



The First Chronicle

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Our Love Asheville Day of Service & Learning is Sunday, Apr. 26. Find details on p. 6, and scan the code to sign up!

A Message from Patrick

Dear Friends,

First, a word of gratitude. Our journey through Lent and into Easter was so rich and beautiful, and many people helped make it so. To our musicians, our liturgical arts team, those who prepared the sanctuary for Holy Week, our ushers, bulletin-stuffers, and quiet encouragers behind the scenes: thank you! Easter worship was full in every sense of the word—full of the Spirit, and full of people. It was a gift to me, and I hope to you as well.

We Are Still in Easter

Easter is a season, not a single Sunday. Just as Lent is forty days of penitence and preparation, Easter is fifty days of joy and new life, culminating at Pentecost on **May 24**. The church celebrates the resurrection for seven full weeks, and we are invited into that celebration together.

A friend and retired minister recently wrote in an email to me, “These are such bewildering times, but also, oddly, I think, times which make the heart of what and whom we trust even clearer.” I agree with that completely. My hope is that this Easter season will be exactly that for our congregation, a time when our trust becomes clearer and deeper.

On the evening of **April 23**, our choirs and other readers will offer “**Let There Be Light: The Joy of Gathering in God’s Good Generosity**,” which is a wonderful gift for this season when we celebrate new life in all its forms. And on **April 26**, we will join together after worship for Love Asheville, a day of service that puts our Easter joy into action.

Building a Wider Welcome: The Campaign Begins

On **Sunday, April 19**, the congregation-wide phase of our Building a Wider Welcome capital campaign begins. Co-chairs Lynn Kieffer and Richard Sens



A Message from Patrick (Continued)

will offer a minute for mission and invite all of us to prayerfully consider our participation. Then, on **Sunday, April 26**, during Faith Formation, you are invited to a town hall to learn more and share the joy.

I am thrilled by the generosity already shown by our leaders, and I believe deeply in what we will accomplish together. Every person, every gift, every prayer matters in this effort. I also invite you to spend some time with the story wall in the Atrium—nearly 200 years of capital investment have shaped this congregation's life, and now we add our own chapter to that story.

Confirmation Sunday: May 31

Confirmation has always belonged to the Easter season, because Easter is the season when the church takes shape and disciples choose to follow the risen Lord. On **May 31**, we will celebrate with our confirmands as they take this significant step in their journey of faith. Nurturing the children of God as disciples of Christ is at the very heart of the Church's mission, and Confirmation is one of the most meaningful moments in that work. I look forward to celebrating with these students and their families.

A Closing Invitation: Pray for Your Pastors and Staff

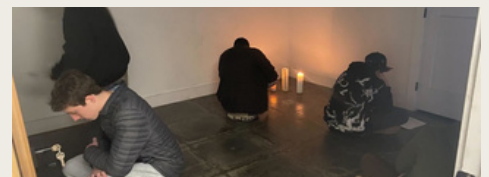
In the weeks ahead, each member of our pastoral and program staff will have some time away — study leave or vacation — to rest and renew. May is also the season when we plan together for the year ahead in worship, programming, and mission. Would you pray for us? Pray that our rest is genuine, that our planning is discernment, and that we return with joy and clarity for the ministry we share together. We are grateful to serve this congregation.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.



CELEBRATING 46 ASTON ST.

Earlier this spring, the congregation acquired the property at 46 Aston St., more than doubling available parking for Sunday mornings and church activities. The building located on the property has great potential for future ministry opportunities. By way of celebration and introduction, several groups—including the youth, Chancel Choir, and those attending the annual intergenerational movie night—have held gatherings there. Learn more about 46 Aston St. at fpcasheville.org/widerwelcome.





On Thursday, Apr. 23, at 6 pm, the Chancel Choir invites you to **“Let There Be Light: The Joy of Gathering in God’s Good Generosity.”**



This intergenerational and interactive service, planned around Earth Day, calls us to ecological faithfulness and celebrates the ways in which music moves us in service with God.

