

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



October 8, 2023

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost:

Who Inherits the Kingdom?

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy Johnson

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

Memorial for Louis VanBuskirk

Centering Music “Surely the Presence” #131

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)

Invocation to Worship

One: Holy and loving God, as wheat is gathered from many fields into one bread, and grapes are harvested from many vines into one cup, so too you are the God who cultivates your people from all corners of creation.

All: In this time of worship, may our minds be fashioned to the mind of Christ, who—with the Holy Spirit—lives and reigns with you; one God, forever and ever. Amen!

*Opening Song “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” #59

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother—all who live in love are thine;
Teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals, join the happy chorus which the morning stars began;
Love divine is reigning o’er us, joining all within its span.
Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.

***Opening Prayer**

***Passing of the Peace**

One: The Lord be with you!

All: And also with you!

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

[Please be mindful that some people may not be able to shake hands or hug due to health precautions]

First Reading

Paul's Letter to the Philippians 2:1-13

If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...

⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Responsorial

Psalm 19

One: The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.

All: Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

One: The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart.

All: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. 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**

Matthew 21:33-46

³³ “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went away. ³⁴ When the harvest time had come, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵ But the tenants seized his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷ Then he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ ³⁹ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹ They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

*‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes’?*

⁴³ “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruits. ⁴⁴ The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Song of Response

“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.

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: 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

Andrew Rainbow & Bob Martin



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*] 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

Ministry of Music

"Secret of Life"

Andrew Rainbow & Bob Martin

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, you set before us the goal of new life in Christ.

All: May we live in the power of Christ's resurrection and bring forth the fruit of your gentle and loving rule. Amen!

*Blessing

***Closing Song**

"Christ Be My Leader" #453

Christ be my leader by night as by day;
Safe through the darkness for he is the Way.
Gladly I follow, my future his care,
Darkness is daylight when Jesus is there.

Christ be my teacher in age as in youth,
Drifting or doubting, for he is the Truth.
Grant me to trust him; though shifting as sand,
Doubt cannot daunt me; in Jesus I stand.

Christ be my Savior, in calm as in strife;
Death cannot hold me for he is the Life.
Nor darkness—nor doubting—nor sin and its stain
Can touch my salvation; with Jesus I reign.

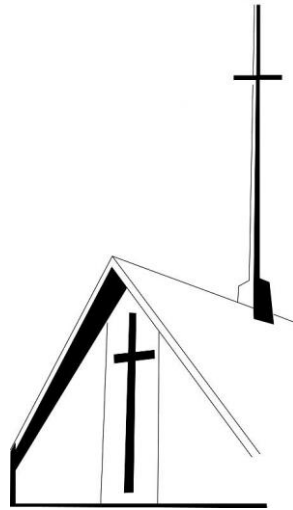


**Thank you for worshipping with us this morning at
Community United Church!**

Next Sunday - October 15, 2023

10:55 AM Announcements

11:00 AM Worship



Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

“The Called and Chosen”

Scripture for Study:

Philippians 4:4-9

Psalm 23

Matthew 22:1-14

***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 George & Judy Thomson in Memory of Pete Strecker

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: Shelly Conrad

Deacons: Carol Rodgers & Angel Conrad

Next Week's Elder: Melanie Vadzemnieks

Deacons: Patti Rogers & Michael Vahey

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 9: Council Meeting 6:30 PM

October 10: Liberty House

October 11: Spirits & Spirituality – Calamari's 7:00 PM

October 15: Service Sunday

October 18: Resonate 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), DJ Miaczynski (Marines), Jaden O'Hara (Army) & Toby Charlton (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Sarah, Liebel, 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, Patti Rogers, Celeste Eller & Family

Council Members:

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