

APRIL 2025

Connection

Striving to become living expressions of God's extravagant grace and love.

Something new for Easter!

Dear Church,

I am excited to share about a unique opportunity that will be available to you – and our whole neighborhood! – during Holy Week. Scott Erickson, an artist, has created a modern twist on the Stations of the Cross called “Stations in the Street.” He encourages churches to post the Stations in public, on the church property, so that church members and passersby alike can engage with the images and accompanying reflections. My hope is that this public art will inspire deeper devotion as we remember Jesus’ journey to the cross, and that it will pique the interest of our neighbors as well.

The Stations will be posted from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday in the grassy area along our Front Street entrance. I'll leave you with these words from the artist:

“As you work through these stations, may you see that we are not troubled guests in this world... that we are not forsaken... and that the good news of this season was expressed best by Jesus when He said... “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

May you experience the good news of this season, during Lent, Easter, and beyond!

Blessings,
Grace

Holy Week

Palm Sunday - April 13

10:30am Fellowship

11:00am Worship

“Stations in the Street” available all week in grassy lot on Front Street

Maundy Thursday - April 17

6:00pm “Dinner Church” &
Tenebrae Service in Fellowship Hall

Easter Sunday - April 20

10:30am Fellowship

11:00am Worship

+ Bring flowers to decorate the cross!

+ Crafts for kids available.



IN THIS ISSUE

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Sing out your joy!

Alamance Chorale Spring Concert
 May 6, 2025
 7:30 p.m.

Walter M. Williams High School
 1307 South Church Street, Burlington, NC 27215

The Alamance Chorale will present its 2025 Spring Concert on Tuesday, May 6, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at Walter M. Williams High School in Burlington. Following two well-received “Christmas Joy” performances in December 2024, the Chorale will complete its 2024-25 celebration of joy with a program comprising works from Bach’s “Jesu, Priceless Treasure” to Dolly Parton’s “Light of a Clear Blue Morning.” Other familiar numbers will include Irving Berlin’s “Blue Skies,” Carly Simon’s “Let the River Run,” and an arrangement of the hymn “It Is Well with My Soul.”

This will be the Alamance Chorale’s first performance at the high school located at 1307 South Church Street, Burlington, NC. Currently nearly 90 voices strong, the Alamance Chorale is a volunteer organization that was started in 1974 to provide local vocalists an opportunity to perform quality music, both sacred and secular, to the people of Alamance County and the surrounding areas. The Chorale is a member of the Alamance County Arts Council and is open to anyone interested in joining.

Bring your family and friends and be prepared to leave the performance with a smile on your face and a song in your heart!

Resurrection rumblings

In *Easter Earthquake*, James A. Harnish explores the “earthshaking promise” of Jesus’ resurrection. Easter Sunday “shatters the power of fear,” he writes. “Because Christ is risen, we no longer allow fear to dominate, control or manipulate us. We don’t remain imprisoned in the tombs of our past failures or buried under the weight of present anxiety. In the risen Christ, old things pass away and everything becomes new.”

Easter, Harnish adds, is proof that God hasn’t forsaken us and is present among us. “The Resurrection contradicts the assumption that Christ resides on an ethereal cloud in a distant heaven. Rather, we find him on the dusty road that leads to the real stuff of our ordinary world.”

Jesus’ followers can find him everywhere, Harnish concludes. “The risen Christ will meet us along the confused, chaotic, fearful paths of our lives and speak the same words the women hear at the tomb, ‘Do not be afraid.’”

FIRST REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NEW MINISTRY TEAM!

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Subcommittees include

- “FRIENDLY VISITORS”
- “CONNECT”
- “RECONNECT”

Our church has created a new ministry team that will focus on our “inward” outreach, including, but not limited to, our Friendly Visitors project, visitor and new member outreach, and checking in on members who we haven’t seen in a while. Want to learn more? Ask us!

Join Us!

Contact Brenda Sawyer, Mike Young, Kay Hunkins or Laura Field for more information

Birthdays

- 5 Mike Taylor
- 7 Becca Merrill
- 12 Ray Deal



Easter insights

Did you know the word *Easter* never appears in the Bible? It may be a variant of the name Eostre, a pagan fertility goddess who symbolized rebirth and spring. *Eostre* stems from the Proto-Germanic word for *dawn*, which Christians connect to Jesus’ victory over darkness.

The ancient tradition of Easter baskets also has ties to Eostre, whose symbol was a rabbit. Christians likely adapted the practice of bringing eggs and seeds as an offering to Eostre. Some Orthodox Christians continue a tradition of having a priest bless baskets of Easter food on Holy Saturday. Items usually hold special symbolism, such as Paska bread, cured meats, colored eggs, salt, horseradish and lamb-shaped butter.



Consistory Notes

The Consistory of FRUCC met on Wednesday, March 12, 2025. In addition to Grace McMullen, there were eight members in attendance

Approval of Reports

The February 2025 minutes and financial reports were approved.

