Sunday, October 25, 2026

The Twenty-Second 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

LAITY SUNDAY

This Sunday we are acknowledging the importance of the lay members of the church. We talk a lot about how the church really IS the members, and it's true. We depend upon each other to carry out the work of the church.

You usually see me during the worship service, but don't think that I am the only one leading worship—worship really only gets its truest expression when EVERYONE is involved. From Matt and our musicians, to Dotti and our deacons, Cindy and the AV technicians to Benjie and the ushers, Julie and the offering counters to all of you who read the scripture, our worship services could not happen without the active help of dozens of people each week.

And that's only considering the Sunday service! Behind the scenes there are faithful people making sure that the doors of First Christian are open and the ministries vibrant. There isn't room in this small space to thank each of you as you deserve, but today I want to tell ALL of you how grateful I am for the work you do that makes the work I do possible. With the Apostle Paul, I say, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus."

Pastor Stephen

The Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost
Laity Sunday

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC
October 25th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS — Carol Fonville

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT — Mary Newsome

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP — Judge Hodges / Susan Wilson

Leader: We gather together with hearts that are complicated, minds that are tired, and souls carrying all the freight of an ordinary week.

People: We come asking the eternal question: what is the point of all this?

Leader: And the answer comes back, startling in its simplicity, devastating in its demand:

People: Love God with everything we are, and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Leader: Not an abstraction, not an algorithm, not a slogan on a bumper sticker.

People: Just radical, vulnerable, unvarnished love. Let us worship God.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" vs 1-4*
The New Century Hymnal #25

THE ACT OF CONTRITION — Judy Hodges/ Susan Wilson

Leader: Jesus insists that love is the whole story of our faith. Knowing how often we trade that love for self-preservation and polite indifference, let us confess our lives together.

People: Holy God, who demands our whole heart, soul, and mind, we confess that we rarely give you more than our spare change and our leftover attention.

We profess to love our neighbor, provided our neighbor shares our taste, our politics, and our boundary lines.

When asked to step into the mess of other people's lives, we retreat to our screens, our excuses, and our cynicism.

Break open our fragile certainties.

Teach us that loving you is not a private hobby, and loving our neighbor is not optional theatre.

Forgive our hollow reverence, and tether our hearts to the bone-deep reality of your grace. Amen.

Leader: Here is the mystery that defies every cynical instinct we possess: God's grace is not transactional. You cannot negotiate it, you cannot lose it through bureaucratic failure, and you do not have to earn it back. In Jesus Christ, you are already known, held, and forgiven.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 — Judy Hodges / Susan Wilson

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM: Psalm 1 — Judy Hodges / Susan Wilson

Leader: Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread or sit in the seat of scoffers,

People: but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night.

Leader: They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that you do, they prosper.

People: The wicked are not so but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Leader: Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous,

People: for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

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 2:1-8 — Judy Hodges / Susan Wilson

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 22:34-46 — Judy Hodges / Susan Wilson

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM *People Need The Lord* — *by M. McDonald*

LAY SPEAKERS: "Living Your Faith" — Mike Smith / Sandra Greene

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "Lord, I Want to Be A Christian"*
The New Century Hymnal #454

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR Mack Painter

Prayer Response: Leader: Lord, in your mercy…
People: …Teach us how to love.

Leader: Let us pray with confidence the prayer that our Savior taught us, saying

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 Mack Painter

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 Mack Painter

All: God of abundant grace, take these gifts, our pledges, and our stubborn, hopeful lives. Use them not to build a museum to our past, but to spread a table where everyone gets fed. May our resources translate into shelter for the cold, companionship for the isolated, and dignity for the oppressed. We give because you loved us first. Amen.

THE COMMUNITY GOES INTO THE WORLD

**HYMN OF DEDICATION: "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"*
The New Century Hymnal #403

*BENEDICTION Matt Rice

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, October 27th
Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm

Sunday, November 1st
John Graves Sunday School at 9:30 am
(Studying the book of Mark)
All are welcome!

All Saints Day
Worship Service at 10:30 am

Monday, November 2nd
Margaret Lightbourne Circle at 11:00 am

Wednesday, November 4th
Finance Meeting at 11:00 am

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

Morrowtown Community Group Gala
Gala to support the Morrowtown Mission
November 7th at 5:30 pm
First Baptist Church of Burlington
$55 per ticket
Includes entertainment, full meal by Lola's, Silent Auction, 50/50 Drawing, and Mayor Beth Kennett as speaker.
(For questions, ask Carol Fonville)

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
Betty King & Roger King
June Sellars
Nancy Hughes
(Trish Ball's Mother)
Darla Bray
Eleanor Lovgren
Dana Matherly
(Terry Ragland's daughter)
The Family of Jane Pate
(Family of Jamie Fonville)
Pete Pate
Joy McPhail
Jerry Barnwell
Carol Fonville
The K Family
The Family of Anthony Kline
Ken Little
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: Judy Hodges & Susan Wilson
Hymn Leaders & Anthem: Choir
Greeters: Benjie Terrell & David Hodges
Ushers: Benjie Terrell, Julie Miller, Charlie Vitou, Eleanor Lovgren