

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



October 1, 2023

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost:

Unexpected Saints

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 "You Are My God" #52

You are my God, you are my King, you are my Master, my everything.
You are my Lord, that's why I sing to you,
"Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"
(Sing 3x)

Invocation to Worship

One: Holy and loving God, in the vastness of your reign—on earth, as in heaven—people of many walks of life are included. The poor and the rich, the weak and the strong; people of faith, as well as doers of all that is good and just.

All: In this hour of worship, we ask for the Holy Spirit to increase our faith and our willingness to live in the world as it should be. Spirit of God, help us to see that all are welcome. May we discover that God's grace is transforming all of creation into an unending kingdom of love, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen!

*Opening Song "Sing a New Song" #10

Chorus:
*Sing a new song unto the Lord;
Let your song be sung from mountains high.
Sing a new song unto the Lord,
Singing "Alleluia."*

Yahweh's people dance for joy; O come before the Lord.
And play for him on glad tambourines, and let your trumpet sound! *(Chorus)*

Rise, O Children, from your sleep; your Savior now has come.
He has turned your sorrow to joy, and filled your soul with song. *(Chorus)*

Glad my soul for I have seen the glory of the Lord.
The trumpet sounds; the dead shall be raised. I know my Savior lives. *(Chorus)*

***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

Paul's Letter to the Philippians 3:4b-14

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it, but one thing I have laid hold of: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Responsorial

Psalm 25:1-9

One: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.

All: Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

One: Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

All: Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

One: Good and upright is the LORD; therefore God instructs us in the right ways.

All: The Holy One leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble the ways of God. 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 21:23-32**

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴ Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' ²⁶ But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹ He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message:

Unexpected Saints

Pastor Rich

Song of Response

"As A Fire Is Meant for Burning" #551

As a fire is meant for burning with a bright and warming flame,
So the church is meant for mission, giving glory to God's name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs, but to build a bridge of care,
We join hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere.

We are learners; we are teachers; we are pilgrims on the way.
We are seekers; we are givers; we are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle, loving actions, we would show that Christ is light.
In a humble, listening spirit, we would live to God's delight.

As a green bud in the springtime is a sign of life renewed,
So may we be signs of oneness 'mid earth's peoples, many-hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens when a storm is past and gone,
May our lives reflect the radiance of God's new and glorious dawn.

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

“Communion Medley”

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 “Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore”
Brad Stewart & 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, having learned, once more, that the citizens of your kingdom reach as far as your love is wide, remind us to be as welcoming.

All: **Help us to use the gifts that you have given us—to be saints of God on earth.
And help us to recognize those gifts in others, and to honor you for them.
Amen!**

*Blessing

*Closing Song “God Be with You” #716

God be with you till we meet again, by his counsels guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again, ‘neath his wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still provide you; God be with you till we meet again.

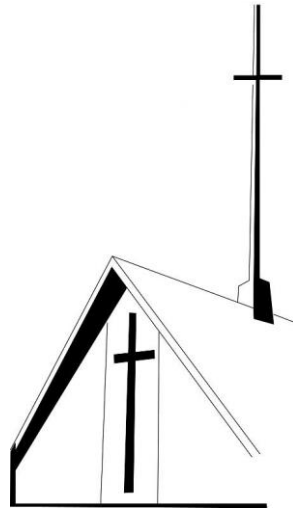
God be with you till we meet again; if life’s perils should confound you,
God will put his arms around you; God be with you till we meet again.

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

Next Sunday – October 8, 2023

10:55 AM Announcements

11:00 AM Worship



Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

“Who Inherits the Kingdom?”

Scripture for Study:

Philippians 4:4-9

Psalm 23

Matthew 21:33-46

***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 Carol Rodgers
in Memory of Teresa Kurty**

Please consider signing up for our prayer ministry. This is not a prayer chain, nor another meeting or committee. We simply ask for those who are interested to email communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com and let us know if we can email you prayer requests for the church. It will not become a group email chain, nor a discussion group. It is simply (but importantly) an opportunity to pray for the life and ministries of Community United Church.

Today's Elder: Nancy Alberico Deacons: Angel Conrad & Becky Pomeroy
Next Week's Elder: Shelly Conrad Deacons: Carol Rodgers & Patti Rogers

**Important Note: Our “not so friendly” COVID has been visiting us here. For this reason,
please respect people's health needs, particularly during the Passing of Peace.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 4: Supper & Study 7:00 PM
October 9: Council Meeting 6:30 PM
October 10: Liberty House
October 11: 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, George Churley, 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, Dina Johnson, Patti Rogers, Celeste Eller & Family

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