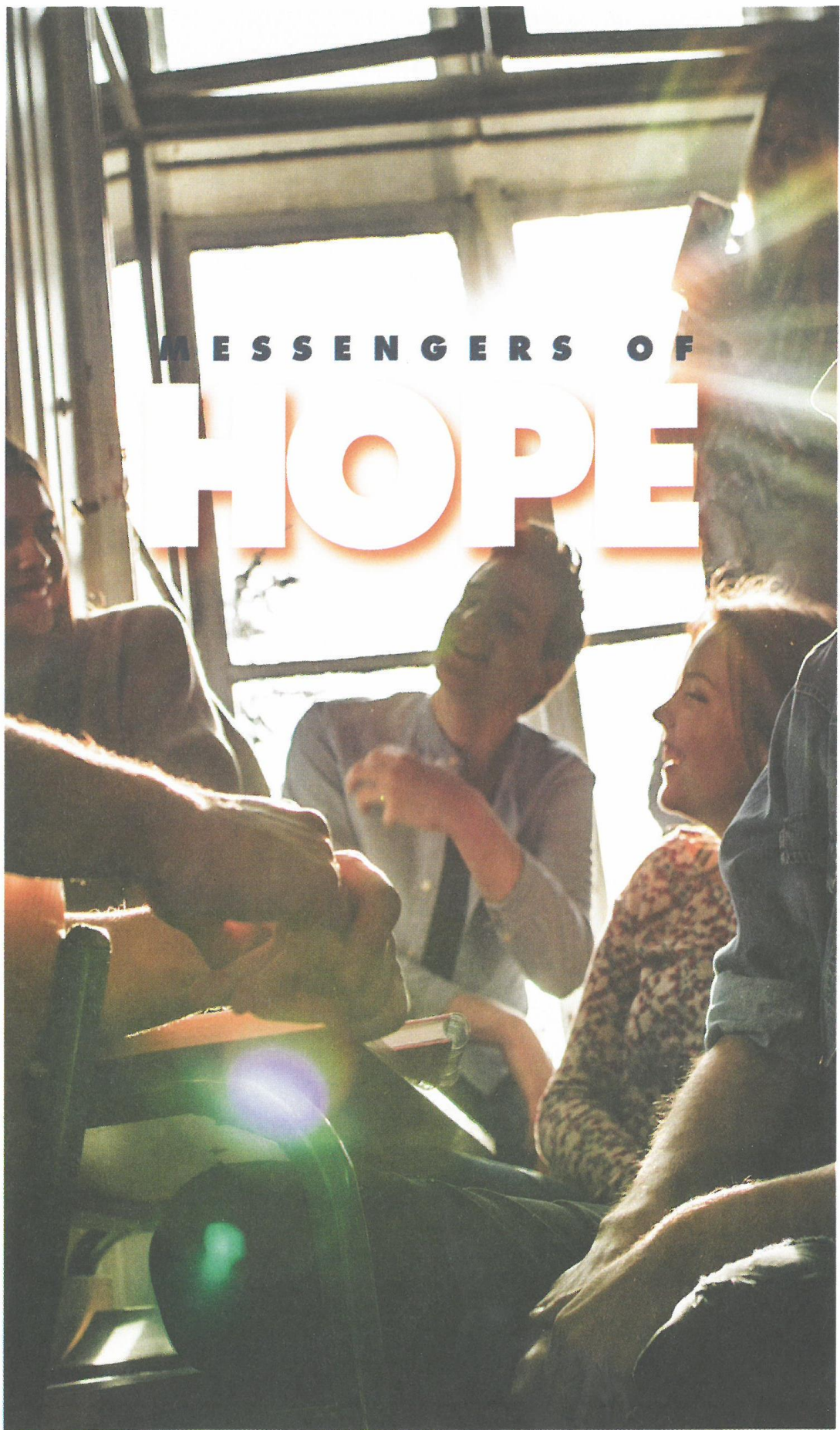


MESSENGERS OF

HOPE



Thank you for worshiping 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 worshiping 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 Pastor for Faith Formation & Parish Life* ~ ksrhoads@erucc.org

Alison E. Shafer ~ *Director of Music* | Tyler L. York ~ *Office Administrator* ~ tyork@erucc.org

