

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ASHEVILLE

OCTOBER 2026

The First Chronicle

A Look Inside

Scenes from Montreat 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. 7
Events Calendar p. 8



New Church T-Shirts Available for Purchase

If you would like a shirt and didn't purchase one at the church retreat, many are still available! Email life@fpcasheville.org with your T-shirt size and desired color (green, blue, or purple). Adult sizes are $20; child sizes are $15.

A Message from Patrick

Dear Friends,

What a weekend we shared at Montreat! Our annual all-church retreat, led by David LaMotte, was rich in every way: in worship, in conversation, in laughter, in games, in the variety show, and in the simple gift of time together in that special place. You'll find pictures from the weekend in this newsletter, and I hope they bring back good memories for those who were there and invite more of you to join us next year!

We are now well into our theme for this church year, Alive to God. Across the year, we will explore what it means to be alive to God in different seasons of life, as human beings in today's world, and as people shaped by our relationships and stories. Most of all, we will explore what it means to be people claimed by the living God as God's own beloved children.

This month in worship we are in a series from the book of Ecclesiastes. This is the first time I have ever preached on Ecclesiastes, and I suspect it may be the first time many of you have spent much time with it, too. It is an unfamiliar book and, frankly, read on its own, a depressing one. But it is also a rigorously honest picture of life without God, or without a God who is good. It raises important questions about our lives and the meaning of life, questions that find their answers in the good news of our faith. I'm grateful to be wrestling with this book alongside you.

There is much to look forward to in the weeks ahead. Registration is going on now for a joint trip, planned by the Chancel Choir and the Racial Justice Team, to go to Charleston in April. You'll hear more about this in different ways in the months to come, but if you're interested in learning more or in going on the trip, please look for that information now. Capacity is limited, and confidential financial assistance is available.

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A Message from Patrick (Continued)

On Sunday, Nov. 1, we will celebrate All Saints Day in worship, giving thanks for those who have gone before us in faith. That evening, we will host the All Souls Cathedral Choir in their annual performance of Fauré's Requiem. Since Hurricane Helene displaced them from their sanctuary, All Souls has used our facility in a variety of ways. I am grateful for this partnership and look forward to sharing in this service of worship with them.

Finally, you no doubt have heard the hard news that this month our associate pastor, David Germer, told us he has received a call to serve as senior associate pastor of Northwoods Presbyterian Church in Houston, Texas. This is a call David has clearly discerned, and while we celebrate it with him, we are sad to see him go. For five years, David has served among us in youth and mission. That is a demanding and time-consuming calling, and he has done it well. His ministry has blessed our youth, our mission ministries, and our whole congregation. He will be missed!

There will be a congregational meeting to dissolve his call on Sunday, Nov. 15, at 10:40 am, followed by a reception after the 11 am service to celebrate David, his family, and their time with us. David will conclude his service with us in worship on Sunday, Nov. 22.

David graciously gave us a heads-up over the summer that this might be coming, so our session and Personnel Committee have been working on plans to keep our ministry and mission strong. More information about those plans will be shared very soon.

May the blessing of October in these mountains be yours, along with so much more from God who is good.

Patrick

Scenes from Montreat















Music & Worship



It was great to make a joyful noise together in Montreat during our retreat hymn sing!

CHURCH STREET IS GETTING SPOOKY!

We invite you to join us on Friday, Oct. 30, for the first-ever **Church St. Organ Spooktacular**! This is a progressive series of mini-organ recitals featuring spooooky music and decorations, costumed performers, Halloween caroling (yes, there is such a thing), and candy!

The event begins at 5 pm at Central UMC, and from there a host will escort you across to FPCA (our performance will happen around 5:20 pm), then to Trinity Episcopal, where we'll end by 6:15 pm. All are invited back to Central UMC following the recital to attend their fall festival! Costumes are encouraged for children and adults alike. For more info, contact elajeunesse@fpcasheville.org.

MUSICAL GUESTS IN NOVEMBER

On Sunday, Nov. 22, we welcome the **A.C. Reynolds High School Chamber Choir** to 11 am worship. They will sing a piece during the service and join our Chancel Choir for a beautiful anthem that features violin and soprano saxophone. That morning we will also have an extended prelude by visiting **saxophonist, Dr. Andrew Gaffey**. He will be playing some different selections at 8:45 and 11 am, in addition to accompanying the choirs and congregational singing. We are so grateful to the many guest musicians who enhance our worship throughout the year, alongside FPCA's own!



MOUNTAIN TO MARSH: Awake to Connections and Alive to God

There's still time to register for the choir and racial justice pilgrimage to Charleston! We have a meaningful and rich itinerary planned for April 23-26, 2027, which includes visiting historic sites, sharing meals together, and supporting our choir in singing and worshiping with the people of St. James Presbyterian Church (James Island). Contact Elizabeth for more info, or to reserve your spot on the bus!



