Beloved,

As I write this we are halfway through our Lenten Journey, moving ever closer to Holy Week and our Easter Celebration. It has been good to be pilgrims wandering together, and I am grateful for the ways in which we have embraced the journey as our home. As we continue on the journey, I hope that you will plan to participate in the offerings of Holy Week here at FCUCC. All of the business meetings of the church have moved to alternative times so that we might create some space and time for observance.

On Sunday, April 14, we will celebrate Palm Sunday, the last Sunday of Lent. The Ministry of Worship has ordered EcoPalms, in alignment of our core values of Creation Care and Social Justice. You can read more here: www.ecopalms.org.

Our Maundy Thursday service, April 18 at 6:30 pm will include contemporary and ancient readings, silence, communion, and a service of Tenebrae that is wistfully beautiful and meditative. Our siblings from Sacred Journey MCC will be joining us.

Good Friday, April 19 is also the first day of Passover, and we will be having a Seder in Fellowship Hall, gathering at 6:30 pm. You can read more about this symbolic meal in this issue of the Chronicle.

On Easter Sunday, April 21, please plan to join us at Jump Off Rock for a community Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 am, followed by coffee and breakfasty snacks in Fellowship Hall. At 10:30 am we will celebrate Easter and the promise of LIFE in worship.

Finally, on the second Sunday of Easter, April 29, we will celebrate “Earth Day” and God’s creation, with an invitation to participate in a special project, “Reducing our Carbon Imprint” from our Sunday School children and their teachers.

Blessings to each and everyone of you as spring blooms around us,

Love and peace,

Karla
The Ministries of First Congregational or WHAT DO ALL THOSE GROUPS DO? 
(Part 1)

At the Inquirer’s Class last Sunday, the information folders Karla and I handed out had a list of regularly scheduled monthly meetings – 18 in all! So what do all those ministries, sub-ministries, and groups do? Well, I plan to tell you. But not all at once. I’ll provide this column for different facilitators and leaders to tell us what their groups do and why their work is important – both to First Congregational and to those who take part in it. And they will also explain how you can learn more about their group and potentially become involved.

Read on! Thanks,
Phil Taylor, Moderator

First up – Dawn Kucera tells us about the Ministry of Worship:

Even with all the many activities, gatherings, and meetings that happen in our building every week, the heart and soul of our church are the Sunday and special worship services. And those services are made up of many moving parts. The Ministry of Worship has the responsibility for almost all of them – we don’t write the sermon or select the music and liturgy, but all the rest of it belongs to the Ministry of Worship.

The purpose of this column (thank you, Phil, for the space) is to further describe these moving parts and how important they are to the congregation having the most meaningful and spiritual worship experience. That is the overarching goal of all we do. And, at the end of it, perhaps you would be interested in becoming part of the Worship Team.

Some of these moving parts operate behind the scenes. These include activities like preparing the communion elements, arranging the weekly floral arrangements, setting up the chancel area (setting out the candles, changing out the banner and the paraments on the chancel table, pulpit and lectern), and re-stocking the pew pockets. Many of these activities can be done during the week when it would be convenient for you.

Others of the moving parts are more out front, and usually are part of the actual worship service. These are things like being a greeter or usher, serving communion, or being an acolyte bringing the light of Christ into our worship space at the beginning of the service. These would be easy to fit in, since you’re at church anyway.

It takes a lot of people to keep all those pieces moving – but here’s the good news: Each of those people only needs to make a small contribution of time: maybe a couple of hours every few months, or serving on Sunday just a few times a year. There is something to fit everyone.

And the really neat part: You don’t have to come to any meetings! Maybe you’re worried that you don’t know how to do these things, or they seem complicated. Rest easy – you will get thorough training, and there will always be someone to help out and back you up.
Again, and best of all, you are involved in making an important contribution to the worship experience of the entire congregation. Being a part of that always fills me with a wonderful sense of fulfillment.

I'd like to share some stories that have come my way from others on the Worship Team. John Parris, who was the Facilitator of the Ministry of Worship until his untimely death last October, told me more than once that he loved to prepare the chancel area for the upcoming Sunday. He would usually come on Friday afternoon or Saturday morning, when the sanctuary was empty. He said he felt the quietness, like a meditation, and sensed the calming spirit of God surround him as he did his part to prepare the space for worship. It was sacred time for him.

