

Sunday, May 17, 2026

The Ascension of the Lord



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 of Easter

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

May 17th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: People of God! Why do you stand looking into the sky?

People: We are looking for the one who promised to return.

Leader: The clouds have received him, but his Spirit remains among us.

People: We gather to witness the power that descends as the Lord ascends.

Leader: Christ is gone from our sight, yet he is closer than our very breath.

People: Let us worship the One who fills all things in every way.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "Crown Him With Many Crowns"*

The Hymnal #234

ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: It is the great human tragedy that we are always looking in the wrong direction. We stare at the dirt when we should be looking at the horizon, and we stare at the clouds when we should be looking at our neighbor. We cling to the hem of Jesus' garment, trying to hold him back, because we are terrified of what it means to be his witnesses without him standing right next to us. Let us confess our fear and our distractions.

People: Holy God, we admit that we are loiterers on the mountaintop. We stand paralyzed by the majesty of the Ascension, using our awe as an excuse for our inaction. You told us to go to the ends of the earth, but we struggle to even cross the street. Forgive us for wanting a Savior who stays in a box – or a sky – rather than a Lord who sends us into the world. Redirect our gaze from the clouds to the calling you have placed upon our lives. Amen.

Leader: The heavens may be high, but the grace of God is deeper still. The same Jesus who ascended into glory did so to fill the entire universe with his presence – including the dark corners of our own hearts. You are not left orphaned; you are not left condemned. In the name of the Living Christ, you are forgiven. **A men.**

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Luke 24:44-53

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM from Psalm 47

Leader: Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy.

People: For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth.

Leader: He subdued peoples under us and nations under our feet. He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves. Selah

People: God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

Leader: Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.

People: For God is the king of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm.

Leader: God is king over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.

People: The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted.

GLORIA

**All: Glory to you, O Trinity, most holy and blessed;
One God, now and forever. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:15-23

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM *Hymn of Promise*

by Tom Fettke

SCRIPTURE: Acts 1:1-11

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"Why Are You Just Standing There?"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "Best Be the Tie That Binds"*

The Hymnal #286

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Leader: "God, 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.**

CHORAL RESPONSE

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 COMMUNITY GOES INTO THE WORLD

**HYMN OF DEDICATION: "Jesus Shall Reign"*

The Hymnal #231

*BENEDICTION

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday, May 24th

John Graves Sunday School 9:30 am
Worship Service 10:30 am

*UCC Offering
Strengthen the Church*

Monday, May 25th

Memorial Day – Office is Closed

Tuesday, May 26th

Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm

Sunday, May 31st

John Graves Sunday School 9:30 am
Worship Service 10:30 am

*Celebrate Faye Strickland's
100th Birthday*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Regular Office Hours

Monday - 9am – 12pm
Tuesday – 9am – 12pm
Wednesday - 9am – 12pm
Thursday - 9am – 12pm
Friday - closed

John Graves Sunday School Note

Sunday School will be studying the New Testament book of James starting Sunday, April 26th. Please join us!

Serving in our Armed Forces

CPT Kirk Workman

James Barnwell

*Dalton Anthony Jones, Ensign US Navy
(Family of June & Dotti)*

Notes

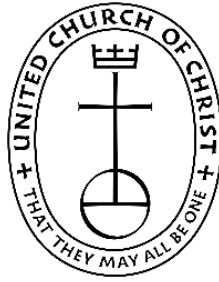
Inspired by something said in the word or sung in a song today? Take a moment to write it here to remember later.

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

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



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