

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 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, 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. Plates for offering are 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. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads ~ *Associate for Faith Formation & Parish Life* ~ ksrhoads@erucc.org

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Elders of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

Marc Kline | Peter Brehm | Robin Cooney | Eric Weakly | Ave Barr | Matt Huetting



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



August 6, 2023

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

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

CONGREGATION CENTERING PRAYER

Jo Ann Fritz

As we journey through this time of transition, remembering our past and welcoming our future, 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;**
- **Caring for one another as God cares for us; and**
- **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 missions, remembering the work of our ancestors, actively participating in our congregation's life, and laying a foundation for our generations to follow. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CENTERING CANDLE

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Like a hungry crowd,
we come to be fed.
Like an anxious child,
we come to be comforted.
Like a forlorn friend,
we come seeking kindness.

Like an agitated mob,
we come demanding answers.
Like a refugee,
we come needing a home.
Like a joyous bride,
we come to share our joy.
Like a newborn babe,
we come with hearts and minds open to all life offers.
Like pilgrims of old,
we come looking for truth.
Here we reach out to grasp your hand, striving for your blessing.
Here we come to worship.

***OPENING PRAYER**

**As you have always been with those who have drawn apart for solitude,
for grieving, for prayer, out of fear, or out of hope, be with us now.
O God, find us here in the struggle of this moment.
Help us to find words for the blessing we so need,
and ears to hear how others wrestle.
Help us to find your goodness in each other's stories and
your steadfast love. Amen.**

***OPENING HYMN** *Wake, My Soul*

#91

see next page

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Sometimes, God, we do not want to wrestle with those things weighing
on our hearts.
We do not want to deal with those things we know we are called to
address:
those with whom we have broken trust;
those suffering from avoidable circumstances;
those whom we fail to stand up for;
those with whom we avoid eye contact.
When we fail to spend time with you, we fail to learn about ourselves.
Forgive us. Amen.**

1 Wake, my soul, with all things liv - ing, thanks be giv - ing to the
 2 All your hope - ful plans con - fess - ing, ask for bless - ing on that
 3 Cry for help, when griefs as - sail you, good friends fail you, life is
 4 Af - ter one last night of weep - ing, one last sleep - ing, you shall

Source of life and day. Sun - light comes and gone con -
 good which you would do; But if you should need cor -
 hope - less, death ap - pears. One whose child knew deep af -
 wake to pure de - light. You at last shall know per -

fu - sion, night's il - lu - sion, like the star - light, fades a - way.
 rec - tion, ask di - rec - tion, pray for pur - pose, clear and new.
 flic - tion, cru - ci - fix - ion, ev - er waits to dry your tears.
 fec - tion, pure af - fec - tion, bathed in God's own morn - ing light.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

God always reaches out to us,
 striving to hold us and assure us.
 Our weaknesses reveal God's strength,
 our doubts reveal God's grace,
 our indifference reveals God's never-ending love.
 God's grace shines in and through us. **Amen.**

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SONG *Feed My Sheep* – Andrew Wilson

**Cast your nets far and wide. Tell everyone to come inside
There is nothing left to hide; my grace has made away.
Come as you are; you won't leave the same.
I'm right where you are and I'll be with you as you go.
Share the message you have heard,
bringing hope all around the world.
Tell everyone to taste and see.
If you love me, then you'll feed my sheep.**

**All the hungry all the weak, all who search for lasting peace:
I'm the treasure that you seek. My love has made away.
Come as you are; you won't leave the same.
I'm right where you are and I'll be with you as you go.
Share the message you have heard,
bringing hope all around the world.
Tell everyone to taste and see.
If you love me, then you'll feed my –**

**Come as you are; you won't leave the same.
I'm right where you are and I'll be with you as you go.
Share the message you have heard,
bringing hope all around the world.
Tell everyone to taste and see.
If you love me, then you'll feed my sheep.**

**Share the message you have heard,
bringing hope all around the world.
I've come to set the captives free.
If you love me, then you'll feed my sheep.**

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

Psalm 145:8-9, 14-19, 21

OT page 581

Genesis 32:22-32

OT page 30

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

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

MORNING PRAYERS

OFFERING OF TITHES, GIFTS AND LIVES TO CHRIST'S SERVICE

OFFERTORY *Just a Closer Walk*

– arr. E. Lojeski
ERUCC Singers

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Receive these good gifts, Steadfast God.

**Open your arms wide to welcome all Creation with your merciful
kindness and to share in the abundance of your blessings for all who
strive to follow you. Amen.**

***COMMUNION HYMN** *Here, O My Lord*

#336, stanzas 1, 2, 3
see next page

1 Here, O my Lord, I see you face to face;
 2 Here would I feed up - on the bread of God,
 3 This is the hour of ban - quet and of song;
 4 Too soon we rise; the sym - bols dis - ap - pear;
 5 We have no help but yours, nor do we need

here would I touch and han - dle things un - seen;
 here share the cup, the gra - cious gift of heaven;
 this is the heaven - ly ta - ble spread a - new;
 the meal, but not your love, is past and gone.
 an - oth - er strength than yours to lean up - on.

Here grasp with firm - er hand the e - ter - nal grace,
 Here would I lay a - side each earth - ly load,
 Here let me feast, and, feast - ing, still pro - long
 This joy - ful feast con - firms that you are here,
 It is e - nough, O Lord, e - nough in - deed;

And all my wea - ri - ness up - on you lean.
 here taste a - fresh the calm of sin for - given.
 the brief, bright hour to - geth - er here with you.
 now and for - ev - er, as our shield and sun.
 our faith is in your might, your might a - lone.

– SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION –

INVITATION

Called by name and known within the very heart of God;
we gather in hope and respond with gladness.

Called to live without fear or favor daringly;
we gather in hope and respond with gladness.

Long ago, the prophet Isaiah spoke these words of God:

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, *you* are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and the rivers, they will never overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you will not be burned,

and the flames will never consume you.

For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

You are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you.

Do not fear, for I am with you." [Isaiah 43]

That same prophet spoke of a servant, who would come and illumine the world, startle the nations, establish justice, heal our brokenness, and bear our iniquities...even unto death.

Jesus Christ, manna of heaven, is the host of this table.

Christ taught us that this is the table where *abundant provision* overwhelms our fears of scarcity.

This is the table where *divine hospitality* embraces the whole body and each of its members.

This is Christ's table, open to all who come.

COMMUNION PRAYER

Eternal God, you created the universe,

And you created us to serve and protect your creation.

We thank you for the gifts of creation and for the gift of life itself.

As we partake of this bread and wine, we honor you, everlasting God.

We give thanks that you come to us and abide with us.

Holy Mystery, stir our imagination so we might glimpse what new thing you are doing among us.

Bless this meal; bless this fellowship; bless our lives, that justice and love may be the measure of our common witness. **Amen.**

As we bless and share these gifts, we celebrate the hospitality of Christ's table. All are worthy, all are welcome!

Receive the fruits of Spirit and celebrate the communion of all things. Creator, Christ, and Spirit dance as one. So may it always be. **Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

All who desire the Sacrament, including children, are invited to come forward at the direction of the deacons. You may kneel or stand to receive the elements. Consume the bread and drink from the cup as it is given to you, and hand your empty cup to one of the ushers.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Thanks be to you, O God, for your presence and your purpose, for your loving kindness and your steadfast Spirit.

May the blessings of this table strengthen our faith, increase our generosity and unify our hearts, in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN** *Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing*

#77

see next page

***BENEDICTION**

***THREEFOLD AMEN**

#812

POSTLUDE *(please be seated)*

1 Lord, dis - miss us with your bless - ing; fill our hearts with
 2 We give thanks and ad - o - ra - tion for your gos - pel's
 3 So that when your love shall call us, Sav - ior, from the

joy and peace; Let us each your love pos - sess - ing,
 joy - ful sound; May the fruits of your sal - va - tion
 world a - way, Fear of death shall not ap - pall us,

tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace: Oh, re - fresh us,
 in our hearts and lives a - bound: Ev - er faith - ful,
 glad your sum - mons to o - bey: May we ev - er,

oh, re - fresh us, trav - eling through this wil - der - ness.
 ev - er faith - ful to the truth may we be found.
 may we ev - er live with you in end - less day.

The flowers on the altar this morning are in loving memory of Bill and Michael Rhoads by Barbara and Family.

The yellow rose bud is presented in honor of veterans by Peter Brehm and Jack Day.

Attendance Last Sunday: 20 at 8:30 am, 96 at 10:30 am and 37 online.

