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THE EXTENDED FAMILY

Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church

Steve's Slant

BY REV. DR. STEVE RUNHOLT



In case you have not already heard, there is some big news on the college front: Warren Wilson has called a new president. Dr. Damián Fernández is the tenth president in the college's history, the fifth since I arrived here in 2005.

He naturally brings a wealth of experience to this position, having served most recently as the president of Eckerd College, in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Notably, Dr. Fernández is a Cuban immigrant and a first-generation college student. (For those of you who have been around a long time, I plan to share this news with Clotilde Guisasola. Julio would be so proud!)

In an email to the Warren Wilson community commenting on this news, interim president Bill Christy wrote:

We are all aware that Warren Wilson College is facing significant headwinds from all quarters, and that we quite simply cannot continue as we have. We must change and adapt. I do not know what that change will look like, but I know that there will be change.

Warren Wilson is not alone in facing stiff headwinds. In his email, Bill went on to note that almost all small colleges in American – all 800 of them – are facing similar challenges.

Many complex factors contribute to this situation. But the main one is quite straightforward: there has been a shift in the cultural landscape in the United States. Young people today (and perhaps also their parents) are far less inclined than they once were to pay the steep tuition of a private liberal arts college in pursuit of an undergraduate education.

I'm glad to say that our situation here at the church is very different in some important respects. Perhaps the biggest difference is that, thanks to all of you, our financial picture is remarkably stable, perhaps even unusually so for a church of our size.

That said, as with liberal arts colleges, the cultural foundations that have supported the Church for generations are also changing. To put it succinctly: church, and going to church, simply does not play the same role in our country, in our communities and in our families, as it once did.

I say this for a couple of reasons.

First, because I believe we would be wise to be aware of this huge change in Americans' religious behavior. Awareness of this change will help us plan for and adapt to it, so that our church will remain strong and vibrant into the foreseeable future.

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I also note this change because I believe our current staff searches, and the discernment process around them, will be especially important this time around.

As part of this process, I believe (finally) that it will be important for our search teams to do some research: to consider what people in the know are learning from studying churches that are not thriving (or have closed altogether), and what we are learning from studying churches that continue to grow and thrive.

Which brings me to my last point. As the search teams undertake their work, I'd like to invite you to do a little work of your own. In this case, I would like you to join me in doing a brief thought experiment.

Imagine that you are new to this campus. Maybe you're a student who has never been to church before, but you're feeling lonely and vulnerable. Maybe you're a new staff person. You stopped going to church in college and you never went back. But you have two kids now. You'd like to reconnect with a faith community, ideally one that shares your progressive values and can help teach those values to your children.

Maybe you're a new member of the college's music faculty and you've just been through a divorce, and you would welcome some spiritual and emotional support.

Maybe you're the new college president and as you turn into those stiff headwinds, you realize faith is going to be vital to your success in not being blown away by them.

Now, here comes the hard part of this experiment: briefly set aside your own preferences for what you like in church and put yourself in the place of whomever you're imagining.

It's 10:45 on Sunday morning. You leave your dorm room, or your house on North Lane, or your office in the Kittredge music building, or the President's house, and you walk the short distance to the Chapel.

You've heard about the Warren Wilson Church from a friend you've made on campus, how it is a loving and welcoming congregation that values and cares about the same things you do: climate justice, economic justice, LGBTQ justice, finding equitable and peaceful solutions to conflicts of all kinds.

You walk through the front doors for the very first time. What do you hope you will find when you enter this beautiful Chapel? What kind of service, that is, what kind of preaching, what kind of music, what kind of liturgy, would inspire you to return? What kind of service and volunteer opportunities, would the church need to have in place for you to feel good about coming here regularly yourself?

Suppose you have children. What kind of programs and facilities would the church need to have in place for you to feel comfortable? Do you see where I'm going with this?

Let the searches begin!

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Betty Siviter March 2
Catherine Showalter March 7
Amber Crumpler March 11
Wendy Meyer March 18
Harriet Page Cowel March 22
Jonathan Crumpler March 26
John Bishop March 29

Evva Hamilton March 6
Patrick Sanderson March 10
Bill Sanderson March 15
Anne Hamilton March 20
Dennis Stockdale March 24
Andrew Pulsiver March 27



Happy
Birthday

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper...



A great time was had by all as we gathered for our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. College students joined us for pancakes and conversation, rounding the night out with a King Cake brought in by the Sanderson's. Special thanks go out to the Congregational Life Team, and to all the folks who were flipping pancakes!

