



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ASHEVILLE

NOV/DEC 2025

The First Chronicle

A Message from Patrick

Dear Friends,

As we move through the final weeks of November and into December, we enter one of the most meaningful seasons in the life of the church. It's a time when the rhythms of our worship invite us deeper into the mystery of God's "once and future coming."

We begin with Thanksgiving, that remarkable theological holiday we share with all Americans, of every faith tradition and those of no faith. In a time when our differences feel so sharp, Thanksgiving offers us a unifying practice: gratitude. Gratitude tunes our hearts to God's presence as we become attentive to the gifts that surround us, the grace that sustains us, and the connections that bind us together. May this Thanksgiving be an opportunity for us to find common ground!

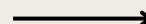
As we enter Advent, our worship series invites us into the theme of "Making Room at Christmas." We will explore how God breaks into our lives with hope, surprise, joy, peace, lament, and light. It's a counter-cultural practice in these busy weeks to not fill every moment, but to intentionally make room for the One who comes.

On the third Sunday of Advent, December 14, we'll celebrate in a special way as our choirs of all ages lead us in a creative service of lessons and carols. It will be a morning of joy, a time to let music carry our prayers and lift our spirits. One service on that Sunday, at 11 am.



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A Message from Patrick (Continued)

Also on Sunday December 14, the session has graciously planned a reception and potluck lunch for the congregation after worship. I'm both humbled and grateful that this December marks my tenth anniversary as pastor of this great congregation. What a gift! **Thank you for your partnership in ministry, for your faithfulness, and for the ways you continue to teach me about the love of God.**

Our Christmas Eve services will have slightly adjusted times this year. The family service remains at 4 pm, designed with our youngest worshipers (and their delightful squirms) in mind. Our evening service will begin at 9 pm this year, and will be a bit more streamlined than in years past, offering a beautiful and meaningful celebration of Christ's birth, with communion, in a service designed to be accessible for all.

Throughout these weeks, there will be rich opportunities for fellowship, ministry to one another, for service through Saturday Sanctuary, and even space for lament and grief in the service of healing and wholeness. All of this is part of how we make room this holy season. I look forward to sharing it with you.

With joyful anticipation,



Intergenerational Opportunities

ADVENT CELEBRATION & BREAKFAST

Sunday, Nov. 23 @ 9:45 am in the Fellowship Hall

Start the season together at 9:45 am in the fellowship hall. We'll share breakfast and get ready for Advent with one another. Each household can make an Advent wreath to use at home, and children will create a Christmas ornament to take with them. Supplies provided. Come for good food, shared preparation, and the joy of beginning this season together. Everyone is welcome! If you have fresh greenery, bring some cut and ready to share.



MORAVIAN LOVE FEAST

Wednesday, Dec. 10, Dinner @ 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall, Worship @ 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

Come for a delicious dinner, followed by FPCA's traditional Love Feast. Led by the youth, this unique worship experience of song and prayer, candles, coffee, and Moravian cookies helps lead us into the Christmas season. The candles trimmed in red are reminders of Christ's love and of his life.

EPIPHANY DINNER & WORSHIP

Wednesday, Jan. 7, Dinner @ 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall, Worship @ 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

Epiphany commemorates the first revelation to the Gentiles of Jesus Christ as the Savior, when the Christmas star led the Magi to find the new king (Matthew 2:1-12). We will select star words during the service—some use these words as a "star to follow" for the coming year. We will also "chalk the doors" and ask God to bless our congregation in 2026, so invite your friends and neighbors out for a special evening of connecting and worship!

Music & Worship



CHURCH STREET CHOIR FESTIVAL

Over 40 singers from FPCA participated in a combined choirs concert on Friday, Nov. 7. Singers from all three Church Street congregations totaled almost 120 voices! Many thanks to all who came to support our choir, both in-person and virtually.

LESSONS & CAROLS

Advent is a season of watching and waiting, both in quiet reflection and joyful expectation. **On Sunday, Dec. 14, during the 11 am service, we invite you to join us for our annual service of Advent Lessons & Carols.** As we experience the unfolding of the story of Christ's coming through readings and music, we deepen our understanding of God's message of love and redemption.

