

FIRST CHRONICLE



A MESSAGE FROM PATRICK

Summer has flown by in what feels like the blink of an eye, and as we look ahead, we find ourselves with just a few more weeks before we transition into a new seasonal rhythm.

One of our greatest joys this summer has been welcoming Elizabeth LaJeunesse as our new music director in July. Her passion for worship and music has already begun to shine through, and we're eagerly anticipating her work with our choirs as they restart in August and September. If you've been thinking of joining a choir, or enrolling your child, now is the perfect time!

What a blessing it has been to witness the strength of our summer attendance! On several Sundays, we've found ourselves running out of bulletins even after printing more—a wonderful problem that speaks to the vitality of our congregation. This enthusiasm has extended beyond our weekly worship, as evidenced by the overwhelming response to our all-church retreat, which is now near capacity. The anticipation for this retreat reflects the desire for deeper connection and engagement within our congregation.

Our growth brings both celebration and practical challenges. Many of you have experienced firsthand the difficulty of finding parking each Sunday morning. Please know that the session is actively addressing this concern as part of a broader vision for our congregation's future. With the enthusiastic support of our leaders, plans for a capital campaign are now being refined to help address parking needs along with other facilities requirements that will support our growing community. The session is excited about these possibilities and will be ready to share more details with the congregation soon.

As August draws to a close, many of us will return to the familiar rhythms of school schedules and sports seasons. For others, this time brings a fresh wave of travel opportunities or visits with family and friends.

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A MESSAGE FROM PATRICK CONTINUED

Wherever life takes you in the coming weeks, remember that you can always connect with First Presbyterian Church of Asheville through worship—whether in person in our sanctuary or online from wherever you may be.

May we find rest in God's presence, joy in our fellowship, strength for our work and witness, and excitement for the ministry opportunities that lie ahead!

Patrick

PIZZA + POPSICLES IN THE PARK



Join us at Robert Lake Park!

We will gather at the playground on August 3, from 4:30-6:30 pm for play, pizza, popsicles, and time in the creek.

CREATION CARE TEAM: RENEWABLE NATURAL GAS

Did you know that many landfills are developing renewable natural gas (RNG) plants onsite? These RNG plants help collect and clean the gas created at a landfill from decomposing waste, including food, wood, paper, etc. This cleaned gas is then pushed directly into the traditional natural gas system. This means that if you heat your home or cook with natural gas, you could be using cleaned landfill gas.

STITCHERS

Stitchers usually meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month in room 214 at FPCA from 10 am – 12 pm. The next meeting will be on August 27. If you have questions or would like to knit or crochet prayer patches at home, please contact Susie Sweet at sesweet16@gmail.com.

YOUTH TRIPS TO MEMPHIS, MASSANETTA SPRINGS, AND MONTREAT

The Youth Group packed it in this summer! We had delightful and engaged groups on each of our three trips: Memphis Youth Mission trip (9 youth and 2 adults), Massanetta Springs Middle School Youth Conference (11 youth and 2 adults), and Montreat High School Youth Conference (12 youth and 3 adults). A video encapsulating these experiences will come later this fall, and we invite you to ask any of these youth about their experiences. They might tell you about systemic injustice or the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel or the Lynching Sites Project (or the Bass Pro Shop Pyramid) in Memphis; a giant slip-n-slide or their favorite energizers or how to play One-Night Werewolf or just how sure they are that God loves them as they are, from Massanetta Springs; the gifts of darkness (and not just light) or what they learned about "free-solo-ing" or our dance to "Popular" from Wicked or our 3:00 a.m. group affirmation.

These youth love each other deeply and well, and they are growing in their faith in beautiful ways, in and through these trips



FAITH FELLOWSHIP, CHILDREN & YOUTH: WHEN GENERATIONS GATHER

BY CAITLIN JOHNSON

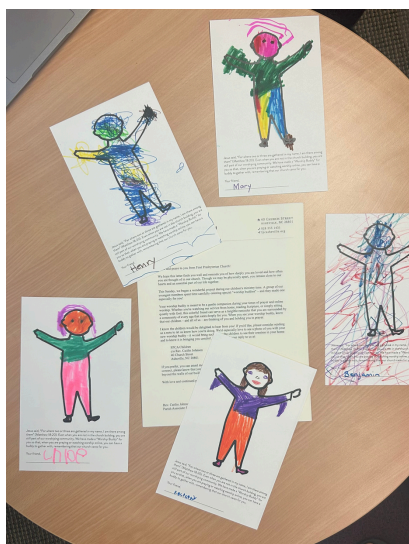
CLASSES SUNDAYS AT 9:45 AM

In our everyday lives, it is easy to find ourselves separated by age and stage – children in schools, young adults building careers, parents connecting with other parents, and older adults living in retirement communities. Yet within our church walls, we have an incredible opportunity to connect these generations together, creating relationships that strengthen us all.

