

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



July 19, 2026

The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 AM

Pastor Joy L. Johnson

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

Welcome and Announcements

Centering Music

"Sanctuary" #452

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
Pure and holy, tried and true;
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living
sanctuary for you.
(Repeat)

Invocation

One: Come, people of God. We gather as one, united in our common purpose: to worship the One who has called us together.

All: We come to remember why we are here—to worship God with open hearts and willing spirits.

One: O God, your steadfast love never fails. You have made us only a little lower than the heavenly beings, and you have claimed us as your own beloved children.

All: Remind us that we are your children. Reassure our hearts that we walk in your light.

One: We are not perfect, but we are yours. Through your Spirit of adoption, you have welcomed us into your family.

All: Hold us close in your grace and help us live as your beloved, and use the very strength that you have given us to worship joyfully and to do your work with compassion and courage. Amen!

***Opening Hymn**

"We are Called to be God's People" #580

We are called to be God's people, showing by our lives his grace,
One in heart and one in spirit, sign of hope for all the race.
Let us show how he has changed us, and remade us as his own,
Let us share our life together as we shall around his throne.

We are called to be God's servants, working in his world today;
Taking his own task upon us, all his sacred words obey.
Let us rise then, to his summons, dedicate to him our all,
That we may be faithful servants, quick to answer now his call.

We are called to be God's prophets, speaking for the truth and right,
Standing firm for godly justice, bringing evil things to light.
Let us seek the courage needed, our high calling to fulfill,
That the world may know the blessing of the doing of God's will.

***Opening Prayer**

***The Peace of Christ**

One: The peace of Christ be with you, all!

All: And also with you!

One: Let us share with one another a sign of peace.

First Reading

Genesis 28:10-19

¹⁰Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. ¹²And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; ¹⁴and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." ¹⁶Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!" ¹⁷And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." ¹⁸So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

Song

"Great is Thy Faithfulness" #72 v.1,2

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with thee;
Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;
As thou has been thou forever wilt be.

Refrain

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed thy hand hath provided—
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter, and spring-time and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

(Refrain)

Second Reading

Romans 8:12-34

¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Responsorial

Psalms 139:7-13

One: Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in the abode of the dead, you are there.

All: If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

One: If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me,

All: even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.” 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 13:24-30

He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ ²⁸ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹ But he replied, ‘No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

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

“Be Thou My Vision” #487

Be thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word,
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my Treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heaven’s Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Hymn 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.

Refrain

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.

(Refrain)



Celebration of Communion

Pastor: Beloved children of God, as we gather at Christ's table this morning, we proclaim that this table is open to all people – no matter who you are or what you believe or what you've been told. At this table we remember the simple gathering of a chosen family all those centuries ago that came together for a meal that proclaimed a new way of being in this world.

All: We remember God's radically inclusive love made real in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We remember the One who befriended the forgotten, embraced the outcast, and saw the image of God in all people.

Pastor: It is here at this table that we find hope and imagination to see God's promise of wholeness, and the strength we need to continue the work of justice. On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took a loaf of bread, gave thanks, and broke it and said, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, he took the cup, saying, "This is my blood, my very life, poured out for you. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

All: God, we thank you for breathing creation into existence and declaring it good. We celebrate the rich diversity of your world-- every soul, every life shaped by your grace. By your Spirit, in this holy meal, assure us that nothing can separate us from your love. Amen.

Pastor: People of God, come to the table!

Communion Music

"Blessings"

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 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 also pray for all who have asked to be on our prayer list—and so we ask: Holy and Loving God, in your wisdom, meet all of these needs in the perfect way of your grace. We pray together:

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 financial contributions to the church are what allow us to support our ministries. As you can give, please do so joyfully!

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/Ministry of Music

"Can You Feel the Love"

Lizdel

Offertory Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Congregational Response #147**

"Praise God, from whom all blessings 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: God of the field, we know you are at work, even when we cannot see it. May we remain faithful in faith, love, and hope.