Jaci Clayton ~ *Facilities Manager* ~ jclayton@erucc.org

Tricia Coffey ~ *Head Chimer & Children & Youth Choir Director*

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

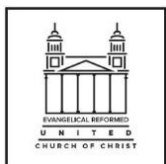
Jenna Duranko ~ *Social Media Assistant* | Ashley Murphy ~ *Nursery Attendant*

The Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel ~ *Pastor Emerita*

The Rev. Fred Wenner ~ *Pastor Emeritus*

Elders of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

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



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



December 10, 2023

Second Sunday of Advent

10:30 AM



How does a
weary world
rejoice? We find joy in
connection

The numbered hymns are from
The New Century Hymnal

*All who are able may stand

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONGREGATION CENTERING PRAYER

Jim and Angela Brittain

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 *Light of the World*

– L. Daigle

Laura Walling, bass; Joseph Baker, drums

THRESHOLD MOMENT *Lessons in Connection*

– Rev. Sarah Speed

It's been a long day,
long enough to complain,
long enough to wine and dine my
disappointment,
to give weariness
keys to the house.

But then you get the giggles
dancing with the dog in the kitchen.
Paws-sliding, tail-wagging,
side-cramping giggles.
I can hear it from across the house.
Your joy burrows its way
through the cracks in my armor
and then we are both laughing,
gulping for joyous, electric air.
And that's when I know –
if you grab my hand,
if you ask me to dance,
if our weary human souls can
make room for connection,
then we will survive.
Joy will take root.
Love will keep
Her keys to the house.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

In God's house, we can be joyful.
We can be grateful. We can be hopeful.
In God's house, we can be weary.
We can be anxious. We can be grieving.
In God's house, we can be honest—
inspired or tired, delighted or doubtful,
connected or curious, and everything in between.
This is God's house. You are welcome exactly as you are.
Let us worship our loving God.

***LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF PEACE**

How does a weary world practice peace?
By listening before we speak and saying sorry when we need to.
By advocating for justice and caring for our neighbor. By practicing Sabbath
and forgiving seventy times seven.
By choosing grace over hate and opening the door for each other.
There are a million ways to practice peace. So today we light the candle of
peace as a reminder and a charge.
With God's help, may we bring peace into a weary world. Amen.

¹Awake! Awake and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
sing out your joy, for Jesus is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
to open wide the heavenly door,
and lives now inside us forever.

³In deepest night Christ's coming shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
One without voice breaks forth in song,
a lame one leaps in wonder,
the weak are raised above the strong,
and weapons are broken asunder.

²To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
Emmanuel comes a-singing,
whose humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing.
Music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of loving kindness,
the thunder of the anthems roll
to shatter all hate and injustice.

⁴Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though cold the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless;
Love be our song and love our prayer,
and love, our endless story,
may God fill every day we share,
and bring us at last into glory.

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Family of faith, one of the ways we find joy in a weary world is through connection. The prayer of confession is a place of connection with God.

In the prayer of confession we get to come before God with our full, messy, honest selves. And in the midst of that mess, God tells us that we are loved, claimed, and forgiven.

There is no greater joy than that.

So, join me in the prayer of confession, not because you have to, but because you can. Let us connect with our merciful God.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of laughter, God of open front doors and family reunions, we confess that we often doubt good news.

We move through this world waiting for the other shoe to drop, waiting for life to fall apart, waiting for our humanity to get the best of us.

Instead of leaning into joy, we lean into scarcity.

We lean into fear. We lean into isolation.

Forgive us for forgetting that joy is amplified when shared.

Heal the wounds we have from past hurts, and teach us how to throw open our doors like Elizabeth. Show us how to find joy in connection. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

I imagine that when we come before God with the truth of our lives, God meets us like Elizabeth meets Mary in our scripture today. The door is thrown open. There is laughter. There is joy. There is embracing – and it is holy.

So trust this; believe this: You are claimed. You are loved. You are forgiven. And you are sent to serve. Find joy in that. Amen!

ANTHEM *Lord of the Dance*

– S. Carter
Children's Music and Movement

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.

