

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



September 8, 2024

The Sixteenth 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

“As We Gather” #646

As we gather may your Spirit work within us,
As we gather may we glorify your Name.
Knowing well that as our hearts begin to worship,
We'll be blessed because we came—
We'll be blessed because we came.
(Repeat all)

Invocation:

One: Holy and loving God, your heart is drawn to the lowly, the oppressed, the poor, and those in sadness. Your love draws the *circle-of-belonging* wider, so that all are included—not based on status or class, but on your prodigal grace.

All: As we come into worship today, enlarge our hearts to be as concerned for the oppressed as you are. In this community of faith, remove from us both privilege and prejudice—so that all are truly welcomed and loved as co-heirs of Christ in the Reign of God. Amen!

*Hymn

“Gather Us In” #649

Here in this place, the new light is streaming, shadows of doubt are vanished away.
See in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken; gather us in; our spirits inflame.
Call to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery; we are the old, who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history, called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty; gather us in, the proud and the strong;
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly; give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we receive new life in the waters; here we receive the bread of new birth;
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion; give us to eat the bread that is you;
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion—lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not just in buildings, small and confining, not in some heaven, light years away,
Here in this place the new light is shining; now is God present, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever; gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

***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 Letter of James 2:1-10, 14-17

My brothers and sisters, do not claim the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory while showing partiality. ² For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, ³ and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here in a good place, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit by my footstool," ⁴ have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor person. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into the courts? ⁷ Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you? ⁸ If you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well. ⁹ But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Surely that faith cannot save, can it? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷ So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Responsorial

Psalm 146

One: Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

All: Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help. When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.

One: Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.

All: The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

One: The LORD watches over the strangers; God upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of wickedness God brings to ruin.

All: The LORD will reign forever, your God, O People, for all generations. Praise the LORD! 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 7:24-37

From there [Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵ but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. ²⁶ Now the woman was a gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁸ But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” ²⁹ Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.” ³⁰ And when she went home, she found the child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

³¹ Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon toward the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³² They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³ He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴ Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” ³⁵ And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶ Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷ They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

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

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

Children’s Message

Song

“Celtic Alleluia” #736

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia!

(Sing 3x)

Message

No Prejudice in the Reign of God

Pastor Rich

Hymn

“Shadow and Substance” #599

Shadow and substance, wonder and mystery,
Spellbinding spinner of atoms and earth;
Soul of the cosmos, person and energy,
Source of our being: we sing of your worth.

We are your image, formed in community,
Sisters and brothers of Adam and Eve.
You gave us color, custom and history;
Teach us to honor what others receive.

Naming the nameless—Spirit of unity,
Scanning the heavens for signs of your care;
God of the ages, give us humility;
Guide us to mystical union in prayer.



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

“Reach Out”

Leah and Addy Johnson

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

"Not Too Far From Here"

Leah Johnson

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, whose love streams like fresh water into the deserts of our hearts—turn us from greed and partiality to healing and justice.

All: Make us companions of those who long for your deliverance, and give us all safe passage—at the last—into the realm of your eternal peace. Amen!

*Blessing



*Closing Hymn

“Take My Life and Let It Be” #466

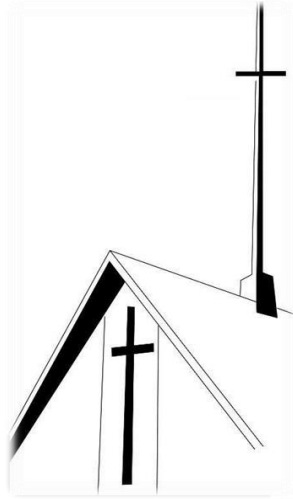
Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love,
At the impulse of thy love.

Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee;
Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King
Always, only, for my King.

Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages for thee;
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold,
Not a mite would I withhold.

Take my love, my God, I pour
At thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself and I will be
Every, only all for thee,
Every, only, all for thee.

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



**Next Week – September 15, 2024:
The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Assigned Scriptures:

James 3:1-12

Psalm 116:1-9

Mark 8:27-28

Theme:

Our Words, Our Course

***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 Linda Weber in
Memory of Mom's & Dad's birthdays**

UPCOMING EVENTS

- September 9: Council Meeting 6:30 PM
September 10: Liberty House
September 11: Spirits & Spirituality – Calamari's 7:00 PM
September 13: **CUC Art Show 5:30 PM**
September 18: Resonate 6:30 PM

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY:

The Ladies Outreach Group will be collecting FULL SIZED bottles of shampoo, conditioner, and body wash, as well as new or GENTLY USED bath towels. We will be donating the items to the Church of the Covenant where they have a women's shower ministry. We will collect the items through September and October.

Thank you for your support!

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 Kaerberlein, The Doerfer-DePoorter Family, Jeremiah, and 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