Research shows that to grow in faith, young people need at least five adults outside their family investing in them. What a calling for our church! Yet I also wonder if older adults might need the same – relationships with at least five folks of other generations – to continue to grow in their faith. Young people gain mentors with wisdom learned from experience, and older members discover they have much to learn as well. Children and youth bring fresh perspectives, honest questions that deepen understanding, and infectious joy that reminds us to approach God with wonder. When a child wonders, "Can God hear everyone's prayers at the same time?" or a teenager challenges us to think differently about justice, they become our teachers too.

We know these intergenerational connections reduce isolation, increase empathy, and create stronger communities. Beyond the research, we witness this truth time and time again at FPCA – in worship in the chapel and sanctuary, while at fellowship on the front lawn, and when folks slow down and stop to say hello in the hallways. Our joy is increased, our faith is deepened, and our welcome is wider when we experience consistent, positive interactions across generations.

Join us this August for an intentionally intergenerational class that will meet at 9:45 AM on Sunday mornings in the fellowship hall. These gatherings are designed to foster meaningful connections across age groups through shared conversation and fellowship. Whether you are seven or one hundred seven, your presence – and your story – could be exactly what someone needs to hear. Come expecting to grow as we experience the boundary-breaking love of Jesus Christ together.



This summer, children age 3 - 2nd grade have met for a special four week summer series at 9:45. They have learned about worship together -- decorating "worship buddies" for some of our homebound members, signing their names to a card for the congregation at First Presbyterian Church Kerrville, TX, and using kitchen instruments to praise God with Patrick!

Summer Book Club: Read, Reflect, Return

This summer, members and friends of FPCA are diving into stories and reflections that invite us to grow in faith, compassion, and community. Whether you're reading *Somehow* by Anne Lamott, *Cherished Belonging* by Gregory Boyle, *The Book of Joy* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama, *Sunrise on the Reaping* by Suzanne Collins, or *Growing in God's Love Story Bible*, we hope you find words that stir your spirit and challenge your imagination.

Groups are currently meeting for *Somehow*, *Cherished Belonging*, and *The Book of Joy*, and **all five books** will be discussed at our **Summer Book Club Luncheon on Saturday, August 24**. Whether you've read one book or all five, you are warmly invited to come share what you've discovered. This gathering is a chance to hear from fellow readers of all ages about what has inspired or unsettled them, and how these stories speak into our life together as a church.

As you read, consider:

- **What does this book reveal about the human longing for connection, healing, and joy?**
- **How does this story or set of reflections challenge your understanding of what the church is called to be?**
- **In what ways does your book help you think more deeply about FPCA's mission to help people experience the boundary-breaking love of Jesus through radical hospitality, deep relationships, and shared ministry?**

Happy Reading!



Making Room for Connection: Fall 2025 Koinonia Groups

This fall at FPCA, we're inviting you to make room—for deepened relationships, for a better understanding of how God works in our world, and for meaningful conversation. One of the best ways to do that? Join a Koinonia Group.

Koinonia Groups are small groups of 7–10 people who meet weekly for six weeks to talk about life and faith, pray together, and build deeper relationships. Whether you're new to FPCA or have been around for decades, these groups offer a space of welcome, reflection, and belonging.

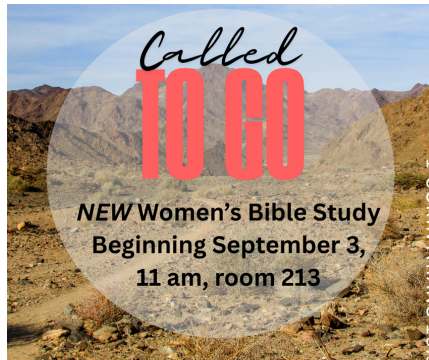
This fall's theme is Making Room, and each week one of our pastors—Patrick, David, Caitlin, or Shannon—will share a short video teaching (10ish minutes) that sparks group conversation. These videos will draw from each pastor's unique voice and experience, inviting you to explore how we make room for God, for one another, and for grace in our everyday lives.

