

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



July 26, 2026

The Ninth 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

"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: Come, people of God. We gather today as one body, called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus—who often had no place to lay his head, yet welcomed all with open arms.

All: We come to open our eyes and our hearts. We gather to worship the God who sees every unhoused neighbor and loves without condition.

One: We know, O God, that your love knows no borders and builds no walls. You call us not to look away from suffering, but to step near with grace, humility, and hands ready to serve.

All: Remind us that whenever, and however we show care for the vulnerable, the forgotten, or the struggling, we are encountering you.

One: We acknowledge our hesitancy and our fear, yet you call us into your transformative love. Through your Spirit, stir in us a holy, restless compassion.

All: Soften our hearts and open our eyes to the needs around us. Help us follow the example of Jesus and bring loving help, dignity, and hope to our neighbors.
Amen!

***Opening Hymn**

"O Come, Let Us Adore Him" #114

O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

We'll praise his name forever,
we'll praise his name forever,
we'll praise his name forever,
Christ the Lord.

We'll give him all the glory,
We'll give him all the glory,
We'll give him all the glory,
Christ the Lord.

For he alone is worthy,
for he alone is worthy,
for he alone is worthy,
Christ the Lord.

***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

Isaiah 58:6-12

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the (ropes) of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? ⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator* shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rearguard. ⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, ¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. ¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. ¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Song

"Refiner's Fire" #374

Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver.

Purify my heart, let me be as gold, pure gold.

Refrain

Refiner's fire; my heart's one desire

Is to be holy, set apart for you, Lord.

I choose to be holy, set apart for you, my Master,

Ready to do your will.

Purify my heart, cleanse me from within and make me holy.

Purify my heart, cleanse me from my sin, deep within.

(Refrain)



Responsorial

Psalm 41:1-3, 11-13

One: Happy are those who consider the poor; the LORD delivers them in the day of trouble.
The LORD protects them and keeps them alive; they are called happy in the land.

All: The LORD sustains them on their sickbed; in their illness you heal all their infirmities.

One: By this I know that you are pleased with me; because my enemy has not ruled over me, but you have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in your presence forever.

All: Blessed be the LORD, from everlasting to everlasting. 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 25:31-40

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'

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

“Step by Step” #494

O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.
O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.
I will seek you in the morning,
and I will learn to walk in your ways;
and step by step you'll lead me,
and I will follow you all of my days.
(repeat)

Message

Weaving the Future

Kurt Crays

Hymn of Response “As a Fire is Meant for Burning” #551 v. 1,2

As a fire is meant for burning with a bright and warming flame,
So the church is meant for mission, giving glory to God's name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs, but to build a bridge of care,
We join hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere.

We are learners ; we are teachers; we are pilgrims on the way,
We are seekers; we are givers; we are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle, loving actions, we would show that Christ is light.
In a humble, listening spirit, we would live to God's delight.



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

"I want to know You / We Fall Down"

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

“How Beautiful”

Amber Jaroszewski

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: Gracious God, as we prepare to go forth, do not let our worship end inside these walls. Send us out, empowered by your Spirit, to walk alongside our unhoused neighbors with enduring courage.

All: **Equip us to serve with persistent love, bringing hope, justice, and tangible difference to our community. Amen!**

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“God Be With You” #716

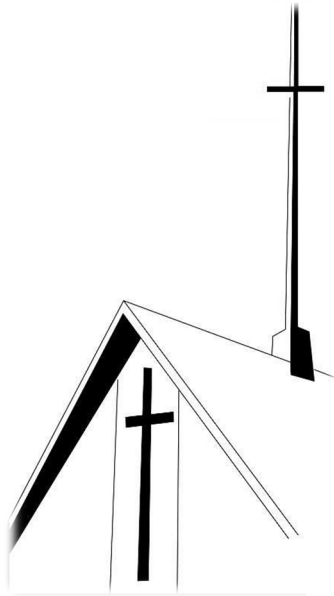
God be with you till we meet again,
By God’s counsels guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again,
‘neath his wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again;
If life’s perils should confound you,
God will put his arms around you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Postlude

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



**Next Week:
Sunday, August 2, 2026
11:00 AM**

Readings:
Genesis 21:22-31
Romans 9:1-5
Psalm 17:1-7,15
Matthew 14:13-21

Theme: We Came Here Hungry

***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

communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com



Community United Church

The altar flowers this morning are given to the glory of God by Nancy Alberico in celebration of Maverick's 5th Birthday. *Happy Birthday, Maverick!*

UPCOMING EVENTS:

July 27: Donation **Checks** toward Erie Gives **must be MAILED** early this week in order to be received at Erie Gives by August 4th. (The form you need is right outside the Sanctuary)

August 11: **ERIE GIVES event** – Give Online or by Phone – no transaction fees!

August 13: Crafternoon in Fellowship Hall – 1:30-3:30 PM

August 18: Women's Group monthly luncheon – 12 PM

August 19: **Spirits & Spirituality** – 7 PM – Calamari's Squid Row

Need hearing assistance? We have four available devices to enhance your worship experience! 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, Zoey Foote, Earl Hall, and Patty Brogdan.

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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