Dear Beloved,

As I write this, I am on the cusp of taking a week of vacation in July. As I look forward to that week, I can’t help but reflect on how wondrous the months have been since February, when I became your pastor. It has been my deepest joy to be in ministry with you, albeit just for a few months. Your passion for justice and for connection is unwavering. Your clear and honest welcome to all who have come into our doors for whatever reason has been affirming. And your forgiveness and solidarity and humor is a balm. Indeed, I am so grateful to be your pastor.

In August, we will resume the business of the church, after a lovely Sabbath month. We have a full FEAST of opportunities for everyone to get involved. You will read about these in the following pages. If you are newer to the congregation, one tiny and fun opportunity to connect to people is our Fellowship Dinner, on August 20. Please, please join us!

Finally, as we return to business and mission of the church, I hope that you will remember to return to Sabbath-keeping in the living of your days. There is a story of a nun who tried out her first session of Centering Prayer. After the twenty minutes were up, she lamented to Father Thomas Keating, “I’m such a failure at this prayer. In twenty minutes I’ve had ten thousand thoughts!” “How lovely,” responded Keating, without missing a beat. “Ten thousand opportunities to return to God.”

We all have ten thousand opportunities to return to God, to return to Love, to return to Sabbath in the present moments of our days. May it be so!

Love and peace,
Karla
Returning To When Serving the Lord Transcended ‘Work’

This month, I’m “borrowing” a commentary by Rev. Dr. Becky J. Beckwith, senior pastor at St. John’s UCC, Fullerton PA. Rev. Beckwith’s commentary appeared in The Morning Call newspaper on June 15, 2019. I think it speaks to us as members and friends of First Congregational, and I hope you will too.

“Whatever you do, work it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not just for the people.” Colossians 3:23

“Church Leadership. Servanthood. When did serving God fall out of good graces? When did church leadership become unpopular? Today it seems to be too much trouble, take too much time, and involve too much effort. I’m not sure of the answers to my questions, but I am deeply saddened that serving God has become about work when it should be about joy.

“There was a time, not so long ago, when being invited to serve on a committee, teach a children’s class or become a church leader was considered quite a compliment. There was a time when pride could be heard in the voice of someone stating that they had been teaching the fourth-grade Sunday School class for some 30 years. Individuals seemed proud to have helped in the kitchen for decades! When did this all change? What happened?

“To gain some insight, I think we need to get back to basics. Growing in the faith means having a personal relationship with God. When you are in a relationship, you have responsibilities. I’m fairly certain if you only call upon a friend, partner, spouse when you need him or her, the relationship is going to falter. The same can be true with our relationship with God. It must be cared for in order to grow. We must spend time together. We come to value and enjoy that time.

“It was important that we were in covenant with each other as we served together to “Be The Church.” Church community was about praying for each other when in need and celebrating when good things happened. It meant finding ways to help and support each other throughout the many circumstances of life.

“Have you ever considered what it takes to grow in faith? In some ways, it is harder today than ever before. Life and rules and what is considered acceptable keeps changing. We live in a society that pushes competition, getting ahead and winning big prizes. We are all about taking care of “Me and Mine” and letting the rest of God’s people go by the wayside.

“So, why does one bother to serve God in this changing environment? What I have found is that when I am serving God, I experience joy. When I am using my gifts or talents to get
something done or make something better, I feel good. I find myself wanting to do more, not less, to serve. A special feeling comes within when we know we are doing something to help, and that doing something had nothing to do with us getting trophies or gold stars or any acknowledgment at all. Whether I serve or lead, I feel good about myself, and I especially feel good about my relationship with God.

“I continue to tell our wonderful people at St. John’s UCC Fullerton that you should not help with something unless you truly enjoy it. No more, “If I don’t do it no one else will.” Instead, I believe that the right people will rise up when asked. If someone isn’t found to help, then maybe that position isn’t needed any more. “If this area of serving God doesn’t bring you joy, then say no.” And no more lifetime commitments! It is a privilege to serve God. How blessed you should feel if you are invited to be a leader! It is a privilege to serve God.

