

The Herald

Vol. 18, No. 1

Spring 2026

PRESBYTERIAN HERITAGE CENTER MONTREAT

Updating Our Look

The PHC recently completed a strategic plan, giving direction for the next five years. In tandem with the planning, staff and board members began a process of updating our public “look”-- how we present ourselves in all communications. While we were intent upon maintaining our Scottish heritage and 20 years of recognition, we knew it was an opportunity to update and refresh our presence while reflecting new direction commensurate with the new strategic plan. It also gave us an opportunity to boost our digital capabilities and improve our public connections.

A New Logo

How will you see this update? With this newsletter, we are delighted to introduce it to you. The new logo can be seen in the upper left corner of the newsletter. We maintained the Celtic cross and colors from the old logo, but added a nod to the Montreat gate arch as well as our beautiful Blue Ridge mountains in the background, reflecting our “place” in WNC. The newsletter masthead is a new clean look, and we’ve adopted new type styles here as well as in all our communications.

PHC Introduces New Look



The PHC's new website launched in Spring 2026.

A New Website

Another major application of our “refresh” is our website. It has been completely reworked-- not only what you see on the screen but also what’s “behind the curtain!” We are excited about the look and functionality of the website since it is our most public face. It is easier to navigate, contains significantly more information, and provides access to a vast library of our archives. Check it out at www.phcmontreat.org.

The refreshed look will be a part of every form of communication, including brochures, e-newsletters, flyers, signage, and even nametags and stationery.

We hope you appreciate the new look and website as much as we enjoyed developing them. Let us know by emailing info@phcmontreat.org.

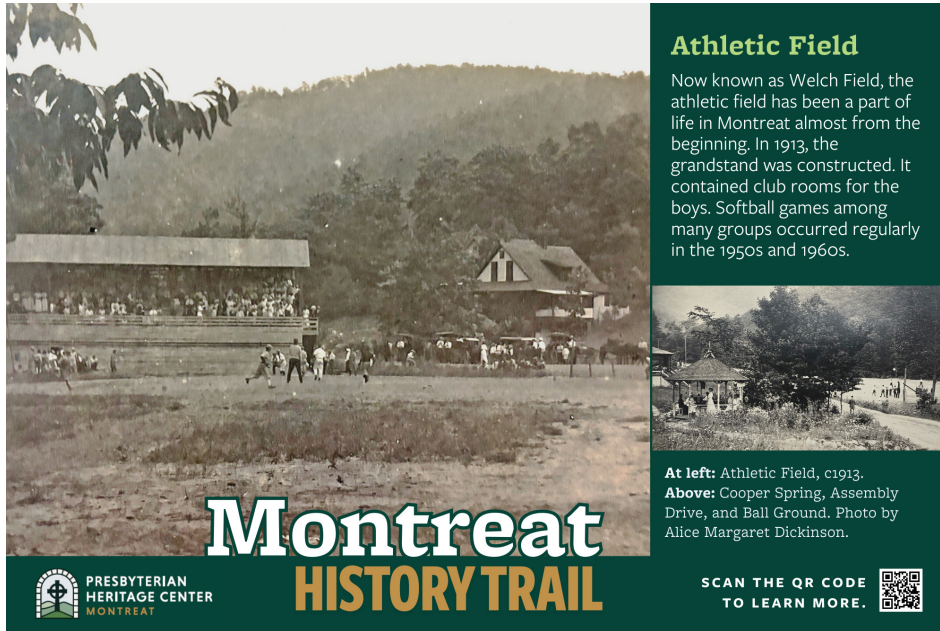
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Montreat's first gate, c1910.

New Outdoor Exhibit Coming Soon



Athletic Field

Now known as Welch Field, the athletic field has been a part of life in Montreat almost from the beginning. In 1913, the grandstand was constructed. It contained club rooms for the boys. Softball games among many groups occurred regularly in the 1950s and 1960s.



At left: Athletic Field, c1913.
Above: Cooper Spring, Assembly Drive, and Ball Ground. Photo by Alice Margaret Dickinson.

