

First UCC News

December 2025



First UCC Mission Statement

*"To grow in faith, love and fellowship
as we serve God and all of our community."*

DECEMBER SCRIPTURES

December 7, 2nd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

December 14, 3rd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

December 21, 4th Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7

Christmas Eve, December 24

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-12
John 1:1-14

Christmas Day, December 25

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20

December 28

Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

December 31, New Year's Eve

(Watch Night)
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-46



- 2 6:30 p.m. Circle 6 Meeting
- 3 5:30 p.m. WOW Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 7 **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
11:00 a.m. Worship with Communion
at Catawba Chapel
12:45 p.m. Pizza lunch and decorate First
Church Horah Street
- 8 5:00 p.m. Circle 7 Meeting
- 9 10:30 a.m. Meals on Wheels Deliveries
- 10 5:30 p.m. WOW Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 11 11:30 a.m. Primetimers
1:00 p.m. Mission Committee Meeting
6:00 p.m. Finance Committee Meeting
- 14 **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
11:00 a.m. Worship at 1st UCC
4:00 p.m. Property Committee Meeting
- 16 1:00 p.m. Bless These Stitches
- 17 5:30 p.m. WOW Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 21 **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
11:00 a.m. Worship at 1st UCC
- 23 10:30 a.m. Meals on Wheels Deliveries
- 24 **CHRISTMAS EVE**
7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
- 25 **CHRISTMAS DAY**
- 28 11:00 a.m. Worship at First UCC
- 31 **NEW YEARS EVE**



First United Church of Christ is re-envisioning its future!

This fall, we'll be worshiping at the Omwake-Dearborn Chapel on the campus of Catawba College as we explore the possibility of making this location our permanent home. The pilot program will run through the end of the year, with a congregational vote scheduled to decide whether to pursue conversations with Catawba College about making the move permanent. The pilot program will run through the new year, and we'll come together as a congregation to make a decision about this exciting opportunity.

Talking Points about the Pilot Program this fall

Have a hard time answering questions about the Pilot Program? Wondering how to explain the move to Catawba for the fall? We've put together a list of "talking points" about the program and the plans for the next couple of months. We're encouraging members to reach out to friends and neighbors and invite them to experience worship in the Catawba Chapel! Feel free to reach out to the Transition Team if you have any questions.

First Church is re-envisioning the future!

A Transition Team has been working together since May.

Rev. Anne Tambling joined us in August as our intentional interim pastor in order to help us consider who we've been, who we are, and where we're going in the future.

The big idea that's emerged: What if First Church moved to Catawba?!?

Sharing chapel space, musicians, and resources for serving the community could open new opportunities for both the college and the church!

We can imagine engaging with faculty, staff, and students in rich ways!

To test the idea, we'll worship in Catawba's Chapel Oct 26 - Dec 7.

Join us!

We'll continue to meet in Catawba's Chapel each Sunday at 11:00am through Dec 7.

We'll return to Horah St for the rest of Advent, Christmas, and New Year's and ponder together whether "First Church at Catawba" is a compelling vision for the future.

If you have questions or suggestions for the Transition Team, we invite you to contact one of the members. Concerns and suggestions are welcome at any time.

Greg Alcorn	Dan Mikkelson	Carolyn Cline	Larry Bolick	Rev. Anne Tambling
Lynn Bernhardt	Larry Walser	Robert Propst	Ken Clapp	
Don Whitfield	Mark Schiemann	Kimberly Nelson	Phyllis Little	
Lynn Bernhardt				



As we enter this Advent season, we also remember that giving is an expression of our gratitude and faith. If you feel led to give today, you may place your offering in the **offering plate located in the center of the chapel**, or you can give electronically by using the **QR code provided above**.

Your generosity makes a real difference. Every gift—large or small—helps support the ministries of our church, care for those in need, and share Christ's love in our community. Thank you for giving faithfully and joyfully.

We are truly grateful for your continued support!

Worship Schedule for Fall 2025

Worship in the Catawba Chapel at 11:00 AM

Dec 7 Second Sunday of Advent
Dec 7 Hanging of the Greens

Worship at First United Church of Christ 207 Horah Street at 11:00 AM

Dec 14 Third Sunday of Advent
Dec 14 Pilot Program Question and Answer Meeting
Dec 21 Fourth Sunday of Advent
Dec 21 Christmas Caroling
Dec 24 Christmas Eve Service
Dec 28 Sunday Worship
Jan 4 Congregational Vote to move Worship Services to Catawba
Jan 11 Last day of Horah Street



Desiree Artz, Brenda Bernhardt, Tyler Bernhardt, Rev. David Crook, Gerri D. Crummett (Donna Odrosky's sister), Maggie Derby (great granddaughter of Jim Weaver), Emily Faust, Emily Hauze (Linda Hauze's daughter-in-law), Cathy Hedrick (John Marion's sister), Jim Lyerly, John Marion, Shirley McNeil, Eddie Meeker, Evan Moreno, Dan Morgan, Patsy Paxton, Paul Paxton, Glenda Shrewsbury, Patty & Mark Shuping and family, Tom Troutman, Barbara Waller, Waylon Ward, Don Whitfield, Janette Yost.

