

# Community United Church

**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

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



June 28, 2026

The Fifth 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!*

## Litany for Independence Day

One: For the morning light that rose over a daring declaration,  
For the quills that traced the promise of a people,  
For the steadfast hearts that faced the storm of empire—

**All: We lift our praise.**

One: For the voices that dared to name all as free, for the hands that shaped cities from wilderness, for the dreams that reached beyond the horizon—

**All: We lift our praise.**

One: From the battlefields where liberty was dearly won, from the harbors where hope and hardship arrived together, from the avenues where justice still calls our names—

**All: Lead us, O God, toward your light.**

One: Shield us from arrogance that deafens, from hatred that divides, and from comfort that forgets the suffering—

**All: Lead us, O God, toward your light.**

One: Bless the peacemakers and the truth-tellers, the healers of wounds both seen and unseen, the builders of bridges across every divide--

**All: Empower them, O God, with your grace.**

One: Let freedom be the shelter of the stranger, the song of the oppressed, the harvest of justice in every land—

**All: Empower us, O God, with your grace.**

**On this day of gratitude and resolve, bind our hearts to the labor of love, that the flame of liberty may shine for all who walk this earth. Amen.**

## Centering Music

"As We Gather" #646 v.1

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)



## Invocation

One: Gracious and loving God, we praise you for creating us in love and gathering us as one people, diverse in gifts, perspectives, and ways of being.

**All: Strengthen us to honor one another and to share your love and your welcome, freely, unapologetically, and compassionately. Amen!**

\*Opening Hymn "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" #473, V 1, 2

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer!

## \*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

**Hebrews 13: 1-2**

Let mutual affection continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Reflections

Linda Weber and Kim Tripp

Song of Response "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" #88

Lord I Lift your name on high, Lord I love to sing your praises.  
I'm so glad you're in my life, I'm so glad you came to save us.

### Chorus

You came from heaven to earth to show the way  
From the earth to the Cross our debt to pay.  
From the Cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky,  
Lord, I lift your name on high.

## Second Reading **Romans 12: 9-13**

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.

Reflection

JP Driscoll

Song of Response "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" #88

Lord I Lift your name on high, Lord I love to sing your praises.  
I'm so glad you're in my life, I'm so glad you came to save us.

Chorus

You came from heaven to earth to show the way  
From the earth to the Cross our debt to pay.  
From the Cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky,  
Lord, I lift your name on high.

**Third Reading Romans 15: 1-7**

We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. For Christ did not please himself, but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Reflection

Nancy Alberico

Song of Response "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" #88

Lord I Lift your name on high, Lord I love to sing your praises.  
I'm so glad you're in my life, I'm so glad you came to save us.

Chorus

You came from heaven to earth to show the way  
From the earth to the Cross our debt to pay.  
From the Cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky,  
Lord, I lift your name on high.

**\*Gospel Acclamation** "Lord, I lift your name on high" #88, chorus

You came from heaven to earth to show the way  
From the earth to the cross my debt to pay.  
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky,  
Lord, I lift your name on high.



**\*Gospel**

**Matthew 10: 40-42**

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous, and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.

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 "Put Peace into Each Other's Hands" #389 v.1,3

Put peace into each other's hands and like a treasure hold it;  
Protect it like a candle flame, with tenderness enfold it.

Put peace into each other's hands, like bread we break for sharing;  
Look people warmly in the eye; our life is meant for caring.

**Message**

*"The Wide Welcome of God"*

Pastor Joy

Hymn of Response

"True Colors"

And I see your true colors shining through  
I see your true colors and that's why I love you.  
So don't be afraid to let them show  
Your true colors, true colors are beautiful like a rainbow.



## 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 expression of love. By your Spirit, remind us *all* that we are loved—fiercely and forever. Amen.**

Pastor: People of God, come to the table!

Communion Music            "My Jesus, I Love Thee / I Love You, Lord"            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](http://www.communityunited.church)**

Or, if you prefer to mail in a check, that can be addressed to the church at:  
1011 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street – Erie, PA 16508

**Offertory/Ministry of Music**

“Rainbow Connection”

Addy Johnson

## 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: O God, as we leave this place, send us out with kindness and grace to embrace those who may be hurting, those who are searching, and those who ache for connection.

**All: Guide us to be a light in all places, offering love, hope, and a place of belonging.  
Amen!**

\*Blessing

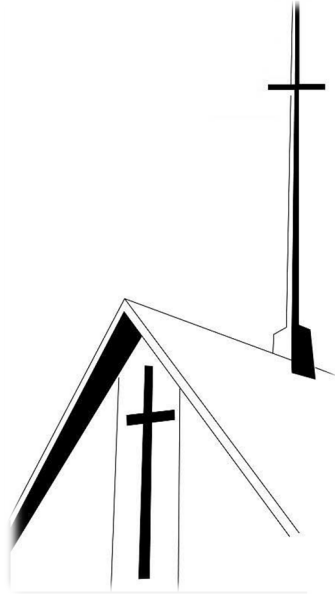
\*Closing Hymn “Sent Forth By God’s Blessing” #712 v. 1,3,4

Sent forth by God’s blessing our true faith confessing,  
The people of God from this dwelling take leave.  
The service is ended, O now be extended  
the fruits of our worship in all who believe.