Residents and visitors walk this path every day, passing sites with remarkable stories they may never have heard--the first livery stable, a hotel lost to fire, a long-gone golf course, and much more. The History Trail brings those stories to life right where they happened, turning an everyday walk into a journey through time.

Companion Exhibit

A companion exhibit inside the Heritage Center will offer an even deeper look at the early history of Montreat and the beautiful cove in which it sits, with additional artifacts, photographs, and stories drawn from our archives.

Together, the trail and the exhibit are designed to reach people of all ages and backgrounds--including many who may never have visited the Heritage Center before. We hope both will spark curiosity, build a deeper appreciation for this remarkable place, and invite everyone to explore Montreat's past in a whole new way.

A draft of one of the 12 Montreat History Trail signs that will be installed soon along the paved pathway that runs from the Montreat Gate to Lake Susan.

Walk Through History

This summer, the Presbyterian Heritage Center is launching the Montreat History Trail--a free, outdoor exhibit along the paved path on Assembly Drive from the Montreat Gate to Lake Susan.

Twelve informational signs will line the route, each featuring archival photographs showing what stood on that very spot more than a century ago. A short description accompanies each image, and visitors who want to dig deeper can scan a QR code on their phone for a richer story.

The PHC is looking for sponsors for Montreat History Trail signs. If you are interested in sponsoring a sign, please contact Executive Director Anne Chesky by emailing director@phcmontreat.org.

Mark Your Calendar

Tuesday, April 21 @ 2pm

Book Club: *Dwelling Place* with author Erskine Clark

Tuesday, May 19 @ 2pm

Book Club: *The First American Declaration of Independence* with PHC Director Anne Chesky

Wednesday, May 20 @ 2pm

Exhibit Opening: Were Mecklenburg's Presbyterians the First to Declare Independence?

Saturday, July 18 @ 2pm

Annual Ice Cream Social

Friday, October 23 @ 7pm

Distinguished Lecture on the Reformation by Dr. Mark Valeri

Wednesday, December 9 @ 3pm

Annual Christmas Tea



PHC Ice Cream Social, 2025.

More events will be announced as they are scheduled.

Check www.phcmontreat.org for the most up-to-date information.

All events are free and open to the public.

2025 PHC Annual Report

Your generosity makes everything we do at the PHC possible.

Because of you, we preserved and grew our collections, opened new exhibits, and welcomed researchers and visitors from around the world.

History comes alive when people have access to it--and your gifts ensure that the story of Presbyterian faith remains available to

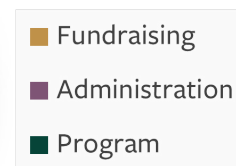
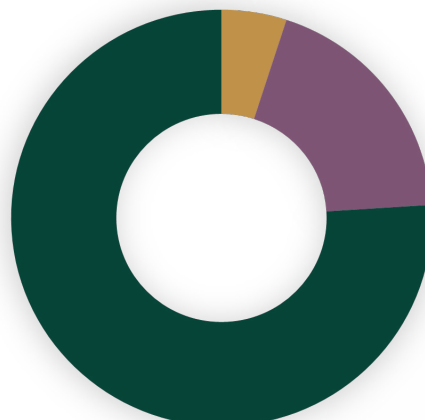
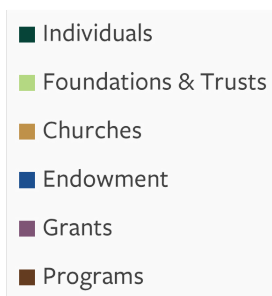
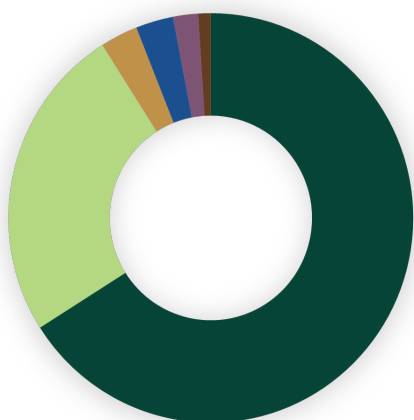
scholars, families, congregations, and curious visitors, whether they walk through our doors or connect with us digitally.