THE WARREN WILSON BOOK GROUP



Please join the Warren Wilson Book Group at noon on Thursday, March 9. We'll be taking a stroll along the Appalachian Trail when Judi will lead our discussion of *Grandma Gatewood's Walk* by Ben Montgomery. Even if you haven't read the book we'd love to have you join us for our discussion of this amazing woman!



Joys and Concerns

Our Healing Prayers go out to: Lee Dugger and his family; Walt Roberts, Fran & Burnace's son; Erika Lytle; Houston Huggins, Beth Meriwether's brother; Carol Lee and Brooks Joslin, Blake's parents; Bob & Janice Kesterson, Mark Meriwether's aunt and uncle; Kip Smith, Tacci's father; Pat Crumpler; Shane Reece, Nancy Garrison's son; Pat Wilson's son, Kell; Fred Porter & Fred Harvey, the Griswold's brothers-in-law; Bartley and Phyllis Spencer, Sandy Brauer's brother and sister in law; Jackie Ligon Cole; Rick Garrison; Fran Roberts' sister-in-law, Linda Briggs; Flo Bishop; Jon Hettrick and his family; Marjorie Hettrick; Kim Reece, daughter of Nancy and Rick Garrison; Bobbie Galgaro and daughter Lisa, friends of the Daugherty family.

SOUPER Bowl of Caring



We collected \$823.00 for Beloved Asheville, and 159 food items. Thank you for your donations!

Music Director Search

The Music Director Search Team would like to thank everyone for their participation in our survey, and for joining us at the listening sessions.

We are gathering everyone's input to fine tune a job description that is inclusive of your ideas and comments. We are also reviewing previous job descriptions, and meeting with our interim music director to get insights into the scope of the job and compensation. Thank you for helping us on this most important journey into the next phase of our music programming!

The Search team: Derron Daugherty; Anne Dale; Beth Meriwether; Donna Eagle Joslin; Darcy Orr and Steve Runholt.





Habitat for Humanity News

ASHEVILLE'S HABITAT CELEBRATES ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY.
COMPLETES PHASE ONE OF NEW HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD CONSTRUCTION.
WILL START CONSTRUCTION IN A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD IN MAY.

Last month, the Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity affiliate, the first in the state of North Carolina, and founded when there were fewer than 25 Habitat affiliates nationwide, marked its 40th anniversary. Since starting up in 1983, Asheville Area Habitat has enabled nearly 900 qualified low income families to build better futures through the purchase of an affordable home.

Combined with their home repair program, thousands of local adults and children have benefitted from Habitat's work in our area, and Habitat's Asheville ReStore, one of the nation's first Habitat re-sale stores, has contributed proceeds to the chapter's mission since 1990.

Habitat's West Asheville New Heights neighborhood now has 38 homes including the 2022 House of Faith where 14 of our church members served as volunteer helpers at the job site last May and June. These 38 homes have completed Phase One at New Heights where the plan is to eventually build a total of 98 homes.

Before work on Phase Two begins however, Habitat will start building at Glenn Bridge, a new neighborhood in Arden, in May. Calling it a Community of Hope, the 29 homes planned to be built there will be designed to be multi-generational and diverse - welcoming families, individuals, and children.

The next House of Faith will be built at Glenn Bridge with construction scheduled to start this summer. Before construction begins dates for volunteer helpers will be announced, and all will be welcome to sign up. No special skills are necessary. All that is needed is willingness to help.



In 2013, Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity's 30th Anniversary year, 17 affordable homes were built in this Swannanoa neighborhood. They included the 10,000th Habitat house built in the state of North Carolina, and Presbyterian/Methodist House #22 near the top right corner of this aerial photo.



Presbyterian/Methodist House #22 in Swannanoa where members of our church as well as family and friends volunteered 112 hours to help build this affordable home for the couple that purchased it.



FINISHING STRONG: PREPARING FOR LIFE'S FINAL STAGES

LENTEN ADULT EDUCATION SERIES

12:15 in Fellowship Hall

Lunch and childcare will be provided.