With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,  
The tasks of our everyday life we will face.  
Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,  
Embracing God’s children of each tribe and race.

With your grace you feed us, with your light now lead us;  
Unite us as one in this life that we share  
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving  
Give honor to Christ and that name which we bear.

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



**Next Week:  
Sunday, July 5, 2026  
11:00 AM**

Readings:

Genesis 29:15-28

Psalm 105:1-6,45b

Romans 8:26-39

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

**Theme: Jesus is the Treasure**

***Need to contact us for prayer, conversation, or to connect  
online with a small group or church ministry?***

1011 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street – Erie, PA 16508

(814) – 864 – 4429

[www.communityunited.church](http://www.communityunited.church)



# Community United Church

**The altar flowers this morning are given to the glory of God by  
Dina and Pastor Joy in loving memory of Rod Johnson.**

## **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- July 1: Join Church Family at Beach 1, 5:30 PM, for UPMC Sunset Music Series  
--Tennessee Back Porch  
( *New Firelight and Fellowship Date* to be announced)
- July 9: Crafternoon 1:30-3:30 PM
- July 14: Women's Outreach Group Luncheon in Fellowship Hall-Margaritaville theme;  
parrots welcome!
- July 14: Liberty House ministry
- July 19: Service Sunday

***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, Shirley Carrier, Debra Jackman, Zoey Cathie Witmire,  
Laura Will, the Smith and Schmidt families, Linda Weber, Veronica, Patty Puzar,  
Joan Schultz, family and friends of Kim Normandy, Michelle and Melissa, Randy Koziol,  
Barbara Thompson, Tanisha and Jaeda, family and friends of Lois Simmers,  
Barbara Hickey, Lorre Rapp, Sandy Gool, Jim Haglund, Rosie Goss,  
Ruth Zavaglia, Brad Stewart, Tom and Thea Hyatt

## **Your 2026 Council Members:**

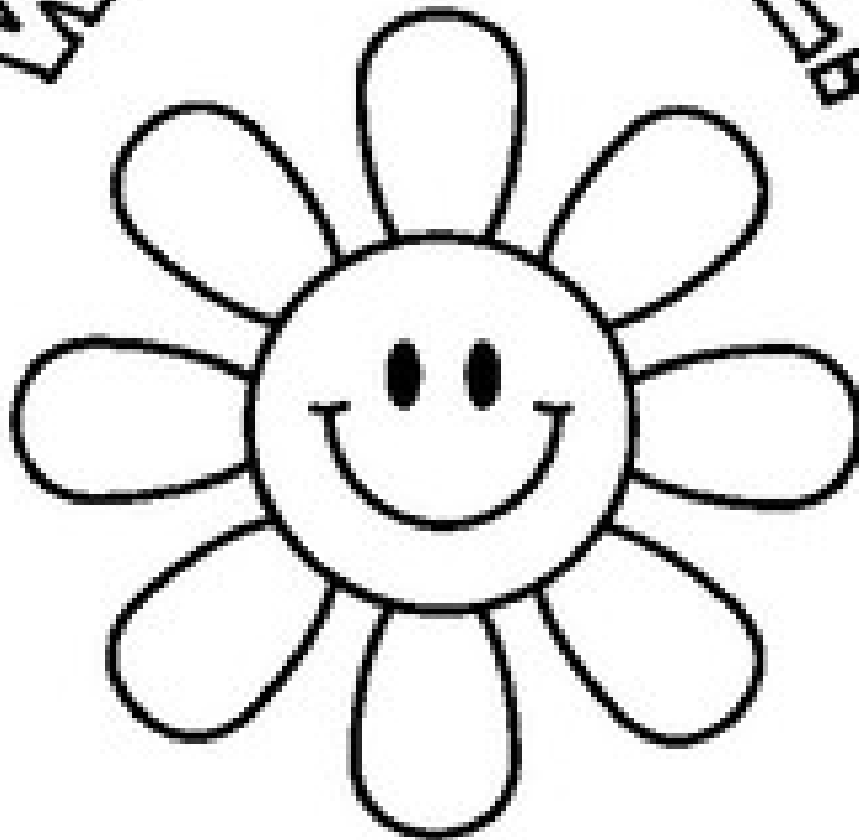
Thea Hyatt, President, Ginnie Burger, Vice President, Tracy Davis, Treasurer, Juli Tonks, Secretary,  
Michele Vahey, Justin Graff, Chuck Becker, and Don Cameron

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

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in our music and livestreaming:

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WELCOME!



GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

