

# Community United Church

**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

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



May 25, 2025

The Sixth 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!*

Prelude  
Welcome & Announcements

Cheryl and Sarah Strecker

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 all)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, by your Spirit, you are creating us to be the Body of Christ—  
not only to serve on earth, but to reign with you forever in the glory of heaven!

**All: Today, we come to worship you and to recommit ourselves to what it means to  
be the church: your body, your love, and your hands and feet on earth, until we  
are raised up into eternity with you. O God of our mercy and grace, we praise  
and adore you! Amen!**

\*Hymn "Sing a New Song" #10

Refrain:  
*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.  
(Refrain)

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

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.  
(Refrain)

**Opening Prayer**

\*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.

## Responsive Meditation

One: As we turn to the scriptures, now, we pause to intentionally open our hearts and minds to listen for the still-speaking Word of God. Not just the words on the page, but the living Word who meets us in our contemplation. Today, we begin with the Book of Revelation. By tradition, it is attributed to the apostle John. This book is a series of visions of heaven and earth, using poignant symbols to communicate an enduring spiritual truth: that the Reign of God will ultimately prevail over the injustices of the earth. By these visions, we are invited to live in hope, not fear.

**All: Living Word of God, meet us with your holy wisdom as we consider these ancient visions of hope. As we do, may we be encouraged by these glimpses of heaven. Amen.**

## First Reading

## The Book of Revelation 21:10-11; 22-26

<sup>10</sup> And in the spirit [the angel] carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. <sup>11</sup> It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>22</sup> I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. <sup>25</sup> Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

## Song of Response

“Blessed Be the Lord God Almighty” #19

Who was, and is, and is to come;  
Blessed be the Lord God almighty,  
Who reigns forevermore.  
*(Repeat all)*

## Responsive Meditation

One: When the Book of Revelation was written and shared at the end of the first century, it was in a time of great uncertainty for early followers of Christ. Many of the apostles had been martyred. There was no centralized church, only a network of churches of many different kinds of people, seeking to walk by the light of the Gospel. They often watched as their faith was persecuted. We do not live in such times. But our faith is still often challenged. The way of love is threatened by divisions in society and factions in local communities. The way of love is assaulted by senseless violence on our streets and in our homes. The way of love is assailed by both apathy and quick tempers. It can feel as if faith offers no real refuge.

**All: In such a time as this, we turn to the scriptures to remind us that all is not lost, and that our ultimate destiny is secure in the Reign of God—and we dare to believe that Christ’s reign shall have no end.**

## Second Reading

## The Book of Revelation 22:1-5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; <sup>4</sup> they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

## Song of Response

## "I Sing Praises" #660

I sing praises to your name, O Lord, praises to your name, O Lord,  
For your name is great and greatly to be praised;

I sing praises to your name, O Lord, praises to your name, O Lord,  
For your name is great and greatly to be praised.

I give glory to your name, O Lord, glory to your name, O Lord,  
For your name is great and greatly to be praised;

I give glory to your name, O Lord, glory to your name, O Lord,  
For your name is great and greatly to be praised.

## Responsorial

## Psalm 67

One: May God be gracious to us and bless us.

**All: May God's face shine upon us that the way of the Holy One may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.**

One: Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

**All: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you bring justice to the people with equity and guide the nations of the earth.**

One: Let the people's praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

**All: The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere the LORD. 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 14:23-29**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus [said], “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words, and the word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me. <sup>25</sup> “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you. <sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. <sup>28</sup> You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur you may believe.

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

**All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!**

Youth Dismissed for Children’s Church

Song of Preparation

“I Adore You” #143

Father, I adore you, lay my life before you; how I love you.

Jesus, I adore you, lay my life before you; how I love you.

Spirit, I adore you, lay my life before you; how I love you.

Reflection

### **The Promise of the Holy Spirit – We Are Never Alone**

One: Our scripture readings today bring us hope in two ways. First, the Book of Revelation offered us the promise that God’s reign will endure forever. In the end, we will be secure and at peace. Even so, our Gospel reading moves our faith from visions of heaven to life on earth. The Gospel of John promises us that the Spirit of God will be given to us so that we are never alone.

**All: As followers of Christ, individually and as the church, collectively, the Spirit is with us. We are not alone. We affirm that our primary identity is as children of God and members of the Body of Christ. By this identity we love and serve the world as Christ’s hands and feet and love.**

**Testimonies**

## Hymn

### “Grace Alone” #436

Every promise we can make, every prayer and step of faith;  
Every difference we will make—is only by his grace.  
Every mountain we will climb, every ray of hope we shine;  
Every blessing left behind—is only by his grace.

#### Chorus:

*Grace alone, which God supplies; strength unknown he will provide.  
Christ in us, our cornerstone.  
We will go forth in grace alone.*

Every soul we long to reach, every heart we hope to teach;  
Everywhere we share his peace—is only by his grace.  
Every loving word we say, every tear we wipe away;  
Every sorrow turned to praise—is only by his grace.  
(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: 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

### “When Peace Like a River”

Sarah 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**

***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/Ministry of Music**

**"Deep River"**

**Sarah Strecker**

## 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, the visions you grant us of heaven provide an enduring hope of peace. The promise of your Spirit being with us reminds us that we are never alone. Spirit's presence also means that we have work to do—the work of your kingdom to love and serve the world.

**All:** **For the calling upon our lives, we now summons the courage to say “yes!” Yes to the way of love. Yes to the paths of peace. Yes to the ways of wisdom. By your Spirit, and in the name of Christ, we commit ourselves to such a life and for your glory, O God! Amen!**

\*Blessing

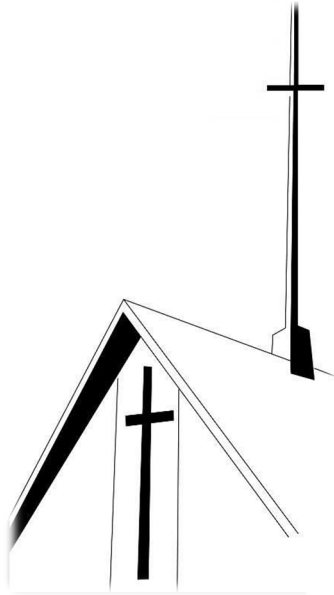
\*Closing Hymn

“Find Us Faithful” #497

O may all who come behind us find us faithful;  
May the fire of our devotion light their way.  
May the footprints that we leave  
Lead them to believe,  
And the lives we live inspire them to obey.  
O may all who come behind us find us faithful.  
*(Repeat all)*



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



**Next Week:**  
**Commemoration of the Ascension**

**11:00 AM**

*Readings:*

Acts 1:1-11

Ephesians 1:15-23

Psalm 47

Luke 24:44-53

**Theme: The Ascension of Christ**

***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 and in celebration of Dew Johnson's birthday from Dina and Pastor Joy.**

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- June 4: Bible Study at 6:30 PM in Fellowship Hall
- June 7: Second Annual Arts, Craft, and Bake Sale at CUC
- June 11: Spirits & Spirituality, 7:00 PM at Andy's Pub
- June 18: Resonate, 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary

### 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, 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, John & Tina Schnarrs and Phyl Weaver

### **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](mailto:mpruzinsky@icloud.com)

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**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**