

Possibilities
Unfolding

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 and Staff of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

The Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel ~ *Senior Pastor* ~ bkdaniel@erucc.org

The Rev. Fred Wenner ~ *Pastor Emeritus* ~ burschenherrlichkeit@gmail.com

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads ~ *Associate for Faith Formation & Parish Life* ~ ksrhoads@erucc.org

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Kelly Esslinger ~ *Assistant Director for Bell Choirs & Children's Music*

Jenna Duranko ~ *Social Media Specialist* | Sherry Murray ~ *Nursery Attendant*



EVANGELICAL REFORMED
United Church of Christ
– An Open and Affirming Congregation –



January 8, 2023

Baptism of Christ

10:30 am

The numbered hymns are from The New Century Hymnal

*All who are able may stand

Chimes Concert at 10:00 am from Trinity Chapel's steeple

Greetings and Announcements

Sharing Our Stories

Robin L. Brady Slifer

Blessing for Those Traveling to Franklinton Center

Choral Call to Worship *Come, My People*

– Martin / Cliffe

Refrain:

Come, my people, welcome to worship.

Love is in the warmth of this place.

Sing to God a song of thanksgiving,

Sing to God a song of praise!

Call to Worship

Praise God, all heavenly beings, praise God's glory and God's strength.

Praise God's glorious name; worship God in holiness and wonder.

The voice of God proclaims...

I created it all...and it is good.

The voice of God thunders...

let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.

The voice of God pleads,

what do I require of you, but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God?

Then the voice of God, who lifts and empowers, affirms...

you are my Beloved...with you, I am pleased.

May God give strength to God's people

and may God bless God's people with peace.

***Opening Prayer (in unison)**

Creating, Calling, and Faithful God, we come to this time and place to be with you, to worship you, and to learn from you.

May our time together be like your creation of light in the darkness that you called good. May it be that you would call us good while we respond to your call and as we listen to you. Amen.

***Opening Hymn** *Let Justice Flow Like Streams*

#588

1 Let jus - tice flow like streams of spark - ling wa - ter, pure,
2 Let righ - teous - ness roll on as oth - ers' cares we heed,
3 So may God's plumb line, straight, de - fine our mea - sure true,

En - a - bling growth, re - fresh - ing life, a - bun - dant, cleans - ing, sure.
An ev - er - flow - ing stream of faith trans - lat - ed in - to deed.
And jus - tice, right, and peace per - vade this world our whole life through.

***Call to Confession**

People of God, we desire to be refreshed, renewed and changed.

Let us listen again to God's calling our names

to encourage us and strengthen our resolve

to be God's people in faithfulness and peace-loving justice.

***Prayer of Confession**

O God, we hear your voice

and we see the way of Jesus set before us.

But its hard, dear God, to try again and again

to live up to our baptismal vows

and maintain our resolve to be your people in the world.

In repentance we ask you to forgive us.

Set us once again on a holy path that leads to you. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

Sisters and Brothers,

God hears our prayers and sets before us the way of Jesus.

God calls us and gives us enough grace and mercy to follow the way.

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 42: 1-9 OT page 670

Matthew 3: 13-17 NT page 3

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

- Renewal of Baptismal Vows -

Introduction

God created new life forms and brought them up from the waters of chaos, embraced them, and called them good.

Jesus, baptized in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, became living water for us and embraces all of us.

Jesus embraces also you who are the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized and all others who come seeking.

We follow Jesus with our baptism, marking a starting place for new life and new ways of being.

We join Jesus in love and service.

Let us prepare our hearts and minds to see, feel, and hear once again the vows of baptism.

Vows of Renewal

Do you renew and affirm the promises made at your baptism?

I do.

Do you recognize the call of God to be God's people always?

I do.

Do you embrace the way of Jesus in faith and ministry?

I do

Do you accept the nurture of the Holy Spirit who renews your spirit each day?

I do.

Do you accept and embrace others who seek a liberating faith in God?

I do.

In renewing your baptismal vows, remember your baptism as a mark of acceptance and welcome into the care of Christ's church where you may begin again your Christian faith and life.

Prayer

O God, we rejoice in your grace, given and received.

