

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



August 31, 2025

The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

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!*

Centering Music “We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise” #651

We bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord;
We bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord.
And we offer up to you—the sacrifices of thanksgiving;
And we offer up to you—the sacrifices of joy.
(Repeat)

Invocation:

One: Holy and loving God, your Spirit gathers us to worship and glorify you, as you are our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

All: In you, we live and move and have our being. In this time of worship, we ask that you open our hearts and minds to be ever-more fashioned into your image, through Christ, who teaches us the way of service and love. Amen!

*Opening Hymn “Gather Us In” #649

Here in this place, the new light is streaming, shadows of doubt are vanished away.
See in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken; gather us in; our spirits inflame.
Call to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery; we are the old, who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history, called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty; gather us in, the proud and the strong;
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly; give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we receive new life in the waters; here we receive the bread of new birth;
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion; give us to eat the bread that is you;
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion—lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not just in buildings, small and confining, not in some heaven, light years away,
Here in this place the new light is shining; now is God present, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever; gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.



*** 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.

A Litany on the Scriptures

One: Today's assigned scripture readings call us to be attentive to how we live our lives. They call us to consider what it means to live according to the ways and teachings of the Gospel.

All: In all things we are called to lead with love, and to choose a life of service.

One: The New Testament Letter to the Hebrews will invite us to believe that when we serve others, we may be serving angels in disguise. The same letter also teaches us to never use or objectify another human being; and to learn contentment.

All: In all things we are called to lead with love, and to choose a life of service.

One: Though we live in a society that loves to give honor to a few "at the top," the Gospel teaches us to avoid seeking the spotlight and glamour of hierarchy. The Gospel teaches us to prioritize serving those who have been made low.

All: In all things we are called to lead with love, and to choose a life of service.

One: The scripture readings today provide a spiritual ideal, into which we are all called to grow. *Few of us ever do it perfectly.* So, remember this: the same God who calls us to live such a life, is the same God who forgives us when we make mistakes; the same God who offers us grace and a chance to start again.

**All: We open our hearts now to receive the Living Word, assured of God's mercy.
Amen.**

First Reading

The New Testament Letter to the Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Let mutual affection continue. ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. ³ Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. ⁴ Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." ⁶ So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" ⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ¹⁵ Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.

Responsorial

Psalm 112

One: Praise the LORD! Happy are those who revere the LORD, who greatly delight in God's commandments.

All: It is well with those who deal generously and lend, who conduct their affairs with justice. For the righteous will never be moved; they will be remembered forever.

One: They are not afraid of evil tidings; their hearts are firm, secure in the LORD. Their hearts are steady; they will not be afraid.

All: They have distributed freely; they have given to the poor; their righteousness endures forever. 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 14:1, 7-14

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely. When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, ⁹ and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹ For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹² He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

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 Preparation

“Through It All” #452

Through it all, through it all,
I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, I’ve learned to trust in God;
Through it all, through it all,
I’ve learned to depend upon God’s Word.

(Repeat)

Message

Service as Leadership

Pastor Rich

Hymn

“Christ, You Call Us All to Service” #571

Christ, you call us all to service,
Call us all who follow you;
Plant in us a deep commitment
All your work and will to do.
Fire a passion for your justice,
In us kindle love of peace;
Help us heal the broken hearted,
To the captive bring release.

Teach us how to work together,
Brothers, sisters, side by side,
Equal partners in the struggle,
In the cause of truth allied.
To each one some gift is given,
Man or woman, young or old;
Help us use each skill and talent
Your great purpose to unfold.

Let us be a servant people,
Reconciling, ending strife,
Seeking ways more just of sharing
And of ordering human life.
Fill us with a glowing vision
Of this world as it should be;
Send us forth to change that vision
Into blest reality.



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

"Children's Prayer"

Don Cameron

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]. We also pray for all who have asked to be on our prayer list—and so we ask: Holy and Loving God, in your wisdom, meet all of these needs in the perfect way of your grace. We pray together:

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

Your offerings are first and foremost what we give to the world through justice, kindness, and mercy—and these we can do every day. Our financial contributions to the church are what allow us to support our ministries. As you can give, please do so joyfully!

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/Ministry of Music “Standin’ in the Need of Prayer”

Don Cameron

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!”

*Departing Prayer

One: Holy and loving God, we are reminded today that you call us to embody the reign of God by creating communities of justice and peace—where all have a seat at the table; where the first are last and the last are first; creating a circle of loving community where all are equal, valued, and fully nurtured.

All: Give us the vision, now, to go out into the world to draw that circle ever wider and to make people ever more free—not as citizens of this or that nation, but as co-equal saints in the Reign of God; on earth as it is in heaven. Amen!

*Blessing

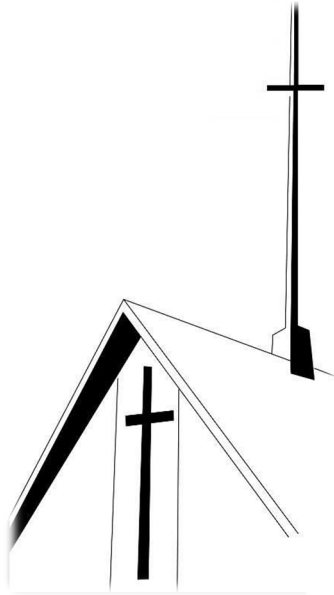
*Closing Hymn

“Song for the Nations” #563 Vv. 1, 5

May we be a shining light to the nations,
A shining light to the peoples of the earth,
Till the whole world see the glory of your name.
May your pure light shine through us.

May your kingdom come to the nations,
Your will be done in the peoples of the earth,
Till the whole world knows that Jesus Christ is Lord.
May your kingdom come on earth.

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



Next Week:

The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings:

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 1

Luke 14:25-33

Theme: Priorities in the Reign of God

***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 memory of both her parents' birthdays, from Linda Weber

UPCOMING EVENTS:

September 7: Safety and Training in the Sanctuary
September 9: Liberty House
September 10: Spirits & Spirituality
September 11: Crafternoon 1:30-3:30
September 17: Resonate (Perhaps Outside)
September 21: Service Sunday
September 23: Ladies Luncheon

Reminders:

- ***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)

PRAYERS FOR:

Darek Baksik, Laura Will, Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Ralph Kester, Teddy Long, Tammy McIntyre, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich, Dave Pakulski, Ethel Davis, Chelsea Brown, Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin, Toni Stevenson, Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Carol & Doug Rodgers, Jane Moran, Josh Cook & Danny Kaeberlein, Helena Burgos, The Vadzemnieks Family, Sharon Cooper, Sandra Ganley, Celeste Peck, Linda Foll Johnson, Todd Carrier, The Kuzma Family

Current Council Members:

Mike Pruzinsky (President), Debbie Anderson (Vice President), Al Tilley (Treasurer), Nancy Alberico (Secretary), Janice Skelly, Angel Conrad, Michele Vahey, Justin Graff, and Mark Davis

Need to contact our Council President? Please email at: mpruzinsky@icloud.com