Beloved,

The third week of November I am doing something I have never done before. I am taking a week of my continuing education to go to an icon writing workshop at Kanuga. I know nothing about icon writing (why is it called writing, when I will be painting?), and I have never participated in a retreat where a piece of art is created through prayer, contemplation, chanting and worship (is it art, even? I don’t think so, but I suppose I will learn this, too.) Why did I choose icon writing? These words from Teresa Harrison, the instructor sold me: “The joy of creating an icon in community is to experience and share the love of God. The end result, of God working in us and through us, goes far beyond the painting on the panel and into the realm of the mystery of our faith. Come join us and ‘fear not’ your ability, simply come open to love.”

Come open to love. This phrase sings to my soul. What if I approached every experience open to love? What if we all did?

I will confess, I am a teensy bit worried about my ability to paint something that stays within the lines. If you have seen icons, you know they are a bit stylized and precise. They are not messy. We have three choices of icons to “write”, one of which is an angel that looks like it has some blurred lines. I leaned toward choosing that one because it looks attainable. Instead, in a rare moment of listening to my higher self, I chose the more precisely lined icon of Mary Magdalene, because even though I know it will challenge me to the core, I wanted to spend a week with one of the most significant disciples of Jesus.

We will see how it goes. I am expecting I’ll have a lot to share with you when the workshop is over! In any case, I will go to the workshop open to love. May it be so for all of us.

Love and peace,

Karla
Retire or Re-Tire?

Once again, I am “borrowing” parts of a commentary by Rev. Dr. Becky Beckworth, senior pastor at St. John’s UCC, Fullerton, PA for this Moderator’s View.

She suggests that how we think about the word “retire” needs to change. The images that we think of when we hear the word “retire” do not match today’s reality. Everything in life seems to evolve. Change is inevitable. Perhaps the word “retire” needs some updating.

At First Congregational, many of us are “retired” – at least in the traditional sense of the word. We are retired from the career that we pursued in the past. The one that we were paid to perform. That change may have occurred for a number of reasons – a major policy change at our employer, elimination of our position, health concerns, a desire to travel, or to spend more time with our family. For many people, they retired to eliminate stress from their lives and take more time to relax and enjoy living.

When one retires today, it seems that it isn’t to simply stop working. Few choose to sit on the front porch in a rocking chair. Retiring today has more to do with a decision to work less and to grow in new directions.

As a new plan for life emerges, ideas of how to spend time spring forth. Is it time to question just what is going on in your life and how God may be calling you to do a new thing?

How do you plan to live out the later years in your life? Are you taking time to envision what needs to be on your Bucket List? Are you questioning how to put things in place to ensure you have ample opportunity to enjoy the fruits of your lifetime labors?

Today is about taking a break from what was and getting excited about what can be. As Molly Marshall said in her sermon at FCCH on October 20th - is it time for a life makeover project to get underway?

What will the “R” word mean for you? One insight is that the word “retire” simply means what the letters say: Re-Tire. It is a time to put some new tires on our life and head out once again, fresh, to do good works. What new thing is God doing in your life?

Thanks for reading,

Phil Taylor, Moderator
MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE
Stillness during the Hectic Holidays

Our spring Ashley lecturer, Ed Bacon, places Stillness as his first habit of love because it is so foundational to the other seven habits. Stillness, or mindfulness, allows us to experience “what it feels like to be connected to the Beloved, the source of the most powerful tool in our lives: love.” Each of us can experiment and find the unique practice(s) that work best for us, including: prayer and meditation; opportunities for self-reflection and centering; while exercising; listening to music; rest; healthy diversion; or solitude. The trick is to integrate Stillness into our lives in a proactive manner, to give yourselves at least 10 minutes a day, and then to expand the time.

While Stillness is a wonderful habit of love anytime, the Mental Health Group especially recommends that you incorporate it into your life during the upcoming joyous (but often hectic) holidays. As little as 10 minutes of this critical self-care each day can make all the difference. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas.

