THE CHRONICLE
NOVEMBER 2026

Beloved,

If you haven't noticed yet, our stewardship campaign's theme is "Let's Make Something Beautiful." I hope you have your Beauty Calendars near you for the next 30 days, even though our campaign is only three weeks. One of the prompts is to name a beautiful poem—and while I am not sure this is the most beautiful poem I have read, I really, really love it.

excerpts from **"Evidence" by Mary Oliver**

Where do I live? If I had no address, as many people do not, I could nevertheless say that I lived in the same town as the lilies of the field, and the still

waters....

Beauty without purpose is beauty without virtue. But all beautiful things, inherently, have this function - to excite the viewers toward sublime thought. Glory

to the world, that good teacher.

Among the swans there is none called the least, or

the greatest.

I believe in kindness. Also in mischief. Also in singing, especially when singing is not necessarily

prescribed...

Keep some room in your heart for the unimaginable.



May we all walk in beauty in these days.

Big Love + Deep Peace,
Karla

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH • HENDERSONVILLE

November Forums

Sundays, 9:00 AM

Every Sunday at 9 am we have a "learning" hour called Forum on a range of topics. Join us!

November 1 - Geography of One with Richard Allen Taylor: Richard Allen Taylor will share poems and commentary from his book Geography of One about his experiences being alone and living alone after the death of his wife in 2019. Taylor identifies freedom and loneliness as two sides of the same coin, and delves into the many permutations of aloneness, both positive and negative. We will discuss aging, mortality, gratitude, and connecting with others in healthful and compassionate ways. Books will be available for purchase ($15.).

November 8 – Processing the Midterms: Everyone has been working so hard on getting out the vote for mid-terms. In this fluid environment it makes sense for us to hold space for one another as the results trickle in. We are praying for justice-love to prevail, and it looks like the period after the elections could have some uncertainty. . How do we live in that liminal, in-between space? Let's bring our concerns, our celebrations questions and stories to share with one another. Karla will moderate.

November 15 – Single Life: FCCH Member panel and discussion: As a follow up to our November 1 forum with Richard Allen Taylor, a panel of FCCH members will share their experiences with singleness. Persons who are single after the death of a partner, divorce, or single by choice or circumstance will share their experience. We will also open the floor to a group discussion of this important topic.

November 22 – A Conversation with Ron and Jayne Miller: Ron and Jayne have been lifelong residents of Hendersonville, as well as longtime members of FCCH. They have fascinating stories about how they met in high school, the changes they've seen in Hendersonville, and the history of our church. Join us for an amazing morning!

November 29 – Organ Donation with Lori Garrison and Janice Buchanan: Earlier this Fall, FCCH member Lori Garrison donated one of her kidneys to a person she did not know. What an amazing gift! Lori will share about her donation experience, and FCCH member Janice Buchanan is a chaplain serving as a family support coordinator with LifeShare Carolina, will talk about the process of organ donation.

Our NOVEMBER Birthdays!

Max Crum	11/1	Debi Jacob-Brotherton	11/24
Katie Bolick	11/5	Cherie Stewart	11/25
Bob Battle	11/13	Lauren Carlin	11/26
Ben Coonrod	11/13	Ann Hartig	11/28
Jay Calloway	11/13	Kendra Ray	11/28
Carol-Ann Carlin	11/15	Jeannie Stewart	11/29
Sukey Pratt	11/15	Susan Cowardin	11/29
Julie Muehe	11/18	Estelle Taylor	11/30
Sky Conard	11/21	Trisha LaGrange	11/30

Sunday School Fun . . .

. . . the children helped make cupcakes for the Congregational Lunch!











Stewardship Corner

We are well into our 2026 Stewardship Season, themed Let's make Something Beautiful, and it is off to a roaring start! On Kick-off Day, Bob McClendon gave us the roadmap of how it would all work, and after the worship service, the congregation gathered for a community lunch – always a fun event at First Congregational.

Enclosed in the packet that was sent to our family units was a one-page calendar, that prompts us to consider a different beautiful thing every day – whether it is reading a special poem or focusing on a favorite color. We hope that you are using it to consider the many beautiful things in your life.

A good number of you have already returned your pledge cards, and THANK YOU for that. If you haven't yet, we hope that you are prayerfully considering doing so. The official campaign goes through November 8th, so please send in your card by then. (Although we will accept pledges through mid-December.)

Here's a note to a specific group of folks. Some of you do not make a practice of pledging, but you are committed to putting some money in the offering plate every week—and there are a many good reasons for that decision

But here's the thing. We can only use the amount that is pledged to build our budget for next year. So, to you folks, we ask you to consider making a pledge, even if it is just for a small amount (those small amounts do add up, and every bit helps!). Finally. We get that circumstances change. If your financial situation changes, pledges definitely can be adjusted.

