



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ASHEVILLE

SEPTEMBER 2025

The First Chronicle

A Message from Patrick

Dear Friends,

As we transition from summer into the promising rhythm of fall, I'm so grateful for the season of worship and ministry we've just concluded. A summer of robust worship was punctuated by meaningful fellowship and vibrant intergenerational and youth activities that strengthened our bonds as a community of faith. I'm especially grateful for the gift of welcoming Elizabeth as our new music director, whose talents are already enriching our church.

Our Theme for the Year: "Making Room"

This year, our congregational theme is "Making Room," and this concept will shape our worship, preaching, and faith formation programs in the months ahead. Our guiding verse comes from Romans 15:7: "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you." Throughout this year, we will explore from many angles what it means to live into the welcome of Christ—how we make room in our hearts, our community, and our physical spaces for God and all whom God calls.

Building a Wider Welcome for Future Generations

Speaking of making room, our session is currently gathering data and refining plans for an exciting capital campaign called "Building a Wider Welcome for Future Generations." This important initiative will address our parking and accessibility needs, fund necessary interior renovations, and tackle crucial maintenance projects that will strengthen the foundation of our ability to welcome others for years to come. Please hold our session in your prayers as they undertake this vital work, and look eagerly for more detailed information in the coming weeks.



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A Message from Patrick (Continued)

Stepping Into Deeper Relationships

While worship remains the heart of our life together as a church, we know that the deepest relationships are formed when we take intentional steps toward one another. This September offers wonderful opportunities to do just that. Koinonia (small) groups are beginning, children's and youth ministries are launching their new year, and both men's and women's fellowship and learning opportunities are starting up. You'll find all the details in this newsletter, and I encourage you to prayerfully consider how you might take a step toward deeper relationships with your siblings in faith. Through these connections we experience the boundary-breaking love of Christ.

All-Church Retreat: A Time of Joy and Learning

At the beginning of October, our all-church retreat promises to be a truly wonderful time together! Registration numbers are already impressively high, and we're eagerly anticipating the fun, fellowship, and learning we'll share with Dr. Kim Wagner of Princeton Theological Seminary. If you have any questions about the retreat, please don't hesitate to reach out.

An Exciting Year Ahead

FPC-A is embarking on what promises to be an exciting year of worship, ministry, and mission. As we learn together what it means to make room—for God's Spirit, for one another, and for all those God calls—I joyfully anticipate the journey we'll share. Thank you for the privilege of continuing to walk this path together.

In Christ,



Service of Remembrance for Hurricane Helene

4 pm on Friday, September 26th at Central UMC (27 Church Street, downtown Asheville)

A joint service with First Presbyterian, Trinity Episcopal, and Central United Methodist Churches

On September 27th, 2024 our community experienced devastation as it never had before. In the weeks and months that followed, we came together as neighbors to survive and then recover. On the first anniversary of Hurricane Helene we invite you to come together again so that we can remember, grieve, and find hope through prayer, Scripture, and song. A special offering will go to a local organization for hurricane recovery support.





CHANCEL CHOIR RESUMES SEPTEMBER 3

After a well-earned summer hiatus, the choir is back! Wednesday rehearsals resume September 3, 7:00–8:30 pm in the sanctuary. Maybe you've thought about joining choir for the first time, or coming back after a break. Maybe you've been singing for decades, or have never sung a note (but always wanted to)—there's a place in choir for you! We have an exciting lineup of anthems for the fall in a wide range of styles, and there are some fun opportunities to sing outside of Sunday mornings as well. If you're interested in joining us, please send an email to Elizabeth LaJeunesse, Director of Music, at elajeunesse@fpcasheville.org, or just come to our first rehearsal. This choir is open to all youth grades 7–12 as well as adults. We can't wait to welcome you!



Registration Form

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MUSIC RESUME SEPTEMBER 10

All children grades K–6 are welcome to join choir for what promises to be a fun musical year! Following dinner at 5:00 pm, both Beginning Choir (K–2) and Junior Choristers (3–6) will begin rehearsal together at 5:30 pm, and then split into two groups for the remainder of the hour. This year we welcome back Sarah–Helen Land as our Beginning Choir leader, and introduce Myles Baron, who will work with the Junior Choristers. Myles is the chorus teacher at Owen Middle School, and is looking forward to joining the music ministry team at FPCA.