Gary Cyphers

SERVICE & GIVING NOTES
by Nancy Keswani, Facilitator

At its meeting of October 10th, the Service & Giving Group approved the following:

- Continue to donate $750 to MountainTrue, a regional environmental organization, for water sampling of the creek near the church, which includes a sign indicating that the church sponsors the activity.
- Continue to donate $500 to the Bamrung School in Thailand.
- Continue to donate $1000 to Safelight, which provides immediate and long-term assistance to local victims of domestic violence.
- A new donation of $100 to the International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region, which promotes women’s reproductive and human rights in this hemisphere. Empowering women is an effective measure against climate change.

Church members are always welcome at Service & Giving meetings to learn about the work of local, national, and international charitable organizations and have a voice in deciding about these donations, which the church supports by allocating 10% of its budget to Service & Giving.
Church Council Highlights
October 2019

⇒ Ron Miller reported that things are business as usual financially. We are ahead of budget and no problems are foreseen for the rest of the year.
⇒ The 2020 preliminary budget was approved for presentation to the congregation and a vote at the congregational meeting on November 3.
⇒ Three modifications to the bylaws were approved. These too will be presented for a congregational vote on November 3.
⇒ Fellowship Suppers will be alcohol-free for the balance of 2019 and then re-evaluated.
⇒ Advent planning has been completed.
⇒ November 20 is a community-wide transgender day of remembrance.
⇒ Nicolas Aguilar will be building benches at the labyrinth for his Eagle Scout project.
⇒ Mark Acker will be full-time in 2020. His job description and title are being revised.

November 20th, at 5:30 pm, Transgender Day of Remembrance. We will hold an ecumenical vigil to remember and honor the transgender people around the world whose lives have been lost to anti-transgender violence. Transgender Day of Remembrance is the last day of Transgender Awareness Week, November 12-19, which is a week when transgender people and their allies take action to bring attention to the community by educating the public about who transgender people are, sharing stories and experiences, and advancing advocacy around the issues of prejudice, discrimination, and violence that affect the transgender community. We are hosting this vigil as part of our welcoming ministry as an Open and Affirming congregation. Please join us.
November’s Fellowship Supper is scheduled to begin earlier this month. We will be eating at 5:30 so please plan to be in the Fellowship Hall at 5:15. There will be no social time (and thus, no appetizers) because the program will begin at 6:30, in the sanctuary. There will be no bar, but attendees are welcome to bring their own beer or wine. Other beverages will be provided.

“Our Favorite Things” will be the program which features a feast of music and violin which cerebrates thirty years of collaborative performances by Larry Schipull and our own Linda Laderach. Both performers have concertized across the United States, Europe and Asia.

The program is a wonderful way to end this year’s Fellowship suppers. There is no charge for this performance, of course, but donations will be accepted for a PFLAG Scholarship for students attending Blue Ridge Community College.

At 5:15, bring a dish to share plus your utensils, plate and a mug for coffee or tea. Mark your calendars and come to enjoy an evening of music.

HOLIDAY WISH LIST

IAM (Interfaith Assistance Ministries) experiences a big demand before Thanksgiving for holiday food. Please donate non-perishable items to the box in the foyer. Stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, canned yams, canned vegetables, potatoes/instant potatoes, cake mixes, icing, and canned pumpkin are especially needed. Most needed are 6-10 lb. fresh hams, 8-15 lb. turkeys, and turkey breasts. Please deliver these directly to IAM at 310 Freeman Street, right off Four Seasons Blvd. near Belk.
**Nov 3: African American History and Art**  
Crystal Cauley  
Art can speak to us in many ways. Crystal Cauley has been inspired to talk about African American History of Henderson County and tell part of this interesting story using many forms of Art. She will share stories and art including a piece by Diamond Cash titled “Legacy”. Come hear, see and learn.  
Cauley is the founder of the Black Business Network of WNC, which strives to embrace and celebrate the achievements of entrepreneurs and businesses owners. One reason she took on the Black Arts and Craft Exhibition was to share the rich cultural heritage of African Americans in Henderson County.

