

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



October 22, 2023

Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost:

New Members Welcome!

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

“Step by Step” #494

O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.
O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.
I will seek you in the morning, and I will learn to walk in your ways;
And step by step you'll lead me, and I will follow you all of my days.
(Repeat all)

Invocation to Worship

One: Holy and loving God, you are the Source of all that is—the seen and the unseen—and we are a part of the world you have created. In this hour of worship, may we be reminded of your enduring goodness and your desire for goodness to flourish in all corners of creation.

All: **Help us to live in the power of your blessings. Inspire us to nurture all that brings love, equity, and serenity—so that we might live on earth as it is in heaven. Amen!**

*Opening Song

“Gather Us In” #649

Here in this place, the new light is streaming, shadows of doubt are vanished away.
See in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken; gather us in; our spirits inflame.
Call us to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery; we are the old, who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history, called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty; gather us in, the proud and the strong;
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly; give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we receive new life in the waters; here we receive the bread of new birth;
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion; give us to eat the bread that is you;
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion—lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not just in buildings, small and confining, not in some heaven light years away,
Here in this place the new light is shining; now is God present, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever; gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

***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]

New Member Welcome

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Song of Response "We Are Called to Be God's People" #580

We are called to be God's people, showing by our lives his grace,
One in heart and one in spirit, sign of hope for all the race.
Let us show how he has changed us, and remade us as his own,
Let us share our life together—as we shall around his throne.

We are called to be God's servants, working in his world today;
Taking his own task upon us, all his sacred words obey.
Let us rise, then, to his summons, dedicate to him our all,
That we may be faithful servants, quick to answer now God's call.

We are called to be God's prophets, speaking for the truth and right,
Standing firm for godly justice, bringing evil things to light.
Let us seek the courage needed, our high calling to fulfill,
That the world may know the blessing of the doing of God's will.

First Reading

The Book of Exodus 33:12-23

Moses said to the LORD, "See, you have said to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' ¹³ Now if I have found favor in your sight, please show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider, too, that this nation is your people." ¹⁴ [And God] said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵ And [Moses said to God], "If your presence will not go, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth."

¹⁷ The LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have asked, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory." ¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you the name, 'The LORD,' and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But," [God] said, "you cannot see my face, for no one shall see me and live." ²¹ And the LORD continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, ²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; ²³ then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

Responsorial

Psalm 96:1-13

One: O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

All: Sing to the LORD; bless God's name; tell of the salvation of God from day to day.

One: Declare God's glory among the nations, the marvelous works of the Holy One among all the peoples.

All: Worship the LORD in holy splendor; tremble before God, all the earth. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar and all that fills it. 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 22:15-22

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. ¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" ²¹ They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." ²² When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message:

Sorting Out Our Loyalties

Pastor Rich

Song of Response

"Find Us Faithful" #497

O may all who come behind us find us faithful;
May the fire of our devotion light their way.
May the footprints that we leave—lead them to believe,
And the lives we live inspire them to obey.
O may all who come behind us find us faithful.

(Sing twice)

Celebration of Communion

Pastor: People of God, come to the table! As we eat this bread and drink this cup, we not only remember Jesus, but we commune with the living Christ.

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

"The Human Heart"
Andrew Rainbow & Bob Martin

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 Don't Know Why"

Andrew Rainbow and Bob Martin

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, as you have given yourself completely to us, grant us the power of your Spirit to give ourselves completely to you, as Christ did with his own life.

All: Help us to become a people whose loyalties are tied to things of the reign of God, so that we might be channels of your peace, and of your grace, to transform the world. Amen!

*Blessing

***Closing Song**

“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” #587

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Chorus:

*O Master grant that I may never seek—
So much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, only light,
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

(Chorus)

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving of ourselves that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

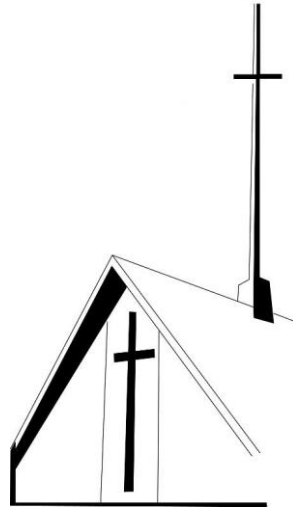


**Thank you for worshipping with us this morning at
Community United Church!**

Next Sunday - October 29, 2023

10:55 AM Announcements

11:00 AM Worship



15th Annual Diversity Service

**Celebrating Diversity through Intentional Inclusivity:
The Way of Divine Love**

**Scripture for Study:
Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-19
Psalm 90
Matthew 22:34-40**

***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 in memory of
Dina's Mom & Joy's Aunt

Today's Elder: David Holmes

Deacons: Becky Pomeroy & Nancy Alberico

Next Week's Elder: Lee Pomeroy

Deacons: David Holmes & Pat Vahey

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 23: Ladies Lunch

October 25: History & Discussion on the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict at 6:30 PM

October 29: 15th Annual Diversity Sunday – *Please invite family and friends!*

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.