Registration Form

Youth grades 7–12 are invited to join the handbell choir, which will meet from 6:00–6:45 pm on Wednesdays in the choir room. No prior experience is necessary to join! We will be learning some pieces to share in worship throughout the year, as well as working on some anthems with handbell accompaniment to present in collaboration with the Choristers.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to Elizabeth LaJeunesse with any and all questions at elajeunesse@fpcasheville.org.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNERS

Dinner is available to all Wednesday program participants and their families, and will be served from 5:00–5:45 pm. The cost at the door is \$8 for adults and \$5 for children and youth, with a family cap of \$20. For those able to pay ahead for the semester, the cost is \$60 (12 weeks) per person, with a family cap of \$240. Payments can be made on Realm or via check, in advance or at the door.

Adult Faith Formation



Grow in Faith This Fall

Faith formation is more than a class or a group—it's the act of God transforming us into the people we were created to be. When we set aside time to learn, pray, and reflect together, the Spirit works in us—helping us become more peaceful, deepening our compassion, and equipping us to love our neighbors as ourselves. This fall, we invite you to join one of our many opportunities for connection and growth. Whether it's a small group, a Bible study, or a hands-on service project, each option below offers a space to be transformed and to encourage one another on the journey of faith.

KOINONIA GROUPS

Making Room: Growing in Faith Together

This fall, our Koinonia Groups will explore what it means to make room—for God, for one another, and for the world God loves. Over six weeks, we'll gather in small groups to share stories, pray, and reflect on how we can create space in our lives for connection, service, and spiritual growth. Register by September 7 to join a group.

Each week features a short video teaching by Rev. Shannon Jordan in conversation with another pastor, along with thoughtful discussion questions to spark meaningful conversations and foster deeper relationships with God and one another.

Weekly themes invite us to make room:

- For one another in authentic community
- For service as we discover our unique callings
- For neighbors near and far through a missional vision
- Across generations in passing on faith
- And ultimately, for the holy in our daily lives

Koinonia Groups are a beautiful way to deepen your faith and friendships at FPCA—whether you've been here for years or are just beginning to connect.

Kickoff luncheon: Sunday, September 14, after the 11 am service. Sign up on our website.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

FAITH & FELLOWSHIP – GOD’S WELCOME

Beginning Sunday, September 14, Faith & Fellowship will begin an exploration of our study of God’s Welcome. Come explore what it means to make room—for one another, for the stranger, for questions, and for the Spirit’s transforming power. As part of our church-wide theme, Making Room: Living Into the Welcome of Christ, our Faith & Fellowship series invites you into a deeper practice of Gospel hospitality..

This class will continue its tradition of being a discussion based reflection on the lesson and is a great way to connect with new people in a casual and conversational way. Sundays, 9:45 am, Fellowship Hall.

TEXT TALK

A meaningful and vibrant discussion of the day’s scripture passages in worship. Bring your questions, insights, and curiosity—no preparation needed. Meets at 9:45 am in Room 112.

MID-WEEK OFFERINGS

WOMEN’S STUDIES

Women’s Studies at FPCA is a monthly gathering of women of all ages for learning, conversation, and growth. This group explores issues that impact women in our congregation, our local community, and around the world—deepening our understanding, expanding our compassion, and inspiring meaningful action. Through shared learning and connection, we seek to nurture both personal faith and collective engagement with the needs and hopes of women everywhere. The 2025–2026 season includes chances to gain a better understanding of local mission partners like BeLoved Asheville and Pisgah Legal, take field trips to Jonesboro to experience storytelling, to find out the behind the scenes work and art to create the liturgical pieces for our worship at FPCA, and more. Please watch weekly emails for the final list when complete or reach out to Jo Nan Hester through the life@fpcasheville.org email.

WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY – CALLED TO GO

Led by Shannon Jordan and Janine Goldin, this weekly study meets on Wednesdays from 11:00 am–12:15 pm, focusing on the story of Abraham and Sarah. We’ll explore how God’s story speaks into our experiences of change, calling, disappointment, joy, and purpose. If there’s enough interest, we will also offer an evening group—contact **Shannon Jordan** to express interest. Begins September 3 in Room 213.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Women connecting in Bible study, service, and fellowship, led by pastors in our congregation. A place for friendship, prayer, and shared mission. Other than in September and April, PW meets on the first Mondays of the month at 10:30 am in Room 112. In September and April they will meet on the second Monday.

MEN’S GROUP – WEDNESDAY MORNINGS

A weekly gathering for men to connect, reflect on topics around life and faith, and share life together. Meets Wednesdays at 9 am in Room 112.



On September 14, Dr. Amy Oden will lead the Faith & Fellowship Class via Zoom, as she kicks off our new season. Radical hospitality calls us into risk and change. Together we will explore: What risks are we called to take? And how might God be changing us through the folks we welcome?

