FCCH Congregational Report Congregation April

2024

	-			100
	Page	What's There	Page	What's There
	2	From the Pastor's Desk	10	Artist on Display - Julius Pratt
	_	Note from the Moderator Message from Service & Giving	11- 13	Upcoming Events of Note at a Glance
1	4	Ashley Series - Catherine Meeks	14	Pet Memorial Atrium
1	5	Service & Giving Volunteers of the Month	15	Circle of Friends
ĺ	6	April Forums League of Women Voters	16	Friendship Dinner
	7	Garden Update	17	March Council Meeting Highlights
	8	Easter Sunday	18	Resource Page: Groups, Birthdays, attendance
	9	Easter Sunday in Sunday School	19	Inspirational Quote/ To Make You Laugh



Hello Beloved FCCH.

In just a few weeks, I will be leaving on my sabbatical for the summer months, and



many of you have asked for a preview of what is to come. The sabbatical time will run from May 20-August 31. I will return to worship on September 2, and back in the pulpit on September 8 on our Regathering Sunday.

First of all, in a standard call agreement between a pastor and congregation, it is noted that, every five years, clergy have a three month time for renewal and reconnection. As you know, the church was awarded a Clergy Renewal Grant on the theme of Pilgrimage from the Lilly Foundation. We chose the theme of pilgrimage because sabbatical time is a kind of journey—inward and outward.

Some of the grant funding is for congregational use. The majority will be used for a lead sabbatical pastor, along with a lineup of amazing preachers for each Sunday. We are blessed to have our own Mark Acker to serve as lead pastor—he will be managing all the day to day happenings as well as the pastoral concerns of the congregation. He will continue to preach once a month as usual. In addition, the Personnel and Pastoral Relations Ministry (PPRM) will be in place for support for Mark and for the rest of the congregation.

Our guest preachers include Rev. Sharad Cressman, Chaplain at Brevard College; John Pavlovitz (former Ashley Lecturer, author and spokesperson for progressive Christianity); Rev. Brian Combs, Founding Pastor at Haywood Street Congregation in Asheville; Rev. Dr. Joan Saniuk, retired pastor of Sacred Journey Metropolitan Community Church, President of PFLAG-Hendersonville, and long time activist; and Rev. Dr. Carter Heyward, former Ashley Lecturer, author and retired professor of theology at Episcopal Divinity School.

In May, we will have a full schedule available for you, along with Forum Topics, and ideas for you to encourage your own intentional pilgrimages, whether you travel anywhere or not! To that end, I hope you sign up for my book study, "The Soul of A Pilgrim" by Christine Valters Paintner. Christine is a student of Celtic Christianity and is an old soul. The book is delicious.

My sabbatical will start with a trip out to California with Liz, for two weeks, traveling and hiking up and down the coast. Then, in June and July, I will be spending a lot of time in spiritual direction, and hanging out at the lake, kayaking, paddle boarding and other nefarious activities (like cooking.) At the end of the summer, we are going to Amsterdam for a few days, and then travelling to Switzerland where we will be pilgrims on an inn-to-inn hike in the Alps.

I hope you will join me on our congregational pilgrimage! Love and Peace, Karla

Moderator Column



On Sunday, April 14th, at 9am, your Church Council and our Ministries will be conducting our Forum .If you are a new member within last year or two it is important that you attend, and I sincerely hope you can . If you are wanting to get more involved in our Church Ministries, this Forum should be very helpful and informative to you . I will present the Moderator Goals for 2024 which were just approved

by our Church Council [listed below], and I need the membership input on how we can develop a plan of action to further these goals for our church. Each of our Ministry Facilitators will be taking your questions on how to get involved or areas that you feel our church needs to emphasize or improve. This church, through the years, has blessed me with shining examples of people who have volunteered to help lead our church with grace and wisdom. We need you to be an active part of your church's future, so see you at the Forum on April 14th!