This work matters. And so does your commitment to it.

On behalf of our staff, board, and everyone who engaged with our work this year, thank you for your faithful partnership. We look forward to sharing more in 2026.



2025 Income and Expense



The Trillium Circle Founding Members

Led by 28 inaugural members (made up of individuals and couples), The Trillium Circle was formed in October of 2025 to promote and recognize legacy giving to the PHC Endowment Fund. We will continue to recruit founding members of The Trillium Circle in 2026, with a goal of having fifty founding members by the time of The Trillium Circle's annual luncheon meeting in October.

Call Mason Blake at 321-720-8989 for information on membership.

- John & Anne Akers
- Hugh & Jane Alexander
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Amy & Mason Blake
- Karen & Tommy Brown
- Gill & Martha Campbell
- Scotty & Karna Candler
- Dixon & Dody Cunningham
- Sue Diehl
- Rusty & Betty Douglas
- Kitty Fouche
- Beth Fountain
- Rick & Sally Giles

- Catherine Harkey
- Tim & Mimi Helms
- Nancy Midgette
- William & Sheri Pender
- Harriss & Wendy Ricks
- Peggy & Bill Scheu
- Steve & Eloise Shepherd
- Gene & Judy Shuford
- Julia & Mark Sibley-Jones
- Kay & Dennis Stockdale
- James & Letta Jean Taylor
- Alva & Ida Whitehead
- Tom & Katie Widmer
- Charles & Nancy Thomas Wofford

2025 Endowment Fund Donors

The PHC Endowment Fund has grown to \$500,000 over the last few years, providing a strong base for the PHC's future. As the fund grows, it ensures that the PHC can continue to fulfil our important mission.

Hugh & Jane Alexander
John & Anne Akers
Anonymous
Amy & Mason Blake
Scotty & Karna Candler
Christ Community Church, Montreat
Dixon & Dody Cunningham

Beth Fountain
Scott & Judy Gregory
Steve & Eloise Shepherd Foundation
Julia & Mark Sibley-Jones
Kay & Dennis Stockdale
Alva & Ida Whitehead
Charles & Nancy Thomas Wofford

2025 Heritage Fund Donors

Heritage Society

RC & SG Anderson Foundation
Anonymous
Cousins Foundation
James & Letta Jean Taylor

Knox Society

James & Laura Alexander
Amy & Mason Blake
Scotty & Karna Candler
Newton & Jacqueline Clark
Dixon & Dody Cunningham
Bill & Julia Lake Dudley
First Presbyterian Church Foundation,
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Kitty Fouche
Montreat Presbyterian Church
Thomas Moody Estate
Preservation Society of Asheville
& Buncombe County
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Tom & Katie Widmer

Witherspoon Society

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Powell & Caren Jones
E.G. Lassiter
Lawrence & Anita Maxwell
Margaret Roberson
Steve & Eloise Shepherd Foundation
Gene & Judy Shuford

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John & Anne Akers
Patricia Box
Mark & Diane Boyd
Robert & Mary Ann Brearley
John & Beth Casper
Frank & Mitzi Cooper
Dan & Ellen Dean
Joan Deifell
Sue Diehl
Lucy Dusthimer
First Presbyterian Church, Greenville
David & Cindy Fouche
Grier Family Foundation
Rose Ann Gant
Rick & Sally Giles
Catherine Harkey
Mary Knight
Montreat Cottagers
Lillian McKay
Robin & Brinkley Melvin
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Sally Richardson
Phyllis Sadler
George & Gayle Sawyer
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Jane Scott
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The David & Willa Grace
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Susan & Otey Walker
Carlton Wilde
Charles & Hope Wilson
Gay & Ken Wynne