*Children ages 5 through 5th grade may be dismissed for Junior Church,
located in the Thomas Room, during the singing of the hymn.*

***HYMN** *Mary, Woman of the Promise*

#123

¹Mary, woman of the promise;
vessel of your people's dreams:
Through your open, willing spirit
waters of God's goodness streamed

²Mary, song of holy wisdom
sung before the world began:
Faithful to the Word within you,
as you bore God's wondrous plan.

³Mary, morning star of justice;
mirror of the Radiant Light:
In the shadows of life's journey,
be a beacon for our sight.

⁴Mary, model of compassion;
wounded by your offspring's pain:
When our hearts are torn by sorrow,
teach us how to love again.

⁵Mary, woman of the gospel;
humble home for treasured seed:
Help us to be true disciples,
bearing fruit in word and deed.

THE SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 40: 1-11

OT page 667

Luke 1: 24-45

NT page 56

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

The Rev. David Cooney

MORNING PRAYERS

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

OFFERTORY *Come Save*

– S. Reeves
Spirit

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Receive our gifts, O God, and bless them for your use. Join our gifts together knowing that we accomplish more together than we do alone. We give our time, talent, and treasure to you and receive joy in return. May our gifts help to connect us to you and to each other. In the name of the one who binds us together, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN *All Earth Is Waiting*

#121

All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
and open furrows, the sowing of our God.
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,
“A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel!”
One whose name is “God with us,” our Savior shall be,
through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.

Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain;
open new highways, new highways for our God,
Who is now coming closer, so come all and see,
and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.

In lowly stable the Promised One appeared,
yet feel that presence throughout the earth today,
For Christ lives in all Christians and is with us now;
again, on arriving Christ brings us liberty.

***BENEDICTION**

Family of faith, as you leave this place, you go into a weary world – so speak tenderly. Do the good that is yours to do. Choose connection. Hold onto hope. And remember that Christ took on flesh for you. You are God’s beloved. So go rejoicing. The world needs it. Amen.

***CHORAL BENEDICTION** *May You Run and Not Be Weary* – Murakami

**May you run and not be weary,
May your heart be filled with song.
And may the love of God continue
To give you hope
And keep you strong.**

**And may you run and not be weary.
May your life be filled with joy!
And may the road you travel
Always lead you home.**

POSTLUDE

Please be seated.



FELLOWSHIP

Please join us after worship in our Community Room for a time of fellowship with light refreshments. The Community Room, located on the 1st floor, is accessible by stairs or elevator.

The flowers on the altar are given by W. Dan Smith and Austin Byrd in loving memory of their parents.

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

Attendance Last Sunday, December 3: 14 at 8:30 AM, 151 at 10:30 AM, and 61 online.

Attendance Sunday, November 26: 12 at 8:30 AM, 126 at 10:30 AM, and 55 online.

Watch
Worship
Live



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

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

Serving Today: December 10

Scripture Reader: Peg Stahler
Deacons: Robin A. Brady-Slifer
Robin L. Brady-Slifer
Elder: Robin Cooney
Greeters: Nancy and Bob Manthey
Cathie Duncan
Welcome: Jeanellen Kallevang
Audio/Visual: Jeff Schaeberle, Jeff Baker
Kelly Esslinger
Nursery: Kate Fromknecht
Fellowship: Luncheon for Congregational
Meeting with Dessert Potluck

Serving Next Week: December 17

Robin Cooney
Matt Davis, Harrison Fisher

Ave Barr
Rachel and Tom Ford, Rob Smith

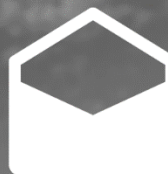
Holly Davis
Rodney Martin, Larry Martin
Jeff Schaeberle
Robert Kambic

Ways to Give to Evangelical Reformed UCC



ONLINE

Go to erucc.org/give
or Scan this Code



ENVELOPE

Cash and
Checks made out to
Evangelical Reformed UCC

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worship Next Week: Third Sunday of Advent – *We allow ourselves to be amazed*

Psalm 126 | Luke 1:57-66

After Elizabeth gives birth, her neighbors and family celebrate with her. When it comes time to name the child, Zechariah affirms the name given by the angel and by Elizabeth. In that moment of affirming the promise, Zechariah's speech is restored. Everyone is filled with awe. How often do you allow yourself to be amazed? Wonder is all around us—can we recognize it? As we learn how to rejoice in a weary world, can we live in a way that allows amazement and wonder to surprise us often? In Psalm 126, those who expect to reap tears are granted a surprise: shouts of joy.

