

Community United Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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



October 11, 2026

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

“Grace Has You Covered”

Pastor Joy L. Johnson

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

Centering Music

"We Exalt Thee" #47

For thou, O Lord, art high above all the earth;
Thou art exalted far above all gods.
For thou, O Lord, art high above all the earth;
Thou art exalted far above all gods.

We exalt thee, we exalt thee, we exalt thee, O Lord.
We exalt thee, we exalt thee, we exalt thee, O Lord.
(Repeat all)

Invocation

One: God of grace and love, we come as we are—fragile, weary, and seeking –drawn to a space where all are welcomed, not because of our perfection, but because of God's endless love.

All: We bring our mortality and our hidden fears, stepping out of the shadows and into the warmth of divine light.

One: Here, O God, we know that You enfold us in boundless mercy, wrapping our anxious hearts in a steady, redeeming peace.

All: Today, we open our hands to receive the grace poured over us, and with joyful hearts, we gather to praise the Lord! Amen!

***Opening Hymn** "Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us" #440 v. 1,2 4

Savior, like a Shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care;
In thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use thy folds prepare;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, though hast bought us, thine we are.

We are thine, do though befriend us, be the guardian of our way;
keep thy flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear, O hear us when we pray;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, O hear us when we pray.

Early, let us seek thy favor, early, let us do thy will;
Blessed Lord and only Savior, with thy love our bosoms fill:
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still.

***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.

First Reading

Isaiah 25:1-9

O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. ² For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of foreigners is a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. ³ Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. ⁴ For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of foreigners like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled. ⁶ On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. ⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the covering that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. ⁹ It will be said on that day, "See, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Responsorial

Psalm 23 (The Message Translation)

One: God, my shepherd! I don't need a thing. You have bedded me down in lush meadows, you find me quiet pools to drink from. True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction.

All: Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk at my side. Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.

One: You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies. You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing.

All: Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life. I'm back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.

***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 22:1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ² “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸ Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ ¹⁰ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad, so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹² and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

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

All: Come Holy Spirit! Thanks be to God!

Children’s Message

Song of Preparation

“You Are My All in All” #427

You are my strength when I am weak,
You are the treasure that I seek,
You are my All in All.

Seeking you as a precious jewel.
Lord, to give up, I'd be a fool.
You are my All in all.

Jesus, Lamb of God, worthy is your name.
Jesus, Lamb of God, worthy is your name.

Message

Grace Has You Covered

Pastor Joy



Chorus: "I Cannot Come to the Banquet"

I cannot come.

*I cannot come to the banquet, don't trouble me now.
I have married a wife, I have bought me a cow.
I have fields and commitments that cost a pretty sum.
Pray, hold me excused I cannot come!*



Hymn of Response

"Amazing Grace" #422

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a Wretch like me.
I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

The Lord has promised good to me. Thy word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come.
Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.



Celebration of Communion

Pastor: Beloved children of God, come to the table with open hands and love in your hearts, for this is Christ's table—a place where every person is valued, treated with kindness, and embraced in fairness and love.

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 we take the 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

"We Remember You"

Cheryl Strecker

"To Commune With You"

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 draw on the Holy Spirit's power within us. We bring forward now the prayer requests that have come to us today, whether they be joys or sorrows.... (*prayer requests are presented*). We also pray for all who have asked to be on our printed prayer list—and so we ask: Holy and Loving God, in your wisdom, meet all of these needs in the perfect way of your grace. We now pray together:

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 offering grows from the justice, kindness, and mercy we share each day. Through generous giving, the ministries of this church continue to welcome, serve, and flourish. May we give with grateful hearts.

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*

Offertory/Ministry of Music

“Truth Be Told”

Dina Johnson

Offertory Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Congregational Response #147**

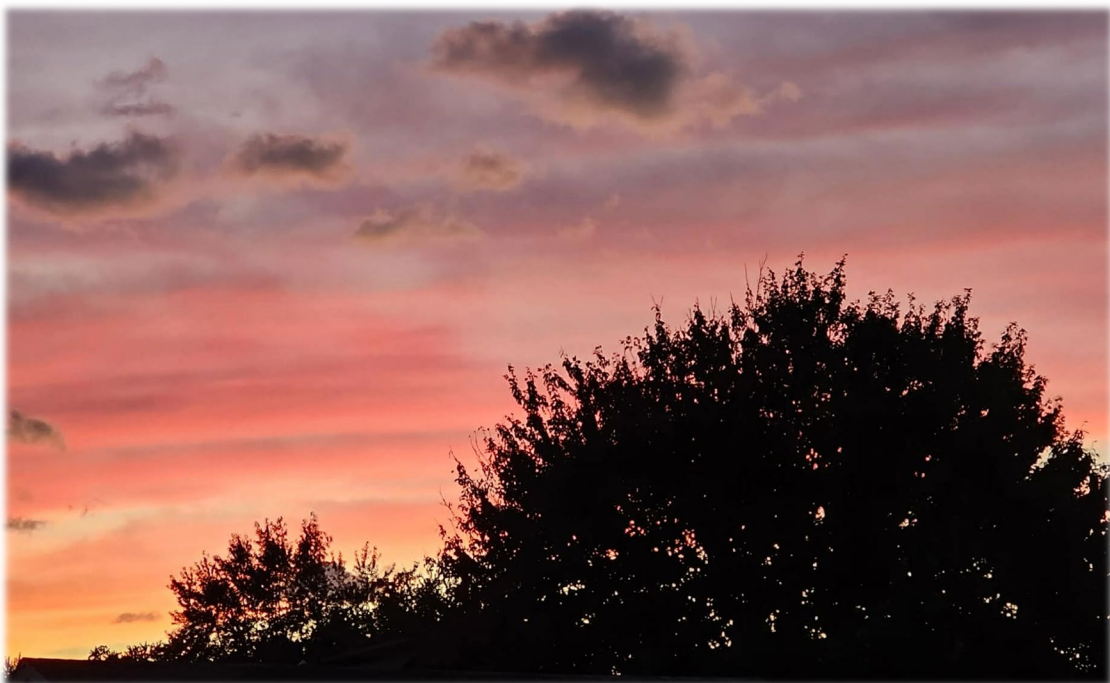
***“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow:
Praise God, all creatures high and low: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, in Jesus fully known! Creator, Word, and Spirit one!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!”***

***Departing Prayer**

One: O God, whose Word has been proclaimed among us, teach us your ways and direct our steps.