2024 Moderator Goals

- To identify and provide help to any members who are struggling with age related limitations, illness or loneliness
- To increase the number of our members, especially new members, who are actively participating in our ministries
- To maintain and continue for FCC to be the leader in environmentally friendly churches in Henderson County
- To increase fellowship opportunities for our members (dinners, outings, social events)
- To continue to increase diversity through new members joining the FCC family

We want our church to be a place where people experience what belongingess feels like. An amazing paradox of belonging is that we feel more like we belong when we help others feel like they belong.

Look What You've Done So Far

Time and again, we are inspired by the strength and generosity of folks gathered in this place, First Congregational.

For instance, you donated more than 300 pounds (!) of nutritious soups (during our January/February Souper Bowl drive), which were then distributed locally by I.A.M. In March, you collected and donated 2 closets stacked full (!!) of much-needed supplies for migrant farm workers and their families. (We'll conduct an official tally next week).

And, as First Congregational dedicates 10%+ of our annual budget to non-profits and agencies that align with the Church's compassion and mission, we've begun to disperse financial donations (as approved in the 2024 budget) on your behalf. In the first quarter, we provided funds to local organizations in the "Inclusivity" category, including: PFLAG Hendersonville, Hendersonville Pride, Open & Affirming Coalition of UCC, Hola Carolina / Hendersonville Cultural Center, TrueRidge, MLK Day of Service / Hendersonville, and NAACP Henderson County.

Thank you!

Stephanie Lowder on behalf of Your Service & Giving Team

Ashley Series - Catherine Meeks - March 9th & 10th



Service & Giving Volunteers of the Month Mark & Marcella Lesher



Our own Mark and Marcella Lesher moved to Hendersonville in late 2019. Mark is a retired engineer, and Marcella is a retired librarian.

After COVID restrictions were lifted, they both became involved with Apple Country Woodcrafters, a non-profit agency that makes heirloom wooden toys for disadvantaged children as its

primary charitable contribution to the community. Mark is on the Board of the group and serves as Toy Chairman. In 2023, 2700 toys were made and distributed at Christmas time to 11 local agencies, including the Storehouse, Boys & Girls Club, Children & Family Resource Center, and the Salvation Army. Apple Country Woodcrafters offers education to its membership regardless of skill level.

Marcella is on the Board of the League of Women Voters of Henderson County and currently serves as Team Leader for Immigration Advocacy. She is also an English language tutor for the Literacy Connection. Both Mark and Marcella also participate in the Progressive Alliance and help to serve meals at the Hendersonville Rescue Mission. They would both love to tell you more about their volunteer activities. All of the agencies they serve have places for many more volunteers.

Article courtesy of Pat Argue pkargue@gmail.com

April Forums

April 14 Active discussion /conversation with new Moderator Bob McLendon and members of your Church Council. 2024 Moderator Goals will be presented for discussion including elder care, increased fellowship opportunities, environmental issues, and how our church members can participate and better understand the needs in our community. For those attending, the hope will be you can better understand "What is my role at FCC?" and how your individual passions and gifts can be enhanced through your church. As Mark said in recent sermon, "We want our church to be a place where people experience what belongingness feels like."

April 21. Writing as Spiritual Practice with Liz Hill - Sometimes our writing is about producing work to be understood or appreciated by others. Writing as spiritual practice is more about process, writing so that we can understand or appreciate something new in ourselves. In this session, we do both. We'll listen closely to a reading, then "free write" individually in reaction to it. We will then be guided to use our own reflections to create a pantoum. Never heard of a pantoum? No worries! All will be explained, and all are invited, regardless of writing experience. Liz is a member friend of FCCH, and is an author, teacher, and spiritual director. She grew up in Staten Island, NY, the setting for her new novel, The Last Brass Ring. To learn more about Liz, please visit www.lizhill.net

April 28 Service and Giving: Suzanne English of the Hope Coalition, The Youth Connection and the Buzz Café and Sober Bar: Come and learn about the work of the Hope Coalition here in Henderson County, and issues surrounding addiction and substance use disorder in Henderson County. Learn about Hope Coalition's work with youth AND about the Buzz Coffee and Sober Bar. You don't want to miss this one!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS:
OF HENDERSON COUNTY

The League of Women Voters of Henderson County (LWVHC) is presenting the program, "Across the Continental Divide," by the BRAVER ANGELS Alliance of Asheville on Thursday, May 2nd, from 5:30-7 pm, at St. James Episcopal Church, 766 North Main Street, Hendersonville.

