

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



June 25, 2023:

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy Johnson

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

Centering Music "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
(Sing twice)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, we believe the good news of Jesus Christ: that your love is for all people and for all of creation! We believe that the reign of God expands wherever mercy and restorative justice are embodied by anyone, anywhere!

All: And, as followers of Christ, we believe that divine love requires transformations of hearts and minds, wherever the love of God is lacking.

One: This morning, we are called to remember that the way of Christ requires taking a stand. The Gospel is indeed inclusive of all. But Jesus also tells us that the Gospel brings a sword. *This is not a call to violence!* It is a reminder that there are chains in life that still need to be broken: hatred, bigotry, prejudice, and injustices of all kinds.

All: Spirit of God, in this hour of worship, remind us that the way of divine love calls us to 'live on earth as it is in heaven.' Grant us the wisdom and courage to overcome all injustices on earth with the power of heavenly love. Amen!

*Opening Hymn "Sing a New Song" #10

Chorus:

*Sing a new song unto the Lord;
Let your song be sung from mountains high.
Sing a new song unto the Lord,
Singing "Alleluia!"*

Yahweh's people dance for joy; O come before the Lord.
And play for him on glad tambourines, and let your trumpet sound.
(Chorus)

Rise, O children, from your sleep; your Savior now has come.
He has turned your sorrow to joy, and filled your soul with song.
(Chorus)

Glad my soul for I have seen the glory of the Lord.
The trumpet sounds, the dead shall be raised. I know my Savior lives.
(Chorus)

***Opening Prayer**

New Members Welcome

*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 9:35-10:23 (An adaptation from the New Living Translation)

²⁴ “Students are not greater than their teacher, and servants are not greater than their master. ²⁵ Students are to be like their teacher, and servants are to be like their master. And since I, the master of the household, have been called the prince of demons, the members of my household will be called by even worse names! ²⁶ “But don’t be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. ²⁷ What I tell you now in the darkness, shout abroad when daybreak comes. What I whisper in your ear, shout from the housetops for all to hear!

²⁸ “Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. ²⁹ What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. ³⁰ And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

³² “Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven. ³⁴ “Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ ‘I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ Your enemies will be right in your own household!’ ³⁷ “If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine. ³⁸ If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. ³⁹ If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Song of Response

“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.

Chorus:

*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, 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.
(Chorus)

Celebration of Communion

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: Jesus said to his disciples, “*my peace I leave you, my peace I give you.*” Open your hearts now—and may the peace of Christ be with all of you.

All: And also with you.

Pastor: Before we come to the table, let us share with one another a sign of peace.

(All are welcome to show a sign of peace with one another, in their own way)

Pastor: Together, now, let us bless the elements. 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

“He Loved Me”

Jerry Strobel



Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer ("Debts and Debtors")

One: The Lord be with you.

All: ***And also with you.***

One: *Let us pray:* For the prayer requests that have come to us today, whether joys or sorrows.... [prayer requests are presented] 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.

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

Ministry of Music

"A Safe Place to Land"

Julie Lokahi & Bob Martin

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.

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, with the sword of the Gospel you free us from any chains that bind us—and all so that we might be a people transformed in the power of your love.

All: Wherever we go this week, make us embodiments of divine love, O God, so that all might know the liberation Christ brings. Amen!

***Blessing**

***Closing Hymn**

“God of Grace and God of Glory” #569

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power;
Crown your ancient Church’s story, bring its bud to glorious flower.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour,
For the facing of this hour.

Lo! the hosts of evil round us—scorn your Christ, assail his ways!
Fears and doubts too long have bound us—free our hearts to work and praise.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the living of these days,
For the living of these days.

Heal your children’s warring madness, bend our pride to your control;
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage lest we miss your kingdom’s goal,
Lest we miss your kingdom’s goal.

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
Let the gift of your salvation be our glory ever-more.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving you whom we adore,
Serving you whom we adore!

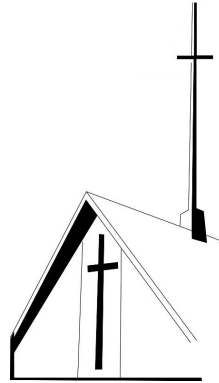


**Thank you for worshipping with us this morning at
Community United Church!**

Next Sunday - July 2, 2023

10:55 AM Announcements

11:00 AM Worship



Summer Sermon Series!

Renewal and Reform is the Path of Faith

Part 1, July 2: *The Prophetic Turn of Religion*

Micah 6:6-8 and Matthew 5:38-48

Part 2, July 9: *Love and Spirit Overcoming Convention*

Acts 10:1-48 and Matthew 22:34-40

Part 3, July 16: *The Future of Church*

Acts 2:1-4, 43-47 and Matthew 28:26-20

***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 Carol Rodgers
in memory of Teresa Kurty.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

June 27: Ladies Lunch 12:00 PM (meet here at 11:00 to carpool)

NEW MEMBERS:

Today we are happy to welcome new members Linda Weber and Carrie Godfrey. Please take the time to introduce yourself! In September, are excited to welcome even more members to our congregation.

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), Chris Duncan (Marines), Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott (Army), Matthew Anderson (Army) and DJ Miaczynski (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett & family & friends, Rod & Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Sue Schweiwer, Diane Walker, George Churley, Robin Adams, Ralph Kester, John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone, Jared & Priscilla Hall, Ron Celeski, Sally Cubetus, Jan & Tim Crowe and Family, Debra Doerfer & David Magid & Annette Minich.

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