Kirkin Circle

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John & Agnes Asman
Elizabeth & Skeet Ayscue
Bell Cook Family Foundation
Alan & Jane Belsches
Douglas J. Collins
John & Amy Crane
Martha Sharp Crossman
Rusty & Betty Douglas
Howard Edington
Curtis & Maggie Elliott
Donald & Sherri Erwin
Alec & Sheila Fraser
Tom & Clare Frist
Ruthie & Ken Gibbs
James & Elizabeth Henderson
Holly & Harry T Jones
Richard & Cheryl Keefer
Alice Lentz
James McClanahan
Mary Margaret & Larry McNeill
Mollie Moore
Lalla Overby
William & Sheri Pender
Martha Jane Petersen
Ashton & Suzanne Phelps
Woods Potts
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John & Anne Rogers
Kenneth & Linda Shortridge
William Sibley
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Laura & Thomas Spangler
William & Anne Straughan
John & Karen Vann
Margaret Wade
Donald & Alanna Wildman
Delle Blount & Steve Wilson
Dr. Pat & Mary Jane Woodward

Celtic Circle

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Mark & Kat Achtemeier
Henry & Mell Ackerman
Eade & Jane Anderson
Barry Anderson
Anonymous
Frank Arnold
Doug Baldwin
Kevin Balmer
Warren & Edna Banes
David & Marcia Barstow
Ann Bell
Suzanne Benton
Milton Bigger
Charles & Nancy Blakely
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Robert Cunningham
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Jane Shelton Dale
Carolyn Darden
William DuBose
Jeannie & Richard DuBose
Eddie & Trish Edwards
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Women (Florence)
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Margaret Fouse
Sandra Freeland
Corise & Robert Gambrell
Jean Gettys
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Michael Goldrick
Scott & Judy Gregory
Vivian Guthrie
William & Judith Hair
Kenneth & Patricia Hamilton

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Phyllis Wertime
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Robert & Sue White
Perrin & Mary Jo Wright
Bob Wynne

Friend of the PHC

Thomas & Anita Adams
Sarah Alexander
Asheville History Club
Nancy Beaver
Carter & Katharine Blaisdell
Jere Bowden
Elizabeth Bryan
Deborah & John Burgess
Vivian Calcote
Stephen Clark
Ed & Katrina Crawford
Thomas & Peggy Currie
Robert Dunn
Peggy Evans
Martha & Tom Farmer
First Presbyterian Church,
Women (Caruthersville)
Gerald George
Keith Grogg
Tim & Mimi Helms
Sara Jackson
Marcy Jarvis
David & Margaret Kennedy
Alvin Lippitt & Jean Muench
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John & Ann Myhre
Presbytery of the Peaks
Sally Rogers
Tobin & Katherine Savage
Carole Shaw
John & Emily Sprague
James & Nancy Vest
Peggy & Jim Williamson
Martha Wilson

Some 2025 Highlights at the PHC



Over 3,500 people visited, with particular interest shown in the exhibit, Hurricane Helene in Montreat.



PHC volunteers made and scooped more than 400 cups of ice cream for the Ice Cream Social.



The PHC's new Book Club met throughout the fall--often with the author in attendance.



More than 25 Hurricane Helene survivors joined our summer writing classes with Lauren Graeber.



PHC staff and volunteers hosted numerous groups for programs in the museum and library.



Dr. Crystal Downing spoke on Dorothy Sayers and C.S. Lewis at the PHC's Annual Distinguished Lecture.



The Rock Hoppers entertained the crowd at our Annual Summer Ice Cream Social.



The PHC Mission Committee hosted a luncheon in the library for more than 50 retired local missionaries.



Over 100 people attended our Annual Christmas Tea, filling the PHC library with cheer and baked goods.

Support the 2026 PHC Heritage Fund

Please consider giving to the PHC this year to support our valuable programs.

To give:

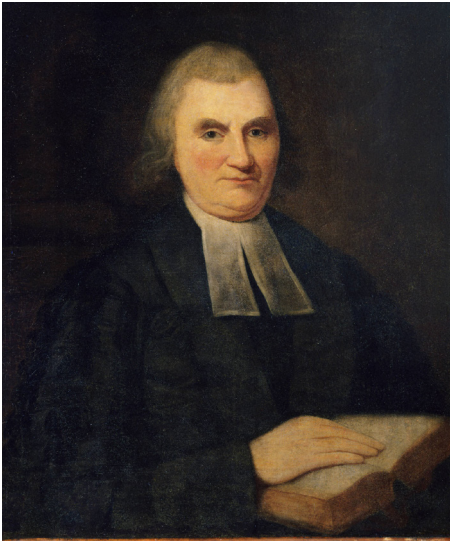
- Mail a check to the PHC, PO Box 207, Montreat, NC 28757
- Make a QCD from your IRA
- Donate online at www.phcmontreat.org



