

Sunday, July 12, 2026

The Seventh 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."

To All God's beloved...who are called to be saints... -Romans 1.7

To be a saint is to be sanctified;
set apart for a sacred purpose.
That would be you.

Every breath of your life is for a sacred purpose:
to shed light, to radiate God's love.

You don't have to be influential,
or pious, virtuous or pure.
You have to be yourself.

The You of you is what God has made holy.
You are God's beloved.

All you have to do is act like it.
Everything you do today is an opportunity
to embody God's love,
not by your effort or skill,
but by the love you embody.
The light of God is in you.
Be transparent to it.

*Steve Garnaas-Holmes
Unfolding Light*

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

July 12th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The Sower goes out to sow, casting seed with a sort of reckless, beautiful extravagance.

People: Not saving it just for the perfect places, but letting it fall everywhere.

Leader: On the hard-packed paths of our daily routines, and among the thorns of our anxieties.

People: On the rocky ground of our doubts, and into the deep, ready soil of our hopes.

Leader: Come, whether you feel like a thriving garden or a concrete sidewalk today.

People: The love of God is scattered generously here. Let us worship God.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "I Sing The Mighty Power of God"*

The Hymnal #59

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: In the economy of the Divine, nothing is wasted, and no ground is written off as completely hopeless. We tend to be harsh judges of our own lives – measuring our productivity, cataloging our distractions, worrying about our thorns. But confession is not a courtroom; it is simply a moment to look honestly at the soil of our lives and invite the rain. Let us pray together.

People: Merciful God, we admit that our lives are often complicated landscapes. There are days when we are deeply receptive, and days when the worries of this world grow so high and thick they choke out our best intentions. We confess that we get tired, and sometimes our hearts harden like a path walked on just a few too many times. Forgive us when we lose our capacity for wonder, or when we assume your grace is only meant for the pristine, perfect places. Loosen the soil of our hearts today. Remind us that you never stop throwing good things in our direction, even when we are too distracted to notice. Amen.

Leader: Hear this good news: The Sower does not look at the rocks or the thorns and decide to skip over us. God's grace is distributed with a magnificent, almost comical lack of efficiency. You are loved, you are forgiven, and you are constantly being renewed.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 55:10-13

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God!

RESONSIVE PSALM from Psalm 65:1-8

Leader: Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed,

People: O you who answer prayer! To you all flesh shall come.

Leader: When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us, you forgive our transgressions.

People: Happy are those whom you choose and bring near to live in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple.

Leader: By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

People: By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might.

Leader: You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples.

People: Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

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.**

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:1-11

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God!

VIDEO ANTHEM *God So Loved*

by Matt Rice

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"Huh?"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "Breathe on Me, Breath of God"*

The New Century Hymnal #292

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Response: "...**Hear our prayer.**"

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.

THE MINISTRY OF GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY

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 COMMUNITY GOES INTO THE WORLD

**HYMN OF DEDICATION: "Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer"*

The New Century Hymnal #18

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday, July 13th

Official Board Meeting at 6:00 pm

Sunday, July 26th

Christmas in July Worship Service

Tuesday, July 28th

Deacon Meeting at 6:00 pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Regular 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
Carolyn Wolley / Family
Dave Smudski / Family
The Family of Susan Horne

Brenda Grogan
Rodney Paul Sr.
Holly Bent
Nanci Isley
(Friend of Sherry Massey)
Curtis Foster
Jon & Judy Kipp
Betty King & Roger King
Troy Marquardt
Blake Jones
June Sellars
Nancy Hughes
(Trish Ball's Mother)



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: Madison Byrd
Hymn Leaders & Anthem: Choir
Greeters: Benjie Terrell & David Hodges
Ushers: Benjie Terrell, Julie Miller, Charlie Vitou, Eleanor Lovgren