Amazement is a balm for the weary.

The Rev. David Cooney will be preaching. The Senior Choir will be offering their Christmas Cantata – The Winter Rose, by J.M. Martin, this morning.

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:

Betsy Fisher
Caughy Family
EJ Kelly and Family
Donald Kline
Donna Hill (mother of Collen Baldree)
Philip Hill (father of Colleen Baldree)
Tanya Pearre (sister of Colleen Baldree)
Jim Baldree (father of Chuck Baldree)
Kathy Gourlie
Katharine Alley
Claire Kershner
Anne Gallagher (friend of Milt and Bettie Joe Crutchley)
Lee Thomas
Joan Thomas (mother of Dan Smith's friend)
Lucy Patterson Cox (friend of Kathleen Jefferson)
Shannon Baxter (daughter of Kathy Gelles-Baxter)

Milt Crutchley
Sandra Trout
Audrey Rayfield
Autumn Crutchley
Christiane Armitage (sister-in-law of Linda Coyle)
Jason Rhoads
Nathan Cable
Hillal Eastburn
Barbara Rhoads
Pat Condo
Cathy Crome (sister of Nancy Jones)
Greg Rhoads
Holly Davis
Marcia Eisenstein
Derek C. Hupp (grandson of Beanie & Gaylon Cornell)
Wayne Kolb (friend of Stefan and Judi Mach and Tony and Linda LaFianza)
Conway Barnes (brother-in-law of George & 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
Fran Wenner
Bonnie Devilbiss
The McCarty family
Tina Prescott (daughter-in-law of Barbara & Bill Prescott)
Mary Remsberg
Heleen (sister of Karin Mens)
Kathy Blue Shores (friend of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)
Gretchen Manuel (niece of Audrey Rayfield)

Today at ERUCC

LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE with Revs. John and Rebecca Shillingburg

Sundays

North Room / Zoom

9:00 – 10:15 AM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERsunstudy

Meeting ID: 893 8670 5888

Passcode: 327128

We are studying the foundational stories of the Old Testament, the big stories in the order they occurred. No prior experience needed; just bring your Bible.

We are now in the stories about David, Israel's ideal king. Except for an ideal king, David was pretty ruthless at times and a not-very-good parent. What's with that?

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

9:30 – 10:10 AM

We have two classrooms for **Children's Sunday School**. Our Pre-K – 2nd Grade class meets in the Liz Coffey Room and our 3rd – 5th Grade class meets in the Thomas Room.

Our **Youth Sunday School** class for 6th – 12th Grade meets in the Clapp Conference Room in the Parish House Church Offices from 9:30 – 10:20 AM.

LET'S TALK – EXPLORING ADVENT THROUGH THE LENS OF MATTHEW

Sundays, December 10 and 17

Community Room

9:30 – 10:15 AM



Long before the genealogical resources of 23andme, myheritage, and ancestry.com, the Gospel According to Matthew lays out a genealogical theology. Just as the Bible's theological history lays foundations for the stories of Abraham and Sarah, Moses, David, and the prophets, Matthew's genealogical theology lays foundations for the story of Jesus. But what does

this genealogy say to us? Join Carolyn Roberts as we explore one of the least-read texts of the Advent season: the genealogy of Jesus as found in Matthew 1.1-17.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, December 10

Community Room/Zoom after 10:30 AM service

Zoom: bit.ly/er23congmtg

Meeting ID: 863 7509 0179

Passcode: 318206

The Consistory invites you to attend ERUCC's annual congregational meeting on Sunday, December 10, following the 10:30 AM service. Agenda items will include reports on Consecration Sunday outcomes, voting on a path forward for Trinity Chapel, and sharing and approval of the proposed 2024 ERUCC mission spending plan. We are the church, and everyone's participation is encouraged.

A light lunch will be served. You are invited to bring a dessert to share.

