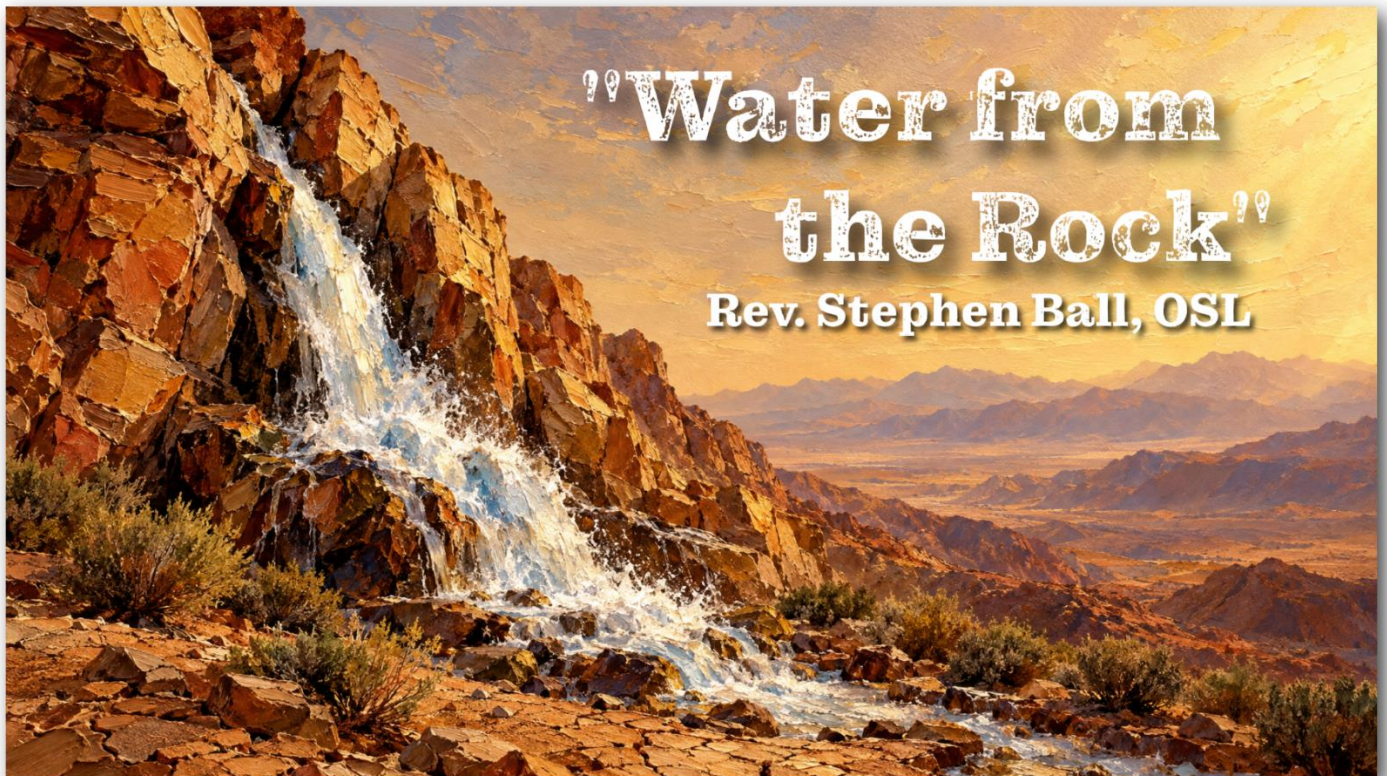


Sunday, September 27, 2026

The Eighteenth 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

Every Sunday, we follow a three-year pattern called the Revised Common Lectionary. Think of it like four distinct storylines released at different times, in vastly different genres, all mysteriously converging on the very same Sunday morning.

The Hebrew Scripture (First Lesson): The Roots. This is our collective backstory. It is poetry, crisis, wilderness wanderings, and deep human wrestling. Without it, we lose the plot. We are not a people who dropped out of the sky yesterday; we stand on ancient, dusty ground.

The Psalm: The Human Sigh. Right after that first story we pause with a psalm. The psalms are prayer, poetry, lament, and occasionally screaming into the void. If the sermon is the monologue, the psalm is the audience participation where we remember God can handle our rawest feelings.

