

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



May 12, 2024

Ascension Sunday

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

“Sanctuary” #482

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: Holy and loving God, we gather on this day to worship you, especially as we consider the great mystery of the Ascension of Christ.

All: Remind us again how Christ's ascension can fuel our hope. Namely, that we are not alone—even as nations wage war, and troubles seek to undo the peace in our lives. Loving Savior, with the ancient disciples, let us see you transcend space and time, to know that you are everywhere with us. Amen!

*Hymn

“Crown Him with Many Crowns” #317

Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon the throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake my soul and sing of him who died for thee,
And hail him as thy matchless king through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save;
His glories now we sing who died and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring and lives that death my die.

Crown him the Lord of love; behold his hands and side,
Rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified;
No angels in the sky can fully bear that sight,
But downward bend their burning eyes at mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of years, the potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For thou hast died for me;
Thy praise shall never, never fail throughout eternity.

* 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.

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 remember you. Amen.

Song of Reflection

“Hymn of Promise” #515

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
In cocoons, a hidden promise; butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
There's a dawn in every darkness bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity;
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

First Reading

The Book of Acts 1:1-11

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."



Song of Response

"Alleluia, Sing to Jesus!" #320

Alleluia, sing to Jesus! His the scepter, his the throne;
Alleluia! His the triumph, his the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood.
Jesus, out of every nation, has redeemed us by his blood.

Alleluia! Not as orphans are we left in sorrow now;
Alleluia! He is near us; faith believes nor questions how.
Though the cloud from sight received him when the forty days were o'er,
Shall our hearts forget his promise, "I am with you evermore"?

Alleluia! Heavenly High Priest, here on earth our help, our stay;
Alleluia! Hear the sinful cry to you from day to day.
Intercessor, Friend of sinners, earth's Redeemer, hear our plea,
Where the songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea.

Second Reading

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Responsorial

An Adaptation of Psalm 47

One: Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy.

All: For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome, a great sovereign over all the earth.

One: God is sovereign over all the nations; God sits in holiness upon the throne.

All: Sing praises to God, sing praise; sing praises to our Sovereign—for God rules all of the earth. 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*Luke 24:44-53**

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” ⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

The Ascension of Christ

Pastor Rich

Hymn

“Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise” #323

Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia!
To his throne above the skies; Alleluia!
Christ, the Lamb for sinners given, Alleluia!
Enters now the highest heaven. Alleluia!

There for him high triumph waits, Alleluia!
Lift your heads, eternal gates, Alleluia!
He has conquered death and sin. Alleluia!
Take the King of glory in! Alleluia!

See! The heaven its Lord receives, Alleluia!
Yet he loves the earth he leaves, Alleluia!
Through returning to his throne, Alleluia!
Still he calls the world his own. Alleluia!

See! He lifts his hands above! Alleluia!
See, he shows the prints of love! Alleluia!
Hark! His gracious lips bestow, Alleluia!
Blessings on his church below. Alleluia!

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

"Ave Maria"

Sarah & Cheryl



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] 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, that can be addressed to the church at:
1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508

Ministry of Music

“Everything Changes”

Leah Johnson

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 (BLUE) #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, the same Christ who ascended—transcending time and space—is the same one who promised his disciples the gift of holy power.

All: Send your Spirit of revelation and wisdom, that we may witness to the grace of forgiveness and sing songs of joy with the peoples of the earth; to the One who makes us one body. Amen!

*Blessing



Lord, the light of your love is shining,
In the midst of the darkness shining;
Jesus, light of the world shine upon us,
Set us free by the truth you no bring us,
Shine on me—shine on me!

Chorus:

*Shine, Jesus, shine! Fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light.*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
From the shadows into your radiance;
By the blood I may enter your brightness,
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness,
Shine on me—shine on me!

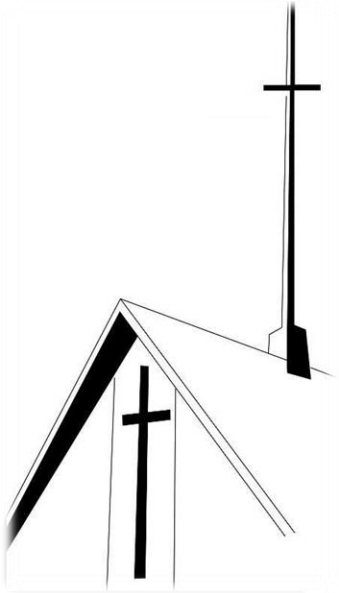
(Chorus)

As we gaze on your kingly brightness,
So our faces display your likeness;
Ever-changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story,
Shine on me—shine on me!

(Chorus)



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



Next Week:

Pentecost Sunday at 11:00 AM

Readings:

Acts 2:1-21

Romans 8:22-27

Psalm 104:24-35

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Theme: The Coming of the Holy Spirit

***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 Ginnie Burger in Memory of Jesse and in honor of Mother's Day.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- May 13: Council Meeting 6:30 PM
- May 14: Liberty House
- May 14: Fundraising Committee 6:30 PM
- May 15: Resonate 6:30 PM (tentative)
- May 19: Service Sunday
- May 26: Praise & Prayer 9:00 AM
- May 28: Ladies Lunch

SAVE THE DATE: June 1: Craft & Bake Sale at CUC

Need hearing assistance? We have four available units. Please talk to our tech crew in the back of the sanctuary.

Please submit any announcement requests by **Tuesday** for the Sunday bulletin.

WE REMEMBER THOSE IN OUR ARMED FORCES:

Jacob Snyder (Army), Nick Duncan (Army), Samantha McHenry (Army), Brittany Duncan (Army),
Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott (Army),
Matthew Anderson (Army),
Jaden O'Hara (Army) & Toby Charlton (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett & family & friends, Rod & Dew Johnson,
Harry Lamb, Diane Walker, Ralph Kester,
John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone,
Jan & Tim Crowe and Family, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich,
Dave Pakulski, Randi Johnson, Lillian Hendrickson, Ethel Davis,
Jim Haglund, Chelsea Brown, John Waid, Celeste Eller & Family, Shirley Carrier,
Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Jerry Koziol, Uncle Charlie,
Carol & Doug Rodgers, Jane Moran, Ed Mumau, Renee Gullekson, Sharon Cooper,
Mary Ann Schmeisser, Sandra Carlson, Josh Cook & Danny Kaeberlein, Jenny Jacob,
The Doerfer-DePoorter Family & Jeremiah.

Council Members:

Debbie Anderson (President), Angel Conrad (VP), Nancy Alberico (Secretary), Janice Skelly, Mike Pruzinsky, Michele Vahey, Patti Rogers, Carol Rodgers, and Angel Conrad