

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



May 28, 2023

Pentecost Sunday

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!***

Prelude

Welcome, Prayer Requests, and Announcements

Memorial Day Litany

One: Before we begin our worship today, we pause as a people of faith who live in this country, the United States. We live in a time when the lion has not yet laid down with the lamb, and swords have not yet been transformed into tools of cultivation.

All: We live in an “in-between time” of the *already* and *not yet*. The Reign of God is *already* here through the life of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Even so, the Reign of God is *not yet* fully here, as nations still rage in wars and conflicts; and people still suffer terrible losses each and every day.

One: In the Book of Ecclesiastes, the Teacher writes, “*For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die... a time to mourn and a time to dance... a time for war and a time for peace.*” These are descriptions of our lives. We live in the wheel of life, caught between the ways of sorrow and the ways of happiness. We do well when we come alongside those who are mourning.

All: In this country, on this day, we remember that many people have died in the cause of protecting their nation, especially through their service in the military.

One: We call this day, Memorial Day, remembering those who have fallen in the service of others, with a willingness to sacrifice for the common good of one’s neighbor—regardless of creed, color, identity, or station. We pause now to remember those who have lost their lives in the service of others.

[Pause for Silent Reflection]

One: The history of every nation is complicated by both strengths and errors (past and present). Let us remember—and hope—that those who feel the call to serve in the military do so for the love of neighbor. They do not wear the uniform with an intention, or goal, of subjugating others. When their lives are lost, help us to be a source of strength and comfort for all whom they loved.

All: May we never confuse ‘right’ with ‘might.’ May we always work towards peace so that others need not die. May we never fail to remember the lives of those that were taken by acts of war, or in times of service. And may the day come when the lives of friends and enemies rise in the healing power of divine love. Amen.

Centering Music and a Meditation on Memorial Day

“The Hand Song”

By: Tennessee Backporch

Invocation:

One: Grace, mercy, and peace to you from our God who goes beyond our understanding, but who is revealed to us—in Christ—as the God of unconditional love and infinite grace.

All: Holy Spirit, remind us of who we really are! We are beloved children of God, forever loved by God.

One: Jesus, you promised that you would send the Spirit of God upon your people, and that we would never be alone.

All: Holy Spirit, reveal your power and inspiration within our community. Empower us to rise up in grace and truth to love the world and bring healing and wholeness to all that is broken. Amen.

*Opening Song of Worship

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” #358

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven to earth come down.
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit, let us find the promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning, Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, never-more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

*Opening Prayer



A Reflection on the Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21

One: Today, Christians around the world celebrate Pentecost in a special way, believing that the Holy Spirit of God came upon Christ's apostles and disciples—as *Jesus promised*—to give birth to the body of Christ on earth.

All: As Christ sent the apostles and disciples out to proclaim the good news, God's Spirit has continued to enliven the hearts and minds of those who hear the call to live on earth as it is in heaven, and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

One: Pentecost is first a Jewish holy day, fifty days after Passover. But it was on this day that something new happened among the followers of the resurrected and ascended Christ. Spirit came in powerful ways! Consider one telling of the first Pentecost, written by Saint Luke, who also authored the Book of Acts. He tells the story this way:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵ Now there were devout Jews from every people under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷ Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." ¹² All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵ Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ *In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. ²⁰ The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. ²¹ Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

One: O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

All: These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

One: May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in God's works.

All: I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to God, for I rejoice in the LORD. Praise the LORD! 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 Lesson:**

John 7:37-39

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, ³⁸ and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.' " ³⁹ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive, for as yet there was no Spirit because Jesus was not yet glorified.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Pentecost: The Coming Spirit

Pastor Rich



Ministry of Music

"Love Helps Those Who Cannot Help Themselves"
Tennessee Backporch

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: Jesus said to his disciples, "*my peace I leave you, my peace I give you.*" Open your hearts now and may 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 shown 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

"Close Your Eyes"

Tennessee Backporch

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

“Dig Another Well”
Tennessee Backporch

*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: Surprising God of Pentecost, you infuse us with your Spirit, urging us to vision and dream.

All: May the gift of your presence find voice in our lives, that our words may be filled with wisdom and our actions be fueled by the unquenchable fire of compassion and justice. Amen.

*Blessing



*Closing Hymn

“God of the Ages” #728

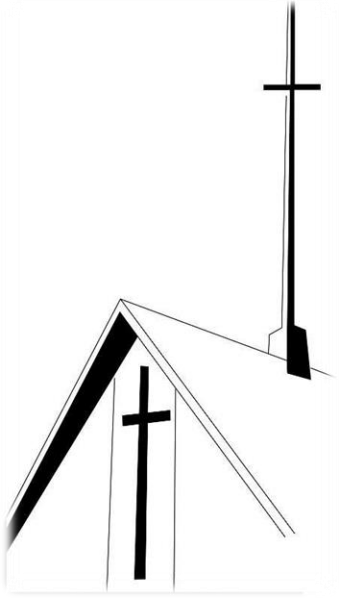
God of the ages, whose almighty hand—
Leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies,
Our grateful songs before your throne arise.

Your love divine has led us in the past,
In this free land by you our lot is cast;
Be now our ruler, guardian, guide and stay,
Your Word our law, your paths our chosen way.

From war’s alarms, from deadly pestilence,
Be your strong arm our every sure defense;
Your true religion in our hearts in crease,
Your bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.

Refresh your people on their toilsome way,
Lead us from night to never-ending day;
Fill all our lives with heaven-born love and grace,
And songs of praise we’ll lift before your face!

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



**Next Week:
The First Sunday after Pentecost:
Trinity Sunday!
11:00 AM**

Assigned Readings from the Lectionary for Study:

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Psalm 8

Matthew 28:16-20

Theme: The Mystery of the Trinity

***Need to contact us for prayer, conversation, or to connect
online 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 Honor of
Jesse by Ginnie Burger.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Monday, May 29:** Memorial Day
- **Wednesday, June 7:** Monthly Bible Study - "Supper & Study"

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Pride parade and festival is **Saturday, June 24th**. We will be decorating and readying our float in advance, so we need people to help with that, as well as to march in the parade Saturday morning and staff the table in Perry Square. Please call the church to volunteer, and/or see Pastor Joy or Pastor Rich to let us know we can count you in.

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), Chris Duncan (Marines), 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 and family and friends, Rod and Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Sue Schweiwer, Diane Walker, George Churley, Robin Adams, Ralph Kester, John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone, Jared and Priscilla Hall, Ron Celeski, Sally Cubetus, Jan and Tim Crowe and Family, and Annette Minich.

Council Members:

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