

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



The Second Sunday of Lent

February 25, 2024:

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Rich McCarty & Pastor Joy L. Johnson

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

Centering Music “Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus” #472

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face.
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.
(Repeat)

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: Holy Spirit, open our hearts to receive your Word, reveal to us the Good News, and
encourage us to seek understanding of the complexities and challenges of our faith.

**All: As we seek to follow Jesus, may we acknowledge and accept the responsibility
of discipleship which leads to the joy of everlasting life with Christ. Amen!**

* Opening Hymn “Be Thou My Vision” #502

Be thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
Thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my Wisdom, and thou my true Word, I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou and thou only, first in my heart, high King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won, may I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heaven’s Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

***Opening Prayer**

***Sign of Peace**

One: The peace of Christ be with all of you.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us share with one another a sign of peace.

*(You may choose to shake hands, hug, or simply acknowledge one another without physical touch based on your
comfort and/or health needs.)*

Confession

One: Merciful God, we confess that, sometimes, we have not been as sincere in our spirituality as we could be. We claim to follow Jesus, yet we have not always followed his example, and sometimes ignored it.

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

One: Instead of serving as disciples, we have shown that we are not always willing to bear the cost of discipleship. We affirm the virtue of self-denial, but sometimes indulge our selfish desires and seek earthly gain.

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

One: Forgive us, we pray, and free us from our shortcomings so that we might become more and more like Jesus, and less and less like people with only earthly ambitions.

All: Help us to live according to your ways, and not our own, by seeking justice and fairness, understanding and love, and by stirring up within us the will to seek out and strengthen your kingdom here on earth. 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.

First Reading

Paul’s Letter to the Romans 4:13-25

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”) —in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Responsorial

Psalm 22:23-31

One: You who revere the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

All: From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who revere him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever!

One: All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

All: To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. Amen!

*Lenten Acclamation

“Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights” #250 V. 1

Throughout these Lenten days and nights
We turn to walk the inward way,
Where meeting Christ, our guide and light,
We live in hope till Easter Day.

*Gospel

Mark 8:31-38

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

Losing and Finding Life

Pastor Joy

Song of Response

“Through it All” #452

Through it all, through it all, I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, I’ve learned to trust in God.
Through it all, through it all, I’ve learned to depend upon God’s Word. *(Repeat)*

COMMUNION LITURGY

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

“Falling Rain”

Jerry Stroebel

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

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. **Today, we especially lift in prayer our Deacons and Elders** who serve the Church so well. *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 the 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, that can be addressed to the church at:
1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508*



Offertory

“The God Who Stays”

Jerry Stroebel

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: Holy and loving God, help us to aspire to your perfect example, which was shown to us in Christ Jesus. May we respond to His urging to take up our cross and follow Him.

All: May we embrace our faith, shout our faith, and live our lives in the light and love of our faith, so that we ourselves might be examples of Your abiding love and enduring promise. Amen!

* Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“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 myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee, ever, only, all for thee.



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



Next Sunday:

11:00 AM

Readings:

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

John 2:13-22

**The Third Sunday of Lent:
To be Holy, to be Set Apart**

***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 Marti Sawyer in memory of loved ones.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- February 25: Ladies Ministry preparing bagged lunches for "Our Neighbors' Place"
February 26: Ladies Ministry volunteering "Our Neighbors' Place" in the evening
February 27: Ladies Lunch (bag lunch)
February 28: Fundraising Committee 6:30 PM

Need hearing assistance? We have four available units. Please talk to our tech crew in the back of the sanctuary.

Please submit any bulletin requests by **Tuesday** to ensure there is time to get them in.

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, Diane Walker, 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, Ethel Davis,
Jim Haglund, Chelsea Brown, John Waid, Patti Rogers, Celeste Eller & Family, Shirley Carrier,
Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Gary Peck, Jerry Koziol, Uncle Charlie,
Carol & Doug Rodgers, Jane Moran, and Ed Mumau.

Council Members:

Debbie Anderson (President), Bob Martin (VP), Nancy Alberico, Janice Skelly, Mike Pruzinsky, Michele Vahey, Patti Rogers, Carol Rodgers, and Angel Conrad

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