This Week at ERUCC

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY with Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

Reading the Bible Again for the First Time

Tuesdays through December 19

North Room / Zoom

11:00 AM

Zoom: bit.ly/3TdUnOy

Meeting ID: 875 1423 3398

Passcode: 973365

One of the vital challenges facing Christians today is how to read the Bible faithfully without abandoning our sense of truth and history. *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* provides a much-needed solution to the problem of how to have a fully authentic yet contemporary understanding of the scriptures.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE with Rev. John Shillingburg

Wednesdays through December 20 North Room / Zoom

7:00 PM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERwedstudy

Meeting ID: 892 1764 4500

Passcode: 848933

Like the Sunday morning class, this new evening 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.

We are currently studying the Prologue in Genesis (ch. 1-11), the origin stories of the Hebrew Scriptures—creation, Adam and Eve in Garden, Noah and the flood, and the Tower of Babel.

PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

Friday, December 15

Community Room

5:00 – 9:00 PM

Enjoy a night out while members of the ERUCC Youth Group care for your children! Donations toward Youth mission trips and retreat are welcome. Our time will include a meal, Pageant practice, games, crafts, and a Christmas Dance Party! Feel free to wear your Christmas pjs! We will stay inside for the evening. Please RSVP by emailing Pastor Kirstin or signing up at Fellowship.

Parents/guardians must complete an annual registration so that we have emergency contacts, allergies, etc. available. Email Pastor Kirstin, ksrhoads@erucc.org, or the church office, erucc@erucc.org, for a copy to complete.



LEND SHIP A HELPING HAND THIS SEASON

November 26 – December 31

SHIP, the Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership, provides critical resources and urgent services to the hundreds of Frederick County youth experiencing homelessness each year. This season, the Mission & Social Action Committee invites everyone to lend SHIP a helping hand by dropping off critically needed, new, FULL-SIZED hygiene supplies in the bin located in the upper lobby (4th floor).

Bathing Items: Shampoo, Conditioner, Body Wash, Face Wash, Shaving Cream

Hair Care Items: Hair Brushes, Hair Ties, Hair Accessories, Ethnic Hair Care Products

Dental Items: Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Mouthwash, Dental Floss, Chapstick

Other: Deodorant, Lotion, Face Wipes, Pod Laundry Detergent, Feminine Hygiene Products, Toilet Paper, Q-Tips, Band-Aids, First-Aid Items

COLLECTING FOR THE MITTEN PROJECT

November 26 – December 31

In 2017, Federated Charities launched The Mitten Project by inviting the community to participate in a small action to reach out in kindness during the cold, winter months. Thousands of pairs of mittens (plus scarves, gloves, jackets and socks) have been made available to anyone who needs them in the time since.

Bring your donations of NEW mittens, gloves, scarves, warm socks, and coats to the donation box located in our upper lobby to contribute to our community.

Upcoming at ERUCC

FRANKLINTON CENTER WORK TRIP

January 13 – 15, 2024

Open to adults and youth (6th – 12th grade)



Please let Pastor Kirstin know if you are interested in going on our annual work trip to Franklinton Center at Bricks over the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. weekend! We will leave early on Saturday, January 13 and return later in the day on Monday, January 15 (time to be determined as we choose projects).

To learn more, attend an interest meeting in the Community Room on Sunday, December 17 at 9 AM or immediately following the 10:30 AM worship service.

The Franklinton Center at Bricks is 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 1950's formed Franklinton Center at Bricks. The Center is related to the United Church of Christ and is managed by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries.

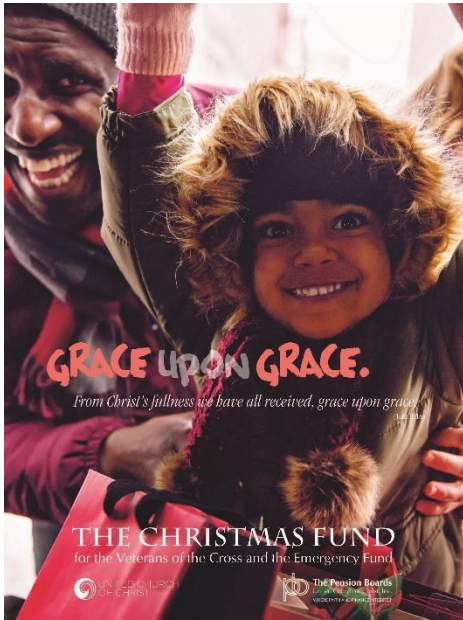
CANTATA: *THE WINTER ROSE*

Sunday, December 17

during 10:30 AM worship

During the 10:30 AM worship service, ERUCC's Senior Choir will present *The Winter Rose*. This cantata incorporates both traditional carols and newly composed anthems that visit the timeless Christmas story with fresh insight. Through use of music, narration and simple symbolism, the cantata presents the life of Christ from prophecy to passion. The theme song is based melodically on the English folk song *The Salley Garden*.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING: "GRACE UPON GRACE"



