

Sunday, August 2, 2026

The Tenth 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

Today we celebrate Holy Communion, and it is indeed a celebration, a joyous outpouring of praise and remembrance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We invite all who wish to receive Communion to come forward as directed by our Ushers, though by no means is it required of anyone! (No one will judge you for receiving or *not* receiving.)

Communion is a deeply visceral experience, remembering the physical presence of Jesus, who gave himself for us out of divine love. We use physical elements, bread and wine (though we use non-alcoholic wine), to remind ourselves that Jesus gave himself for us not just as individuals, but as a corporate body. We are joined to each other, and to all Christians throughout space and time into the Body of Christ. The Apostle Paul put it like this:

"For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread...For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Today we commune by *intinction*, receiving a piece of bread and dipping it briefly in the cup before returning to our seats.

The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

August 2nd, 2026 at 10:30 am

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We arrive today from a long week of checking bank balances, double-checking our calendars, and wondering if we have enough left in the tank to make it through another Sunday.

People: We bring our tired minds, our calculated lives, and our quiet fears that the math just won't work out.

Leader: But the God who spread the heavens is not running an accounting firm.

People: God opens a hand, and the table is set without cost or condition.

Leader: So unclench your fists. Let go of the tight grip you've held all week long.

People: We are here to gather, to breathe, and to receive what we could never earn. Let us worship God together.

**HYMN OF PRAISE: "Open My Eyes, That I May See"*

The Hymnal #381

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

Leader: It is a default human setting to look at a crowd of five thousand hungry people and think, *We should probably send them away to buy their own dinner.* We love a good boundary, and we love a budget that balances. But when we treat life as a relentless contest of limited resources, we lock our hands into tight little fists. Let us step out of that defensive posture for a moment and pray together, being honest about our fear of scarcity.

People: Gracious God, we confess that we are hoarders of grace and auditors of mercy. When we face the wildernesses of our lives, we instinctually count what is missing rather than what is present. We look at five loaves and two fish and see an impossibility, forgetting that you are the God who satisfies every living thing. Forgive us for holding tightly to our time, our money, and our compassion. Teach us to trust your quiet abundance, that we might relax our grip and live with the joy of open hands. Amen.

Leader: Here is the good news that the world usually forgets to mention: God's grace is not a finite resource that runs out if too many people sign up for it. You do not need to qualify for this mercy, nor do you need to pay back the loan. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, loved, and fed. Breathe easy. You are whole, and you are free.

THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 55:1-5

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONSIVE PSALM from Psalm 145

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

People: The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.

Leader: You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.

People: The LORD is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings.

Leader: The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

People: He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them.

Leader: The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

People: My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.

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.**

ANTHEM *Come Thou Fount*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:13-21

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON: *"With Open Hands"*

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS AT THE TABLE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

COMMUNION PRAYER (*see insert*)

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Pastor: Come, the table is prepared.

(The congregation, as they are able, may proceed 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, opening our hands as you have opened yours; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE COMMUNITY GOES INTO THE WORLD

**HYMN OF DEDICATION: "Break Now the Bread of Life"*

The New Century Hymnal #321

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Announcements

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday, August 3rd

Women's Circle Super Salad Supper Bar
at 5:30 pm in Bray Hall
with Guest Speaker
from Allied Ministries Jai Baker
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 11th

Ice Cream Social
(WILL BE RESCHEDULED)

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

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

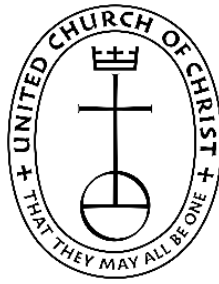
Inspired by something said in the word or sung in a song today? Take a moment to write it here to remember later.

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
Carolyn Wolley / Family
Dave Smudski / Family
The Family of Susan Horne
Patty Howey
(Charlie Vitou's Niece)

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