CHORISTER CORNER

This month, Beginning Choristers will be preparing to sing in worship on Nov. 8, as well as starting to learn music for Moravian Lovefeast and Lessons & Carols! Junior Choristers will be starting a new unit with FPCA staff singer Chandler on drama and movement. Our youngest musicians (and future choristers) are able to have regular music time on Sunday mornings with Michaela or Sarah-Helen.

Scan the code to sign up for Wednesday night dinners and chorister rehearsal dates.

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:
  - **Through Oct. 25 — Does reading the Bible really matter?** We'll explore how the Bible came together, when and why different books were written, and how genre and historical context shape the way we read them. We'll also make room for the questions many of us carry: What do we do with passages that seem to disagree? How do we approach difficult texts? And how can these ancient writings still speak meaningfully into our lives today?
  - **Nov. 1, 8 & 15 — Held, Seen & Pieced Together: Alive in God.** Every created being is creative, even those of us who would never call ourselves artists. We are made in the image of a Maker. As we prepare for Advent, when God took on ordinary flesh, we'll spend time with three living artists. Read alongside scripture, their work helps us ask what it means to bear that image. This is not a lecture series. Each class is hands-on and interactive. We'll look closely, talk together, and make something with our own hands. No artistic experience is needed, only curiosity.





Questions? Contact Shannon Jordan at sjordan@fpcasheville.org.

MID-WEEK OFFERINGS

LIFE WORTH LIVING — DO YOU WISH YOU HAD JOINED A GROUP?

Our fall Koinonia Groups are wrapping up, and more than 55 people have been gathering to explore the themes and questions raised in Life Worth Living. Together, they've been reflecting on what makes a life meaningful, what really matters, and how we might live more intentionally. Several people have asked if it's too late to participate. While you can't join a current group, if you would still like to explore this material, all you need to do is find a couple of friends who are willing to gather for conversation and discussion. Let Shannon know (at sjordan@fpcasheville.org), and she'll help you get started! It's never too late to ask the question: What makes a life worth living?

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN – FIRST MONDAYS AT 10:30 AM

All women are invited to join these monthly gatherings as we share in study, prayer, and conversation. Each month, a different leader guides a discussion of this year's theme, "United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians." Up next: An exploration of freedom in Christ with Patrick Johnson on Nov. 2.

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.

WOMEN'S STUDIES — (MOST) THIRD THURSDAYS AT 10:30 AM

Women of all ages are invited for conversation, fellowship, and a potluck brunch. Bring something to share and come enjoy time together while we explore a variety of thought-provoking and relevant topics and book studies. Up next: A discussion of Elizabeth Strout's The Things We Never Say on Nov. 19. Find dates and topics at fpcasheville.org/womens-studies.

Children's Faith Formation







GODLY PLAY: SUNDAYS @ 9:45 AM

Godly Play is our primary method of faith formation for children in preschool through 5th grade. Children meet in three communities: preschool, kindergarten-2nd, and 3rd-5th grade. Led each week by two of our 20+ trained leaders, children hear a story, wonder together, respond through play and art, and enjoy a feast of goldfish! This fall, our stories have been chosen to walk alongside the sermon series. Watch for a wondering question posted outside each classroom door, a ready-made conversation starter for the ride home.

GODLY PLAY + FLOWER GUILD: SUNDAY, OCT. 25 @ 9:45 AM

During Helene, when Sunday morning programming was paused, our children gathered with the creative adults of the Flower Guild to make small flower arrangements to bless members of the congregation and their neighbors and friends at a time when we all needed extra care. It has become a treasured time of working across generations to share God's love with one another and our community. Children, along with their grown-ups, are invited to come create arrangements together. No supplies needed! After the 11 am worship service, worshippers will take them home to share with a friend or neighbor.

INTERGENERATIONAL ADVENT CELEBRATION: SUNDAY, NOV. 22 @ 9:45 AM

Join us in the Fellowship Hall for our Advent Celebration! Children, families, and all are invited to gather and make Advent wreaths and other small crafts together as we prepare for the first Sunday of Advent (Nov. 29) together. Feel free to bring greens from your yard to add to your wreath. Gathered around an Advent Wreath at home, children (and all of us) can carry the sacred story of God's love, that we hear in Godly Play and Sunday morning worship alike, with us through our ordinary days as we make time to linger in the growing light and wait with hope and wonder for the joy of Christmas.



PARENTS' NIGHT OUT!

SUNDAY, OCT. 18
4:30-6:45 PM

While your children (birth-5th grade) enjoy a night in at the church with pizza, a movie, and plenty of time to play together, you're invited to walk over to the Draftsman for an evening of good conversation and connection with other grown-ups. Come as you are, and enjoy some time together.

RSVP to life@fpcasheville.org so we can plan accordingly!



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. 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. **Up next: Breakfast for dinner, active games, and an FPCA adult faith story on Oct. 25.**
- 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.

YOUNG ADULTS – "STILL FLO!"

