

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



Community United Church Renewal Series

Called to Be the Church, Part 1

January 29, 2023:

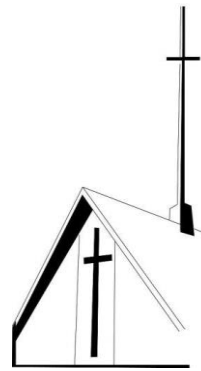
11:00 AM

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

We are now in the Season of Epiphany! The word epiphany means “to reveal.” On the first Sunday of Epiphany many Christian churches commemorate the story of the three Magi who followed a star to Bethlehem—the time at which Christ began to be revealed to the world. For seven weeks we are in the Season of Epiphany, from that story of the mysterious star over Bethlehem, to Christ’s transfiguration on the mountain. In the final four weeks of this season, we are exploring what it means to be called by God to be the church, the Body of Christ on earth. Join us each week!



Today’s Readings:
Romans 5:1-8, 12-21
Psalm 24
Matthew 12:46-50



Theme:
The Body of Christ:
Who Belongs?

Pastoral Team:
Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty, Senior Pastor
Pastor Joy Johnson, Associate Minister

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

Prelude

Welcome, Prayer Requests & Announcements

Centering Music

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: Holy and loving God, you are the Source of all that is—and all that will be. You are not only our Creator, but you seek to be in loving communion with us, and to reveal yourself through us, so that all of creation might know your presence, your wisdom, and your grace.

All: As a people who believe in you through Christ, we offer our worship today not only because it is holy and right to do so, but also because we are seeking inspiration and renewal for our church and our ministries—that we, too, will continue to be a place where you, God, are known. Amen!

* Opening Hymn “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” #68

Come, thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise God’s name—I’m fixed upon it—name of God’s redeeming love.

Here I raise to thee an altar, hither by thy help I’ve come;
And I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger, bought me with his precious love.

O to grace how great a debtor—daily I’m constrained to be!
Let thy goodness like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee;
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my heart, O, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.

* **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 shake hands, hug, or simply acknowledge one another without physical touch based on your comfort and/or health needs.)

First Reading

The Apostle Paul's First Letter to the Romans 5:1-8, 12-21

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

¹²Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— ¹³for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

¹⁵But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰But law came in, so that the trespass might increase, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹so that, just as sin reigned in death, so grace might also reign through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Responsorial

Psalm 24

One: The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it, for God has founded the earth on the seas and established it on the rivers.

All: Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in God's holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false and do not swear deceitfully.

One: They will receive a blessing from the LORD and vindication from the God of their salvation. Such is the company of those who seek God—who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

All: Lift up your heads, O gates! Be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle

One: Lift up your heads, O gates! Be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory?

All: The LORD of hosts, God is the King of glory. Amen.

*Doxology

"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

Matthew 12:46-50

While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷ Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸ But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Called to Be the Church, Part 1:
The Body of Christ: Who Belongs?

Pastor Rich

Every promise we can make, every prayer and step of faith;
Every difference we will make—is only by his grace.
Every mountain we will climb, every ray of hope we shine;
Every blessing left behind—is only by his grace.

Chorus:

*Grace alone, which God supplies;
Strength unknown he will provide,
Christ in us, our cornerstone,
We will go forth in grace alone.*

Every soul we long to reach, every heart we hope to teach;
Everywhere we share God’s peace—is only by his grace.
Every loving word we say, every tear we wipe away;
Every sorrow turned to praise—is only by his grace.

(Chorus)

COMMUNION LITURGY

Pastor: People of God, come to the table! 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. 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: 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!



Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

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: O God, for the foundation of Community United Church, we give thanks. For deliverance through past times of trouble—and for our many times of great joy and victory—we remember your presence. For the present ministries of our church, we pray for blessings. And for the future ministries of our church, we ask for inspiration and guidance.

All: **God hear our prayer!**

One: That we would truly be open to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

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 and Time for Contemplation

Cheryl Strecker

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 Thanks

*Congregational Response #147

***“Praise God, from whom all blessings 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, help us to believe—and then to live into—the spiritual truth that we are the body of Christ.

All: As Christ reigns from the glory of heaven, grant us the spiritual gifts and grace to be Christ’s hands and feet on earth; to be the instruments through which the living Word still speaks—and to be so transformed by your grace that heavenly peace will manifest in and through this community. Amen!

*Blessing

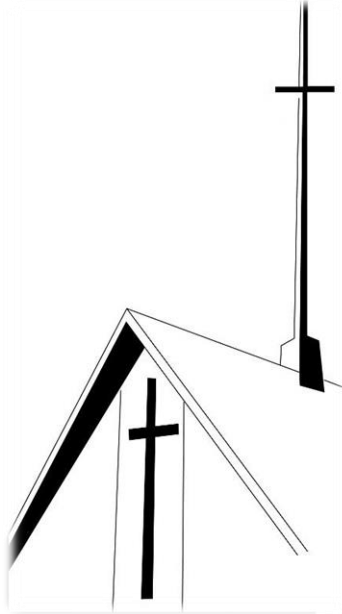
*Closing Hymn

“Find Us Faithful” #497

O may all who come behind us find us faithful;
May the fire of our devotion light their way.
May the footprints that we leave—
Lead them to believe,
And the lives we live inspire them to obey.
O may all who come behind us find us faithful.
(Repeat)



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



Next Sunday, February 5, 2023:

11:00 AM

Readings:

1 Corinthians 12:4-31

Psalm 95:1-7

John 14:1-3, 25-27

Called to Be the Church, Part 2:

The Body of Christ: Spiritual Gifts for All

***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 AND IN CELEBRATION OF BILL DODSWORTH'S BIRTHDAY FROM KATHY KOZIOL

Today: Congregational Meeting Immediately following worship.

WE REMEMBER THOSE IN OUR ARMED FORCES:

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

PRAYERS FOR:

Rod and Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Sue Scheiwer, Diane Walker, George Churley, Robin Adams, Ralph Kester, Sharon Cooper, Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone, Jared and Priscilla Hall, Ron Celeski, Sally Cubetus, and Annette and Ralph Minich.

Council Members:

Debbie Anderson (President), Bob Martin (VP), Dina Johnson (Secretary), Ginnie Burger (Treas.), Mike Pruzinsky, April Knapp, Patti Rogers, Carol Rodgers, and Angel Hall