This is an introduction to the work of Braver Angels, established in 2016, predicated on the principle that many of our most pressing problems are caused by our inability to see the humanity in people with opposing worldviews.

Braver Angels is the nation's largest cross-partisan, volunteer-led movement to bridge the partisan divide. This organization teaches ways to model respect of differing viewpoints, practice listening skills, reduce judgement, and "lower the temperature" to diffuse differences. We invite anyone interested, including high school students, to attend this worthwhile presentation.

For more information about the League of Women Voters of Henderson County, go to LWVHCNC.org

Article courtesy of Marcella Lesher marcella.lesher@gmail.com

Garden Update



Spring has definitely arrived, and the birds and bees are bustling with activity as is the garden crew. The garden has been tilled, and rows have been prepared for our potato crop to be planted (see photo). Preparing the potatoes for planting is a somewhat labor-intensive process.

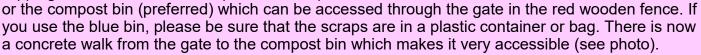
The four blueberry bushes that were planted last year have bloomed. and we are eagerly awaiting the little berries to form. Hopefully we'll be able to harvest them before the birds do. Once the soil has warmed up

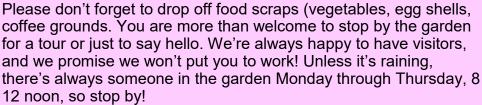
a bit, we'll be planting green bean, okra, and turnip seeds. In addition, collard and cabbage seedlings will be added to the garden.

The photo of two large piles of soil-looking material is actually goat manure. Manure from goats has been found to be of greater value than cow manure for nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. It also quickly composts and is virtually odorless.

A big thank you to those of you who have contributed to our compost pile throughout he winter months. Keep the eggshells, vegetable and fruit scraps, cardboard egg boxes (not the plastic ones), tea bags, coffee grounds and coffee filters coming. Adding compost or "black gold" to our existing soil grows happy, productive plants. We do not use harmful chemical fertilizers to boost the yield of our plants. Instead, we use the compost produced by all the donations you make to the compost pile.

As a reminder, please do NOT add the following items to our compost pile: citrus, meat, fish, eggs or poultry scraps, dairy products, fat, or oils (these items attract rodents and insects), plants or plant clippings, or flowers. Please deposit the scraps, etc. in the blue tub





A few weeks ago, we received a donation of a dozen or so elderberry cuttings to plant in our "back 40", an area that is currently uncultivated. Hopefully they will thrive and eventually provide us with lots of elderberries, unless the birds get to them first. Elderberry jam or syrup anyone? Stay tuned!

Have you noticed the tall metal frame located on the White Pine Drive side of the garden? Field fencing will be attached to it to provide support for growing butternut squash and pole beans. The idea behind using this way of growing vining vegetables is to grow up, not out, and thus conserve space on the ground. In turn, we will

have more space to grow more non-vining vegetables. Article & pictures courtesy of Carolyn Wilson





Easter Sunday, March 31st











Alter Flowers

The beautiful Easter altar flowers were given by Burton & Rita Joyce in honor of the 106th birthday of their mother, Helen Joyce, a long time member of First Congregational Church.

Pictures courtesy of Dawn Kucera dawnkucera@mac.com

Easter Sunday in Sunday School



12 children helped to make an Easter board for the adults at Coffee Hour.

So many beautiful dresses and Happy faces!



zempvirginia@gmail.com

Easter project that was shared with the congregation at coffee hour

Julius Pratt Artist on Display



My parents were an Episcopal priest and church organist.

I always liked to draw. After high school, I served in the Army in Europe, a great influence on my work.

I attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, majoring in Art, then the Pratt (no relation) Institute in New York City.

I was an Art teacher at all school levels --- private, elementary through high school, and college. I was also a graphic artist and product designer.

