

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



The First Sunday of Lent

February 26, 2023:

11:00 AM

The First Sunday of Lent

We are now in the Season of Lent. It is a six-week span in the church year when Christians contemplate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ—whose path ultimately led to death on a Cross. Within these six weeks, Christians are invited to fast and pray for 40 days—calling to mind Christ's 40 days in the desert, in which he wrestled with temptations of power. From the desert, Christ would come forth showing that the power of God is love. That love was put on ultimate display when Christ turned his own condemnation and death into forgiveness and new life.



Today's Readings:

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Psalm 32

Matthew 4:1-11



Theme:

Tempters, Temptations, and our Responses

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty, Senior Pastor

Pastor Joy Johnson, Associate Minister

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

Welcome, Announcements, and Prayer Requests

Centering Music

Invocation

One: Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, from God our Creator, Christ our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit our eternal Advocate and Friend.

All: And also with you.

One: 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.

One: 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, which leads to the misery and 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.

(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: 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 you 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 or forsake us. Amen.

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

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die, ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,^[a] knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

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.

One: Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous!

All: Shout for joy, all you upright in heart. Amen!

*Lenten Acclamation

“Surely the Presence” #131

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;

I can feel his mighty power and his grace.

I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face;

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,

*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 [Jesus] 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 Jesus.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Tempters, Temptations, and Our Responses

Pastor Rich



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

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

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]*...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 those who feel tormented in the deserts of life, whether physical, spiritual, relational, economic, or social.

All: God hear our prayer!

One: That temptation would flee us, as Christ serves as our defender and shield.

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

Or, if you prefer to mail in a check, that can be addressed to the church at:

1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508

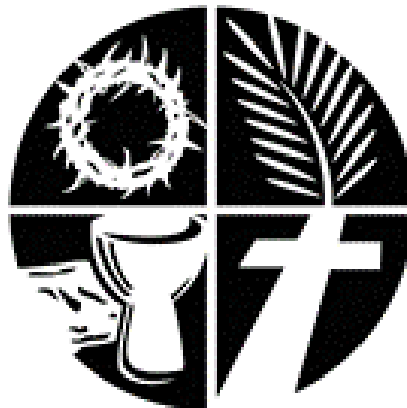
Ministry of Music and Time for Contemplation

Cheryl Strecker

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.

*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, send us forth to follow wherever your Spirit leads.

All: May your angels guard our hearts and our souls, so that even in harm's way we will not be consumed. Remind us that whether in falling or in rising we are forever in the protection of your love. Amen!

*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.

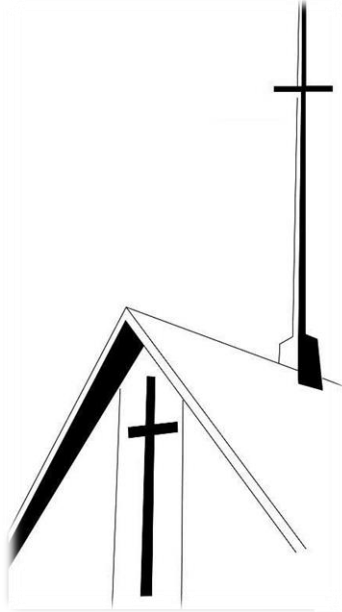
And thro' these days of penitence,
And thro' your Passion-tide,
Forever-more, in life and death,
O Lord, with us abide.

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



*Blessing

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



Next Sunday:

11:00 AM

Readings:

Genesis 12:1-4a

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

Psalm 121

John 3:1-17

**The Second Sunday of Lent:
Body and Spirit: Coming Wholly Alive**

***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 LOVING MEMORY OF HER NEPHEW JASON GEHRLEIN FROM DEBBIE ANDERSON.

Tuesday: Ladies Lunch

Wednesday: Bible Study with Angel Hall 7 PM in Fellowship Hall

Please join us next Sunday, March 5TH as we honor **Tracy Davis** who has served faithfully as our church administrator for seven years and has moved on to take a new role at the Redevelopment Authority! While Tracy and her amazing family remain a treasure of Community United Church, we ask that you join us after service on the 5TH to celebrate Tracy and her many contributions as a staff member and will wish her well in her wonderful new job! Refreshments will be provided after worship, please be with us! ~Church Council and Staff

WE REMEMBER THOSE IN OUR ARMED FORCES:

Jacob Snyder (Army), Nick Duncan (Army), Samantha McHenry (Army),
Chris Duncan (Marines), Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard),
Shelby Wescott (Army), Mathew Anderson (Army)
and DJ Miaczynski (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Rod and Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Sue Scheiwer, Diane Walker, George Churley,
Robin Adams, Ralph Kester, Sharon Cooper, Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy
Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone, Jared and Priscilla Hall, Ron Celeski,
Sally Cubetus, and Annette Minich.

Council Members:

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