

Sunday Worship

January 4, 2026



By Another Road

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

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*

Second Sunday After Christmas

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

10:30 am Worship Service

January 4th, 2026

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Arise, shine, for your light has come!

People: The glory of God has risen upon us!

Leader: For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples,

People: But God will rise upon us, and God's glory will appear over us.

Leader: The light of God is with us;

People: All the nations' leaders will be drawn to the light of God.

Leader: God's light now dwells with us;

People: Come, worship God, and shine God's light to the world!

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "We Three Kings"*

The Pilgrim Hymnal #143

CALL TO CONFESSION

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

(Please pause for a moment of silent prayer and contemplation)

CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: Holy God,...

People: ...we admit that often we are not Magi, but tourists.

We confess that we are drawn by the glamour of the star, but recoil from the inconvenient location of the stable. We want the easy wonder, not the challenging journey. We are prone to follow the bright, shiny distractions of the world – the latest gadget, the loudest opinion, the most comfortable chair – and forget to look up for the true light.

Forgive us, Lord, for missing your revelation when it arrives in the poor, the unexpected, and the uncomfortable. Forgive us for our spiritual laziness, which keeps us firmly planted in Burlington when the path to Bethlehem is calling.

Shine your light on us, and grant us the humility to actually *change our course* and follow the truth, no matter the cost. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

Leader: In Jesus Christ, the full, uncompromising, and dazzling light of God has come into the world. You are seen. You are known. You are forgiven.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 60:1-6 *Nations come to the light*

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM 72:1-7, 10-14

Leader: Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice.

People: May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.

Leader: May he live while the sun endures and as long as the moon, throughout all generations. May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.

People: In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more. May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

Leader: May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service. For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper.

People: He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.

GLORIA

All: Glory to you, O Trinity, most holy and blessed; One God, now and forever. Amen.

ANTHEM: Seekers of Light

by Martin/Angerman

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 2:1-12

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"By Another Road"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS AT THE TABLE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

INVITATION TO GIVE

THE GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

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 COMMUNION PRAYER *(see insert)*

THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Pastor: Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.

**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.**

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Pastor: Come, the table is prepared.

*(The congregation, as they are able, proceeds to the table to commune by intinction.
Those who are unable to walk will be served at their seats.)*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Our Savior Jesus Christ keep and preserve you to everlasting life.

Let us pray:

**All: We thank you, God for inviting us to this table where we have known
the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our
faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise
in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

THE COMMUNITY GOES INTO THE WORLD

**HYMN OF DEDICATION: "Hark the Harold Angels Sing"*

The New Century Hymnal #160

*BENEDICTION

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

December 23rd – January 1st

The office will be closed

Wednesday, January 7th

Finance Meeting at 11:00 am

Sunday, January 11th

Rev. Stephen Ball's Installation Service

FCUCC at 3:00 pm

Monday, January 12th

Margaret Lightbourne Circle at 11:00 am

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.

Buster Freeman
Nell Allred
Amber Massey
Joe Strickland
Ross Strange Sr.
Trisha Shelly
John Moon
Ray Palyok
(*Matt's Step-Father*)
Lewis Fowler
Carolyn Wolley / Family
Dave Smudski / Family

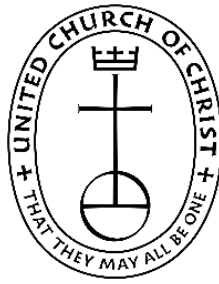
Brooke Manning
David Hodges
Brenda Grogan
Spanky Newsome
Holly Bent
Troy Marquardt
Joy McPhail
Blake Jones
Jerry Barnwell
Family of Rev. Tharrington
Our Nation

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