

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



May 11, 2025

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Richard W. McCarty & Pastor Joy L. Johnson

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

Centering Music “His Name is Wonderful” #102 (2X)

His name is Wonderful, His name is Wonderful,
His name is Wonderful, Jesus, my Lord;
He is the mighty King, Master of everything,
His name is Wonderful, Jesus, my Lord.
He’s the great Shepherd, the Rock of all ages,
Almighty God is He;
Bow down before Him, love and adore Him,
His name is wonderful, Jesus, my Lord.

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, you are present to guide our journey, and eager to forgive us when we go astray. Through your Son, Jesus, you call us by name so we can know you, and you prepare the way so we can follow.

All: **May we listen to the voice of our Shepherd, as He calls us to leave our fears and our hesitations behind, so that we are steeped in the Good News in our times and in our world. Amen!**

*Hymn “Holy God, We Praise Your Name” #138 v.1,3,4

Holy God, we praise your name, Lord of all, we bow before you;
All on earth your scepter claim, all in heaven above adore you;
Infinite your vast domain, everlasting is your reign.

All apostles join the strain as your sacred Name they hallow;
Prophets swell the glad refrain, and the white-robed martyrs follow;
And from morn to set of sun, through the Church the song goes on.

Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Spirit, Three we name you;
While in essence only one, undivided God we claim you,
Then, adoring, bend the knee, while we own the mystery.

Opening Prayer

Mothers' Day Litany:

One: To those who gave birth this year to their first child—we celebrate with you. To those who have lost a child – we mourn with you. To those who are in the trenches with little ones every day and wear the badge of food stains – we appreciate you. To those who have experienced loss through miscarriage, failed adoptions, or running away—we mourn with you. To those who walk the hard path of infertility, fraught with pokes, prods, tears, and disappointment – we walk with you. Forgive us when we say foolish things. We don't mean to make this harder than it is.

All: To those who are foster moms, mentor moms, and spiritual moms – we need you. To those who have warm and close relationships with your children – we celebrate with you.

One: To those who have disappointment, heart ache, and distance with your children – we sit with you. To those who lost their mothers this year – we grieve with you. To those who experienced abuse at the hands of your own mother – we acknowledge your experience.

All: To those who lived through driving tests, medical tests, and the overall testing of motherhood – we are better for having you in our midst. To those who will have emptier nests in the upcoming year – we grieve and rejoice with you. And to those who are pregnant with new life, both expected and surprising –we anticipate with you.

One: This Mother's Day, we walk with you. Mothering is not for the faint of heart and we have real warriors in our midst. We honor and remember you. Amen.

*The Peace of Christ

One: People of God, 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

The Book of Revelation 7:9-18

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.'

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God, and

worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

Responsorial

Psalm 23

One: The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

All: He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

One: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

All: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long. 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**

John 10:22-30

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So, the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Children's Message

I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses.

Refrain:

And he walks with me, and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.

He speaks and the sound of his voice is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
And the melody that he gave to me within my heart is ringing. (*Refrain*)

I'd stay in the garden with him though the night around me be falling, but he bids me go;
through the voice of woe his voice to me is calling. (*Refrain*)

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: And so, 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

"Shepherd Medley"

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*

Ministry of Music

"Shepherd of My Heart"

Julie Lokahi

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.

Offertory 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 God, Divine Shepherd, you anoint us with the oil of gladness and your love overflows our hearts. We are learning to listen to your voice, for you are our hope and our strength, our light and our sovereign, our shepherd and our savior.

All: May we go forth to follow the right path, the path that you have illuminated for us and call us toward. Help us to recognize the right and peaceful way as we hear the sounds of your goodness and mercy. Amen.

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” #440

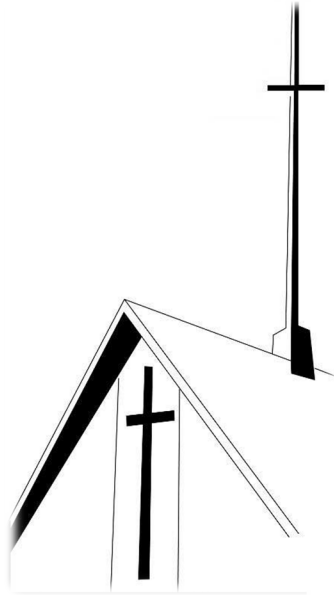
Savior, like a Shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care;
In thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use thy folds prepare;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us thine we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are.

We are thine, do thou befriend us, be the guardian of our way;
Keep thy flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us thine we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are.

Thou hast promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
Thou hast mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse, and power to free:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us thine we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are.

Early let us seek thy favor, early let us do thy will;
Blessed Lord and only Savior, with thy love our bosoms fill:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us thine we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are.

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



**Next Week:
Fifth Sunday of Easter
11:00 AM**

Readings:

Revelation 21:1-6

Psalm 48

John 13:31-35

Theme: Visions of Heaven Inspiring Love on Earth

***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 and in loving memory of Jesse Edwards-Borowicz from his aunt, Ginnie Burger. The additional flowers are given in loving memory of Julie Celeski from her husband, Ron.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- May 14: Spirits & Spirituality-Andy's Pub at 7:00 PM
May 15: Crafternooners will meet in Fellowship Hall from 1:30-3:30
May 16: Movie & Game Night 6:00 PM
May 18: Church and the Paranormal Discussion Group: Ancient and Contemporary Unidentified Flying Objects - 12:45 PM
May 21: Resonate Contemplative Service at 7:00 PM
May 27: The Ladies Group will meet at 12:00 in Fellowship Hall for a brown bagged lunch

SAVE THE DATES: June 7: Second Annual Arts, Craft, and Bake Sale at CUC
June 28-29: Erie Pride events

Reminders:

- ***Need hearing assistance? We have four available units. Please talk to our tech crew in the back of the sanctuary.***
- Have you signed up for **Small Group discussion** opportunities to continue our discernment for **church growth and stewardship**? See signup sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

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)

PRAYERS FOR:

Darek Baksik, Laura Will, Keith Vargeson, Joyce Kneidel, Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Ralph Kester, John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Tammy McIntyre, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich, Dave Pakulski, Ethel Davis, Chelsea Brown, Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin, Linda Foll-Johnson, Toni Stevenson, Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Carol & Doug Rodgers, Jane Moran, Josh Cook & Danny Kaeberlein, Helena Burgos, The Vadzemnieks Family, Doug Moore, and John & Tina Schnarrs

Current Council Members:

Mike Pruzinsky (President), Debbie Anderson (Vice President), Melanie Vadzemnieks (Treasurer), Nancy Alberico (Secretary), Janice Skelly, Angel Conrad, Michele Vahey, Justin Graff, and Mark Davis

Need to contact our Council President? Please email at: mpruzinsky@icloud.com

Community United Church



1011 West 38th Street

Second Annual

Arts, Crafts, Bake Sale

{wooden, crocheted & tie dyed items, jewelry, painted items, & more, including the best baked goods!}



Saturday, June 7, 2025

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Admission \$3.00 per person