

**ANOTHER ROAD**

Thank you for worshipping with us this morning. We extend a special welcome to our guests.

**F**or Children: Please feel free to attend services with your children. For the safety of the children, staff and volunteers ERUCC will not be providing childcare during services until further notice. Your children are welcome to bring their own quiet activities, no materials will be provided. Please take ALL personal items with you after the service.



**W**e have removed all items from the pew racks for your safety. Music selections will be provided within this bulletin. If you are visiting and did not stop at the welcome desk in the downstairs lobby please stop by after the service they would love to meet you or, please feel free to reach out to someone sitting near you and ask them questions about the service or church. Many of our visitors ask us about the time of offering. This is a time in our service when we respond to God's gifts of love by offering the gifts of our lives. For many of us, this is when we make a financial gift towards the ministries and programs of our church. We also use this time to ask God how we might use the gifts of our hands and hearts in sharing God's love. If you are visiting, there is no obligation to give a financial gift. We are just glad you are worshipping with us. At this time we are taking offering at the end of the service. Plates will be placed at the doors as you exit the sanctuary, Thank you.

**W**e ask that you please silence your cell phones during our worship service. We also ask that you refrain from applause after our choirs sing and allow the music to resonate in the quiet of the sanctuary and in your hearts. Our musicians are playing and singing for the glory of God. They know you appreciate their efforts and their gift.

Rest rooms (equipped with changing stations) are located on the first floor of the church building and outside the Community Room and the Nursery.

**T**here is much information about the church in this bulletin and our website: [www.erucc.org](http://www.erucc.org).

***Donate online by scanning this code:***

***or you may use our new texting donation system. Send a donation amount to 301-804-2933 . You will receive a text back within minutes with a link. Click the secure link and provide your method of payment and a receipt will be sent to you! Or, download the GivePlus Church application and make your donation via the app.***



Thank you.

# EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

## United Church of Christ

- An Open and Affirming Congregation -

January 3, 2021

Epiphany Sunday

10:30 a.m.

*\*All who are able may stand*

*The numbered hymns are from The New Century Hymnal*

### Chimes Concert

### Greetings and Announcements

### Prelude

*John Widmann, organist*

### Sharing of the Star Gifts

*(This morning you are invited to receive a gift from the offering plates being passed around the congregation. Please help yourself to a star. The wise ones traveled great distance to offer their gifts to the newborn Christ-child were responding to the gift first given to them. They received God's gift, then offered their gifts to God. As we commemorate the arrival of the wise ones and remember their offerings, we take delight in receiving these stars and words that symbolize God's generosity in our lives. You are invited to ponder what significance this word might have in your life, and how God might be speaking to you through that simple message. You are encouraged to take your star home and place it some place where you can see it every day. Allow this "word" to speak to you throughout the year.)*

### \*Call to Worship

Shining star, lead us on:

**We seek the way of peace.**

Spirit of hope, lead us on:

**We seek the way of joy.**

Bethlehem's cradle, lead us on:

**That our hearts may hold the way of love.**

### \*Opening Prayer (in unison)

**O Shining Light, we give thanks for the light of this day, for the light of eternal love, for the light of the journey to justice and peace, and for the light of your grace in our lives. Shine through us, we pray, that the light of joy may spread through the world. Amen.**

### \*Opening Hymn *Arise, Your Light Is Come*

#164  
*See insert*

### \*Call to Confession

## **\*Prayer of Confession**

As the wise ones sought Jesus by following a star, let us follow the star-child in the Christ-light of peace.

**Holy light of God, shine on us.**

As the wise ones dared to trust in the wonders of the sky, let us walk in the ways of compassion together in the wonder of true community on earth.

**Holy light of God, shine on us.**

As the wise ones returned to their country by another road, let us travel a new path to justice and kindness.

**Holy light of God, shine on us.**

## **\*Assurance of Pardon**

The gifts of the star-child are healing of heart, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the abiding presence of the Spirit in suffering and joy, and power to live life anew. Thanks be to God!

## **Thought For the Day**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**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, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

### **The Scripture**

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Matthew 2:1-12

Reader: The Word of God for the people of God.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **Sermon**

### **Offering of Tithes, Gifts and Lives to Christ's Service**

**Anthem** *Jesus, Emmanuel*

- *R.K. Boesinger*  
*ERUCC Singers*

## **SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION**

### **Invitation to the table**

#### **Invitation**

Come, all who seek hope.

