

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



August 20, 2023

The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

"Just As I Am"

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy Johnson

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

Centering Music

“The Power of Your Love” #467

Lord, I come to you; let my heart be changed, renewed,
flowing from the grace that I’ve found in you.
And Lord, I’ve come to know the weaknesses I see in me
will be stripped away by the power of your love.

Refrain

*Hold me close, let your love surround me. Bring me near, draw me to your side.
And as I wait, I’ll rise up like the eagle, and I will soar with you;
your Spirit leads me on in the power of your love.*

Lord, unveil my eyes; let me see you face to face,
The knowledge of your love as you live in me.
Lord, renew my mind as your will unfolds in my life,
In living every day by the power of your love.
(Refrain)

Invocation

(adapted from the works of Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, “Hold Fast to What is Good.”)

One: Children of God: Welcome!

All: Welcome to this place of love and grace,

One: Welcome to this place of hope and perseverance,

All: God invites all of us to be a part of the beloved community,

One: God invites all of us to share in the good news:

All: We are welcome, just as we are. We are loved, just as we are.

One: In gratitude for all of this, let us worship God.

All: AMEN!

***Opening songs**

“Great and Mighty is He”

Great and mighty is He, Great and mighty is He
clothed in glory, arrayed in splendor, Great and mighty is He
Let us lift His Name on high, celebrate His grace
For He has redeemed our lives and He reigns on high

“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”

What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms

Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms
Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms

What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms

“The Potter’s Hand”

Beautiful Lord, wonderful Savior. I know for sure
All of my days are held in Your hands; crafted into Your perfect plan

You gently call me into Your presence, guiding me by Your Holy Spirit
Teach me dear Lord to live all of my life through Your eyes

I’m captured by Your holy calling
Set me apart, I know You’re calling me to Yourself; Lead me Lord, I pray

Chorus

*Take me, mold me, use me, fill me. I give my life to the Potter’s hand
Call me, guide me, lead me, walk beside me. I give my life to the Potter’s hand*

Opening Prayer

First Reading

Romans 15:1-13 The Message

Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, “How can I help?”

That’s exactly what Jesus did. He didn’t make it easy for himself by avoiding people’s troubles but waded right in and helped out. “I took on the troubles of the troubled,” is the way Scripture puts it. Even if it was written in Scripture long ago, you can be sure it’s written for *us*. God wants the combination of his steady, constant calling and warm, personal counsel in Scripture to come to characterize *us*, keeping us alert for whatever he will do next. May our dependably steady and warmly personal God develop maturity in you so that you get along with each other as well as Jesus gets along with us all. Then we’ll be a choir—not our voices only, but our very lives singing in harmony in a stunning anthem to the God and Father of our Master Jesus!

7-13 So reach out and welcome one another to God's glory. Jesus did it; now *you* do it! Jesus, staying true to God's purposes, reached out in a special way to the Jewish insiders so that the old ancestral promises would come true for them. As a result, the non-Jewish outsiders have been able to experience mercy and to show appreciation to God. Just think of all the Scriptures that will come true in what we do! For instance:

Then I'll join outsiders in a hymn-sing; I'll sing to your name!
And this one: Outsiders and insiders, rejoice together!

And again: People of all nations, celebrate God!
All colors and races, give hearty praise!

And Isaiah's word: There's the root of our ancestor Jesse, breaking through the earth and growing tree tall, tall enough for everyone everywhere to see and take hope!

Oh! May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!

Song of Response

"I Give Myself Away"

Chorus

*I give myself away, I give myself away so You can use me
I give myself away, I give myself away so You can use me*

Here I am, here I stand, Lord, my life is in Your hands
Lord, I'm longing to see Your desires revealed in me

Take my heart, take my life as a living sacrifice
All my dreams, all my plans; Lord, I place them in Your hands

***Gospel Acclamation**

"I Love You Lord" #85

I love You Lord, and I lift my voice to worship You, Oh my soul rejoice
Take joy my King in what You hear, may it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear

***Gospel Lesson**

Luke 19:1-10 The Message

Then Jesus entered and walked through Jericho. There was a man there, his name Zacchaeus, the head tax man and quite rich. He wanted desperately to see Jesus, but the crowd was in his way—he was a short man and couldn't see over the crowd. So he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus when he came by. ⁵⁻⁷ When Jesus got to the tree, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry down. Today is my day to be a guest in your home." Zacchaeus scrambled out the tree, hardly believing his good luck,

delighted to take Jesus home with him. Everyone who saw the incident was indignant and grumped, “What business does he have getting cozy with this crook?”⁸ Zacchaeus just stood there, a little stunned. He stammered apologetically, “Master, I give away half my income to the poor—and if I’m caught cheating, I pay four times the damages.”⁹⁻¹⁰ Jesus said, “Today is salvation day in this home! Here he is: Zacchaeus, son of Abraham! For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost.”