In a recent email to her team of acolytes, Judith Nourse sent a message that spoke of “… carrying the Light, and when we take a breath and feel calm before walking, we are doing our part to set the tone, bringing God’s peace into our worship service.”

Heather Fitzwilliam and Clare Willey have prepared the communion elements every month for almost four years. Over this time, they have developed a close friendship, and look forward to their time together on the Saturday before communion Sunday, to share their thoughts and lives with each other.

As you can see, helping with “the moving parts” can be a whole lot more than just performing the duty. It can become an integral part of your own worship experience.

In closing, I invite you to do a couple of things. When you come on Sunday morning, try to notice all the things that happen during the service, from the time you walk in until you leave. I think you will be surprised at how many there are, things that you might have taken for granted. But be aware that someone had to make each one of them happen.

And I invite you to join the Worship team - it is really easy to be a part of this vital ministry. If you’d like more information, please contact me at 696-0524, dawnkucera@mac.com, or see me at coffee hour. I would love to chat with you! You may also contact Barbara Rathbun at opendoorpastor@yahoo.com or 891-9405.

Dawn Kucera
Facilitator, Ministry of Worship

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**THE WRITERS ROUNDTABLE**

Writers--whether members of the church or not -- who would like to read from their work (any genre) at a Writers’ Roundtable, are invited to register with Rand Bishop (697-0090 or randbishop33@gmail.com). Listeners are also welcome. The Writers’ Roundtable meets on the fourth Thursday of every month in the Church Parlor at 11:30 am. If you're reading, please bring 5-6 duplicates of your work to share. Check with Rand for details. The next meeting time is Thursday, April 25th at 11:30.
Church Council Highlights  
March 2019


Treasurer Ron Miller reported that we are on budget.

A motion passed to increase Karla’s housing allowance to $20,000 per year starting March 1, 2019.

A church retreat is scheduled for November 9, 2019. Two locations are being investigated.

The mayor of Hendersonville has designated June 15 as “Gay Pride Day.” FCUCC will participate; Karla will be one of the speakers.

FCUCC is hosting the upcoming Easter Dawn Service. Speakers will be Rev. Karla, Pastor Joan, and Rev. Mark Stanley. Light food will be served in Fellowship Hall after the service.

A proposal to run an ad conveying our support for the LGBTQ community received unanimous approval. The ad will run once in the Times-News.

Karla reported that the small-group meetings are going very well. She will continue scheduling them until everyone has had a chance to participate. She has also held sessions at Carolina Village and Lake Pointe Landing, and plans to continue visiting our members there.

The Ministry to the Larger Community announced that Missions & Service has changed its name to Service & Giving.

The Ministry of Finance noted that IAM is in need of funds. Service & Giving will follow up.

The Ministry to Members & Friends reported that planning for the ‘90s luncheon, scheduled for April 24, is going well. Pamela Federlein was praised for her coordination of this event.

The Ministry of Physical Resources shared that a new TV is being wall-mounted in the Parlor; that we have hired Garrett’s to maintain the grounds, including completion of the labyrinth landscaping by the end of April; that we need to update our rest rooms to be handicap accessible; and that it has approved MCC’s request for a permanent sign.

continued next page
The Ministry of Worship announced that 47 people attended the Ash Wednesday evening service. More evening services are being considered. Our Lenten theme, “The Journey is Our Home,” is being featured on the MOW bulletin board and the Lenten devotionals were well-received.

The Human Relations Ministry has met and is developing an action plan.

The next Council meeting is Wednesday April 10 at 10 AM in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend.

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The Reverend Ed Bacon is an Episcopal priest who recently concluded his ministry as rector at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, California. The author of 8 Habits of Love, Reverend Bacon has been a regular guest host on Oprah Winfrey’s Soul Series, and a guest panelist in the Spirituality 101 segment of the Oprah Winfrey show “Living Your Best Life” series.