So, think about all the good that FCC does, and how we are engaged in so many activities that reflect our values. Please pledge.

The Stewardship Team



LOOK!

Monday's Coffee & Conversation is an interesting and growing group of people making connections.

The coffee is a side treat.

Soon they will need to add more tables and chairs!

Treasurer's Highlights:

- Total General Operating Fund income YTD was $8,424 more than budgeted.
- Total General Operating Fund expenses YTD were $6,184 less than budgeted.
- Net result of General Operating Fund YTD was $14,608 better than budgeted.
- Heritage Fund balance as of 9/30/2026: $799,531.

The next Church Council meeting is Tuesday, November 10, at 4 pm in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend. Contact Bill Shaffer or Linda Laderach if you have questions.

Did you know?

Each week Sunday's sermon is posted to FCCH's website. Unless we have a guest speaker, check the website each Monday for the latest sermon!
(From FCCH website → Home → Sermons)





Great News! Our own Bruce Mills has been asked to serve on Commission on Ministry of the Western North Carolina Association of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ. (WNCA)!!!

This is holy and sacred work, essential to the life and health of our churches and clergy. The Commission on Ministry (COM) upholds the standards of ministry on behalf of the Association, assisting congregations and pastors with conflict resolution, search and call, and implementing church policies. The COM's responsibilities include:

1. Interviewing candidates for standing in the Western NC Association
2. Recommending candidates for ordination and standing.
3. Receiving individuals as Members in Discernment (MID) and overseeing the MID process
4. Promoting the welfare of local churches and their clergy.

Bruce has served on our church through Service and Giving, Pastor-Parish Relations Ministry, and on our Church Council. He has been a member of our choir since he and his husband joined the church. His professional background in Human Resources, along with his love and care for our wider church make him an excellent choice for this Commission, and we look forward to hearing more from Bruce as he begins his service.

Thank you, Bruce!

Service & Giving Highlights from October 2026

During our October meeting Phil Taylor reported that our spending is still on target, on schedule, and on budget. Our Matching Funds drive (year end Matching Gift campaign) will be held from November 22 until December 13. Nine agencies have been selected for this year's campaign; Caregivers of Mother Earth, Charlie's Angels, Haywood Street Congregation, Hendersonville County Hunger Coalition, Interfaith Ministries, Literacy Connection, MLK Day of Giving, Pisgah Legal Services and the Veteran's Healing Farm. Additional information will soon be provided.

Ken Whitney reported that the Hunger Walk was a huge success! There were 311 registered walkers, not including all who actually participated. The Hunger Coalition's goal was $135K, and they surpassed that goal and raised $155K, and there is still money coming in. If you have more to donate please get it to Ken as soon as possible. Ken is also looking for anyone interested in serving with him on the Hunger Coalition board.

Lillian Dashner shared that our pet food drive was a huge success and the Blue Ridge Humane Society was extremely thankful for the donations.

Theo Sharps contacted Mountain Aging Partners regarding their Senior Christmas program. You can brighten a Senior's holiday with a Meals on Wheels Senior Gift Wish or fill a Shoebox/gift bag with small useful items and gifts. Here's how:

1. Choose a Senior Gift Wish tag or get a list of items to fill a Shoebox/gift Bag at Sunday service beginning November 1st. See Elf Theo Sharps.
2. Shop for the specific gift items requested by the individual Meals on Wheels Client or fill a Shoebox/gift bag with the recommended items.
3. Return the wrapped gift with Gift Wish tag attached to FCC by November 19th or the wrapped Shoebox/gift Bag to FCC by November 29th. Mountain Aging Partners will be distributing the gifts.

Respectfully submitted by Jeanne Wilson and Theodore Sharps.



October Attendance in Worship

October 4 ~ 150	October 18 ~ 161
October 11 ~ 129	October 25 ~ 163

Ministry of Physical Resources (MPR) UPDATES:

MIlton's Garden has produced close to 3,000 pounds of fresh produce to help food insecurity in our region. Much of our produce goes to Interfaith Assistance Ministry.
The Memorial Garden, Pet Memorial and Labryinth are maintained by volunteers, and are bursting with fall colors~~please take a few moments to visit and rest in their great beauty.

