

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

March 17, 2024:

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

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

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

Centering Music

“He is Exalted” #122

He is exalted the King is exalted on high; I will praise him.

He is exalted, forever exalted, and I will praise his name!

He is the Lord, forever his truth shall reign. Heaven and earth—rejoice in his holy name.

He is exalted, the King is exalted on high. *(Repeat all)*

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, we believe the good news of Jesus Christ: that you love *all* people, and that abundant life and flourishing are your will for *all of us* and *all of creation*. Yet, upon the path of faith we encounter trials, burdens, and the suffering that comes from the many crosses we bear.

All: **Holy Spirit, teach us once more that faith is our shield and refuge in times of uncertainty and trouble. Remind us that even in the darkest valley—even in death itself—you are with us. You promise to restore all things, but we do not always understand your timing. Help us to trust in you when the answers are unclear. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen!**

* Opening Hymn

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” #501

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty—hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal foundation, whence the healing stream does flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar—lead me all my journey through:
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer, be thou still my strength and shield,
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside;
Bear me through the swelling current, land me safe on Canaan’s side:
Songs of praises, songs of praises—I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

***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.

(You may choose to shake hands, hug, or simply acknowledge one another without physical touch based on your comfort and/or health needs.)

Confession

One: *Let us pray:* For the times we have chosen to *needlessly* critique:

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

One: For the times we have held back generosity for *selfish* reasons:

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

One: For the times we have put *self-righteousness* above grace:

All: Lord, have mercy. Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy. May Almighty God have mercy upon us, and may we grow in the assurance of God's eternal love. Amen.

Song of Confession

"Change My Heart, O God" #373

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay;

Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

(Repeat all)



Lenten Meditation & Candles

Song of Reflection

"Jesus Remember Me" #285

(Sing Three Times)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

First Reading

The New Testament Letter to the Hebrews 5:5-10

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest but was appointed by the one who said to him, "*You are my Son; today I have begotten you*"; ⁶ as he says also in another place, "*You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.*" ⁷ In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered, ⁹ and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰ having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Responsorial

Psalm 51

One: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

All: Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. 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 12:20-33

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew, then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. ²⁷ “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say: ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

One: This is the Gospel of Christ for the People of God

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Facing Trial with Faith

Pastor Rich

Song of Response

“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 on God’s Word.

(Repeat)

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!

Communion Music

“Rescue”

Ladies Ensemble

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 pray for everyone who has asked their name to be on the prayer list *[see the last page of the bulletin]*. And as we pray for our own church this week, we pray for- and give thanks for our tech team, who keep our church connected to people across the street and across the nation. 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, that can be addressed to the church at:

1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508



Offertory

“God of Wonders”

Ladies Ensemble

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, your promise to us is that from every sorrow there will one day be joy, and from every ending: a new beginning.

All: Spirit of God, infuse within us the faith to endure in times of sadness and suffering. Christ Jesus, remind us that in every cross and grave there is the promise of resurrection. Amen!

* Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“When Peace Like a River” #428

When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say,
“It is well, it is well with my soul.”

Chorus:

*It is well (it is well), with my soul (with my soul),
It is well, it is well—with my soul.*

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,

Let this blest assurance control:

That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And has shed his own blood for my soul. (*Chorus*)

My sin—O, the bliss of this glorious thought—

My sin not in part by the whole,

Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! (*Chorus*)

And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,

The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,

The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend:

“Even so”—it is well with my soul. (*Chorus*)



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



Next Sunday:

11:00 AM

Readings:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Mark 11:1-11

John 12:12-16

PALM SUNDAY!

***Need to contact us for prayer, conversation, or to connect
with a small group or church ministry?***

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www.communityunited.church