The service will include all music ensembles—children's choirs, Chancel Choir, and handbells—and plenty of opportunities for YOU, the congregation, to join us in song! You won't want to miss it!



IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GIVE CHORISTERS A TRY!

Kindergartners through 6th graders and families: have you been thinking about joining choir, but are just too busy with fall sports and activities? Consider trying it out this month! Now is the perfect time to jump in and join our children's choirs as they prepare for our Advent Lessons & Carols service. Wednesday rehearsals are on Nov. 19, Dec. 3, and Dec. 10, and we'll have one Saturday morning rehearsal on Dec. 13. Reach out to Elizabeth at elajeunesse@fPCA.org for more information.

Poinsettia Dedications Due Dec. 16

Each Christmas season, we decorate the sanctuary and chapel with flowers and greens for our worship services. This year, white poinsettias and cyclamen may be dedicated in honor and in memory of loved ones. To make a dedication, pick up a form in the narthex, or give on Realm, selecting "Chancel Flowers" from the dropdown menu, and including your dedication ("in memory" or "in honor" of, and the name of the person) in the memo line. Suggested donation is \$20 each.



Welcoming a New Advent Wreath Stand

We're adding a new piece of liturgical furniture to the sanctuary this season! Commissioned by the Worship Committee, funded through memorial contributions, and designed by artist Erich Thompson, our new wreath stand spotlights the Advent candles in a way that harmonizes with the table, font, and pulpit.



Adult Faith Formation



SUNDAY MORNINGS

During the season of Advent, adults have two wonderful opportunities to grow in faith and community on Sunday mornings. **Text Talk** (in Room 112) offers a chance to dive into the week's sermon scripture. Together we read, discuss, and pray over the passage before worship—one participant even shared that it helped them feel "more ready for the sermon."



Through the month of December, **Faith & Fellowship** (in the Fellowship Hall) will explore art, incarnation and reflection through *Honest Advent* by artist and author Scott Erickson. Devotions will be emailed to all congregants several times each week, and on Sundays, we'll gather for conversation around the week's images and themes—seeing how the story of Christ's birth meets our lives with honesty, wonder, and hope.

Whether you're drawn to thoughtful study or conversation around the Sunday text, we invite you to join us at 9:45 am and discover the gift of learning and growing together.

MID-WEEK OFFERINGS

SERVICE FOR HEALING & WHOLENESS

Wednesday, Dec. 3 @ Noon in the Campbell Chapel

Holiday festivities are hard when you don't feel very festive. Whether you have lost a loved one this year, or this Christmas will be different than many in the past, we hope that you will come to the lunchtime service to remember God's faithfulness during difficult times.

CHRISTMAS CAROL SING-ALONG & LUNCHEON

Wednesday, Dec. 17 @ Noon in the Fellowship Hall

Come share the joy of the season at our Christmas Carol Sing-Along and Luncheon! We'll sing favorite carols and enjoy a fun lunch. If you're able, bring a dozen (or two) of your favorite Christmas cookies for us to deliver to our homebound friends as a group goes caroling on Friday, Dec. 19. Lyrics and supplies provided; all ages welcome. Friends, family, and neighbors invited! RSVP or send questions to Shannon Jordan at sjordan@fpcasheville.org.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women continue their fall theme of resilience with thoughtful lessons and meaningful fellowship. PW will gather again on Monday, Dec. 1, at 10:30 am in Room 112, when Rev. David Germer will lead a discussion on "The Prodigal Child, the Eldest Child, and the Devoted Parent." All women are invited to join these monthly gatherings as we share in study, prayer, and conversation that encourage resilience and deepen our faith.

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. (Men's Group will not meet on Nov. 26, Dec. 24, or Dec. 31.)

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. **The youth will plan and lead the Moravian Love Feast on Wednesday, Dec. 10, and we will hold our fourth annual overnight Christmas Lock-in on Dec. 19–20.**

YOUNG ADULTS – “STILL FLO!”

