



# HIGHLIGHTS

NEWSLETTER OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ASHEVILLE

## The Helper Is On the Way

by Mack Dennis

John 14:15-18

Before Jesus is taken away from the disciples, he comforts them with a promise, “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you” (Jn. 14:18). After Jesus is raised from the dead, he fulfills this promise in at least two ways. First, he appears to the disciples multiple times—to Mary in the garden, to the disciples behind locked doors, to a skeptical Thomas, to a heartbroken Simon Peter. But he also promises to send what he calls an “Advocate” or helper, “to be with you forever” (14:15). This is the Spirit of truth, Jesus says, who will forever abide with us and be in and among us.

Skipping ahead 2,000 years, we could be forgiven for wondering if Jesus is still keeping these promises. We’ve been as vulnerable as a herd of sheep scattered across a thousand acres. We haven’t been able to huddle for warmth in the cold. Multiple crises have left us bewildered, anxious, and exhausted. Even mundane tasks have left us feeling taxed or disoriented. If you’ve recently walked into the kitchen and forgotten what you came to do, or jumped in the car to run an errand and forgotten where you intended to go, you’re not alone. Prolonged stress and isolation affect how our brains function, and diminish our ability take pleasure in things we used to enjoy. Margaret Wehrenberg, author of *Pandemic Anxiety: Fear, Stress, and Loss in Traumatic Times*, names this

effect “behavioral anhedonia.” But I won’t elaborate. Your brain has enough to keep up with right now.

Yes, we need help. We need Jesus. We need the Spirit. We need each other.

So, beloved, I’m very excited to tell you about our upcoming (gradual) reopening of the sanctuary for worship. Staff are already making plans and recruiting volunteers. We expect to do a trial run on Pentecost Sunday, May 23, with deacons and other congregational leaders present in the sanctuary. The May 23 service will also be livestreamed so that everyone may participate. This practice event will help us prepare for a new summer schedule, beginning June 6 and extending through August 29, with limited seating in the sanctuary for all members and friends.

I encourage you to find the details for the summer schedule in this special edition of Highlights, and begin to imagine how you will participate in worship with us across this promising new season.

I also encourage you to keep faith in the promises Jesus has made. Don’t let your hearts be troubled. God has not left us behind. Soon, we will see again just how true Jesus is to his word. Yes, the Helper is on the way, and is already here. The Spirit of truth intends to gather us again, and abide with us in new and wonderful ways.

*Mack*

We are excited to offer three in-person camps for our elementary students this summer.

**Advocacy Camp** a missions camp for 3rd - 6th graders.  
June 7 - 11 from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Vacation Bible School** for elementary students  
June 21 - 25 from 9:00 a.m. - Noon

**Discovery Camp** for elementary students  
July 12 - 16 from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

*If you would like to register or volunteer* to participate in one or more of these camps contact Amy (astertz@fbca.net).



## FBCA YOUTH



### Welcome Ellie, Youth Summer Intern

#### **Ellie Stewart, FBCA Youth Summer Intern**

Ellie is a rising sophomore at Davidson College. She is from Memphis, TN, and will be a wonderful leader to the youth group this summer.

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### Youth Summer Retreats and Special Events

**Caswell Youth Spring Retreat** - May 29-31, Caswell Beach, NC

**"Tuesdays with Ellie"** 6:00 p.m. - June-July (more details TBA)

**Youth Mission Week in Asheville** - June 7-10

**Baccalaureate Luncheon** - June 13

**Volunteer as a Camp Counselor at our children's camps**

**Unidiversity Youth Summer Camp** - July 20-24, Maryville College, TN

# MISSIONS

**Through the summer our meal ministry will continue to serve those facing food shortages.**

On Wednesdays a team of volunteers faithfully comes in to sort food donations and to pack 75 food boxes each week that are delivered to our Crossroads Afterschool Program families, Asheville City School children and their families, and to members in our community facing food shortages.

On Thursdays another team of dedicated volunteers gathers to prepare 300 hot-meals and 200 delicious bag lunches that are delivered to Western Carolina Rescue Mission. A small portion of the bag lunches are given out to a group of Lunch at the Crossroads guests who fellowship outside the Sherman Center at noon.

**Thank you to all for keeping the pantry well stocked and to all our beloved meal ministry volunteers--you make such a difference!** Here are some of the top items requested for our food pantry this summer: vienna sausage, pancake mix, instant oatmeal/grit packets,

canned chicken and tuna, canned/dried beans (pinto, navy and black), canned vegetables (spinach and collard greens are favorites), instant mashed potatoes, 2-lb bag of cooking flour, sugar, Jiffy cornbread mix, and instant gravy mix.