Watch
Worship
Live



Watch worship live every Sunday at 10:30 am or on-demand:

<https://sundaystreams.com/go/ERUCC>

Today: August 6, 2023

Scripture Reader: Patti Patterson
Deacons: Mark Ulrich, Darryl Glick
Elder: Ave Barr
Greeters: Ave and Cliff Barr
Danielle Carbone
Welcome: Jeanellen Kallevang
Audio/Visual: Kelly Esslinger, Jeff Schaeberle
Matthew Mercier
Fello+wship: Green Team
Saturday Chimer:
Sunday Chimer: Tricia Coffey

Next Week: August 13, 2023

Patti Patterson
Robin A. & Robin L. Brady-Slifer
Robin Cooney
Cathie Duncan, Felecia Bishop
Anne Hoffman
Julie Clarke
Rodney Martin, Larry Martin
Matthew Mercier
Julie Chappell
Dick Williams

FELLOWSHIP

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worship Next Week: Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28 | Romans 10:8-13

Joseph was the son of Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel, and as such his father Jacob's favorite. Jacob gives Joseph a "long robe with sleeves", a style suitable for royalty and suggesting that Joseph does not have to work like his 11 older brothers. Joseph shares dreams with his brothers, dreams that depict him as ruling over them. Consequently, his brothers hate him, and they conspire to kill him. But they find a less troubling and more profitable alternative--selling him into slavery.

The Rev. John Shillingburg will be preaching this morning. Today we will observe our annual Blessing of the Backpacks. Children, youth, and professionals in education are invited to bring their school bags to worship this morning to receive a special blessing for the upcoming academic year.

HOSPITAL AND PRAYER LIST

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:

Rob Peters, Rich Stolz, Manny Greber, Hillal Eastburn, Barbara Rhoads, Pat Condo, Cathy Crome (sister of Nancy Jones), Greg Rhoads, Luke Chappell, Holly Davis, Mike Roberston (friend of Kathleen and Niel Jefferson), Stacie Carey (niece of Darlene Brunner and Jeannette Johnson), Marcia Eisenstein, 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), 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, Emogene Wyand, Fran Wenner, 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).

PASTORAL CARE

Evangelical Reformed UCC wants to be there for you when you're experiencing an illness, hospitalization, or other life-event for which you, or someone you love, may need a visit.

If emergency pastoral care is needed in the case of crisis, death, or severe illness, please first contact the church office at (301) 662-2762 or erucc@erucc.org. Outside of office hours, you may contact Nancy Manthey, pastoral care coordinator, at (240) 629-8030.

Sunday Fellowship Opportunities for Adults

FRIENDS AND FELLOWSHIP **Community Room** **9:30 – 10:15 am**

Come to the Community Room for some coffee or tea and to chat and relax.

THE PARENT'S PLACE **West Classroom, Trinity Chapel** **9:30 – 10:25 am**

Take a moment to unwind and gather with other parents to gather in Trinity Chapel after your kids are in Sunday School. The West Classroom is the room to the right as you enter the chapel.

This Week at ERUCC

COLLECTING FABRIC MASKS FOR ART IN AUGUST

During COVID times, especially before we were all able to get ahold of N95 masks, most of us wore fabric masks. The Worship and Design team would like to create an art piece about the epidemic using these fabric masks. We are unsure just what the form of that piece might be since we are not sure how many fabric masks are still out there. We will be collecting clean masks in a container in the upper lobby through the month of August. Please donate if you are interested. Masks will not be returned. If you have questions, please contact Ave Barr.

Weekly Education Opportunities for Adults

New and returning opportunities for adult faith formation are coming in September!

LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE

Sundays, starting September 10 **North Room / Zoom** **9:00 – 10:15 am**

Our *Let's Study the Bible* class will resume Sunday, September 10! More details coming soon.

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY with The Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence

Tuesdays, September 12 – October 24 **North Room / Zoom** **11:00 am**

In *Freeing Jesus*, Diana Butler Bass offers a refreshing take on the comprehensive, multi-faceted nature of Jesus, keeping his teachings relevant and alive in our daily lives. She challenges the idea that Jesus can only be understood in static, one-dimensional ways and asks us to instead consider a life where Jesus grows with us and helps us through life's challenges in several capacities: as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence.

Watch for a reading schedule and Zoom link in coming weeks. Books are available now for \$10 on Sundays or in the church office.

LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE - WEDNESDAY EVENING EDITION

with The Rev. John Shillingburg

Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence

Wednesdays, September 13 – October 25

North Room / Zoom

7:00 pm

Starting in September, you can participate in a new evening edition of the current Sunday morning adult Bible study class. This class offers an opportunity to read and discuss the scriptures, looking at them in their original context, considering when and by whom they were written, and how they have been interpreted through the centuries. All you need is a Bible; no prior knowledge is necessary. This new evening edition will begin where the Sunday morning group did, with a seven-week basic introduction to the Bible: how it came down to us in the form we have it, how it's organized, the types of literature in it and what they mean for how we understand it.

The class will meet tentatively in person or by Zoom at 7:00 pm on Wednesday evenings, finishing up by 8:15 pm or so. If you are interested in participating in this new opportunity, please let Linda Coyle or John Shillingburg know. Tell us whether Wednesday evening is good for you, whether another evening would be better, and whether you will participate in person or by Zoom. And watch for more information in September's *Trinity Chimes*.

Upcoming at ERUCC

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

Sunday, August 13

10:30 am Worship

Calling all students, teachers, bus drivers, school employees and administrators! Bring the tools of your trade for Blessing of the Backpacks on Sunday, August 13 during the 10:30 a.m. service.

INAUGURAL BLACK FESTIVAL IN FREDERICK

Saturday, August 26

Carroll Creek Linear Park

11:00 am – 5:00 pm



BlackFrederick.com is excited to be partnering with Nigerians in Frederick-NIF Association to host the first ever Black Frederick Festival on August 26.

We are invited to “join us as we share, celebrate, and educate the Frederick community about the richness of Black culture at the inaugural Black Frederick Festival! Our vision is to host an annual, economically viable celebration of Black culture that attracts people throughout Frederick and the surrounding areas. Our mission is to share, celebrate, and educate the Frederick community about the richness of Black culture.”

Pastor Kirstin invites all of our church to consider attending this free, family-friendly event, as a part of getting to know our own neighbors and to show our support. As a predominantly white congregation, this is a great opportunity to learn about and celebrate heritage and gifts of black culture. If you want to go with others, reach out to Kirstin for a meeting time and location ksrhoads@erucc.org, but there is no need to RSVP, just show up!

Children and Youth Ministry

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY POOL PARTY

Sunday, August 6

Dan Smith & Austin Byrd's Home

1:00 – 4:00 pm

ERUCC Children and Youth (and parents) are invited to a POOL PARTY!!

As we say goodbye to summer, we invite families of children and youth to play at a parent supervised pool party at the home of Dan Smith and Austin Byrd. We are sure to make a BIG SPLASH! Contact Dan for address and directions at (301) 514-8615. Bring your own dishes, cups, silverware, and a dish to share. Julie Clark is helping to organize food, and we ask you to bring your own dishes, silverware, and a dish to share.

RSVP and Questions: Julie at jclarkad@yahoo.com or Pastor Kirstin at ksrhoads@erucc.org.

SUMMER MUSICAL – IN THE IMAGE

Sundays

Trinity Chapel, upstairs

9:30 – 10:15 am

The ERUCC summer musical is back with *In the Image*, a story that explores what it really means to be created in the image of God. Through humor and exploration, the characters realize that being created in the image of God isn't just about how you look but about the attributes of God that show forth in your life.

Rehearsals will take place from 9:30 – 10:15 am in Trinity Chapel. Attend rehearsals as often as possible. If you have any questions, or if you are an adult and are interested in helping with this effort, please contact Tricia Coffey, trishcoffey1195@gmail.com or (240) 815-9118.

YOUTH ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING

Sunday, August 27

Community Room

4:00 – 6:00 pm

Youth, parents, and adult leaders are invited to take part in the first step of planning our 2023-2024 Youth gatherings. If you are unable to attend, please reach out to Pastor Kirstin so she can connect with you before and afterward. We want as many of our youth voices as possible!

Our time together will include team-building, laughter, planning, laughter, dinner, and laughter! As I like to say, we come to play and pray together!

Contact Pastor Kirstin with questions, ksrhoads@erucc.org.



Additional Announcements

LOVE IS ALWAYS THE ANSWER...

Recently the LGBTQ+ community has seen a nationwide increase in political attacks and a rise in anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination.

Frederick County and FCPS Board of Education is no exception...

