way is clear. You are with us in our lostness and in our coming home, in moments of courage and moments of fear.

Keep watch, we pray, over those who are weary, and those who struggle to believe they matter. Hold this community in your care — our bodies, our minds, our spirits, our work for healing and justice. Remind us that we never walk alone. That love surrounds us, before us and behind us, now and always.

Response

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

Invitation to Offering

OffertoryBeautiful City (Godspell)
Stephen Schwartz
Sage Crum, soloist

Out of the ruins and rubble, out of the smoke, out of our night of struggle can we see a ray of hope? One pale thin ray reaching for the day . . . We can build a beautiful city. Yes, we can (Yes, we can) We can build a beautiful city. Not a city of angels, But we can build a city of peace. We may not reach the ending, but we can start. Slowly but surely mending, brick by brick, heart by heart. Now, maybe now, we start learning how. When your trust is all but shattered. When your faith is all but killed. You can give up bitter and battered, or you can slowly start to build finally a city of hope, a city of dreams, a city of love!

*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.

*HymnMiracles of Justice

Could miracles of justice surround all lives on earth,
Till those who sit in darkness find healing, light, and birth?
Can we imagine prisoners, allowed to start anew?
Can we who've been discouraged now trust again in you?

Could those who've faced oppression find love and welcome here?
Could hungry, homeless children be free of want and fear?
Could we your church find blessing in reaching to the poor?
Can we your church imagine what we've been called here for?

O God of love and justice, may we imagine, too,
How faith, put into practice, can change the world for you.
May what we each imagine when we are at our best
Be miracles of kindness till all your world is blessed.

Intentions and Benediction

PostludeRide the Chariot
Patsy Simms
Joel Helfand, soloist

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: Phyllis RhinehartAcolyte: Kirsten Howard

Cover art: