

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



May 7, 2023

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

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

“As We Gather” #646

As we gather may your Spirit work within us,
As we gather may we glorify your Name.
Knowing well that as your hearts begin to worship,
We'll be blessed because we came—
We'll be blessed because we came.
(Repeat as guided)

Invocation:

One: We gather in the presence of God: Creator, Redeemer, and Enduring Presence.

All: Amen!

One: From the week that has been, and before the week that will be, we gather to worship you, O God, and to be nurtured in the ways of grace.

**All: In the name of Christ we gather, seeking wisdom, restoration, and peace.
Amen.**

*Song of Worship

“Sing a New Song” #10

Refrain:

*Sing a new song unto the Lord;
Let your song be sung from mountains high.
Sing a new song unto the Lord, singing, “Alleluia.”*

Yahweh's people dance for joy; O come before the Lord.
And play for him on glad tambourines, and let your trumpet sound.
(Refrain)

Rise, O children, from your sleep; your Savior now has come.
He has turned your sorrow to joy, and filled your soul with song.
(Refrain)

Glad my soul for I have seen the glory of the Lord.
The trumpet sounds; the dead shall be raised. I know my Savior lives.
(Refrain)

*Opening Prayer

A Time for Reflection:

One: God, it is the first morning of a new week. Somehow, we are here. Some of us chose to be here with glad and expecting hearts; or, maybe someone chose for us to be here, and so we might be reluctant. Some have high hopes. Some have mixed spirits. Some are seeking inspiration. Some are seeking relief from pain, or direction in life.

All: All of these can be offerings to God—offerings of where we really are in life. Offerings of honesty. Let us be still in the presence of the God who welcomes us as we are.

[Pause for silence]

One: Do thoughts of the past keep you feeling bound and trapped? Remember: what has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done. Let it be.

All: What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done. Let it be.

[Pause for silence]

One: Let us look expectantly, now, to new possibilities. A new day, a new future, secure in the love of God.

All: And so we pray: Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, pain-bearer, life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be; Father and Mother of us all, Loving God in whom is heaven: the hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by all created beings. Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Song of Praise

“Jesus, Your Name” #361

Jesus, your name is power. Jesus your name is might.
Jesus, your name will break every stronghold,
Jesus, your name is life.

Jesus, your name is healing. Jesus, your name gives sight.
Jesus, your name will free every captive,
Jesus your name is life.

Jesus, your name is holy. Jesus, your name brings light.
Jesus, your name, above every other,
Jesus, your name is life.

Scripture Lesson:**John 14:1-14**

[Jesus said:] “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Doing Greater Works

Pastor Rich

Song of Response

“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.

Chorus:

*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.

(Chorus)

Celebration of Communion

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: The peace of Christ be with all of you.

All: And also with you.

Pastor: Before we come to the table, let us share with one another a sign of peace

(All are welcome to show a sign of Christian love to one another, in their own way)

Pastor: Having signaled our love for one another, and for God, let us center our hearts on the sacrament. Together, 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

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 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.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Congregational Response (BLUE) #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: Risen Christ, you prepare a place for us, in the home of the Creator of all.

All: Draw us more deeply into yourself, through scripture and sacrament, silence and song, so that when our hearts are troubled, we will know you more completely as the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“We Are Called to Be God’s People” #580

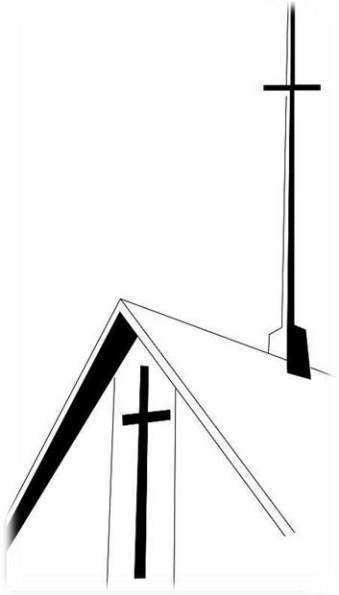
We are called to be God’s people,
Showing by our lives his grace,
One in heart and one in spirit,
Sign of hope for all the race.
Let us show how he has changed us,
And remade us as his own,
Let us share our life together
As we shall around his throne.

We are called to be God’s servants,
Working in his world today;
Taking his own task upon us,
All his sacred words obey.
Let us rise, then, to his summons,
Dedicate to him our all,
That we may be faithful servants,
Quick to answer now his call.

We are called to be God’s prophets,
Speaking for the truth and right,
Standing firm for godly justice,
Bringing evil things to light.
Let us seek the courage needed,
Our high calling to fulfill,
That the world may know the blessing
Of the doing of God’s will.



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



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

Assigned Readings from the Lectionary for Study:

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:8-20

John 14:15-21

Theme: Searching for God, Finding Love

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

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