

The Chronicle

November 2025



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH • HENDERSONVILLE**

Beloved FCCH,

November kicks off our stewardship drive "I Love This Place." As we go through this month, you are invited to consider how you find community and kinship at our sweet church here on 5th and White Pine. You will hear from several of our members on what they find meaningful about being a part of our church, and will be encouraged to make pledge of any kind. I hope, most of all, that you know how far your gifts go in our mission of justice, inclusion, belonging and compassion.

As we move through November, we have several dates I want to highlight. On November 16, after worship, we have an important congregational meeting to consider updates to our by-laws. You will hear more about these updates in the coming days so that you will be informed when we come together to vote on the updates. November 20 marks the annual observance of the Community Transgender Day of Remembrance. This year the vigil will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hendersonville, at 6:30 pm. I hope that you can make every effort to attend this somber, sacred ritual.

Don't forget to sign up for our FCCH Thanksgiving Day Dinner on November 27th! This is such a wonderful time to get to spend with our church family. While many people have other plans, we also many people bring their friends and neighbors and family~~it's a delightful smorgasbord of gratitude and great food. Join us, please!

I am so grateful for you, and for our church community. In times like these, we need each other more than ever.

Big Love + Deep Peace,
Karla

A Note from Our Moderator, Bob McClendon

November is an important month for our church as we plan for 2026, with Stewardship and on November 16th our Congregation will vote on updates to our By Laws which will have a significant impact on our future. Pledging your financial support is so important to our church continuing to be healthy and growing. But I would ask you to also consider carefully how you can pledge your "talents" in the upcoming year.

I believe our Congregation knows that service to those in need shapes our own well being and happiness. For FCC serving others inspires us to be closer to God. I have seen that the relentless spirit of our congregation will not allow us to turn away when someone is hurting.

Together this church will have no tolerance for bigotry, violence or hatred. So how can you "pledge" your talents and time? Just do it! Let me give you a few examples in just the last "few months": Jan and John Clademeyer organizing and leading Pilgrimage Walks. Krista and Robert Kaufman organized our Circle of Friends/Small groups. Stephanie Lowder used her Marketing talents to develop new outdoor signage for our church. Mark Mitchell and Ken Harkins used their architectural talents to draw plans to renovate our Sunday School area and bathrooms. Shelia Clendenning by involving our members with Progressive Alliance to write postcards to Legislators. Bill Shaffer used his leadership talents to guide us in updating our By Laws. Romella Hart-O'keefe used her knitting talents to handmade blankets to comfort children. Richard Vickers in providing security for our church services. Phil Taylor, Ron Miller and Scott Querin using their accounting talents to manage all finances for our church.

There are many more examples than space will allow. All of the examples mentioned would quickly tell you of the many others who have pledged their talents to our church. Our Stewardship theme: "We love this place"!

So the question during this month of Stewardship for you is – "where can my talents be used"

Our November Birthdays:

Max Crum 11/1	Sukey Pratt 11/15
Katie Bolick 11/5	Julie Muehe 11/18
Shawn Kelly 11/6	Lauren Carlin 11/26
Jo Clare Wilson 11/11	Ann Hartig 11/28
Bob Battle 11/13	Jeannie Stewart 11/29
Carol-Ann Carlin 11/15	

October Worship Attendance:

October 5 = 122
October 12 = 139
October 19 = 151
October 26 = 142



First Congregational Bylaws

If you didn't realize, our church has a set of Bylaws that guide how we operate. Periodically we review these and update them to reflect who the church is and what we envision the church becoming. For most of the past year a diligent group of Congregants, along with our Moderator and our Pastor has been meeting, reviewing, discussing and making suggestions about our Bylaws. The group's final product was presented to the church Council and, after a bit more tweaking, was approved in September. Now it's your turn. On November 16th, after service, we'll have a congregational meeting to review and vote on the proposed updates. I know it sounds boring, but it is important. At the meeting I'll explain how our church operates, what the bylaws do and why we've proposed some updates. Prior to the meeting we'll have paper copies of the proposed Bylaws with a summary of the changes on the table in the "holy hall" and we'll send everyone an email link. Please plan to stay and be part of the First Congregational family meeting on November 16th.



Stewardship Season is a happy time at First Congregational (unlike some places, where it is seen as a chore). It's a time when we can review with joy our giving and accomplishments of the past year. And it's a time for us to reflect on the future, and how we can help keep on projecting our values within our church and into our community.

In late October, we mailed the Stewardship package to all our member units (we hope!). If yours doesn't arrive in the next few days, please call the office and we'll get one to you. The campaign will run through the first three weeks in November, culminating in a service of thanksgiving and stewardship gratitude on November 23rd.