Throughout worship, we will explore music and the elements, moving from the ethereal (light and air) through the tangible (earth and water) to the transforming fire of the Holy Spirit. A reception will follow, with a table hosted by our Creation Care team. You won’t want to miss it—come and bring a friend!

Coming soon.... **Are you an intermediate to advanced handbell ringer?** Save the date! We are looking for confident ringers with some experience to come together for two rehearsals early this summer, to prepare for playing at the 11 am service on June 21. If this might be you, please reach out to Elizabeth at elajeunesse@fpcasheville.org.



CHORISTER CORNER

The Choristers have been working so hard in rehearsals, and did an excellent job helping to lead worship on Palm Sunday! Besides learning music, they’ve been busy making seed paper for our Earth Day service, and Junior Choristers have been working on a hymnal quiz! Chorister rehearsals resume Apr. 15—it’s a perfect time to jump in and try it out!

Attention, rising kindergarteners: You are invited to join Beginning Choir for the last four weeks of the year! We have three weeks of regular rehearsals on Wednesdays from 5:45–6:30 pm, and then **both choirs will be singing at Deerfield on Wednesday, May 6, at 5 pm** with pizza served after. The residents are really looking forward to it, and it will be a great experience for our choristers!



GIVE A LISTEN

As we move through Eastertide and look toward our Earth Day service, take a moment to reflect with “Earth Song” by Frank Ticheli. The poem ends:



“But music and singing have been my refuge, and music and singing shall be my light. A light of song shining strong: Alleluia! Through darkness, pain, and strife, I’ll Sing, Be, Live, See... Peace.”

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."
- **Faith & Fellowship** (in the fellowship hall) focuses this season on "Practicing Resurrection: How We Live." Through conversation with a variety of voices and real-world examples, participants will reflect on how Easter shapes what we do beyond the walls of the church and how we join God's renewing work in everyday life.

MID-WEEK OFFERINGS

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women continue their theme of resilience with thoughtful lessons and meaningful fellowship. PW gathers on the first Monday of the month, at 10:30 am in Room 112. On May 4, Rev. Tamara Puffer will lead "When You Are Walking with Jesus: The Road to Emmaus." 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.



CHURCHWIDE RETREAT AT MONTREAT | OCT. 2-4

For almost 30 years FPCA has had the tradition of going to Montreat and connecting in a meaningful and very intergenerational way. Time and time again, new people say that coming to the retreat gives them the relationships and connections that make ministry at FPCA even more rich!

To experience the retreat most fully, we encourage you to stay at the Assembly Inn. When you stay on site, the weekend becomes more than something you attend. Meals turn into community. Hallway conversations spark new friendships. Morning coffee and mountain views invite a slower pace. Being together in one place allows relationships to grow naturally and often becomes the most treasured part of the retreat. And while the retreat is just "up the road" we encourage you to pretend it is hours away and immerse yourself in this time away.

Overnight space fills quickly, so begin looking at your calendar now. Commuter options are also available. Register by Jun. 24 for overnight attendees and by Aug. 24 for commuters.

Children's Faith Formation

GENERATIONS GATHERED: GODLY PLAY @ GIVENS

In March, a small and meaningful gathering took place at Givens Estates. Five families with young children from our congregation joined approximately 20 residents, beloved members of this congregation, for an evening of story, connection, and every type of pizza you can imagine!

The evening centered on **Godly Play**, the sacred storytelling practice that has become the cornerstone of our children's faith formation. After a welcome and opening prayer, fifth grader Juju Wijesinghe told the parable of the Good Shepherd using the Godly Play materials: wooden figures, a felt mat, and the quiet, unhurried way of wondering together that our children know so well. It's a story that Juju, and all of our children, have become well acquainted with. Residents and families listened side by side, and what followed over dinner was exactly what we had hoped for: genuine conversation, laughter, and the particular kind of warmth that happens when very different generations simply share the same space. It was a gift in both directions.

