

Sunday, October 18, 2026

The Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost



"Two Sides of a Coin"

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL



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

Why Some of Us Keep Drawing Crosses in Thin Air

If you grew up Protestant, watching someone cross themselves in church can feel a bit like seeing someone suddenly break into interpretive dance at the DMV. It catches you off guard. *Wait, are we allowed to do that here?*

Take a breath. No one is secretly reporting back to the Vatican.

Tracing the Sign of the Cross—from forehead to heart, shoulder to shoulder—is simply one of the oldest, most grounded physical habits the Church possesses. Long before Christianity became an intellectual debate or a 45-minute bulleted lecture, it was something people practiced with their actual bodies.

Think of it as muscle memory for the soul.

When life feels chaotic, noisy, or downright unhinged, making that small, four-point gesture is a way of physically marking yourself with grace. You touch your mind (*redeem my thoughts*), your heart (*calm my affections*), and your shoulders (*carry my daily burdens*). It is an embodied reminder: *I belong to the God who meets us at our lowest, not the noise currently screaming for my attention.*

You certainly don't have to do it. There are no gold stars handed out at the door, and God isn't taking attendance by hand motions. But if you ever feel the urge to silently trace that shape over your heart during a prayer or a blessing, go right ahead. Sometimes your hands just need a reminder of what your spirit is trying so desperately to believe.

The Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

October 18th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it; the world, and those who live within it.

People: Ascribe to the Lord the glory due God's name; worship the Lord in holy splendor.

Leader: Render unto God the things that are God's: our worship, our devotion, and our very lives.

People: Let us worship the Living God with reverent hearts and steadfast minds.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "God of Grace and God of Glory"*

The Hymnal #292

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

All: ...Holy and Righteous God, we confess that our loyalties are often divided. We readily render our time, our energy, and our honor to the empires and powers of this world, while offering you only our remnants. We withhold from you that which bears your holy image – our full obedience, our love for the neighbor, and our pursuit of justice. Forgive our idolatries, both subtle and open. Cleanse our hearts of pride and deceit, and restore us to wholeness, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer...Amen.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 45:1-7

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM 96:10-13

Leader: Say among the nations, "The LORD is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity."

People: Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar and all that fills it;

Leader: let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD,

People: for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his truth.

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 1:1-10

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM *Look at the World*

By J. Rutter

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 22:15-22

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Leader: The Word of God for all people.

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON *"Two Sides of a Coin"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS AT THE TABLE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Response: Leader: God of grace...

People: ...Hear our prayer.

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

THE COMMUNION PRAYER

Pastor: God be with you!

People: And also with you!

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to God.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

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

Pastor: It is truly right, good, and our joyful duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, O God. Therefore, with angels and

archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we praise and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and saying:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

(+) Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Leader: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. Remembering his life, his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his promise to come again in glory, we offer ourselves to you in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, proclaiming the mystery of faith:

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

Leader: Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us gathered here, and upon these gifts of bread and wine. Sanctify them, that they may be for us the communion of the body and blood of Christ; and sanctify us, that we may be united in his love, faithful in his service, and brought at the last into the fullness of your heavenly kingdom.

Through him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

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.

BREAKING THE BREAD AND SHARING THE CUP

The communion elements will be passed from person to person as they remain seated.

Please hold the element until all have been served and we will partake together.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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: "Come Now, Almighty God"*

The New Century Hymnal #275

***BENEDICTION**

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday, October 25th

Stewardship Sunday

Get your pledge cards in by today!

Laity Sunday

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

Morrows town Community Group Gala

Gala to support the Morrows town 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

Blake Jones

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

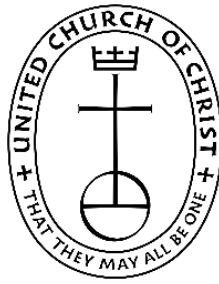
Joy McPhail

Carol Fonville

The K Family

Anthony Kline

Ken Little



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