

A vertical strip of pink flowers, including clusters of buds and open blossoms, runs along the left edge of the page. The flowers are in various shades of pink and purple.

May

2026 NEWSLETTER

# Devotion

The older I get the more sedate my birthday celebrations become. Not so with birthday celebrations for the grandchildren! Last month saw a joint birthday party for both of our grandkids at our place. The house was alive with the energy that only a 6-year old and a 2-year old can bring to an event in their honor. The house was full of noise and activity. Trish cooked a big dinner (I helped) and served it family-style. There was a cake with unnaturally bright icing applied in thick layers. Four generations gathered around our kitchen table and countertops to mark the milestones for the two youngest family members. It was, at least in the terms of an old introvert like me, a raucous affair!

This month we will celebrate Pentecost, the birthday of the church. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that the birth of the church, the arrival of the Holy Spirit, was loud and boisterous enough that some of the onlookers were convinced that those followers of Jesus were partying hard enough that they were drunk before noon!

When the Holy Spirit moved on and among the earliest of church members, it attracted attention. The attribution of overindulgence came from the enthusiasm with which the early church met its encounter with the Breath of God blowing through it. When filled with the Holy Spirit, the disciples simply could not contain what had happened to them. The powerful experience spilled out into the streets and into the lives of the witnesses. Lives were changed and onlookers heard the gospel in their own languages, no matter where they were from!

# Devotion



Just as surely as that fluorescent blue and green cake frosting somehow marked the faces and hands of everyone at our party, the light of the Holy Spirit marked the disciples as changed. That change was so inspiring that the church began to grow on that very first day! This Pentecost we could bear to be reminded that we, too, are bearers of the Holy Spirit into our own community. Let us live like the Breath of God is inspiring us every day!

God of new beginnings, breathe your Spirit into our hearts.

Inspire us to live our lives as changed followers of your Son, Jesus.  
Grant that we might embody through our actions a witness of your love so strong that it cannot be ignored.

May all who see us hear about you in their own language of love.

Amen.

Pastor Stephen

# OUR CHURCH FAMILY

## Birthdays

Sandra Greene 5/5

Iris Workman 5/8

Carol Fonville 5/17

Mary Pettigrew 5/17

Matt Rice 5/23

Gayle Watson 5/31

## Anniversaries

Spanky & Mary Newsome 5/28

## Those Remaining in Our Prayers

Buster Freeman

Nell Allred

Amber Massey

Joe Strickland

Ross Strange Sr.

Trisha Shelly

Ray Palyok

Lewis Fowler

Carolyn Wolley / Family

Dave Smudski / Family

David Hodges

Susan (Susie) Horne

Brenda Grogan

Spanky Newsome

Holly Bent

Troy Marquardt

Blake Jones

June Sellars

Nanci Isley

Curtis Foster

Jon & Judy Kipp

Mike Smith

Family of John Garrison

Kay Causey

Gayle Pollard Watson

## Prayers

If you need prayers or know someone that does please let us know.

You can call the office or call your Deacon.

We are here to assist in anyway that's helpful.

# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- **Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>**
  - *Finance Meeting at 11:00 am*
- **Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**
  - *Official Board Meeting at 6:00pm*
- **Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>**
  - *Margaret Lightbourne Circle at 11:00 am*
    - *Harbor Inn / Spouses Welcome / RSVP to Carol F.*
  - *Centennial Circle at 5:30 pm*
- **Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>**
  - *Hot Dog Lunch & Cake Auction after worship*
- **Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>**
  - *Pentecost Sunday*
  - *UCC Offering Strengthen the Church*
- **Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>**
  - *Memorial Day: Office is Closed*
- **Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>**
  - *Deacons Meeting at 6:00 pm*

*The John Graves Sunday School will be studying the New Testament book of James starting Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>.*

*Please join us!*

## **Community Engagement**

Blessed Sacrament Food Distribution will be moving their location to their building on our block. We have agreed to allow them to use our parking lot for their distribution lines.

2nd Mondays from 10:30 - 1:30 pm

4th Mondays from 1:30 - 3:30 pm

*(Exceptions are May and December)*

# THEMES & LITURGISTS

## Communion

Judy Hodges & Phil Bray 5/3

## Greeter

Eleanor Lovgren

## Ushers

Benji Terrell (head)

Julie Miller, Eleanor Lovgren, Charlie Vitou

## Liturgists

May 3<sup>rd</sup> - Sherry Massey

May 10<sup>th</sup> - Jamie Fonville

May 17<sup>th</sup> - Sandra Greene

May 24<sup>th</sup> - Tena Barnwell

May 31<sup>st</sup> - Judy Hodges

## Receptions

Please join us in the parlor for fellowship and light refreshments after  
Worship on Sundays.

# CHURCH INFORMATION

## Mission Statement

*(Revised 2/4/24)*

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."

## Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 9 am - 12 pm

## 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

Organist / Choir Director: Matt Rice

Custodian: Rodney Paul Sr.

Office Administrator: Debbie Norris