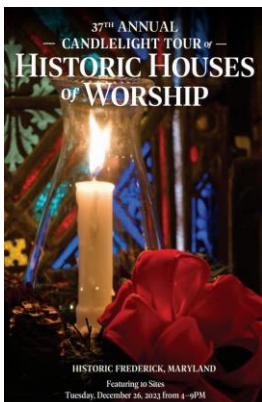
The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks.

ERUCC will receive The Christmas Fund offering on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, which falls on December 24 – Christmas Eve – this year!

CANDLELIGHT TOUR OF HISTORIC HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Tuesday, December 26

Volunteers needed at various times



The beloved Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship returns this holiday season in Downtown Frederick. This special open house celebrates Frederick's tradition of religious diversity, local history, and the holiday season on Tuesday, December 26, 2023 from 4 PM-9 PM. This is Frederick's most popular church tour and is a great opportunity to step inside some of its most beautiful buildings.

We will be opening our main building at 15 West Church Street to the public for this Candlelight Tour. We will be offering refreshments and our wonderful hospitality.

Interested in volunteering at this event? Sign up at bit.ly/ertour1226.

Questions? Contact Julie Clark, Jclarkad@yahoo.com.

THE POWER OF MANY: 2024 ORGANIZING AND STRATEGY RETREAT

Friday, January 5

Zoom

6:00 – 8:30 PM

Saturday, January 6

Zoom

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM



Join justice leaders, clergy and local churches across the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ for a *time of worship, prayer, theological reflection, training, strategic planning, setting goals, and building relationships.*

Justice leaders, clergy and local churches will have an opportunity to . . .

- Learn more about our Local Church Covenant Partnership Initiative
- Preview of the Faith & Democracy 2024 Campaign and Racial Justice Initiatives -- (1) *Anti-Racist Local Church Audit* and (2) *“Journey Towards Confronting White Supremacy and Creating a White Supremacy Free Zone Local Congregation: an Intentional Study and Action Guide to challenge Racism and White Supremacy”*
- Receive organizing training on how to be a covenant, strategic partner with the ***Justice & Witness Action Network***
- Build relationships, organize, engage in strategic planning and set goals with justice leaders, clergy and local churches in your State Action Network (DC, DE, MD, NJ & VA) around 2024 legislative & organizing priorities
- Learn about the priorities and focus of our Issue Based Networks (Racial Justice, Environmental & Climate Justice, and Palestine-Israel)

We are building *a powerful, faithful and effective justice organizing network of leaders, clergy and local churches.*

RSVP now at <https://bit.ly/PowerMany>.

Children and Youth Ministry

JUNIOR CHURCH

Junior Church, a space to join in creative spiritual formation activities, meets most Sundays, except the first Sunday of each month when we observe Communion. Children aged 5 – 5th grade may go to Junior Church in the Thomas Room after the Thought for the Day in the worship service. Parents should pick up children from Junior Church following service.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH CHRISTMAS PAGEANT REHEARSALS

Our Christmas Pageant, *A Very Special Child*, is inspired by the stories in Luke 1-3. We need 11 characters and singers as well as some helpers with props. Rehearsals will take place Sundays after worship in the Sanctuary on December 10. We will also practice on Friday, December 15 during the Youth Babysitting Night.

Pageant participants will gather on Sunday, December 17 at 5:00 PM for dinner in the Community Room, will perform in the Sanctuary at 6:00 PM, and celebrate afterward with a cookie and milk reception. Contact Ms. Trish or Ms. Kelly with questions or for more information.

YOUTH GROUP

Friday, December 15

Community Room

5:00 – 9:00 PM

Babysitting for Parent's Night Out. This is a fundraiser for youth mission trips and retreat.

