

# Community United Church

**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

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



July 14, 2024

The Eighth 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

“Spirit Song” #352

Oh let the Son of God enfold you with His Spirit and His love.  
Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul.  
Oh let Him have the things that hold you, and His Spirit like a dove  
Will descend upon your life and make you whole.

Jesus, O Jesus come and fill Your lambs.  
Jesus, O Jesus come and fill Your lambs

Invocation:

One: God of goodness and abundance and love, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**All: As we are destined to be children of God, sealed in the Holy Spirit, may we worship our Savior with songs of praise and thanksgiving! Amen.**

\*Hymn

“Open the Eyes of My Heart” #656

Open the eyes of my heart Lord, open the eyes of my heart  
I want to see You. I want to see You.

To see You high and lifted up  
Shining in the light of Your glory  
Pour out Your power and love  
As we sing Holy, Holy, Holy.

Holy, Holy, Holy; Holy, Holy, Holy  
Holy, Holy, Holy We want to see You.

*(Repeat as guided)*

**\*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.



## Litany of the Word

One: People of God, we center our hearts now on the ancient scriptures of our tradition. These are texts that connect us with our Jewish and Christian spiritual ancestors.

**All: The Word of God comes to us as we reflect, study, and pray through the texts. Reading or hearing the Bible is only the first step.**

One: Today, we encounter a letter from the Apostle Paul to the people of Ephesus, the Ephesians. The people of the church in Ephesus were from many backgrounds—both Jewish and Gentile. This meant that, very often, they did not understand one another, and were sometimes easily upset by one another. The Apostle Paul's ministry to them was to help them understand their unity in Christ. Although each member of the church had a unique individual identity, Paul was calling them to understand that their common identity as children of God is really what unites them through Christ.

**All: Spirit of God, grant us the wisdom to find meaning in the scriptures for our lives today. Meet us as we seek understanding. Amen.**

## Reading

## Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 1:3-14

## (The Message)

How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.

<sup>7-10</sup> Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. *Abundantly* free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth.

<sup>11-12</sup> It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

<sup>13-14</sup> It's in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it (this Message of your salvation), found yourselves home free—signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit. This down payment from God is the first installment on what's coming, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life.

## Reflection

One: God had us in mind before the world was made; settled on us as the focus of His love to be made whole and holy by His love. God, our Creator knows everything about us. God knows all the things we care about, the things we need, the things that keep us up at night – because WE are the focus of His love. God is paying attention.

*[Silent reflection]*

One: Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we're a free people. Free of penalties and punishments. And not just barely free, either! Abundantly free! This is God's plan. That we would not be crushed under the burden of our mistakes, imperfections, or weaknesses. That we should not have to be punished by God and we should not punish ourselves.

*[Silent reflection]*

One: Part of "glorious living" is loving each other. As we allow God to heal our hearts and minds, and as we forgive ourselves and learn to walk in God's freedom – let us also forgive others who have hurt us. God can and will help us to release these hurts. Even though it's tempting to want justice when we've been hurt, let us receive God's grace and trust that God is working all things out for our good.

## Song

"Pass it on" #557

It only takes a spark to get a fire going,  
And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing;  
That's how it is with God's Love, Once you've experienced it,  
You spread His love to everyone; You want to pass it on.

I wish for you my friend This happiness that I've found;  
You can depend on God, It matters not where you're bound,  
I'll shout it from the mountain top! I want the world to know  
The Lord of love has come to me; I want to pass it on.

## Responsorial

**Psalm 85:8-13**

One: Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

**All: Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.**

One: Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky.

**All: The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before him and will make a path for his steps. 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 11:1-13**

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” <sup>2</sup> So he said to them, “When you pray, say:

Father, may your name be revered as holy. May your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.” <sup>5</sup> And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, <sup>6</sup> for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ <sup>7</sup> And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ <sup>8</sup> I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything out of friendship, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.” <sup>9</sup> “So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. <sup>11</sup> Is there anyone among you who, if your child asked for<sup>[e]</sup> a fish, would give a snake instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup> Or if the child asked for an egg, would give a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit<sup>[f]</sup> to those who ask him!”