We thank you that you claim us, that you wash us, strengthen us, and guide us, that you empower us to live a life worthy of our calling.

In the way of Jesus, make us as water in a dry and thirsty world.

Establish us to be places of refreshment.

Root us and nurture us in love,

that with all your people, that we may rightly and justly serve you.

Fill us with your fullness

that our lives may overflow in service and love. Amen.

Coming to the Water

As you are called, as you are moved, you may approach the bowl of water to renew your baptism. Remember always that, just as God called out to Jesus, God calls out to us, "You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased."

Baptismal Hymn *Down to the River to Pray*

– Southern U.S. folk hymn

**¹As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**²O sisters let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on, sisters let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**³As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe & crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**⁴O brothers let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O brothers, let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**⁵As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**⁶O fathers let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on, fathers let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**⁷As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe and crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**⁸O mothers let's go down
Come on down, don't you wanna go down?
Come on mothers, let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**⁹As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**¹⁰O sinners, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O sinners, let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**¹¹As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe and crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

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

Offertory *Come, Be Baptized*

– G.A. Smith
Spirit

***Prayer of Dedication**

**Faithful God,
Bless us in our baptismal calling
to be in ministry of showing hospitality to others.
We offer the gifts that we have been given to be used
not for conquest and dominance,
but for use in liberating the poor and hurting people
who pray for our liberation as well as their own.
Receive and multiply our gifts for life-giving ministry. Amen.**

***Closing Hymn** *I Am the Light of the World*

#584

in response to a Christmas poem by HOWARD THURMAN

F *Unison Introduction* **B♭** *Refrain* **C** **F**

“I am the light of the world!

B♭ **C** **F** **Gm** **Dm** **C**

You peo-ple come and fol-low me!” If you fol-low and love you’ll

F **Gm7** **C** **B♭** **F** **B♭** **F** *Last time, end*

learn the mys-ter-y of what you were meant to do and be.

F **B♭/D** **C** **F**

1 When the song of the an-gels is stilled, when the
 2 7 To find the lost and lone-ly one, 7 to
 3 7 To free the pris-oner from all chains, 7 to
 4 To bring hope to ev-ery task you do, 7 to

Gm Dm C

star in the sky is gone,
 heal the bro - ken soul with love,
 make the pow - er - ful care,
 dance at a ba - by's new birth,

When the
 7 To
 To re -
 7 To

F Bb C F

sag - es and the shep - herds have found their way home, the
 feed the hun - gry chil - dren with warmth and good food, To
 build the na - tions with strength of good will, to
 make mu - sic in an old per - son's heart, and

Dm Bb Gm7 C

work of Christ-mas is be - gun:
 feel the earth be - low, the sky a - bove!
 see all God's chil - dren ev - ery - where!
 sing to the col - ors of the earth!

Return to

***Benediction**

Go now in faith and with courage,
 Empowered by god's spirit to spread the light
 And the transforming message of Christ
 In every dark corner.
 Go, knowing god's love goes with you.
 For you, too, are god's dear child,
 Beloved and blessed. **Amen.**

Postlude *(please be seated)*



Seeking Higher Ground, Service Prayers for Baptism of Christ Sunday was written by the Rev. Rosemary McCombs Maxey, a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and is retired clergy and a member of Fellowship Congregational United Church of Christ, Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Call to Worship and Benediction is from Seasons of the Spirit.

The flowers on the altar today are in memory of the Rev. Henri L. G. Kieffer, Margaret Roulette Kieffer, and Dr. Robert H. Pilgram and Margaret Kieffer Pilgram, by Penny & Bill George.

The yellow rose bud is presented by Peter Brehm and Jack Day.

If you are interested in sponsoring the yellow rose, please contact the church office at (301) 662-2762 or erucc@erucc.org.

Attendance Last Sunday: 17 at 8:30 am, 136 at 10:30 am, and 58 online.

