

# Community United Church

**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

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



September 14, 2025

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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!*

Centering Music

“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.  
(Repeat All)

Invocation:

One: Holy and loving God, your Spirit gathers us to worship you as a people held in the sovereign hands of your grace.

**All: You formed us in love, you redeem us in unending mercy, and you sustain our daily lives by the wisdom of your living Word. Glory and honor be to you, the Sovereign One of heaven and earth, immortal, invisible, the only God forever and ever. Amen!**

\*Opening Hymn

“Come, Christians, Join to Sing” #87

Come, Christians, join to sing: *Alleluia! Amen!*  
Loud praise to Christ our King: *Alleluia! Amen!*  
Let all, with heart and voice, before his throne rejoice;  
Praise is his gracious choice: *Alleluia! Amen!*  
  
Come, lift your hearts on high, *Alleluia! Amen!*  
Let praises fill the sky; *Alleluia! Amen!*  
Christ is our Guide and Friend; to us he’ll condescend;  
His love shall never end: *Alleluia! Amen!*  
  
Praise yet our Christ again, *Alleluia! Amen!*  
Life shall not end the strain; *Alleluia! Amen!*  
On heaven’s blissful shore—his goodness we’ll adore,  
Singing forever more, “*Alleluia! Amen!*”



\* 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.

## First Reading

## The Apostle Paul's First Letter to Timothy 1:12-17

I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he considered me faithful and appointed me to his service, <sup>13</sup> even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup> and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup> But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience as an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup> To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

## Responsorial

## Psalm 51:1-10

One: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

**All: You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

One: Let me hear joy and gladness...hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

**All: Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. 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

**Luke 15:1-10**

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” <sup>3</sup> So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.’ <sup>7</sup> Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. <sup>8</sup> “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup> And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ <sup>10</sup> Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

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

“Healing Grace” #370

Merciful God and Father, loving us like no other,  
Hear our prayer, the cry of our hearts, as we come to you;  
We acknowledge our transgressions, we confess to you our sins,  
Show us mercy and compassion, touch our lives with your healing grace again.

Release us from the past, as we seek your face:  
Wash us free at last, we receive your love, we receive your healing grace.  
We receive your love, we receive your healing grace.

*(Repeat All)*

### Message

*The God Who Searches*

Pastor Rich

### Hymn

“His Strength is Perfect” #637

His strength is perfect when our strength is gone;  
He’ll carry us when we can’t carry on.  
Raised in his power, the weak become strong;  
His strength is perfect, his strength is perfect.

*(Repeat)*



## 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

Lord of All Hopefulness"

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](http://www.communityunited.church)**

*Or, if you prefer to mail in a check, that can be addressed to the church at:*

1011 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street – Erie, PA 16508

**Offertory/Ministry of Music**

**“A Change in Me”**

**Adriana Johnson**

## 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, you have revealed yourself as the God who searches for us until we are found. You never tire, and you never give up on us. Remind us of such love when we feel like you are distant, though you never truly are.

**All:** **As you search for us, so we search for you, O God—and we find one another in Jesus Christ. Now, may your Spirit grant us the greater gifts of faith, hope, and love so that we will be bold in living out the Good News of your never-ending Reign. Amen!**

\*Blessing

\*Closing Hymn      “Go, My Children, with My Blessing” #719 Vv. 1, 3

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.

Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.

In my love’s baptismal river, I have made you mine forever.

Go my children, with my blessing—you are my own.

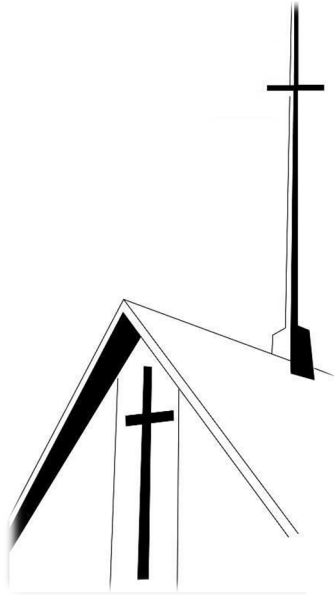
Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;

Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.

Here my Spirit’s power filled you; here my tender comfort stilled you.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

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



**Next Week:**  
**The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

*Readings:*  
*1 Timothy 2:1-7*  
*Psalm 113*  
*Luke 16:1-13*

**Theme: Community Building Through Peacemaking**  
*The International Day of Peace*

***Need to contact us for prayer, conversation, or to connect  
online with a small group or church ministry?***

1011 West 38<sup>th</sup> Street – Erie, PA 16508

(814) – 864 – 4429

[www.communityunited.church](http://www.communityunited.church)



## Community United Church

**The altar flowers this morning are given to the glory of God by Carol Rodgers in memory of Florence Kurty, and by Kathy and Jerry Koziol in celebration of their granddaughter, Cheyenne's, 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- September 17: Resonate, 7:00 PM Rain or Shine
- September 21: Service Sunday
- September 23: Ladies Luncheon – Brown bag in Fellowship Hall

### 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)

### **PRAYERS FOR:**

Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Harry Lamb, Ralph Kester, Ethel Davis,  
Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin, Toni Stevenson, Dave Wooledge, Dorothy Moyer,  
The Vadzemnieks Family, Sharon Cooper, Sandra Ganley, Celeste Peck,  
Linda Foll Johnson, Todd Carrier, The Kuzma Family

### **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](mailto:mpruzinsky@icloud.com)

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