

# Community United Church

**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

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



April 20, 2025:  
Easter Sunday

*Celebrating the Resurrection*

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!*

## Welcome & Centering Music

### Easter Sunday Proclamation:

**Mark 16:1-8**

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. <sup>2</sup> And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup> They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" <sup>4</sup> When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. <sup>5</sup> As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup> But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." <sup>8</sup> So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. [And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.]

One: People of God, Christ is Risen!

**All: Christ is Risen indeed!**

\*Processional

"Christ the Lord is Risen Today" #288

Christ the Lord is risen today, *Alleluia!* All creation join to say: *Alleluia!*

Raise your joys and triumphs high: *Alleluia!* Sing, ye heavens and earth reply: *Alleluia!*

Love's redeeming work is done, *Alleluia!* Fought the fight, the battle won! *Alleluia!*

Death in vain forbids him rise, *Alleluia!* Christ has opened paradise: *Alleluia!*

Lives again our glorious King, *Alleluia!* Where, O death is now thy sting? *Alleluia!*

Once he died our souls to save, *Alleluia!* Where thy victory, O grave? *Alleluia!*

Soar we now where Christ has led: *Alleluia!* Following our exalted Head: *Alleluia!*

Made like him, like him we rise! *Alleluia!* Ours the cross, the grave, the skies: *Alleluia!*

\*Invocation

One: Living God, long ago, faithful women were the first to proclaim the good news of Christ's resurrection, and the world was changed forever.

**All: Teach us to keep faith with them, that our witness may be as bold, our love as deep, and our faith as true. Amen!**

\*Hymn

“Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!” #293

Christ is risen! Shout hosanna! Celebrate this day of days!  
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder; all creation is amazed.  
In the desert all surrounding, see, a spreading tree has grown.  
Healing leaves of grace abounding, bring a taste of love unknown.

Christ is risen! Raise your spirits from the caverns of despair.  
Walk with gladness in the morning, see what love can do and dare.  
Drink the wine of resurrection, not a servant, but a friend.  
Jesus is our strong companion. Joy and peace shall never end.

Christ is risen! Earth and heaven never-more shall be the same.  
Break the bread of new creation, where the world is still in pain.  
Tell its grim, demonic chorus: “Christ is risen! Get you gone!”  
God the First and Last is with us. Sing Hosanna, everyone!

\*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.



**First Reading**

**Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 15:1-10**

Now I want you to understand, brothers and sisters, the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup> through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. <sup>3</sup> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures <sup>4</sup> and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain.

*Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord!  
Alleluia, Alleluia! Give praise to his name.*

Jesus is Lord of all the earth. He is the King of Creation! *(Chorus)*

Spread the good news o'er all the earth; Jesus has died and has risen *(Chorus)*

We have been crucified with Christ. Now we shall live forever *(Chorus)*

Come, let us praise the living God, joyfully sing to our Savior *(Chorus)*

### **Second Reading**

### **The Book of Acts 10:34-43**

<sup>34</sup> Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup> but in every people anyone who [reveres God] and practices righteousness is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup> You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. <sup>37</sup> That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: <sup>38</sup> how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. <sup>39</sup> We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, <sup>40</sup> but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, <sup>41</sup> not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup> He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup> All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

### **Responsorial**

### **Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24**

One: O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good; God's steadfast love endures forever! Let the people of God say, "God's steadfast love endures forever."

**All: The Lord is my strength and my might; God has become my salvation. There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous.**

One: I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

**All: The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.**

One: This is the day that the LORD has made!

**All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it. 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 24:1-12**

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they went in they did not find the body. <sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. <sup>5</sup> The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen. <sup>6</sup> Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be handed over to the hands of sinners and be crucified and on the third day rise again.” <sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup> But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

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 “Goodness is Stronger than Evil” #296

Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate;  
Light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death.  
Victory is ours, victory is ours through him who loved us.  
Victory is ours, victory is ours through him who loved us.

*(Repeat)*

Message

The Resurrection of Christ:  
A New Hope

Pastor Rich

## Hymn

“Jesus Christ is Risen Today” #295 Vv. 1, 2, 4

Jesus Christ is risen today: Alleluia!  
Our Triumphant holy day: Alleluia!  
Who did once, upon the cross: Alleluia!  
Suffer to redeem our loss: Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing! Alleluia!  
Unto Christ our heavenly king! Alleluia!  
Who endured the cross and grave: Alleluia!  
Sinners to redeem and save! Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above: Alleluia!  
Praise eternal as his love: Alleluia!  
Praise him, all ye heavenly host: Alleluia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Alleluia!

## Easter 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—*the Redeemer of All, who is resurrected and ascended*—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 Ministry of Music

“On the Wings of Song”

Sarah Strecker

## **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. 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**

*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:

“Risen”

Addy and Leah Johnson

***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: We rejoice in your love, O God of the living, for you made the tomb of death the womb from which you bring forth Christ and universal eternal life.

