

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



The Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 6, 2025:

11:00 AM

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)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, the vastness of your goodness is beyond what human tongue can tell, or heart can feel. Still, we come to offer you our adoration and worship, because you are our All in All—Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

All: With all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength we join together in one accord—to praise you as the ground of our being and the hope of our life. We pray this through the powerful name of Jesus, who lives and reigns with you, and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen!

* Opening Hymn

“I Sing the Almighty Power of God” #31

I sing the almighty power of God that made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at God's command and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord that filled the earth with food;
God formed the creatures with the Word and then pronounced them good.
Lord, how your wonders are displayed where'er I turn my eye,
If I survey the ground I tread or gaze upon the sky!

There's not a plant or flower below but makes your glories known;
And clouds arise and tempests blow by order from your throne;
While all that borrows life from you is ever in your care,
And everywhere that I may be, you, God, are present there.

***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.

Confession

One: Holy and loving God, your scriptures say that to love you is also to love those around us. For times when we have not recognized you in the faces of strangers and those in need:

All: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

One: For times when we have knowingly supported the might of empire over the peace of the reign of God:

All: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

One: Woven in the tapestry of our lives is the assurance of your mercy and grace to us, so that we might always start again in the ways of love.

All: Christ Jesus, grant us a measure of your courage and strength to be love and light to the world. When it feels like we are surrounded by vicious powers, remind us that all things are surrounded by you. Amen.

Lenten Meditation & Candles

Song of Reflection "Jesus Remember Me" #285

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

(Sing Three Times)

First Reading

The Apostle Paul's Letter to the Philippians 3:10-14

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Responsorial

Psalm 126

One: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

All: Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy; then was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

One: Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the desert. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

All: Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy. Amen!

*Lenten Acclamation

“Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights” #250 V. 1

Throughout these Lenten days and nights
We turn to walk the inward way,
Where meeting Christ, our guide and light,
We live in hope till Easter Day.

*Gospel

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him. ³ Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’s feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?” ⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷ Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

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

“I Love You, Lord” #85

I love you , Lord,
And I lift my voice—
To worship you, O my soul, rejoice!
Take joy, my King, in what you hear:
May it be a sweet, sweet sound
In your ear.
(Repeat all)

Message

Prodigal Praise

Pastor Rich



Song of Response

“As We Gather at Your Table” #695

As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,
Help us know, O God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own;
Teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love’s victory known.

Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;
Send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave;
May we still behold your image in the world you died to save.

Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast—
Where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy bind us—nor will pride our peace destroy,
As we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.



COMMUNION LITURGY

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!

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

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 everyone who has asked their name to be on the prayer list *[see the last page of the bulletin]*. 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 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.

Planned-giving of even 1% can be transformational!

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

How is God calling you this week to give of your time, talent, and resources?

Offertory

His Eye Is on The Sparrow

Shelly Conrad

Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Lenten Congregational Response #576

***Make me a servant, humble and meek.
Lord, let me lift up those who are weak!
And may the prayer of my heart always be:
Make me a servant! Make me a servant!
Make me a servant today!***

*Departing Prayer

One: Holy and loving God, like Mary, let us never withhold our praise and adoration of you—not only in words, but also in deeds.

All: Christ Jesus, as Mary anointed you with precious oil, help us to be quick to bring the anointing of service and love to all who are in need—for it is in the face of the least among us that you are still present with us. Amen!

* Blessing

*Closing Hymn “For the Healing of the Nations” #621

For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord,
For a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead your people into freedom, from despair your world release,
That, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace.
Show us how, through care and goodness, fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned:
Pride of status, race, or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice—may we hallow life’s brief span.

You, Creator-God, have written your great name on humankind;
For our growing in your likeness, bring the life of Christ to mind;
That by our response and service—earth its destiny may find.



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



Next Sunday:

11:00 AM

Readings:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Luke 19:28-40

The Sixth Sunday of Lent:

Palm Sunday

***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



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The altar flowers this morning are given to the glory of God and in memory of Ginnie Burger's father on his birthday. The pink carnation is in honor of the baptism of Don and Sue Cameron's granddaughter who lives in South Carolina.

THIS WEEK:

April 9: Soup & Simplicity – 6:30 PM Fellowship Hall

REMINDERS:

- Women's Outreach Ministry completes their **hairbrush collection** for the Overnight Shelter TODAY.
- 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 Kaeberlein, 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

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