All: Help us from being distracted by the weeds. Help us to bear the fruit of Christ.

One: Keep us faithful in the work you have given us.

All: We will leave the sorting to you. 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.

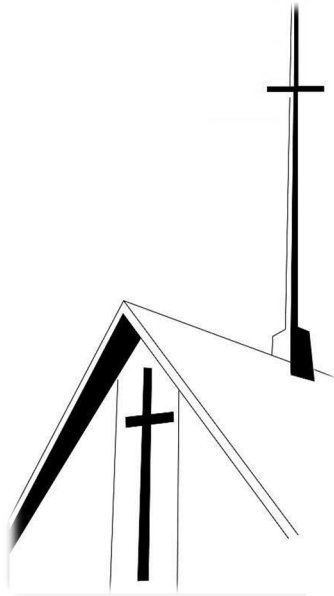
With God our Creator, children all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

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, July 26, 2026
11:00 AM**

Readings:
Genesis 29:15-28
Psalm 105:1-11
Matthew 13:24-30

Theme: Weaving the Future

***Need to contact us for prayer, conversation, or to connect
online 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 Ron and Penny Churley as they celebrate the 54th birthday of their daughter, Shari. Carol Rodgers also provides flowers in memory of her father, Walter Kurty.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

July 19: Service Sunday – today! See how it's done and/or volunteer to provide something.

July 20: CUC Council Meeting –6:30 PM.

Spirits & Spirituality resumes in August – stay tuned for updates

- **ERIE GIVES IS COMING UP SOON!** Check donations *must be* received via US Mail by Tuesday, August 4th. See the detailed insert and check form in this bulletin!

-Note that the online giving for Erie Gives is August 11th, starting at midnight and running through midnight-

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), and Connor Bille (Army)

PRAYERS FOR:

Linda Hilbert, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Ethel Davis, Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin, Toni Stevenson, Sandra Ganley, Dorothy Moyer, Celeste Peck, Linda Foll Johnson, Debra Jackman, Zoey Cathie Witmire, Laura Will, Linda Weber, Veronica, Patty Puzar, Joan Schultz, Michelle and Melissa, Tom and Thea Hyatt, Randy Koziol, Barbara Thompson, Tanisha and Jaeda, Barbara Hickey, Sandy Gool, Jim Haglund, Rosie Goss, family and friends of Lorre Rapp, Ruth Zavaglia, Brad Stewart, Cain Hickey, Cal Bretz, and Earl Hall

Your 2026 Council Members:

Thea Hyatt, President, Ginnie Burger, Vice President, Tracy Davis, Treasurer, Juli Tonks, Secretary, Michele Vahey, Justin Graff, Chuck Becker, and Don Cameron

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

Don't forget to check Facebook and our website: **communityunited.church**

Community United Church is committed to ethical and legal compliance in our music and livestreaming:

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Nancy Alberico Visits a Radiant and Cheerful Shirley Carrier

"That was very uplifting," says Nancy Alberico after visiting with Shirley Carrier this week. Shirley was bright-eyed and in good spirits at her residence at Holiday Niagara Village, where she now lives with her sweet but shy cat, "TC." Shirley sends her regards to all of her friends at CUC, and would love a visit, note, or phone call. She hopes to get to church one of these days, but in the meantime, she welcomes contact with her Church Family. And, just in case you are wondering...she loves chocolate.

*If you would like information about who to visit or where to visit them, touch base with Pastor Joy. We have generous and caring people here at CUC, and it is a very rewarding experience to stay in touch with our church family members who may not be able to attend, or they cannot attend regularly. In addition, our members and friends may need support as they care for a loved one during illness. **We currently have several opportunities to show our love for our people.***

Be looking for a photo from the Women's Outreach Group as they are planning to visit our own Rosie Goss, now residing at Walnut Creek Healthcare Center on Zuck Road.
