Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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

November 22, 2026

With Grateful Hearts We Gather

Pastor Joy L. Johnson

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

Prelude "He Will Hold Me Fast" Amber Jaroszewski, Cheryl Strecker
Welcome and Announcements

Centering Music "In the Lord I'll Ever be Thankful" #448

In the Lord I'll ever be thankful,
In the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near;
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.
(Repeat)

Invocation

One: Generous and gracious God, you fill our days with gifts beyond counting. Open our hearts to see your goodness in every blessing, so we may give thanks with gladness and share what we have received.

All: Fill us with gratitude, that our thanks may overflow with kindness and praise.

One: As Jesus gave thanks before breaking bread, help us give thanks in all things. Bless the harvest, our tables, and all who gather, and help us welcome with compassion everyone who hungers for hope.

All: **Teach us to live our gratitude, not merely speak of it. Shape us into thankful people who give as we have been given to, share our abundance, and serve in love. Amen!**

***Opening Hymn** "Let All Things Now Living" #22

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
To God the Creator triumphantly raise,
Who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
Who guides us and leads to the end of our days.
His banners are o'er us, his light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining forth in the night,
Till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,
As forward we travel from light unto light.

His law he enforces; the stars in their courses
And sun in its orbit obediently shine;
The hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,
The deeps of the ocean proclaim him divine.
We too should be voicing our love and rejoicing;
With glad adoration a song let us raise,
Till all things now living unite in thanksgiving:
To God in the highest, hosanna and praise!

***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 **Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24**

For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. 12As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. 13I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. 14I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. 16I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. 20 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, 22I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

Responsorial **Psalm 100**

One: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; Come into his presence with singing.

All: Know that the LORD is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

One: Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to God, and bless God's name.

All: For the LORD is good; God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations. 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** **Matthew 25:31-46**

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." 37Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" 40And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,* you did it to me." 41Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." 44Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" 45Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." 46And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

One: This is the Gospel of Christ for the people of God.
All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Children's Message

Hymn of Praise "For the Beauty of the Earth" V.1

For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
For the love from which our birth over and around us lies.
Lord of all, to thee we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise.

Message *With Grateful Hearts We Gather* *Pastor Joy*



Hymn of Response "Give Thanks" #359 2X

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, his Son.
Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, his Son.

And now let the weak say "I am strong,"
Let the poor say "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us.
And now let the weak say "I am strong,"
Let the poor say "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us.
Give thanks!
(repeat all)

Celebration of Communion

Pastor: Beloved children of God, come to the table with open hands and love in your hearts, for this is Christ's table—a place where every person is valued, treated with kindness, and embraced in fairness and love.

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 grateful people, thankful for every gift. 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 we take the 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 Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus" / In Christ Alone 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 draw on the Holy Spirit's power within us. We bring forward now the prayer requests that have come to us today, whether they be joys or sorrows…. *(prayer requests are presented).* We also pray for all who have asked to be on our printed 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 now 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

Offertory/Ministry of Music "I Am Coming Home" Veronica Quinn

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, you have given us more than we could ask or imagine. Send us out with thankful hearts to share your gifts with a hungry world.
All: Help us give thanks in every season, welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, and live as people of gratitude. Send us forth to serve in love. Amen!

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn "He Has Made Me Glad" #657

I will enter his gates with thanksgiving in my heart;
I will enter his courts with praise.
I will say, "This is the day that the Lord has made!"
I will rejoice for he has made me glad.

He has made me glad,
He has made me glad,
I will rejoice for he has made me glad.

He has made me glad,
He has made me glad,
I will rejoice for he has made me glad.
(repeat)

For every hand that serves, every voice and instrument raised in song, every word of grace faithfully shared, we give thanks.

Happy Thanksgiving, all!

Postlude_____

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

<u>Next Week</u>:

Sunday, November 29, 2026
11:00 AM

Advent: A Season of Wonder

First Sunday of Advent: Hope

Where Wonder Begins



Community United Church

The flowers this morning are given to the glory of God by Kathy Koziol in Honor of Leanne's birthday on November 22nd. *Happy Birthday, Leanne!*

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **November 22:** **A Sunday of Thanksgiving / Decorating for Advent: Please stay to help!**
- November 26: Happy Thanksgiving! CUC folks provide Thanksgiving dinner at Liberty House
- November 29: First Sunday in Advent! Please join us!
- **December 9:** **CUC Holiday Party and Carols in the Sanctuary!**
- December 15: Save the Date: Ladies Outreach Group Christmas Party!

Need hearing assistance? We have four available devices to enhance your worship experience! 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, Debra Jackman, Zoey Cathie Witmire, Laura Will, Veronica, Joan Schultz, Michelle and Melissa, Tom and Thea Hyatt, Randy Koziol, Barbara Thompson, Tanisha and Jaeda, Barbara Hickey, Sandy Gool, Jim Haglund, Shirley Carrier, Ruth Zavaglia, Brad Stewart, Cain Hickey, Patty Brogdan, Lynn Oliver, Rowan Oliver, Katrina Strohmeyer, Theodore, Bill and Marilyn, Ron Celeski, Dennis and Kate Martin.

Your 2026 Council Members:

Thea Hyatt, President, Ginnie Burger, Vice President, Tracy Applebee Davis, Treasurer, Juli Tonks, Secretary, Michele Vahey, Justin Graff, Chuck Becker, Pat Smith, and Jackson Feiock

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

Don't forget to check Facebook and our website: **communityunited.church**
Community United Church is committed to ethical and legal compliance in our music and livestreaming:

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Your Voice Matters!

The Question of the Week is an effort by our CUC Profile Committee to collect input from the congregation. Based on one of the **Marks of Faithful and Vital Local Churches in the United Church of Christ**, each question aims to help establish our shared vision for the present and future of our church.

The United Church of Christ recognizes several Marks of Faithful and Vital Local Churches to guide us in that quest. They include Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice, Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions, Shaping Church Community, Organizing Community with Intention, Building Leadership Skills Within Local Churches, Caring for the Wider Community, and Working Together for Justice and Mercy.

Everyone is encouraged to prayerfully respond to this week's question using the new response cards (headlined "Your Voice Matters!!") located in envelope holder in the pews. Responses to the Question of the Week, as well as questions or concerns, can also be shared with Members at large Sean Leonard, Aimee DeYoung, and Cheryl Sealy or sent confidentially to the Profile Committee email address: CUCPROFILETEAM@gmail.com

Question of the Week: Nov. 22

Mark: Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice

What would be tangible ways of knowing that our church is creating space for the Holy Spirit to work through Christian practice and worship, including the sacraments?