Come, all who seek new life.

Come, all who have journeyed far, following God's promise  
without knowing where it might lead.

Come to this table, where all are welcome,  
and partake of this feast.

Share this bread and this cup,  
and in so doing know that God, the true light of all time and space,  
is ever in our world. Come.

#### **Communion Prayer**

Prophetic God,  
in the midst of our lives you call us  
to be disciples,

to be learners and teachers,

to be followers and leaders,

to be prophets and wonderers.

You journey with us as you journeyed with the magi,  
leading us through encounter with Christ  
to new paths that lead us to new ways of living.

You call us as you did the child Samuel  
and ask us to dare to be prophets  
in a world that still shuns your word and promise.

You patiently wait for us  
in the Ninevehs of our uncertainty.

You offer us healing and cast out our demons,  
and you call us to offer the same to others.

Now in this sacred time  
we recall Jesus' challenge to us  
to shine a light of grace in all the world.

And we offer that grace to others who cross our paths,  
inviting all to come and share this blessed banquet.

In simple bread and wine [juice], you offer a meal that can always satisfy,  
that fills our longings with a blessedness that casts off our mourning  
and adorns us with blossoms of joy.

As we share in this holy feast,

may we remember  
and feel newly reconnected with the Christ  
and with one another. Amen.

## Sharing of the Bread and Cup

### \*Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### \*Closing Hymn *Brightest and Best*

#157

### \*Blessing

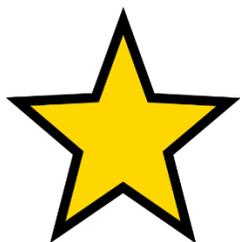
Let us go now by another road – the road of trust and faithfulness to God.

**Let us be watchful – for those whose way is fearful; let us be ready – to stand beside the outcast; let us be prepared – to stay the course with those who suffer.**

Let us go to the world in the power of the Spirit to fulfill our high calling as disciples of Christ, who shines on us now and forever. Amen.

### \*Postlude

*John Widmann, organist*



#### STAR GIFTS

The idea for today's "star gifts" sharing came from Susan J. Foster, pastor of East Woodstock Congregational Church in East Woodstock, CT. as published in *Reformed Worship Magazine*.

We thank the Cindy Duranko and Stephanie Sites for making the stars for this morning's service.



**Every Sunday at 10:30**

<https://boxcast.tv/channel/bzloh0xyyacgq5fmjnoi>

**Want to listen to the sermon again? Visit our YouTube channel:**

**[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9\\_hGBb5tBHeZuvqBvSbX5w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9_hGBb5tBHeZuvqBvSbX5w)**

You can get to the link on our homepage at [www.erucc.org](http://www.erucc.org)

**The flowers on the altar this morning** are given by Cindy Smith, Cindy Duranko, and Jenna Duranko in memory of Liz Coffey whose sweet spirit will forever dance in our memories.

The **yellow rose bud** on the stand is in honor of those currently serving in the military by Jack Day and Peter Brehm.

**Worship Next Week:** [Ctrl + Click HERE to join worship Sunday 10:30 a.m.](#)

### **January 10, Baptism of Christ Sunday**

Today is Baptism of Jesus Sunday, an invitation to enter into the mystery and wonder of Baptism. Baptism is important to our identity as Christians, as it is the defining moment in which we enter into the Christian family. This day invites reflection on the relationship between God and Jesus, defined in Jesus' baptism as special and different from all other relationships. Consider what it means that God says to each of us, "You are my beloved child."

Mark's gospel is characterized by urgency – events happen at a rapid pace. In these opening verses, John the Baptizer bursts on the scene in our Gospel lesson, Mark 1: 4-11, with a shocking message: Israel must repent and return to God's ways. In the defining moment of baptism, there is a new beginning for Jesus and for all who would follow him in the days and years to come.

Genesis 1:1–5 gives a vivid picture of the work of God the creator. Water is an image of power, both life-giving and destructive. A wind from God (God's Spirit) brings order out of the watery chaos. God creates by speaking and calls the creation "good." Creation is beloved and God is pleased with it.

We will be reaffirming our baptisms this morning.

### **Stay Connected and Get Informed!**

There are many ways to receive information about what is happening at church each week. The weekly bulletin, the weekly informational email, and our monthly newsletter, The Trinity Chimes, Facebook, and Instagram. @eruccfred

**Thursday Thoughts**—A weekly emailed message that shares updates, highlights the upcoming service's scripture and focus, and includes announcements about Sunday School. To sign up to receive Thursday Thoughts, contact Amy Aguilar at 301-662-2762 or [aaguilar@erucc.org](mailto:aaguilar@erucc.org) and share your preferred email address.