My wife, Sukey, was on the craft circuit. Being a ceramic artist, she got me started working in clay.

My paintings are done with acrylic paint on canvas or panel. Ceramic pieces are formed, fired, and finished in acrylic with color changing reflective bits.

I try to create interest and mystery. What inspires me is seeing the work grow

from being an idea into something that

has potential and consequence.



Upcoming events of note at a glance



New Member Sunday

April 14th



Sunday, April 14th at 5 pm

If you are "new" to First Congregational Church (whether you've joined or not) in the past four years, please join us for pizza and conversation with Karla and Mark.

We want to hear about your experience in being a part of FCCH, and help you find your place of belonging and service if you are still looking for your niche in our church.

Please reserve a place by contacting Jo at office@fcchendersonville.org

Mark. We



Wednesday, April 17th at 5 pm

Bring a main dish, salad, vegetable or dessert to share, as well as your own plates, cups, and silverware

Friendship dinners are a great way for us to get to know each other better.

Upcoming events of note at a glance







Your adult child won't speak to you?

It's one of the most painful experiences in life, and one of the most difficult things to talk about.

Join our Recovery Group

Every Saturday beginning April 20th 8:30 am to 9:45 am First Congregational Church Library 1735 Fifth Ave. W. Hendersonville, NC 28739

Some facts about parental estrangement from adult kids:

- Parental estrangement is not rare. Research suggests that 12 percent of parent-child relationships in the United States are estranged. Some call it the silent epidemic.
- Parental estrangement tends to occur among older parents with over a third falling in the 70 to 80 age range.
- In spite of the prevalence of parental estrangement, most people are surprised by how common it is. This is largely due to the shame that parents feel in admitting that their adult children have broken contact with them.
- Since admitting parental estrangement to others is so difficult to do, parents often feel isolated in the experience.
- Only 5% of estranged parents say that they cut off the relationship. It is usually the case that the estranged parent is left longing for a relationship that they have no power to reinstate.

Email: peak.feanamavis@gmail.com

Brought to you by PEAK and your Henderson County Council on Aging.

No one ages alone.



Register here.

PEAK

Estrangement from your adult children and grandchildren is among the most painful of human experiences. The pain is magnified by the fact that it is difficult to talk about and, therefore, isolating. You are not alone!

Find help at the PEAK (Parents of Estranged Adult Kids) Recovery Group.

It meets in the church library every Saturday morning, 8:30 to 9:45 AM, beginning April 20th. Please help us prepare for your coming by registering here:

https:// www.parentsofestran gedadultkids.com/ peak-registrationhendersonville/

Questions? Call Fe Anam Avis at 614-208-4090 or email him at

fe@asecondday.com.

Brought to you by First
Congregational
Church, PEAK, and your
Henderson County
Council on Aging.
No one ages alone.



Upcoming events of note at a glance





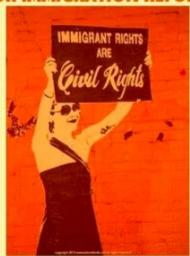
Calling All Poets

Our first poetry meeting has stimulated some interest on the part of Rapid River Arts and Culture Magazine. Poetry Editor Tom Baugh would like participants to know that the magazine is always interested in new poets and new, previously unpublished, poems. Tom is currently filling the issues for early to mid-2025. If you would like to see your poetry in print, contact Tom at hiddenspring2@gmail.com

SILENT VIGIL

AAAAAA

FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM



FRIDAY, APRIL 19th 4:00 to 4:30pm

IN FRONT OF THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

Then join us from 4:30-5:30 at Oklawaha Brewing for our monthly Postcard Party

We have signs or bring your own

Pet Memorial Atrium In memory of...

Have you ever grieved the loss of a pet? Pets are family members that deserve to be treated like family members (sometimes better) both in life and in death. Here at First Congregational, we understand that grief. Did you know you can scatter your pet's ashes in the church atrium?