One: This is the Gospel of Christ for the People of God!

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

**Children’s Message**

**Song**

**“Seek Ye First” #349**

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,  
And all these things shall be added unto you; Allelu, alleluia!  
Ask, and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find,  
Knock, and the door shall be opened unto you; Allelu, alleluia!

**Message**

“Good Things from God”

Pastor Joy

**Hymn**

“Lord, Listen to Your children praying” #489

Lord, listen to Your children praying  
Lord, send Your Spirit in this place  
Lord, listen to Your children praying  
Send us love, send us power, send us grace  
*(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**

“He Knows my Name”

Shelly Conrad

## **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] .... 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.*

**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

Ministry of Music

"Jesus at the Center"

Shelly Conrad

## **Offertory Prayer of Thanksgiving**

\*Congregational Response (BLUE) #147

***"Praise God, from whom all blessing 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, thank you for filling us with every spiritual grace that we might be a blessing for others. Through your love for us, Your children, may we be inspired beyond measure to honor each other through good works, constant prayers of hope and healing, and many demonstrations of infectious joy in sharing your gospel.

**All: By the power of your Holy Spirit, may we perceive your love and measure our lives against the life of Christ who was and is your pure and perfect Son. Amen!**

\*Blessing



\*Closing Hymn

“Now Thank We All Our God” #14

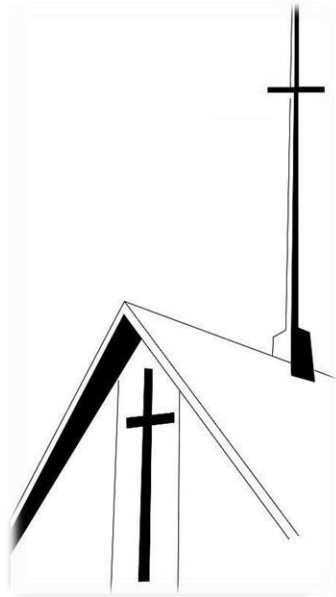
Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,  
who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;  
who, from our mother’s arms, has blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in His grace and guide us when perplexed,  
And free us from all ills in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,  
The son, and Him who reigns with them in highest heaven,  
The one eternal God whom earth and heaven adore;  
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.



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



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

*Readings:*

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Psalm 23

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

***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 Her Father, Walter Kurty**

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- July 17: Resonate 6:30 PM  
July 21: Service Sunday  
July 23: Ladies Lunch  
July 28: Praise & Prayer 9:00 AM

***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), Samantha McHenry (Army), Brittany Duncan (Army), Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott (Army),  
Matthew Anderson (Army), Jaden O'Hara (Army) & Toby Charlton (Marines)

### **PRAYERS FOR:**

Dorothy Moyer, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson,  
Harry Lamb, Diane Walker, Ralph Kester,  
John M., Todd Carrier, Teddy Long, Jimmyo, Sandy Gool, Tammy McIntyre, Laura Stone,  
Jan & Tim Crowe and Family, Debra Doerfer & David Magid, Annette Minich,  
Dave Pakulski, Randi Johnson, Ethel Davis,  
Jim Haglund, Chelsea Brown, John Waid, Celeste Eller & Family, Shirley Carrier,  
Dave Woledge, Ev Smith, Karis Fenton, Ruth Schmidt, Jerry Koziol, Uncle Charlie,  
Carol & Doug Rodgers, Jane Moran, Ed Mumau, Sharon Cooper,  
Mary Ann Schmeisser, Josh Cook & Danny Kaeberlein, Jenny Jacob,  
The Doerfer-DePoorter Family & Jeremiah.

### **Council Members:**

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

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