



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ASHEVILLE

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The First Chronicle



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A Message from Patrick

Dear FPCA Family,

As we move through January into February, our congregation finds itself in a rich season. The 2026 theme "Making Room" continues to unfold in ways that invite us deeper into the welcome of Christ.

Making Room for Generosity

Over the next few weeks, we are in our annual stewardship season with the theme "Making Room for Generosity." This is more than a budget campaign; it's a spiritual invitation to reflect on James 1:17, "Every generous act of giving is from above," and to consider how God's generosity shapes our own giving. The guiding prayer for this season is simple: "God, where do You want me to be in my giving?"

This stewardship emphasis supports our everyday ministries—worship, education, pastoral care, mission work, and daily operations. These foundations make our church whole and alive week after week. Later this spring, we'll have a separate opportunity for our capital campaign, "Building a Wider Welcome," with three-year commitments for property acquisition and facility improvements. Both expressions of stewardship are important and distinct.

You should have received information about "The Giving Path" by mail—a framework for considering where God might be leading you in generosity. On Feb. 1, we'll offer Estimate of Giving Cards during worship. Until then, I encourage you to pray, reflect, and listen for God's invitation.

Making Room by Letting Go

Ash Wednesday on Feb. 18 begins our Lenten journey, and the sermon series this Lent will be "Making Room by Letting Go." We'll explore spiritual disciplines—fasting, prayer, silence, confession, simplicity, and surrender—as practices



A Message from Patrick (Continued)

that help us release what clutters our lives and make space for God's transforming presence. Sometimes hospitality requires letting go before we can welcome what God has for us.

Building a Wider Welcome Continues

Our capital campaign reached a significant milestone on Jan. 4 when our congregation voted unanimously to acquire the property at 46 Aston Street. This property will expand our available parking and provide a building that can be used for future ministry opportunities. As we enter the initial commitment phases of the campaign, please prayerfully consider and plan to support our congregation's vision to extend a wider welcome through better parking, improved facilities, and enhanced hospitality.

Honoring Service, Welcoming New Voices

On Jan. 25, we'll celebrate Beth Olwell's retirement as Executive Director of the First Presbyterian Child Care Center. Beth's leadership has shaped countless children and families, and we'll honor her service during worship that morning.

That same Sunday, Christian Chambers from Safe Shelter will share a Moment for Mission. Safe Shelter is a ministry we support financially and by sharing facilities, and Christian will help us see how this partnership serves our community. His visit is part of our stewardship emphasis on connecting generosity with meaningful ministry.

A Grateful Farewell

At the end of January, Equal Plates Project moves to a new location in Haw Creek, where they can combine volunteers and staff in one place. This isn't only an ending but a new beginning for them. We'll continue to support them as they take this significant step forward, grateful for the partnership we've shared.

As we navigate these weeks of transition and invitation, I'm reminded that "making room" is always both a spiritual practice and a practical commitment. In our stewardship, we make room for God's work through our generosity. In our Lenten disciplines, we make room by releasing what no longer serves. In our capital campaign, we make room for future generations and expanded ministry. And in our transitions—both the goodbyes and the welcomes—we trust that God is making room for something new while honoring all that has been.

May we approach this season with open hearts, generous spirits, and confidence in the One who makes room for us all.

Grace and peace,



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP

Following the Lessons & Carols service on Dec. 14, the congregation shared in a celebration of Rev. Dr. Patrick Johnson, recognizing his 10 years of service with reflections, gifts, and a delicious potluck lunch (and sheet cake!). Scan the code to see more photos from this day on the FPCA Facebook page.



Music & Worship



SING WITH US!

Chancel Choir rehearsals are already underway for the spring semester, but it's not too late to join us! We are always happy to welcome new members, both youth and adults. Chancel Choir rehearses on Wednesdays, from 7 to 8:30 pm in the sanctuary.

Interested, but still not quite ready for a weekly commitment? Mark your calendars for Sunday, Mar. 1, and join us for a pop-up choir! We'll have a rehearsal at 10 am that morning to learn the powerful anthem "Total Praise," by legendary gospel singer/composer Richard Smallwood (who died just weeks ago). You may remember hearing our combined choirs sing this anthem at our Church Street service of remembrance for the anniversary of Hurricane Helene last September.

YOUTH AND CHORISTER REHEARSALS ARE BACK

Note the new time for children's choirs: Both Beginning & Junior Choristers will meet on Wednesdays from 5:45–6:30 pm. Youth handbells rehearse from 6–6:45 pm. A delicious, family-friendly meal is served beginning at 5:15 pm. This is the time of year for sports and so many other activities, but we hope your family can make music a priority! Choir is not only FUN, but singing helps children build confidence, learn social skills, relieve stress, and succeed academically. Your child can jump into choir at any time!