**Nov 10: Habit of Love 4: Candor**  
Gary Cyphers  
We continue our monthly facilitated discussion of Ashley lecturer Ed Bacon’s *8 Habits of Love*, with a focus on **Candor**. This challenging habit helps us voice an opinion that may unbalance, anger, or put on the defensive the person you are addressing. Successful courageous conversations are from the heart, and allow love, rather than fear, to enrich our relationships. Gary is a prior Council moderator and member of the pastor search committee.

**Nov 17: The Writer’s Forum**  
Rand Bishop  
It is time once again for our Writer’s Forum which is devoted to our writers, whether church members, friends, or visitors. The writer reads his or her own work, any genre, to the group. If you’d like to read, please contact Rand Bishop at 808-697-0090 or randbishop33@gmail.com. Come support our creativity!  
Rand, a retired college professor of English, facilitates a Writer’s Roundtable every fourth Thursday morning at the church.

**Nov 24: My Near-Death Journey**  
Jim Nourse  
Many people in Henderson and Transylvania counties know Dr. Jim Nourse as a psychologist, acupuncturist, writer and seeker of wisdom. A brain hematoma brought him to the brink of death in 2017, but it turned out to be an unexpected source of blessing and spiritual insight, which continues to unfold.  
Jim is a member of FCCH and is the author of *Simple Spirituality: Finding Your Own Way* and *Opening the Aloha Mind*. He refers to his present work as “spiritual mentoring” — helping people explore, clarify and if necessary heal the spiritual aspect of their lives.
Poetry Book. Marilyn McComas has recently published a book of poems titled “Palace of Imaginings.” Please speak with Marilyn if you are interested in purchasing it. 828-693-3657,

Hendersonville Chorale presents

**Glorias and Memories**

Sunday, November 24, 2019 @ 3 p.m.
First United Methodist Church in Hendersonville
Tickets ($20) are available online or at the door

Go to hendersonvillechorale.com for tickets and information
Please join us for a great concert!

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!

THE WRITERS’ ROUNDTABLE

There will not be a meeting in November. 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.
Eighth Annual HOLIDAY COOKIE SALE

Saturday, December 7, 2019, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The Eighth Annual Cookie Sale buzz has begun! Excitement is growing about this special sale, which raises money for the Needs of the Church fund. Themed Gift Baskets will be raffled and the items included in the baskets will pleasantly surprise the winners.

There will be a Holiday Café open for guests to sip complimentary beverages while enjoying eating delicious cake and listening to holiday music. A selection of fair-trade coffees, teas, cocoa, and candy will be available for purchase. There is something for everyone!

There are sign-up sheets for the cookie/cake bakers at a display in the reception area. If you are willing to make one, two, or more batches of cookies, **YOU ARE NEEDED** to make this year’s sale spectacular. **PLEASE no chocolate chip cookies or brownies.** From past sales, it has been learned, that customers would prefer Holiday Cookies. (Recipes may be copied from the Holiday Cookie Recipe Book found with the sign-up sheets.)

The Needs of the Church Fund has recently provided money to purchase 6 new choir chairs with arms, 4 large tables for the Fellowship Hall, new tablecloths, the church-wide WIFI system, desk top copier for the reception area, and new cook tops in the kitchen plus other projects which benefit our church.

Many cookies are needed to make our sale a success. If you have questions or want to help on the 6th and/or 7th, please contact Claudia Schopper, chairperson, at 697-1569 or cschopper1@gmail.com.
COME TO THE WELL
November, 2019

“If the only prayer you said in your whole life was “thank you,” that would suffice.”
- Meister Eckhart

A few days ago, pondering this season of Thanks-giving, I thought about how easy it is for us to take for granted the ordinary parts of life, some of which we may be unaware of, with nary a thought of thanksgiving. For example, did you know that most of what we consider our bodies is not us? Yes, about 97% of us is made up of an amazing microcosm, a microbiome of trillions of miniscule microorganisms that inhabit our bodies, working non-stop throughout our life span in building, repairing, renewing us in partnership with our body’s cells. Like the great cathedrals in Europe that have stood for centuries and whose interiors and exteriors continually have scaffolding for workers to maintain and repair these edifices of prayer for generations to come, our body’s scaffolding is the structure for these tiny amazing workers, these trillions of biota that keep working, each generation’s short life span continuing the work of maintenance and repair that keeps us going.

