

# Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



April 23, 2023

The Third Sunday of Easter

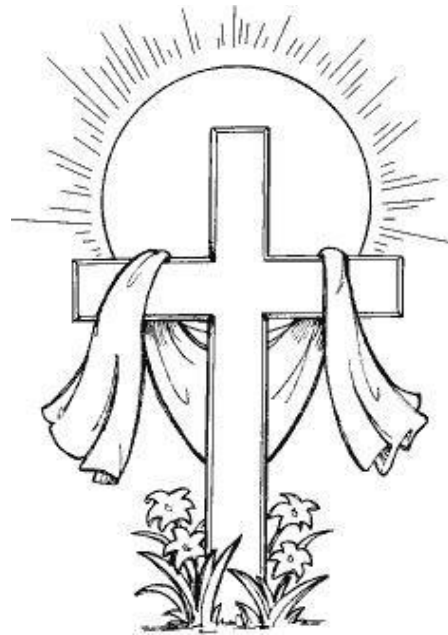
11:00 AM

## April 23, 2023: The Third Sunday of Easter

The Easter season proclaims a great mystery: *Christ is risen from the dead!* Resurrection is the transformation of the finite to the infinite. Resurrection undoes the finality of death with the power of immortal life.

Resurrection is not simple, nor obvious. It defies the natural order. It pushes us beyond our every notion of what can be known and shown to be real. But today we live into this hope: In the resurrection, God emerges triumphant over death itself.

*Celebrate the Resurrection!*



*Today's Readings:*

1 Peter 1:3-9

Psalm 16

John 20:19-31

**Theme: Living Our Questions**

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy Johnson

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

Welcome, Prayer Requests, and Announcements

Centering Music

Invocation

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

**All: And also with you.**

One: O Risen Christ, be with us this day. We recognize your wounded hands; they tell us that you know what it is to struggle and suffer, and to prevail in the power of love.

**All: We grasp those hands, that they may lead us together into a deeper place of peace. Pour into us the freshness of your new life, we pray; for you are our strength and our might. Wonderful is your loving kindness to us. Amen!**

\*Hymn

“Crown Him with Many Crowns” #317

Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne.  
Hark! how the heavenly anthems drown all music but its own.  
Awake my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,  
And hail him as thy matchless king through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,  
And rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save;  
His glories now we sing who died and rose on high,  
Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of love; behold his hands and side,  
Rich wounds yet visible above, in beauty glorified;  
No angels in the sky can fully bear that sight,  
But downward bend their burning eyes at mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of years, the potentate of time,  
Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime.  
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For thou hast died for me;  
Thy praise shall never, never fail throughout eternity.

**\* Opening Prayer**

**\*The Peace of Christ**

One: People of God, the Peace of Christ be with you, All!

**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.)*

## First Reading

## The First Letter Attributed to Peter 1:3-9

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> Although you have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

## Responsorial

## Psalm 16

One: Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.”

**All: The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.**

One: I bless the LORD, who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I keep the LORD always before me; because God is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

**All: Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.**

One: For you do not give me up to [the place of the dead] or let your faithful one see the Pit.

**All: You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore. 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 20:19-31**

<sup>19</sup> When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of [some of the Jewish religious leaders], [and then] Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup> But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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

**All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!**

Message

Living Our Questions

Pastor Rich

**Hymn**

"Glorify Thy Name" #146

Father, we love you, we worship and adore you,  
Glorify thy name in all the earth.

**Refrain:** *Glorify thy name, glorify thy name, glorify thy name in all the earth.*

Jesus, we love you, we worship and adore you,  
Glorify thy name in all the earth. (*Refrain*)

Spirit, we love you, we worship and adore you,  
Glorify thy name in all the earth. (*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

### 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 who need to know that questions and doubts are part of the journey of faith.

**All: God hear our prayer!**

One: That we would never be satisfied with our own answers if they lead us away from love.

**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](http://www.communityunited.church)**

*Or, if you prefer to mail in a check, that can be addressed to the church at:  
1011 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street – Erie, PA 16508*

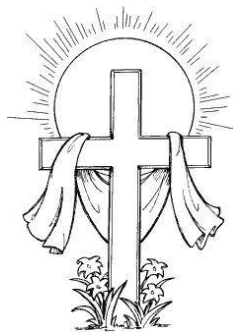
## Ministry of Music

*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.*

## **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, may your love move us to use our hands as you do—to do works of care and justice for your creation and for all people.

**All:** Give us grace and strength for abundant life! For this is the day that God has made, let us go forth, rejoice, and be glad in it! Amen.

\*Blessing

\*Closing Hymn

“Rejoice, the Lord is King!” #342

Rejoice, the Lord is King!  
Your Lord and King adore!  
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing,  
And triumph ever-more.

Refrain:

*Lift up your heart,  
Lift up voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!*

Our Savior, Jesus, reigns,  
The God of truth and love;  
When he had purged our stains,  
He took his seat above:

*(Refrain)*

His Kingdom cannot fail,  
He rules both earth and heaven;  
The keys of death and hell  
Are to our Jesus given:

*(Refrain)*

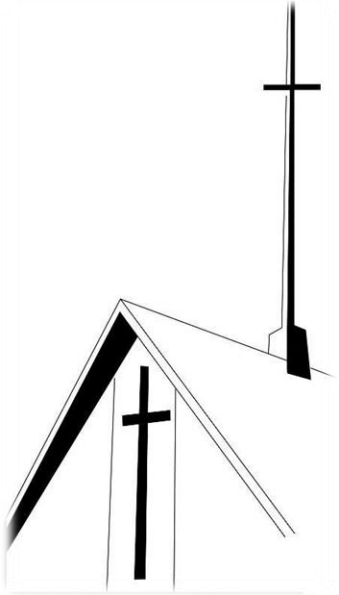
Rejoice in glorious hope  
For Christ the Judge shall come  
To gather all his saints  
To their eternal home:

*(Refrain)*





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



**Next Week:**  
**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**11:00 AM**

*Readings:*

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23

John 10:1-10

**Theme: Christ the Gate and Guardian**

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

1011 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street – Erie, PA 16508

(814) – 864 – 4429

[www.communityunited.church](http://www.communityunited.church)



# Community United Church

THE ALTAR FLOWERS THIS MORNING ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN HONOR OF PASTOR JOY'S BIRTHDAY FROM DINA JOHNSON

**This week:**

- **Tuesday, April 25:** Ladies Lunch

**Special Announcements:**

- **Sunday, April 23:** Church Rally Day (before and after the worship service).

*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),  
Chris Duncan (Marines), Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott  
(Army), Mathew Anderson (Army)  
and DJ Miaczynski (Marines)

**PRAYERS FOR:**

Dorothy Moyer, Kathy Koziol, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett and family and friends, Rod and 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, 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***