This spring, Junior Choristers will be working through several different units, so if committing to the entire semester just isn't feasible for your family, consider trying a five-week period. We'll be learning about the hymnal and the liturgical year, working with Orff instruments, and preparing music to take out into the community, in addition to learning anthems for worship. It will be a busy and exciting spring! Contact Elizabeth LaJeunesse at elajeunesse@fpcasheville.org for more information.



ASH WEDNESDAY DINNER & WORSHIP

**Wednesday, Feb. 18, Dinner @ 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall,
Worship @ 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary**

Ash Wednesday is the threshold that marks the beginning of our journey into Lent and is an opportunity to pause and reflect. Join us for a shared meal followed by a special contemplative service. We will read scripture, receive ashes as a mark of our mortality and repentance, and gather around the Lord's table as the forgiven people of God.

Adult Faith Formation



SUNDAY MORNINGS

Adults have two wonderful opportunities to grow in faith and community on Sunday mornings at 9:45 am. **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."

This season brings two great topics to explore in **Faith & Fellowship** (in the Fellowship Hall):

- **February: Wisdom for Real Life** — In a world where life is complex and certainty is often unavailable, wisdom matters. We will explore what it means to live wisely—not as having all the answers, but as learning how to live well. Wisdom is the practiced ability to perceive what matters most in a given moment and to act in ways that sustain life, our own, others', and the world. Through scripture, reflection, and conversation, a variety of teachers will highlight wisdom as it shows up in different areas of life, offering insight shaped by faith, experience, and everyday practice.
- **March: Letting Go to Make Room for What Matters** — You're invited to explore how a simple Rule of Life can help us live more intentionally with the time, energy, and relationships God has entrusted to us. A Rule of Life is not about rigid schedules or spiritual perfection; it is a flexible framework that helps us notice what truly gives life and gently let go of what drains it. In a season when life often feels crowded and demanding, this class will offer space to reflect, discern, and choose practices that support love of God, care for others, and faithful attention to our own lives.

MID-WEEK OFFERINGS

LENTEN KOINONIA GROUPS

Lent is a season that invites us to slow down and reflect on where we are placing our hope and how we are living it out. **Hope: More Than Wishful Thinking** will explore hope as a practiced way of life, shaped by the boundary-breaking love of Jesus and sustained through faith, community, and care for a broken world. These Lenten Koinonia Groups offer a welcoming space to engage this journey together through meaningful conversation, shared reflection, and prayer while building relationships in a small group format.



Participants will have flexible ways to engage with the weekly content. Each session will include a short 15-minute video teaching by Shannon Jordan, and you may also choose to read [Hope Is Here!](#) by Luther E. Smith Jr. as a companion resource. Watch the videos, read, or do a little of both—in short, participate in the way that best fits your season and schedule. **Scan the code to sign up by Feb. 1; groups will kick off with a shared lunch on Feb. 8.**

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women continue their theme of resilience with thoughtful lessons and meaningful fellowship. PW gather on the first Monday of the month, at 10:30 am in Room 112. On Feb. 2, Rev. Caitlin Johnson will lead a discussion on "Finding Our Joy in Christ," and on Mar. 2, Jane Vann will lead "The Woman Who Was Bent Over." 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 AT 9 AM

A weekly gathering for men to connect, reflect on topics around life and faith, and share life together.

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. **In the season of Ordinary Time between Christmas and Lent, the younger children are exploring stories about Jesus, and older children are hearing stories of how God showed up in the lives of courageous people of faith like Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, and John Lewis.**

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.

JOIN OUR GODLY PLAY TEAM! LEADER TRAINING ON FEB. 1



Our Godly Play community is growing! As we continue nurturing the faith of children on Sunday mornings, we're inviting both interested and current leaders to join us for a one-hour Godly Play leader training on Sunday, Feb. 1, at 12:15 pm on the children's hall. Each week, it takes a team of at least six leaders to create these sacred spaces across our three Godly Play communities, and it works best when leaders can serve at least once a month. No experience necessary—just bring an openness to learn and a willingness to wonder alongside our children. Contact Caitlin Johnson at cjohnson@fpcasheville.org with questions or to RSVP.

Youth & Young Adult Faith Formation



From left: Youth & leaders at our December lock-in; Judging lock-in gingerbread creations; College students attending the College Conference at Montreat.

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 are serving with Saturday Sanctuary on Jan. 24, watching the Super Bowl together on Feb. 8, and working on "Holy Fools" creative group projects from January into May!**

YOUNG ADULTS – "STILL FLO!"

Our first "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—was a great success! **Our next gathering will be at New Belgium Brewing Company on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 5 pm, when we will discuss "Being people of Christian faith in a time of fearfulness"—how can we practice, live, and stand for justice and neighbor love in the face of ICE and other troubling developments?** Contact David Germer at dgermer@fpcasheville.org for more information.



SATURDAY SANCTUARY

This ministry of hospitality, warmth, and lunch for our downtown neighbors is central to our identity as a downtown congregation. The season 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, plating, cleaning) or fellowship hall (welcoming, serving, visiting, cleaning). Contact David Germer at dgermer@fpcasheville.org for information.