Introducing “Theology on Tap,” a chance to gather over drinks at a fun location, check in on one another in our lives, and discuss a relevant topic as it intersects with our faith. **Young adults (20s and 30s, and inclusive of others) can join us for our first Theology on Tap gathering on Saturday, Nov. 22, at 5 pm at Zillicoah Beer Co.** Our topic will be “Why and how to hold onto Christian faith amidst rising Christian nationalism.” 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 at 8:45 and 11 am, participate in Godly Play classes at 9:45 am, and older elementary children regularly assist in worship leadership at the 11 am service.

Godly Play communities are designed to nurture children (age 3–5th grade) in their relationship with God through story, play, and wonder. **Four special Advent Godly Play classes will happen on Nov. 30, Dec. 7, Dec. 14, and Dec. 21.**

If you would like more information about worship, Godly Play classes, or children in worship leadership, contact Caitlin Johnson at cjohnson@fpcasheville.org. Nursery care is available for ages 0–2. Contact Shannon Jordan at sjordan@fpcasheville.org for more information.

FOR PREK & KINDERGARTEN FAMILIES



Advent at Home: Simple Family Practices for Wonder & Waiting | Wednesday, Nov. 19, 5:30–6:30 pm (dinner available from 5–5:30 pm and childcare provided)

Advent invites us to slow down and notice—to cultivate wonder in the everyday, curiosity about the sacred story unfolding, and intentionality in how we welcome this season at home as families. This workshop celebrates the holy potential of small practices in the season of Advent that, over time, can root our children in wonder and shape their capacity to see God’s presence in the world. RSVP to Caitlin Johnson at cjohnson@fpcasheville.org.

Mission & Service Opportunities



Photos from our dedicated Saturday Sanctuary volunteers

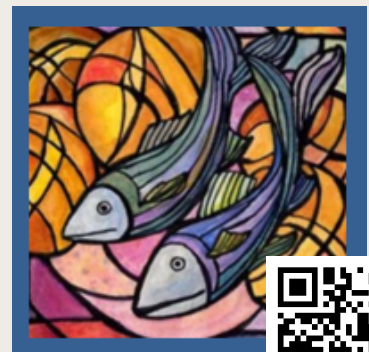
SATURDAY SANCTUARY

This ministry of hospitality, warmth, and lunch for our downtown neighbors is central to our identity as a downtown congregation. The season begins Oct. 11, and continues weekly until Holy Week in late March. Open to the community from 10:30 am until 2 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).

LOAVES & FISHES

Our annual holiday alternative gift market returns to FPCA with a live event on Sunday, Nov. 30 and online orders taken through Dec. 20. **Come to our Gardner Fellowship Hall from 10 am to 1 pm on Sunday, Nov. 30.** Learn about a dozen organizations, invited by the mission committees from the three Church Street congregations, and consider a donation to support the vital work they do in our community. Scan the code to preview this year's organizations.

The mission of Loaves & Fishes is to 1) provide a way for members of our congregations and the broader community to resist the commercialization of the holiday season by directing funds to support great non-profits; 2) educate the community about their mission/programs and thus raise awareness, support, and volunteers; and 3) better connect those organizations as nonprofit leaders to each other.



CHRISTMAS TREE GIFT-GIVING FOR HELPMATE & CCC

The holiday season often prompts us to reflect on the blessings in our lives and to look for creative ways to respond to God's invitation to extend and share our resources with others.

This year, we once again have the opportunity to provide gifts for several families through the FPCA Child Care Center and through Helpmate, a domestic violence agency working with our community to eliminate abuse and fear. **An email with a link to sign up to provide specific gifts will be sent to the congregation the first week of December.**

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

More Mission & Service

THE IMPACT OF OPEN-HANDED GENEROSITY

In the days, weeks, and months following Hurricane Helene, we encountered a flood of a different kind. Dozens of notes, emails, checks, and online donations—from sessions, pastors, men's and women's groups, individuals; from the PC(USA), a handful of other denominations, and non-religious groups; literally from one U.S. coast to another—came pouring in. Our session assembled a small task force to research needs and agencies doing hands-on relief work and to make recommendations for disbursing these funds. In 2025, as the money kept coming in and long-term needs shifted, that role was passed to the Mission Committee.