**When can I deliver?** Drop your items off at the church on Mondays through Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Look for the box under the atrium entrance area.

**Health and Safety Reminders:** Do not make an EXTRA trip to the grocery store. Do this AS YOU GO. If you are in an at-risk group, limit any additional gatherings. Always clean your hands as encouraged by the CDC. If you are ill or living with someone who is ill, stay at home.

**Unable to bring food donations but would like to help?**

Please go to the church website and click on GIVE. Select Designated Gift. In the Designated Gift Description, type Hunger Relief. You may also mail a contribution to the church at 5 Oak Street, Asheville, NC 28801.

## AFTA Summer Events



Reclaim the joy of live music with two free summer concerts featuring Academy for the Arts faculty. A free-will donation will be collected for the AFTA Scholarship Fund, giving opportunities to students in financial need. Sit back and enjoy!

**Sunday, July 11:** Traditional Music - Sanctuary Steps (bring a chair)

**Sunday, July 18:** Classical & Jazz Music - Sacred Garden (chairs provided)

[academyforthearts.org/summerconcerts](https://academyforthearts.org/summerconcerts)



Our Summer Intensives are back! After a year of virtual and individual music-making, these week-long intensives are perfect for getting your mojo back. Students in grades 2-12 with at least two years of playing experience are invited to join for our Summer Strings, Piano, and Traditional Music Intensives.

Camps run 9 am-4 pm daily. Sign up today!

[academyforthearts.org/summer](https://academyforthearts.org/summer)



## Bach's Lunch 2020-21 Season

Join us for Asheville's premiere organ series featuring Tate Addis. Concerts are the first Tuesday of each month at 12:05 pm. [academyforthearts.org/bachs-lunch](https://academyforthearts.org/bachs-lunch)

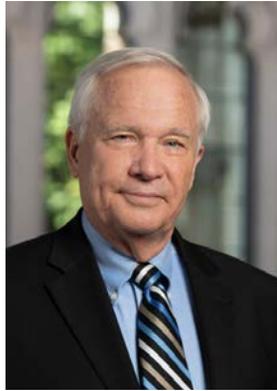
**June 1** - Gregorian Inspirations

**July 6** - Organ Music from the United States

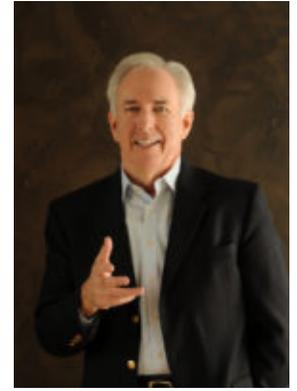
# SUNDAYS THIS SUMMER



**Anna Carter Florence**  
June 6 & 13, August 15 & 22



**William H. Willimon**  
June 20 - July 11



**Tim Owings**  
July 18 & 25



**Laura Addis**  
August 1



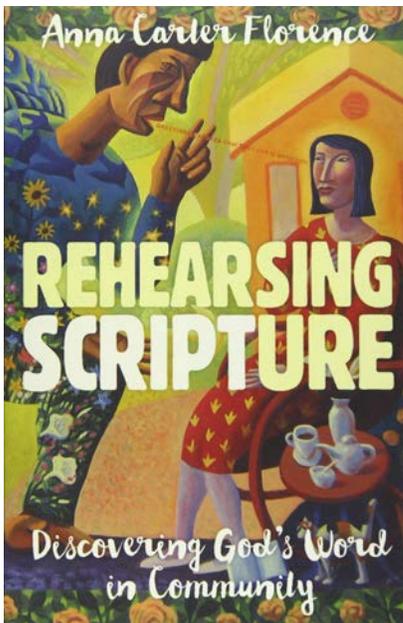
**Mary Caldwell**  
August 8



**David Blackmon**  
August 29

\*Guest musicians from folk, classical, contemporary and Celtic traditions will lead worship each week.

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## Rehearsing Scripture with Amy and Tommy

Join us this summer as we explore the book *Rehearsing Scripture: Discovering God's Word in Community* by Anna Carter Florence. This 11 week series will introduce Anna Carter Florence who will be preaching at our church four weeks this summer and her book which gives new tools to help us encounter Scripture. Each week we'll share an overview of a chapter from the book and practice what it teaches as we read and study the sermon text for the week.

This series will be offered as a video option for those who cannot meet in person and would like to use it for their weekly Bible study and as a podcast for teachers and others who are interested in studying the sermon text.

You are welcome to purchase the book and read along but having the book is not a requirement to participate in this series. More details to come!