Dr. Oden teaches church history and Christian Spirituality for several seminaries, including Shannon Jordan’s Alma Mater, Wesley Theological seminary.



Youth & Young Adult Faith Formation



Youth Ministry

FPCA Youth (grades 6–12) gather every Sunday morning during the school year for Percolating Presbies – a time of connection, games, learning, and discussion (with drinks and snacks!) – 9:30 to 10:50 am in the Youth Rooms on the top floor. We also meet every other Sunday evening (typically 4:30 to 7 pm, though with some variance), to eat dinner, play games, reflect on life, deepen our relationships, serve others, worship and pray. Retreats, service days, and Presbytery events round out the year.

Young Adults – “Still FLO!”

Designed for young adults in their 20s and 30s (but welcoming and inclusive to others), this group gathers six to eight times throughout the year to build community, share meaningful conversation, and have fun together. Activities alternate between social outings and deeper discussions about faith and life. Contact David Germer at dgermer@fpcasheville.org for more information.

Children’s Faith Formation

Children’s Ministry

Children are a vital part of FPCA’s worship and life together. On Sundays, children are welcomed in worship and children (ages 3 – 5th grade) are invited to take part in Godly Play communities at 9:45 am designed to nurture their relationship with God through story, play, and wonder. Nursery care is available for ages 0–2. Contact Shannon Jordan at sjordan@fpcasheville.org for more information.

Third Graders Receive Bibles in Worship

On Sunday, September 21st current Third Grade students will receive Bibles in worship at 11 am. Join us as we celebrate this milestone with these students and their families! If you have a third grade student and have not been in touch with Caitlin, contact her at cjohnson@fpcasheville.org.



Service Opportunities in the Church



USHERS

Ushers are a key component of our welcome at FPCA. Often the first friendly faces people see when they arrive, this key ministry is a wonderful opportunity to make a real difference in worship and welcome. Ushers are assigned to teams that serve once a month, or people can be on the sub list. Contact Shannon Jordan at life@fpcasheville.org.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

We need almost a dozen volunteers a week for our children and youth programs. Some of these volunteers work directly with the children or youth, while others work more in support roles. If you are interested in supporting one of these ministries, please contact Caitlin Johnson or Shannon Jordan for children's ministries (birth through 5th grade) or David Germer for our youth ministry (6–12 grades) at life@fpcasheville.org.

DEACON PRAYER TEAM

The Deacon Prayer Team meets twice a month to pray for people on our prayer list, those who are grieving, and for those who are having birthdays. This group then writes handwritten notes for those for whom we are praying. Wondering if this is a good fit? Come try it out one week and see. They usually meet on the first and third Thursdays of the month at 12:30 pm in the Conference Room. Reach out to Shannon Jordan at life@fpcasheville.org if you are interested or have questions.

DEACON MEAL TEAM

This team delivers food to people who are in crisis. There are opportunities to package food made by Equal Plates or to drive to drop off at people's homes—usually on Thursdays. Reach out to Shannon Jordan at life@fpcasheville.org if you are interested or have questions.



DEACON FLOWER DELIVERY TEAM

This team takes flowers from the service on Sundays to people in our congregation for a variety of reasons. Please contact Shannon Jordan at life@fpcasheville.org if you are interested in delivering flowers quarterly.

FRONT DESK VOLUNTEERS

We have time slots available for people to sit at the front desk during office hours, answer the phones, do light administrative tasks, and greet people who come to the church during the week for a variety of reasons. Shifts usually run from 9am–1 pm or 1 pm to 4 pm. As one volunteer has said, she gets to read her current book and help others at the same time! Contact Lucy Hazlehurst at life@fpcasheville.org.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

The Congregational Life Team's motto is that they have the most fun of any Team at church! They bring the fun! This group provides volunteers for most of our meals, picnics, and help with the retreat. They also care for our congregation through providing meals in conjunction with the Deacons. Contact Nancy McNeill at life@fpcasheville.org.

Mission & Service Opportunities



SATURDAY SANCTUARY

This ministry of hospitality, warmth, and lunch for our downtown neighbors is central to our identity as a downtown congregation. The season begins October 11, and continues weekly until Holy Week in late March. Open to the community from 10:30 am until 2:00 pm. Volunteers sign up for 2–3 hour shifts in the kitchen (preparing food alongside Equal Plates, plating, cleaning) or Fellowship Hall (welcoming, serving, visiting, cleaning).

Training for new volunteers: Sunday, Sept. 28, 12:30–2:00 pm.

LOAVES AND FISHES

Is an alternative gifts fair in collaboration with our Church St. neighbor congregations, supporting local partner organizations and nonprofits. November and December.