“If your way of faithfully serving God is through cleaning up the trash from God’s world – then thank you! Maybe you buy someone else’s coffee at Starbucks on occasion, or offer your babysitting or plumbing skills – awesome!

“You might help at the Lehigh Conference of Churches Daybreak, Lazarus House, Pathways, HOPE and the Ecumenical Soup Kitchen.

“You may run the worship projector, sing in the choir, fold bulletins, usher or be church president.

“Whether you serve God in or out of the church, it matters. Kindness matters. Giving of your time when your life is already too busy, matters. We are called to serve God with a joyful heart. May you find your own way to lead and serve. May it bring you joy! AND, may church leadership, everywhere, make a big comeback!”

Thanks for reading,
Phil Taylor, Moderator

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**Prayer Shawl Ministry**

We meet the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am in the Parlor. Grab some yarn and your needles and join us!

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**The FCUCC Bookclub** will meet on August 13 at 2:00 in the church library. The discussion will be on “The Overstory” by Richard Powers. The Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Powers writes “we all travel the Milky Way together, trees and men.” He explores a sense of how we become who we are individually and collectively and our responsibility to the planet and to ourselves. The discussion will be led by Maralee MacMillan. Please join us.
Church Council Highlights
June 12, 2019

Church Council did not meet in July.
Learned that the sanctuary and parlor roof replacement has been completed.
Learned that the mold in the parlor closet will be addressed later in June.
Learned that bids have been obtained for painting the sanctuary ceiling. Physical Resources will probably choose to paint the entire ceiling for a more uniform appearance.
Learned that the vegetable garden has already produced over 70 pounds for IAM, with 70 additional pounds expected shortly. Help is always welcome mornings Monday through Thursday.
Approved Karla serving on a national UCC committee to rewrite the Manual on Church, based on a recommendation from the Human Relations Ministry.
Learned that Red paraments and candle ribbons will be in place all summer to create a “season of Pentecost”.
Held a Council Retreat, covering the topics of:
⇒ Our Spiritual Happenings
⇒ Our Leadership
⇒ Knowing Ourselves

Sunday School Monthly Report
June 2019

Monthly Theme: Finding God’s Love All Around Us

In June, we welcomed a total of five new children to the Sunday School group. We took time during the month to thank the congregation for playing the Carbon Footprint Game with us, to work outside in the garden, and to read the story, Old Turtle, about how all the creatures learned to appreciate each other and get along. We also talked about the love we feel for our country as we prepare to celebrate its independence.

Early planning and preparations are beginning for the children to take part in the Adopt a Stream Project. After more coordination and training with the Environmental Sustainability Group, our role will be to observe and document plant and animal life forms in and near Wash Creek.

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>June 23, 2019</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Laura Harrelson for Dede Walton</td>
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<td>Sadie Crum for Dede Walton</td>
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FELLOWSHIP SUPPER
Tuesday, August 20, 2019
5:30 - 7:30 pm

HENDERSON COUNTY HUNGER COALITION

Goals: Fellowship, introductions and fun.

FCC is an active community supporter and fundraising machine. In order to exceed last years' contribution to HCHC of over $23,000, we would like to kick off by getting to know the organizations we are supporting.

We expect 40 to 60 congregation members who will provide hors d’oeuvres, salads, bread and desserts. Our organizing committee will provide a variety of soups.

Beer and wine will be available for a donation. Handmade soup bowls will also be available for a donation to HCHC. Disposable eating utensils will be provided.

We are inviting representatives from the HCHC board and supported Henderson County food pantries. It is envisioned that our guests will scatter throughout the room to facilitate multiple discussions with our congregation members. We will also ask that no more than one or two guests sit at each table so that everyone gets a chance to tell and hear their story.

Fellowship will be from 5:30 until 6:00 in the Fellowship Hall at First Congregational Church. Dinner from 6:00 to 6:30.