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

“Just As I Am”

Pastor Joy

Guided Meditation

Hymn of Response

“Just As I Am” #354

Just as I am, without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd’st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within without, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve.
Because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Passing of the Peace

(When prompted, all are welcome to show a sign of peace with one another, in their own way)

Celebration of Communion

Pastor: Beloved children of God, you are personally invited to the table of Jesus, our Redeemer. It is the same Jesus who knows your name, who asks you to come forward *just as you are*, and whose love pursues you your whole life long.

All: This is a table of grace. There is room around it for every soul that was, and is, and is to come. We come to the table as a people who are learning the way of Christ. We confess that we are not always right. But we share this faith: that those who trust in Christ Jesus will grow in the assurance of God’s eternal love.

Pastor: Together, now, let us bless the elements. 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!

Communion Music

“Prayer of St. Francis” #587

Pastoral Prayer and Lord’s Prayer (“Debts and Debtors”)

One: The Lord be with you.

All: *And also, with you.*

One: Let us pray today for all whose names or circumstances have been presented before us, whether from within the sanctuary or online. Let us also pray for each individual whose name is printed on the prayer list found on the last page of the bulletin, and may we also remember and pray for all those in our armed forces.

(prayer requests are read – when you are prompted, please respond, “God, hear our prayer.”)

One: Holy and Loving God, in your wisdom, meet all these needs in the perfect way of your grace.

All: God hear our prayer!

One: For all that we hold in the silence of our hearts, we come to you now in the confidence of quiet, O God, and we ask for your healing, your grace, and your mercy upon ourselves and on those for whom we care.

(Silent prayers)

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

Your offerings make this inclusive ministry possible. Thank you! Because of you, our church reaches through and beyond Erie: providing worship, community, and service. Please give generously for the maintenance of our building, our programs and 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, which can be addressed to the church at:

1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508

Ministry of Music

“Called Me Higher”

Shelly Conrad

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Congregational Response “Majesty” #43**

**Majesty, worship his majesty; unto Jesus be all glory, honor and praise.
Majesty, kingdom authority, flow from his throne unto his own, his kingdom reigns.**

***Departing Prayer**

One: God of enduring faithfulness, we ask that you help us find way to accept ourselves as you accept us. Open our eyes to see the beauty in our own souls and help us recognize that you welcome us, love us, and have redeemed us just as we are.

All: Build our confidence, bring our talents to life, Precious Creator, so that we might understand that we are each a blessing, made in your image and treasured also for the love and care we give to each other. Amen!

***Blessing**

***Closing Song**

“Made New”

You’re calling me over, You’re pulling me close
With love You surround me, You give me hope

Chorus

Now I’m made new, because of You
You hold my head up, You remind me who I am
You hold my head up, I’m alive in You again
I’m made new, I’m made new

You’re taking me deeper, You’re making me whole
With grace You redeem me, You restore my soul
(Refrain)

You’re making me stronger, You’re healing my heart
With Your hands You hold me, You set me apart
(Refrain)

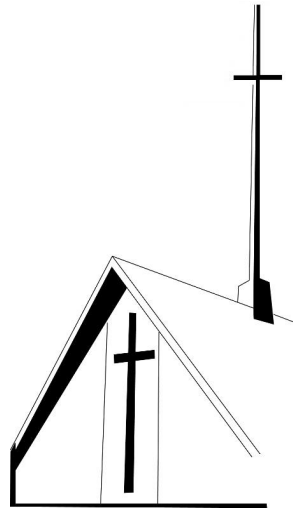


**Thank you for worshipping with us this morning at
Community United Church!**

Next Sunday - August 27, 2023

10:55 AM Announcements

11:00 AM Worship



Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

“Be Transformed”

Scripture for Study:

Isaiah 51:1-6

Psalms 138

Matthew 16:13-20

***Need to contact us for prayer, conversation, or to connect
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 to the glory of God by Cheryl Strecker for Sarah's Birthday

Please consider signing up for our prayer ministry. This is not a prayer chain, nor another meeting or committee. We simply ask for those who are interested to email communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com and let us know if we can email you prayer requests for the church. It will not become a group email chain, nor a discussion group. It is simply (but importantly) an opportunity to pray for the life and ministries of Community United Church.

Today's Elder: David Holmes Deacons: Becky Pomeroy & Nancy Alberico

UPCOMING EVENTS:

August 20: Service Sunday
August 24: "Art Show 3.2" - 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM
September 6: Bible Study – "Supper & Study" - 6:30 PM
September 11: Council Meeting – 6:30 PM
September 12: Liberty House
September 13: Spirits & Spirituality – Calamari's 7:00 PM

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), Brittany Duncan (Army), Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott (Army), Matthew Anderson (Army) and DJ Miaczynski (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett & family & friends, Rod & 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, Ron Celeski, Jan & Tim Crowe and Family, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich, Dave Pikulski, Randi Johnson, Lillian Hendrickson, Wilma and Janice Skelly, Ethel Davis, Jim Haglund, Chelsea Brown, John Waid & Dina Johnson.

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