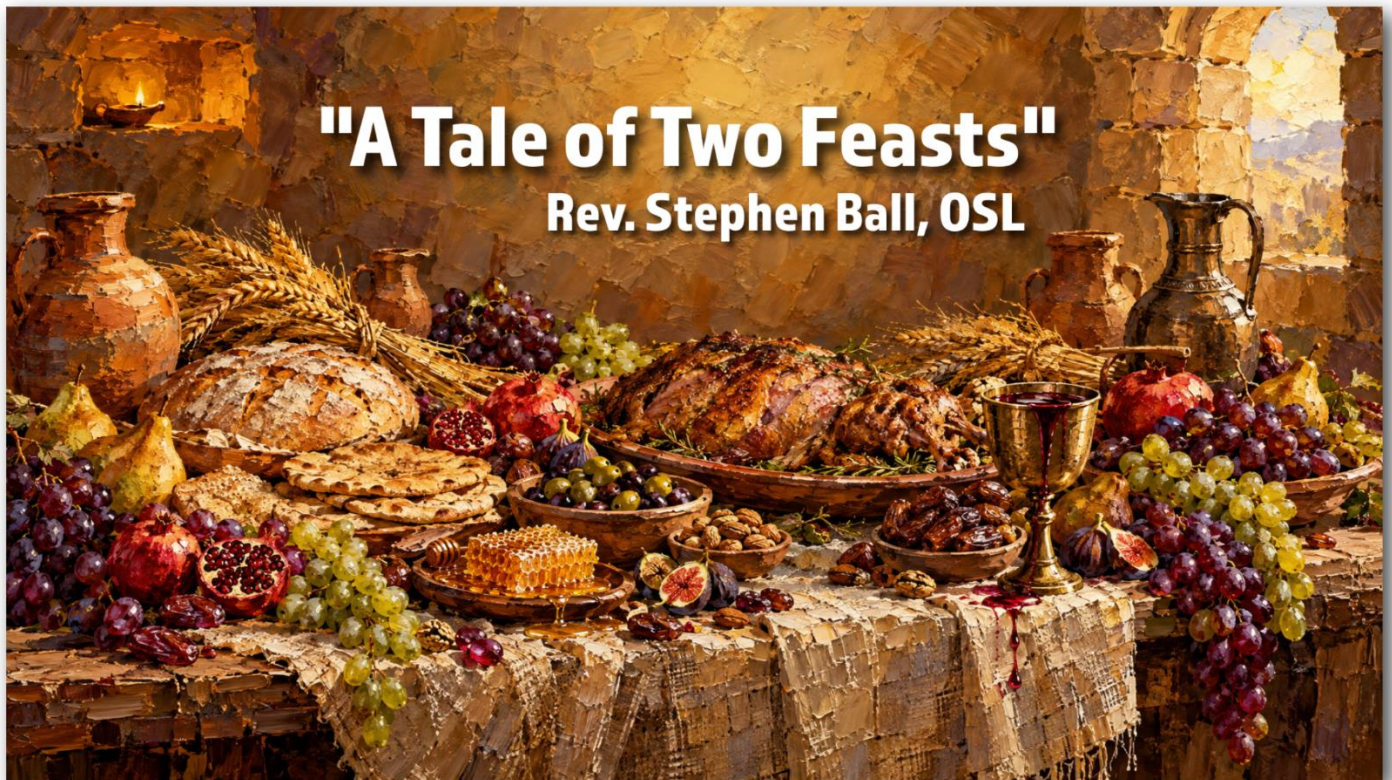


Sunday, October 11, 2026

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost



"A Tale of Two Feasts"

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL



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

On Belonging

Many people assume that joining a church is like a contract: swear to this exact set of doctrinal propositions, nod at the correct intervals, and you too can join the club.

Here in the United Church of Christ, we take a different, slightly more terrifying route. We offer a covenant.

A contract says, *I will fulfill my end as long as you fulfill yours*. A covenant says, *We are in this boat together, even when the wind howls and somebody forgot the oars*. It isn't an ideological purity test. It doesn't mean you must check your intellect at the door or pretend you have life figured out. As the saying goes around here, "God is still speaking,"—which implies the divine conversation isn't wrapped up in neat, leather-bound certainty.

When you become a member here, you aren't purchasing an exclusive backstage pass to grace. Grace was already free. Membership simply means deciding to plant your feet in this specific patch of North Carolina soil, with these specific, wonderfully imperfect people. It means saying: *I'll show up. I'll share the load. I'll let you see my questions, and I'll hold space for yours*. It is an act of quiet, radical shared courage in a culture obsessed with solo flights.

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

October 11th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: On this mountain, the Holy One prepares an extravagant banquet: rich food, well-aged vintage, a feast for all nations.

People: We arrive hungry for justice, parched for grace, carrying the quiet weariness of our days.

Leader: Look around – the heavy shroud that covers all peoples is tearing; death itself is being swallowed up forever.

People: God gently wipes the tears from every face and lifts the burden of disgrace from the earth.

Leader: This is our God, for whom we have waited with aching hearts.

People: Let us rejoice and be glad in this great saving love. Let us worship God!

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "How Firm A Foundation"*

The New Century Hymnal #407

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

People: God of the Great Banquet, forgive us when we prefer the lean scraps of anxiety to the rich fullness of your promise. We confess that we often cling to the very shrouds that bind us – believing that death has the final word, that sorrow is permanent, and that our small reserves must be hoarded against the world. We look away from our neighbor's tears because we can scarcely manage our own. Unravel the woven fabric of our despair. Strip away the pride that isolates us and the cynicism that dulls our hope. Draw us up your mountain, meet us in our deepest need, and teach us once more how to celebrate the victory you have already won. Amen.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

THE FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 25:1-9

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM from Psalm 23

Leader: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

People: He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

Leader: he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

People: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Leader: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

People: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

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.**

THE SECOND LESSON: Philippians 4:1-9

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM *Look at the World*

By J. Rutter

THE GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 22:1-14

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON "A Tale of Two Feasts"

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "What A Friend We Have In Jesus"*

The New Century Hymnal #506

RECEPTION OF MEMBER

Pastor: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the true God.

Pastor: Do you believe in God?

All: I believe in God.

Pastor: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

All: I believe in Jesus Christ.

Pastor: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

All: I believe in the Holy Spirit.

Pastor and Deacon Representatives: Let us, the members of First Christian United Church of Christ of Burlington, North Carolina, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

People: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

Pastor and Deacon Representatives: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, North Carolina, we extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming you into the company of this local church.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Congregational Response:

Leader: God of the banquet, **People: Swallow up our sorrows in your joy.**

**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: "Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing"***

The New Century Hymnal #303

***BENEDICTION**

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday, October 12th

Official Board Meeting at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, October 13th

Centennial Circle at 5:30 pm

Sunday, October 18th

John Graves Sunday School at 9:30 am

(Studying the book of Mark)

All are welcome!

Worship Service at 10:30 am

Sunday, October 25th

Stewardship Sunday

Get your pledge cards in by today!

Laity Sunday

Tuesday, October 27th

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

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)

The Family of Jane Pate

(Family of Jamie Fonville)

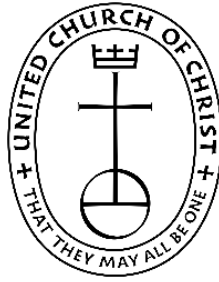
Pete Pate

Joy McPhail

Carol Fonville

The K Family

Anthony Kline



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