FCPS Policy 443: Creating Welcoming and Affirming Schools for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students was created because of the efforts by and for the courageous, brave, persistent, and vulnerable trans and non-binary students seeking a welcoming and affirming place at their public school.

Several groups in Frederick County are advocating that Policy 443 be reconsidered. They have organized to be present at every BoE meeting to take up public comment time to challenge the policy and spread misinformation and fear.

Students are listening. Students are watching.

What's YOUR message to them? Join the efforts to advocate for public education and the rights of LGBTQI young people and their families.

Help be the OTHER voice in the room!

Email CommunityFOR443@gmail.com for more information!

NEW! RECYCLE BATTERIES AT ERUCC



Batteries power the modern world, whether it's your cellphone, tablet, power tool, or game console. When batteries lose their charge or ability to recharge, it's time to recycle them. With gratitude to the ERUCC Green Team, we now have a battery recycling program. A box is in the upper lobby outside the main sanctuary where alkaline, lithium, and button batteries may be recycled. Please carefully read directions to ensure safe and proper recycling procedures are followed.

**BLACK LIVES
MATTER**

UCC.ORG

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Sunday Morning Schedule

8:30 – 9:15 am	Worship , Trinity Chapel
9:30 am	Coffee and Conversation , Main Building, Kieffer Lobby The Parents' Place , Trinity Chapel, West Classroom
9:30 am – 12:00 pm	Nursery Care , Main Building
9:30 – 10:10 am	Children's Summer Musical Rehearsal , Trinity Chapel, upstairs
10:30 – 11:30 am	Worship , Main Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org
11:30 am	Fellowship , Community Room

Stay Informed

AUGUST TRINITY CHIMES

Read the ERUCC monthly newsletter, *Trinity Chimes*, in the back of the sanctuary or online by scanning the QR code or going to bit.ly/aug23chimes.



WEEKLY THURSDAY THOUGHTS EMAIL

Subscribe to receive our weekly email newsletter at <http://eepurl.com/gDNCu5> or by scanning the QR code!

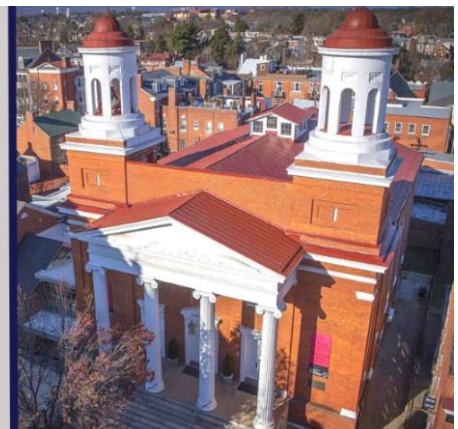


MISSION STATEMENT

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



August 6, 2023

Matthew 14:13-21

Face to Face

When Jesus fed miraculously produced loaves and fishes to the crowds who followed him, here's what he did *not* do. He did *not* ask them to show evidence that they were gainfully employed. He did *not* make them prove that they followed a certain set of guidelines or adhered to a particular set of behaviors. He did *not* make them sign an oath of allegiance to him. He just... fed them. Every single person who was gathered there that day was fed.

Lost in the wonder of Jesus' production of the loaves and fishes, we can lose sight of how this story can guide us in our own lives. In order for Jesus to feed everyone, he had to believe not only in the abundance providence of God but in the inherent worthiness of each person, without discussion or question. How often we forget these things!

It is perhaps no accident that we hear this story of abundance and worth on Hiroshima Day of Remembrance. As we recall the atomic bomb that was dropped on August 6, 1945, on the city of Hiroshima, we join the citizens of that city and people around the world in pausing for a moment to pray for peace, and for the will to see the abundant worthiness in all of creation as stronger than our weapons of mass destruction.

If you look on the timeline of Lao Congregational UCC in Maui, Hawaii, you will notice that in 1942, months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces, the church changed its name from Wailuku Japanese Christian Church to Lao Congregational Church. This was no coincidence, but a move designed to protect the church members of Japanese descent. These American citizens, many with generations in the country, were interred in great numbers on suspicion of spying or treason, even though no evidence was ever found against a single Japanese-American Hawaiian during the second world war.

As we pray for peace this day, may we also pray for the willingness to be changed from within, to follow Christ's example of abundance and compassion for all.



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

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