Feb. 26 Legal: Living Wills and Advanced Directives
Mike Begley, Founder, Begley Law Firm

Mar. 5 Medical: Our bodies as they age
Dr. Casey Sharpe, Palliative Care Physician

Mar. 12 Spiritual/Emotional/Familial Considerations
Rev. Susan Verbrugge, Solace Hospice Chaplain

Mar. 19 Internment Options
WWC Prof. Mallory McDuff, Author of "Our Last Best Act"

Mar. 26 Affording End of Life Care
John Snell, Retired Social Worker, specializing in elder care

April 2 Wrap up and review
Rev. Dr. Steve Runholt, Pastor, WWPC



NOTEWORTHY EVENTS

LENTEN SPIRITUALITY RETREAT

The Presbytery of Western NC is once again offering the yearly Lenten Spirituality Retreat. This year it will be held at William Black Lodge in Montreat on March 24 and 25. It will be led by Donna Chase, Director of Spiritual Formation at 1st Presbyterian of Greensboro. Each day allows for learning, fellowship and prayer so that you return home relaxed and rejuvenated. Registration deadline is March 3. Contact Sandy Brauer (828-803-4718) for questions or help getting registered.

JUST FOR FUN

Just For Fun is starting back up. This event is for topics and/or activities that are interesting and fun to our church congregation. But we (Congregational Life Ministry Team) would like to know your ideas and get your input. Please contact Susan Daugherty (sdaugh56@gmail.com) with any and all of your fun ideas!

PALM SUNDAY

Our Palm Sunday service on April 2, will begin at 10:45 in front of the chapel, as we gather to pick up our palm branches to wave while walking down the center aisle of the sanctuary. We'll leave our palms on the chancel area up in front of the sanctuary before returning to our seats for the service.





Adoration by Daniel Bonnell

Celebrate the Gifts of Women

2023 WORSHIP SERVICE

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 | 9 a.m. (EST)

[Live on the Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\) Facebook page](#)

Rev. Dr. Marcia Mount Shoop preaching

"Scattering, Shattering & Mattering"

Luke 1:45–56

To download the full worship resource and a reflection from Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, [click here](#).



The Rev. Dr. Marcia Mount Shoop (M.Div. Vanderbilt, Ph.D. Emory) is an author, theologian and pastor. She serves as pastor/head of staff at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Asheville, North Carolina. She facilitates in ecclesial, academic and community contexts around issues of race, gender, sexual violence, power and embodiment. Marcia is the author of *Let the Bones Dance: Embodiment and the Body of Christ* (WJKP, 2010) and *Touchdowns for Jesus and Other Signs of Apocalypse: Lifting the Veil on Big-Time Sports* (Cascade Books, 2014). She co-authored *A Body Broken, A Body Betrayed: Race, Memory, and Eucharist in White-Dominant Churches* (Cascade Books, 2015) with Mary McClintock Fulkerson. Learn more about Marcia's work at marciamountshoop.com.

New College President

Dr. Damián J. Fernández will become Warren Wilson College's 10th President.

The selection follows an eight-month national search with a deep, strong, and diverse pool of candidates. From an initial applicant pool of over 75, to four finalists for on-campus interviews, the Search Committee was very pleased with the caliber of candidates who sought to become the 10th President of the College. I want to give a special thank-you to the 15 members of the Presidential Search Committee and to the 80 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and trustees who worked with the committee and provided feedback about the presidential candidates.

We are delighted that Dr. Fernández is hitting the ground running. From today through May 31, 2023, he will be working closely with me, Provost Dr. Jay Roberts, the rest of Cabinet, and the Board of Trustees to understand the College, its challenges and opportunities, and to map out a smooth transition. On June 1, 2023, Dr. Fernández will assume the role of President.

Dr. Fernández's aspirations for our college include advancing innovative programs that deepen experiential and project- and problem-based learning, growing and diversifying enrollment, addressing facilities and other institutional needs, and rethinking the traditional business model of liberal arts colleges. As he notes:

"Warren Wilson's foundational pedagogy of mind, heart and hand—learning, service, and work—is as compelling now as it was in 1894. Together we will push the boundaries of progressive pedagogy for the 21st century. Our college will be a leader in the renewal of the American liberal arts college by focusing on excellence, access, innovation, and impact. I am honored and grateful to be a steward of this inspiring institution."

A Cuban immigrant who grew up in Puerto Rico, and a first-generation college student, Dr. Fernández comes to Warren Wilson with more than 30 years of experience in teaching and leadership positions at both private and public institutions.

Dr. Fernández received his bachelor's from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, his master's in Latin American Studies from the University of Florida, and Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Miami. A catalytic leader and progressive educator, he is a National Science Foundation grant recipient, and he sat on the Board of the American Council on Education (ACE) and on the Association of Governing Boards Council of Presidents. ACE profiled him in their series on equity-minded leadership. Warren Wilson's values, heritage, and pedagogy resonate deeply with him.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Fernández to the Warren Wilson College community.

With gratitude,

William H. Christy '79 (Taken from a letter Bill sent out to Alumni)



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