

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Affiliated with the United Church of Christ & the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



April 30, 2023

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

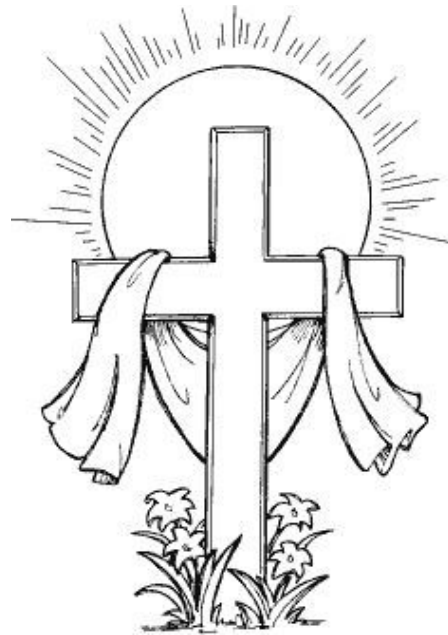
11:00 AM

April 30, 2023: The Fourth Sunday of Easter

The Easter season proclaims a great mystery: *Christ is risen from the dead!* Resurrection is the transformation of the finite to the infinite. Resurrection undoes the finality of death with the power of immortal life.

Resurrection is not simple, nor obvious. It defies the natural order. It pushes us beyond our every notion of what can be known and shown to be real. But today we live into this hope: In the resurrection, God emerges triumphant over death itself.

Celebrate the Resurrection!



Today's Readings:

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23

John 10:1-10

Theme: Christ the Gate and Guardian

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy Johnson

*Whoever you are, and wherever
you are on life's journey, you
are welcome here!*

Prelude

Shelly Conrad

Welcome, Prayer Requests, and Announcements

Centering Music

“Forever Grateful”

Shelly and Congregation

You did not wait for me to draw near to You; But you clothed Yourself in frail humanity.
You did not wait for me to cry out to You; But You let me hear Your voice calling me,
And I'm forever grateful to You. I'm forever grateful for the cross
I'm forever grateful to You, that You came to seek and save the lost.

Invocation

One: Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, from God our Creator, Christ our Savior, and
the Holy Spirit, our eternal Advocate and friend.

All: And also with you.

One: Come! Walk in green pastures.

All: We follow the Shepherd.

One: Come, lie down in green pastures.

All: We trust the Shepherd.

One: Come, dine at the table of abundance.

All: We are fed by the Shepherd.

One: Come, dwell in God's house.

**All: We live in the Shepherd's care. When we face darkness and death,
walk beside us. When we hunger for your love, fill us with your presence.
When we are fearful, feed us at your table. May we dwell in the house of
goodness and mercy all the days of our lives. Amen!**

*Worship Song

“This is the Day” This is the day that the Lord has made;
I will rejoice and celebrate!
This is the day that the Lord has made;
I will rejoice; I will rejoice and celebrate!

He goes before me (echo: He goes before me)
He walks beside me (echo: He walks beside me)
He lives within me – He's the lover of my soul.
He's my defender (echo: He's my defender)
He's my provider (echo: He's my provider)
His overflowing mercies are brand new every day!

*** Opening Prayer**

***The Peace of Christ**

One: People of God, the Peace of Christ be with you, All!

All: And also with you!

One: Let us share with one another a sign of peace.

(You may choose to shake hands, hug, or simply acknowledge one another without physical touch based on your comfort and/or health needs.)

The dedication of Elliott Robert Davis

First Reading

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Responsorial

Psalm 23 - The Message

One: God, my Shepherd! I don't need a thing! You have bedded me down in lush meadows, you find me quiet pools to drink from. True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction.

All: Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk at my side. Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.

One: You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies. You revive my drooping head, my cup brims with blessing.

All: Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life. I'm back home in the house of God for the rest of my life. Amen!

***Gospel Acclamation**

"Thy Word" #664

Refrain:

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way,
still you're there right beside me.

Jesus be my guide and hold me to your side,
and I will love you to the end.

Refrain



*Gospel

John 10:1-10

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

One: This is the Gospel of Christ for the people of God.

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Christ the Gate and Guardian

Pastor Joy

Hymn

“Be Thou My Vision” #502

Be thou my Vision, O lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art---
Thou my best thought by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
Be thou my Wisdom, and thou my true Word,
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
high King of heaven, my Treasure thou art.
High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heaven’s Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Communion

Pastor: People of God, come to the table! God prepares the table for us, offering us a feast of abundant love. Christ promised that as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we not only remember him, but we commune with him by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

All: This is a table of grace. There is room around it for every soul that was, and is, and is to come. Our cups overflow with the bounty of grace, for our Shepherd knows us as no one else can — restoring our souls, leading us onward, nourishing us with grace and mercy.

