



# The Herald

## Presbyterian Heritage Center at Montreat

Vol. 17, No. 3

Fall 2025

### Celebrating Missionaries at the PHC



On October 9, the Presbyterian Heritage Center was filled with the cheerful chatter of what felt like a family reunion.

Current and retired missionaries in the Montreat area gathered for a luncheon so that the PHC could thank them for dedicating their lives to fulfilling the Great Commission through cross-cultural mission in countries around the world, including Brazil, Malawi, Taiwan, and Japan.

Rob Robinson, who has been building hospitals in North Korea for many years, said of the gathering, "It was so enjoyable and valuable to talk with people involved in missions, and it was a huge encouragement."

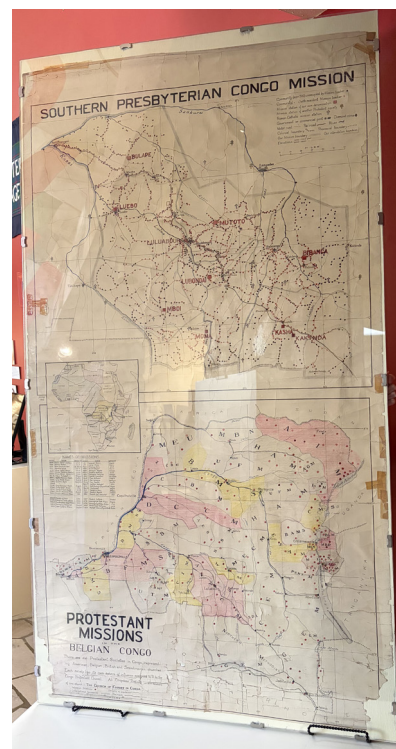
Stan Topples, who served with his wife, Mia, (both doctors) in Korea and Kenya, commented, "It was a delight to see people chatting

away who had not seen each other in years. It was a joyful and happy time. It has always seemed that missionary friends are sometimes even closer than family."

Since 2008, when the PHC opened its doors, we have had a strong commitment to sharing the Church's rich heritage in global missions. At our Grand Opening, PHC Chairman Dick Ray cut the ribbon with a Korean choir from Asheville by his side.

Each year, the PHC presents an exhibit on a missionary effort—ongoing or historical—using materials from our extensive public mission archive. The mission exhibit this year has a focus on Montreat's long history of supporting missionaries and their service. The Montreat area continues to be a hub for mission activity. We were honored to host this congenial and interesting group.

### Collection Spotlight



#### Southern Presbyterian Congo Mission Map

Louis Armistead (LA) McMurray was a Presbyterian missionary to the Congo for 37 years (1924-1961), where he served as head of Morrison Bible School, which prepared Congolese people for the ministry.

He drew this map in 1945 to show the Presbyterian stations as well as the location of all the other Protestant missions in Congo. He drew the map on a rolled window shade for easy transport.

*Donated by Harlan McMurray.*

# Presbyterian Heritage Center on the Move in 2025

We have been busy over the last few months! A few highlights:

## Highland Farms Outreach

The PHC has inaugurated a program to take our current exhibits to Givens Highland Farms, a local retirement community, with presentations by the staff that include visual representations of what visitors to the Center see. In September, PHC Director Anne Chesky offered a presentation on the Historic Floods in western North Carolina. She presented comparative information on the Flood of 1916 with the Flood of 2024 that resulted from Hurricane Helene. This topic was a most timely one since the residents at Highland Farms had also experienced the impact of the hurricane.

PHC Historian Nancy Midgett offered a presentation in November based on another exhibit, Montreat and Missions. These programs will continue on a quarterly basis.

## Inauguration of a Book Club

In September, the first meeting of the PHC's new Book Club discussed Anne Chesky's book, *Murder at Asheville's Battery Park Hotel: The Search for Helen Clevenger's Killer*.

The October meeting, led by Ann Vinson, addressed, *Subversive: Christ, Culture, and the Shocking Dorothy L. Sayers* by Crystal Downing.

On November 18, Don W. King led the discussion of his book, *Inkling, Historian, Soldier, and Brother: A Life of Warren Hamilton Lewis*.

The January 20, 2026, selection is *The Sky Above: An Astronaut's Memoir of Adventure, Persistence and Faith*. Author John H. Casper will lead this discussion. The club is free and open to the public.



Visitors gather at the PHC to watch footage of the floodwaters rising and receding in Montreat.

## Increased Visitation

This year the PHC has seen a significant increase in visitors, primarily as a result of the exhibit on the impact of Hurricane Helene in Montreat. Priscilla Hayner donated hours of video footage taken the morning of September 27, 2024, showing the rapid rise of Flat Creek and its devastating impact. Visitors can experience that morning through an 18-minute video and additional pictures and quotes that show not only the immediate impact, but also the short-term and long-range recovery. The exhibit will run through the end of 2025. A digital version of the exhibit is now available at [www.phcmontreat.org/exhibits](http://www.phcmontreat.org/exhibits). Other major exhibits include the *The Gospel in Rev. John Mack Walker's Wood Carvings, Missions & Montreat*, and *Presbyterians in the Swannanoa Valley*.

