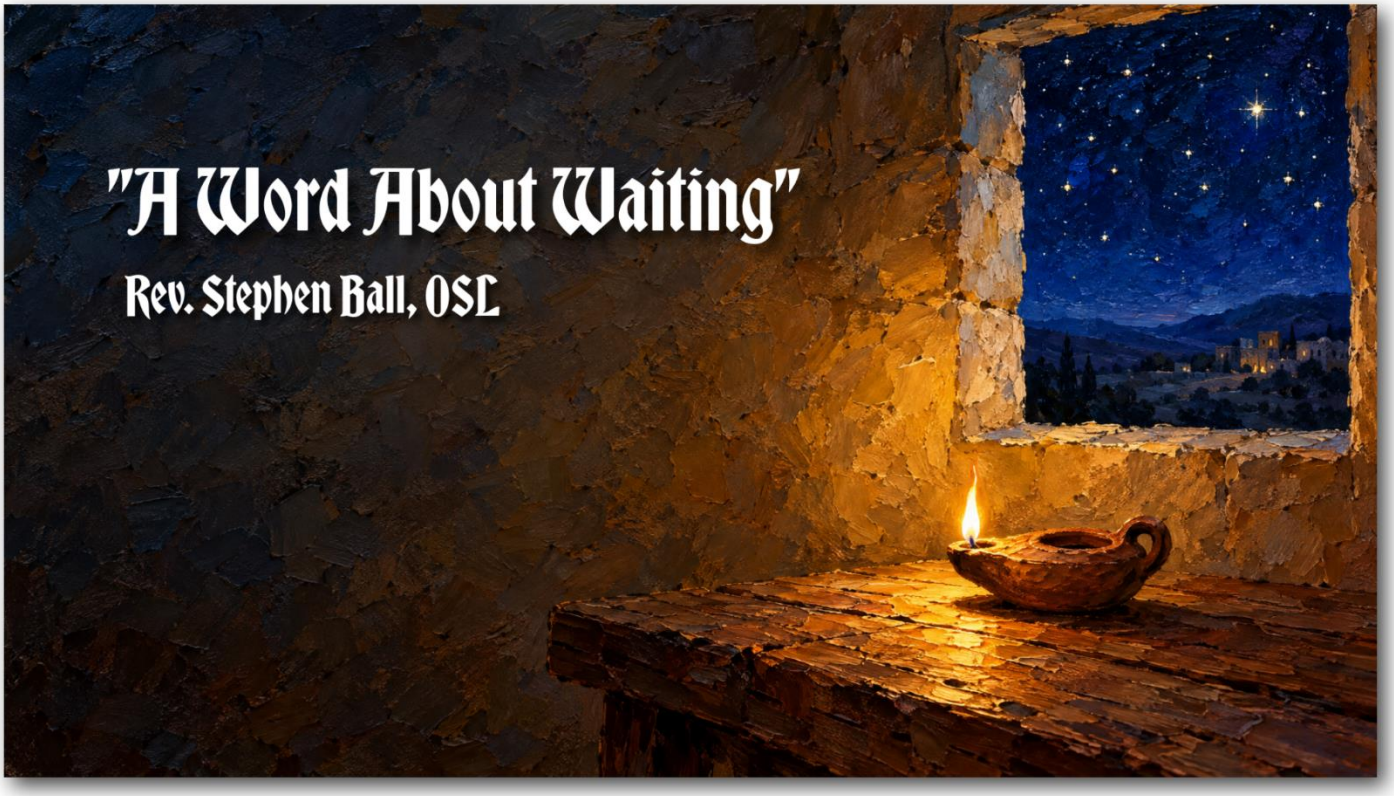
Sunday, November 8, 2026

The Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost



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."

WORSHIP MATTERS

Silence Can Be Really Loud

I was once a member of a church whose Order of Worship included the "Ministry of Silence." Intentional, slightly awkward, but unapologetic silence. It was glorious.