Pastor: And so, here at this table we take bread and cup and ask the Holy Spirit to make it for us: communion with Christ, who gave his life as the bread of heaven and as the cup of eternal life.

All: Here at this table we remember that Christ gave his entire life as an outpouring of God's love—a love that will, one day, renew all things. Amen.

Pastor: People of God, Come to the table and feast with the Shepherd!

Communion Music

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer ("Debts and Debtors")

One: The Lord be with you.

All: ***And also with you.***

One: *Let us pray:* For the prayer requests that have come to us today, whether joys or sorrows.... [prayer requests are presented] Holy and Loving God, in your wisdom, meet all of these needs in the perfect way of your grace.

All: God hear our prayer!

One: For all who long to hear your voice and follow your leading yet find that the world gets in the way.

All: God hear our prayer!

One: That we will walk without fear and follow you in truth and action.

All: God hear our prayer!

One: For all that we hold in the silence of our hearts, we come to you in the confidence of quiet, O God, and lift our petitions privately to you. (*Silent prayer*)... Almighty God, Sovereign of Heaven, shower your blessings upon all people! Move the mountains in our lives, or help to move us so that we might be fully at peace. This we pray in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray...

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 debts as we forgive our debtors—and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory forever." Amen.

Offering

Our offerings are first and foremost what we give to the world through justice, kindness, and mercy—and these we can do every day. Our offerings can also take the form of financial contributions to the church to support our ministries.

**If you are not in the sanctuary, online donations can be made at:
www.communityunited.church**

*Or, if you prefer to mail in a check, that can be addressed to the church at:
1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508*

Ministry of Music

*Your offerings make this inclusive ministry possible. Thank you! Because of you, our church reaches through and beyond Erie: providing worship, community, and service.
As you can give generously, it is well received.*

Offertory Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Congregational Response #658

“Awesome God”

Our God is an awesome God
He reigns from heaven above
With wisdom, power, and love
Our God is an awesome God



*Departing Prayer

One: Gracious God, Gentle Shepherd, Holy Spirit, may we receive your abundant blessings and your precious care with gratitude and devotion. Help us to return to the flock when we stray from your leading and be with us so that we might flourish and grow in the knowledge of your love.

All: Grant us both strength and peace even as we wander into chaos and confusion. Be with us and guide us and instill in us the knowledge and comfort that you provide. Amen!

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn

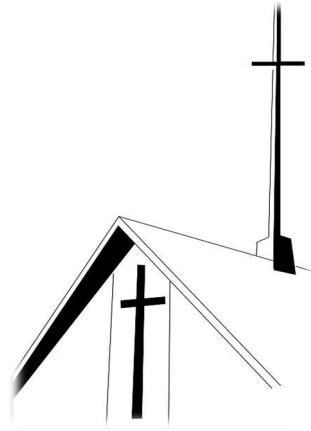
“The Summons” #350

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

**Thank you for worshipping with us this morning at
Community United Church!**



**Next Week:
Fifth Sunday of Easter
11:00 AM**

Readings:

Acts 7: 55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

John 14:1-14

Theme: Works and Wisdom

***Need to contact us for prayer, conversation, or to connect
online with a small group or church ministry?***

1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508

(814) – 864 – 4429

www.communityunited.church



Community United Church

THE ALTAR FLOWERS THIS MORNING ARE GIVEN BY GINNIE BURGER TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND IN MEMORY OF HER MOTHER WHO PASSED AWAY 6 YEARS AGO.

Coming Up:

- May 8th Church Council meeting at 6:30pm
- May 14th is Mother's Day
- May 17th Resonate 7:00 pm

Special Announcements:

- **The Ladies Group is collecting travel size personal care items. Please see Carol Rodgers For questions relating to these important donations.**

Need hearing assistance? We have four available units. Please talk to our tech crew in the back of the sanctuary.



WE REMEMBER THOSE IN OUR ARMED FORCES:

Jacob Snyder (Army), Nick Duncan (Army), Samantha McHenry (Army),
Chris Duncan (Marines), Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott
(Army), Mathew Anderson (Army)
and DJ Miaczynski (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Aaron and Liz Pifer and family, Andy Via, Dorothy Moyer, Kathy Koziol, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett and
family and friends, Julie Minich, Rod and Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Sue Scheiwer, Diane Walker,
George Churley, Robin Adams, Ralph Kester, John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool,
Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone, Jared and Priscilla Hall, Ron Celeski,
Annette Minich.

Council Members:

Debbie Anderson (President), Bob Martin (VP), Dina Johnson (Secretary), Janice Skelly, Mike Pruzinsky, April Knapp, Patti Rogers, Carol Rodgers, and Angel Hall