These two groups spent dozens of hours learning, listening, and discerning together. FPCA was entrusted with these funds because people around the country believed we would know where their money could do tangible good. Join us in celebrating the generosity we saw in the wake of Helene and the vital work that our position and presence allowed us to support.

2024-2025 Helene Donation Disbursements	Amount
Project	
Rock Hill Baptist Church – Project Lighten Up for Youth	\$2,000.00
Security deposit for a person in need – Grace Covenant connection	\$2,242.00
Child Care Center – FPCA	\$2,500.00
Community Housing Coalition of Madison County	\$10,000.00
Habitat for Humanity of Asheville	\$10,000.00
Gas and supplies for the FPCA community in the days after Helene	\$420.45
Porta Potties at FPCA	\$1,299.43
WAMY (Watauga, Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey) Community Action	\$10,000.00
Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry	\$10,000.00
Cabins for Christ/Campers Care	\$10,000.00
Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church Rental Assistance	\$20,000.00
Temporary showers for AYM relief groups	\$6,789.00
FPCA 2nd floor improvements to directly benefit groups staying with AYM for relief efforts	\$4,500.00
BeLoved Asheville	\$20,000.00
ABCCM (Veterans Restoration Quarters)	\$20,000.00
MANNA Food Bank	\$20,000.00
Riverlink	\$12,677.75
Mountain True	\$12,677.75
Working Wheels	\$12,677.75
United Methodist Committee on Relief	\$12,677.75
TOTAL	\$200,461.88

The recipients of our **2025 Mission Endowment Grants** below also reflect hours of discernment, as our FPCA Mission Committee looked and listened for the movement of the Holy Spirit in our community and around the world. The generosity and foresight of those who came before us and established this endowment continue to yield incredible fruit, particularly in places of immense challenge in 2025.

2025 Mission Endowment Disbursements	Amount
Project	
Launch Program in Scotland – Lynn & Craig Sumey	\$8,000.00
Bountiful Cities – Building long-term food security in Asheville	\$8,500.00
Read to Succeed	\$8,500.00
2026 Guatemala Mission Trip	\$3,488.00
TOTAL	\$28,488.00

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE SPECIAL EVENTS

Wednesday, November 19

Advent Workshop for Pre-K & K Grownups

Thursday, November 20

Women's Studies at BeLoved Tiny Home Village

Sunday, November 23

Advent Celebration & Breakfast

Monday, November 24

Lunch Bunch meets at Apollo Flame Bistro

Sunday, November 30

First Sunday of Advent

Loaves & Fishes Market at FPCA

Monday, December 1

Presbyterian Women meets

Wednesday, December 3

Service for Healing & Wholeness

Wednesday, December 10

Moravian Love Feast

Sunday, December 14

Lessons & Carols Service (No 8:45 am service)

Reception & potluck lunch honoring
Rev. Dr. Patrick Johnson's 10 years at FPCA

Wednesday, December 17

Festive Caroling Luncheon

Friday, December 19

Caroling to Homebound Members

Youth Lock-In

Sunday, December 21

New members received

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve services

Sunday, December 28

Twelve Days of Christmas Potluck Brunch

Wednesday, January 7

Epiphany Dinner & Worship

Christmas Eve Worship



FAMILY-FRIENDLY SERVICE, 4 PM

This service will include a pop-up Christmas pageant. Children 5th grade and under can pick up a costume in the library between 3:30-3:45 pm. This is a really fun service for children of all ages. This casual and meaningful service does not have rehearsals. Childcare is provided for the 4 pm service.



CANDLELIGHT SERVICE, 9 PM

This service will include candlelight, scripture, communion, and special music led by the Chancel Choir. Christmas music on the organ starts at 8:30 pm. No childcare provided.