

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



15th Annual Diversity Service

October 29, 2023

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy Johnson

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

Centering Music "Sanctuary" #482

Lord, prepare me—to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true;

With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

(Repeat all)

Invocation to Worship

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: People of God, we are part of the church universal—faithful people as many and diverse as the stars, and as colorful as the rainbow. We are gathered by God to be loved, and then, to go out into the world to love, serve, and stand up for justice!

All: We are an open and affirming church! Together let us worship God, rejoicing in the good news which we celebrate this day. Amen!

*Opening Song "Sing a New Church" #577

Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity,
Gathered in the name of Jesus, richer still in unity;

Chorus:

*Let us bring the gifts that differ and in splendid, varied ways,
Sing a new church into being, one in faith and love and praise.*

Radiant risen from the water; robed in holiness and light;
Many genders in God's image, many genders God's delight. *(Chorus)*

Bring the hopes of every nation; bring the art of every race.
Weave a song of peace and justice; let it sound through time and space. *(Chorus)*

Draw together at one table all the human family;
Shape a circle ever wider and a people ever free. *(Chorus)*

***Opening Prayer**

***Passing of the Peace**

One: The Lord be with you!

All: And also with you!

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

[Please be mindful that some people may not be able to shake hands or hug due to health precautions]

Statement of Faith

One: People of God, what is the Word and Wisdom that we hear from the Sovereign Creator of the Universe?

All: This is the good news: There is a place in God's heart, there is a place at Christ's table, and there is a place here, and in every welcoming church, for all people. Faith is an illuminating guide, not a warden that imprisons the mind. Whatever is loving, just, compassionate, thoughtful, and healing—all these things are welcome here. Anyone who embodies such things shows forth the glory of God! Amen!

First Reading

The Book of Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²“Speak to all the congregation of the Israelites and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. ¹⁵“You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. ¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand idly by when the [life] of your neighbor is at stake: I am the LORD. ¹⁷“You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Meditation in Word and Song:

“You are Near” ~ The Law of Love

**All: *Yahweh, I know you are near, standing always at my side.
You guard me from the foe, and you lead me in ways—everlasting.***

One: Holy and loving God, when you gave our spiritual ancestors the Torah, you placed at the heart of it the law of love. Remind us what it means to practice religion from the heart of love—and by doing so, finding ourselves ever near to you.

**All: *Yahweh, I know you are near, standing always at my side.
You guard me from the foe, and you lead me in ways—everlasting.***

One: Affirming the heart of the Torah, and joining the voices of the prophets, your living Wisdom came to us, O God, in the person of Jesus. With Christ came the good news that God loves the whole world, and that the greatest law is indeed the law of love.

**All: *Yahweh, I know you are near, standing always at my side.
You guard me from the foe, and you lead me in ways—everlasting.***



Responsorial

Psalm 90

One: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

All: Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

One: For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.

All: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days—let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands. 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

Matthew 22:34-40

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that [Jesus] had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷ [Jesus] said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message:

Celebrating Diversity through Intentional Inclusivity:
The Way of Divine Love

Pastor Rich



Chorus:

*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. *(Chorus)*

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

Grain for the fields, scattered and grown,
Gathered to one, for all. *(Chorus)*



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: Together, now, let us bless the elements. 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!

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*] 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

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.

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.

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, which can be addressed to the church at:

1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508

Ministry of Music

"Just One Person"

Kelly McLaughlin & Ensemble

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Congregational Response #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: You know us and search us by name, O God, and in your sight we have found favor.

All: Almighty God, as we glimpse your greatness, may we see your glory reflected in each one of us. For you have called and chosen all people to bear your image in the world. By your Spirit, may our witness be expressed with the contagious joy of your love. Amen!

*Blessing

***Closing Song**

“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)

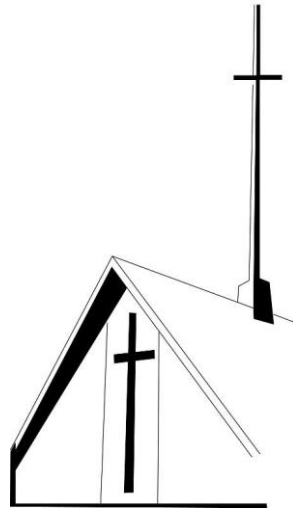


**Thank you for worshipping with us this morning at
Community United Church!**

Next Sunday – November 5, 2023

10:55 AM Announcements

11:00 AM Worship



All Saints Day Commemoration

“Life unto Life”

Scripture for Study:

Revelation 7:9-17

Psalm 34:1-10, 22

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12

***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 in memory of Bob Martin's Father, Charles Martin

Today's Elder: Lee Pomeroy **Deacons:** David Holmes & Pat Vahey
Next Week's Elder: Carol Rodgers **Deacons:** Sandra Carlson & Patti Rogers

Reminder: The fleece order has been extended to November 5th. Samples are available to see.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 29: Diversity Sunday
November 1: Supper & Study 6:30 PM
November 8: Spirits & Spirituality – Calamari's 7:00 PM
November 12: Interfaith Service
November 13: Council Meeting 6:30 PM
November 15: Resonate 6:30 PM

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), 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, Sue Scheiwer, Diane Walker, George Churley, Robin Adams, Ralph Kester, John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone, Ron Celeski, Jan & Tim Crowe and Family, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich, Dave Pikulski, Randi Johnson, Lillian Hendrickson, Wilma and Janice Skelly, Ethel Davis, Jim Haglund, Chelsea Brown, John Waid, Dina Johnson, Patti Rogers, Celeste Eller & Family & Shirley Carrier

Council Members:

Debbie Anderson (President), Bob Martin (VP), Dina Johnson (Secretary), Janice Skelly, Mike Pruzinsky, April Knapp, Patti Rogers, Carol Rodgers, and Angel Conrad.