

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



October 26, 2025

The Seventeenth Annual Diversity Service

Celebrating and Recommitting to our Designation as a Nationally
Recognized Open & Affirming Congregation

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Richard W. McCarty & Pastor Joy L. Johnson

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

Welcome, Prayer Requests, and Announcements

Centering Music "Put Peace into Each Other's Hands" #389 Vv. 1-2

Put peace into each other's hands
And like a treasure hold it;
Protect it like a candle flame,
With tenderness enfold it.

Put peace into each other's hands
With loving expectation;
Be gentle in your words and ways,
In touch with God's creation.

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, you have made us to be part of the church universal—faithful people as diverse as the stars, and as colorful as the rainbow. Your Spirit gathers us to worship in love, and then, to go out into the world to love, serve, and stand up for justice!

All: We are an open and affirming church! Together, let us worship God, rejoicing in the good news which we celebrate this day. Amen!

*Opening Hymn

"Sing a New Church" #577

Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity,
Gathered in the name of Jesus, richer still in unity;

Chorus:

*Let us bring the gifts that differ and in splendid, varied ways,
Sing a new church into being, one in faith and love and praise.*

Radiant risen from the water; robed in holiness and light;
Many genders in God's image, many genders God's delight. *(Chorus)*

Bring the hopes of every nation; bring the art of every race.
Weave a song of peace and justice; let it sound through time and space. *(Chorus)*

Draw together at one table all the human family;
Shape a circle ever wider and a people ever free. *(Chorus)*

*** 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.

Statement of Faith

One: People of God, what is the Word and Wisdom that we hear from the Sovereign Creator of the Universe?

All: **This is the good news: There is a place in God's heart, there is a place at Christ's table, and there is a place here, and in every welcoming church, for all people. Faith is an illuminating guide, not a warden that imprisons the mind. Whatever is loving, just, compassionate, thoughtful, and healing—all these things are welcome here. Anyone who embodies such things shows forth the glory of God! Amen!**

First Reading

Paul's Letter to the Romans 14:1-13

Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God. ⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." ¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable. ¹³ Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother or sister.

Responsorial

Psalm 150

One: Praise the LORD! Praise God in the Holy One's sanctuary; praise God in the mighty firmament!

All: **Praise God for the Holy One's mighty deeds; praise God according to the LORD's surpassing greatness!**

One: Praise God with trumpet sound, with lute and harp; with tambourine and dance; with strings and pipe; and with loud clashing cymbals.

All: **Let everything that breathes praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! 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 7:1-8

“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. ² For the judgment you give will be the judgment you get, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. ³ Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye. ⁶ “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you. ⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

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

All: Come, Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Children’s Message



Special Music

“The Truth”

Julie Lokahi

Message

Putting Away Judgement, Putting on Love

Pastor Rich

Hymn

“Let There Be Peace on Earth” #614

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God our creator, children all are we. Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

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!

Communion Music

"Only Hope"

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 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**

*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 About Love”

Bob Martin & 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, everything in your creation that expresses unconditional love, abiding peace, and true compassion reflects your goodness.

All: **We affirm, once more, that the diversity of humanity is part of your handiwork. Too long diversity has been condemned; too long too many of your children have been caught in systems of prejudice and bias.**

One: God of Mercy, you know us and search us by name. In your sight we have found favor.

All: **Almighty God, as we glimpse your greatness, may we see your glory reflected in each one of us. For you have blessed all people to bear your image in the world. By your Spirit, may our witness be expressed with the contagious joy of your love. Amen!**

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“For the Children”

God, we gather as your people to raise our song above,
And we dare to claim the promise of your love.
Though the day may not yet be here,
We trust it soon will be
When your children will be free.

Chorus:

*Oh, may our hearts and minds be opened,
Fling the church doors open wide.
May there be room enough for everyone inside.
For in God there is a welcome, in God we all belong.
May that welcome be our song.*

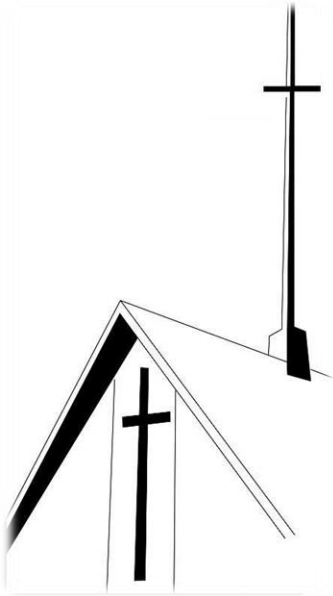
Oh, we sing for all the children, that one day they be free;
And we sing for generations yet to be,
That they never have a reason to doubt that they are blessed.
May they, in your love, find rest.
(Chorus)

Oh, we pray for all the young lives cut short by fear and shame,
So afraid of who they are and whom they love.
May the message now be banished that your love is for the few;
May their faith in you renew.
(Chorus)

God, we're working for the future when children far and wide
Can live their lives with dignity and pride.
As they grow in strength and stature, may they join us hand in hand,
As against all hate we stand.
(Chorus)



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



Next Week:
The Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

Readings:

Ephesians 1:11-23

Psalm 149

Luke 6:20-31

All Saints Commemoration

***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



Community United Church

The altar flowers this morning are given to the glory of God by Penny Churley in celebration of Ron Churley's 75th birthday, and the second arrangement is given by Carol Rodgers in memory of her father, Walter Kurty, on his birthday.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Oct.26: Lake Erie Assn. of UCC meeting here at 3 PM today! Please join us.
- Nov. 2: Church and the Paranormal, 12:45 PM: Angels, Demons, and the Afterlife
- Nov. 5: Bible Study at 6:30 PM, *Love Wins*, Chapters 4-6
- Nov. 11: Liberty House – Veterans' Ministry
- Nov. 12: Spirits & Spirituality at Calamari's, *Love Wins: Scare Tactics?* 7:00 PM
(See also the *Love Wins* calendar in this bulletin)

Reminders:

- ***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:

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)

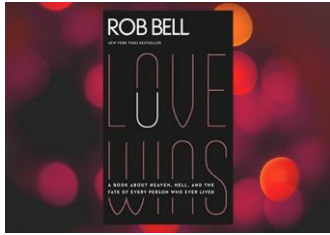
PRAYERS FOR:

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

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



Love Wins Study & 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? POSTPONED UNTIL 2026
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

I love my church