Here is a link to a brief video of Rev. Bacon talking with Oprah Winfrey.  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IpbPyTtnhPk

For additional information or to make reservations, please visit our Ashley Lecture Series page on our website (fcchendersonville.org).

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Save the Date
Our 90’s (plus) Luncheon
April 24
12:00 pm
Stay tuned for details in the coming weeks!

Hosted by your
‘Connections Ministry’
April 7 - Writers Forum
Four times a year Forum honors our many writers, members and friends of our church, by giving them a chance to read aloud from their works. If you would like to read from your writing, any genre, please make arrangements with Rand Bishop – 828-697-0090 or randbishop33@gmail.com. Come to listen and support our creativity! Rand, a retired Professor of English, coordinates a Writers’ Roundtable at the church on the fourth Thursday of each month.

April 14 - The Best Three Months of Life
If you knew you had only three months to live, how would you want it to look? Are you living your best three months now? Are you where you want to be mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually? Are you happy with the relationships in your life? We will explore the ways to make the last three months the best three months of your life, starting right now.

Diane Swift trained as a Sacred Passage Doula to assist people with end-of-life issues by helping people to normalize death and make death a peaceful, even joyous transition. She was a psychotherapist for 40 years, currently is a Prayer Chaplain at Unity Church and assisted with the initial training of prayer chaplains at First Congregational.

April 21 - Easter - No Forum

April 28 - Why Mary Oliver’s Poetry Matters
Walter Brueggemann writes about the urgency and power of the “poetic word” for the worshipping congregation, a “community that has come all too often to expect nothing but prose.” He says that when the text of our lives is reduced to prose, “there is a dread dullness that besets the human spirit… we become so beaten by prose that only poetic articulation has a chance to let us live.” (Finally Comes the Poet, 9-10) Mary Oliver just may be the best contemporary poet to help us overcome this “dread dullness” and to read the most important text of all, each person’s own life.

Writing about Mary Oliver (1935-2019) as a mystic poet of the natural world, Debra Dean Murphy says, “She remains true to what her work has always been about: pointing readers to the gift of presence - reminding us, in poems that are often deceptively simple, of what it means to attend to what is before us in any given moment.” Through more than 20 volumes of poetry, Oliver’s poems have invited her readers to wake up, to listen, to ask questions, to be astonished, to face our mortality, and to bow often. Tom Richie, who has read, appreciated, and shared Oliver’s poetry for many years, will lead us as we explore and respond to her work. A native of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, he has been an ordained Presbyterian Minister for over 50 years. He retired in 2008 and moved to Flat Rock in 2017.
NEW MINISTRY

Dear Members and Friends,

During last year’s Pastoral Search Process, the need for increased support of church leaders became very clear. In response to this need, the Human Relations Ministry came into being, and was voted on and accepted during our annual Congregational Meeting. Church leaders include our Pastor (Karla Miller), our Music Minister (Mark Acker), our Administrator (Sheryl Tellier), our moderator (Phil Taylor), our custodians (Dora and Charles Littleton), and all Lay Leaders.

Our desire is to continue to create a culture of love and support for those who have taken on leadership. With your help, we intend to recognize and celebrate the gifts these wonderful human beings share with us. This can be done in small ways, during our daily comings and goings, and in more intentional ways during occasional Sunday Worship Services, Communal Events, and scheduled times for sharing the needs and concerns of those who lead.

It is no small task to lead and to do so with great love. As a community built on love and support, we invite you to join with us as we more consciously and creatively celebrate our leaders.

With gratitude for the many gifts each of you brings to our church family…

Your Human Relations Ministry,  
Nolleen Kelly, Tom Kimmel, Sheryl Mendenhall, Charlotte Shipley and Mark Fagerlin

Mental Health Minute

In 2017, our church received recognition from the national United Church of Christ for becoming a WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) congregation for mental health. With 40 percent of those seeking help for psychiatric challenges turning first to a house of worship, FCUCC established a mental health social justice group that seeks to lift stigma by providing and promoting education, activities, and resources as well as advocating for legislative action and collaborating with other mental-health organizations. Our next meeting is Friday April 12 at 9:00 a.m. the church library. If you are interested, please join us.

