



Sunday Worship
November 30, 2025

Hope

First Christian United Church of Christ
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

First Sunday of Advent

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC
10:30 am Worship Service November 30th, 2025

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Some say “hope’ is the thing with feathers;”

People: But we have come to the Lord’s house seeking something more sure, more certain.

Leader: Hope is not a soft word, nor is it a lofty, unattainable ideal.

People: It is as real as a light, shining in a dark room. Come, let us walk by the Lord’s light.

“HANGING OF THE GREENS: SYMBOLS OF ADVENT”

ADVENT WREATH

POINSETTIAS

CHRISMON TREE

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH (HOPE)

Leader: Today we light the first candle, the candle of hope. The light reminds us of Christ’s mission to seek and save those who are lost. In this season of Advent, we look forward with hope to the One who restores, heals, and makes all things new.

God of hope, as we light this candle, fill our hearts with expectation. May we trust in your promises and share your hope with a world in need. Amen.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Leader: Let us silently confess our sins against God and neighbor...
...Hopeful God,

All: Creator of light and darkness, day and night, as we begin this journey of Advent, we confess that we often choose our own paths instead of yours. We choose the way of conflict instead of peace. We seek to build our lives on our own terms, rather than following the foundation you have laid for us. Forgive us, God. Teach us to seek you, even when your way is the harder road. Help us to walk humbly in your light, that we may reflect your love and hope to the world around us. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

Leader: Hear the good news: Jesus Christ came into the world to offer hope in the midst of our darkness. In the name of Emmanuel, God with us, you are forgiven.

PRESENTATION OF THE POINSETTIAS

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "O Come O Come Emmanuel"*

The Pilgrim Hymnal #110

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 2:1-5

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRISMON TREE

SCRIPTURE: Romans 13:11-14

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM "Bring Us Hope"

by Ruth Schram

READING OF SCRIPTURE AND SERMON

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

"Advent Hope"

Pastor: A reading from the Gospel According to Matthew 24:36-44

(scripture reading)

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

People: Thanks be to God!

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks"*

The Celebration Hymnal #135

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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.

CHORAL RESPONSE

THE GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*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: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"*

The Pilgrim Hymnal #103

*BENEDICTION

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

*All who are able to are asked to stand;
May we all lift our spirits into fellowship with God!

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, December 3rd

Finance Meeting at 11:00 am

Sunday, December 7th

Christmas Cheer contributions are due!

Monday, December 8th

Margaret Lightbourne Circle at 11:00 am
*(At Betty King's home. Please RSVP by the
1st week of December. All are asked to
bring a finger food or covered dish)*

Official Board at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, December 9th

Centennial Circle at 5:30 pm

Sunday, December 14th

Congregational Meeting after worship
to vote on the 2026 Budget, Boards, and
Committees

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Regular Office Hours

Monday - 9am – 12pm

Tuesday – 9am – 12pm

Wednesday - 9am – 12pm

Thursday - 9am – 12pm

Friday - closed

Our Love and Prayers

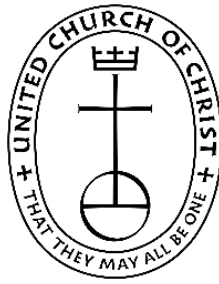
Please remember all our sick, at home members, others in need of our prayers, and those in our area hospitals in your prayers this week.

Serving in our Armed Forces

*CPT Kirk Workman
James Barnwell*

Notes

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



Church Officers

President: Jamie Fonville
Vice President: Cindy Sharpe
Treasurer: Judy Kipp
Assistant Treasurer: Julie Miller
Secretary: Mark Garrison

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