Entertainment from 6:30 until 7:30 or so.

We ask that food pantry representatives come prepared to discuss their organizations and provide handouts describing your history and mission. Name tags showing both your name and that of the pantry you are representing will be helpful. Attendees should bring a set of silverware, a plate and a mug for hot beverages.

Questions and directions may be obtained by contacting Ken Whitney:
Telephone: 828-708-1408 E-mail: whitneykenneth9@gmail.com Please RSVP.
Aug 4  **Teilhard and Love**  Larry Anderson

*Teilhard de Chardin On Love: Evolving Human Relationships* by L.M. Savary and P.H. Berne. This recent book proposes to lead us to “Omega Love.” Larry Anderson wrote his Master’s thesis on Teilhard in 1967 at Chicago Theological Seminary and proposes to review the book and tweek some curiosity about exploring Teilhard, especially as his writing connects with Jungian depth psychology.

The book suggests there is value in connecting Teilhard’s writing with Jung’s deep dive into the human mind (psyche). When Larry sits down with the circle at Adult Forum, he loves to invite conversation. Come join us.

**August 11 Kick-off of Discussions of Ed Bacon’s 8 Habits of Love: Generosity**  Diane Swift

Join the first of eight lively discussions of our spring Ashley lecturer Rev. Ed Bacon’s eight habits of love – generosity, stillness, truth, candor, play, forgiveness, compassion, and community. This series is motivated by the desire to take reflective time to more fully understand, integrate and apply, as both individuals and a congregation, the wisdom of Ed’s wonderful ideas. “When put into place in our daily lives, these important habits help us make the choice – day after day – to reject fear’s hold and embrace, instead, the immense power and grace within all of us.” The eight Forums will each be led by a different church member, including Rev. Karla Miller and Mark Acker. (This series will be similar to the ten Forum discussions of 2014 Ashley lecturer Diane Butler Bass’ spiritual practices of a vibrant church.)

The first discussion on generosity will be facilitated by Diane Swift. Diane is a member of First Congregational Church and a prayer chaplain at Unity. She is a retired psychotherapist and completed training to become an End of Life Dula. Diane is co-facilitating the monthly Death Café and weekly Centering Prayer group, both held at FCCH.
Aug. 18  The Spirituality of Pilgrimages  Rev. Rob Field and Karen Jackson
Rev. Rob Field and Karen Jackson of the Center for Spiritual Wisdom will lead a program on the subject of pilgrimage, one of the most ancient and widely-observed spiritual practices in the world. What makes a pilgrimage a pilgrimage? Do you have to go across the world? Can I create a pilgrimage in my back yard? The presenters will address these questions as well as any you might bring with you.
Rob is an Episcopal priest who founded the Center For Spiritual Wisdom in Brevard in 2016. Rob has given workshops on Centering Prayer at our church. Karen is a writer, consultant and retreat leader who has trained with Parker Palmer at his Center for Courage and Renewal.

Aug. 25  Immigration Border Experience in El Paso TX  Shawn Kelly
This presentation is a first-hand experience from one of our FCC members who volunteered in El Paso from May 4 to May 20, 2019. With the support of our church and others, Shawn was able to volunteer as a nurse/driver (whatever was needed) to help the overwhelming numbers of migrants crossing our southern border in recent months. Come and hear her experience and learn how she and others are helping those seeking safety and refuge in our country.

Shawn is a retired trauma nurse and was the Emergency/Trauma Services Director of Nursing for the Greenville Health System (working in several large Children’s trauma centers before that). She was an Air Force medic serving in Texas prior to her nursing career. Shawn was moved by the stories of children dying of preventable infectious diseases while in U.S. custody at the border and felt called to help. This is her story.

