

# Community United Church

**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

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



August 4, 2024

The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 AM

Pastoral Team:

Rev. Dr. Richard W. McCarty & Pastor Joy L. Johnson

**Guest Preacher, Douglas Hearn**

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

Prelude  
Welcome, Prayer Requests, and Announcements

Cheryl Strecker  
Becky Pomeroy

Centering Music           “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)*

Invocation:

**One:** Grace, Mercy, Peace and Love from God our Creator, Christ our Savior and the Holy Spirit.

**All: And also, with you.**

**One:** Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God, because God is love. We thank you for the gift of love that you have freely given us. May this love permeate our hearts, our minds, and our actions as we worship you today. Help us to love one another deeply and sincerely, just as you have loved us. Let your love shine through us so brightly that others may see and experience your presence among us.

**All: Bless each member of this congregation, that we may be united in love and purpose, reflecting your glory to the world around us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

\*Hymn                           “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” #358

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven to earth come down,  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;  
Visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast;  
Let us all in thee inherit, let us find the promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning, Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;  
Suddenly return, and never, never-more thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,  
Pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee:  
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

**\*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: Lord, your Word calls us to love genuinely and live in peace.

**All: Help us to embody your love and kindness.**

One: From the teachings in Romans, we learn to overcome evil with good and to live in harmony.

**All: Guide us to be peacemakers and to honor one another.**

One: In the Gospel of Matthew, you command us to love you fully and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

**All: May your love be our guiding light in all we do. Amen.**

### **Reading**

### **Romans 12:9-21**

<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup> love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. <sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup> Instead, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

### **Responsorial**

### **Psalms 118**

One: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good;

**All: God's steadfast love endures forever!**

One: Let Israel say,

**All: "God's steadfast love endures forever!"**

One: The Lord is on my side; I will not fear.

**All: What can mortals do to me?**

One: The Lord is my strength and my might;

**All: He has become my salvation.**

One: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

**All: God's steadfast love endures forever!**

**\*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**

**Matthew 22:34-40**

<sup>34</sup> When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, <sup>35</sup> and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” <sup>37</sup> He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

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

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

**Children’s Message**

**Song**

“Open Our Eyes” #491

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,  
To reach out and touch him, and say that we love him.  
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen,  
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.  
*(Repeat)*

**Message**

“The Divine Call to Love: Reflecting the Face of God”

Douglas Hearn



**Hymn**

“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)*

## **Celebration of Communion**

One: 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.**

One: 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.**

One: People of God, come to the table!

## **Communion Music**

The Human Heart

Bob Martin

## **Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer ("Debts and Debtors")**

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, let us lift them up to God. (Prayer requests are presented.) Holy and Loving God, in your wisdom, meet all of the needs in the perfect way of your grace.

**All: God hear our prayer!**

One: For your divine guidance, Lord, as we navigate the storms of life.

**All: God hear our prayer!**

One: Help us to recognize your voice amid the chaos and noise in our lives, so that we may follow your direction and walk in your ways.

**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, with grateful hearts, we thank you for your unfailing love and presence in our lives. Help us to love others as you have loved us, caring for those in need and spreading your peace in our communities. 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. They 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

I Won't Last a Day Without You

Bob Martin

## Offertory Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: Gracious and loving Creator, we come before you with hearts filled with gratitude and reverence, thankful for the abundance of blessings you have bestowed upon us.

**All: We offer our hearts in love to others. May our actions reflect your boundless grace.**

One: Bless these gifts we offer; may they be used to nurture, heal, and bring hope to those in need and to spread your message of compassion throughout the world.

**All: Amen!**

\*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: As we prepare to leave this place, we carry with us the words of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who reminded us of the greatest commandments: to love You with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

**All: Grant us the grace to embody these commandments in our daily lives. May our love for you be reflected in our thoughts, words, and actions, guiding us to walk in righteousness and compassion.**

One: Help us to see Your image in every person we meet, treating them with the kindness and respect that You command. Fill our hearts with empathy and understanding, breaking down the barriers of hatred, violence, and division.

**All: Thank You for Your unwavering love and guidance. We depart in Your name, committed to living out Your commandments and spreading Your light wherever we go. Amen.**

\*Blessing

\*Closing Hymn "God of the Ages, History's Maker" #78

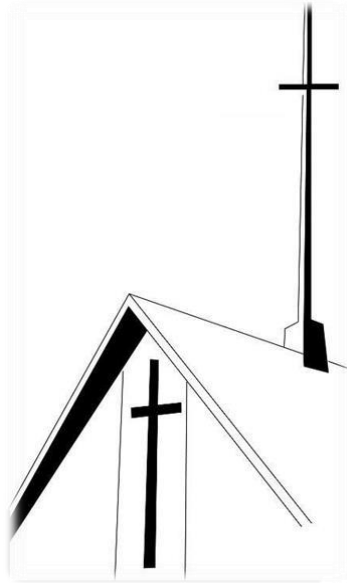
God of the ages, history's Maker,  
Planning our pathway, holding us fast,  
Shaping in mercy all that concerns us:  
Father, we praise you, Lord of the past.

God of this morning, gladly your children  
Worship before you, trustingly bow:  
Teach us to know you, always among us,  
Quietly sovereign—Lord of our now.

God of tomorrow, strong overcomer,  
Princes of darkness own your command:  
What then can harm us? We are your people,  
Now and forever kept by your hand.

Lord of past ages, Lord of this morning,  
Lord of the future, help us, we pray:  
Teach us to trust you, love and obey you,  
Crown you each moment, Lord of today.

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



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

***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 the Tilley's in celebration of their wedding anniversary.**

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

August 12: Council Meeting 6:30 pm  
August 13: Liberty House  
August 14: Spirits & Spirituality 6:30 PM at Calamari's  
August 18: Service Sunday  
August 21: Resonate 6:30 PM

***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, & Linda Foll-Johnson.

### **Council Members:**

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