If you know of anyone who should be added or removed from our prayer list, let the office know.

December Primetimers

Christmas Luncheon

**THURSDAY
December 11
11:30 a.m.**

Please let the church office
or Larry Bolick know if
you plan to attend.



ONE CHURCH ONE CHILD STAR GIFTS

The deadline for returning
Star Gifts will be Sunday,
December 7.



REMINDER

WORSHIP
Sunday December 7
at Catawba Chapel
11:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 14
Through January 11
11:00 a.m.
at First UCC

Wednesday, December 24
Christmas Eve Service
7:00 p.m.

at First UCC



*A heartfelt thank you
for your well wishes on
the onset of my retire-
ment. I am very grateful
for the wonderful
friends and relationships
I have made throughout
my years at First UCC.*

Sue Legendre



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

7:00 p.m.



"...WHEN THEY SAW
THE **STAR**,
THEY WERE FILLED
WITH **JOY**..."
MATTHEW 2:10

Donate to The Christmas Fund

Your care and compassion will make a tangible difference
in the lives of our ministers, church workers, and their
families in need.

 Donate Online Here!

 www.christmasfund.org 

For over one hundred years, The Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to United Church of Christ ministers, church workers, and their families. Last year, over 1,800 congregations joined together to secure the physical, financial, and spiritual health of those engaged in the life of the Church.

Receiving The Christmas Fund this year ensures more ministers, church workers, and their families receive the loving support of the Church in their moment of deepest need. The Christmas Fund will be received by First UCC on December 21 and 24 during Worship. You may also use the bar code to the left to donate directly to The Christmas Fund online.

To learn more about the Christmas Fund:
[The Pension Boards - PBUCC - The Christmas Fund](#)



Key Dates



December 7	Final 2025 Worship Service at Catawba Chapel Second Sunday of Advent
December 7	Decorate First UCC After Catawba Worship
December 14	Return to First UCC for Third Sunday of Advent
December 21	Fourth Sunday of Advent at First UCC
December 24	Christmas Eve Service at First UCC
December 28	Worship at First UCC

WOW Wednesday Bible Study ... All are Welcome!

WOW Bible Study will meet Wednesday, December 3 at 5:30 pm in The Lilly Center Coffee House. We will view ACTS Video on "Saints Around the Edges." On Wednesday, December 10 at 5:30 pm, we will return to the First UCC Fellowship Hall to conclude ACTS Video "This Changes Everything." Bring food to share, canned goods for The Blessing Pantry and a willingness to participate. In January 2026, WOW Bible Study will begin a Bible Study on "Romans."

First UCC 5-Alive Fund



Christmas has always been about celebrating - family gatherings, giving and receiving gifts.

As Christmas approaches, many in our area will need a helping hand, a *generous* helping hand, to bring the necessary food, toys, gifts, and joy to their homes. With your donation to First UCC's 5-Alive Fund and the fund's monthly support of Rowan Helping Ministries, we will be able to help serve and feed the hungry, distribute groceries through RHM's three food programs, provide meals for food insecure students, shelter the homeless, and so much more.

This Christmas, your help will make the holidays of many families and individuals in need warmer and brighter. Thank you for considering a financial gift to the 5-Alive fund to help our neighbors in crisis.

Bless These Stitches

Those in the Bless These Stitches group have been working not just at our meetings but at home as well. There are lots of knitted and crocheted items on the shelf outside the office that are ready to go to their new homes. Christmas is coming right up and one of these crafts would make a great gift. If you know someone who would benefit from this mission, who needs to know that someone is thinking of them and praying for them, please take a comfort item and deliver it to them as an extension of our ministry. If you are planning on something for your personal use or for a gift, a donation is appreciated. There is a suggested price list posted in the area. Donations are used to purchase more yarn to further the ministry.

Our ministry now includes adding hats and scarves to our blessing pantry during these cold winter months. If you knit or crochet, want to learn, or just want to share fellowship with other needleworkers, join us on the third Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m.!

The next meeting will be on December 16.

Primetimers

The Primetimers hosted Mt. Zion UCC Joy Club on November 13 with about 15 of their members and their Pastor Jim Simonds who had devotions and shared his faith journey that brought him into being a UCC minister. A delicious meal of a variety of soups, sandwiches and desserts were shared, prepared by Carolyn Cline, Sarah Schiemann, Flo Peck and Joyce Trexler. Thanks to all those who helped to prepare the meal and clean up afterwards.

The Primetimers will meet on Thursday, December 11 at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall for a catered meal from Mykonos Grill in Salisbury. We will order Authentic Chicken Souvlaki (two chicken skewer plate with Greek Salad) for \$12.00 per person. We will have a program on "Christmas Carols and Christmas Traditions." Please let Larry Bolick (828-612-8146) know if you plan to attend by Monday, December 8.