This special area was funded by Mark Acker, in memory of his parents. It was designed, planted, and continues to be maintained by Lin and Craig Stogner (members of the Ministry of Physical Resources). Initial plantings included a Clematis, three Encore© Azaleas, several Lenten Roses, two Heavenly Bamboo bushes, three Heuchera, Hosta, Daffodils, and a Pieris bush.

The atrium garden is decorated for the seasons and, since its initial planting, has acquired several new specimens. Bird houses and feeders adorn the area, and a rain barrel has recently been added to obtain environmentally sound, free water!



An inside viewing area (lobby) exists that offers comfortable seating for quiet reflection and bird watching. The lobby also displays a book with stories and pictures of the faithful pets whose cremains have been scattered. Books about Dog Heaven and Cat Heaven by Cynthia Rylant are on display in the lobby to read and comfort you.

Karla or Mark perform a short Service of Remembrance for each for each pet interred in the Pet Atrium.

If you have any questions, or would like to honor your pet by making this lovely garden the final resting place for your pet's cremains, pamphlets are located throughout the church with additional information. Donations for new plantings and maintenance are always appreciated and accepted.



Lin & Craig Stogner, our Atrium Managers

Article & pictures courtesy of Lin Stogner alfandellie@gmail.com

Circle of Friends, Bay Breeze, March 28th



Our Family Circle met today (this is what we call our Circle of Friends group) at the Bay Breeze restaurant on Asheville Highway. We had an absolute blast! Our group phoned Jim Jolly from our table, and each of us spoke to him. We told him how much we love him and that we will be praying for him every day until he can rejoin our group. I told him that we are keeping his seat warm until he kicks cancer's butt! We are, after all, a community. We love and support one another!

Pictures and article courtesy of Bruce Mills bmills9@att.net

Friendship Dinner March 19th











Pictures courtesy of Dawn Kucera dawnkucera@mac.com

Council Meeting Highlights for March 2024

Important Note: Council meetings are always open to all FCC Members and Friends. Please notify Moderator Bob McLendon if you would like to attend.				
Karla presented our Moderator, Bob McLendon, with Ed Argue's United Church of Christ Cross medallion. The medallion will be passed on annually to each Moderator.				
□ February was a good month for the church financially.				
o YTD Total Income \$18,243 MORE than budgeted.				
o YTD Total Expenses \$ 617 LESS than budgeted.				
o YTD Net Result \$18,860 BETTER than budgeted.				
o Our investments are also doing well so far this year.				
□ A Paving Team meeting was held March 20. Watch for updates to come.				
□ Fellowship Suppers have been rebranded FRIENDSHIP DINNERS and resumed March 19th. They will be held monthly and alternate between Tuesday and Thursday. If you are interested in being a "kitchen angel" (responsible for greeting, set-up, and clean-up) for one or more of these events, contact Diane Rose.				
□ Karla's last Sunday prior to Sabbatical is May 19. Our Sabbatical period will be May 19 through September 1. A calendar of speakers and events is forthcoming.				
☐ Your Church Council is an active group and seeks your support and input to keep us moving forward!				
□ Upcoming events to watch for:				
o 4-Week book study on Pilgrimage.				
o Pizza Party April 14.				
o Forum to introduce you to your Church Council in April.				
o A ministry to assist with age related concerns.				
☐ Hosts, or rather "go-to" persons, are needed to orient guest speakers during the sabbatical period.				
$\hfill \square$ NEW OFFICE HOURS: M - F 8AM $-$ 1PM. The church will be open, and Jo will be at the church during these hours.				
□ There is a new day and time for Church Council meetings: Always the second TUESDAY of the month at 3:30PM! Minutes courtesy of Lin Stogner alfandellie@gmail.com				

