

# Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



**Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

November 23, 2025

**Christ the King Sunday**

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy L. Johnson

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

Prelude

"We Fall Down"

Aimee DeYoung, Pat Vahey  
Shelly Conrad

Welcome & Announcements

Centering Music

"There's Something About That Name" #108

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus; there's just something about that name!  
Master, Savior, Jesus, like the fragrance after the rain;  
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, let all heaven and earth proclaim:  
Kings and kingdoms will all pass away,  
but there's something about that name!  
(repeat)

### Invocation

One: Divine and compassionate Creator, at the dawning of the first day, you spoke creation into being and declared it good. You crafted each flower and vegetable and bird of the air and beast of the land, and there at the very beginning was Christ Jesus.

**All: We give thanks as we gather in love and faith, knowing that through the Lordship of Your Son, Jesus, the powers and dominions of the world obtain their purpose, and creation finds its meaning.**

One: Reveal to the world the gracious rule of Christ our Lord!

**All: Instruct our hearts in the ways of peace, give us integrity in our quest for truth, grant us courage in the face of evil, and empower us to bear witness to the Lordship of Jesus, through whom we pray. Amen!**

\*Opening Song

"Great is the Lord" #50

Great is the Lord, he is holy and just;  
by his power we trust in his love.  
Great is the Lord, he is faithful and true;  
by his mercy he proves he is love.

Great is the Lord and worthy of glory!  
Great is the Lord and worthy of praise.  
Great is the Lord; now lift up your voice,  
now lift up your voice:  
Great is the Lord! Great is the Lord!

Great are you, Lord, and worthy of glory!  
Great are you, Lord, and worthy of praise.  
Great are you, Lord; I lift up my voice, I lift up my voice:  
Great are you, Lord! Great are you, Lord!

### **\*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**

**Colossians 1:11-20**

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully <sup>12</sup>giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. <sup>13</sup>He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. <sup>15</sup>He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; <sup>16</sup>for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

### **Responsorial**

**Psalm 46**

One: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though the waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

**All: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city, it shall not be moved.**

One: Come, behold the works of the Lord; I see what desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

**All: "Be still and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the earth." The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. 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 23: 33-43

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>34</sup> Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. <sup>35</sup> And the people stood by watching, but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" <sup>36</sup> The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine <sup>37</sup> and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" <sup>38</sup> There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup> But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" <sup>41</sup> And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

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

"All Hail King Jesus" #92

All hail King Jesus! All hail Emmanuel,  
King of Kings, Lord of lords, Bright Morning Star.  
And throughout eternity, I'll sing your praises;  
And I'll reign with you throughout eternity.  
(Repeat)

Message:

*Christ the King: Always There*

Pastor Joy



All I once held dear, built my life upon,  
All this world reveres and wars to own.  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss,  
Spent and worthless now compared to this.

Refrain

Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you,  
There is no greater thing.  
You're my all, you're the best,  
You're my joy, my righteousness,  
And I love you, Lord.

Now my heart's desire is to know you more,  
To be found in you, and known as yours.  
To possess by faith what I could not earn,  
all surpassing gift of righteousness.

*(Refrain)*

Oh, to know the power of your risen life  
And to know you in your sufferings.  
To become like you in your death, my Lord,  
so with you to live and never die.

*(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!

## **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](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

**Offertory/Ministry of Music**

**"Revelation Song"**

Aimee DeYoung, Pat Vahey,  
Shelly Conrad



## **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, You brought forth the world for the love of Christ.

**All: Help us to surrender any areas of our lives that are not fully yielded to your love and mercy and help us to walk in this world as citizens of your kingdom where Christ reigns as King in glory forever and ever. Amen!**

## \*Blessing

## \*Closing Song

“Rejoice the Lord is King”#342 v.1,2,3

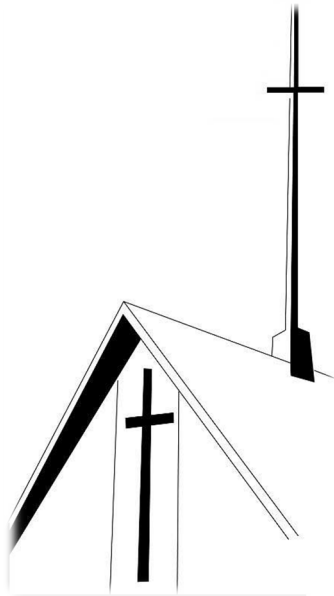
Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore!  
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing, and triumph evermore:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Our Savior, Jesus, reigns, the God of truth and love;  
When he had purged our stains, he took his seat above:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His Kingdom cannot fail, he rules both earth and heaven;  
The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus given:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!  
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!



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



**Next Week:**

## **The First Sunday of Advent**

*Readings:*

Isaiah 40:1-5

Psalms 141:1-3, 8

Luke 1:5-25

*Preparing the Way*

***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 loving memory of his mother, Elaine, by Bob Martin. Carol Rodgers provides an arrangement in loving memory of her mother, Florence Kurty.*

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

Nov. 27: Happy Thanksgiving! Our generous volunteers provide the holiday meal to our friends at Liberty House.

Nov. 29: **Advent/Christmas decorating day** on Saturday, November 29 (10:00 AM - 2:00 PM)

**Helpers needed!**

*(Love Wins gatherings continue through December – see calendar in this bulletin)*

### Ladies Outreach Ministries Announces:

- Winter clothing items are being collected to benefit the students at Perry Elementary School. Scarves, hats, gloves in sizes XS to XL are requested and by the way, the school's colors are navy blue and white!
- Again this year, the Group is seeking donations to support the “Be a Santa to a Senior” project. A tree with names of seniors who will benefit from a special gift this season is located in Fellowship Hall. This is a very well received ministry so please adopt a senior to include in your early giving!

### 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:

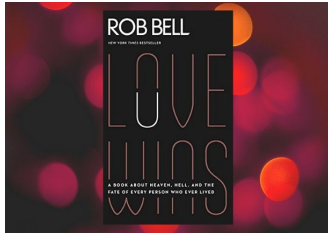
Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Ralph Kester, Ethel Davis,  
Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin, Toni Stevenson, Dave Woledge, Dorothy Moyer,  
The Vadzemnieks Family, Sharon Cooper, Sandra Ganley, Celeste Peck,  
Linda Foll Johnson, Todd Carrier, The Kuzma Family, Debra Jackman, Rose Goss,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

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

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

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? <b>POSTPONED UNTIL 2026</b>
October 29:	Evening Small Group Discussion
October 30:	Morning Small Group Discussion

### November 2025

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