

MAUNDY THURSDAY

APRIL 2, 2026



THE SERVICE OF BASIN AND TABLE

FIRST CHRISTIAN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Maundy Thursday

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

April 2nd, 2026 at 7:00 pm

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

**HYMN OF ENTRANCE: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"*

The New Century Hymnal #224

ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: Friends, before we can sit at this table or wash at this basin, we must drop the masks we wear and admit to the shadows we carry into this upper room.

People: Holy and Patient God, we confess that we are more like the disciples than we care to admit. We have jockeyed for position while you knelt to serve; we have slept while the world was in agony; and we have already begun to calculate our exit before the shadows even fall. Forgive us for the times we have chosen the safety of the sidelines over the scandal of your basin. Wash our hearts as you wash our hands, and feed us with a grace we do not deserve but desperately need. Amen.

Leader: Hear the good news of the night: The One who knows exactly what we are capable of – our denials, our betrayals, and our fears – is the same One who breaks the bread and says "This is for you." In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven and invited to the feast.

THE SERVICE OF THE BASIN

SCRIPTURE: John 13:1-17, 31b-35

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

HOMILY: *"The Scandal of the Towel"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE RITUAL OF HANDWASHING

Symbolic of Christ's command to his disciples to love and serve one another, the Pastor will wash and bless the hands of the Deacons, the servants of the congregation.

**HYMN: "What Wondrous Love Is This"*

The New Century Hymnal #223

THE SERVICE OF THE TABLE

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE SURSUM CODA

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Holy God, Creator of heaven and earth. From the red clay of this Piedmont soil to the rolling limestone hills of the Hoosier heartland, your glory is shouted by the very ground we walk upon.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, our love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets – those holy agitators who called us back to the basin and the block.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

THE SANCTUS

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. On this night – this night of shadows and betrayal – he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

THE EPICLESIS (Invocation of the Spirit)

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Pastor: The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

People: We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Pastor: The cup of blessing which we bless is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

People: The cup which we share is the cup of the New Covenant.

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.)*

THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

THE SCRIPTURAL LAMENT: Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night but find no rest.

Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm and not a human, scorned by others and despised by the people.

All who see me mock me; they sneer at me; they shake their heads;

“Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver – let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”

Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother’s breast.

On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help.

Many bulls encircle me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they bound my hands and feet.

I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O LORD, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!

Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!

Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.

I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me but heard when I cried to him.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD. May your hearts live forever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

THE COMMUNITY GOES INTO THE WORLD

THE FINAL SHADOW

Pastor: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness...has tried to overcome it.

THE DEPARTURE

There is no benediction.

There is no postlude or after-service music.

This is a solemn departure in silence. You are encouraged to stay as long as you wish to pray and meditate in the quiet shadows of the evening.

When you are finished, please depart in total silence.

BULLETIN NOTES

A Note on the Shadows: Why We Strip the Altar

In the life of the Church, we often spend our time “decorating” – adding layers of music, flowers, and fine linens to point toward the glory of God. But tonight, the story takes a turn toward the stark.

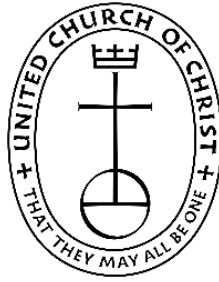
As we conclude our service, you will witness the **Stripping of the Altar**. This is not merely a “clean-up crew” preparing for tomorrow. It is a liturgical drama. Each item removed – the Bible, the candles, the fair linens, and the chalice – represents the unfolding abandonment of Jesus. One by one, his friends flee. His influence is stripped away. His dignity is mocked. Eventually, he is left as bare and vulnerable as the wooden table before you.

We leave in **total silence** for a reason. There is no benediction tonight because the service hasn’t actually ended. The liturgy of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday is one continuous movement – the *Triduum*. The blessing doesn’t come until the first light of Easter.

Tonight, we simply sit in the “between”. We live in the tension of a love that is willing to be poured out until there is nothing left.

Instructions for Departure

- **The Silence:** Please honor the sacredness of this moment by maintaining absolute silence as you leave the sanctuary and the building.
- **The Shadows:** If you wish to remain in the pews for a time of personal prayer after the Central Candle is hidden, you are invited to do so.
- **The Return:** We depart not into the end of the story, but into the heart of it. We invite you to join us Sunday morning for Breakfast and Easter Worship.



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