



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ASHEVILLE

AUG/SEPT 2026

The First Chronicle

A Message from Patrick

Looking Back

As I reflect on summer 2026, I continue to be grateful for our celebration in June, when we concluded our capital campaign fundraising. This Building a Wider Welcome campaign was wonderfully successful, raising \$5.2 million to invest in the future of this congregation and its ministry and mission. Already—through the added parking—this vision is taking shape and making a positive difference. I'm so proud of our leaders for their boldness and faithfulness, and especially for the fundraising team, led by Richard Sens and Lynn Kieffer. So much to be grateful for!

In other ways, summer 2026 was wonderfully ordinary. Our high school youth went to Montreat and middle school youth to Massanetta Springs, and a combined group had a very successful service week in our fair city. Across generations, groups in the church met through book clubs, meals after church on Sundays, summer choir, social gatherings, and there was a wonderful ball game in July—fun stuff, all around, and good relationships built.

Earlier this month, the session held its annual retreat, where we build bonds that will support our work as spiritual leaders in the coming year, and have deeper strategic conversations about the life of the church. This year we talked about the implementation of our Building a Wider Welcome projects and began making plans for what that will look like in the coming year or year and a half. Right now we are in a holding pattern on the interior renovations, as we wait for an engineering study and further architectural designs that will finalize our costs before we move into permitting. As difficult as it is not to know the schedule, that's just the way these things go—at this point, we don't know the timeline. We do hope to move forward very soon with some other deferred maintenance projects that will make a meaningful difference in the life of the



A Look Inside

Cleaning Day p. 2
Music & Worship p. 3
Adult Faith Formation p. 4
Children's Faith Formation p. 5
Youth Faith Formation p. 6
Young Adult Faith Formation p. 6
Life & Mission @ FPCA p. 6
Events Calendar p. 8
Service Opportunities p. 8



A Message from Patrick (Continued)

church, such as HVAC in the Education Building and replacing the elevator to the parking lot, among other things. The confidence our congregation has shown in this vision is so inspiring—we want to keep up our forward progress and momentum!

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead in this (almost) September newsletter, we are kicking off a new program year of education, music, and worship together. You'll see in the pages of this newsletter an invitation to join the small group series this fall, an invitation to be part of our music ministry, as well as some of the activities coming as part of youth ministry and children's ministry.

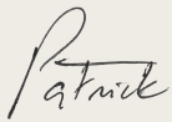
In September, we will also begin our worship theme for 2026–2027. This year our theme will be **“Alive to God,”** with a key verse of John 10:10—**“I have come that you may have life, and have it abundantly.”** That is God's gift in creation, God's purpose in redemption, and God's plan in restoration of all things. This theme will be a lens through which we explore the spiritual life, our life in the world, and the life of the world, as we ask what it means to be alive to God—today, in our time and place. I'm very excited about how this theme will shape our life together, especially worship and preaching, in the year ahead.

Finally, as we look ahead to the year, I want to highlight something that many of us know and have heard, but some may have forgotten: Shannon Jordan, our Associate Pastor, will take a well-deserved sabbatical this year, beginning in December. Through the generosity of this congregation and its session, each pastor receives a sabbatical after five years of service. This is a time of intentional reflection and vocational renewal for both the congregation and the pastor. Much more will be said in the weeks and months ahead, but so that we begin to communicate well and know what's coming: Shannon will be on sabbatical from December 1 until the beginning of Lent in mid-February in 2027. Our session and personnel committee are working now on plans to cover her absence and ensure that the ministry and mission of the church remain strong. Please keep them in your prayers, and if you can think of a way to help, feel free to offer.

Thankfully, we are a strong intergenerational congregation, and there are many ways for us to live out our faith together and care for one another. I hope the pages of this newsletter become an invitation for you to be part of the life of this church in the year ahead.

Blessings as we come to the end of the summer, and whether this season finds you returning home or heading out, may you be alive to God in every way.

In Christ,



Thanks to the 35 + volunteers who dusted, scrubbed, swept, and tidied our spaces during Cleaning Day on Aug. 19.



Music & Worship



**Follow Us
on Facebook!**

Keep up with FPCA
music news online.



Youth choir is back this year!

We will meet in conjunction with Sunday evening youth groups early in the fall, as well as select Wednesday evenings in September. More details to come!

Handbells for adults and youth will meet this fall for a shortened season beginning Wednesday, Oct. 14, from 6-6:45 pm. Please contact Elizabeth if interested. Some experience is helpful, but not necessary!

