



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

For Children: We have trained nursery staff (paid nursery attendant as well as adult volunteers) for ages 0-4. The nursery is located on the first floor outside of the Community Room. (Accessible by the stairs from the Church Street Entrance or via the elevator). Children ages 5 and above are invited to stay and worship with their families. Children's programs, books, and crayons are located in the rear of the sanctuary near the welcome table.



Hymn selections can be found in the black hymnals in the pew racks or printed in the 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 for offering will be placed at the doors as you exit the sanctuary. Thank you.

We 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.

There is much information about the church in this bulletin and our website: www.erucc.org.

Donate online by scanning this code:
or download the **GivePlus Church** application and
make your donation via the app. Thank you.



Ministers - All the People of Evangelical Reformed Church

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EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH
United Church of Christ
- An Open and Affirming Congregation -

January 2, 2022

Epiphany Sunday

10:30 a.m.

*All who are able may stand

Chimes Concert at 10:00 a.m. from Trinity Chapel's steeple

Greetings and Announcements

Prelude *Af Høiheden oprunden er* – Neils W. Gade (1817-1890)

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**

We come to this place --

each of us on our own path.

The path is winding,

and the path is not always clear,

and the path changes,

but we are here.

God is walking us home.

What a gift it is to not walk alone.

Let us worship Holy God.

***Opening Prayer (in unison)**

Holy God,

**You speak to us in Scripture and in prayers,
in sunrises and sunsets,
in friends and in strangers,
in dreams and in songs.**

**You are speaking all the time,
and how often do we miss it?**

**Still our minds so that we can listen with a depth
that we have not heard before.**

**Still our hearts so that we can receive with open arms
what it is you are offering us today.**

**We know you are speaking,
so we are listening.**

Gratefully we pray, amen.

Opening Hymn *Arise, Your Light Is Come

#164

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession**

God of changed plans,

**The Magi heard in a dream that they were to take a new way home—
a different path, an untraveled road. And to our amazement,
they did just that. The Magi packed their bags and went home by
another way.**

**We wish that change could be easy for us, but more often than not,
when whispers of change come, we tend to clench our fists and
hold on tighter.**

Forgive us for resisting change that might be holy.

Forgive us for ignoring that there is more than one road home.

Forgive us for failing to hear your invitation.

Guide our steps to unfamiliar places.

Gratefully we pray, amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

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.

Hymn *The First Noel*

#139, stanzas 3, 4, 5

The Scripture

Isaiah 60: 1-6

OT page 690

Matthew 2:1-12

NT page 2

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Morning Prayers

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

Offertory *Led by a Star* (from *Rise Up! A New Light A-Comin*)

– L. Larson
Senior Choir

*Prayer of Dedication

God of new beginnings,

We offer these gifts to you today because we love you.

**The world will tell us to keep our money to ourselves,
to hold it tight, to tuck it away,**

but just as the Magi made a different choice, we make a different choice.

Instead, we give what we have,

trusting that when we live like we belong to one another,

we will see a better world.

So, take these gifts and use them for your good. With hope we pray, amen.

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

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

In long nights of eternity, in days without end,
our God offers a spark of hope in a world of uncertainty.
In times unfamiliar, and moments ungrasped,
God is miraculously and wonderfully present,
here in our midst, proclaiming that, whatever our mood,
there is always a promise that shines brighter than the brightest star.
And so, with all the stars of heaven we proclaim with gladness:

Glory! Glory! Glory!
Holy is the one who created all things
and declared them good.
Hosanna in the highest!
Holy is the one who comes
in the name of our God.
Hosanna in the highest!

In times of deepest sorrow and chaotic misgivings,
Jesus is an ever-living reminder of the goodness of our God.
We remember how,
the night before he died,
Jesus took bread and thanked you, O God,
and broke it, and gave it to his friends
and challenged them to eat it,
to take it in,

to be nourished.

And so, we do the same,
and in that act, we are united once more with the Christ.

After supper Jesus took a cup of wine,
and again, offered you thanks, O God,
and passed it among his friends,
challenging them to drink it,
to take it into themselves, and to be refreshed.

And so, we do the same, and in that act, we are united once more
with Christ.

Loving God, Creator of the universe,
lover of all, be with us in this sacred meal.

Remind us of the powerful presence
of the living Christ in these elements,
that we may know that we take Christ with us wherever we go.
Come to the table of God. God is revealed here.

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

(This morning we will bring communion to the congregation as you are seated in the pews. Please hold the bread until all have been served and the pastors extend the invitation for all to eat. Please hold the cup of grape juice until all have been served and the pastors extend the invitation for all to drink. In this way, we can commune together.)

***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**

***Sevenfold Amen**

#814

***Postlude** Präludium und Fuge in a moll – Georg Böhm (1661-1733)

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

January 2, 2022

John 1:(1-9), 10-18

Another Road

Many church stewardship teams breathe a collective sigh of relief at this time of year. If your stewardship season arrives with autumn and winds up around Advent, the new year is often a time to take a break. But the thing is, God's grace is evident through faithful giving all year long. So, it might be time to imagine a new rhythm of stewardship that weaves stewardship into every season of the church year.

Here are suggested stewardship activities for every month of the year. Which of them are you already doing? Which of them seem like they might be helpful? What would you add to this calendar?

January - Send a message from the Pastor with help in laying the biblical foundation of how church giving is different from your members' other giving opportunities.

February - Invite each of the ministries of the church to communicate how their work is a reflection of the greater mission of the church.

March - If you send a quarterly giving statement, consider adding a brief communication about how the gifts are used to further the church's mission. Include pictures!

April - Send a message from an elder member, reflecting on why they give to the church, and how their giving has changed over their lifetime.

May - Encourage church members to write wills and make estate plans that reflect their faith commitments.

June - Assemble a group to lead a fall stewardship campaign and spend the first meeting inviting sharing about why each person gives to the church.

July - Share a message from a member of the wider church staff and host a conversation on how that message relates to your local congregation's work.

August - Take a retreat day as a community to pray about how each person's gifts and graces might be utilized to grow your church in both numbers and in spirit.

September - Create and share a chart that shows the average giving to the congregation. Ask members to prayerfully consider where they are on the chart and where they want to be.

October - Send a message from a younger church member about how their giving relates to their faith.

November - During your church Thanksgiving celebrations, find a personal way to thank those who give to the church.

December - Ask how the Advent themes of hope, peace, joy, and love encourage church members to be generous, extravagant givers.



8 1/2" x 14" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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