

Sunday, September 6, 2026

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost



WELCOME

First Christian United Church of Christ Mission Statement
(Revised February 4, 2024)

First Christian United Church of Christ in Burlington, North Carolina opens wide its doors to all who hunger for God and God's righteousness. It seeks to provide rest for weary spirits, comfort for troubled hearts, and to inspire all to follow Jesus Christ in unselfish service to humankind. We, in the spirit of Jesus' great commandments, commit to love God and our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:28-34) and follow Paul's teaching of acceptance of one another (Romans 14:1-15: 13).

We believe that all people are created in God's image and are blessed and loved equally by God. We welcome with respect, and nurture with intention, the gifts of all who come to us on the journey of faith and seek eternal salvation under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. We welcome everyone to join us in the life and leadership of our family of faith, and in our ongoing commitment as an Open and Affirming Congregation. The people of First Christian United Church of Christ are dedicated to always being a welcoming and loving church; a "House of Christian Fellowship for ALL people."

WORSHIP MATTERS

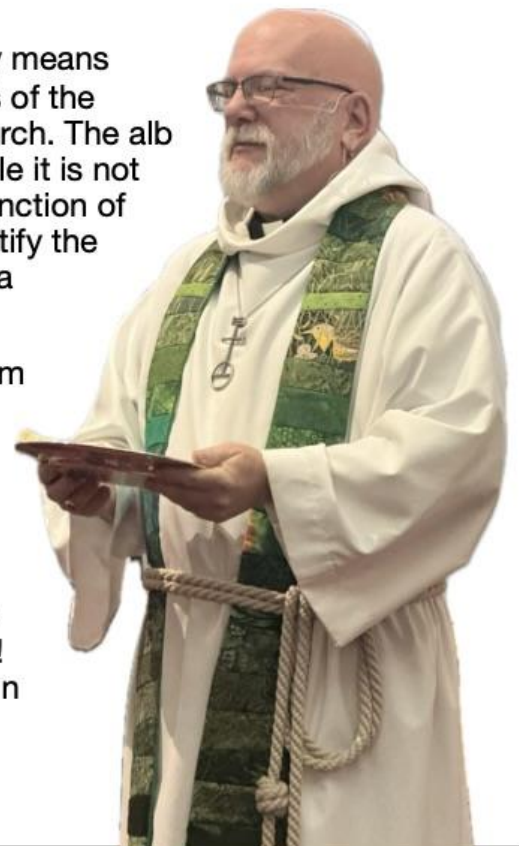
"Mommy, why is that man wearing a big white dress?"

The "Big White Dress" in question is called an alb, which simply means "white." (It's from the Latin *albus*.) As with many of the symbols of the liturgical churches, the alb is a nod to the early first-century church. The alb evolved from the simple garments from the Roman Empire. While it is not required for Protestant clergy, it does serve to distinguish the function of the minister when worn. It is a distinctive garment, worn to identify the minister, serving much the same function as a uniform. It is not a symbol of authority, it is a symbol of function.

The cloth around the pastor's neck is a "stole." (Once again, from the Latin *stola*.) It developed from the scarf of office worn by Roman officials, and today serves as an indicator that the wearer is an ordained pastor. As such, it is considered to be symbolic of the "yoke of service" entrusted to clergy. Usually the stole is the color of the liturgical season or occasion.

The rope around the pastor's waist is the "cincture," or belt. It's really just that, a belt to keep the Big White Dress under control! (Mine is part of my monastic habit and represents my life vows in the Order of Saint Luke.)

Pastor Stephen



The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

September 6th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The night is nearly spent; the hour has arrived to wake from sleep.

People: We wipe the dust of apathy from our eyes and turn our faces toward the dawn.

Leader: Lay aside the well-worn garments of cynicism, exhaustion, and despair.

People: We will put on the armor of light and clothe ourselves in the radical love of Christ.

Leader: The daylight of God's realm is at hand. Let us worship.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus"*

The Hymnal #477

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: We are remarkably skilled at pulling the covers over our heads, mistaking our comfortable numbness for actual peace. Yet grace will not leave us slumbering in our complicity. Trusting the mercy that relentlessly meets us at the edge of night, let us speak the truth of our lives together.

People: Holy God of the waking dawn, we confess that we prefer the dim, quiet corners of avoidance to the blinding noon of your justice. We wrap ourselves in fatigue, insisting the world cannot change, while quietly accepting the privileges built on its fractures. We leave our debts of love unpaid; we treat our neighbors as abstractions rather than our own kin. Strip away our heavy, defensive armor.