Other Announcements and Reminders

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.

YEAR END GIVING

As you contemplate donations this holiday season, please keep Evangelical Reformed UCC in mind. Your contributions are needed for everything from special programs to basic operating expenses—both are deserving of your support. Please be as generous as you can this holiday season and in the year ahead. For the convenience of church members, we offer electronic giving at www.erucc.org/give.

Advent and Christmastide at ERUCC

HOW DOES A WEARY WORLD REJOICE?



How does a weary world rejoice?

An Advent series in
Luke's Gospel

Christ was born into a weary world. King Herod ruled the land with a legacy of ruthlessness. The Romans treated the people of Israel with contempt, imposing harsh taxes and land seizures that forced many into

subsistence farming. Poverty and destitution were pervasive. And yet, Christ was born, bringing good news of great joy for all people.

As Advent comes again to a weary world, we ask, “How does a weary world rejoice?” From the opening chapters of Luke’s Gospel, we have found a few answers: we acknowledge our weariness, we find joy in connection, we allow ourselves to be amazed, we sing stories of hope, we make room, we root ourselves in ritual, and most importantly, we trust our belovedness. In the parallel birth stories of Jesus and John, joy arrives—despite trepidation, fear, or grief. In these stories, we find rhythms for rejoicing. As we move through our series, we hope to create space for acknowledging the weariness of our world while celebrating God’s closeness with great joy.

And so, we will hold space for our weariness and our joy. We will seek a “thrill of hope” in our hurting world. We will welcome joy—even if, like the prophet Isaiah, we cry out for comfort (Isaiah 40:1). In this weary world, may we find many ways to rejoice.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET

Beginning with the first week of Advent, this daily devotional is designed to help you practice joy in a weary world. Each week offers art, reflections, poetry, and hymns. Journey through these pages at your own pace. The devotional is available in the rear of the Main Sanctuary or request a copy through the church office at erucc@erucc.org.

MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICES AND SOUP LUNCHEON

Wednesdays, December 13 & 20 Sanctuary

12:00 PM

Join us in a brief mid-week Advent service as we reflect on the themes of *An Unlikely Advent* by Rachel Billups, which takes a deeper dive into contemplating the extraordinary people of the Christmas Story. Then we will make a cozy journey to the Community Room to share a meal of soup and bread and reflect on some of our worship themes.

MID-WEEK FAMILY ADVENT DINNER AND ACTIVITY

Wednesdays, December 13 & 20 Community Room/Thomas Room 5:00 – 6:30 PM

Each Wednesday evening of Advent, we will share a light dinner at 5 PM in the Community Room, then begin our program around 5:30 PM in the Thomas Room. Dress to be comfortable sitting on the floor or crafting at a table. RSVP to Pastor Kirstin, ksrroads@erucc.org, or sign up at Fellowship. When you RSVP please note if you will be joining for dinner.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Sunday, December 17 Sanctuary 6:00 PM

A Very Special Child tells the Christmas story from the book of Luke. It begins with Elizabeth and Zechariah, follows the interwoven birth stories of Jesus and John, and concludes with Jesus' baptism. Come for a sweet performance, join in singing classic Christmas carols, and enjoy in a brief cookies and milk reception afterwards in the Community Room. Donations can be brought that day to contribute to SHIP, (Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership) and boxes of birthday cake mixes can be brought to donate to the family shelter.



Cookie donations are welcomed for the celebration following the Pageant. Please bring them the evening of the Pageant and take them to the Community Room.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

Thursday, December 21 Sanctuary 7:30 PM

Although Advent is a joyful season for so many, we also know that this time of year can be drenched in fatigue, grief, and loneliness. We will gather as a community to honor that reality and draw near to God to allow space for healing and prayer. Bring your grief. Bring your weariness. Bring your fatigue. May you find peace in your journey.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Morning Services

8:30 AM – Communion Service

10:30 AM – Lessons and Carols

Evening Services

5:30 PM – Children's Service

7:30 PM – Family Candlelight and Carols Service

10:30 PM – Communion and Candlelight Service

www.ERUCC.org



How does a
weary world
rejoice?