CHANCEL CHOIR REHEARSALS RESUME AUG. 26

Beginning Sept. 6, the Chancel Choir will resume singing weekly at 11 am worship. Wednesday rehearsals begin Aug. 26, and are held from 7-8:30 pm in the sanctuary. Please consider giving choir a try; we learn challenging repertoire of all styles, and have a wonderful time together doing it! Choir is a place for community, connection, and strengthening our faith through music. If you're interested in joining this ministry, reach out to Elizabeth LaJeunesse, Director of Music, at elajeunesse@fpcasheville.org, or just come to our first rehearsal. We can't wait to welcome you!

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MUSIC STARTS SEPT. 9

We welcome all elementary-age children into our Chorister program on Wednesday evenings from 6-6:45 pm, following dinner and gathering time. Choir training not only builds musicianship skills but nurtures creativity and confidence and teaches children the importance of their role as worship leaders!



LISTENING LIBRARY

As we prepare for fall and think about the ways music shapes our young people in church and in the world, please enjoy this recording of the Girl Choir of South Florida singing "L'dor Vador" (arranged by former FPCA Chorister director Rebecca Thompson).

"From generation to generation we will tell of your greatness... your praise, our God, will not depart from our mouths for ever and ever."

Beginning Choristers (K-2nd) will again be taught by Sarah-Helen Land, and



Junior Choristers (3rd-5th) will meet with a variety of staff and volunteers to work on units in singing, Orff instruments, bells, and drama.

Our first session is four weeks: September 9, 16, 23, and 30. Scan the code to sign up for dinners and rehearsal dates.

CHORISTER MINI-FESTIVAL ON SEPT. 20

Following our Godly Play kickoff Sunday, **ALL children grades K-6** (whether participating regularly in Choristers or not) will have an opportunity to gather with friends from Central UMC and Trinity Episcopal for a fun afternoon of food, music and games here at FPCA. Special guest Dr. Kari Adams, music education professor at UNCG, will lead the workshop, along with some of our music staff. The afternoon will conclude with a short "informance" in the sanctuary at 3 pm, where we'll share what we've been working on.

If your child already loves music, or just wants to try it out, this event is for you! RSVP to elajeunesse@fpcasheville.org.

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) invites discussion on a wide variety of topics. Here's what's coming up:
 - Aug. 23 & 30 – Growing Together: Our Guatemala Partnership (intergenerational)
 - Sept. 20 – In conversation with Madagascar ministry partners Dan & Elizabeth Turk
 - Sept. 27 – Discussion about the film "The Odyssey" (We will talk specifically about ideas and sequences from the movie; watch at your own discretion.)
 - Oct. 11, 18 & 25 – Does the Bible really matter?



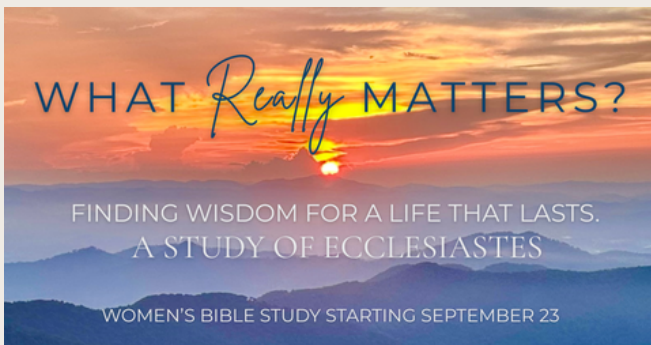
Guatemala-focused intergenerational class participants build legos while blindfolded to learn about reciprocal and fun "partnership!"

MID-WEEK OFFERINGS

FALL KOINONIA GROUPS — WHAT MAKES LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Come explore this timeless question through the lens of Christian faith. Together, we will discover how God invites each of us into lives marked by purpose, meaning, joy, and hope. Each week's lesson will begin with a 15-minute video conversation led by Shannon, featuring Patrick and other special guests throughout the series. The videos are followed by discussion questions designed to help participants reflect intentionally on what God desires for our lives. Sign up by Aug. 30. Kickoff luncheon on Sunday Sept. 13, after the 11 am service. Find more information and sign up at fpcasheville.org/koinonia-groups/.

WEDNESDAY WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY: A STUDY OF ECCLESIASTES



This fall, we turn to one of the Bible's most honest and thought-provoking books, to explore some pretty big life questions:

- What really matters?
- How do we live well in our current season of life?
- How much is enough?
- How do we live for more than ourselves?
- What do we do with what we can't explain?
- How can we find joy today?
- How do we grow older with wisdom?
- What kind of life truly lasts?

Beginning Wednesday, Sept. 23, at 11 am, we'll spend eight weeks exploring Ecclesiastes and what its ancient wisdom might mean for the way we live today. As always, our time together will blend Bible study, conversation, and reflection on our own lives. Whether you've studied the Bible for years or are simply curious about these questions, you are welcome to join us. Email sjordan@fpcasheville.org with questions or to sign up.

