

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost

November 26, 2023

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy Johnson

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

Centering Music

“Cares Chorus” #493

I cast all my cares upon you, I lay all of my burdens down at your feet.
And anytime that I don't know what to do. I will cast all my cares upon you.
(Repeat all)

Invocation to Worship

One: Holy and loving God, we flourish in your compassion. You search for us—and you find us! You meet us in our deep needs, and in love your hand moves us from selfishness and injustice to generosity and wholeness.

All: Most Holy One, surround us with the power of your abundant love and utmost care. Be present among us as we praise your name, bring our burdens, and give thanks for all that you are and all that you do. Amen!

*Opening Song

“Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” #440

Savior, like a Shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care;
In thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use thy folds prepare:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are.

We are thine, do thou befriend us, be the guardian of our way;
Keep thy flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear, O hear us when we pray;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear, O hear us when we pray.

Thou hast promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
Thou hast mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse, and power to free:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to thee;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to thee.

Early let us seek thy favor, early let us do thy will;
Blessed Lord and only Savior, with thy love our bosoms fill:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still.

***Opening Prayer**

***Passing of the Peace**

One: The Lord be with you!

All: And also with you!

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

[Please be mindful that some people may not be able to shake hands or hug due to health precautions]

First Reading**Ezekiel 34:11-15, 22-24**

For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep and will sort them out. ¹² As shepherds sort out their flocks when they are among scattered sheep, so I will sort 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. ¹³ I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and 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. ¹⁴ I 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. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD.

²² I 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. ²⁴ And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I the LORD have spoken.

Responsorial**Psalm 95:1-7a**

One: O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

All: Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise!

One: In God's hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are God's also. The sea is God's, for the Holy One made it, and the dry land, which God's hands have formed.

All: O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand. 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

³¹ “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. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, ³⁵ for 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, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷ Then 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? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’ ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I 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.’ ⁴⁴ Then 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?’ ⁴⁵ Then 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.’ ⁴⁶ And 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!

Message:

Comfort and Challenge in the Reign of God

Pastor Rich



Song of Response

“Change My Heart, O God” #373

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay; mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

(Repeat all)

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: Together, now, let us bless the elements. 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

“Father’s Eyes”

Cheryl Strecker

Pastoral Prayer and Lord’s Prayer (“Debts and Debtors”)

One: The Lord be with you.

All: ***And also with you.***

One: *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 everyone who has asked their name to be on the prayer list [*see last page of the bulletin*]. 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.

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.

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, which can be addressed to the church at:

1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508

Ministry of Music

“I Have Decided”

Katie Schaaf & Cheryl 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, we have been reminded today that even in your Sovereignty, you give us the freedom—and *call us*—to cooperate with you.

All: **We humbly ask you: refresh your gifts in us of faith, hope, and love! Grant this, so that we might choose to be healers and helpers; and to contribute to the flourishing of all people and all of creation. Amen!**

*Blessing



***Closing Song**

“For the Healing of the Nations” #621

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord,
For a just and equal sharing
Of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
Help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead your people into freedom,
From despair your world release,
That, redeemed from war and hatred,
All may come and go in peace.
Show us how, through care and goodness,
Fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living—
Let it from the earth be banned:
Pride of status, race, or schooling,
Dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
May we hollow life’s brief span.

You, Creator God, have written
Your great name on humankind.
For our growing in your likeness,
Bring the life of Christ to mind;
That by our response and service
Earth its destiny may find.

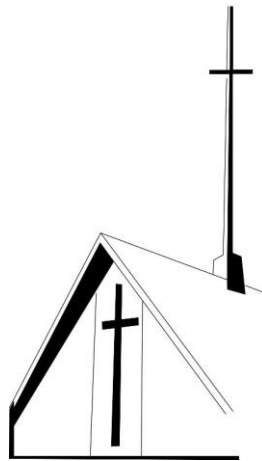


**Thank you for worshipping with us this morning at
Community United Church!**

Next Sunday – December 3, 2023

10:55 AM Announcements

11:00 AM Worship



Advent I:

“Waiting for the Coming King:
A Story of God’s Promises to David and Mary”

Scripture for Study:

2 Samuel 7:8-17

Psalm 22:25-31

Luke 2:26-38

***Need to contact us for prayer, conversation, or to connect
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 Bob Martin in remembrance of his Mother, Elaine Martin

UPCOMING EVENTS

- November 26: Church Decorating following 11:00 Service
November 28: Ladies Lunch – Fellowship Hall (Brown Bag) 12:00 Noon
December 3: 1st Sunday of Advent
December 6: Supper & Study 6:30 PM
December 11: Council Meeting 6:30 PM
December 12: Spirits & Spirituality – Calamari's 7:00 PM

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:

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), DJ Miaczynski (Marines), Jaden O'Hara (Army)
& Toby Charlton (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett & family & friends, Rod & Dew Johnson,
Harry Lamb, Sue Scheiwer, Diane Walker, Robin Adams, Ralph Kester,
John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone,
Ron Celeski, Jan & Tim Crowe and Family, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich,
Dave Pikulski, Randi Johnson, Lillian Hendrickson, Wilma and Janice Skelly, Ethel Davis,
Jim Haglund, Chelsea Brown, John Waid, Patti Rogers, Celeste Eller & Family, Shirley Carrier,
Dave Woledge, & Eve Smith

Council Members:

Debbie Anderson (President), Bob Martin (VP), Dina Johnson (Secretary), Janice Skelly,
Mike Pruzinsky, April Knapp, Patti Rogers, Carol Rodgers, and Angel Conrad.