We live in a culture terrified of dead air. We treat stillness as empty space that must be filled. In worship, however, silence isn't the emptiness in the vessel. It is the vessel.

When Elijah went looking for the Divine on Mount Horeb, God wasn't in the hurricane, the earthquake, or the blazing fire. God showed up in what the old King James called the "still small voice"—or more accurately, the sound of sheer, vibrating stillness.

When we are silent together in the sanctuary, something miraculous happens: the noise of our frantic week begins to settle like sediment at the bottom of a river. We finally give the Holy Spirit room to get a word in edgewise. It is dramatic, it is slightly terrifying, and it is where grace actually does its quiet, heavy lifting.

So next time the room falls still and the clock keeps ticking, don't rush to fill the silence. Breathe in the hush. You are not witnessing an awkward pause—you are standing in the quiet workshop of God.

Pastor Stephen

The Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

November 8th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The midnight hour approaches, and the world is weary of holding its breath.

People: Yet in the quiet darkness, we kindle our small lights.

Leader: We do not gather as people terrified of the night, but as people who know who is coming.

People: We gather with oil in our flasks, hope in our souls, and joy in our waiting.

Leader: Shake off the stupor of cynicism; trim the wicks of your imagination.

All: Let us worship the God who meets us along the road, right on time.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "Be Now My Vision"*

The New Century Hymnal #451

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

All: Patient God, we confess that we are terrible at waiting.

In a world conditioned for two-day delivery and instant gratification, we treat Your kin-dom like a delayed package we're ready to cancel. We allow our lamps to sputter out. We drain our reserves on trivial anxieties while neglecting the quiet oil of justice, mercy, and stillness. When the cry goes up to welcome the holy into our streets, we are often asleep, distracted by our screens and self-absorbed routines. Forgive our heavy eyelids. Rekindle our attention, replenish our reserves, and teach us that waiting for You is not a static delay, but an active, trembling joy.

Amen.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 24:14-18

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM: 78:1-7

Leader: Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

People: I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.

Leader: We will not hide them from our children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD and his might and the wonders that he has done.

People: He established a decree in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children,

Leader: that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children,

People: so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

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: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM *Starry Skies* *by E. Butler*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:1-13

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: "A Word on Waiting" Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "Be Still, My Soul"*

The New Century Hymnal #488

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Congregational Response:

Leader: In our waiting…

People: Kindle our 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

All: Extravagant God, receive these gifts – coins, paper, clicks, and intentions – as oil poured into the lamps of this community. Multiply what we release.

May this offering feed the hungry, warm the vulnerable, and keep a steady, stubborn flame burning on every corner where despair threatens to take hold.

In the name of the One who is our morning star, Amen.

THE COMMUNITY GOES INTO THE WORLD

**HYMN OF DEDICATION: "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand"*

The Pilgrim Hymnal #433

*BENEDICTION

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday, November 9th
Official Board at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, November 10th
Centennial Circle at 5:30 pm

Sunday, November 15th
John Graves Sunday School at 9:30 am
(Studying the book of Mark)
All are welcome!

Worship Service at 10:30 am
Turkey Day & Cake Auction
(all proceeds will go to repairing the sanctuary roof and ceiling)

Tuesday, November 24th
Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm

Thursday, November 26th
Happy Thanksgiving!
Office is Closed

Sunday, November 29th
First Sunday of Advent
Hanging of the Greens

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

Christmas Cheer Collection

(begins 11/8 through 11/ 29)



Poinsettias

(order forms due by 11/23)



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.

The Family of 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
Darlene Watson
(Nancey Simmon's Sister)

June Sellars
Nancy Hughes
(Trish Ball's Mother)
Darla Bray
Dana Matherly
(Terry Ragland's daughter)
The Family of Jane Pate
(Family of Jamie Fonville)
Pete Pate
Joy McPhail
Jerry Barnwell
The K Family
Ken & Helen Little
David Hodges
David Hodges
Rodney Paul Sr.
Blake Jones

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