**ALL ARE
WELCOME**

Sunday Morning Schedule

8:30 – 9:15 AM	Early Worship Service , Sanctuary
9:00 AM	Coffee and Conversation , Kieffer Lobby, 2 nd Floor
9:00 – 10:15 AM	Let's Study the Bible , North Room, 2 nd Floor
9:30 – 10:15 AM	Let's Talk , Community Room, 1 st Floor
9:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Nursery Care , 1 st Floor
9:30 – 10:10 AM	Sunday School <i>Pre-K – 2nd Grade</i> , Liz Coffey Room, 2 nd Floor <i>3rd – 5th Grade</i> , Thomas Room, 2 nd Floor <i>Youth (6th – 12th Grade)</i> , Clapp Conference Room, Church Office
10:10 – 10:25 AM	Children's Music and Movement , Liz Coffey Room, 2 nd Floor
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Worship , Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org Junior Church , Thomas Room, 2 nd Floor <i>Children are dismissed from the sanctuary after Thought for the Day during Worship</i>
11:30 AM	Fellowship , Community Room, 1 st Floor Christmas Pageant Rehearsal , Sanctuary

Stay Informed

DECEMBER 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/dec23chimes.



WEEKLY THURSDAY THOUGHTS EMAIL

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



Mission Statement of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

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.

Worship services and events at Evangelical Reformed UCC are sometimes photographed and videotaped to document the vibrant life of our church. If you do not wish to be included in these recordings, please notify a deacon or the church office. Always obtain permission prior to sharing images and videos that include minors on your personal social media.

Poinsettias



We will be ordering poinsettias from Frederick High School this year. All funds will benefit the horticultural program and Frederick High FFA Chapter. Each plant will have 4-6 blooms and will cost \$10. Plants will be placed on the chancel in the Sanctuary.

Orders Due: Sunday, December 10!

Plants can be picked up after the Christmas Eve Services; however, we would appreciate having some left in our buildings for the Candlelight Historic Houses of Worship Tour on Tuesday, December 26.

Donor Name(s): _____

I would like to place _____ poinsettias in the church for Christmas.

Enclosed is \$_____ (\$10 per plant).

If you wish for your poinsettias to be listed in memory of, in honor of, or placed by the donor, please indicate which and PRINT the names below.

In memory of:

In honor of:

Placed by:

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 10, 2023

Isaiah 40:1-11

Messengers of Hope

This is the second Sunday of Advent, the season when we set time aside to express the human longing for God to be right here with us. There are many moods in this season. Some of us are too busy and some of us are too lonely. Some of us take joy in all that there is, some of us grieve all that is lost. Some of us find comfort in the same story told a new way each year, some of us just want to hurry along to the turning of the year. Some of us find deep peace in the rituals of this season, and some of us feel very anxious. And many of us feel all these things! On each of our Advent Sundays, we are invited to sink deeply into our spiritual lives with a time of devotion and contemplation, knowing that God meets us exactly where we are - busy and lonely, joyful and grieving, comfortable and hurried, peaceful and anxious.

Comfort, comfort O my people, says your God. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Isaiah 40:1, 3-4

First, read the focus scripture for this day.
Read it again, more slowly, perhaps even out loud.
Now read it a third time.

What are the questions or images that come to mind?
Here are some to get you started. You may have others.

Last week, we sat with the Israelite people in the discomfort that comes from feeling far from God. Today, we take comfort in the now, and in God's presence with us. When have you felt truly comforted by God or God's presence? Compare this to other times you felt God with you. How was that feeling of *comfort* unique?

These words are often sung as part of Christmas cantatas or presentations. Do these words bring to mind a tune for you? If not, what other songs of Christmas can you bring to mind? Why is it important to invoke God's presence with song at this time of year?

In this scripture, A Voice calls for all of us to make ready for God to come. The scripture advises the listener to make a path where no path has been made before and where there are rough places, to make them smooth. Is there a place in your spiritual life where you have not ventured before? What would it be like to make a new path through that uncharted territory? Or, alternatively, is there a rough place in your life? A meanness, an addiction, an old hurt? What would it be like to begin to smooth out that part of your heart or mind?

End your time of meditation with this prayer: *Comforting One, wrap us in your compassion and warmth. Cover us now and always with the certainty of your healing presence. In your Holy Name we pray. Amen.*



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