## Distinguished Lecture on the Reformation

The PHC continued its annual Distinguished Lecture on the Reformation with Dr. Crystal Downing, a renowned scholar on the work of C. S. Lewis. A featured speaker in the 2019 C. S. Lewis Symposium, Dr. Downing's topic was "From Wittenberg to Oxford: The Re-formation of C. S. Lewis and Dorothy L. Sayers." As always, Dr. Downing was extremely well received. Her talk was recorded and can be viewed on the PHC's YouTube channel.

## Board Adopts New Strategic Plan

At its November meeting, the PHC Board adopted a new Strategic Plan to take the PHC into the next decade. A Strategic Plan Visioning Team was formed earlier this year, focusing on the future of the PHC. The team developed new Mission and Vision statements along with Core Values and Strategic Priorities. Priorities moving forward include increasing financial strength, communicating PHC's work in new and innovative ways, expanding educational offerings for wider audiences, building partnerships, and enhancing PHC facilities. Contact [info@phcmontreat.org](mailto:info@phcmontreat.org) if you would like a copy of the plan or to learn more about it.



# Presbyterians at the Battle of Kings Mountain

The Battle of Kings Mountain on October 7, 1780, marked a turning point in the Revolutionary War that was crucial in winning American independence. Taking place on the border of North and South Carolina, the battle pitted American Patriot militia against a Loyalist force led by British Major Patrick Ferguson. What made this engagement particularly significant was the overwhelming presence and critical role of Scots-Irish frontiersmen, who were largely Presbyterians, in securing a resounding Patriot victory.

## The Scots-Irish

These descendants of Scottish Presbyterians who had settled in Ulster (Northern Ireland) and later migrated to America, had developed a strong tradition of self-reliance, resistance to centralized authority, and rugged frontier living. In the colonies, they had settled in the backcountry of Pennsylvania, Virginia, the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Georgia—areas often neglected by colonial and British authorities alike. Their frontier experiences, fending off attacks and surviving in isolated conditions, made them skilled marksmen and determined fighters.

## A British Ultimatum

By 1780, the southern campaign had taken a dire turn for the Patriot cause. British victories at Charles-town and Camden had left much of South Carolina in Loyalist hands. Major Ferguson issued a provocative ultimatum: local Patriots were to lay down their arms or face destruction. This threat roused the fiercely independent and predominantly Scots-Irish frontiersmen of the Appalachian backcountry.



*1863 engraving depicting the death of British Major Patrick Ferguson at the Battle of Kings Mountain. Artist Alonzo Chappel, Engraver Charles Henry Jeens. Courtesy Brown University.*

## The Overmountain Men

In response to Ferguson's threat, a loose coalition of frontier militia, known as the "Overmountain Men," mobilized. These men, primarily from present-day Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina, were overwhelmingly Scots-Irish in origin. Leaders—including Isaac Shelby, John Sevier, William Campbell, Joseph McDowell, and Benjamin Cleveland—rallied up to 1,400 men, most of whom mustered at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River (near Elizabethton, Tennessee) on September 25, 1780. From there, they began a grueling march over the Appalachian Mountains to confront Ferguson's force.

They were farmers and settlers who carried their own weapons and supplies. Their motivation came not from allegiance to the Continental Congress, but from a determination to protect their families, homes, and freedom from British tyranny.

## The Battle

On October 7, a detachment of about 900 Overmountain Men, riding on horseback, caught up with and surrounded Ferguson's Loyalist force at King's Mountain. Though the Loyalists held high ground, their defensive position proved vulnerable to the guerrilla tactics and sharpshooting of the Patriot militia. The backwoodsmen surrounded the ridge and advanced in waves, firing from cover and then retreating when charged, a method adapted from hunting.

The fighting was intense but brief—lasting about an hour. Ferguson was killed while trying to break through Patriot lines, and the Loyalist resistance collapsed. The victory revitalized the Patriot cause at a time when morale was low and defeat seemed imminent. The courage and determination of the Overmountain Men helped set the stage for the final American victory at Yorktown a year later.

# Trillium Circle Legacy Society Has Strong Start



During the summer, the PHC announced the formation of the Trillium Circle, a planned-giving opportunity. The Trillium Circle is made up of supporters who commit to making a current or legacy gift of \$10,000 or more to the PHC Endowment Fund.

The PHC Endowment Fund is a perpetual fund, meaning the fund's principal is never touched. Annual earnings from the Fund are available to the PHC for exhibits, programming, and operating expenses.

Donors enjoy knowing their gifts will extend far beyond their own lifetimes, providing the PHC with a strong financial foundation and ensuring a future for generations to come.

The Trillium Circle has had a strong start since its inception in the summer. Twenty-eight family units have become Trillium Circle Founding Members. They were recognized recently at a special luncheon (pictured above).