Wake our slumbering spirits, forgive our lingering shadows, and dress us afresh in the vulnerable, disruptive grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Leader: Hear the good news that interrupts every lingering shadow: God does not wait for us to wake up before offering grace. In Jesus Christ, the night is broken, our debts are settled in love, and you are clothed in unearned, unending mercy. Stand upright, breathe deeply, and live in the daylight.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Romans 13:8-14

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM Psalm 119:33-40

Leader: Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, and I will observe it to the end.

People: Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.

Leader: Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.

People: Turn my heart to your decrees and not to selfish gain;

Leader: be gracious to me according to your word.

People: Confirm to your servant your promise, which is for those who fear you.

Leader: Turn away the disgrace that I dread, for your ordinances are good.

People: See, I have longed for your precepts; in your righteousness be gracious to me.

GLORIA PATRI: (#759 NCH)

**All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.**

ANTHEM *At The Table of the Lord*

by J. Althouse

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 18:15-20

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: "OOTD"

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS AT THE TABLE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Response

Leader: Lord, wake us to your justice... **People: ...clothe us in your love.**

THE MINISTRY OF GENEROSITY

DOXOLOGY

***ALL: Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.***

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

THE COMMUNION PRAYER (*see insert*)

THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

One: In the confidence of those who walk in the light, let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Pastor: Come, the table is prepared.

*(The congregation, as they are able, proceeds to the table to commune by intinction.
Those who are unable to walk will be served at their seats.)*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Our Savior Jesus Christ keep and preserve you to everlasting life.

Let us pray:

**All: God of grace, you have fed us at this table not to lull us back to sleep,
but to nourish us for the daylight. Send us out with minds clear, hands
ready, and our whole lives wrapped in the radical garment of your love.
Amen.**

THE COMMUNITY GOES INTO THE WORLD

**HYMN OF DEDICATION: "Take Time To Be Holy"*

The Hymnal #441

*BENEDICTION

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

*The Altar Flowers are given in celebration of
Ben & Irene Terrell's 83rd wedding anniversary.*

*Love,
Lauren, Matt & Benji*

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday, September 7th

Labor Day: *Office is Closed*

Tuesday, September 8th

Centennial Circle at 5:30 pm

Sunday, September 13th

HOMEcoming

(Please RSVP by placing your invitation card in the offering plate)

*If you'd like to invite any special guests, call the office with their address.

Monday, September 14th

Official Board Meeting at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, September 15th

Margaret Lightbourne Circle at 11:00 am
(We will be collecting 13-gal trash bags to help with the Church's ongoing Mission project for Allied Churches)

Tuesday, September 29th

Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm

Ongoing Mission Project

We will be collecting 13-gallon trash bags to help Allied Churches.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office Hours

Monday - 9am – 12pm

Tuesday – 9am – 12pm

Wednesday - 9am – 12pm

Thursday - 9am – 12pm

Friday - closed

Serving in our Armed Forces

CPT Kirk Workman

James Barnwell

Dalton Anthony Jones, Ensign US Navy

(Family of June & Dotti)

Notes

Inspired by something said in the word or sung in a song today? Take a moment to write it here to remember later.

Our Love and Prayers

Please remember all our sick, at home members, others in need of our prayers, and those in our area hospitals in your prayers this week.

Buster Freeman

Nell Allred

Amber Massey

Joe Strickland

Ross Strange Sr.

Trisha Shelly

Ray Palyok

(Matt's Step-Father)

Lewis Fowler

Shawn Hooks

(Matt's Nephew)

Brenda Grogan

The Family of Patty Howey

(Charlie Vitou's Niece)

Holly Bent

Nanci Isley

(Friend of Sherry Massey)

Jon & Judy Kipp

Betty King & Roger King

Blake Jones

June Sellars

Nancy Hughes

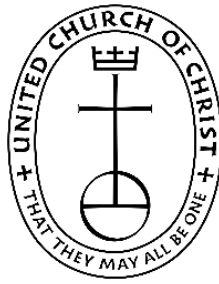
(Trish Ball's Mother)

Darla Bray

Eleanor Lovgren

Dana Matherly

(Terry Ragland's daughter)



Church Officers

President: Jamie Fonville
Vice President: Cindy Sharpe
Treasurer: Judy Kipp
Assistant Treasurer: Julie Miller
Secretary: Matt Rice

Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL
pastorfcucc@gmail.com / 336-276-0374
Organist/Choir Director: Matt Rice
Custodian: Rodney Paul
Office Administrator: Debbie Norris
(Office Hours: Monday to Thursday 9 -12pm)

Worship Participants

Liturgist: Beth Painter
Hymn Leaders & Anthem: Choir
Greeters: Benjie Terrell & David Hodges
Ushers: Benjie Terrell, Julie Miller, Charlie Vitou, Eleanor Lovgren