

Sunday, August 16, 2026

The Twelfth 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."

WORSHIP MATTERS

Stop Singing on Autopilot: What *Is* a Doxology?

If private devotion is a quiet conversation over coffee with God, corporate worship is the moment the stadium lights flip on and the entire arena belts out the chorus together. Private faith sustains your Tuesday afternoons, but Sunday morning demands a shared racket. Enter the *doxology*—from the Greek words for “glory” and “word.” It’s a short, unashamed burst of praise designed for a crowd. Think of it as the liturgical equivalent of an entire stadium joining in for the opera section of Queen’s *Bohemian Rhapsody*. You aren't just reciting poetry in your head; you are drowning out your personal doubts in a sea of neighborly noise.

You'll often hear two distinct doxologies in our sanctuary. **The Doxology** (*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*) is our earthy response to creation—a grateful cheer for physical blessings, daily bread, and divine grace right here and now. **The Gloria Patri** (*Glory Be to the Father*), on the other hand, is our ancient theological tether, anchoring our fleeting moment in the eternal, ongoing mystery of the Trinity. One thanks God for the gifts sitting right in front of us; the other reminds us we belong to a story that spans millennia.

So when the music swells and we stand to sing, don't let habit rob you of the miracle. We aren't just filling time. We are joining our clumsy, beautiful voices to declare together: *We are here, God is good, and none of us are in this alone.*

The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

August 16th, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RECOGNITION OF MATT RICE

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We live in a world obsessed with VIP lists, algorithms that feed us back our own tastes, and exclusive groups built around keeping the wrong people out.

People: But God builds a porch with an open door to an extravagantly long room where everyone keeps getting added to the list.

Leader: Prophet Isaiah tells us: *"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."* Not just the insiders. Not just the regulars.

People: We gather here – the lifelong believers, the hesitant wanderers, the delightfully skeptical, and the thoroughly exhausted.

Leader: Let us worship the God who continually gathers the outsiders, breaking open every tidy circle we try to draw.

People: Let us worship God as one people: the Children of God.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "Amazing Grace"*

The New Century Hymnal #547

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: We like predictability. But grace is notoriously unpredictable, and justice demands far more than nodding along in agreement with a well-worded statement. Let us speak together the truth of our hesitation, opening our hearts to the God who quietly dismantles our walls.

People: God of wide horizons and open doors,

We confess that we prefer comfortable boundaries. They make the world smaller, quieter, and far easier to manage. We carefully arrange our lives, filtering out the different voices that disrupt our rhythm or challenge our assumptions.

When you command us to maintain justice, we often settle for polite goodwill. When you call us to gather those on the edges, we worry about whether there will be enough space, enough budget, or enough quiet for ourselves.

Forgive us for trying to turn your sanctuary into a private retreat. Unclench our hands. Expand our imagination. Teach us to live into the messy, beautiful reality of a kingdom where no one is an outsider. Amen.

Leader: Here this good news, delivered without fine print, processing fees, or hidden conditions: God's grace is not a finite resource. You do not need to qualify for a higher tier of righteousness to receive mercy. The gates are thrown wide, the light is left on, and you are fully, completely, extravagantly forgiven.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM from Psalm 67

Leader: May God be gracious to us and bless us and make God's face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.

People: Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Leader: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with quality and guide the nations upon earth.

People: Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Leader: The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us.

People: May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere God.

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 11:1-2a, 29-32

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM *What A Beautiful Name*

Arr. J. Martin

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 15:21-28

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"No Dogs Allowed"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE WORD

**HYMN OF CELEBRATION: "Blest Be The Tie That Binds"*

The New Century Hymnal #393

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Response: Leader: "God of wide welcome..." **People: "...Hear our prayer."**

**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: "Sing Praise to God, Who Has Shaped Us"*

The New Century Hymnal #22

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

RECEPTION

*In Gratitude to God for the faithful music ministry of Matt Rice, Organist
& Choir Director, celebrating ten years of devoted service at FCUCC.*

*We give thanks for his steady leadership, his joyful spirit, and the gift of
music he shares so generously. Through hymns, anthems, and the beauty
of the organ, he helps our congregation worship with
deeper meaning and grace.*

*May God continue to bless his hands, his voice, and his heart
as he leads us in praise.*

*With love,
First Christian UCC*

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday, August 23rd

Guest Preacher

(Pastor Stephen is on Vacation)

Tuesday, August 25th

Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm

Wednesday, August 26th

Ice Cream Social at 7pm

Sunday, September 13th

HOMEcoming

(Please RSVP by placing your invitation card in the offering plate)

*If you'd like to invite any special guests, call the office with their address.

August Mission Project

First Aid Supplies for ABSS and Matt's School at Rockingham County School

- Bandages, assorted sizes
- Sterile gauze pads and rolls
- Adhesive medical tape
 - Antiseptic wipes
 - Instant cold packs
- Non-latex disposable gloves
- Tweezers and small scissors
 - Hand sanitizer
- Plastic size sandwich bags

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office Hours

Monday - 9am – 12pm

Tuesday – 9am – 12pm

Wednesday - 9am – 12pm

Thursday - 9am – 12pm

Friday - closed

New Flooring: August 10th – 21st

New Flooring will be installed in Bray Hall and the 2nd floor Narthex areas. Please know that Sunday Services will continue as normal during installation.

*Please use the Breezeway entrance on the educational side to enter the Sanctuary on August 16th.

**The Elevator will be accessible for those who require assistance.

***During installation the restrooms in the Educational Building will be available for use.

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

Patty Howey

(Charlie Vitou's Niece)

Brenda Grogan

Holly Bent

Nanci Isley

(Friend of Sherry Massey)

Jon & Judy Kipp

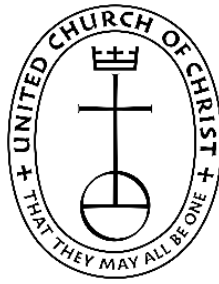
Betty King & Roger King

Blake Jones

June Sellars

Nancy Hughes

(Trish Ball's Mother)



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