

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



The Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 10, 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

“His Strength is Perfect” #637

His strength is perfect when our strength is gone;
He'll carry us when we can't carry on.
Raised in his power, the weak become strong;
His strength is perfect, his strength is perfect.
(Repeat)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, you created all things by your wisdom and infused creation with your love. When we find ourselves lost and missing the mark, that same love restores us by grace.

All: **As we journey more deeply into Lent, open our hearts and our minds so that we might remember that we are saved by grace. We do not have to earn your favor; you grant it upon us—through Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer. Amen!**

* Opening Hymn “Come Away from Rush and Hurry” #655

Come away from rush and hurry to the stillness of God's peace;
From our vain ambition's worry, come to Christ to find release.
Come away from noise and clamor, life's demands and frenzied pace;
Come to join the people gathered here to seek and find God's face.

In the pastures of God's goodness we lie down to rest our soul.
From the waters of God's mercy we drink deeply, are made whole.
At the table of God's presence all the saints are richly fed.
With the oil of God's anointing into service we are led.

Come, then children with your burdens—life's confusions, fears, and pain.
Leave them at the cross of Jesus; take instead his kingdom's reign.
Bring your thirsts, for he will quench them—he alone will satisfy.
All our longings find attainment when to self we gladly die.

***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 history of the church on earth, especially for those times when churches have given themselves to judgement and not to love:

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

One: For those times in our lives when we have created trouble for others without thinking through our words or our actions carefully:

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

One: For the violence humans render unto others:

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.

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

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 2:1-10

You were dead through the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³ All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, doing the will of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else, ⁴ but God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.

Responsorial

Psalm 107

One: O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good, God's steadfast love endures forever.

All: Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. 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 3:16-21

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷ "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned, but those who do not believe are condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Redemption by Grace

Pastor Joy

Song of Response

"Grace Alone" #436

Every promise we can make, every prayer and step of faith;
Every difference we will make—is only by his grace.
Every mountain we will climb, every ray of hope we shine;
Every blessing left behind—is only by his grace.

Chorus:

*Grace alone, which God supplies; strength unknown he will provide.
Christ in us, our cornerstone, we will go forth—in grace alone.*

Every soul we long to reach, every heart we hope to teach;
Everywhere we share his peace—is only by his grace.
Every loving word we say, every tear we wipe away;
Every sorrow turned to praise—is only by his grace.

(Chorus)

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

“Days Like These”

Bob Martin & Patrick Vahey

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 we pray for our Liberty House Ministry this week, for the leaders and the cooks, for those donating their time and resources to help enrich the lives of the veterans who live there—we ask for blessings upon them of wisdom and servant leadership. 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

“The Color Purple”

Bob Martin, Patrick Vahey & 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, by your grace we are redeemed and commissioned to go into the world to announce the good news of Christ: the love of God is for all!

All: May we be ambassadors of grace this week, and all the days of our lives, until the fullness of God's love renews all of creation. 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 Sunday:

11:00 AM

Readings:

Hebrews 5:5-10

Psalm 51:1-12

John 12:20-33

The Fifth Sunday of Lent:

Facing Trial with Faith

***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 by Kathy Koziol, Lorre Rapp & Pat in memory of Sisters birthdays Emma & Remie

UPCOMING EVENTS:

March 11: Council Meeting 6:30 PM

March 12: Liberty House

March 13: Lenten Soup & Simplicity Meal Share & Connection, 6:30 PM

March 17: Service Sunday

March 17: Deadline for Soup Donations

March 26: Ladies Lunch

Coin collection Update: Right - \$134.38

Left - \$ 57.92

Need hearing assistance? We have four available units. Please talk to our tech crew in the back of the sanctuary.

Please submit any bulletin requests by **Tuesday** to ensure there is time to get them in.

WE REMEMBER THOSE IN OUR ARMED FORCES:

Jacob Snyder (Army), Nick Duncan (Army), Samantha McHenry (Army), Brittany Duncan (Army),
Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott (Army),
Matthew Anderson (Army), DJ Miaczynski (Marines), Jaden O'Hara (Army)
& Toby Charlton (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett & family & friends, Rod & Dew Johnson,
Harry Lamb, Diane Walker, Robin Adams, Ralph Kester,
John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone,
Ron Celeski, Jan & Tim Crowe and Family, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich,
Dave Pakulski, Randi Johnson, Lillian Hendrickson, Ethel Davis,
Jim Haglund, Chelsea Brown, John Waid, Patti Rogers, Celeste Eller & Family, Shirley Carrier,
Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Gary Peck, Jerry Koziol, Uncle Charlie,
Carol & Doug Rodgers, Jane Moran, Ed Mumau, Renee Gullekson, Sharon Cooper,
Mary Ann Schmeisser & Sandra Carlson

Council Members:

Debbie Anderson (President), Bob Martin (VP), Nancy Alberico, Janice Skelly, Mike Pruzinsky, Michele Vahey, Patti Rogers, Carol Rodgers, and Angel Conrad