

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

November 16, 2025

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy Johnson

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

Prelude

“How Lovely are Thy Dwellings”

Cheryl Strecker

Welcome & Announcements

Centering Music

“Hear Our Prayer, O Lord” #490

Hear our prayer, O Lord, hear our prayer, O Lord;

Incline thine ear to us, and grant us thy peace.

(Repeat all)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, we are a people who live in the long advent—we celebrate the long waiting that ended in the coming of Christ in Bethlehem, yet we are the same ones who wait for the glorious appearing of Christ to renew the world.

All: Waiting can be difficult. We see the troubles and tragedies of the world, O God, and we wonder where you are. Yet, you promise us that through the trials of life you are with us. You further promise that on a Day of your own making, you will come to renew and redeem all of creation. And so, we wait on you, Christ Jesus, and dare to believe in the fullness of your promises. Amen!

*Opening Song

“Through the Darkness of the Ages” #536

Through the darkness of the ages, through the sorrows of the days,
Strength of weary generations, lifting hearts in hope and praise,
Light in darkness, joy in sorrow, presence to allay all fears,
Jesus, you have kept your promise, faithful through two thousand years.

Bounty of two thousand harvests, beauty of two thousand springs;
He who framed the times and seasons—has vouchsafed us greater things.
Word of God who spoke creation—speaks forgiveness, speaks to save,
Gathers still his ransomed people in the life he freely gave.

Countless flowers have bloomed and withered, countless noons are sealed in night,
Shattered thrones and fallen empires, realms and riches lost from sight.
Christ, your kingdom still increases as the centuries unfold.
Grain that fell to earth and perished has brought forth ten thousand fold.

Master, we shall sing your praises, man of sorrows, God of power,
For the measured march of seasons shall at least bring in the hour
When, as lightning leaps the heavens, you return to lead us home.
You have promised, “I am coming.” Swiftly, our Lord Jesus come.

*Opening Prayer

***Passing of the Peace**

One: The peace of Christ be with all of you.

All: And also with you!

One: Let us share with one another a sign of peace.

First Reading

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah 65:17-25

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating, for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it or the cry of distress. ²⁰ No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days or an old person who does not live out a lifetime, for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat, for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—and their descendants as well. ²⁴ Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

Responsorial

Psalm 98:4-9

One: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

All: Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre and the sound of melody. With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the Sovereign, the LORD.

One: Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the world and those who live in it. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the LORD, for God is coming to bring justice to the earth.

All: The Holy One will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity. 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 21:5-19

When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, [Jesus] said, ⁶“As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.” ⁷They asked him, “Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?” ⁸And he said, “Beware that you are not led astray, for many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is near!’ Do not go after them. ⁹“When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified, for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.” ¹⁰Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; ¹¹there will be great earthquakes and in various places famines and plagues, and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven. ¹²“But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. ¹³This will give you an opportunity to testify. ¹⁴So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance, ¹⁵for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents and siblings, by relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷You will be hated by all because of my name. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your souls.

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

“Shout to the Lord” #94

My Jesus, my Savior, Lord there is none like you.
All of my days—I want to praise—the wonders of your mighty love.
My comfort, my shelter, tower of refuge and strength,
Let every breath, all that I am, never cease to worship you.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing;
Power and majesty praise to the King.
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar at the sound of your name.
I sing for joy at the work of your hands,
Forever I’ll love you, forever I’ll stand.
Nothing compares to the promise I have in you.

(Repeat all)

Message:

“Visions of the End, Not Predictions”

Pastor Rich



Song of Response “When the King Shall Come Again” #534

When the King shall come again all his power revealing;
Splendor shall announce his reign, life and joy and healing;
Earth no longer in decay, hope no more frustrated;
This is God’s redemption day—longingly awaited.

In the desert trees take root, fresh from God’s creation;
Plants and flowers and sweetest fruit—join the celebration.
Rivers spring up from the earth, barren lands adorning:
Valleys, this is your new birth; mountains, greet the morning.

Strengthen feeble hands and knees; fainting hearts, be cheerful!
God who comes for such as these, seeks and saves the fearful.
Deaf ears hear the silent tongues sing away their weeping;
Blind eyes see the lifeless ones—walking, running, leaping.

There God’s highway shall be seen where no roaring lion,
Nothing evil or unclean walks the road to Zion:
Ransomed people, homeward bound, all your praises voicing,
See your Lord with glory crowned, share in his rejoicing.