I'd like to support the PHC in the amount of:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage Society
\$25,000+ | <input type="checkbox"/> Tartan Circle
\$1,000 - \$2,499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calvin Society
\$10,000 - \$24,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Kirkin Circle
\$500 - \$999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knox Society
\$5,000 - \$9,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Celtic Circle
\$100 - \$499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Witherspoon Society
\$2,500 - \$4,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend of the PHC
\$1 - \$99 |

John Witherspoon in Scotland



John Witherspoon by Charles Willson Peale.

During this 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Presbyterians remember Scottish-American Presbyterian minister, educator, and statesman John Witherspoon (1723–1794). We focus on the “American” chapters of his life, during which he served as president of the

College of New Jersey--now Princeton--and was the only clergyman to sign the US Declaration of Independence.

Witherspoon’s innovation and leadership at Princeton helped shape American higher education and the moral philosophy of the emerging US.

He played a central role in the formation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA). He was the convening moderator of the First General Assembly of the PCUSA in 1789 in Philadelphia.

But what we often overlook is the role Witherspoon played in the development of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland during the 18th century, before he was persuaded to come to America.

During that period, disputes arose between conservative “evangelicals” and liberal “moderates.” Witherspoon was a leader of the evangelicals, but he did not advocate for schism nor did he reject all Enlightenment thought.

Within Scotland’s 18th-century Church, Witherspoon was:

- A consolidator of evangelical resistance within the establishment.
- A defender of confessional Calvinism against the more liberal reform sought by the moderate party.
- An intellectual bridge between Reformed theology and Enlightenment philosophy.

To read more about John Witherspoon and the Church of Scotland, visit our website, www.phcmontreat.org.

Remembering Henry Neale

The PHC has lost one of its dearest friends and foremost leaders, Dr. Henry W. Neale. Henry was a mainstay of the PHC’s leadership. He was an active member of the Board of Directors and served on the PHC Executive Committee. Henry also served as Chair of the Development Committee for many years and continued to play a leadership role on the committee until his death.

We are indebted to Henry not only for his contributions to the PHC but for his extraordinary and storied service to the Montreat community as a whole.

Henry was a graduate of Davidson College and the Medical College of Virginia. His professional career was legendary. He founded the University of Cincinnati Medical Center Division of Plastic Surgery in 1974, developed its residency program, and served as its Chief until his retirement in 2003. The extremely long list of his professional accomplishments includes serving as Chairman of the American Board of Plastic Surgery.

The PHC will forever be grateful for Henry’s important and staunch support for the institu-



tion and its future. We are also grateful for his Christian example. We will miss his straightforward counsel, his bright smile, and his constant care for others.



PRESBYTERIAN
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Collection Spotlight



Arrival of the Shepherd, 1985

Rev. Walker's Toolbox

Between 1943 and 1997, Rev. Dr. John Mack Walker carved 64 wooden sculptures. As his art progressed, he began composing original layouts, sometimes adapting an idea to a specific block of wood. The sculptures often reimagined Biblical figures in more contemporary settings.

In his 1985 carving, *Arrival of the Shepherds*, Rev. Walker included a personal element--a carving of his toolbox. This toolbox is now part of PHC's collection.



Trivia Time

How many of Rev. Walker's sculptures are part of the PHC's permanent collection? Email your answer to info@phcmontreat.org.



See all the carvings in the PHC's exhibit, *The Gospel in Appalachian Wood Carvings*.

Trivia Time Answer (Fall 2025)

Question: How many American soliders were captured by Loyalist troops during the Battle of Kings Mountain?

Answer: None.

Congratulations John Buchanan for winning last edition's prize drawing. Email info@phcmontreat.org to claim your prize.