

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany & Annual Congregational Meeting

January 28, 2024

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy Johnson

Centering Music

“As We Gather” #646

As we gather may your Spirit work within us,
As we gather may we glorify your Name.
Knowing well that as our hearts begin to worship,
We'll be blessed because we came—
We'll be blessed because we came.
(Repeat All)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, your Spirit gathers us as a people of faith to worship you in Spirit and Truth. Today, we also gather for our congregational meeting to set our vision, and our commitments for our ministries in the year to come.

All: Almighty God, we ask that your creative hands stir within us to make all things new. Remind us of the gift that it is to *be the church*—the Body of Christ. Set a warming fire in all of our hearts. Help us to renew our efforts to be good stewards of this congregation, and to take joy in our shared ministries. Amen!

* Opening Hymn

“Sing a New Church” #577

Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity,
Gathered in the name of Jesus, richer still in unity.

Chorus:

*Let us bring the gifts that differ—and in splendid, varied ways,
Sing a new church into being, one in faith and love and praise.*

Radiant risen from the water; robed in holiness and light;
Many genders in God's image, many genders God's delight. *(Chorus)*

Trust the goodness of creation; trust the Spirit strong within.
Dare to dream the vision promised sprung from seed of what has been. *(Chorus)*

Bring the hopes of every nation; bring the art of every race.
Weave a song of peace and justice; let it sound through time and space. *(Chorus)*

Draw together at one table all the human family;
Shape a circle ever wider and a people ever free. *(Chorus)*

***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 greet one another without physical touch based on your comfort and/or health needs.)



First Reading

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many members yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect, ²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵ that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work powerful deeds? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Responsorial**Psalm 111**

One: Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

All: Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

One: Full of honor and majesty is God's work, and the Holy One's righteousness endures forever.

All: Revering God, the LORD, is the beginning of wisdom; all who practice it have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever. Amen

Gloria*"Glory Be to God, Creator" #145**

Glory be to God, Creator, glory be to God the Son,
Glory be to God the Spirit, known as Three, yet God the One

As it was in the beginning, it is now and so shall be,
In a world without an ending, glory through eternity.

Holy, holy God Almighty! Holy, holy Prince of Peace!
Holy, holy Wind of Presence! Holy, holy, holy! Amen!

Gospel*Matthew 16:13-19**

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

To Be the Church!

Pastor Rich

Song of Response

"Sanctuary" #482

Lord, prepare me—to be a sanctuary,
Pure and holy, tried and true;
And with thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

(Repeat all)

COMMUNION LITURGY

Pastor: People of God, on this Sunday when we gather to worship *and* to commit ourselves to another year of ministry, we honor Christ as the Foundation and Head of our church. We follow the Holy Spirit, leading us in the footsteps of Christ. In all of this, we long to draw ever closer to our Redeemer and Friend.

All: Our altar table is another place to encounter the living Christ. Here at this table, food for the body also becomes food for the spirit.

Pastor: This is a table of grace. There is room around it for every soul that was, and is, and is to come.

All: We come to the table as 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 the living Christ, body and blood, love poured out, forever!

All: Here at this Table we remember that Christ indeed 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

Shelly Conrad

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

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, which can be addressed to the church at:

1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508

Offertory

“I Could Sing of Your Love Forever”

Cheryl Strecker

Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Congregational Response #147

“Praise God, from whom all blessing flow!

Praise God, all creatures high and low:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, in Jesus fully known!

Creator, Word, and Spirit one!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia!”

*Departing Prayer

One: Holy and loving God, having received your grace through Word and Sacrament, song and prayer, we now listen to one another—in order to discern where you would have us serve and minister in the year to come.

All: Spirit of God, make room in our hearts to hear one another. Season our speech with wisdom and insight. Make our unity complete through a common vision and the law of love. Amen!

*Closing Hymn

“Make Me a Servant” #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.

(Repeat)

2024 Congregational Meeting

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



The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany & Church Renewal Series

Readings to Study:

Isaiah 40:21-31

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Mark 1:29-39

Theme:

*The Church Empowered to Proclaim the Gospel in Word and
Deed*

***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 Penny Churley in celebration of Mom and Payton's birthday!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- January 28: Prayer & Praise Monthly Service, 9:00 – 9:45 AM
January 28: SPECIAL SERVICE AND CONGREGATIONAL MEETING 11:00 AM
February 7: Supper & Study 6:30 PM
February 12: Council Meeting 6:30 PM
February 13: Liberty House

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:

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 Pikulski, Randi Johnson, Lillian Hendrickson, Wilma and Janice Skelly, 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
& Doug Rodgers.

Council Members:

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