Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



November 8, 2026

The Twenty -Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Theme: “Being Prepared: An Opportunity”

Pastor Joy L. Johnson

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

Prelude "On Wings of Song" / 10,000 Reasons Sarah and Cheryl Strecker
Welcome and Announcements

Veteran's Day Commemoration

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)

Invocation

One: God of all time and every generation, like those who stood on the edge of the Promised Land, remind us that you invite us into holy opportunity to step out of life's shadows and into your never-ending light.

All: Nurture in us a peaceful trust, a deep desire to serve, and an eager readiness to accept your invitation.

One: Cultivate in us an open heart to listen to your call and do your will.

All: **Keep us faithful as we await the day when you gather us into your eternal presence. Amen!**

***Opening Hymn** "When Morning Gilds the Skies #111

When morning gilds the skies, my heart awakening cries,
May Jesus Christ be praised!
Alike at work and prayer to Jesus I repair,
May Jesus Christ be praised!

Does sadness fill my mind? A solace here I find,
May Jesus Christ be praised!
Or fades my earthly bliss? My comfort still is this,
May Jesus Christ be praised!

The night becomes as day, when from the heart we say,
May Jesus Christ be praised!
The powers of darkness fear when this sweet chant they hear,
May Jesus Christ be praised!

Be this, while life is mine, my canticle divine,
May Jesus Christ be praised!
Be this th'eternal song
Through all the ages long,
May Jesus Christ be praised!

***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 **Joshua 24:1-3, 14-25**

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God.
2 And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac; 14 'Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.'
16 Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; 17 for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; 18 and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.'

19 But Joshua said to the people, 'You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. 20 If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good.' 21 And the people said to Joshua, 'No, we will serve the LORD!' 22 Then Joshua said to the people, 'You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him.' And they said, 'We are witnesses.' 23 He said, 'Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.'
24 The people said to Joshua, 'The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey.' 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

Responsorial adapted from **Psalm 78**

One: Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

All: Things we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us, we will not hide from their children.

One: We will tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, his might, and the wonders that he has done.

All: That the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children;

One: So that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;

All: So that our hearts are steadfast, and our spirits are faithful to God.

One: Though we often stray, he is compassionate and forgives our sin, remembering that we are but flesh.

All: He guides us like a flock and leads us with a skillful 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 25:1-13**

'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids* took their lamps and
went to meet the bridegroom.* 2Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3When the
foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; 4but the wise took flasks of oil with
their lamps. 5As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. 6But
at midnight there was a shout, "Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him."
7Then all those bridesmaids* got up and trimmed their lamps. 8The foolish said to the
wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." 9But the wise replied, "No!
there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy
some for yourselves." 10And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those
who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. 11Later
the other bridesmaids* came also, saying, "Lord, lord, open to us." 12But he replied, "Truly
I tell you, I do not know you." 13Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor
the hour.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Children's Message

Message *Being Prepared: An Opportunity* *Aimee De Young*

Hymn of Response **"**Take My Life and let it Be" #466

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love,
At the impulse of thy love.

Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee;
Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King,
Always, only, for my King.

Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages for thee;
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold,
Not a mite would I withhold.

Take my love, my God, I pour
At thy feet its treasure store;
Take my self and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee,
Ever, only, all for thee.

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 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 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 "My Jesus, I Love Thee" 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 "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" Sarah and Cheryl Strecker

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, grant us the grace to stay the course in joyful readiness for when you call.

All: When weariness slows us down, fill us with your oil and strengthen our trust in you. Amen!

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn "Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness" #93

Praise the One who breaks the darkness with a liberating light.
Praise the One who frees the prisoners, turning blindness into sight.
Praise the One who preached the gospel, healing every dread disease,
Calming storms and feeding thousands with the very bread of peace.

Praise the One who blessed the children with a strong yet gentle word.
Praise the One who drove out demons with a piercing two-edged sword.
Praise the One who brings cool water to the desert's burning sand.
From this well comes living water quenching thirst in every land.

Praise the one true love incarnate: Christ, who suffered in our place.
Jesus died and rose for many that we may know God by grace.
Let us sing for joy and gladness, seeing what our God has done.
Praise the one redeeming glory; praise the One who makes us one.

Until we meet again, remember: you are loved.

Postlude_____

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

<u>Next Week</u>:

Sunday, November 15, 2026
11:00 AM

Readings:
1 Timothy 3:1-10
Psalm 1
Matthew 4:18-22, 9:9-13

Theme: Come, Follow!

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
communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com

Community United Church

The flowers this morning are given to the glory of God By Nancy Alberico in memory of her Mom.
Honoring your mom with you today.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- November 12: Crafternoon at 1:30
- November 15: Sunday Worship
- November 16: CUC Council Meets at 6:30
- November 17: Women's Outreach Group Luncheon
- November 18: **Friendsgiving Supper at 6:00 – sign up now!**
- November 22: A Sunday of Thanksgiving / **Decorating for Advent: Please stay to help!**
- November 26: Happy Thanksgiving! Liberty House Thanksgiving meal
- November 29: First Sunday in Advent

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, and Christine Hickey.

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!

Over the last few months, our CUC Church Profile Committee has been collecting input from the congregation through Community-Building Conversations and one-on-one interactions. The aim is to establish our shared vision for the present and future of our church.

This work continues, and your participation is essential.

The United Church of Christ recognizes a number of **Marks of Faithful and Vital Local Churches in the United Church of Christ**. 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.

An insert in today's bulletin provides a detailed list of the characteristics of churches as they exhibit the behaviors of the seven **Marks of Faithful and Vital Local Churches in the United Church of Christ.** Over the next several weeks, the Profile Committee will pose a Question of the Week related to these characteristics, practices and actions to gain your insights to develop our church profile.

Everyone is encouraged to prayerfully respond to these questions using the new response cards (headlined "Your Voice Matters!!") located in the pews. Responses, as well as questions or concerns, can also be sent confidentially to the new Profile Committee email address: CUCPROFILETEAM@gmail.com

Question of the Week: Nov. 8

Mark: Building Leadership Skills Within Local Churches

What is challenging for our church about nurturing gifts for ministry among lay people and equipping new generations of faith leaders?