

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



July 7, 2024

The Seventh 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!*

Litany for the United States at the Celebration of Independence Day

One: People of God, as citizens of the Reign of God, we find ourselves a pilgrim people on earth. The scriptures teach us to live peacefully wherever we are.

All: As our country celebrates its Independence Day, we honor every good thing that has come from the civil mission to create liberty and justice for all.

One: We also pause in humility, and we repent, for times past—and present—when oppression and injustice have been perpetuated.

All: As we hear the call to mend our every flaw, we dare to rise in the cause of common liberty. We do this so that all people may be free. And we rise in the cause of liberty to create a more perfect Union: for our time, for our children, for the future, and for the sake of a peace we might attain throughout the world. Amen.

Song for the Nation

“We Praise You, O God” #726

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring;
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
We bless your holy name: glad praises we sing.

We worship you, God of our fathers and mothers;
Through life's storm and tempest our guide you have been;
When perils o'er take us, you never forsake us,
And with your help, O Lord, our battles we win.

With voices united our praises we offer,
Our songs of thanksgiving to you we now raise;
Your strong arm will guide us, our God is beside us,
To you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!

Invocation:

One: Holy and loving God, you are the source of all wisdom.

All: By wisdom you gave birth to creation. By your living Word, all things live and move and have their being. Your wisdom brings order out of chaos and pathways out of meaninglessness.

One: Your living Word inspires prophets, teachers, artists, and all those who bring a manifestation of your manifold wisdom.

All: Two thousand years ago, your living Word became human in the person of Jesus Christ. As we follow in his path, open our hearts and minds to your still-speaking Voice! Amen!

*Hymn

“God’s Holy Ways are Just and True” #663

God’s holy ways are just and true, his promises are ever new:
O praise him, alleluia! Let every heart with praises sing
And make this house with voices ring: O praise him,
O praise him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Bring back to mind God’s grace and love, our needs provided from above:
O praise him, alleluia! God kept his word and Jesus came
To make a people for God’s name: O praise him,
O praise him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Tell once again God’s deeds of old, the story of our mighty God:
O praise him, alleluia! For all God’s glorious works and ways
We shall rejoice through endless days: O praise him,
O praise him! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

*** 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.

Song

“I Sing Praises” #660

I sing praises to your name, O Lord, praises to your name, O Lord,
For your name is great and greatly to be praised!
I sing praises to your name, O Lord, praises to your name, O Lord,
For your name is great and greatly to be praised!

I give glory to your name, O Lord, glory to your name, O Lord,
For your name is great and greatly to be praised;
I give glory to your name, O Lord, glory to your name, O Lord,
For your name is great and greatly to be praised.



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 the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. This text comes to us from the Jewish tradition. Ezekiel lived during a time when the Jewish people were held in captivity by the Babylonian Empire. This was almost six hundred years before the time of Jesus. According to prophets like Ezekiel, the Jewish people had lost their home and kingdom because their leaders had become greedy, unjust; partial to power and privilege. Even so, God did not give up on them. God stirred in Ezekiel's heart to be a prophet—to be one who would bring pathways out of ruin.

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

Reading

The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel 2:1-5

[The Holy One] said to me: "O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you." ² And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. ³ He said to me, "Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. ⁴ The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' ⁵ Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

Reflection

One: People of God, notice how Ezekiel's challenging words were not pointing at other people in the world, but diagnosing his own community. How many times are we quick to point out the flaws of others, without first confronting our own?

[Silent reflection]

One: Ezekiel describes the people as a nation of rebels, full of transgressions. According to the prophets, their sins were things like abusing the innocent and poor; self-righteousness; ruling unjustly to hold power and privilege; and turning away from the needs of the afflicted. Do we take seriously that these are the things that break the heart of God?

[Silent reflection]

One: No person, nation, or kingdom is perfect. Yet God does not give up on us. God invites us to turn from injustice, greed, and violence and to embrace the wisdom the Reign of God. Let us be mindful of how each of us are called to such introspection before we ever point a finger at another. In this, there is healing and peace.

Song

“Change My Heart, O God” #373

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay;
Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.
Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

(Repeat)

Responsorial

Psalm 123

One: To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!

All: As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, until God has mercy upon us.

One: Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt.

All: Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud. *Have mercy upon us! 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**

Mark 6:1-13

[Jesus] left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ² On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. ⁴ Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown and among their own kin and in their own house." ⁵ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶ And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷ He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸ He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff: no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, ⁹ but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰ He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹ If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹² So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³ They cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Message

A Prophet Among Us

Pastor Rich

Hymn

"The Power of Your Love" #467

Lord, I come to you; let my heart be changed, renewed,
Flowing from the grace that I've found in you.
And Lord, I've come to know the weaknesses I see in me
Will be stripped away—by the power of your love.

Chorus:

*Hold me close, let your love surround me. Bring me near, draw me to your side.
And as I wait, I'll rise up like the eagle, and I will soar with you,
Your Spirit leads me on—in the power of your love.*

Lord, unveil my eyes; let me see you face to face,
The knowledge of your love as you live in me.
Lord, renew my mind, as your will unfolds in my life,
In living every day—by the power of your love.

(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



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

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.

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, your living Word is still speaking. Your Spirit still stirs prophets. May we be open to your wisdom in all the ways you bring it to us.

All: Open our hearts, our minds, and our curiosity about the things of God. Empty us of stubbornness so that we might become filled with the illumination of divinity and inspired by love. Call to us, O God, and we will follow. Amen!

*Blessing

Closing Hymn

“Here I am, Lord” #559

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin—my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

Chorus:

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people’s pain.
I have wept for love of them, they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my Word to them. Whom shall I send?

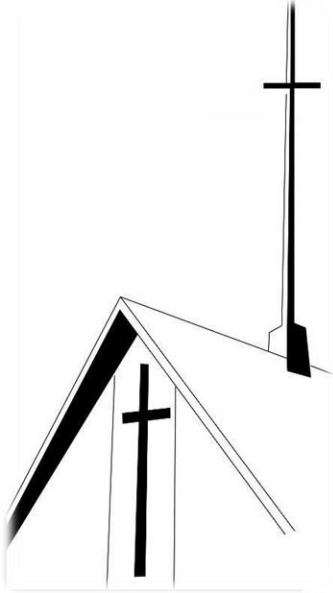
(Chorus)

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide—till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?

(Chorus)



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



Next Week:
The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings:

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

Psalm 85:8-13

Luke 11:1-13

Theme: Good Things from God

***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 Penny Churley in celebration of her and Ron's Anniversary

UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 8: Council Meeting 6:30 PM
July 9: Liberty House
July 9: Fundraising Committee 6:30 PM
July 10: Spirits & Spirituality – Calamari's 7:00 PM
July 17: Resonate 6:30 PM Pre-Service Social, 7:00 PM Service

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 Wooledge, 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 Kaerberlein, 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