We are grateful to the residents of Givens for their kind hospitality, and we hope this is only the beginning of a longer relationship. If you are interested in being part of a future gathering, watch for announcements or reach out to Caitlin at cjohnson@fpcasheville.org.



Children are a vital part of FPCA's worship and life together. On Sunday mornings, 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. Nursery care is available for ages 0–2.

Youth & Young Adult Faith Formation

YOUTH MINISTRY

FPCA Youth (grades 6–12) gather Sunday mornings 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.

FPCA Youth Group Presents: A Night with Holy Fools Friday, May 29 @ 5:30 pm

The youth have been reading, studying, and discussing 1 Corinthians this year, thinking carefully about the ways that Paul's wisdom and guidance to



the new Christians in Corinth can serve young Christians following Jesus today, in the 2020s. Our youth are creating projects in various formats (including a short film, a music video, and a children's story) that we hope will be engaging, entertaining, and edifying to the congregation.

Please plan to show the youth of FPCA your love and support by joining us for this unique experience, the evening of May 29!

YOUNG ADULTS – “STILL FLO!”

"Theology on Tap" offers 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. **Our next gathering will be at Cellarest Beer Project (395 Haywood Rd.) on Saturday, May 16, at 5 pm, when we will discuss "False Idols and Ordered Love."** We'll also brainstorm topics and ideas for future gatherings. Contact David Germer at dgermer@fpcasheville.org for more information or to RSVP.

Mission & Life @ FPCA



LOVE AVL DAY OF SERVICE & LEARNING

Sunday, Apr. 26 – Lunch @ noon; Service @ 1-3 pm

Each year, we set aside a Sunday afternoon to serve our community together. We'll have lunch from Mamacitas in the fellowship hall, followed by service opportunities including a downtown poverty education walk with Asheville Poverty Initiative, a river cleanup with AVL GreenWorks, gardening with Bountiful Cities, projects and a tour at Safe Shelter, and assembling Blessing Bags at FPCA. Scan the code on p. 1 or check your email to sign up by Apr. 19.

NEW GALLERY SHOW: THE ARTISTIC "TELEPHONE GAME"

The Artistic "Telephone Game" opens May 3 and features 18 FPCA artists, working in three teams, who created chains of response. Each team started with a photographer who was given a scripture. They passed their photographic interpretation of the scripture to the next artist, who then shared their artistic response with the next artist on their team. Each artist saw only the piece immediately before theirs, allowing the work to evolve step by step through six people.

The result is a fascinating progression across photography, painting, mixed media, and textile art. Come see how each team transforms, distorts, deepens, or clarifies their theme as it moves through different hands and perspectives. Take a minute to wonder how you would interpret the idea as well. The exhibition will be on display throughout May and June in the church gallery. Come experience the unfolding of creativity, connection, and interpretation and see where the story ends.



"Be Not Afraid" by John Skinner



SPECIAL EXHIBITION TOUR & RECEPTION

Sunday, May 17 @ 4-6 pm

The FPCA Gallery Team is excited to offer a wonderful guided tour of [In a New Light: American Impressionism 1870-1940](#) at the Asheville Art Museum, followed by a private reception in the rooftop café. This event, facilitated by FPCA Session member and project lead curator, Mary Edith Alexander, Bank of America Collection Manager, is a unique opportunity for our community to experience the exhibition with added insight and connection.

Space is limited to 25 participants. RSVP to life@fpcasheville.org by May 10. Admission: \$12.50 for museum members; \$14.50 + general admission for non-members.

A SEASON FOR RENEWAL, FROM REV. SHANNON JORDAN

After almost 20 years in ministry, I am going to be able to take my first sabbatical next year! (Thank you to the wise FPCA people who give pastors 10 weeks after five years!) As you can imagine, my plan is to spend unhurried time with our parents, children, and grandchildren—lots of time taking photos of God’s creation, and charging my physical, spiritual, and emotional batteries for what God has next at FPCA.

