

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



April 28, 2024

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Richard W. McCarty & Pastor Joy L. Johnson

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

Prelude
Welcome, Prayer Requests, and Announcements

Cheryl Strecker

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

One: Holy and loving God, you are the Source of all that is seen and unseen. You are the Ground of our being that allows us to be. Your Presence inspires order out of chaos.

All: We believe, O God, that the power of your creation is rooted in love. And we dare to believe that this same love redeems us when we bring chaos into order, violence into peace.

One: We meet this divine love in Jesus—the incarnate Wisdom of God and Risen Christ.

All: Creating and Redeeming God, in this time of worship, enfold us more deeply in your Presence. Nurture us so that we might abide in you and bear much fruit. Amen!

*Hymn "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**

*The Peace of Christ

One: The Peace of Christ be with you, All!

All: And also with you!

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

First Reading

The First Letter of John 4:7-21

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶ So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God," and hate a brother or sister are liars, for those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Responsorial

Psalm 22:25-28

One: From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who revere God.

**All: The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek God shall praise the LORD.
May your hearts live forever!**

One: All the ends of the earth shall remember and return to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before God.

All: For dominion belongs to the LORD, and God rules over the nations. 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**

John 15:1-8

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Abiding & Bearing

Pastor Rich

Hymn

“One Bread, One Body” #689

Refrain:

*One bread, one body, one lord of all,
One cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many—throughout the earth,
We are one body in this one Lord.*

Gentile or Jew, servant or free,
Woman or man—no more.
(Refrain)

Many the gifts, many the works,
One in the Lord—of all.
(Refrain)

Grain for the fields, scattered and grown,
Gathered to one—for all.
(Refrain)



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: 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

"I Could Sing of Your Love Forever"

Cheryl & Sarah



Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer ("Debts and Debtors")

One: The Lord be with you.

All: ***And also with you.***

One: People of God, let us center our hearts and extend the spiritual power that is within us. *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

“Deep River”

Cheryl & Sarah

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 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: Holy and loving God, open our hearts to your power moving around us and between us and within us.

All: **May your glory be revealed in our love of both friend and enemy, in communities transformed by justice and compassion, and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.**

*Blessing



*Closing Hymn

“Great is Thy Faithfulness” #72

Great is thy faithfulness, O God Creator,
There is no shadow of turning with thee;
Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;
As thou has been thou forever will be.

Refrain:

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed thy hand hath provided—
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

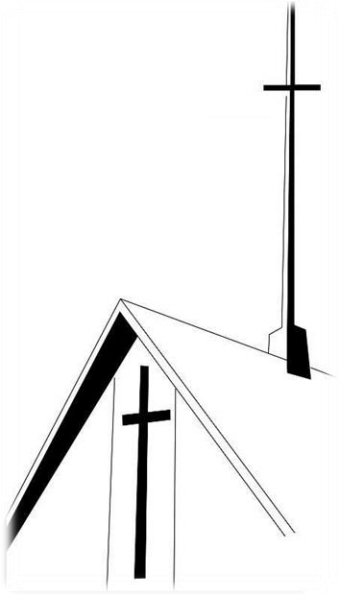
(Refrain)

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

(Refrain)



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



**Next Week:
Sixth Sunday of Easter**

11:00 AM

Readings:

1 John 5:1-6

Psalm 98

John 15:9-17

Theme: The Commandment & Commission of Love

***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 by Kathy Koziol in celebration of their 44th Wedding Anniversary

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- April 28: Praise & Prayer, 9:00 AM
May 1: Supper & Study, 6:30 PM
May 8: Spirits & Spirituality, 7:00 PM
May 13: Council Meeting, 6:30 PM
May 14: Liberty House, 5:30 PM
May 15: Resonate, 6:30 PM

SAVE THE DATE: June 1: Craft & Bake Sale at CUC

Need hearing assistance? We have four available units. Please talk to our tech crew in the back of the sanctuary.

Please submit any announcement requests by **Tuesday** for the Sunday bulletin.

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:

Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett & family & friends, Rod & Dew Johnson,
Harry Lamb, Diane Walker, Robin Adams, Ralph Kester,
John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone,
Jan & Tim Crowe and Family, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich,
Dave Pakulski, Randi Johnson, Lillian Hendrickson, Ethel Davis,
Jim Haglund, Chelsea Brown, John Waid, Patti Rogers, Celeste Eller & Family, Shirley Carrier,
Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Jerry Koziol, Uncle Charlie,
Carol & Doug Rodgers, Jane Moran, Ed Mumau, Renee Gullekson, Sharon Cooper,
Mary Ann Schmeisser, Sandra Carlson, Josh Cook & Danny Kaeberlein.

Council Members:

Debbie Anderson (President), Bob Martin (VP), Nancy Alberico, Janice Skelly, Mike Pruzinsky, Michele Vahey, Patti Rogers, Carol Rodgers, and Angel Conrad

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