Isn’t it amazing to just recently find that our Great Creator, since the beginning of time, has created this ongoing care for all of the creatures on this earth including us? How about a rousing, “Thank You, God!”- and- “Thank you, Biota!”

For providing us with such an amazing life-giving biodiversity, we thank you God. We open ourselves to your Healing Presence as you strengthen and renew us in this wondrous visible and unseen partnership you have given that pours forth new life and light throughout us and all creatures. We thank you, biota and thank you, cells, for your continuous partnership in this divine plan of life. Thank you God!

Relaxing now in the peace of God, know that, though unseen, this unceasing pulse of life force is always mightily at work in and through you. Our hearts overflow with gratitude and thanksgiving for this wondrous care from our Creator and for the love that blesses us with such wonderful Grace and Divine Order.

Remembering the small things to be thankful for, a Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Romella Hart-O’Keefe

Our Prayer chaplains for 2019-2020 were dedicated on Sunday, October 27. We welcome two new chaplains, Helle Gylling and Jim Rash, to our roster.

Ben Coonrod Joanna Coonrod
Helle Gylling Susan Huff
Nancy Keswani Judith Nourse
Joady Perrett Jim Rash
Diane Rhoades Sammye Whitney

Ed O’Keefe and Romella Hart-O’Keefe, Chaplain Coordinators
The FCCH Bookclub will meet on Tuesday, November 12th to select books for next year (2020). If you have a favorite book or two, please join us with your selection and tell us a little about why you love it. We meet in the church library at 2 o’clock. Hope to see you then.

Sunday School Monthly Report - October 2019

Ginger Fisher, Sunday School Teacher
Dede Walton, Nursery Teacher

Monthly Theme: Joining The Family

October marked the beginning of a much-anticipated new beginning for the Sunday School Program. The children are delighted to be welcomed into Sunday morning church as valued members of the congregation. They have truly enjoyed the friendly, informal introductions that Karla has provided for them each week at the beginning of the worship service, and they love hearing the prayers and music that mark First Congregational Church’s weekly traditions.

After the children leave for Sunday School at the end of the first hymn, we return to our classroom to continue exploring the weekly lessons that the adults are focusing on in church. We encourage the children to talk with their parents about these themes at home, and to share what they are learning with their families. We are all grateful to feel and return the love of the entire congregation. Thank you for your wonderful welcome!

We are also celebrating the surprising changes that Autumn brings. This past Sunday the children gathered flowers, grasses, rocks, and twigs to create a beautiful Nature Altar in the Sunday School Classroom. For a better idea of how our children are growing and learning in faith, we invite members of the congregation to stop in and visit us at the end of services. It may be a little hectic, but it’s also a lot of fun!
**Church Retreat.** The church retreat that was originally scheduled for November 9th has been postponed. Stay tuned for more information.

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**IMMIGRATION NEWS AND NOTES**

In the August Chronicle you were introduced to the new initiative being undertaken by a dozen churches and other groups working with True Ridge to address the needs of those left behind in an immigration detention or deportation situation, or SLBT (for “Serving Those Left Behind”) for short. The effort is off to a great start, with five clients being assisted during September, as well as completing items such as intake procedures, contacts with other groups, etc. *There is a need for a Volunteer Coordinator, someone to set up a telephone tree for transportation needs, and bilingual persons willing to be trained for court advocacy work. If you’re interested, let Pat or Ed Argue know.*

