

Sunday, July 5, 2026

The Sixth 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 Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

July 5th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The world screams for our attention, flashing its neon lights and demands.

People: But we come here seeking a quieter, deeper truth.

Leader: We come as we are – distracted, weary, or filled with joy.

People: We come to find the thread that connects our stories to the Divine.

Leader: Let us step out of the relentless noise and into the sacred space.

People: Let us worship God together.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"*

The New Century Hymnal #43

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: Let's be honest with ourselves for a moment. It is exhausting trying to pretend we have it all together. We walk through life wearing masks of absolute certainty, while internally we are tripping over our own doubts and missteps. But this isn't a courtroom; it's a sanctuary. We are not on trial here. Let us lay down our masks and speak the truth of our lives to a God who already knows us, and loves us anyway.

People: God of Grace and Gravity, we confess that we are master distractors. We busy ourselves with the trivial while the profound cries out at our doorsteps. We build walls out of our privileges and comfort, choosing the illusion of safety over the radical vulnerability of love. We have seen neighbors in need and looked away; we have heard the cry for justice and turned it out like background noise. Forgive our apathy. Soften our hardened hearts, break through our cynical defenses, and pull us back into alignment with your compassionate spirit. Amen.

Leader: Hear the good news, my friends: the story does not end with our shortcomings. God is not keeping a cosmic scorecard. The divine love that knit the universe together is the very same love that reaches into our mess and says, "*You are forgiven. You are enough. Now, stand up and try again.*" Believe the gospel: in Jesus Christ, we are set free to live fully and love deeply. Amen.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM from Psalm 145:8-14

Leader: The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

People: The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.

Leader: All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your faithful shall bless you.

People: They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, to make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Leader: Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds.

People: The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.

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: Zechariah 9:9-12

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"Prisoners of Hope"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS AT THE TABLE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Responding: ... **Hear our prayer.**

THE MINISTRY OF GENEROSITY

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

One: 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: "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling"*

The New Century Hymnal #449

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday, July 6th

Margaret Lightbourne Meal
Olive Garden at 11:00 am
Please RSVP to Carol Fonville

Monday, July 13th

Official Board Meeting at 6:00 pm

Sunday, July 26th

Christmas in July Worship Service

Tuesday, July 28th

Deacon Meeting at 6:00 pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Regular 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

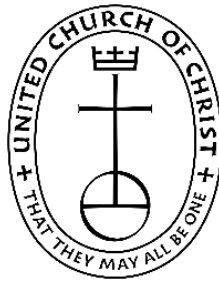
Inspired by something said in the word or sung in a song today? Take a moment to write it here to remember later.

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