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



As we reach the end of the summer, we're excited to welcome children and families back to our weekly rhythm of Godly Play and worship on Sundays and dinner and choir on Wednesdays (see page 3 for details).

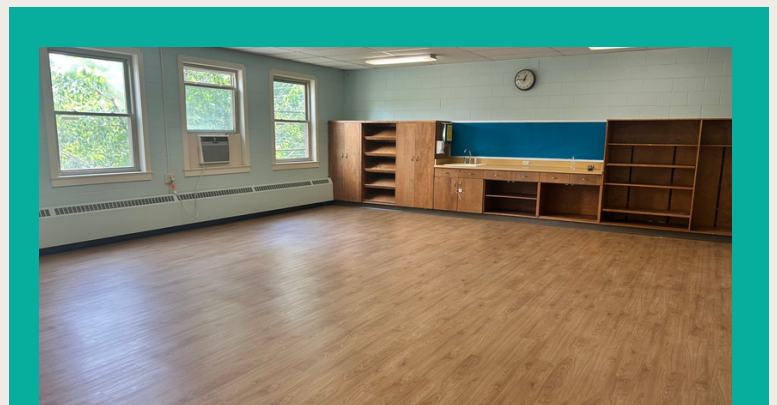
Godly Play Begins on Sunday, September 20 @ 9:45 am

We are thrilled to be back on the Children's Hall with new flooring beginning on Sept. 20. Children ages 3–5th grade will meet in three communities led by our incredible teaching team: Preschool, Kindergarten – 2nd grade, and 3rd–5th Grade. We gather from 9:45–10 am, hear a story, respond through art and activity, and share a feast together before being sent out with our grown-ups at 10:45 am. Have questions about what to expect or where to go? Reach out to Caitlin Johnson at cjohnson@fpcasheville.org

3rd Graders Receive Bibles on September 27

In 11 am worship on Sunday, Sept. 27, new 3rd graders will receive Bibles in worship. This is an important milestone as they move into the oldest community in Godly Play, and we are so grateful to celebrate it alongside them. The Bible is central to our faith and to our life together, and we are delighted to share it with these children as they are at an age when they are beginning to read it for themselves and get comfortable with it in their Godly Play communities.

Also, at this moment in time, we want them to hear and know that we want to grow with them: we want to hear their insights, learn from their growing faith, and from their questions as they read this book. This is not just a milestone for these kids or even these families — it's an important moment for our church community to let them know through our presence that we want to grow in faith and knowledge alongside them.



GRATITUDE FOR NEW FLOORS!

Thanks to the generosity and faithful stewardship of past generations through our endowment funds, we are excited to start the program year with new flooring and some fresh coats of paint in the children's hall!

Youth & Young Adult Faith Formation



YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth ministry at FPCA centers around Sunday morning Percolating Presbies gatherings every week and Sunday evening Youth Group gatherings, which generally happen every other week. We also travel to overnight retreats together during the year and the summer.

- **Percolating Presbies meets EVERY Sunday from 9:30 to 10:50 am** in the second-floor youth rooms, beginning on Sunday, Sept. 13. On Sunday mornings, we study Scripture, share about our lives, and often do some engaging group activities or projects.
- Sunday evenings we share a meal, play games, dive deep into topics relevant to our lives, and occasionally serve together. Our **first regular Youth Group gathering** of the year will also take place on Sunday, Sept. 13 — dinner and Flashlight Monster from 4:30 to 8:00 pm.
- A weekly email is sent to youth and parents with brief updates, reflections, and important information. Please contact David at dgermer@fpcasheville.org to be added to the email list.



End-of-Summer Pool Party & Parent Meeting Sunday, August 30 @ 3:30-6 pm at the Reinhardts'

Come share some summer highlights, enjoy food and fellowship, and talk through the plan and calendar for the year ahead in Youth Ministry at FPCA!

YOUNG ADULTS – “STILL FLO!”

After some fun summer outings — bowling, Salt Face Mule, Tourists game — we are kicking off the program year getting back to the popular Theology on Tap series:

Saturday, Sept. 19 @ 5 pm
Burial Forestry Camp
“What’s Up with Hell?”

Contact David Germer at dgermer@fpcasheville.org to get on the email list!



Life & Mission @ FPCA

CEREAL SUNDAE: SEPT. 13 @ 9:45 AM

Come hungry for fun (and ice cream)! All ages are invited to Cereal Sundae, a silly and joyful breakfast where we swap cereal milk for scoops of ice cream. It's the perfect way to reconnect after summer and kick off a new season together. While we enjoy this sweet treat, you'll also hear about exciting fall opportunities for families, including faith formation gatherings and children's choirs. Don't miss this chance to start the year with laughter, community, and a big bowl of goodness!





