

Sunday, July 19, 2026

The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost



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*

The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

July 19th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We arrive this morning carrying the crushing weight of a thousand micro-anxieties, meticulously tracking our steps, optimizing our schedules, and fretting over our personal brands.

People: We are fragile creatures of the present moment, easily startled by the noise of the world.

Leader: And yet, the Voice of the Cosmos echoes across the ages, shattering our self-absorbed panic: *"I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god."*

People: We lean into the Rock that was here before the world was ever formed, and will remain long after the stars grow cold.

Leader: Let us step out of the frantic rush of our lives and into the vast expanse of the Divine.

People: Let us worship the One who holds history, yet knows our names.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"*

The New Century Hymnal #23

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: It is a uniquely human affliction to look at the infinite, terrifying grandeur of the universe and think, *"Yes, but if I don't respond to this text message in five minutes, the entire fabric of reality will tear."* We excel at manufacturing minor deities out of our daily stresses and worshipping our own illusion of control. Let us strip away the high drama of our self-importance, drop our defenses, and confess our truth before the One who actually holds the future.

People: Eternal God, the First and the Last, we confess that we spend far too much time panicked right here in the middle. We construct elaborate fortresses of worry, treating our temporary fears as if they are the ultimate reality. We have looked for security in the fleeting trends of a fickle world rather than the enduring rock of Your justice. We have trembled before the giants of our own making – systems of exclusion, scarcity, and economic greed – and forgotten that You alone hold the final word. Forgive our short-sightedness. Calm our frantic hearts.

Reorient us toward Your grand, unfolding story of love, that we might step out of our panic and into Your peace. Amen.

Leader: Hear the good news, friends: The One who spans all of time and space does not hold our fleeting moments of panic against us. Long before you stumbled, grace was already waiting for you. Long after our modern anxieties are forgotten, Divine love will still remain. You are forgiven, you are deeply known, and you are held by the only Rock that matters. Stand up, breathe deeply, and face the world in peace. Amen.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 44:6-8

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM from Psalm 86

Leader: Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

People: I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.

Leader: For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

People: You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Leader: Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant; save the child of your maidservant.

People: Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame, because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

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: Romans 8:12-25

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

VIDEO ANTHEM *Amazing Grace*

by Benji Terrell

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:24-30

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"Wheat and Weeds"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "Nearer, My God to You"*

The New Century Hymnal #606

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Congregational Response:

Pastor: "God of the first and last..."

People: "...Anchor our hearts in Your Peace."

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

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 COMMUNITY GOES INTO THE WORLD

**HYMN OF DEDICATION: "In Christ There Is No East or West"*

The New Century Hymnal #395

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

*The Altar Flowers are given today in memory of Irene Terrell
and in celebration of her Birthday.*

*Love,
Matt, Lauren & Benji*

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday, July 26th

Christmas in July Worship Service

Tuesday, July 28th

Deacon Meeting at 6:00 pm

Monday, August 3rd

Women's Circle Super Salad Supper Bar
at 5:30 pm in Bray Hall

with Guest Speaker

Allied Ministries Executive Director

All are welcome to attend

Please RSVP to Carol Fonville

Wednesday, August 5th

Finance Meeting at 11:00 am

Monday, August 10th

Official Board Meeting at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, August 25th

Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office Hours

Monday - 9am – 12pm

Tuesday – 9am – 12pm

Wednesday - 9am – 12pm

Thursday - 9am – 12pm

Friday - closed

Serving in our Armed Forces

CPT Kirk Workman

James Barnwell

Dalton Anthony Jones, Ensign US Navy

(Family of June & Dotti)

Notes

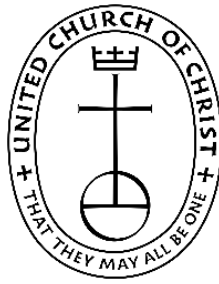
Inspired by something said in the word or sung in a song today? Take a moment to write it here to remember later.

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.

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

Brenda Grogan
Rodney Paul Sr.
Holly Bent
Nanci Isley
(Friend of Sherry Massey)
Curtis Foster
Jon & Judy Kipp
Betty King & Roger King
Troy Marquardt
Blake Jones
June Sellars
Nancy Hughes
(Trish Ball's Mother)



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