April 27, 9-11: DREAM Scholarship Breakfast at St. James Episcopal Church in Hendersonville. This is an annual fundraiser for $2500 scholarships for undocumented students. See poster.
CONNECTIONS
Your care & concern ministry

... is here to offer support to you in our community through CONNECTIONS care for each other. Our aim is to create and sustain one another with inclusiveness, honesty, confidentiality and action in love, by offering a thoughtful and living presence in each other’s lives with friendship, support, nurture, and encouragement.

As a ‘Family or Friend’ you have a ‘Contact’ person who is here to offer assistance, whether it’s noticing when you are absent, a phone call, visit, email, note or card acknowledging special occasions and events; being a part of each other’s experience. Your ‘Contact’ can help inform you of the many resources available, such as; being on our ‘Prayer List,’ meet with the pastor, a Prayer Chaplain, or someone in the Mental Health Group. If you or your family are facing a health challenge, illness or death, it’s the time to be wrapped within a Prayer Shawl, nourished by a warm casserole, or receive the Grief Book Series. We are here to help remind you if you’re not able to attend church that you can listen to the service on our FCUCC website, receive a mailed CD, Bulletin and/or Chronicle. If you need transportation, who to call. A helping hand to navigate through the different ministries, groups and activities; someone to go to - to ask your questions.

Feel free to contact Pamela Federlein (828 890-9023), Jeannie Stewart (828 243-3351), or your ‘Contact’ (Connections Contact List posted in the reception area and online).

We are a growing church and the need for YOU to join our group is a good opportunity to share yourself. This is a perfect way to get connected; what you teach, you learn. One reason Jeannie and I restarted (was “Samaritans” in the past) this group is to get to know who people are. And the best part is - we are not alone!

"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team." Phil Jackson

Your Connection Ministry Group

WRITTEN PRAYER REQUESTS
Prayer request slips are now located in all pew pockets at the church. Please feel free to write your prayer request and place it either in the offering plate during service, or in one of the two prayer boxes located at the church narthex and the reception desk. The prayer requests are gathered by the chaplains on duty each week and prayed over for four weeks before they are released in a ceremonial prayer burning service.
COME TO THE WELL

Lynn Ungar writes at the end of her glorious poem “Boundaries,”

“Listen. Every molecule is humming its particular pitch. Of course you are a Symphony! Whose tune do you think the planets are singing as they dance?”

Lent, when I was young and felt myself to be the center of the universe, was annoying. Of course I gave up chocolates and always there would be a luscious heart shaped box full of divine chocolates tempting me - never ever thinking this could be instructive about resisting temptation. I also didn’t know that the word lent comes from the Old English word “lencten” which means “spring season.” Hmmmm.

In all my dog-walking days, the ones most eagerly awaited were in early spring. Morning and evening Annie and I set upon our long winding walks along woodland trails, Annie’s retriever nose close to the ground sorting out the day’s payload. One spring morning I too began looking down instead of ahead or behind. Among the debris of winter in a mantle of dry curled leaves and brittle twigs, one small pure white petal appeared. The next day, 2 or 3, or maybe 5 petals, then a stalk, maybe a rosette of leaves. Bloodroot. Harbinger of spring! Suddenly valleys and waysides became carpeted with white petals, perhaps from one seed kindly given from a bird’s quick flight.

Somewhere along my Lenten journeys I began thinking not of giving up but of giving to or of myself - a kind act every day, arrow prayers every hour for someone in need, my time to be present to someone who needed to talk. The ideas of loving kindness overflowed my being.

This observance is so exciting.

A thing will wither or die; an action may bear fruit!

“Of course you are a symphony!

Whose tune do you think the planets are singing as they dance?”

Go in love.
Joady Perrett, Prayer Chaplain

Prayer Chaplains are available for one-one telephone prayer

Diane Rhoades: 828-696-9968          Sammye Whitney: 570-664-1141
Drumroll, please:  
Our “Missions and Service” team at FCUCC is now called: **“SERVICE AND GIVING”**. Church Council recently approved this change, which more adequately reflects our congregants’ efforts to “Be the Church”, not only with monetary support of worthy agencies but also by actively volunteering our talents, skills and time. Thanks to all of you who responded to our survey with information about your individual volunteer outreach activities. As mentioned last month, we are revising our directory of volunteer opportunities, and hope to have it ready for you later this year.