Ministry Reports

Mission and Outreach

- Housing Task Force is working on finalizing the team and plan to set a date for an organizational meeting before Easter
- Church World Service involvement includes Pastor Grace and Bev Pugh meeting on March 4 with Bethany Showalter, Interim Office Director (Durham). Evening Circle may collaborate with this effort.
- Habitat for Humanity of Alamance County has a Unity Build scheduled for May or early June. Bev Pugh serving on the Unity Build Committee with pastors and church leaders.

Worship

- The FRUCC Choir is invited to join FCUCC Choir for a Southern Conference UCC event on April 5 at First Christian.
- Laura, Derek, and David continue working on our new streaming strategy and workflow for our Sunday worship services. We are now simultaneously live streaming to Facebook and YouTube via StreamYard.
- Claudette decorated for Lent. The team is discussing decorations for Easter.

Congregational Care

- The Friendly Visitors Team has rescheduled the canceled meeting for 3/16. We currently have 10 visitors. Kenny is moving to the reconnect team. There may be others choosing to move to a different Congregational Care team after the discussion at the meeting. We are visiting five members on a consistent basis and more when the need arises.
- Connect Team members Brenda, Mike, and Kay met recently and discussed how to enhance our welcome to new friends (visitors). The concerns were how to approach, welcome, and follow up with new people and repeat visitors, and how the congregation can enhance the welcome. Kay has met with Arleen to

learn how the Greeters Team contributes to this effort already. Future thoughts are toward designing events that purposely reach out to new faces in the community and let them know about our church, welcome them to join us, and also thoughts about how we should invite folks to join us for occasions we already have planned...ie, breakfast on March 23.

- The Reconnect Team has Kenny and Laura heading the Reconnect efforts for Congregational Care. Kenny shared with Kay that he would like for The Willows residents to be included in this effort. Kay is scheduling a meeting with Wendy Covington, Willows Services coordinator, to learn if our current outreach to the Willows is sufficient, and might there be other needs or wishes we could help with. Consistory discussed that this would be separate from Congregational Care.

Trustees

- There was a report of a small amount of graffiti in the lady's restroom on the 2nd floor. It was easily removed. However, we all need to be aware of this so that it does not become an ongoing problem. Also, There has been some ongoing discussion and questions from Endowment about the want/need for cameras by the Tarpley Street door. Currently, this item is on hold.

Old Business

- Fountain repair quotes were submitted for the brick and autofill. We will also need to cap off the faucet before the plumbing work is done. Consistory approved.
- The Building Superintendent task force submitted a proposal to the Consistory. Because the position is beyond the budget, the task force will need to present the proposal to the Endowment Committee, send it back to the Consistory, and put it up for a Congregational vote. The Consistory approved the proposal moving forward.

New Business

- The scholarship committee needs a chair. Carol has sent scholarship applications to Williams and Western high schools.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Field, Secretary

“There are always flowers for those who want to see them.” –Henry Matisse

Connection is published monthly by

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Suggestions and contributions for our newsletter are welcomed and encouraged. The deadline for each issue is the 15th of each month.

Sunday Services

9:30 a.m. Faith Formation
 11:00 a.m. Worship

All are welcome!

Jesus didn't reject people. Neither do we.


Stay Connected

If you haven't done so already, please be sure you join FRUCC's social media accounts.


Website:

firstreformeducc.org

Facebook:

First Reformed UCC of Burlington, NC 

Instagram:

frucc_of_burlington_nc 



8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Tuesday - Friday

Evening Circle
 Thursday, April 10 at 7 p.m.
Second Thursdays 7 p.m.

The Morning Circle will meet
 Wednesday, April 2, at 10:00 a.m.
All are welcome!
Morning Circle
 First Wednesdays 10 a.m. in church parlor

Meals on Wheels
 Delivery Dates April 7 - 11

Greeters: Don Doornheim, David French, Claudette Fitzgerald
Trustee on Call: David French

Senior Adults
 Thursday, April 24
 11:30 a.m. at Southbound Sandwich Works

Creation Care

Sir Robert Baden-Powell, who founded the Boy Scouts, asked troop members to “leave this world a little better than you found it.” For Christians, that aim is rooted in Scripture. Using a Bible-like parable, biology professor Michael Duncan writes: “Imagine you owned a property and rented it out to tenants for a period of time. Upon move-in, the tenants found the place clean and in perfect working order. As the owner of the property, it is your desire to see that the tenants regard the condition of the property and live in such a way that does not destroy the house. This is the mindset that we should adopt as tenants living on the earth.”



Almost five centuries ago, John Calvin encouraged creation care too. “The earth was given to man, with this condition, that he should occupy himself in its cultivation,” he wrote. “Let him who possesses a field, so partake of its yearly fruits, that he may not suffer the ground to be injured by his negligence, but let him endeavor to hand it down to posterity as he received it, or even better cultivated. Moreover, that this economy, and this diligence, with respect to those good things which God has given us to enjoy, may flourish among us; let everyone regard himself as the steward of God in all things which he possesses.”