EARTH CARE MINISTRY

Putting our faith into action as stewards of God's creation. The group focuses on practical tips for the congregation, educational opportunities, and tangible actions for our congregation.

RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM

Committed to listening to and learning from BIPOC leaders, congregations, and organizations, the groups time is currently devoted to: learning about and supporting the efforts of the Asheville Reparations Commission; planning and leading congregational learning trips (Civil Rights and Racial Justice museums and memorials in Greensboro, Charleston, and Montgomery); learning about organizations leading the way in racial justice work in our community; and participating in gatherings and events led by people of color.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Other opportunities to serve together with one of our many partner organizations, including Safe Shelter, Equal Plates, YWCA, and AYM.

Contact David Germer at dgermer@gmail.com if interested in serving with any of these groups, or for more information.

Calling All Artists – Two Creative Opportunities Ahead!

Do you paint? Sculpt? Quilt? Create amazing photos? Draw in ink? Shape clay? Knit with flair? Quill? However you create, we want to see it! The FPCA Gallery team has two upcoming opportunities to use your gifts!

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER GALLERY THEME: “MAKING ROOM”

This fall we’re curating a show that will be up through Thanksgiving and the season of Advent—a perfect time to ponder hospitality, margin, and welcome. Create in any medium around Making Room: in our lives, our church, and our community. How is God calling us to make space for all people?

- **Submit by: Saturday, October 26**
- **On view: November & December**

Bring your creativity, your unique perspective, and your interpretation of what “making room” means in this season.

SPRING PROJECT SIGN-UP: THE ARTISTIC “TELEPHONE GAME”

Remember the old game where a message changes as it’s whispered from person to person? We’re giving it a creative twist!

- The gallery team will create a list of possible themes and put them into a basket.
- The first artist will draw one of these themes—a scripture, poem or phrase.
- They’ll create a piece from their medium of choice, then share that finished piece with the next artist. Without sharing the original theme.
- After 3–4 weeks the next artist will see the completed or close to completed piece and without knowing original prompt, will create their own response. This pattern will continue every few weeks through the list of artists who have signed up.
- We’ll hang the full chain of works at the beginning of May.

Interested? Please indicate your interest by the end of September (final sign-ups due Monday, September 30). We’ll follow up with the schedule and details.

Ready to jump in?

Whether you’re submitting for Making Room, signing up for the Artistic Telephone Game, or both, let us know—your art could be the spark that inspires someone else!



Gallery Show: Remembering Helene by Sondra Dorn

**OPENED AUGUST 31 | FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF
ASHEVILLE GALLERY**



This moving series by local artist Sondra Dorn (and partner to FPCA member, Jonathan Tetzlaff) was born from the aftermath of Hurricane Helene and its dramatic transformation of western North Carolina's landscape. Known for her depictions of the region's lush, tangled growth, Dorn found her familiar terrain suddenly altered—marked by broken tree lines and piles of sawn trunks. Early works in the collection capture her immediate, emotional response to the devastation, while later pieces reflect a gradual return to hope, harmony, and the beauty that still emerges from loss.

Remembering Helene invites viewers into a journey of grief, resilience, and renewal—an artistic witness to a world forever changed.

ARTIST RECEPTION SEPTEMBER 7TH

You can meet the artist Sondra Dorn at a reception in the art gallery after the 11 am service on September 7th.

Creation Care Team: “Sun Day”

THE SUN SHINES FOR ALL OF US

Today, solar is the most abundant energy source and the cheapest way to produce electricity. “Sun Day” is a global day of action celebrating the unstoppable rise of clean energy and the movement to leave fossil fuels behind.

Join the Creation Care Team after the 11 am service on September 21 for “Sun Day” to celebrate the power and promise of solar and wind. We will meet on the Church Street lawn where we will test a solar oven, watch a video of the church's solar panels that we cannot see from the ground, learn about the benefits of solar energy, participate in a children's activity, and eat sun-themed snacks. Sun Day is also the International Day of Peace.



FPCA STAFF TEAM



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ELIZABETH SHORT



Custodian

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE SPECIAL EVENTS

Wednesday, September 3, 2025

Chancel Choir Resumes

Sunday, September 7, 2025

Cereal Sundae Kick-Off

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Children and Youth Music Resumes

Wednesday Dinners Resume

Sunday, September 14, 2025

Dr. Amy Oden leads Faith and Fellowship discussion

Koinonia Kickoff Luncheon

Friday, October 3- Sunday, October 5, 2025

Church Retreat at Montreat Conference Center

11 am Service at Montreat

