

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

March 16, 2025:

11:00 AM

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

“Wait for the Lord” #166

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!
(Sing 3x)

Invocation

One: Holy and loving God, as we gather to worship, we cannot ignore the troubles in our minds, and in our hearts. Our daily lives remind us that we live in a divided world. We live in a world where the Reign of Christ is both *already* and *not yet* here.

All: When our hearts are filled with sorrow and anger at the injustices of the world, remind us that faith, hope, and love are to be our virtues in response. When despair and vengeance threaten to take hold of our center, remind us that Christ absorbed and transformed injustices and pain, he did not perpetuate them.

One: Spirit of God, around us and within us, restore our peace and root our courage in love—that we, like Christ, may bring the power of love’s salvation to the world.

All: God of hope, turn our whole being to the way of Christ—believing that Jesus lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!

* Opening Hymn “Holy God, We Praise Your Name” #138

Holy God, we praise your name, Lord of all, we bow before you;
All on earth your scepter claim, all in heaven above adore you;
Infinite your vast domain, everlasting is your reign.

Hark! the loud celestial hymn—angel choirs above are raising;
Cherubim and seraphim—in unceasing chorus praising,
Fill the heavens with sweet accord: holy, holy, holy Lord.

All apostles join the strain as your sacred Name they hallow;
Prophets swell the glad refrain, and the white-robed martyrs follow;
And from morn to set of sun, through the Church the song goes on.

Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Spirit, Three we name you;
While in essence only one, undivided God we claim you,
Then, adoring, bend the knee, while we own the mystery.

***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.

Confession *(With adaptation from the New Zealand Prayer Book, "Lord's Prayer")*

One: Spirit of God, as we walk on the pathways of Christ, we are called to imitate Jesus and to learn from all disciples of Christ who embody heavenly love. But sometimes we are tempted to imitate those whose ways seem more effective—the ways of insult, the ways of greed, the ways of violence, and the ways of self-centeredness.

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

One: For those times that we have chosen to fight fire with fire; sin with sin; and injustice with injustice.

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

One: For when the passion of our anger turns into wrath; for when the response on our lips is careless and wounding; for the times when we have emptied our hearts of love—we turn to you for forgiveness and restoration.

All: In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. Amen.

Lenten Meditation & Candles

Song of Reflection

"Jesus Remember Me" #285

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

(Sing Three Times)

First Reading

The Apostle Paul's Letter to the Philippians 3:17-4:1

¹⁷ Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. **4** ¹ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Responsorial

Psalm 27

One: The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

All: When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh—my adversaries and foes—they shall stumble and fall.

One: One thing I asked of the LORD; this I seek: to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in God's temple.

All: I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD! 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

Luke 13:31-35

³¹ At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to [Jesus], “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” ³² [Jesus] said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³ Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ ³⁴ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵ See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Children's Message

Song of Preparation

“I Come to the Cross” #251

I come to the cross—seeking mercy and grace;
I come to the cross where you died in my place.
Out of my weakness and into your strength;
Humbly I come to the cross. *(Repeat)*

Your arms are open, you call me by name,
You welcome this child that was lost.
You paid the price for my guilt and my shame;
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come to the cross.

Song of Response

"Come and Find the Quiet Center" #477

Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
 Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
 Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see
 All the things that really matter, be at peace and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,
 God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,
 Making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,
 Raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,
 Let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:
 There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,
 In the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare!



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

"How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings"

Cheryl Strecker

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. *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. 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

Our offerings are 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.

Planned-giving of even 1% can be transformational!

**If you are not in the sanctuary, online donations can be made at:
www.communityunited.church**

*Or, if you prefer to mail a check, that can be addressed to the church at:
1011 West 38th Street – Erie, PA 16508*

Offertory

"I Will Follow"

Shelly Conrad

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, we have heard your call to turn away from the imitation of hatred, violence, and greed, and to recommit ourselves to the imitation of Christ.

All: As we go into the world—where the Reign of Christ is *already* and *not yet*—remind us to root our work for justice and peace in the essence and power of love. Give us the courage to walk in the ways of Christ, where humility is holy, the prophetic word brings healing, and even the defeat of death turns into the victory of new life. Amen!

* Blessing

*Closing 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.



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



Next Sunday:

11:00 AM

Readings:

Isaiah 55:1-9

Psalm 63:1-8

Luke 13:1-9

**The Third Sunday of Lent:
Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?**

***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 loving memory of sisters Erma and Remle's birthday, from Kathy Koziol

TODAY:

March 16: Service Sunday—12:15 PM. On the third Sunday of the month, Community United Church prepares and distributes bagged lunches for our neighbors in need.

THIS WEEK:

March 19: Resonate – 7:00 PM. On the third Wednesday of the month, Community United Church offers a contemplative evening worship service of music and meditations.

REMINDERS:

- The Ladies Luncheon will be Tuesday, March 25 at 12:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. It will be a potluck luncheon, but if you prefer to bring your own, that's okay too! Please let Carol Rodgers know if you can attend.
- The Women's Outreach Ministry is still collecting hairbrushes for the Overnight Shelter.
- Need hearing assistance? We have four available units. Please talk to our tech crew in the back of the sanctuary.
- Have you signed up for Small Group discussion opportunities to continue our discernment for church growth and stewardship? See signup sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

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)

PRAYERS FOR:

Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Ralph Kester, John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Tammy McIntyre, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich, Dave Pakulski, Ethel Davis, Chelsea Brown, Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin, Linda Foll-Johnson, Toni Stevenson, Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Carol & Doug Rodgers, Jane Moran, Josh Cook & Danny Kaeberlein, The Vadzemnieks Family, Doug Moore, Reverend Susan Strouse & Reverend Barbara Peronteau, and John & Tina Schnarrs

Current Council Members:

Mike Pruzinsky (President), Debbie Anderson (Vice President), Melanie Vadzemnieks (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