In the interim, you will hear from some congregation members about Why They L♥ve This Place, and you'll have the opportunity to pledge your commitment and support for the work we do. It does take a village, and you are part of that village!

The Stewardship Team



Service & Giving Highlights

At the October Service & Giving (S&G) meeting, we allocated funds to four crisis intervention agencies. We also discussed this year's Matching Funds Opportunity which is scheduled from November 23rd to December 14th. We selected twelve organizations for recommendation. Please consider this opportunity to have your contribution matched by budgeted church funds.

The team planned and hosted the successful October 5 coffee hour where information was shared about what we do and recruited new members. Everyone is welcome to come to our meetings which happen on the second Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM. FCC's annual Hugsgiving will happen November 9th, 16th and 23rd.

We approved a special needs request of 30 blankets for Safelight residents.

Also, we will have Senior Gift Wish Tags for MAP/Meals on Wheels clients for anyone wishing to create a senior gift based upon the individual needs of that senior. See Sheila Clendenning for a tag.

Bruce Mills refreshed the bulletin boards in the hallway. Check them out!

The next S&G meeting is **Thursday, November 13 at 10 am** in the choir room.

You Can Fulfill a Meals on Wheels Client's Holiday Gift Wish! Here's How:

1. Choose a Senior Gift Wish tag at Sunday service beginning on November 2. (See Sheila Clendenning)
2. Shop for the specific gift items requested by the individual Meals on Wheels client.
3. Return wrapped gift, with Gift Wish tag attached, to FCC by November 30.

Update from The Hunger Walk
2025 FCC donations to the Henderson County Hunger Coalition are now estimated at \$20,000.00!!! The total for this year's Hunger Walk has now exceeded \$140,000.00!!! A hearty THANK YOU to First Congregational's tremendous support.

Love,
All our neighbors in need



YOU'RE INVITED to bring new or very-gently-used toy stuffed animals into our sanctuary Sunday Nov. 9, 16, 23, to benefit local children experiencing violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

While the stuffies are in the pews, feel free to cuddle, direct loving vibes, or otherwise infuse them with **FCC Love**. Then, before Thanksgiving, we'll deliver them to Safelight and the Children & Families Resource Center for comforting children in their care.

All styles of stuffed animals are welcome. One local source for stuffed toys is First Congregational member Lyndsey Simpson's Hendersonville Toy Company at 315 South Church Street (inside Gateaux Cakes & Pastries). Mention **FCC Project HUGSgiving** for a 25% discount on animals.

Questions? Ask any FCC Service & Giving team member:

Dede Walton (chair), Mark Acker, Jan Aplin, Pat Argue, Jim Bonham, Sheila Clendenning, Lil Dashner, Romella Hart-O'Keefe, Sharon Johnson, Nancy Kaczor, Jenn Kirby, Cindy Larrison, Stephanie Lowder, Dennis Maloy, Bob McLendon, Bruce Mills, Bill Shaffer, Frosty Sinclair, Julie Spalla, Phil Taylor, Elle Travis, Ken Whitney.

THANK YOU!



Save These Futures Dates – Significant and Special – These Happen Outside of Our Regularly Scheduled Togetherness:

November 8 – FCCH Final Pilgrimage Walk of 2025: Join us as congregant and Certified Forest Therapy Guide, Anne Ogburn, takes us on a guided forest therapy walk as we slow down and explore Flat Rock park with our senses for about an hour.

November 16 – FCCH Congregational Meeting after Worship in the Sanctuary

November 20 – Community Transgender Day of Remembrance Service, UUFH

November 23 – Deck the Halls for Advent & Christmas after worship, Sanctuary: Join in the fun of making our church beautiful for the holidays. Many hands are needed!

November 27 - Thanksgiving Day Potluck Feast, FCCH Fellowship Hall: Join us for a wonderful Thanksgiving Day lunch with your church family. We gather at noon, and begin eating at 12:30 p.m. So that we can have adequate seating, and know that we have plenty of food, we will begin taking reservations on Sunday, November 9. Everyone should bring a large dish to share: a turkey, other meat, vegetable, side, bread or dessert. Remember a lot of people will be here for this feast! Everyone is also asked to bring their own plates, cups, silverware, and serving utensils for your dish to share. If you would like wine with your meal, you are invited to bring some. Tea and coffee will be provided by the church.

December 14 - Christmas Music Sunday: This is a special day in which our choir sings a program of fantastic Christmas music, interspersed with readings, and accompanied by strings and percussion. Join us for a meaningful and joyful tradition at FCCH. A Special Music Reception Coffee Hour is held afterwards in the Fellowship Hall.