Watch
Worship
Live



Watch worship live every Sunday at 10:30 am or on-demand:
<https://sundaystreams.com/go/ERUCC>

Today: January 8, 2023

Scripture Reader: Linda Coyle
Deacons: Chuck Baldree, Matt Pomeroy
Elder: Marc Kline
Greeters: Tom and Rachel Ford
Cathie Duncan
Welcome: Jeanellen Kallevang
Audio/Visual: Kelly Esslinger, Jeff Baker
Jeff Schaeberle
Fellowship: Laura Rhoderick
Saturday Chimer: Suzanne Morris
Sunday Chimer: Robin and David Cooney

Next Week: January 15, 2023

Dan Smith
Matt Davis, Harrison Fisher
Tyler L. York
David and Robin Cooney
Sue Pinner
Holly Davis
Rodney Martin, Larry Martin
Kendra Sampson
Mark Ulrich, Darryl Glick
Dick Williams
Tricia Coffey

FELLOWSHIP

Please join us for fellowship in the Community Room after worship to chat with friends, welcome our visitors, and enjoy a time of refreshment.

The Community Room, located on the 1st floor, is accessible by stairs or elevator.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worship Next Week: Second Sunday after Epiphany

Today we explore God's call to us. Isaiah is called by God to proclaim the restoration of Israel in Isaiah 49: 1-7. Jesus calls disciples in John 1: 29-42. Through these accounts, we are invited to consider the ways that God's call comes to us and discover the ways that God equips and strengthens us to live into this call.

The Senior Choir will be singing. The Rev. John Shillingburg will be leading worship.

HOSPITAL AND PRAYER LIST

Your pastor wants to be available when members of ERUCC are in the hospital. Please let us know so that we can visit with you and your family and provide support. We always ask permission before adding a name to be included in the prayer list or in the verbal announcements on a Sunday morning. There are many for whom we pray and visit whose names are not listed in the bulletin by their request.

Please remember the following people in your prayers:

Stacie Carey (niece of Darlene Brunner and Jeannette Johnson), Frank Tordoff (father of Kim Sexton), Ginny Peters, Larry Butler (father of RaeAnn Butler), Marcia Eisenstein, Bob Shafer, Joyce Kallevang (sister-in-law of Jeanellen Kallevang), Derek C. Hupp (grandson of Beanie and Gaylon Cornell), Wayne Kolb (friends of Stefan and Judi Mach and Tony and Linda LaFianza), Conway Barnes (brother-in-law of George and Linda Kline), Mary Ellen Baker, Pat Hevner, Jeannette Johnson, Jackie Keyser (sister-in-law of Betsy and Phil Selby), Tamara Tamas, Barbara Lee Crutchley (sister of Milt Crutchley), Marcy Channell (daughter of JoAnn Fritz), Paige Coffey, Jane Doll, Peggy Githerman, Emogene Wyand, Fran Wenner, Neremiah Castillo (niece of Andrew Beadle), Bonnie Devilbiss, The McCarty family, Tina Prescott (daughter in law of Barbara and Bill Prescott), Mary Remsberg, Heleen (sister of Karin Mens), Kathy Blue Shores (friend of Jean Fish and Barb Biser), Gretchen Manuel (niece of Audrey Rayfield), Debra Reedy (friend of Jean Fish and Barb Biser).

Stacie Carey
11849 Renner Rd
Keymar MD 21757



**LORD, LISTEN TO YOUR
CHILDREN PRAYING**

Sunday Education Opportunities for Adults

LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE with The Reverends John & Rebecca Shillingburg

New series begins January 8 North Room / Zoom 9:00 – 10:20 am

Zoom: bit.ly/ERSunstudy Meeting ID: 893 8670 5888 Passcode: 327128

Foundational Stories of the Old Testament ... in Order! The Exile ... and the Exodus ... is that one event with two names ... or two? And if they are different, which came first? Was Daniel in the lion's den because Joseph put him there?

If you have ever pondered questions like these, join the *Let's Study the Bible* class beginning on January 8 for an 8-week (or so) survey of the big stories of the Old Testament in the order they occurred. No prior experience needed; just bring your Bible!

LET'S TALK

Community Room

9:30 – 10:15 am

Let's Talk this month focuses on "Faith in Action" as ERUCC members and friends reflect on recent trips including the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, disaster recovery in Kentucky, and the Franklinton Center at Bricks work trip.

This Week: What is the Camino and Why Walk 150 miles?