Pastor Karla welcomed Sandy Devold at Pisgah Legal Services’ March 20 standing-room-only Immigration Lunch’n’Learn. “Standing for Justice and Dignity Since 1978”, PLS (pisgahlegal.org), is one of FCUCC’s many recipient charitable organizations. It offers free civic legal aid to disadvantaged children, seniors, at-risk families and other vulnerable WNC residents.

**NEXT SERVICE AND GIVING MEETING:** Thursday, April 11, 10 a.m. All are invited!
February Theme: Thanking the People and Things We Love. In February we focused on our families, our friends, our community and our environment. The children played games, drew pictures, and talked with each other about expressing our thanks every day — not just on Valentine’s Day — for all our gifts. As our group grew larger with the addition of new children, we worked on making new friends, sharing space and resources with others, and showing respect for each other.

To celebrate Valentine’s Day, the children made creative cards to give to someone special. In anticipation of our upcoming focus on the environment, we began introductory discussions about our fragile Earth and how each of us can help solve the problems of pollution and overuse of resources. We look forward to participating with the adults as our entire congregation addresses critical environmental issues.

Two new children enrolled in our program during February, for a total enrollment of 13 children.

Ginger Fisher, Sunday School Teacher
Dede Walton, Nursery Teacher

SEDER APRIL 19

Come celebrate Passover Seder on Friday, April 19th! We will gather at 6:30 in Fellowship Hall to be seated. The Seder will begin at 7:00. This is a lovely evening that recounts the history of the Israelites fleeing Egypt, breaking the bondage of slavery and embarking on a new chapter of history as a people.

The Hebrew word *seder* means order and refers to the way this ritual meal is served in a specific order. The “meal” will take us through the biblical account of the Exodus with specific foods, songs and blessings that represent aspects of this ancient story. We are invited to consider our own slavery consciousness - perhaps in bondage to limiting beliefs that clutter our consciousness and limit us as children of God.

The story continues today as we face global challenges, modern “plagues” that affect all of God’s children. The theme of Seder, observed by Jesus in The Last Supper, is *freedom* from bondage. Throughout the Seder, we contemplate a deeper level of our own state of being and consciousness, discovering within ourselves our own inner bondage and the path to our own new chapters of life. Jim and Judith Nourse are our facilitators.

Because at the time of the Exodus “free men” reclined at meals, participants are asked to bring a small pillow or chair cushion for themselves.

This is a symbolic meal, so please eat your dinner before coming!
We expect a full house, so reservations are required for everyone.
Sign up sheets will be on clipboards on the reception desk counter.

There are many moving parts to the Seder, and we will be contacting some of you with specific requests!

Your planning committee: Maralee McMillan, Romella O’Keefe, and Judith Nourse
A Reminder about Our Former Pastors – 3/18

As we learned with Richard’s departure, and again recently with Mike, saying “goodbye” to people we deeply care about can be difficult. Despite wonderful farewell dinners, gifts, and final hugs, there may be a lack of clarity, or even confusion, about what UCC’s ethical departure guidelines are. “These guidelines, A Sure Foundation: Resources for the Relationship between Pastors and Congregations (available in the library), are meant to facilitate a faithful leave-taking on the part of the pastor, freeing everyone to live into a new future as ministries move in new directions separate from each other.”

Specifically, UCC sets “the expectation that, upon departure, a pastor will not return to serve that congregation or its congregants in a pastoral capacity. For a minimum of one to three years, a departing pastor will observe a no-contact boundary with the congregants, thus helping congregants observe the same. This boundary enables the pastor to fulfill the UCC Ministerial Code in support of their former church’s relationship-building with a new pastor. Re-establishing contact is only appropriate after negotiation with the new pastor, potentially in dialogue with a wider church representative.”