FCC was pleased to be a sponsor of the very well-attended Pisgah Legal Services Justice Forum at the Civic Center in Asheville. This year’s focus was immigration, with Jose Antonio Vargas, a Pulitzer Prize winning author and himself an undocumented immigrant, as keynote speaker. We were especially pleased to see a Pisgah Legal video shown at the event, which featured Roman, one of their clients who is also a current recipient of the DREAM Scholarship. (FCC, of course, has long been a participant in the DREAM Scholarship initiative.) Roman is a great speaker, and you might want to go to YouTube and view the video – it’s “Pisgah Legal Services Roman and Louisette’s Stories”. Roman is typical of the amazing young people who have been helped by DREAM. As an aside, Jose Vargas is a gifted communicator, and his current book “Dear America” will give you an insider view of being undocumented in the immigration world these days. It’s a very quick read, and highly recommended.
Friday Morning Video Series-Fall Term

We began a new series of video courses on Friday October 4th from 10 - 12. This series is “The Lost Christianities – Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew.” The lecturer is Dr. Bart Ehrman, an early Ashley Lecturer at First Congregational. All are welcome and encouraged to bring a few goodies for the snack table. Coffee and tea will be provided.

November 1
The Acts of John
The Acts of Thomas
The Acts of Paul and Thecla

November 8
Forgeries in the Name of Paul
The Epistle of Barnabas
The Apocalypse of Peter

November 15
The Rise of Early Christian Orthodoxy
Beginnings of the Canon
Formation of the New Testament Canon

November 22
Interpretation of Scripture
Orthodox Corruption of Scripture
Early Christian Creeds

Time to change your clocks! Daylight savings time ends Sunday, November 3rd at 2 a.m. Don’t forget to set your clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, November 2nd!
PRAYER LIST

Marilyn Brain
Family of Howard Carl
Family of Ray Clawson
Barbara Dexter (mother of Angie Yates)
Al & Joan Diaz
Sue Easton
Elizabeth Fisher
Mildred Gardner
Hilarie & Jean Glasgow-Hawkins
Jackie Green
Mildred Gardner
Carol Inman
Gabriel Kerr and Family (friend of Karla Miller)
Priscilla Milo (friend of Joady Perrett)
Charles Ogle
Bob Palmer
Betsey Parker
Joady Perrett
Ingrid Perry
Lois Popanz
Jim & Bonnie Rash
Pamela Ray (friend of Joady Perrett)
Jessica Smith (Tierneys’ niece)
Priscilla Smith (friend of Joady Perrett)
Victoria Tatum
Eve Teerlinck
Family of Wiley-Taylor
Jane Wilson (friend of Joady Perrett)
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.
November Birthdays

01: John Sams
02: Linda McFadden
04: Wes Simmons
06: Shawn Kelly
13: Ben Coonrod
13: Bob Battle
17: Mireille Soss
19: Nick Pence
25: Anna Helfand
25: Tom Kimmell
25: Anne Rutledge Thomas
26: John Walters
28: Judith Nourse
28: Luther Dowdy
29: Marilyn McComas
29: Jeannie Stewart
30: Estelle Taylor
30: Matt Henderly
30: Trisha LaGrange

November Anniversaries

04: Karla Miller & Liz Thurston
07: Joel Matthews & Emery Gill
11: Jon & Judith Arthur
27: Jim & Victoria Mosher
November Lectionary

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost
November 3
Hab 1:1-4; 2:1-4 and Ps 119:137-144 or
Isa 1:10-18 and Ps 32:1-7
2 Thess 1:1-4, 11-12
Luke 19:1-10

Transforming Love

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost
November 10
Hag 1:15b-2:9 and Ps 145:1-5, 17-21, or Ps 98
Job 19:23-27a and Ps 17:1-9
2 Thes 2:1-5, 13-17

Hold On To Faith

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost
November 17
Isa 65:17-25 and Isa 12 or
Mal 4:1-2a and Ps 98
2 Thess 3:6-13
Luke 21:5-19

Infinite Possibilities

Reign of Christ
November 24
Jer 23:1-6 and Luke 1:68-79 or
Jer 23:1-6 and Ps 46
Col 1:11-20

Together in Christ

ATTENDANCE

Children's
Worship Sunday School
10/06 - 169 7
10/13 - 202 4
10/20 - 190 6
10/27 - 185 3

Average Worship Attendance: 187

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Justice, Compassion, Inclusion