During the luncheon, each family was presented with a commemorative specially-commissioned Trillium Circle pottery bowl (pictured above). The beautiful pottery was made by a North Carolina potter of NC-sourced clay.

Founding memberships will continue through October 2026, with new members being inducted at the Trillium Circle's 2026 annual meeting and receiving the meaningful commemorative pottery bowl. To learn more about the Trillium Circle, email the PHC at [info@phcmontreat.org](mailto:info@phcmontreat.org) or call 828.669.6556.

## Trivia Time!

One young "Overmountain Man" remembered of the aftermath of the Battle of Kings Mountain:

*"The dead lay in heaps on all sides, while the groans of the wounded were heard in every direction. I could not help turning away from the scene before me, with horror, and though exalting in the victory, could not refrain from shedding tears."*

Col. William Campbell commanded 910 Patriot soliders at the Battle of Kings Mountain. Major Patrick Ferguson's Loyalist troops numbered about 1,125 soliders.

Casualties for British troops were estimated to be 157 killed, 163 wounded, and 698 captured. American casualties were much lower--28 men were killed and 62 wounded.

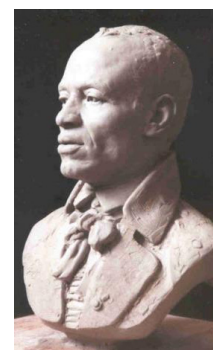
**How many American soliders were captured by Loyalist troops?**

Email your answer to [info@phcmontreat.org](mailto:info@phcmontreat.org).

## Summer 2025 Trivia Answer

**Q.** Who was the first ordained African-American Presbyterian minister?

**A.** John Chavis



**Congratulations to Laura Spangler for winning the prize drawing.**

Contact us at  
[info@phcmontreat.org](mailto:info@phcmontreat.org)  
to claim your prize.



# Support the 2025 Heritage Fund Annual Campaign

This year was a year of remarkable recovery for the Presbyterian Heritage Center and all of Montreat from Hurricane Helene. The PHC led the way in documenting the Helene event and opened a fascinating “Stories from the Storm: Hurricane Helene in Montreat” exhibit that, along with other new exhibits, resulted in record attendance at the PHC this year.

The PHC also contributed to healing and bringing the Montreat community together with special events and programs. Next year will be very exciting as we move past Helene into a promising future. Among other things, we will unveil a new Strategic Plan that orients the PHC towards transforming lives with storytelling grounded in Christ-centered Reformed traditions.

We will launch a new website with more content and capabilities, which will expand the reach and impact of the PHC. We will also open a brand-new exhibit on the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in honor of the 250th anniversary of the United States.

The Presbyterian Heritage Center needs your financial support this year and every year. We receive virtually all of our operating funds from the contributions of individuals like you who give to our Heritage Fund annual giving campaign. Your contributions to the Heritage Fund campaign enable the PHC to keep our doors open and fulfill our special mission to collect, preserve, and share historical materials and narratives that inspire learning, connection, and the growth of Christ’s Kingdom.

Many people do not realize that the PHC serves all Presbyterian and Reformed denominations. The PHC is independent and does not receive support from any Presbyterian denomination or from the Montreat Conference Center.

Please prayerfully consider making a gift to the Heritage Fund prior to December 31st. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included with this issue to make your contribution as easy and convenient as possible.

The PHC is qualified by the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization. Your contributions to the Presbyterian Heritage Center are tax deductible as allowed by law. Various types of donations that provide you with tax advantages, including contributions of appreciated stock and donations of Qualified Charitable Distributions from IRAs, are welcomed and can easily be accommodated. Our EIN is 56-2462726.

Please feel free to contact Development Committee chair Mason Blake at 321-720-8989 if you have any questions regarding these tax advantaged donations.

## 2025 Heritage Fund Giving Levels

### Heritage Society

☐ \$25,000+

### Calvin Society

☐ \$10,000 - \$24,999

### Knox Society

☐ \$5,000 - \$9,999

### Witherspoon Society

☐ \$2,500 - \$4,999

### Tartan Circle

☐ \$1,000 - \$2,499

### Kirkin Circle

☐ \$500 - \$999

### Celtic Circle

☐ \$100 - \$499

### Friend of the PHC

☐ \$1 - \$99

### To give to the Heritage Fund:

- Mail a check to the PHC at PO Box 207, Montreat, NC 28757
- Make a tax-free Qualified Charitable Deduction from your IRA
- Donate at [www.phcmontreat.org/give](http://www.phcmontreat.org/give) or scan the QR code:



**Thank you for your support and generosity!**



*Lila Ray and Anne Chesky spoke to a group at Highland Farms in September.*



Presbyterian Heritage Center  
PO Box 207  
Montreat, NC 28757



# *Christmas Tea*

Please Join Us for Food & Fellowship on  
Wednesday, December 3, 2025 from 3:00pm - 5:00pm

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Presbyterian Heritage Center  
318 Georgia Terrace, Montreat