FPCA's young adult group will gather to **serve together with Saturday Sanctuary on Saturday, Nov. 7**. We'll be trained at 11:30 am, eat lunch and volunteer together and with neighbors from 12:15 to 2:45 pm, and then those who would like to can walk nearby to grab a beverage and spend some time debriefing the experience together. Please RSVP to David Germer at dgermer@fpcasheville.org by Thursday, Oct. 29.

REV. DAVID GERMER ACCEPTS NEW CALL

David joined the FPCA community as Associate Pastor in January 2022. After nearly five years of shared ministry focusing on youth and mission, David and the Germer family will be moving to Houston, Texas. His last Sunday at FPCA will be Nov. 22.

Scan the code to read letters from pastors Patrick & David about this change, and be on the lookout for additional information about plans for the youth and mission ministries.

Please keep the Germers in your prayers during this time of transition, and mark the following date on your calendar.

Sunday, Nov. 15
10:40 am — Congregational Meeting
Noon — Reception honoring David and his family



BUILDING BRIDGES PANEL DISCUSSIONS AT FPCA!

We have been hosting the fall Building Bridges course here at FPCA, with a fantastic team of volunteers. Now through Nov. 2, panel discussions are open to our community, on Mondays from 6:30 to 8 pm in the FPCA fellowship hall. Here is the schedule of topics:

- October 19: Racism and Anti-Racism in our Criminal Legal System
- October 26: Racism and Anti-Racism in Healthcare in Asheville
- November 2: Reparations in Asheville

The FPCA Racial Justice Team encourages anyone who is interested in learning more about anti-racism work in Asheville to attend as many of these sessions as possible! Contact David Germer with any questions at dgermer@fpcasheville.org.

SATURDAY SANCTUARY 2026-27

Saturday Sanctuary, our ministry of welcome, hospitality, relationships, and food with our downtown neighbors, began 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. We love to welcome new volunteers! Contact David Germer at dgermer@fpcasheville.org with questions or to be added to the email list.





JOIN THE HABITAT FAITH BUILD THIS FALL

This is the 33rd year that, together with other faith communities, FPCA is building a house for a local family. Shown here is a thank-you note from last year's family!

There are jobs for all skill levels (16 years and older), and we have reserved three work days for those who want to help build: Saturdays, Oct. 31 and Nov. 14, and Friday, Nov. 20. Other slots are also available. Monetary contributions are also welcome. Visit the church website or contact Bill Winkler at life@fpcasheville.org for information.

MEET HEATHER DEIFELL, NEW EXEC. DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MISSION CO.

Did you know that this summer, **Asheville Youth Mission (AYM)** hosted 181 volunteers from 15 different churches and provided 18 local agencies with more than 2,806 hours of volunteer support? FPCA is a huge part of this amazing work as AYM's host church!

This fall, Youth Mission Co (AYM's umbrella organization) has been in transition with our beloved Bill Buchanan stepping back and **Heather Deifell** stepping into leadership. Heather has a rich history in WNC with ties to Montreat, Haywood Street Congregation, YMCA of WNC, United Way, LEAF Global Arts, The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club, and more. Bill will always be YMCo's Founder; he plans to stay in Asheville and be active with FPCA while continuing to be a resource for our YMCo partners who now have programs in Atlanta, Charleston, Memphis, and Raleigh. We are excited about this new chapter. Help us welcome Heather to our FPCA family.





UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, October 18
Child Care Center Open House
Parents' Night Out

Sunday, October 25
Artist Reception for Mary Calloway Logan

Monday, October 26
Lunch Bunch at Pomodoro's

Friday, October 30
Church Street Organ Spooktacular

Sunday, November 1
All Saints Day

Monday, November 2
Presbyterian Women

Sunday, November 15
Congregational Meeting
Reception for Rev. David Germer

Thursday, November 19
Women's Studies: The Things We Never Say

Sunday, November 22
Intergenerational Advent Celebration

Monday, November 23
Lunch Bunch at Rye Knot

Sunday, November 29
Loaves & Fishes Alternative Gift Market @ Trinity

Wednesday, December 2
Service of Healing & Wholeness

Monday, December 7
Presbyterian Women

Wednesday, December 9
Dinner & Moravian Love Feast

Sunday, December 13
Lessons & Carols

Friday, December 18
Youth Overnight Lock In

Thursday, December 24
Christmas Eve Worship at 4 & 9 pm

STAY IN THE LOOP WHEN PLANS CHANGE



We are beginning the process of having our church family opt in to text messages through Realm for timely updates about weather cancellations and other announcements we need to share quickly. We'll use texts sparingly, so you can stay informed without feeling overwhelmed.

To opt in, text "start" to 828-382-8752.

Questions? Email life@fpcasheville.org.



OCTOBER IS PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

Last year, the Personnel Committee invited the congregation to write notes of appreciation to our pastors. The response was overwhelming, and many thoughtful cards were presented during a special appreciation luncheon.

This year, we would like to extend that spirit of appreciation to all members of our church staff. If you haven't already, please consider bringing a small gift or token of appreciation to donate; items can be placed in the drop box behind the church reception desk.