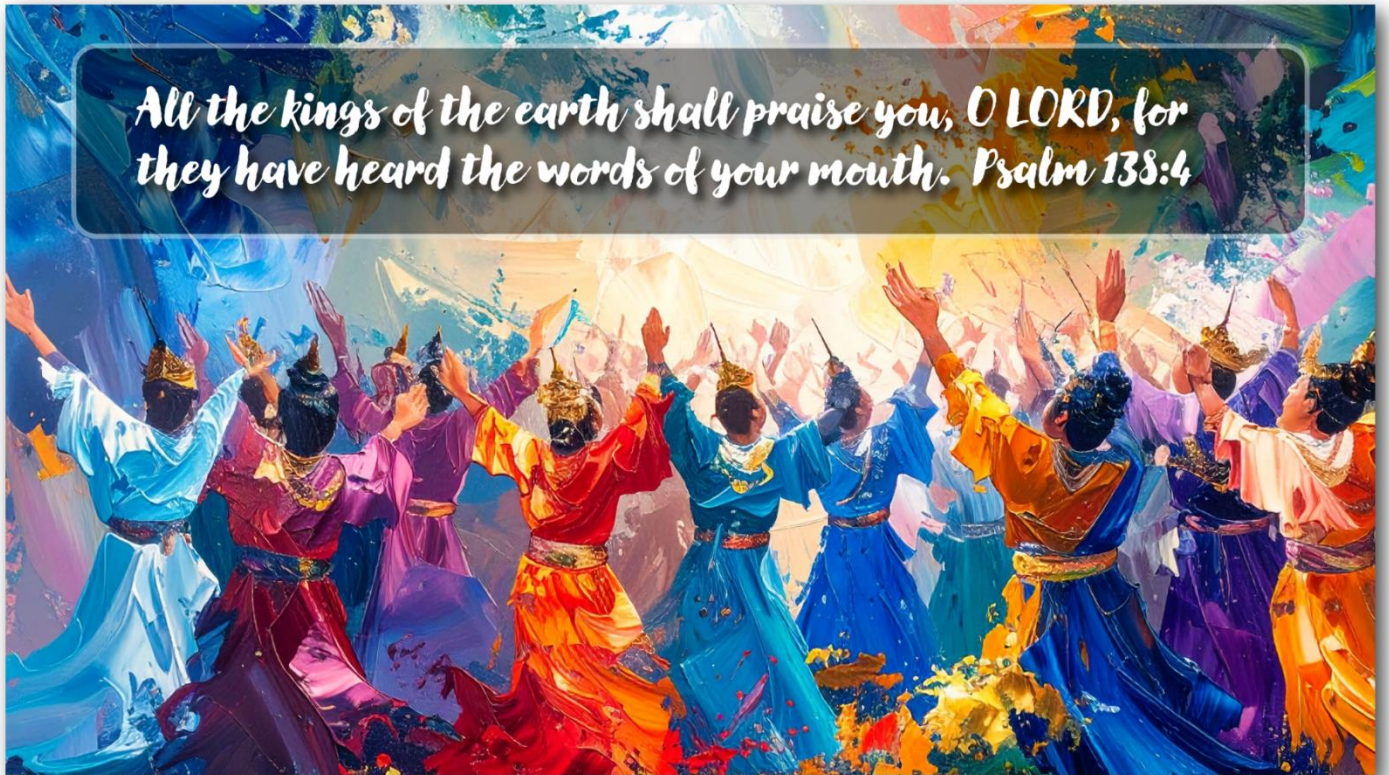


Sunday, August 23, 2026

The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth. Psalm 138:4



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

This morning we are privileged to host Rev. Micah Hardy-Royal as our Guest Minister.

Micah B. Hardy-Royal is a pastor, hospice chaplain, poet, and social justice advocate based in North Carolina.

Micah has a Master of Divinity in Pastoral Care and Counseling from Campbell Divinity School, and has been serving in ordained ministry in various contexts for over 20 years. Micah currently serves as hospice chaplain with Transitions LifeCare, where he has served since 2014 .

Micah has previously served as President of the Eastern NC Association of the United Church of Christ and a founding board member of LILA Latinx LGBTQA Initiative.



The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

August 23rd, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.

People: We come seeking our footing in a world that so often feels like shifting sand.

Leader: Listen! Salvation is not a distant, speculative Hollywood reboot; it is an ancient promise being unfolded right here, right now.

People: We gather to listen, to remember, and to be rebuilt by the God who comforts every wilderness.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "Christ is Made the Sure Foundation"*

The New Century Hymnal #400

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: We are remarkably skilled at self-invention – or at least we like to pretend we are. We wander through our lives like people with amnesia, convinced we dropped from the sky fully formed, owing nothing to the past and accountable to no one in the present. But the prophet Isaiah reminds us that we have roots. Let us confess the ways we have ignored our holy foundation and tried to carve out a life on our own fragile, anxious terms.

People: God of Abraham and Sarah, of ancient quarries and holy foundations, we admit that we are easily distracted by the noise of the moment. We look at a world that feels as though it is unraveling, and instead of trusting your enduring justice, we panic. We confess that we forgot our roots. We trade our deep, ancient righteousness for quick fixes and cheap outrage. Forgive us for our short-sightedness, for our self-reliance, and for our failure to offer the comfort we have so freely received. Dig us out of our cynicism, and set our feet once again upon your everlasting love. Amen.

Leader: Hear the good news from the prophet: Heaven may vanish like smoke, and the earth may wear out like an old coat, but God's salvation will endure forever, and God's deliverance will never be ended. You are not defined by your panic, your mistakes, or your spiritual forgetfulness. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, restored, and anchored to an eternal rock.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 1:8-2:10

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

RESONSIVE PSALM Psalm 138

Leader: I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise;

People: I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

Leader: On the day I called, you answered me; you increased my strength of soul.

People: All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth.

Leader: They shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD.

People: For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he perceives from far away.

Leader: Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

People: The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

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 12:1-8

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

VIDEO ANTHEM *Go Ye Into All the World*

by Matt Rice

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 16:13-20

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"Being Bearers of the Light"*

Rev. Micah Hardy-Royal

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"*

The New Century Hymnal #459

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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: "Onward, Christian Soldiers"*

The Hymnal #479

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, August 25th

Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm

Wednesday, August 26th

Ice Cream Social at 7:00 pm

Sunday, September 13th

HOMEcoming

(Please RSVP by placing your invitation card in the offering plate)

*If you'd like to invite any special guests, call the office with their address.

Tuesday, September 15th

Margaret Lightbourne Circle at 11:00 am

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office Hours

Monday - 9am – 12pm

Tuesday – 9am – 12pm

Wednesday - 9am – 12pm

Thursday - 9am – 12pm

Friday - closed

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

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

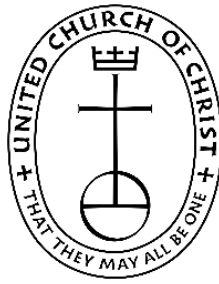
Betty King & Roger King

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