NEW EXHIBIT IN THE GALLERY

From the SHOAH to the Mountains – Choosing to Remember is a 19-poster exhibit from the UNC Asheville Special Collections & University Archives, on display through Feb. 23. The exhibit explores the Holocaust through historical context, personal stories, photographs, and documents, including the experiences of refugees who found welcome in Asheville and the wider region. It invites quiet reflection on remembrance, responsibility, and the enduring question of how ordinary people become complicit in great harm. The final poster issues a simple, urgent call: Choose to Remember. The gallery is open during church office hours and on Sundays before and after worship.



INTIMACY: LOVE'S JOURNEY WITH JEANNIE DUBOSE

Wednesday, Feb. 11, Dinner @ 5:15 pm in the Fellowship Hall; Program from 5:45 to 7 pm

Join us for an exploration of how to enjoy the fruits of intimacy while navigating the inevitable challenges that accompany any abiding relationship. Whether you are with a long-term partner, newly attached, on the precipice of new romance, or decidedly single, all are welcome to consider this rich topic. Jeannie is the author and illustrator of the award-winning Tending the Fire: The Story of a Marriage and The Mother Daughter Dance. An experienced speaker, facilitator, and retreat leader, as well as FPCA member, we are excited to have her lead us in this tender and important topic. She will preview predictable stages in relationships, offer "normalizing" research, share insights from her marriage of 34 years, and provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on their own journey with love. Come prepared to learn and laugh together! If you don't typically attend Wednesday night dinner, please RSVP to life@fpcasheville.org.



INTERGENERATIONAL MOVIE NIGHT

Sunday, Mar. 8 @ 4:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall

Come enjoy food, a film, and fellowship with First Pres folks of all ages. Harvey is a beloved Jimmy Stewart movie from 1950, and a personal favorite of Rev. David Germer, who believes this movie has a great deal to teach the Church about evangelism and living as a "holy fool." It's also just a lot of fun!

MAKING ROOM FOR GENEROSITY

FPCA begins its annual stewardship season this month with the theme "Making Room for Generosity." Over the next several weeks, our congregation will explore what it means to grow in generosity as a spiritual practice and response to God's abundant grace.

Megan Morlok, Stewardship Committee Chair, writes:



“This season is deeply spiritual. Our guiding scripture comes from James 1:17, which reminds us that ‘every generous act of giving is from above.’

**The prayer that will shape our journey is simply,
‘God, where do You want me to be in my giving?’”**

The campaign focuses specifically on supporting the church's regular annual ministry and mission—worship, education, pastoral care, mission work, and daily operations. This emphasis is separate from the "Building a Wider Welcome" capital campaign, which will launch in February and March with three-year commitments for property acquisition and facility improvements.

Throughout the season, the congregation will hear Moments for Mission each Sunday, illustrating how generosity through FPCA makes a tangible difference in people's lives. We will also receive daily email devotionals, written by Patrick Johnson, which started on Jan. 4. Families will receive two mailings: the first includes a letter from Patrick, a campaign brochure, and a record of 2025 contributions; the second contains a letter from Megan Morlok, a "Giving Path" chart to help discern where God may be leading, and an Estimate of Giving Card.

The campaign centers on spiritual growth rather than budget needs. The focus isn't the church's need to fund a budget, but each person's need to contribute proportionately as part of their spiritual maturity and discipleship with Christ. Everyone is invited to consider moving further along the Giving Path as a response to God's generosity.

On Feb. 1st, the stewardship season concludes as Estimate of Giving Cards are offered during worship, making our commitments an integral part of our gathered praise and thanksgiving. Each of us is invited to pray during this season, “God, where do you want me in my giving?”



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE SPECIAL EVENTS

Friday, January 16

Youth group at retreat at Lake Junaluska

Sunday, January 18

New members received

Monday, January 19

Office closed for MLK holiday

Sunday, January 25

Parents' Night Out

Monday, January 26

Lunch Bunch at Cornerstone Restaurant

Wednesday, January 28

FPCA Stitchers

Sunday, February 1

Estimate of Giving Sunday
Godly Play Leader Training

Monday, February 2

Presbyterian Women

Sunday, February 8

Koinonia Group Kick-off Luncheon

Wednesday, February 11

Intimacy: Love's Journey with Jeannie DuBose

Friday, February 13

Racial Justice Trip to Montgomery, Alabama

Sunday, February 15

New members received

Wednesday, February 18

Beginning of Lent
Ash Wednesday Dinner & Worship Service

Thursday, February 19

Women's Studies: Pisgah Legal Services

Sunday, February 22

Annual Congregational Meeting

Monday, February 23

Lunch Bunch at Pomodoros

Wednesday, February 25

FPCA Stitchers

Monday, March 2

Presbyterian Women

Sunday, March 8

Intergenerational Movie Night

