

# SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 1, 2026



**"HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE?"**

**FIRST CHRISTIAN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

# **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*

# Second Sunday in Lent

First Christian United Church of Christ, Burlington, NC

10:30 am Worship Service      March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

*Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL*

## **THE COMMUNITY GATHERS**

CENTERING CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In the darkness of our doubts, we come seeking the Light.

**People: How can these things be?**

Leader: From the dry dust of the earth, God breathes the Spirit of life.

**People: We come to be born from above.**

Leader: Come to the water; come to the Table. Let us worship the God of new beginnings.

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

*The New Century Hymnal #43*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, perhaps hoping the darkness would hide his confusion. We often do the same, masking our brokenness in the shadows. But God does not send the Son to condemn the world, but to save it. Let us step into the light and speak our truth.

SILENT CONFESSION

CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: Holy God,...

**People: ...we confess that we are often like Nicodemus: we prefer the literal to the spiritual because it feels safer. We cling to the dust we know rather than the life you promise. We ask "How?" when you invite us to say "Yes." We have seen the signs of your kingdom but remained barricaded in our old ways. Forgive our lack of imagination. Blow through our lives like the wind of the Spirit, and wash us clean in the mystery of your grace. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: The wind blows where it chooses. You hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with the grace of God. It has found you, it has claimed you, and it has made you new. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. **Amen.**

## **THE COMMUNITY LISTENS TO THE WORD**

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 12:1-4a

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

**People: Thanks be to God!**

RESPONSIVE PSALM: Psalm 121

Leader: I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come?

**People: My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.**

Leader: He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

**People: He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**

Leader: The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand.

**People: The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night.**

Leader: The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

**All: The LORD will keep you going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.**

GLORIA

**All: Glory to you, O Trinity, most holy and blessed;  
One God, now and forever. Amen.**

ANTHEM: Lenten Meditation

SCRIPTURE: John 3:1-17

SERMON: “*How Can These Things Be?*”

Rev. Stephen Ball, OSL

## **THE COMMUNITY GATHERS AT THE TABLE**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

INVITATION TO GIVE

THE MINISTRY OF GIVING

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: "As We Gather At Your Table"*

*The New Century Hymnal #332*

\*BENEDICTION

EXTROIT

POSTLUDE

# Announcements

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>**

Finance Meeting at 11:00 am

**Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>**

Worship Service at 10:30 am

**Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>**

Official Board Meeting at 6:00 pm

**Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>**

Margaret Lightbourne at 11:00 am  
*(Program on plants and flowers by Nancy Simmons. Bring a sandwich to enjoy)*

Centennial Circle at 5:30 pm

**Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>**

UCC Offering  
One Great Hour of Sharing

### **\*\*Missions Project\*\***

We will be collecting the following items through March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please consider donating some items to help Allied Churches of Alamance County.

- Kitchen towels
- Bar towels
- Window cleaner
- 55 gal trash bags
- Paper towels
- Microfiber cleaning cloths

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Regular Office Hours**

Monday - 9am – 12pm

Tuesday – 9am – 12pm

Wednesday - 9am – 12pm

Thursday - 9am – 12pm

Friday - closed

### **John Graves Sunday School**

Will not meet 2/22, 3/1, or 3/8. Class will resume on 3/15.

### **Display of Crosses**

The idea is of a Cross Display during Lent, starting Ash Wednesday. This would be on display on tables in the church parlor like we did when photos of our parents were brought in. Invite people to bring photos, pictures, crosses of various sizes for stands or holders, and jewelry which will be laid flat on the table. Request that the crosses be labeled with names of owners in order to return them. The Spiritual Life Committee wishes to bring to people's awareness the importance of the cross. A plastic bin will be in the parlor as we start collecting them.

# 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

David Hodges  
Brenda Grogan  
Spanky Newsome  
Holly Bent  
Troy Marquardt  
Blake Jones  
June Sellars  
Nanci Isley  
*(Friend of Sherry Massey)*  
Curtis Foster  
Jon & Judy Kipp  
Mike Smith

## Serving in our Armed Forces

*CPT Kirk Workman*

*James Barnwell*

## Notes

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

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## **Church Officers**

President: Jamie Fonville  
Vice President: Cindy Sharpe  
Treasurer: Judy Kipp  
Assistant Treasurer: Julie Miller  
Secretary: Mark Garrison

## **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: Brooke Manning  
Hymn Leaders & Anthem: Choir  
Greeters: Benjie Terrell & David Hodges  
Ushers: Benjie Terrell, Julie Miller, Charlie Vitou, Eleanor Lovgren