

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



Ascension Sunday & Pastoral Farewell Service

May 17, 2026

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy L. Johnson

Prelude
Welcome & Announcements
Words of Gratitude

Musicians of Community United Church

Centering Music

“Ubi Caritas et Amor” #399

Where true charity and love abide,
God is dwelling there; God is dwelling there.

(Repeat)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, we gather on this Ascension Sunday to remember that many weeks after his resurrection, Christ ascended into heaven—transcending time and space—not to leave his friends behind, but to continue the work of transforming creation; bringing heaven to earth.

All: Christ is resurrected and ascended! We are now Christ’s body on earth. United by the Spirit, we are empowered to be the hands and heart of God to all of creation. Christ has gone before us into the mystery of eternity, and Christ is with us through the Spirit and in the bonds of love. Wherever we go, we are never alone. Amen!

* Opening Hymn

“Sing a New Song” #10

Refrain:

*Sing a new song unto the Lord;
Let your song be sung from mountain high.
Sing a new song unto the Lord, singing “Alleluia.”*

Yahweh’s people dance for joy; O come before the Lord.
And play for God 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**

***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.

Statement of Faith

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen!



Song of Commitment

"Grace Alone" #436

Every promise we can make, every prayer and step of faith;
Every difference we will make is only by his grace.
Every mountain we will climb, every ray of hope we shine;
Every blessing left behind—is only by his grace.

Chorus:

*Grace alone which God supplies;
Strength unknown he will provide,
Christ in us, our cornerstone,
We will go forth in grace alone.*

Every soul we long to reach, every heart we hope to teach;
Everywhere we share his peace—is only by his grace.
Every loving word we say, every tear we wipe away;
Every sorrow turned to praise—is only by his grace.

(Chorus)

First Reading

Acts 1:1-11

In the first book, Theophilus, I [Luke] wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Song of Praise

"We Will Glorify" #337 Vv.1, 3

We will glorify the King of kings, we will glorify the Lamb;
We will glorify the Lord of lords, who is the great I AM.

He is Lord of heaven, Lord of earth, he is Lord of all who live;
He is Lord above the universe, all praise to him we give.



Second Reading

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸ so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰ God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²² And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Responsorial

Psalm 93

One: The LORD is sovereign; God is robed in majesty and girded with strength.

All: God has established the world; it shall never be moved; your throne, O God, is established from of old, you are from everlasting.

One: The floods have lifted up their voice and their roaring. More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic is the LORD!

All: Your decrees are very sure; holiness befits your house, O LORD, 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

Luke 24:44-53

Then [Jesus] said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” ⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

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

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

Children’s Message

Song of Contemplation

“Step by Step” #494

O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.
O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.
I will seek you in the morning, and I will learn to walk in your ways;
And step by step you'll lead me, and I will follow you all of my days.
(Repeat)

Reflection

The Ascension: Faith in Times of Change

Pastor Rich



Song of Response

“How Great Thou Art” #51

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Refrain:

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:
How great thou art, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:
How great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down from lofty mountains grandeur,
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze.
(Refrain)

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.
(Refrain)

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, “My God, how great thou art.”
(Refrain)

COMMUNION LITURGY

Pastor: People of God, we come to the table with open hands and love in our hearts, for this is *Christ's* table—a place where *every person* is valued, treated with kindness, and embraced in fairness and love.

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 the bread and we take the cup and we 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: Remembering that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. People of God, come to the table!

Communion Music

“The Blessing”

Shelly Conrad

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 within us. *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

God is inviting us to serve in response to God's great love for us, so that the whole world may know the fullness of God's peace.

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

Offertory

“Crossroads”

Bob Martin

Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Congregational Response #147

***Praise God, from whom all blessings 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!***

Sending Forth and Blessing

Tracy Applebee-Davis

*Sending Prayer (2 Corinthians 13:11-13)

One: Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Be restored; encourage one another; be in harmony with one another; live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

All: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of us, now and forever. Amen!

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“O God Beyond All Praising” #64

O God beyond all praising, we worship you today
And sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay;
For we can only wonder at every gift you send,
At blessings without number and mercies without end;
We lift our hearts before you and wait upon your Word,
We honor and adore you, our great and mighty Lord.

Then hear, O gracious Savior, accept the love we bring,
That we who know your favor may serve you as our King;
And whether our tomorrows be filled with good or ill,
We'll triumph through our sorrows and rise to bless you still:
To marvel at your beauty and glory in your ways,
And make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise.

Postlude

“Keep-A-Going”

Bob, Julie and Chris

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



**Next Week:
Sunday, May 24
Pentecost Sunday**

Scriptures:

Acts 2:1-21

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

John 20:19-23

Theme:

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

***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 are given to the glory of God by Patti Rogers
and in loving memory of her Mom and Dad*

Coming up:

May 18: Church Council – 6:30 PM
May 19: Women’s Outreach Group – 12:00 PM
May 24: Pentecost Sunday – wear red!
June 3: Bible Study / Discussion Group 6:30 PM
June 6: CUC Flea Market

**Please join us immediately after the worship service for a reception honoring
Pastor Rich!**

*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:

Jackson Feiock (Army), Jacob Snyder (Army), Nick Duncan (Army), Brittany Duncan (Army),
Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott (Army),
Jaden O’Hara (Army), Toby Charlton (Marines), Cole Posnett (Army), Hunter Miaczynski (Army)
Mathew Anderson (Army), Zachary Oliver (PA Army National Guard),
and Aran Maloney (Air National Guard)

PRAYERS FOR:

Linda Hilbert, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Ethel Davis, Celeste Eller & Family,
Michele Serafin, Toni Stevenson, Sandra Ganley, Dorothy Moyer, Celeste Peck,
Linda Foll Johnson, Shirley Carrier, Debra Jackman, Zoey Cathie Witmire,
Laura Will, the Smith and Schmidt families, Linda Weber, Veronica, Patty Puzar,
Joan Schultz, Mary Mong, family and friends of Kim Normandy,
Michelle and Melissa, Randy Koziol, Barbara Thompson, Tanisha and Jaeda,
family and friends of Lois Simmers and Barbara Hickey

Your 2026 CUC Council:

Thea Hyatt, President, Ginnie Burger, Vice President, Tracy Davis, Treasurer,
Michele Vahey, Justin Graff, Angel Conrad, Chuck Becker, Don Cameron

You may call the church office at 814-864-4429 for pastoral and administrative matters or use email:
communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com

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