

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



August 25, 2024

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!*

Prelude
Welcome, Prayer Requests, and Announcements

Cheryl Strecker

Centering Music “Where the Spirit of the Lord Is” #396

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is peace.
Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is love.
There is comfort in life’s darkest hour,
There is light and life, there is help and power
In the Spirit, in the Spirit of the Lord.
(Repeat all)

Invocation:

One: Holy and loving God, your Spirit gathers us to worship you through Christ Jesus, our Redeemer and fountain of divine wisdom.

All: Speak, O Living Word of God, and we will be empowered from strength to strength as we gather and worship in the courts of God. Amen!

*Hymn “God is Here” #1

God is here! As we your people meet to offer praise and prayer,
May we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts
Wait the coming of the Spirit—into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace;
Here are table, font, and pulpit; here the cross has center place.
Here in honesty of preaching, here in silence, as in speech,
Here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd’s flock and fold;
Here as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore
What it means in daily living to believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of church and kingdom, in an age of change and doubt,
Keep us faithful to the Gospel; help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day’s dedication, all we have to give, receive;
We, who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!

***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.

Reading

The Apostle Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power; ¹¹ put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, ¹² for our struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on the evil day and, having prevailed against everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand, therefore, and belt your waist with truth and put on the breastplate of righteousness ¹⁵ and lace up your sandals in preparation for the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, so that when I speak a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

Responsorial

Psalm 84

One: How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.

All: Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise. Happy are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to the city of God. They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in the city of God.

One: For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness.

All: For the LORD God is a sun and shield; God bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the LORD withhold from those who walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you. 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

John 6:56-69

[Jesus said]: Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which the ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹ He said these things while he was teaching in a synagogue at Capernaum. ⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” ⁶¹ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who were the ones who did not believe and who was the one who would betray him. ⁶⁵ And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

⁶⁶ Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

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

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

Children's Message

Song

“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)

Message

“Strength in the Lord”

Pastor Rich



Hymn

“As the Deer” #471

As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you;
You alone are my heart’s desire and I long to worship you.

Chorus:

*You alone are my strength and shield; to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart’s desire, and I long to worship you.*

I want you more than gold or silver, only you can satisfy;
You alone are the real joy-giver and the apple of my eye.

(Chorus)

You’re my friend and you are my brother, even though you are a king;
I love you more than any other, so much more than anything!

(Chorus)



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

“Commune with Me/To Commune with You”

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] 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**

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

Ministry of Music

"Time and Again"

Linda Smith

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, in the courts of your house we have found grace and wisdom. In our worship of you, you empower us with your very Spirit to go from strength to strength with the love of heaven.

All: Send us out with faith and courage, wisdom and might, so that we might be bold ambassadors of your love; dressed in the armor of God to bring light and love to the world. Amen!

*Blessing

*Closing Hymn

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” #501

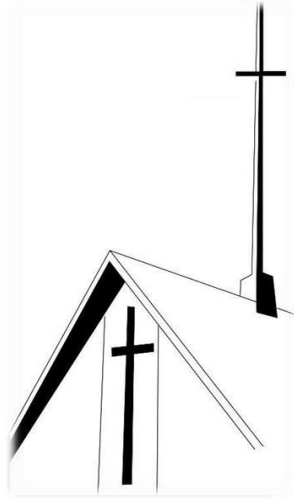
Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty—
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream does flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Bear me through the swelling current,
Lead me safe on Canaan’s side:
Songs of praises, songs of praises—
I will ever give to thee
I will ever give to thee.



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



**Next Week – September 1, 2024:
The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Assigned Scriptures:

James 1:17-27

Psalm 15

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15

Theme:

From Heart to Action

***Need to contact us for prayer, conversation, or to connect
online 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 Ginnie Burger in celebration of her wedding anniversary and by the Ladies Group in honor of Lorre Rapp

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 25: Praise & Prayer 9:00 AM
August 25: Sunday Service 11:00 AM
August 27: Ladies Lunch at Noon at the Siebenbuegger Club (2114 French Street)
September 4: Supper & Study 6:30 PM
September 8: Council Meeting 6:30 PM
September 11: Spirits & Spirituality – Calamari’s 7:00 PM
September 13: **CUC Art Show 5:30 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,
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