Koinonia Groups begin the week of September 8 and will gather for a kickoff lunch after worship on Sunday, September 8 to learn more about group dynamics and to preview the season ahead.

No book is required, and there's no homework—just show up each week ready to listen, reflect, and share. You can sign up as an individual, with a friend, or even form your own group.

Whether you're seeking a space for deeper connection or simply curious to see what God might do when we make room, a Koinonia Group is a great place to start.

To sign up or learn more, contact Shannon Jordan at sjordan@fpcasheville.org.



**Save the Date: NEW! Fall Women's Bible Study
Called to Go: Faith, Change, and Finding Our Way
Wednesdays, 11:00–12:15 | Beginning September 3**

This fall, we will begin a new women's Bible study led by Shannon Jordan and Janine Goldin. This class will explore the stories of Abraham and Sarah's journey of faith, change, and unexpected blessing from the book of Genesis. Together we'll reflect on how God's story speaks to our own stories—especially in seasons of transition, disappointment, and restlessness, as well as joy, calling, and renewed purpose.

Whether you've done lots of Bible study, consider yourself fairly new to Bible study, or are just curious, this will be a welcoming space for thoughtful conversation and connection.

If there is interest, we may also offer an evening group—let Shannon know if that would work better for you. Let Shannon know if you are interested at sjordan@fpcasheville.org. Mark your calendars now and plan to be part of this meaningful time together!

COME AWAY TOGETHER: REGISTER NOW FOR CHURCH RETREAT

Let this be the year we come together, one year out from the storm, as a visible witness to the resilience and grace of God at work among us.

The retreat begins Friday night, October 3, 2025, with a kickoff dinner and ends after worship on Sunday, October 5, 2025. Please see the linked form for costs. Sign-ups for overnight attendees ended on July 1, 2025; check with Nancy McNeill at life@fpcasheville.org to inquire about last minute availability. **Sign-ups for commuters due by September 1, 2025.** Final payment is due by September 20, 2025. You can sign up online or during coffee hour on Sunday mornings.

Costs:

- Overnight: Two Nights, One adult \$195.00
- Overnight: two Nights, Two adults 1st Adult \$165.00 and second adult \$165.00
- Commuter Adult-\$80, Children 5 and under, Free. Children 6-11 \$30, Youth 12-17 \$55.00
- Family Discount 10% off per person for families of 3 or more.
- Full and partial scholarships are available, please reach out to Shannon if needed. If you would like to support a scholarship, please let us know.

Register Now!

Register at: <https://fpcasheville.org/church-retreat/>

IMAGES FROM THE TOURISTS BASEBALL GAME

FPCA members enjoyed baseball, fireworks, and dollar hotdogs at the Asheville Tourists game on July 18.



FPCA RACIAL JUSTICE LEARNING TRIP TO MONTGOMERY, AL: FEBRUARY 13-16, 2026

Interested in joining a small group from FPCA to travel to Montgomery, AL, to visit the nationally acclaimed EJI (Equal Justice Initiative) Legacy Sites - National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Museum, and Sculpture Park? We will prepare for the experience together, travel on the church bus, visit the sites, share meals, worship, and debrief together. A detailed email was sent to the congregation on July 16 (including cost info). Interested in coming or learning more? Contact Fred Dulin at life@fpcasheville.org by Aug. 7.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars for These Special Events

Sunday, August 3, 2025

Pizza & Popsicles in the Park

Sunday, August 10, 2025

Pop-Up Choir

Sunday, August 24, 2025

Summer Book Club Luncheon

Saturday & Sunday, August 30-31, 2025

Youth Kick-Off Event and Lock-In

Sunday, September 7, 2025

Cereal Sundae Kick-Off

Friday, October 3- Sunday, October 5, 2025

Church Retreat at Montreat Conference Center

11 am Service at Montreat



Music Director Elizabeth LaJeunesse with the search committee at her welcome reception.