The Epistle (Second Lesson): The Group Chat. Written mostly to messy, squabbling, little house churches trying to figure out how to love each other. It answers the question: *Now that resurrection has cracked open the world, how on earth do we share our lunch and get along on Tuesday?*

The Gospel: The North Star. In the life, radical hospitality, and table-flipping grace of Jesus, we believe God's heart is most clearly shown. Everything else we read this morning bends toward this light.

We read for texts because life is too multifaceted for just one angle. We gather up the ancient memory, the heartfelt prayer, the messy community advice, and the story of Jesus—and somewhere in the collision of those four voices, we listen for a still-speaking God whispering directly into our lives.

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

September 27th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We come here from dusty, crowded weeks, parched for something real.

People: We bring our honest thirst, our worn-out patience, and our quiet doubts.

Leader: In the dry stretches of our lives, we wonder aloud if God is truly among us.

People: Yet even from solid flint, grace finds a way to spring forward.

Leader: Come, bring your questions and your dry throats.

People: Let us worship the Living God who meets us in the arid places.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "God the Omnipotent"*

The Hymnal #33

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: It does not take long in the dry heat for fear to turn our neighbors into adversaries. When the water skins run empty, our instinct is to grumble, point fingers, and demand proof on our own terms. Let us lay down our defenses and speak the plain truth about ourselves together.

All: Gracious and Patient God, we confess that anxiety makes us short-sighted. Like our ancestors in the desert, the moment our supplies dwindle, we forget every kindness that carried us to this day. We turn on our companions. We stockpile our grievances. We demand signs instead of offering trust, asking if you are among us or not. Forgive our panic and our small faith. Strike the stone of our stubborn hearts, draw forth the water of repentance, and help us drink deeply of your mercy. Amen.

Leader: God does not answer our panic with abandonment, but with an open spring. The rock is struck, the water pours out, and grace is given before we even learn to ask politely. Hear and trust the good news: in Jesus Christ, you are forgiven and sustained.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 17:1-7

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM Psalm 78

Leader: Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.

People: We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD and his might and the wonders that he has done.

Leader: In the sight of their ancestors he worked marvels in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan. He divided the sea and let them pass through it and made the waters stand like a heap. In the daytime he led them with a cloud and all night long with a fiery light.

People: He split the rocks open in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. He made streams come out of the rock and caused water to flow down like rivers.

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: Philippians 2:1-13

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need*

by V. Thomson

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:23-32

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"Water from the Rock"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "O For a Thousand Touns"*

The New Century Hymnal #42

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Congregational Response:

Leader: Lord, in your mercy...

People: ...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

DOXOLOGY

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: "I Love to Tell The Story"*

The New Century Hymnal #522

***BENEDICTION**

People:.....Amen

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, September 29th

Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm

Saturday, October 3rd

Alamance CROP walk at 9:00 am
(registration starts at 8:30 am at the
Trinity Worship Center)

All are welcome to participate in the walk
or contribute financially.

Sunday, October 4th

World Communion Day

John Graves Sunday School at 9:30 am
(Studying the book of Mark)

All are welcome!

Monday, October 5th

Margaret Lightbourne Circle at 11:00 am
(Guest speaker, Ann Russell on
Morrowtown Community Gardens)

Monday, October 12th

Official Board Meeting at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, October 13th

Centennial Circle at 5:30 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

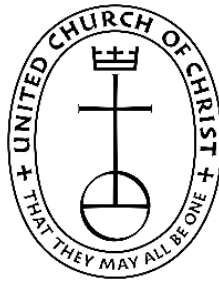
Dana Matherly

(Terry Ragland's daughter)

Pete & Jane Pate

(Family of Jamie Fonville)

Joy McPhail



Church Officers

President: Jamie Fonville
Vice President: Cindy Sharpe
Treasurer: Vacant (*Julie M. acting Treasurer*)
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: Judy Kipp
Hymn Leaders & Anthem: Choir
Greeters: Benjie Terrell & David Hodges
Ushers: Benjie Terrell, Julie Miller, Charlie Vitou, Eleanor Lovgren