**All: Make us joyful witnesses to this good news, that all humanity may one day gather at the feast of new life in the kingdom where you reign forever and ever! Amen.**

\*Blessing

\*Closing Hymn                    “Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven” #289

Alleluia, alleluia! Hearts to heaven and voices raise:  
Sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise.  
He who on the cross a victim for the world’s salvation bled—  
Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, now is risen from dead!

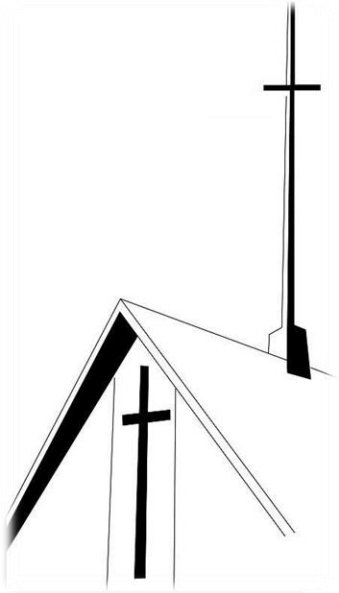
Alleluia, Christ is risen! Death at last has met defeat:  
See the ancient powers of evil in confusion and retreat!  
Once he died, and once was buried: now he lives forever more!  
Jesus Christ, the world’s Redeemer, whom we worship and adore.

Christ is risen, we are risen! Set your hearts on things above!  
There in all the Father’s glory lives and reigns our King of Love!  
Hear the word of peace he brings us, see his wounded hands and side!  
Now let every wrong be ended, every sin be crucified.

Alleluia, alleluia! Glory be to God on high:  
Alleluia to the Savior who has gained the victory!  
Alleluia to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity!  
Alleluia, alleluia to the Triune Majesty!



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



**Next Week:**  
**The Second Sunday of Easter**

**11:00 AM**

*Readings:*

Revelation 1:4-8

Psalm 150

John 20:19-31

**Theme: The Honesty of Doubt**

***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, in celebration of Easter, and in honor of David's birthday from Melanie Vadzemnieks**

### **COMING UP:**

April 22: Ladies Outreach Ministry will have a luncheon at the Siebenburger Club at 12:00 PM. Please let Carol Rodgers know if you can attend.

April 27: 9:00 AM Praise & Prayer Service, followed by the Coffee Social at 10:15 AM and the Second Sunday of Easter at 11:00 AM.

### **REMINDERS:**

- Need **hearing assistance**? We have four available units. Please talk to our tech crew in the back of the sanctuary.
- Have you signed up for **Small Group discussion** opportunities to continue our discernment for **church growth and stewardship**? See signup sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

### **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, Keith Vargeson, Joyce Kneidel, Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Ralph Kester, John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Tammy McIntyre, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich, Dave Pakulski, Ethel Davis, Chelsea Brown, Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin, Linda Foll-Johnson, Toni Stevenson, Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Carol & Doug Rodgers, Jane Moran, Josh Cook & Danny Kaerberlein, Helena Burgos, The Vadzemnieks Family, Doug Moore, and John & Tina Schnarrs

### **Current Council Members:**

Mike Pruzinsky (President), Debbie Anderson (Vice President), Melanie Vadzemnieks (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](mailto:mpruzinsky@icloud.com)

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## **EASTER FLOWERS 2025**

Ginnie Burger:	<i>Celebration of Spring!!</i>
The Churley Family:	<i>Celebration of the Glory of God</i>
Kathy Koziol:	<i>In memory of loved ones</i>
The Davis Family:	<i>In loving memory of Robert Davis and Ray and Edie Filley and Glenn and Gwennie Reynolds</i>
Carol Rodgers:	<i>In loving memory of the Kurty, Pruzinsky and Rodgers Families</i>
Pastor Joy and Dina:	<i>In loving memory of loved ones</i>
Al and Pam Tilley:	<i>In memory of loved one</i>
Nancy Alberico:	<i>In celebration of the Glory of God</i>
The Vahey Family:	<i>In memory of loved ones</i>
Lee & Becky Pomeroy:	<i>In memory of loved ones</i>
Cody Empey & Mike Pruzinsky:	<i>In celebration of Easter</i>
Natalie Braddock & April Knapp:	<i>In celebration of Spring</i>
Wilma Todd Skelly & Janice Skelly:	<i>In memory of loved ones</i>
Sean Leonard:	<i>In celebration of Spring</i>
Kim Tripp:	<i>In celebration of God's unconditional love for us!</i>
Lori Tripp:	<i>In celebration of Life</i>
Debbie Anderson:	<i>In memory of loved ones</i>
Evon Lloyd & Tom Gordiner:	<i>In memory of loved ones</i>
Cheryl Strecker:	<i>In celebration of Easter</i>