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, August 22 at 11:30.
OUR AMAZING GARDEN

BECAUSE OF

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!!!!

from left: Nick Pence, Milton Stewart, Mindy Myers, Carolyn Wilson, Jon Nobling.
(Not pictured John Caldemeyer)
COMING TO THE WELL
August, 2019 By Ed O’Keefe

In a recent issue (July 3, 2019) in the Christian Century, author Andrew Root writes about “selective intention” and refers to an interesting YouTube demonstration (Daniel Simon: “The invisible gorilla”). Because viewers are given specific instructions what to look for, 50% of them do not perceive an incongruous man in a gorilla suit who waves his arms and jumps up and down.

Root explains, “Deep-seated assumptions about how to conceive and represent the world...inform and frame what we give our attention to. We can and do miss hugely obvious realities when our attention is on something else.”

What does this have to do with prayer? The author argues that in this Age of Secularism/Materialism our attention has been drawn away from what our ancestors thought was obvious: that a personal God acts and moves in the world. “We’ve acquired a unique observational blindness. ...New forms of attention make us unable to see what was once obvious.”

“The socially constructed ‘frame’ within which we see reality imposes levels of attention that make divine action questionable even for those of us who do not define ourselves as atheists or unbelievers.” In our secular society God, if God really exists, is in the background, and our day-to-day, moment-to-moment attention is on material things.

Enter the role of prayer. Prayer, daily prayer - the lifting of our minds and hearts to God - is the antidote to the materialistic, secular milieu that we live in.

We at First Congregational United Church of Christ have many ways to develop the habit of prayer. Besides our Sunday corporate service, there are opportunities to deepen our prayer lives such as attending Centering Prayer sessions offered each week, being faithful to our daily spiritual reading, and praying with a Prayer Chaplain. (The Prayer Chaplains are trained and available each Sunday and by phone to show, by example, how to pray.)

In addition to these ways, there is still time to sign up for our Annual Prayer Retreat to be held this month on September 13 and 14 at our UCC Retreat Center in Blowing Rock, NC. See Ed or Romella O’Keefe as soon as possible if you are interested in attending (edrookeefe@att.net). Andrew Root in the Atlantic Monthly talked about the secular frame and how difficult it is to keep our intention pure and on the Divine in the midst of indifference and materialism. We have to keep “prayed up”, which is one of the mottos of the Prayer Chaplains. We keep “Prayed up” by daily practice. Need a prayer?
Ministry of Physical Resources News

Due to an old leak prior to our roof repair, there was some mold growth in the Parlor closet. In June, MPR hired a professional company for removal of mold (drywall, etc) & mold remediation of Parlor closet & entire room. An industrial dehumidifier was placed in the Parlor as part of the process. The Parlor was then closed for 2 weeks per request of Inspector.

Early in July, Ray C. Woodcock, Certified Industrial Hygienist, completed a full inspection of the Parlor including air samples of Parlor, Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall. Mr. Woodcock is a highly respected mold inspector all over NC. His report said: “All surfaces in the Parlor remediation area were clean and dry. Air sample (Parlor, Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall) results were consistent with that, with very low indoor counts that probably came in from outdoors. I didn't see any sign of unusual mold growth indoors. I think these results should be encouraging to your members.”

A contractor will be completing new drywall & Parlor repairs/painting soon. We want to thank all of you who use the Parlor for your patience! Please contact Mindy Myers, MPR Facilitator, mindy7myers@gmail.com or 919-491-1004 with questions.

World Breastfeeding Week Celebration, August 2nd, 10AM - Noon. East Flat Rock Park, 107 Blue Ridge Road. Sponsored by Henderson County Breastfeeding Coalition.
FCUCC has long been active in the turbulent immigrant and migrant world. DREAM Scholarship, Immigration Network, Friends of La Capilla, Immigrant Rights Sunday, support for El Centro, and many other initiatives have been undertaken – ask Pat or Ed Argue if you have questions about these (pkargue@gmail.com).