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

“I Can Only Imagine”

Pastor Rich

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

Your 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

Offertory/Ministry of Music "Nimrod from Enigma" Variations

Don Cameron

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: Holy and loving God, when the troubles of the world seem too much to bear, remind us of your promise: that though nation rise against nation, though kingdoms collapse, though noonday skies turn dark, and though the earth shakes, these things are not the end.

All: Let us not follow after people who peddle in fear or claim to know what only you, God, know. Instead, let us trust in the visions of your coming Reign as a source of hope, inspiration, and goodness. And in our trials, remind us, O God, that where chaos and evil seem to prevail, one day you will make all things well, and it shall be fully well with us and for all. Amen!

*Blessing

*Closing Song

“Soon and Very Soon” #523

Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King;
Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King;
Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We're going to see the King.

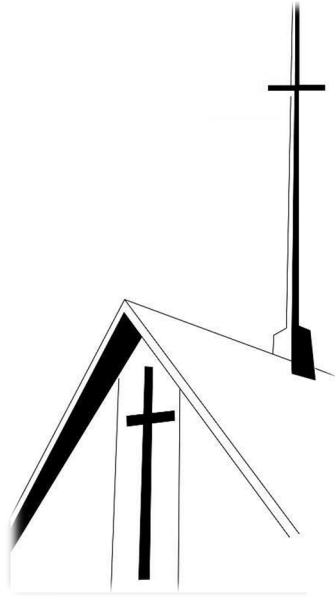
No more crying there, we are going to see the King;
No more crying there, we are going to see the King;
No more crying there, we are going to see the King;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We're going to see the King

No more dying there, we are going to see the King;
No more dying there, we are going to see the King;
No more dying there, we are going to see the King;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We're going to see the King

Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King;
Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King;
Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We're going to see the King.



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



Next Week:

The Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings:

Colossians 1:11-20

Psalm 46

Luke 23:33-43

Reign of Christ Sunday

*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 Caleb Smith, grandson of Elmer and Pat Smith, and nephew of Kathy Koziol and Lorre Rapp.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Nov. 17: Council Meeting
- Nov. 18: Ladies' Lunch (early this month) The Siebenbuerger Club-RSVP to Carol Rodgers-note that at the club it is cash only for payment.
- Nov. 19: Friendsgiving Resonate Service at 6:30 PM – *Please RSVP* and sign up in Fellowship Hall for what you can bring.

(See also the Love Wins calendar in this bulletin)

Reminders:

- ***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)

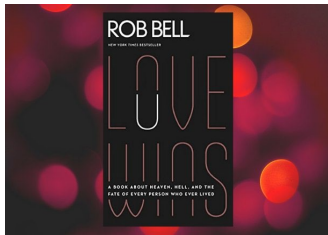
PRAYERS FOR:

Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Ralph Kester, Ethel Davis,
Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin, Toni Stevenson, Dave Woledge, Dorothy Moyer,
The Vadzemnieks Family, Sharon Cooper, Sandra Ganley, Celeste Peck,
Linda Foll Johnson, Todd Carrier, The Kuzma Family, Debra Jackman, Rose Goss
Cathie Witmire, Laura Will

Current Council Members:

Mike Pruzinsky (President), Debbie Anderson (Vice President), Al Tilley (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
You may call the church office at 814-864-4429 for pastoral and administrative matters or use email:
communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com



Love Wins Series at Community United Church

Join us on a multi-month exploration of Christian concepts about the afterlife, including the ancient sacred hope that all people will be redeemed by the love of God in Christ.

October 2025

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|----------------|--|
| October 1: | Bible Study (Chapters 1-3 of <i>Love Wins</i>) |
| October 8: | Spirits & Spirituality: On the Afterlife |
| October 15: | Documentary & Discussion: <i>Hellbound?</i> |
| October 16-30: | Small Groups as Requested |
| October 22: | Art Show V: Does Love Win? POSTPONED UNTIL 2026 |
| October 29: | Evening Small Group Discussion |
| October 30: | Morning Small Group Discussion |

November 2025

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|-----------------|---|
| November 2: | Church & the Paranormal: Angels, Demons, and the Afterlife |
| November 5: | Bible Study (Chapters 4-6 of <i>Love Wins</i>) |
| November 12: | Spirits & Spirituality: Scare Tactics or Love Tactics? How what we say matters. |
| November 13-30: | Small Groups as Requested |
| November 19: | Resonate: Friendsgiving |
| November 22: | Afternoon Small Group |

December 2025

| | |
|----------------|---|
| December 3: | Bible Study (Chapters 7-8 of <i>Love Wins</i>) |
| December 4-19: | Small Groups as Requested |
| December 10: | Spirits & Spirituality: Advent, Christmas, and Eternal Hope |
| December 17: | Resonate: Living in Waiting |