Weekly Education Opportunities for Adults

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY with The Rev. Barbara Kershner Daniel

The Difficult Words of Jesus

Tuesdays through February 21 North Room / Zoom 11:00 am – Noon

Zoom: bit.ly/3TdUnOy Meeting ID: 875 1423 3398 Passcode: 973365

Jesus provided his disciples teachings for how to follow Torah, God's word; he told them parables to help them discern questions of ethics and of human nature; he offered them beatitudes for comfort and encouragement. But sometimes Jesus spoke words that followers then and now have found difficult. He instructs disciples to hate members of their own families (Luke 14:26), to act as if they were slaves (Matthew 20:27), and to sell their belongings and give to the poor (Luke 18:22). He restricts his mission (Matthew 10:6); he speaks of damnation (Matthew 8:12); he calls Jews the devil's children (John 8:44).

In *The Difficult Words of Jesus*, Amy-Jill Levine shows how these difficult teachings would have sounded to the people who first heard them, how have they been understood over time, and how we might interpret them in the context of the Gospel of love and reconciliation

January 10 Hate Father and Mother

January 17 Slave of All

No class on January 24 and 31

February 7 Nowhere Among the
Gentiles

February 14 Outer Darkness

February 21 Your Father the Devil

This Week at ERUCC

UN-HANGING OF THE GREENS

Sunday, January 8

following 10:30 am service

We will be taking down our Christmas decorations and appreciate all the help we can get! Help with the "Un-Hanging of the Greens" after the 10:30 am worship service on January 8.

FRANKLINTON CENTER

Trip Prep Meeting

Sunday, January 8

Community Room

12:30 – 1:30 pm

Adults, youth and their parents who will be attending the work trip to Franklinton Center at Bricks should attend this meeting after Christmas decorations are put away. We will discuss expectations, work assignments, travel, packing, and food menu.

Franklinton Center Work Trip

January 14 – 16

Open to adults and youth (7th – 12th grade)



Please let Pastor Daniel know if you are interested in going on the work trip to The Franklinton Center at Bricks, a conference, retreat, and educational facility in eastern North Carolina with a focus on justice advocacy and leadership development. Franklinton Center is an historic center of transformation where issues affecting the marginalized, the oppressed, and the poor are addressed. A former plantation, Franklinton Center traces its beginnings to the founding of Franklinton Christian College in 1871 and the Congregationalist Bricks School in 1895. A merger of those two schools in the 1950s formed Franklinton Center at Bricks. The Center is related to the UCC.

As with all church buildings, the more work volunteers can provide to maintain facilities, the more funds are available for programs and meeting the direct needs of people.

The work trip costs \$80 per person (includes housing and meals). The trip is subsidized by budgeted funds for mission trips.

Meal Donations

The ERUCC mission trip to Franklinton Center in North Carolina is coming soon! We will be preparing our own meals while we work to restore and improve the facilities at the Center. We could use your help in providing donations for these meals. Please review the items list available through the website/QR code below and sign up as you are able. All donations must



be in the church kitchen and labeled as "Franklinton Trip" no later than Wednesday, January 11. Thank you, as always, for your generosity and support!

Donation List: <https://bit.ly/3Z6VSB4>

Questions? Please contact Trish Coffey at (240) 815-9118 or trishcoffey1195@gmail.com.

PICK UP 'WE CREATE' ARTWORK

Sunday, January 8



Thank you to all the amazing artists for their contributions to the We Create exhibition during Advent. Artists should pick up their artwork on Sunday, January 8. If you are unable to pick up your piece this Sunday, please call the church office at (301) 662-2762 to make alternate arrangements.

Image: "Larry Flexes his Muscles" by Larry Maples

ACTIVE THREAT/SHOOTER TRAINING

Wednesday, January 11

Main Sanctuary

5:30 – 7:00 pm

Mark Landahl, formerly of the Frederick Sheriff's department, who provided our active shooter training several years ago, will be offering this training for us again. Anyone is welcome to attend.

ADULT EDUCATION PLANNING MEETING

Wednesday, January 11

North Room / Zoom

7:00 – 8:00 pm

Zoom: bit.ly/3Go7rPf

Meeting ID: 846 7439 1631

Passcode: 092646

Come and discuss with the Christian Education Committee as we plan adult education opportunities for the next six months and beyond.