As part of the process of preparation for sabbatical, with the wholehearted endorsement of session and my colleagues, I have applied for Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program, a grant that would support both the church in my absence as well as me in my time away. A rock star planning team representing many areas of church life worked thoughtfully on the proposal: Mary Edith Alexander (chair, Faith Formation), Janet Armstrong (Congregational Life Team), Elaine Croft (Deacon), Janine Goldin (Deacon Prayer Team and Women’s Bible Study), Scott Haight (chair, Congregational Life), and Alan Schlesinger (chair, Mission).

The hard work writing this grant has deepened my intentions for this time away, and I am already excited to know how God will use what I learn and experience in my teaching, caregiving, and leadership moving forward.

The verse that I have chosen to guide my time away is Isaiah 55:12—For you shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

I am so thankful to be a part of a church that supports their staff the way you do and I am excited for how God will use this time to inspire and enliven me to ministry at FPCA.



2026 Capital Campaign

Building a Wider Welcome is well underway, thanks to the diligent work of our Capital Campaign Committee, co-chaired by Richard Sens and Lynn Kieffer. The congregation-wide phase of the campaign kicks off this month. Here’s a look at what’s been happening, and what’s up next:

- Rev. Dr. Patrick Johnson led a series of Walk the Welcome tours—after Sunday worship and with groups of parents and choir members on a Wednesday—to visit the new property at 46 Aston St. and review the architectural concepts for the new narthex and Commons areas.
- On Sunday, Apr. 26, the campaign team will lead a town hall conversation at 9:45 am in the fellowship hall. Ask questions, get clarity on the plans, and share in the excitement for our campaign!
- Learn more about the campaign, see renderings of the renovation plans and take a 360° tour of the new parking lot and building online at fpcasheville.org/widerwelcome.
- Anyone interested in a one-on-one conversation with a committee member can reach out to widerwelcome@fpcasheville.org.
- The committee requests that you please submit campaign responses by Friday, May 15.
- Mark your calendar for Celebration Sunday on June 7!



Check out the “story wall” recounting nearly 200 years of FPCA’s stewardship and future vision in the Atrium.



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE SPECIAL EVENTS

Monday, April 20

Lunch Bunch at Rye Knot

Wednesday, April 22

FPCA Stitches

Thursday, April 23

“Let There Be Light” Worship Service

Sunday, April 26

Building a Wider Welcome Town Hall

Love Asheville Day of Service & Learning

Thursday, April 30

Women’s Studies: Helpmate

Monday, May 4

Presbyterian Women

Wednesday, May 6

Children’s Choirs at Deerfield

Saturday, May 16

Still FLO: Theology on Tap

Sunday, May 17

New members received

Wednesday, May 20

Luncheon & Hymn Sing

Thursday, May 21

Women’s Studies: Field Trip to Jonesborough, Tenn.

Wednesday, May 27

FPCA Stitches

Friday, May 29

FPCA Youth Group Presents: A Night with Holy Fools

Sunday, May 31

Confirmation Sunday

Sunday, June 7

Celebration Sunday & Congregational Picnic

LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER



Summer Social Groups are back! Summer is a great time to build relationships at FPCA, and our Summer Social Groups are designed to help you do just that. Sign-ups begin in May. Each group of 5–8 people will commit to gathering four to

five times during the summer, creating space for connection and shared experiences.



In the past, many groups have centered around meals, and that is still a great option. This year, we are also inviting new ideas—hiking, photography, golf, or anything else that helps foster community and joy together.

Email Shannon Jordan at sjordan@fpcasheville.org to let her know what kinds of groups interests you! Your ideas will help shape a summer of meaningful connection and radical hospitality—then be on the lookout for sign ups!