

Sunday, August 9, 2026

The Eleventh 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

Why Are We Doing This Again?

You could have stayed in bed. You could have made coffee, put on your softest sweatpants, and put on a Spotify playlist. That quiet, solitary space—where you talk to God in your pajamas—is **private devotion**. It is vital, beautiful, and deeply necessary for the soul. But that's not what this is.

Corporate worship is the difference between listening to a live album on noise-canceling headphones and standing in a crowded stadium singing the chorus at the top of your lungs with twenty thousand strangers. It's louder, messier, and infinitely more unpredictable.

When we gather in this sanctuary, we engage in **liturgy**. The word comes from the ancient Greek *leitourgia*, which translates quite literally to "the work of the people," not "the performance of the pastor." Worship isn't a spectator sport. It is collective labor. We do everything together. It's work, but it's the best kind of work.

This brings us to **ecclesia**—the Greek word often translated as "church," though it actually means the "called-out gathering." We often say, "I'm going to church," as if this building on a Sunday morning were the final destination. But *ecclesia* reminds us that church is a verb. We are a people called *out* of our individual isolation and called *into* a living community.

We don't gather here to escape the world; we gather to be put back together so we can love it better. Private devotion feeds your individual spirit, but corporate worship transforms us into the hands and feet of God's grace right here in Burlington.

Glad you're here. Now, let's get to work.

The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

August 9th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We do not gather this morning because we have it all figured out, or because our faith is made of iron.

People: We gather because the wind is blowing, and we are looking for solid ground.

Leader: Some of us arrive carrying dust of deep, dark pits – cast down by circumstances, or by those we trust.

People: Some of us arrive soaked to the bone, weary from rowing against relentless waves.

Leader: The Living God does not demand that we pretend to be fearless or pristine.

People: God meets us in the echo of the pit and on the crest of the stormy sea.

Leader: Come. Let us bring our doubts, our trembling courage, and our honest longing to the One who calls us out into the deep.

People: Let us worship the God who holds us, even when we sink.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "All Creatures of our God and King"*

The New Century Hymnal #17

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: Let us be entirely honest with ourselves for a moment. Most of us spend an absurd amount of spiritual and emotional energy trying to look like seasoned sea captains who have it all together while secretly baling water out of our leaky rowboats with a plastic coffee cup.

We pretend we aren't terrified of the storm. We pretend we haven't quietly wished our bothersome neighbors into a pit somewhere out of sight. But grace doesn't require us to maintain the theater of perfection. Grace simply asks us to stop pretending.

So let us drop the pretense, and pray together in honest confession.

People: Holy One, Presence of Grace and Mystery, we confess that we are far more comfortable with safety than with faith. When the storms of life swell around us – when anxiety brews in our communities, when our bodies fail, when the future feels like an angry sea – we cling tightly to

the sides of our cozy little boats. We huddle in the familiar, even when the familiar is suffocating.

Forgive us for the times we have let fear dictate our compassion. Forgive us for the times we have scapegoated our siblings, throwing them into metaphorical pits to protect our own sense of control. Forgive us for mistaking genuine faith for mere mental certainty.

Step into our chaos, Divine Deliverer. Give us the sheer audacity to step out of the boat, to trust Your call, and to remember that when the waters swallow us, Your hand is already reaching into the deep to catch us. Amen.

Leader: Here this good news: Salvation is not a grade on a spiritual final exam. It is not something you earn by producing perfect confidence or flawless belief. *Salvation is God's refusal to let you go.*

Whether you are trapped at the bottom of a dry well or flailing in the middle of a stormy sea, God's grace is already pulling you upward into wholeness and light. You are forgiven, you are known, and you are held in an everlasting, unconditional love. Take a deep breath. You are free. Amen.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 37:1-4, 23-28

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM from Psalm 105

Leader: O give thanks to the LORD; call on his name; make known his deeds among the peoples.

People: Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.

Leader: Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

People: Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually.

Leader: Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles and the judgements he uttered, O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

People: When he summoned famine against the land and cut off every supply of bread, he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who had been sold as a slave.

Leader: His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron; until what he had said came to pass, the word of the LORD kept testing him.

People: The king sent and released him; the ruler of the peoples set him free.

Leader: He made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions, to instruct his officials at his pleasure and to teach his elders wisdom.

People: Praise the LORD!

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 10:11-15

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

VIDEO ANTHEM *Come by Here*

RUACH Quartet

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:22-33

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"Exiting a Perfectly Good Boat"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

*HYMN OF CELEBRATION: *"O Savior, Let Me Walk With Thee"*

The New Century Hymnal #503

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Response: Leader: "Merciful God..."

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

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: *"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"*

The New Century Hymnal #1

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday, August 10th

Official Board Meeting at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, August 11th

Ice Cream Social
(WILL BE RESCHEDULED)

Tuesday, August 25th

Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm

August Mission Project

First Aid Supplies for ABSS and Matt's School at Rockingham County School

- Bandages, assorted sizes
- Sterile gauze pads and rolls
- Adhesive medical tape
 - Antiseptic wipes
 - Instant cold packs
- Non-latex disposable gloves
- Tweezers and small scissors
 - Hand sanitizer
- Plastic size sandwich bags

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office Hours

Monday - 9am – 12pm

Tuesday – 9am – 12pm

Wednesday - 9am – 12pm

Thursday - 9am – 12pm

Friday - closed

New Flooring: August 10th – 21st

New Flooring will be installed in Bray Hall and the 2nd floor Narthex areas. Please know that Sunday Services will continue as normal during installation.

*Please use the Breezeway entrance on the educational side to enter the Sanctuary on August 16th.

**The Elevator will be accessible for those who require assistance.

***During installation the restrooms in the Educational Building will be available for use.

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

Patty Howey

(Charlie Vitou's Niece)

Brenda Grogan

Holly Bent

Nanci Isley

(Friend of Sherry Massey)

Jon & Judy Kipp

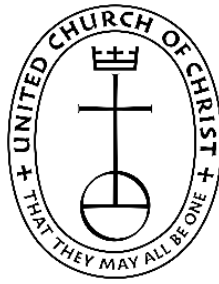
Betty King & Roger King

Blake Jones

June Sellars

Nancy Hughes

(Trish Ball's Mother)



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