

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



The First Sunday in Lent

February 22, 2026

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

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

Centering Music

“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)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, as we step into the season of Lent, you offer steadfast love as our strong refuge, and your boundless grace is our sheltering presence.

All: In the unity of worship, we trust that you, O God, will speak to us and through us—as we walk anew the path of Christ. It will lead us to the mystery of his cross, and then again, to his triumph over the grave. Amen!

* Opening Hymn

“You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd” #99

You, Lord, are both lamb and shepherd. You, Lord, are both prince and slave.
You, peacemaker and sword bringer—of the way you took and gave.
You, the everlasting instant; you, whom we both scorn and crave.

Clothed in light upon the mountain, stripped of might upon the cross,
Shining in eternal glory, beggared by a soldier’s toss,
You, the everlasting instant; you, who are both gift and cost.

You, who walk each day beside us, sit in pow-er at God’s side.
You, who preach a way that’s narrow, have a love that reaches wide.
You, the everlasting instant; you, who are our pilgrim guide.

Worthy is our earthly Jesus! Worthy is our cosmic Christ!
Worthy your defeat and victory. Worthy still your peace and strife.
You, the everlasting instant; you, who are our death and life.

***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: Christ Jesus, we sometimes forget that you—*yourself*—faced rejection, condemnation, isolation, and death. Our perception can sometimes become so narrow that we do not sense that you are with us in our troubles. We confess, we have sometimes felt discouraged, abandoned, and even betrayed by you, O God, when all manner of things have not gone well for us.

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

One: Instead of following where you lead, O God, at times we follow a tempter who shows us a vision of the world that is a counterfeit of what you desire for us. We confess, at times we have been deceived by *imitations* of love, abundance, and joy.

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

One: Help us to trust you to journey with us and to guide us.

All: Help us to rest in your promise to never leave nor forsake us. 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

Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:12-19

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned— ¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Responsorial

Psalm 32

One: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

All: Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

One: Therefore, let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

All: You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. 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

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴ But he answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ” ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ” ⁷ Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ” ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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

“Oh How He Loves You and Me” #270

O how he loves you and me,
O how he loves you and me;
He gave his life—what more could he give?
O how he loves you, O how he loves me,
O how he loves you and me.

(Repeat)

Song of Response

“Jesus, Your Name” #361

Jesus, your name is power,
Jesus, your name is might.
Jesus, your name will break every stronghold—
Jesus, your name is life.

Jesus, your name is healing,
Jesus, your name gives sight.
Jesus, your name will free every captive—
Jesus your name is life.

Jesus, your name is holy,
Jesus, your name is might.
Jesus, your name, above every other—
Jesus your name is life.



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

“Oh, How I Love Jesus”
“In Moments Like These”

Cheryl 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 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 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

God is inviting us to serve in response to God's great love for us, so that the whole world may know the fullness of God's peace.

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

"Above All"

Pastor Rich

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, in the deserts of our lives we are reminded that we are not alone. Christ is with us, knowing our every need.

All: Spirit of God, when we face our own trials and tribulations, grant us the wisdom of heaven to guide our thinking and our actions. And when we are in great need, send the angels of heaven to minister to us. Amen!

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn “Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days” #252

Lord, who throughout these forty days
For us did fast and pray,
Teach us with you to mourn our sins
And close by you to stay.

As you with Satan did contend,
And did the victory win,
O give us strength in you to fight,
In you to conquer sin.

As you did hunger and did thirst,
So teach us, gracious Lord,
To die to self, and so to live
By your most holy Word.

And thro' these days of penitence,
And thro' your Passion-tide,
Forever-more, in life and death,
O Lord, with us abide.

Abide with us, that through this life
Of doubts and hope and pain,
An Easter of unending joy
We may at last attain!



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



Next Week:

**Sunday, March 1:
The Second Sunday in Lent**

Scriptures:

Genesis 12:1-4a

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

Psalm 121

John 3:1-17

Theme:

Born Anew in Faith and Spirit

***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 and in honor of April's 59th birthday and Anna's 80th birthday by Natalie Braddock. An additional arrangement is given in honor of Lorre Rapp's birthday, which was February 18th, by her sister, Kathy Koziol. Happy Birthday, all!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 4: Bible Study with Pastor Rich: A Catholic and Protestant Dialogue (6:30 PM)
- March 8: **Worship Service in honor of International Women's Day**
- March 10: Liberty House Meal Preparation and Sharing
- March 11: Soup & Simplicity: Lenten Devotions and Social, Fellowship Hall (6:30 PM)
- March 12: Crafternoon 1:30-3:30 PM, Fellowship Hall
- March 15: Service Sunday
- March 18: Resonate (7:00 PM)

SPECIAL INVITATION: In honor of Anna Silvia's 80th birthday, her church family and friends are invited to a reception here in Fellowship Hall this Tuesday, February 24th. Come and wish Anna a happy birthday and enjoy some cake between 3 and 6 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:

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)
Zachary Oliver (PA Army National Guard)

PRAYERS FOR:

Linda Hilbert, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Ethel Davis, Celeste Eller & Family,
Michele Serafin, Toni Stevenson, Dave Wooledge, Sharon Cooper, Zoey Cathie Witmire, Sandra Ganley,
Celeste Peck, Linda Foll Johnson, Shirley Carrier, The Kuzma Family, Debra Jackman, Malcom Bauer,
the Schmidt and Smith families, Zoey Cathie Witmire, Laura Will, Paul Dietz, baby Elijah, Linda Weber

Meet your 2026 Church Council

Thea Hyatt, President, Ginnie Burger, Vice President, Tracy Davis, Treasurer,
Michele Vahey, Secretary (Interim), Justin Graff, Angel Conrad, Chuck Becker, Don Cameron

CUC IS LOOKING FOR A COUNCIL SECRETARY

We currently have an open position on the CUC Council and are looking for someone who can provide valuable support as Secretary and serve as a voting member. If you are interested, please speak with any Council member or contact the Church office. Thank you!

You may call the church office at 814-864-4429 for pastoral and administrative matters or use email:
communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com