**Trinity Chimes**—ERUCC's monthly newsletter. A more in-depth look on what's happening with the congregation. How we're reaching out, learning and volunteer opportunities, member and social program updates. Receive Trinity Chimes by email! Contact Amy Aguilar at 301-662-2762 or [aaguilar@erucc.org](mailto:aaguilar@erucc.org) to request to be added. (Paper copies also available upon request.)



### **Ministers - All the People of Evangelical Reformed Church**

Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel, Senior Pastor ([bkdaniel@erucc.org](mailto:bkdaniel@erucc.org))

Rev. Fred Wenner, Pastor Emeritus ([faw500@msn.com](mailto:faw500@msn.com))

Kim Sexton, Associate for Children's Ministry ([ksexton@erucc.org](mailto:ksexton@erucc.org))

Alison E. Shafer, Music Director • Tricia Coffey, Head Chimer & Children & Youth Choir Director

Sherry Murray, Nursery • Jaci Clayton, Facilities Mgr.

Amy Aguilar, Office Administrator ([erucc@erucc.org](mailto:erucc@erucc.org)) • Jenna Duranko, Social Media Coordinator

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*Isa. 60:1; 61:1-2; Luke 4:14-21**Ruth Duck, 1973*

1 A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;  
 2 A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;  
 3 A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,  
 4 A - rise, your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song!

Show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day!  
 Pro - claim the cap-tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.  
 Bind up the bro-ken - heart-ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.  
 Rise up like ea - gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

# Brightest and Best

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Reginald Heber, 1811; alt.

Matt. 2:9-11; Luke 2:10-14

1 Bright - est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,  
2 Cold on the cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing,  
3 Shall we not of - fer our cost - ly de - vo - tion,  
4 Vain - ly we of - fer each am - ple ob - la - tion,

dawn on our mid - night and lend us your aid.  
God's ho - ly Child with the beasts of the stall;  
fra - grance of E - dom and of - ferings di - vine,  
vain - ly with gifts would we fa - vor se - cure;

Star of the East the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,  
An - gels a - dore while this ba - by lies sleep - ing,  
Gems of the moun - tain and pearls of the o - cean,  
Rich - er by far is the heart's ad - o - ra - tion,

guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.  
Mak - er and Mon - arch and Sav - ior of all.  
myrrh from the for - est or gold from the mine?  
dear - er to God are the prayers of the poor.

## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

January 3, 2021

John 1:1-18

### Another Road

In a few days, Christians around the world will celebrate the feast of Epiphany. Like so many of our Christian observances, this one contains the seeming contradictions of human and divine. It is on the one hand an acknowledgement of the divine nature of Jesus, which was recognized by the Three Magi who came to visit the Christ Child. On the other hand, it is a celebration of Christ's appearance to all people, as The Magi are often thought to represent Christ's Gentile followers.

It is not uncommon to tell stories to try and make sense of our stories, especially the ones that hold contradictions like Epiphany. In Italy on this day, Italian Christians tell the legend of Befana. The story goes like this:

Befana was an old woman, who was renowned throughout the village for keeping the most meticulously clean house. All of her energy and time went into creating a beautiful home. When the three Magi followed the star through her village, they naturally stayed with her in her lovely abode. They told her about the Christ Child, whose star they followed. After a day's rest, the three began again to follow the star, and they urged Befana to come with them. Befana said no at once, for if she left the village, who would keep her house clean and neat? The more she thought about the Christ Child, the more Befana was compelled to see and know more about him. Quickly packing a bag of sweet treats and carrying a broom for the new mother, Befana hurried down the road. But the Magi had already gone on ahead. Although she hurried to catch up with them, Befana could not find the Magi and to this day she searches for the Christ Child. Although her search for the Child was not successful that night, on Epiphany Eve, Befana travels still, visiting each child in Italy. And for each child, she leaves a gift, because she now knows that the Christ Child can be found in each young person.

Questions for reflection:

How does the story of Befana help you understand the story of Epiphany in a new way?

How does this story embody the paradox of this season's celebration both of Christ's divinity and his ministry to all people?

How can your life be a story that tells a story about the meaning of Epiphany?