BUILDING BRIDGES ANTI-RACISM CLASS... AT FPCA!

The FPCA Racial Justice Team is delighted to share that we will be hosting the highly regarded 9-week Building Bridges of Asheville class in our space this fall. Building Bridges fosters antiracism by educating people on how to intentionally engage in dialogues about racism. The class is from 6:30 to 9 pm on 9 consecutive Mondays, Sept. 14 through Nov. 9. Scan the code to register for the class, or visit bbavl.org.

Please contact David at dgermer@fpcasheville.org if you are interested in helping us host OR interested in participating in the class. Building Bridges has offered some discounted participant fees for a limited number of FPCA participants!

SATURDAY SANCTUARY 2026-27

Saturday Sanctuary, our ministry of welcome, hospitality, relationships, and food with our downtown neighbors, begins the 2026 season on October 10. Every Saturday for roughly six months, we provide a warm meal and a safe and welcoming space to neighbors, building relationships and finding Jesus in our midst, right in the fellowship hall.

Training for new volunteers takes place on Sunday, Sept. 20, from 12:15-1:45 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Contact David Germer at dgermer@fpcasheville.org with questions or to be added to the email list.



There's something special about gathering around a table. Sharing a meal gives us a chance to slow down, enjoy conversation, hear one another's stories, and build relationships that can be harder to form in the rush of a Sunday morning.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNERS

Wednesday night dinners are for more than those participating in Wednesday evening programs! Small groups, committees, and anyone who would enjoy dinner and fellowship are welcome to join us. If you are not already registered as part of a Wednesday night program, such as Children's Choir, RSVP by Monday of the week you're coming so we can plan for you at life@fpcasheville.org. We will skip dinner on a few Wednesdays throughout the year to coordinate with other church ministries and school calendars, so check the weekly church calendar to see when dinner is being served.

LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch is another wonderful way to deepen connections while trying different restaurants around Asheville. We choose restaurants with accessible parking and spaces that make it easy for everyone to participate. Whether you come every month or are joining us for the first time, there is always room at the table! For upcoming Lunch Bunch restaurants and dates, scan the QR code or visit fpcasheville.org/lunchbunch/. Please RSVP to life@fpcasheville.org so we can reserve enough seating. Come for the food. Stay for the conversation and connection.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, August 24

Lunch Bunch at Zeus Taverna & Grill

Wednesday, August 26

Chancel Choir Rehearsal Resumes

Sunday, August 30

Book Club Luncheon

Youth Group End of Summer Pool Party

Wednesday, September 9

Wednesday Dinners & Chorister Rehearsal Resume

Sunday, September 13

Cereal Sundae

Koinonia Group Kick-Off Luncheon

Monday, September 14

Presbyterian Women

Thursday, September 17

Women's Studies

Sunday, September 20

Godly Play Communities Resume

Church Street Chorister Mini-Festival

Wednesday, September 23

Women's Fall Bible Study Begins

Saturday, September 26

Blue Ridge Pride Festival

Monday, September 28

Lunch Bunch at Cornerstone Restaurant

Friday, October 2–Sunday, October 4

Church Retreat at Montreat, N.C.

Monday, October 5

Presbyterian Women

Saturday, October 10

Saturday Sanctuary Begins

Wednesday, October 14

Youth & Adult Handbells Begins

Sunday, October 18

Parents' Night Out

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, email life@fpcasheville.org.

USHERS

Often the first friendly faces people see when they arrive, this key ministry is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in worship and welcome. Ushers are assigned to teams that serve once a month or to the on-call sub list.

DEACON PRAYER TEAM

The Deacon Prayer Team meets on the first and third Thursdays of the month to pray for people on our prayer list, those who are grieving, and those who are having birthdays. This group then writes handwritten notes for those for whom we are praying.

DEACON MEAL TEAM

This team delivers food to people who are in crisis. There are opportunities to package food on Wednesday evening or to drive to drop meals off at people's homes—usually on Thursdays.

CHILDREN & YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

We need almost a dozen volunteers each week to work directly with the children or youth, or in support roles.

DEACON FLOWER DELIVERY TEAM

This team takes flowers from the service on Sundays to people in our congregation for a variety of reasons. Volunteers deliver flowers one Sunday per quarter.

FRONT DESK VOLUNTEERS

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. Shifts usually run from 9 am to 1 pm or 1 pm to 4 pm.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

The Congregational Life Team's motto is that they have the most fun of any Team at church! This group provides volunteers for most of our meals and picnics, and helps with the retreat.