A developing issue is providing assistance to families “left behind” when ICE action results in detention or deportation of the family’s main provider. True Ridge Ministries, working with St. James Episcopal Church, applied for a grant from the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina to provide services for such families. FCUCC, along with El Centro, La Capilla de Santa Maria, Holy Family Episcopal Church, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hendersonville, Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, DC Wellness, and the NAACP joined in support of this grant application.

Good news! The application was approved, and the Diocese will fund the program at a level above that originally requested. We now set forth on the actual work, which will provide case management, education, and advocacy, along with realistic planning and goal setting for dealing with the immediate and long-term impacts of deportation with the goal of making those left behind self-sufficient. As a practical matter, this will involve each organization in the coalition providing some financial support as well as modest volunteer assistance.

This is an important initiative, particularly during unprecedented times on the immigration front, and addresses a critical need that is sometimes overlooked. As the program evolves, we anticipate offering discussion programs and Q&A sessions. If this “strikes a chord” with you, please let Pat or Ed Argue know so that we can maximize our contribution to an exciting program.
Estrangement from your adult children is among the most painful of human experiences. It’s also one of the most difficult to talk about.

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 5-6% 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.

- **It’s not about who is right or wrong.** It is about moving forward with life.

First Congregational Church Library
Every Saturday, Sept. 7 – Nov. 9, 2019
8:30 am to 9:45 am

No RSVP required

Fe Anam Avis, Convener
614-208-4090
First Congregational Church
1735 Fifth Avenue West
Hendersonville, NC  28739
Marilyn Brain
The family of Jim Clegg
David Conner (friend of Anne Cain)
Susan Corn
Barbara Dexter (mother of Angie Yates)
Sue Easton
Marcia Farrell
Hilarie & Jean Glasgow-Hawkins
Jackie Green
Gabriel Kerr & family
Mildred Gardner
Jackie Green
Gabriel Kerr and Family (friend of Karla Miller)
Tammy MacIsaac
Jeannie Myers (friend of Diaz’s)
Charles Ogle
Betsey Parker
Joady Perrett
Ingrid Perry
Victoria Tatum
Eve Teerlinck
Family of Wiley Taylor
Richard Tyler
Pius Yorio

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.
August Birthdays

05: Linda French
05: Nancy Kaczor
05: Elizabeth Kamis
07: Suzie Edell
09: Diane Harrison
10: Steve Hogenboom
11: Joe Streer
12: Lester Vier
14: Joyce Tierney
14: Sandy Westin
16: Carl Schoendorfer
16: Kevin Tierney
16: Nadene Spear
17: Virginia Craig
17: Elaine Wiggen
22: Janice Walters
24: Lori Cipot
27: Milton Stewart
29: Carol Woeppel
31: Wyatt Henderly
31: Bonnie Rash

August Anniversaries

16: Paul & Sandy Westin
24: Mark & Jean Raymond
31: Powell & Bridget Cotter
August Lectionary

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
August 4
Hos 11:1-11 and Ps 107:1-9, 43 or
Eccl 1:2, 12-14, 2:18-23 and Ps 49:1-12
Col 3:1-11
Luke 12:13-21

Soul Investment

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
August 11
Isa 1:11, 10-20 and Ps 50:1-8, 22-23 or
Gen 15:1-6 and Ps 33:12-22
Heb 11:1-3, 8-16

Living into the Promise

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 18
Isa 5:1-7 and Ps 80:1-2, 8-19, or
Jer 23:23-29 and Ps 82
Heb 11:29-12:2
Luke 12:49-56

Restore Us

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
August 25
Jer 1:4-10 and Ps 71:1-6 or
Isa 58:9b-14 and Ps 103:1-8
Heb 12:18-29
Luke 13:10-17

Healing Reign

ATTENDANCE

Children's
Worship Sunday School
07/07 - 150  8
07/14 - 151  7
07/21 - 173  9
07/28 - 161  4

Average Worship Attendance: 159
First Congregational UCC
1735 Fifth Avenue West
Hendersonville NC 28739-4013

Justice, Compassion, Inclusion