CHIMES LEARNING GROUP

Thursday, January 12

North Room

11:00 am

Join the Chimes Learning Group for their first gathering of 2023 in the North Room at 11:00 am on Thursday, January 12.



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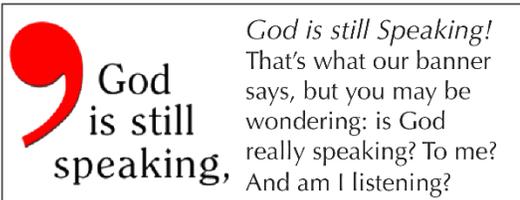
Upcoming at ERUCC

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION MINI-RETREAT

Saturday, January 21

Community Room

6:30 – 8:30 pm



God is Still Speaking! That's what our banner says, but you may be wondering: is God really speaking? To me? And am I listening?

Join the Mission and Social Action committee for a mini-Saturday night retreat where we will consider what God

may be saying to us and where that may lead. There will be time for food fellowship, guided reflection and sharing of our interests and experiences. Whether you are feeling overloaded and can't do one more thing or are wondering how to get involved, this time together will be an opportunity to relax, reflect and listen for the voice of our Still Speaking God.



Let us know you are coming! We are making soup!

Register by scanning the QR code, go to bit.ly/JOINmymt, or email your interest to pastorbeadle@gmail.com.

Contact a Mission and Social Action Committee member if you have questions: Michelle Beadle, Colleen Baldree, Angela Brittain, Rebecca Shillingburg, Linda Coyle, Kelly Esslinger, Manny Greber, Ed Hoffman, Kathleen Jefferson, Niel Jefferson, Shelley Weakly.

SERVICE OF INSTALLATION

Sunday, January 22

Main Sanctuary

3:00 pm

A Service of Installation for Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads as Associate Pastor for Faith Formation and Parish Life will take place Sunday, January 22 at 3:00 pm in our Main Sanctuary. A reception will immediately follow in the Community Room.

Youth Group Ministry

FRANKLINTON CENTER TRIP PREP MEETING

Sunday, January 8

Community Room

12:30 – 1:30 pm

Youth who will be attending the work trip to Franklinton Center at Bricks and their parents should attend this meeting after Christmas decorations are put away. We will discuss expectations, work assignments, travel, packing, and food menu.

A conversation about summer trips will immediately follow the Franklinton prep meeting.

SNOW TUBING

Saturday, January 28

Enjoy fun together and enjoy tubing down the snowy slopes together. Thanks to parent, Julie, for organizing this activity.

Children and Family Ministry

COLLECTING HATS AND GLOVES

A new addition to our outdoor foliage is our Holiday Warmth Tree, so named by our Sunday School children. Our Children's Ministry will be collecting new winter hats and gloves through the end of January. These can be left in boxes throughout our two buildings or added to the tree itself, which lives just outside the glass doors. Placed on a tree, these winter warmth items can be taken by those who might be able to use them. Additional items will be shared through SHIP for Homeless students and Federated Charities. Contact Pastor Kirstin, ksrroads@erucc.org with questions.

GOD'S KIDS CLUB

Upcoming dates to save for GKC include February 20 and March 22, scheduled 9:00 am – 3:00 pm with students packing their own lunches. Kirstin is also planning a short day on Good Friday, April 7 from 9-12. This day we will participate in the stories of Holy Week through an interactive scavenger hunt of sorts and some imaginative visioning.

Would you like to volunteer for a partial or whole day with GKC? It is ideal for us to have 4 adults for our day. Contact Kirstin at ksrroads@erucc.org with questions or to volunteer!

JUNIOR CHURCH

On all Sundays except the first Sunday of each month, children aged 5 – 5th grade may go to Junior Church after the Thought for the Day in the worship service. Junior Church, a space to join in creative spiritual formation activities, will take place in the Thomas Room most weeks. Parents should pick up children from Junior Church following service.

Volunteer leaders needed! Contact Pastor Kirstin for more information and to express interest.