All: Grant that we may know ourselves worthy to receive your grace, assured of our place at your table and held always within your gracious care; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Blessing**



*Closing Hymn

“Shine Jesus Shine” #319

Lord, the light of your love is shining, in the midst of the darkness shining;
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us, set us free by the truth you now you bring us,
Shine on me, shine on me.

Refrain

*Shine, Jesus, shine. Fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light.*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence, from the shadows into your radiance;
By the blood I may enter your brightness, search me, try me, consume all my darkness,
Shine on me, shine on me.

Refrain

As we gaze on your kingly brightness, so our faces display your likeness;
Ever changing from glory to glory, mirrored here may our lives tell your story,
Shine on me, shine on me.

Refrain



Until we meet again, remember: you are
loved.

Postlude_____

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



Next Week:

Sunday, October 18, 2026
11:00 AM

Our Special Guest Preacher: Rev. David Ackerman

Readings:

Exodus 33:12-23
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Psalm 99
Matthew 22:15-22

Theme: Face to Face

***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

communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com



Community United Church

The flowers this morning are given by Ron and Penny Churley to the glory of God and in celebration of their granddaughters' birthdays: Grace's 19th and Avery's 16th.

Happy Birthday, Grace and Avery!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Tuesday, October 13: Liberty House Veterans' Ministry
- Wednesday, October 14: Spirits & Spirituality: Calimari's at 7:00 PM
- Sunday, October 18: *Preaching: Rev. David Ackerman, Transitional Regional Conference Minister, Region 3, Keystone Conference of the UCC*
- Sunday, October 18: Service Sunday!
- Tuesday, October 20: Women's Outreach Group gathers with Lois Bartos: meet at church to carpool – Halloween brown bag lunch - costumes welcome!

***Need hearing assistance? We have four available devices to enhance your worship experience!
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), Brittany Duncan (Army), Matt Duncan (Army), Tyler Anderson (Army National Guard), Shelby Wescott (Army), Jaden O'Hara (Army), Toby Charlton (Marines), Cole Posnett (Army), Hunter Miaczynski (Army), Mathew Anderson (Army), Zachary Oliver (PA Army National Guard), Aran Maloney (Air National Guard), and Connor Bille (Army)

PRAYERS FOR:

Linda Hilbert, Anna Silvia, Dew Johnson, Ethel Davis, Celeste Eller & Family, Michele Serafin, Toni Stevenson, Sandra Ganley, Dorothy Moyer, Celeste Peck, Linda Foll Johnson, Debra Jackman, Zoey Cathie Witmire, Laura Will, Veronica, Joan Schultz, Michelle and Melissa, Tom and Thea Hyatt, Randy Koziol, Barbara Thompson, Tanisha and Jaeda, Barbara Hickey, Sandy Gool, Jim Haglund, Shirley Carrier, Ruth Zavaglia, Brad Stewart, Cain Hickey, Patty Brogdan, Lynn Oliver, Rowan Oliver, Katrina Strohmeier, Theodore, Bill and Marilyn, and Bill and Patti Rogers.

Your 2026 Council Members:

Thea Hyatt, President, Ginnie Burger, Vice President, Tracy Applebee Davis, Treasurer, Juli Tonks, Secretary, Michele Vahey, Justin Graff, and Chuck Becker

You may call the church office at 814-864-4429 for pastoral and administrative matters or use email: communityunitedchurch@yahoo.com

There are available Church Council positions – please let us know if you're interested!

Don't forget to check Facebook and our website: **communityunited.church**

Community United Church is committed to ethical and legal compliance
in our music and livestreaming:

CCLI Church Copyright License: 11405428 / Streaming License: 20856761

A Word Search for You!

Name: _____ Date: _____

PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET

B R D K E Z N C K F Y A N G U S M
J X U R N J V D H S Q O S E A A D
X O S E R V A N T S I H D L T N G
R L R W V D S L R T M T V T A S S
B A N Q U E T O A W I A H K I U Z
A U T R X E B T E G T E P X O L T
W N J E Z T I D A I W R X I H D H
Q X Y Z G V D H O K H Q G I I O F
T W E O N I R N G N Y I S A A O J
C E V I N D B E V N L S E C M F R
E L E G Y E D G F E I L C O D W S
J B R C G Z J T R U B K D P N O W
E A Y U C J V E Y I S G D A F A G
R R O Z W Z W O B C N E H X X Z J
J A N S C F D E T I V N I S X I J
P P E C S F O Z K U B A K H Z H S
L U N V G Y X X J E S U S X Q M C

INVITATION
SERVANTS
MATTHEW
REFUSE
FOOD

RELIGIOUS
BANQUET
PARABLE
REJECT
KING

SALVATION
INVITED
WEDDING
BIBLE
GOD

EVERYONE
KINGDOM
ANYONE
JESUS