

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



The Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 15, 2026

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

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

Centering Music “O Lord, Hear My Prayer” #484 V. 1

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call—answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer, come and listen to me.

(Repeat)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, you are the Creator of night and day, twilight and dawn. The light of creation brings us warmth. The darkness of night brings rest, relief, and guiding dreams. We thank you for all of it.

All: In our daily living, you call us to walk by the illumination of your wisdom. But we are also called to avoid spiritual darkness. We need your help to know the difference. In this time of worship, grant us clear spiritual sight. Amen!

* Opening Hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!” #136

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Which wert and art and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy—though the darkness hide thee;
Though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
Perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

***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.

Lenten Time of Confession

One: *Let us pray together:* Holy and loving God, to walk with Christ is to live by the Spirit, and to trust in your wisdom. Yet we sometimes harden our hearts and let resentment, hatred, and bias write the script of our speaking and close off our thinking. And so we ask:

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

One: We hear the call of Christ to repent—to turn away—from the pathways of sin. But too often the church on earth has called things sin that are not sin. For any time that churches have engaged in such malpractice, we pray:

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

One: For those times when humanity has delighted in demeaning others, when humanity has refused the path of loving our enemies, we ask for transformation.

All: May the God of mercy grant us the grace we need to radically transform our lives, until love is all that remains. 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 Letter to the Ephesians 5:8-14

...for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Responsorial

Psalm 23

One: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. God makes me lie down in green pastures; the Holy One leads me beside still waters.

All: God restores my soul. The LORD leads me in right paths for the sake of God’s name.

One: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

All: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long. 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 9:1-41

As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷ saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹ He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹² They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸ [Some of the people] did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰ His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹ but we do not

know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵ He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷ He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” ²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰ The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

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

All: **Come, Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!**

Children’s Message

Reflection

The Trouble with Blaming Sin

Pastor Rich



Song of Response

“Amazing Grace” #422 Vv. 1, 3, 4

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be.
As long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
‘Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.



COMMUNION LITURGY

Pastor: People of God, come to the table with open hands and love in your hearts, for this is *Christ's* table—a place where *every person* is valued, treated with kindness, and embraced in fairness and love.

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 the bread and we take the cup and we 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: Remembering that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. People of God, come to the table!

Communion Music

“Pie Jesu”

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

"Après un Reve"

Dan Bainbridge

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, by your grace we are granted spiritual sight—not with physical eyesight, but with the vision that comes by your wisdom. With such discernment, help us to join you in seeing the world through love.

All: May this spiritual sight help us to see where hurting people need our love; where injustices need repair and restoration, and where the ravages of violence need the transformation that only comes through peace. Grant us the gifts, as your church, to be the body of Christ to the world. Send us out with both the sight and the mission of love. Amen!

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“Let There Be Peace on Earth” #614

Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth,
The peace that was meant to be.
With God our Creator,
Children all are we.
Let us walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me;
Let this be the moment now.
With every step I take,
Let this be my solemn vow:
To take each moment
And live each moment
In peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me.



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



Next Week:

**Sunday, March 22:
The Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Scriptures:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Romans 8:6-11

Psalm 130

John 11:1-45

Theme:

Rising Again

***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 her dad's birthday by Julie Minich

This week:

- March 15: Service Sunday (TODAY! 12:15 PM)
March 16: CUC Council Meeting 6:30 PM
March 17: Ladies' Outreach Group - St. Patrick's Day Luncheon in Fellowship Hall 12:00 PM
March 18: Resonate 7:00 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), Aran Maloney (Air National Guard)

PRAYERS FOR:

Linda Hilbert, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Ethel Davis, Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin,
Toni Stevenson, Dave Woledge, Sharon Cooper, Sandra Ganley, Celeste Peck, Linda Foll Johnson,
Shirley Carrier, The Kuzma Family, Debra Jackman, Zoey Cathie Witmire, Laura Will,
Paul Dietz, the Smith and Schmidt families, Linda Weber, Veronica, baby Elijah, Kim Normandy,
Joan Schultz, Mary Mong, Esmerelda Oliver

Your 2026 CUC 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

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