

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



The Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

February 11, 2024

11:00 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 “Goodness is Stronger than Evil” #296

Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death.
Victory is ours, victory is ours; through him who loved us.
Victory is ours, victory is ours; through him who loved us.
(Sing 3x)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, throughout time, and in all places, your presence has been revealed in quiet moments of inspiration, and sometimes in grand manifestations too wonderful to fully explain.

All: **As your Spirit gathers us to worship today, help us to be a people who find you in the stillness and in the miraculous—and in all the many ways you reveal yourself. This we pray, through Christ our Redeemer, Amen!**

* Opening Hymn “Sing of God Made Manifest” #247

Sing of God made manifest, in a child robust and blest,
To whose home in Bethlehem, where a star had guided them,
Magi came and gifts unbound, signs mysterious and profound:
Myrrh and frankincense and gold—grave and God and King foretold.

Sing of God made manifest, when at Jordan John confessed,
“I should be baptized by you, but your bidding I will do.”
Then from heaven a double sign, dove-like Spirit, voice Divine
Hailed the true Anointed One: “This is my beloved Son.”

Sing of God made manifest, when Christ came as wedding guest
And at Cana gave a sign, turning water into wine;
Further still was love revealed, as he taught, forgave, and healed,
Bringing light and life to all—who would listen to God’s call.

Sing of God made manifest, on the cloud-capped mountain’s crest,
Where the law and prophets waned, so that Christ alone remained;
Glimpse of glory, pledge of grace, given as Jesus set his face
Towards the waiting cross and grave, sing of hope that God would save.

***Opening Prayer**

***Sign of Peace**

One: The peace of Christ be with all of you.

All: And also with you.

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

(You may choose to greet one another without physical touch based on your comfort and/or health needs.)

First Reading

2 Kings 2:1-12

Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ² Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. ³ The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent."

⁴ Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. ⁵ The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent." ⁶ Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. ⁷ Fifty men of the company of prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸ Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and the two of them crossed on dry ground.

⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit." ¹⁰ He responded, "You have asked a hard thing, yet if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not." ¹¹ As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. ¹² Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

Responsorial

Psalm 50:1-6

One: The mighty one, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

All: Our God comes and does not keep silent; before the Holy One is a devouring fire and a mighty tempest all around God.

One: God calls to the heavens above, and to the earth, that the Holy One will bring justice to God's people...

All: The heavens declare God's righteousness, for God is our Sovereign and wholly just. Amen!

***Gloria**

“Glory Be to God, Creator” #145

Glory be to God, Creator, glory be to God the Son,
Glory be to God the Spirit, known as Three, yet God the One

As it was in the beginning, it is now and so shall be,
In a world without an ending, glory through eternity.

Holy, holy God Almighty! Holy, holy Prince of Peace!
Holy, holy Wind of Presence! Holy, holy, holy! Amen!

***Gospel**

Mark 9:2-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling bright, such as no one on earth could brighten them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us set up three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” ⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Christ’s Transfiguration and the Life of the Church

Pastor Rich

Songs & Prayers of Response

“Surely the Presence” #131 & “Holy Ground #654

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place; I can feel his mighty power and his grace.
I can hear the brush of angels’ wings, I see glory on each face;
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place. *(Repeat all)*

One: Holy and loving God, as you transfigured Christ on the mountaintop, transform us so that we can always perceive you, everywhere and in all places.

All: God you are here! You are present: In moments of miraculous glory. In the burning of our hearts as we hear the living Word. At the table where our lives are nourished by your grace. And in every human relationship that embodies unconditional love. In all these moments, we stand on holy ground. Amen!

We are standing on holy ground, and I know there are angels all around.
Let us praise Jesus now; we are standing in his presence on holy ground.
(Repeat all)

COMMUNION LITURGY

Pastor: People of God, come to the table! All who hunger and thirst are fed here by the Servant of servants, Jesus Christ. Here, all are loved, all are welcomed, all is forgiven.

All: Here at this table, food for the body also becomes food for the spirit.

Pastor: This is a table of grace. There is room around it for every soul that was, and is, and is to come.

All: We come to the table as 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: And so, here at this Table we take bread and cup and ask the Holy Spirit to make it for us communion with the living Christ, body and blood, love poured out, forever!

All: Here at this Table we remember that Christ indeed 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

"Glorious Day"

Cheryl Strecker

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

One: The Lord be with you.

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

One: People of God, let us center our hearts and extend the spiritual power within us. *Let us pray:* For the prayer requests that have come to us today, whether joys or sorrows...*[prayer requests are presented]*...We also pray for everyone who has asked their name to be on the prayer list *[see last page of the bulletin]*. 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 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.

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.

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

Offertory

“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us”

Cheryl & Sarah



Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Congregational Response #147

“Praise God, from whom all blessing flow!

Praise God, all creatures high and low:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, in Jesus fully known!

Creator, Word, and Spirit one!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia!”

*Departing Prayer

One: Holy and loving God, your glory, love, and presence are always with us. You bring us to the height of heaven so that we might be inspired and empowered to go into every valley of shadow.

All: Spirit of God, help us now to be the Body of Christ in poignant and empowered ways. Renew us! Revive us! As you do, we pray that you will help us to grow in spirit and numbers for the sake of your reign. Amen!

*Closing Hymn

“Shine, Jesus, Shine” #319

Lord, the light of your love is shining,
In the midst of the darkness shining;
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us,
Set us free by the truth you now bring us,
Shine on me, shine on me.

Chorus:

*Shine, Jesus shine, fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light.*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
From the shadows into your radiance;
By the blood I may enter your brightness,
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness,
Shine on me, shine on me.

(Chorus)

As we gaze on your kingly brightness,
So our faces display your likeness;
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story,
Shine on me, shine on me.

(Chorus)



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



**February 14, 2024: Ash Wednesday
6:30 PM**

February 18, 2024: The First Sunday of Lent

Readings to Study:

1 Peter 3:18-22

Psalm 25:1-10

Mark 1:9-15

Theme:

Christ in the Desert

***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 Kathy Koziol in
Celebration of Lorre's 91st birthday on 2-18**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- February 13: Liberty House
February 14: Ash Wednesday, 6:30 PM
February 18: Service Sunday
February 21: Resonate 6:30 PM
February 25: Praise & Prayer 9:00 AM
February 27: Ladies Lunch

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

Please submit any bulletin requests by **Tuesday** to ensure there is time to get them in.

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), DJ Miaczynski (Marines), Jaden O'Hara (Army)
& Toby Charlton (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett & family & friends, Rod & Dew Johnson,
Harry Lamb, Diane Walker, 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, Ethel Davis,
Jim Haglund, Chelsea Brown, John Waid, Patti Rogers, Celeste Eller & Family, Shirley Carrier,
Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Gary Peck, Jerry Koziol, Uncle Charlie,
Carol & Doug Rodgers, and Jane Moran.

Council Members:

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