UCC is also very clear that these denominational ethical boundaries apply to interim ministers: “As with the departure of a called minister from a local church, when an interim minister completes her or his ministry, the congregation should have been encouraged to set healthy boundaries. Although the interim may remain in close geographical proximity, the interim must separate from the congregation and perform no further pastoral functions. In order to facilitate the congregation’s bonding with the new settled leadership, the interim should refrain from visiting the congregation or any of its members (for a minimum of one year) or participating in any events unless specifically invited to do so by the church Council in consultation with the settled minister.” (From UCC Manual on Ministry)

With Richard and Mike still living in our community, there can be a desire to continue or to re-establish contact with them. While random encounters and brief greetings in the community may occur, our UCC boundary guidelines clearly exclude all social engagements. In order to ensure the most positive and healthy relationship-building with our new pastor, the Start-Up Team lovingly reminds you of the importance of maintaining these boundaries. Thank you.

Gary Cyphers, chairman, and members of the Start-Up Team
PRAYER LIST

Jo Ann Ashley
Lynne Cigal (friend of the Tierney’s)
David Conner (friend of Anne Cain)
Barbara Dexter (mother of Angie Yates)
Sue Easton
Anna Frawley (Friend of Tierney’s)
Mildred Gardner
Donna Gross
Trisha LaGrange
Jeannie Myers (friend of Diaz’s)
Joady Perrett
John Sams
Nadene Spear
Victoria Tatum
Eve Teerlinck

Thank you for letting us know of people who need to be added to our prayer list as well as those that are ready to be taken off.

The FCUCC Bookclub will meet at 2:00 on Tuesday, April 9th at 2:00 in the church library. This month’s book will take us on a trip with Paul Theroux on “The Old Patagonian Express.” He states his intention “my object was to take the train everyone took to work and keep going, changing trains, to the end of the line, and this I took to be a tiny station called Esquel in the middle of Patagonia.” Marilyn McComas will lead us on this adventure- come join us.
April Birthdays

2: Kathy Heckathorne
2: Jean Gower
3: Ann Puryear
3: John Bodamer
4: Joel Helfand
5: Nancy Irving
8: James Jolly
8: Frances Gullyes
11: Mark Fagerlin
13: Jon Nobling
14: Jen McKinley
14: Rachel Stone
14: Charlotte Shipley
15: John Towle
16: Joan Diaz
16: Hilarie Glasgow-Hawkins
17: Jean Glasgow-Hawkins
19: Bruce Jayne
21: Bill Green
23: Glenn Gross
26: Sheryl Mendenhall

April Anniversaries

03: Hilarie & Jean Glasgow-Hawkins
05: Joe & Gillian Streer
07: Alan & Carolyn Schmalz
14: Kevin & Joyce Tierney
15: Roy & Jimmie Harris
27: John & Karel Bodamer
April Lectionary

Fifth Sunday of Lent
April 7
Isa 43:16-21
Ps 126
Phil 3:4b-14
John 12:1-8

Something New

Sixth Sunday of Lent
April 14
Isa 50:4-9a * Ps 31:9-16 * Phil 2:5-11

Intro Jerusalem

Easter
April 21
Acts 10:34-43 or Isa 65:17-25
Ps 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Cor 15:19-26 or Acts 10:34-43

Resurrection Joy

Second Sunday of Easter
April 28
Acts 5:27-32
Ps 118:14-29 or Ps 150
Rev 1:4-8
John 20:19-31

Resurrection Witness

ATTENDANCE

Children’s
Worship Sunday School
03/03 - 142 9
03/06 - 47 (Ash Wednesday Service) 2
03/10 - 158 2
03/17 - 172 6
03/24 - 191 7

Average Worship Attendance: 166

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1735 Fifth Ave. West
Hendersonville NC 28791-4013
Phone: 828.692.8630
E-mail: fccinfo@hendersonville.org
Website: www.fcchendersonville.org

Rev. Karla Miller, Pastor
(karla@fcchendersonville.org)
Mark Acker, Minister of Music
(mark@fcchendersonville.org)
Sheryl Tellier, Administrator
(sheryl@fcchendersonville.org)
Dora & Charles Littleton, Custodians
Rev. David G. Kelly, Jr., Pastor Emeritus

Next Chronicle deadline
April 23, 2019