Mission Committee

Thank You letters were received from CWS and UCC Global Ministries for the sponsorship of the CWS Hygiene Kits Assembly Party (144 Kits) and \$288 for the shipping fee, donated by Primetimers.

The Mission Committee is the recipient of a First Foundation Grant on November 9 for \$1500, equally divided for RHM Food Pantry, RHM Shelter Meals, CISRC School Supplies, CWS Kits and the Blessing Pantry items (\$300 each).

We will continue to stock the Blessing Pantry as long as we have the financial resources, donations and own the property at 207 West Horah Street. Larry Bolick stocked the Pantry in October, Rebecca Wrights in November and Linda Hauze in December for a total of \$160 reimbursement each month.

The Mission Committee is sponsoring 30 Star Tree Gifts for One Church One Child in December. Gift bags need to be returned to the church by Monday, December 1 to be delivered on December 2. Thanks to all who donated \$30 per Star Gift Cards or Gift Bags.

The Mission Committee will sponsor Study Time Care Packs for Catawba Students who have been helping and attending services in the chapel during the Pilot Program. The cost is \$15 per pack/per student. If interested in donating a Study Time Pack (\$15 each), please contact Larry Bolick, 828-612-8146 by November 30 and reimburse him directly. The Study Packs will be delivered on Monday, December 1 to student's residence or campus mailbox.

The Mission Committee will also sponsor a RHM Shelter Meal on Tuesday, December 23 from 5:30 – 8 pm. Dr. Ken Clapp will coordinate food purchases and supervise volunteers to prepare and serve the meals. Please let Larry Bolick (828-612-8146) know if you can volunteer or prepare a dessert for the meal.

The next Mission Committee Meeting will be following Primetimers on Thursday, January 9, 2026 at 1:15 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

BLOWING ROCK CONFERENCE CENTER 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Blowing Rock Conference Center celebrated 75th Anniversary of operation, beginning in 1950 after the Hughes Estate was purchased in 1945 by the Southern Synod of the E & R Church. Those attending from First Church members and friends were Edith and Larry Bolick, Ken Clapp, Joshua Jarrett, Glenda, Caleb and Charles Shrewsbury. A 75th Anniversary Quilt was presented with significant dates like the term of Edith and Homer Bonds as Seasonal Managers of Blowing Rock Assembly Grounds from 1950-67, and Ken Clapp as fulltime Executive Director of BRAG 1979-89. Larry Bolick served on the Board of Directors from 2015-2020 and chair the Board from 2018-20. Today, Ted Wilson served as the Executive Director from 2017 to present. He was on staff 10 years prior to his being named Ex. Dir. and has a wealth of experience with BRCC. The Century Club has been renamed "Rooted Together" Club for donors and contributors of the mission and ministry of BRCC. The four upcoming annually sponsored events of BRCC are Winter Youth Retreat, January 16-19, 2026, Retired Servants Retreat, May 3-6, Special Days Camp, June 23-26, and Bluebird Family Fiddle Camp, June 28-July 5. All donations to BRCC may be mailed to P. O. Box 2350, Blowing Rock, NC 28605. For the past several years, BRCC has been recipient of First Foundation Grants since residents of Rowan Country attend the Special Days Camp each year.

Take a Blessing, Leave a Blessing, Be a Blessing

A Blessing Pantry has been placed on our church property as an outreach to the neighboring community. It is located near the driveway into the parking lot on Church Street, just north of Monroe Street.

Members of the Mission Committee continue to monitor the box and add items at least once a week, but demand is great and it is usually emptied in a couple of days.

Popular items include:

- Canned meats (chicken, tuna, ham, Spam)
- Healthy soups
- Beef stew
- Chef Boyardee canned meals
- Pop Tarts are appreciated
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Peanut butter
- Dehydrated foods like noodles, cereals, and dry beans
- Personal care products, including baby wipes
- Inexpensive can openers for cans without pop-tops



Excluded items include those in glass packaging and fresh items that are perishable in the weather conditions.

How can you help?

Bring your contributions to the church during office hours. This bin will distinguish items intended for the Blessing Box from donations for the Little Red Wagon and Rowan Helping Ministries.

You can also add items directly to the box.

Or make a monetary contribution to help the Mission Committee to keep the pantry supplied.

Thank you in advance for supporting this important effort to be an active presence in our neighborhood every day of the week!

—Linda Hauze for the Mission Committee

Little Red Wagon

Please continue to bring food items for the Rowan Helping Ministries Food for Thought Backpack Program on Sundays to Catawba Chapel. There is a bin in the vestibule for these food items which will be collected weekly. Items may also be dropped off at the First UCC Church office during office hours..

Suggestions include:

- Mac & Cheese cups
- Canned ravioli or franks & beans
- Cereal cups (individual serving size)
- Oatmeal
- Pudding cups
- Fruit cups
- Granola bars



Glory to God
in the highest.
and on earth peace,
good will toward men.

Luke 2:14, KJV