Our parlor bathroom project should be finished by the end of the month. As previously reported, this began as a simple refresh, but unfortunately due to a backup in the city sewer system that damaged the newly refreshed bathrooms, hallway, sacristy and parlor, this has become a major clean-up event and re-doing the refreshment. After hazmat crew cleaning, replacing all sub-flooring, cleaning of air ducts, and installing a check valve on the city sewer line, the cost of this project will be upwards of $100, 000 dollars. Church insurance issued $10, 000, and we are reaching out to the city to cover the cost of damages. This is a big ask, as the municipal insurance adjustor has determined the city is not at fault.

We also have some roofing that needs to be replaced sooner rather than later.

Our new church sign is beautiful, and not quite finished. The shrubbery around the sign will be re-homed so it will be more visible. Thank you to Stephanie L. for her design and working with the sign company.

We are hoping to finish the parking lot environmental project in the spring, which includes addressing parking lot run-off, protecting the bank of Wash Creek, and green space for Ecusta Trail users. Plans and permits are in a slow process.

We are grateful for all of the many hearts, hands, and creative minds that keep our church home safe, beautiful and inviting.





FIND YOUR PLACE

HELP FOR MEMORIAL SERVICES

Jeanne Stewart and Diane Rose are the team coordinating the receptions for families after celebrations of life and memorial services. If you would like to be called upon to donate food, baked or bought , please contact Jeanne Stewart at 828-243-3351 or greenbriar13@gmail.com. If you prefer to set up and clean up, please contact Diane Rose at 951-543-2771 or dianerose617@gmail.com. We appreciate your help as we support our friends.

THANKSGIVING, NOVEMBER 26

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 8
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.

If you can help with the clean-up following the lunch, please contact Phyllis Rhinehart (p1rhineha@gmail.com). We need a good crew to help with this!

We thank Phyllis Rhinehart and her helpers for coordinating this wonderful part of our Thanksgiving celebration.

Enriching Our Communities



Josie and Sadie Crum at the Oct. 1 Children & Family Resource Center Harvest Dinner.

FCC was a sponsor!





FCCers at No Kings 4!!!

Liz Hill spoke, Sky Conard dressed up as Liberty, and David Conard sported a sign, on a chilly morning at the Courthouse!





Vigil For Democracy

COUNT EVERY VOTE. EVERY VOTE COUNTS

Nov. 3rd | 7:45pm-8:45pm | Board of Elections: 75 E Central St.

BRING A SMALL FLASHLIGHT

PERSIST

OF HENDERSON COUNTY

WHERE PERSEVERANCE MEETS PASSION

FREE

RESOURCE FAIR

FOR INDIVIDUALS, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN HENDERSON COUNTY

FRIDAY, NOV 6 9-12 PM

THE SALVATION ARMY | 239 THIRD AVE E, HENDERSONVILLE



FREE!

- HOT OATMEAL BAR AT 9 AM
- HOT CHILI SERVED AT 11 AM

HYGIENE KITS, SNACKS, AND WINTER PREPAREDNESS SUPPLIES

RAFFLE

- RAFFLE DRAWINGS AT 11:45 AM
- MULTIPLE DRAWINGS AND PRIZES

REPRESENTATIVES ON SITE FOR:

- Housing Services
- Financial Services
- Health Care
- Employment and Training
- Mental Health Providers
- Support Groups
- Food and Nutrition
- And more...

¡hola! CAROLINA

PRESENTS

BUILDING BRIDGES

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES.

Creating opportunities. Stronger together.



THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 12
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

GOODWILL BUILDING
1616 Patton Ave.
Asheville, NC 28806
Room 207

CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE by NOVEMBER 6
info@holacarolina.org

LIMITED SEATING

THIS EVENT IS MADE POSSIBLE BY:

¡hola! CAROLINA | the YMCA OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA | UNIDXS WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY | Big Brothers Big Sisters OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Progressive Alliance of Henderson County

POSTCARD PARTY & SOCIAL TIME

MID-TERM RESULTS:

ARE WE DELIGHTED OR DEVASTATED?

SOME OF BOTH? WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?





FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20th

4:30-6:00pm at Trailside Brewing
874 Lenox Park Dr. (off S. Whitted St)

We'll write to newly elected public servants with our congratulations and/or expectations.

WE'LL HAVE SURVEYS TO SEE WHAT YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON IN 2027

As always, we supply suggestion sheets, postcards & addresses

Parking can be tricky- consider carpooling, walking or biking

STONE SOUP



$10

SUGGESTED DONATION
NO ONE TURNED AWAY!

FEATURING
LOCAL STORYTELLER
RONNIE PEPPER

5-7PM
FRIDAY
NOV 13th

COMMUNITY SUPPER

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

CHANGING LIVES WITH LOVE AND RESPECT