December 24 - Service of Candlelight and Carols: Join for this special Christmas Eve service where we hear our ancient story, sing carols, and savor togetherness in candlelight.



LYNX took over a Finance Meeting in Karla's office, much to Phil and Ron's chagrin!



Karla welcomes New Members into the church family (photo above from left to right): Jennifer & Carol Austin-Janssen, Renee Gipson and Frances Yoder joined October 26!

photo credit Isabel Cutler

We walked our Labyrinth on 10/5 during --> Forum. *photo credits to Isabel Cutler*



FCCH Pilgrimage Hikers went to Living Waters, at Balsom Grove on 10/11 in 2 pictures (below.)

photo credits to Marck Acker and Joyce Tierney



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Miss Ginger and the kids are ready for church!

Kimberly plays with Nolan!

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photo credit to Dawn Kuchera and Ginger Zemp



Stone Soup - a Community Supper Hosted by Love & Respect

This Friday, November 7, from 5-7pm at First Congregational Church in Hendersonville NC, we invite you to join us for our own Stone Soup Community Supper. Bring a bowl and spoon (we'll have extras on hand if you need them), bring a side to share, settle in at the table, and enjoy a warm meal in the company of friends and neighbors. Like the folktale, this evening is about more than soup—it's about what we create when we all come together.

In addition to the meal, local pottery artists are contributing beautiful handcrafted pieces that will be available in a silent auction. It's a wonderful way to take home something meaningful while supporting our mission.

Your donation at the door helps us continue building community and ensuring that everyone has a place at the table. Come share a meal, bid on local art, and leave reminded that even small contributions can make a big difference.



COMMUNITY SUPPER

A FUNDRAISER BENEFITTING **LOVE & RESPECT RCC**
HOSTED @FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC
1735 5TH AVE WEST, HENDERSONVILLE



GODSPELL



CALL FOR AUDITIONS FOR MAY 2026 PRODUCTIONS

Auditions:

Friday, November 14, 6:30 pm

Saturday, November 15, 10 am and 4 pm

First Congregational Church

1735 Fifth Avenue West, Hendersonville

Needed:

- Singers and soloists of all ages and levels of mobility
- Instrumentalists
- Other crew positions also available

COME SING ABOUT LOVE!

Come sing songs about love with your pop/rock/folk voices that can transform an audience. This production is set in a physical therapy studio – a place of healing – with a cast of 10-12 people young, old and in-between. If you are mobility impaired, you will fit right in. Walkers/wheelchairs welcome as well as young people! The 7-9 performances are May 15 – 31.

Bring music of a song you know with accompaniment. Use office entrance at church. Must have clear calendar April 15 thru May 31. To audition on other dates, contact: Philip Wiehe: 530-575-7420, pfwiehe@gmail.com



Our gardens are home and sanctuary to many birds during all seasons of the year, and the feeding frenzy has greatly increased in these cooler temperatures.

We have several birdfeeders that need donations of birdseed or giftcards/coupons from the Wild Bird Store or other stores for use in the Atrium and outside the Library.





Immigration & Citizenship: Where We Are Now & How We Got Here

The Henderson County League of Women Voters is hosting a program on "Immigration & Citizenship: Where We Are Now & How We Got Here" on Tuesday, November 18 from 5:00-6:30 pm at the Henderson County Public Library, Kaplan Auditorium, 301 N. Washington St., Hendersonville, NC.

Dr. Giovanni Pleites-Hernandez, Assistant Professor of Political Science at UNC Asheville, will go beyond current headlines and discuss immigration and citizenship policy within its historical context. He'll consider the question of what it means to be an 'American,' and does 'American-ness' differ from other national identities?

Professor Pleites-Hernandez studies minority politics, public opinion, and Congress. He researches and teaches on a number of topics including, media and politics, public policy and administration, and immigration politics and policy in the U.S.

For more information about the League, go to the LWVHC website at:
<https://lwwhcnc.org>.

LWVHC welcomes all members of our community.

The WNC American Society of Pilgrims on the Camino will host a training hike on November 8th.

The route includes options for 4, 7, and 10 mile distances, starting from the First Congregational Church, 1735 5th Avenue West at 9:00 am and culminating in a stop at St. James around noon. If you're just curious about the Camino, join them for coffee at around 10:30 am at Southern Streams.

See the WNC ASPC facebook page for more information:

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/AVLCamino/?
multi_permaLinks=2613982685633249](https://www.facebook.com/groups/AVLCamino/?multi_permaLinks=2613982685633249)