

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



The Third Sunday of Lent

March 12, 2023:

11:00 AM

The Third Sunday of Lent

We are now in the Season of Lent. It is a six-week span in the church year when Christians contemplate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ—whose path ultimately led to death on a Cross. Within these six weeks, Christians are invited to fast and pray for 40 days—calling to mind Christ's 40 days in the desert, in which he wrestled with temptations of power. From the desert, Christ would come forth showing that the power of God is love. That love was put on ultimate display when Christ turned his own condemnation and death into forgiveness and new life.



Today's Readings:

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

John 4:5-42



Theme: The Water of Life

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!*

Welcome, Announcements, and Prayer Requests
Centering Music

Invocation

One: Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, from God our Creator, Christ our Redeemer,
and the Holy Spirit our eternal Advocate and Friend.

All: And also with you.

One: God of all creation, you offer us the gift of living water, and the gift of eternal life!

**One: As we worship you today, O God, we pray that you show us who we are:
channels of your love and vessels of your grace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen!**

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

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow’rs before Thee, op’ning 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 heav’n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flow’ry meadow, flashing sea,
Singing 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**

***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.)

Confession

One: People of God, we are called to confess to the One who knows us and knows everything we have done; yet, we have nothing to fear. God pours pure love into our hearts, and truth into our lives, and offers healing for our world. *Let us pray:* For the times we have rejected God's overflowing blessings and abundant grace.

All: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

One: For times we commit ourselves to things that will never last, and thirst for things that will never satisfy us.

All: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

One: For the wisdom to know that our God is the giver of living water and the source of deepest compassion, and for us to return these gifts to others.

All: May it be so, through the power and presence of your Holy Spirit, and in the way of Christ. Amen.

Lenten Meditation & Candles

Song of Reflection

"Jesus Remember Me" #285

(Sing Three Times)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

First Reading

Exodus 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Song of Reflection

"Find Us Faithful" #497 *(Sing twice)*

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.

Responsorial

Psalm 95

One: O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

All: **Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!**

One: In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

All: **O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!**

*Lenten Acclamation

“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.



*Gospel

John 4:5-42

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir,

give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

The Water of Life

Pastor Joy



Musical Reflection

"It All Fades Away"

Julie Lokahi

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!

Communion Music

Cheryl Strecker

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: For all who are weary----weary from life's long journey, wearing from quarreling and testing, wearing from pain or grief.

All: God hear our prayer!

One: For all who are broken---broken by sin and suffering, broken by hard disappointment, broken by acts of violence.

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

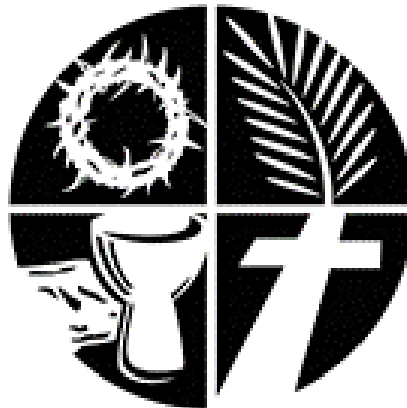
Ministry of Music and Time for Contemplation

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.

*Lenten Congregational Response #576

***Make me a servant, humble and meek.
Lord, let me lift up those who are weak!
And may the prayer of my heart always be:
Make me a servant! Make me a servant!
Make me a servant today!***



*Departing Prayer

One: Holy God, we ask that you be with us as we become weary from our journey, thirsty for rest, and hungry for peace, that you renew us in your love and restore us by your eternal grace.

All: May we grow in our awe and wonder of You, O God, who knows us and loves us. And, as you have fed us by your mercy, may it be our daily bread to do your will. Amen!

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“The Summons” #350

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

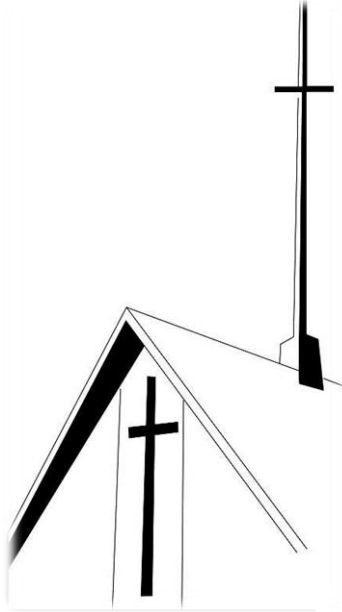
Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.



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



Next Sunday:

11:00 AM

Readings:

Ephesians 5:8-14

Psalm 23

John 9:1-41

The Fourth Sunday of Lent:
Overcoming our Blindness

***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 HONOR OF FAMILY FROM DAVID AND DIANA HOLMES.

This week:

- **Sunday, March 12:** Church Council voting meeting - 12:15pm
- **Monday, March 13:** Officers Meeting of Church Council – 6:30 PM
- **Tuesday, March 14:** Liberty House Dinner and Social – 5:30 PM (*Interested in attending and serving? Please see Council President, Debbie Anderson or one of the pastors!*)
- **Wednesday, March 15:** Resonate Service, “Honor Grief, Allow Hope,” a contemplation of life post-COVID. Becky Pomeroy, leading – 7:00 PM
- **Sunday, March 19:** Fourth Sunday of Lent at 11:00 AM, and Service Sunday at 12:15 PM.

Special Announcement:

The sign-up for Easter flowers is in Fellowship Hall. We are only four weeks away from Easter!



WE REMEMBER THOSE IN OUR ARMED FORCES:

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

PRAYERS FOR:

Kevin Bennett and family and friends, 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 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