Volunteer Opportunities

Facilitator	Group	Day	Contact			
Barbara Rathbun	Bible Study: 1 Verse at a Time	2nd & 4th Thursdays, 4:00	bmrathbun@bellsouth.net			
Karla Miller	Carolina Village	1st Mon, 1:30 pm	karla@fcchendersonville.org			
Mark Acker	Choir Rehearsal	Every Wed 3:15 pm	Mark@fcchendersonville.org			
Bob McLendon	Church Council	2nd Tues 3:30	captainbob.bm@gmail.com			
Krista Kaufman	Circle of Friends - ongoing small groups	Each circle schedules	kristakaufman41@gmail.com			
Fe Avis	Elder Resources / PEAK (Parents of Estranged Adult Kids)	Saturday, beginning April 20th, 8:30 am - 9:45 a.m	fe@asecondday.com			
Mark Fagerlin	Ministry of Finance	2nd Tues of each month b4 Council 11:00	mfagerlin@gmail.com			
Karla Miller	Sunday Forum	Sunday, 9:00 am	karla@fcchendersonville.org			
Joyce Tierney & John Fuller	Meditation Group	Every Tuesday, 4:00 pm	joycie47@gmail.com fullerjohn@me.com			
Stephanie Lowder	Service & Giving	2nd Thurs, 10 am	slowder@rarebirdcreative.com			
Mindy Myers	Ministry of Physical Resources	3rd Wed, 10:00 am	mindy7myers@gmail.com			
Linda Laderach	Ministry of Worship (acolytes, ushers, etc.)	Contact to volunteer	lladerac@mtholyoke.edu			
Bob McLendon	Peace Building & Justice	Tuesdays, 1:30	captainbob.bm@gmail.com			
Barbara Rathbun	Prayer Shawls	1st Tues, 10:00 am	bmrathbun@bellsouth.net			
Patti Clay	Racial Justice Task Force	3rd Tues, 12:00 am	pclay51@gmail.com			
Sheila Clendenning	Progressive Alliance	various	bsheila.nc@gmail.com			
Diane Rose	Service & Giving Ministry	2nd Thurs, 10:00 am	dianerose617@gmail.com			
Sukey Pratt	Stitchaway	Fridays at 10:00 am	sukeys@yahoo.com			
Amy Dahan	Tai Chi Easy	Every Mon, 11 am	amydahancan@gmail.com			
Patti Clay	Virtual Circle of Friends	pm	pclay51@gmail.com			
Mar ttendance Krista Kaufman 4/1 Loan Diaz 4/16						
AAAM(dance -	3100	Jon Nobling 4/13			
MITTER	Vision	ta Vaufman 4/1	John Towle 4/15			

Mar

Attendance

Date	Total		
3	130		
		Catherine	
10	151	Meeks	
17	135		
24	142		
31	181	Easter	

	Krista Kaufman	4/1
	Mark Lesher	4/3
	Joel Helfand	4/4
	Nancy Irving	4/5
•	Janice Aplin	4/5
	Richard Howe	4/5
i	David Larry Johnson	4/8
	James Jolly	4/8
ì	Frances Gullyes	4/8
ı	Mark Fagerlin	4/11

Ion Nobling	4/13
Iohn Towle	4/15
loan Diaz	4/16
Donald Culver	4/16
Hilarie Glasgow	4/17
Amy Dahan	4/19
Bruce Jayne	4/19
Matthew Carlin	4/20
William Green	4/21
Glenn Gross	4/23
Phyllis Rhinehart	4/24
Suzanne Gottesman	4/25
Phil Carlin	4/25
Sheryl Mendenhall	4/27
Annie Haberkorn	4/30
Fred Yopps	4/30
	_

To make you smile / Inspirational Quotes of the Month

"Whatever you do, always give 100%.
Unless you're donating blood."

I ordered a chicken and an egg from Amazon. I'll let you know.

I was going to tell a time traveling joke, but you guys didn't like it

BILL MURRAY

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

– Martin Luther King Jr. **CAN YOU FIND THEM?**

This sentence contains exactly threee erors.

A cheese factory exploded in France. Da brie was everywhere. "But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

First Congregational Church 1735 Fifth Avenue West Hendersonville, NC 28739 Phone: (828)692-8630

Email: office@fcchendersonville.org

Staff:

Pastor: Reverend Karla Miller (karla@fcchendersonville.org

Minister of Music / Pastoral Associate: Mark Acker

mark@fcchendersonville.org

Administrator: Jo Freeman (office@fcchendersonville.org)

Custodian: Dora Littleton

We are here for you!