

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



April 2, 2023:

Palm Sunday

11:00 AM

The Sixth Sunday of Lent

We are now in the Season of Lent. It is a six-week span in the church year when Christians contemplate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ—whose path ultimately led to death on a Cross. Within these six weeks, Christians are invited to fast and pray for 40 days—calling to mind Christ's 40 days in the desert, in which he wrestled with temptations of power. From the desert, Christ would come forth showing that the power of God is love. That love was put on ultimate display when Christ turned his own condemnation and death into forgiveness and new life.



Today's Readings:

John 12:12-15

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Matthew 21:1-11



Theme:

Which Christ Do We Welcome?

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty, Senior Pastor

Pastor Joy Johnson, Associate Minister

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

Prelude

Cheryl Strecker

“Antiphonal Hosanna”

Ensemble

Palm Sunday Proclamation

John 12:12-15

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, *“Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!”*

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: “Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

*Processional Hymn

“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna” #267

Hosanna, loud hosanna, the little children sang;
Through pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang:
To Jesus, who had blessed them, close folded to his breast,
The children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed ‘mid an exultant crowd,
The victor palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud;
The Lord of earth and heaven rode on in lowly state,
Nor scorned that little children should on his bidding wait.

“Hosanna in the highest!” The ancient song we sing,
For Christ is our Redeemer, the Lord of heaven our King.
O may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice,
And in his blissful presence eternally rejoice!



***Invocation**

One: Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, from God our Creator, Christ our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, our eternal Advocate and Friend.

All: And also with you.

One: Come, O Holy One! Come through the streets. Come into this house. Come to find a space beside us at the table.

All: Come to challenge our answers about why tragedy comes, why poverty increases, and why we are afraid.

One: Come, O Holy One! Speak to us in the silence and in song; in scripture and in prayer.

All: With wisdom greater than ours! With love deeper than ours! With change wider than ours! Amen!

*Song of Praise “Ride On, Ride On in Majesty” #268, Vv. 1-2, 5

Ride on, ride on in majesty! Hear all the tribes hosanna cry;
O Savior meek, pursue your road
With palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die.
In Christ, your triumphs now begin
O'er captive death and conquered son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die.
Bow your meek head to mortal pain
Then take, O Christ, your power and reign.

Confession & Assurance

One: Holy One, as we walk with you towards your Cross, we see that your face did not turn from your dedicated mission to pour out the love of God. We have not always been so bold, nor courageous.

All: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy.

One: Jesus, you have told us that you identify with the least among us and with all who walk in love and faith. And yet, too often, the church—throughout the generations—has not opened her doors of welcome to all.

All: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy.

One: Loving God, we each have a foot in the kingdom of heaven and a foot in the kingdom of sin. In the silence of our hearts we confess our sins to you...*(hold silence for one another)*...O Holy One, speak to us. Fill our silences. Comfort us with your love so that we may find your understanding.

All: Trust us to find your answers when we finally tire from our own. Save us, O Holy One, with your steadfast and restorative love. Amen!



Lenten Meditation & Candles

Song of Reflection

“Jesus Remember Me” #285

(Sing Three Times)

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

Responsorial

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

One: O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good; God's steadfast love endures forever!

All: Let the people of God say, "God's steadfast love endure forever."

One: Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

All: This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

One: *The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.* This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

All: This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!

One: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD.

All: The LORD is God, and the Holy One has given us light.

One: Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you.

All: O Give thanks to the LORD, for God is good, for God's steadfast love endures forever! Amen!



*Lenten Acclamation

"Surely the Presence" #131

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;

I can feel his mighty power and his grace.

I can hear the brush of angels' wings, I see glory on each face;

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,

***Gospel**

Matthew 21:1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.”^[a] ⁴ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

*⁵ “Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd^[b] spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

*“Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”*

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹ The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Which Jesus Do We Welcome?

Pastor Rich

Musical Reflection

“Seasons of Love”

Ensemble



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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

Cheryl Strecker

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

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]*...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: That we learn to dive deeper than the surface of religion, and to commit ourselves to the authentic path of discipleship—following wherever Christ goes.

All: God hear our prayer!

One: That we would join Christ in his mission of redemptive love; and to count our every moment by the way we lead with love.

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.

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

Ministry of Music and Time for Contemplation

Cheryl Strecker

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.

Offertory Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Lenten Congregational Response #576

***Make me a servant, humble and meek.
Lord, let me lift up those who are weak!
And may the prayer of my heart always be:
Make me a servant! Make me a servant!
Make me a servant today!***

*Departing Prayer

One: Sovereign God, you have established your rule over the human heart, not by force but by the servant example of Jesus Christ.

All: **Move us by your Spirit to join the joyful procession of those who confess Christ Jesus with their tongues and praise him with their lives. Amen!**

*Blessing



*Closing Hymn

“All Glory, Laud and Honor” #265

Chorus:

*All glory, laud and honor to you, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.*

You are the King of Israel, and David’s royal Son,
Now in the Lord’s name coming, our King and blessed One!

(Chorus)

The company of angels are praising you on high,
Creation and all mortals in chorus make reply:

(Chorus)

The people of the Hebrews with palms before you went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems before you we present:

(Chorus)

To you, before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise;
To you, now high exalted, our melody we raise:

(Chorus)

As you received their praises, accept the prayers we bring,
For you delight in goodness, O Good and Gracious King!

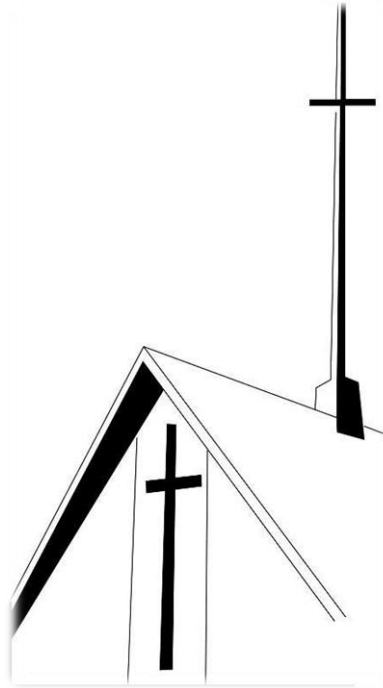
(Chorus)



Postlude

Cheryl Strecker

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



Join us for Holy Week & Easter Services

Thursday, April 6 : *Celebrating the Last Supper* (6:30 PM)

Friday, April 7: *Good Friday* (8:00 PM)

Sunday, April 9: *Easter – Resurrection Morning!* (11:00 AM)

***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 AND IN
MEMORIAL OF PENNY CHURLEY'S MOTHER**

This week:

- **Wednesday, April 5:** New Members Meeting, Fellowship Hall, 6:30 PM
- **Thursday, April 6:** Maundy Thursday/Holy Thursday Last Supper Commemoration, 6:30 PM
- **Friday, April 7:** Good Friday evening service, 8:00 PM

Special Announcements:

- **Sunday, April 9:** Easter Sunday
- **Sunday, April 16:** New Members and Baptism Sunday (Please talk to Pastors Rich & Joy if you would like to be a formal member or associate member, and/or to be baptized.)
- **Sunday, April 23:** Church Rally Day (before and after the worship service).

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),
Chris Duncan (Marines), Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott
(Army), Mathew Anderson (Army)
and DJ Miaczynski (Marines)

PRAYERS FOR:

Dorothy Moyer, Kathy Koziol, Anna Silvia, Kevin Bennett and family and friends, Rod and 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, Jared and Priscilla Hall, Ron Celeski,
Sally Cubetus, and Annette Minich.

Council Members:

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