Additional Announcements

2022 YEAR END DONATIONS

As 2022 comes to a close, the Finance Committee would like to thank you all for your continued extravagant generosity to the financial well-being of ERUCC in support of its programs and mission. The final 2022 year-end giving statements will be sent via e-mail or in the mail mid-January 2023.

VOLUNTEER FOR FELLOWSHIP

Helping with Sunday Fellowship can be as easy as helping set up before worship, helping serve after worship, or bringing a special treat to share. Sign up at bit.ly/ERUCC_fellowship or talk with Laura Rhoderick or Starr Schaeberle for more details.

Sunday Morning Schedule

Our regular Sunday morning schedule resumes next week:

8:30 – 9:15 am	Worship , Trinity Chapel
9:30 am – 12:00 pm	Nursery Care , Main Building
9:30 – 10:15 am	Adult Education , Main Building <i>Let's Talk (9:30 am) and Let's Study the Bible (9:00 am)</i>
9:30 – 10:10 am	Children's Sunday School , Trinity Chapel <i>Ages 3 – 2nd Grade, 3rd – 6th Grade, Confirmation Class</i>
10:10 – 10:25 am	Children's Music & Movement , Trinity Chapel <i>Pre-K through high school</i>
10:30 – 11:30 am	Worship , Main Sanctuary
11:30 am	Fellowship , Community Room
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	Cambridge Handbell Choir Rehearsal , Flora Room <i>Pre-K through high school</i>

Stay Informed



Read the ERUCC monthly newsletter, *Trinity Chimes*, for more information about activities, opportunities, and updates. You can find the newsletter in the back of the sanctuary and online by scanning the QR code or at bit.ly/Jan23Chimes.



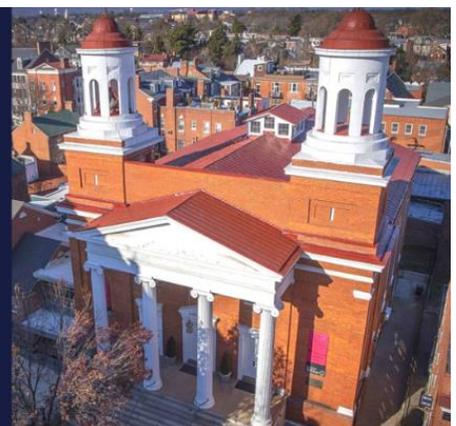
Please send announcements for the bulletin, Thursday Thoughts, or Trinity Chimes to erucc@erucc.org.

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the members of this congregation, seek to celebrate in word and deed the gospel of Jesus Christ, by nurturing spiritual growth through worship, study and prayer; by caring for one another as God cares for us; and by proclaiming God's love for all people as we work to help our neighbors near and far. We commit ourselves to develop and implement specific programs to fulfill our mission.



EVANGELICAL REFORMED
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



**THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
(FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY)**

January 8, 2023

Mathew 3:13-17

Possibilities Unfolding

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Don't you wonder what Jesus remembered about the day of his baptism? Was it his thoughts, the inner knowing that this would be the "proper" way to "fulfill all righteousness"? Was it his relationships and conversations, like John's reluctance to perform the sacrament, followed by his consent? Was it his physical sensations, like the feel of the cool water on dry and dusty skin? Would he most remember the miraculous arrival of the dove and the voice from heaven asserting his belovedness?

When asked what they remembered about baptisms, their own or loved ones', two United Church of Christ clergywomen shared these strong memories.

Nicole Pickens recalls, "I remember my baptism vividly. I was 12 years old. The baptistry was located behind the chancel, with a window cut to about waist height. I could see my family and friends below. It was January 6, and the waters in which I was immersed were chilly! My pastor gently hurried me to my mom and a hair dryer. On the way home, Mom smiled and said we should stop at the grocery store for cake because we had a new birthday to celebrate."

Meg Wilson adds, "When my daughter was baptized the minister said to the congregation "is she worthy of God's love?" Everyone applauded and answered yes! Since becoming ordained I ask the question and people joyfully respond yes. I do it when I introduce the child to the congregation. Worthy is a powerful word!"

What do you remember about your baptism? The physical sensations? The words spoken? The relationships with others present? Your own internal knowing? If you don't remember your own, what other baptisms have been impactful to you?



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