

Shouts of Joy

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*

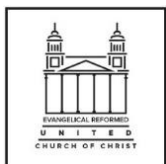
Jenna Duranko ~ *Social Media Assistant* | Ashley Murphy ~ *Nursery Attendant*

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 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

10:30 AM



How does a
weary world
rejoice? *We allow ourselves
to be amazed*

The numbered hymns are from
The New Century Hymnal

*All who are able may stand

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONGREGATION CENTERING PRAYER

Justin and Ashley Coen

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

THRESHOLD MOMENT *Awe*

– Rev. Sarah Speed

The birds could spend their lives
on telephone wires,
feet under them
sure and steady.
Or they could open their wings,
leave the ground,
and let the wind carry them home.

I want to be like the birds.
I want an open heart,
open arms,
open eyes.
Give me a sky view,
for I do not want to miss a thing.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF JOY

How does a weary world practice joy?

By dancing, and throwing birthday parties.

By hanging Christmas lights, and holding sleeping babies.

By singing loudly, and looking for good news.

By telling the stories of Jesus, and showing up for our community.

There are a million ways to practice joy. So today we light the candle of joy as a reminder and a charge.

With God's help, may we bring joy into a weary world. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN** *We Hail You God's Anointed*

#104

**¹We hail you God's anointed,
the long awaited One!
Hail n the time appointed,
your reign on earth begun!
You come to break oppression,
to set the captive free;
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.**

**²You shall come down like
showers upon the fruitful earth;
and joy and hope, like flowers,
spring in your path to birth.
Before you on the mountains
shall peace, the herald, go,
and righteousness, in fountains
from hill to valley flow.**

**³The wise shall bow before you
and gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore you,
and praise all peoples sing;
To you shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows be said,
your realm is still increasing,
with you, O Christ, as head.**

**⁴O'er every foe victorious,
you on your throne shall rest;
from age to age more glorious,
all blessing and all blessed:
The tide of time shall never
your covenant remove;
your name shall stand forever,
your changeless name of Love.**

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

If you spend any time with a child, you will quickly notice that children see the world differently.

For a child, a ladybug is a miracle.

A pine tree is a wonder.

Curiosity is a love language,

and water is not only for survival, but for joy.

As adults, we forget this language of awe and wonder,

and when we do, we distance ourselves from God.

In confession, we have the opportunity to close that distance. So let us return to God with hearts wide open. Let us return to God in prayer. Join me in the prayer of confession.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Holy God,

Somewhere in our childhood we face pressure to outgrow awe.

We turn into adults who obsess over data and facts.

We praise those who have answers, and assume that wonder is an answerless game.

Forgive us for closing that door to you.

Remind us that the kingdom of God belongs to children.

Teach us the ways of awe and wonder, so that like Zechariah, when we find ourselves speechless, our first words will be words of praise.

With hearts open wide, we pray, amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Family of faith,

Just as we marvel at mountains and newborns, at sunrises and sunsets,

God marvels at us.

There is nothing you could do or leave undone that could prevent God from loving you. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

We are forgiven.

We are loved.

We belong to God. Amen.

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.*

THE SCRIPTURES

Luke 1: 57-66

NT page 57

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

CANTATA *The Winter Rose*

– Joseph M. Martin
Senior Choir

The Winter Rose

When Will He Come

Advent Cry

Every Valley

Carol of Remembrance

Lullaby to a Rose

In the Judean Hills

Dance into the Light

The Rose Tree Carol

The Winter Rose (Reprise)

Look to the Rose

Lo, How a Rose

***CLOSING PRAYER**

Amazing and wonderful God, with hearts full of awe we praise you. The intricacies of your creation and the perfectness of your holiness leave us with inadequate words and unspoken abundant joy. On tiptoe we wait for your most inspiring act of all – the sending of the Incarnate One. Fill us with expectation and keep us alert lest we miss the miracle. Accept the gifts we give to you and give to us in return a spirit of service. Amen.

***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.

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 Andy and Kathy Johnston in honor of their seven grandchildren: Hannah, Emma, Mady, Cole, Hayden, Zoe, Ryder, and Hazel.

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

Attendance Last Sunday, December 10: 13 at 8:30 AM, 147 at 10:30 AM, and 59 online.

Watch
Worship
Live



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

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

Serving Today: December 17

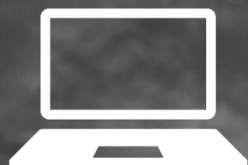
Scripture Reader: Robin Cooney
Deacons: Matt Davis, Harrison Fisher
Elder: Ave Barr
Greeters: Rachel and Tom Ford
Rob Smith
Welcome: Holly Davis
Audio/Visual: Rodney Martin, Larry Martin
Jeff Schaeberle
Nursery: Robert Kambic
Fellowship:

Serving Next Week: December 24

Betsy Selby, Jim Brittain
Laura Rhoderick
Robin Cooney, Felecia Bishop

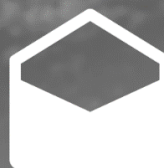
Sue Pinner
Larry Martin, Jeff Schaeberle
Kelly Esslinger
Dawn Lagrotteria
Julie Clark

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: Fourth Sunday of Advent – *We sing stories of hope*

Today we celebrate our annual lessons and carols service with our college students reading the scriptures. The Rev. David Cooney will be leading us in worship. The Senior Choir will be singing and the Cambridge Bell Choir will offer special music.

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:

Sue Pinner
Bob Pinner
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
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
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)

Christmas Cards are appreciated:

Nathan Cable / Game Changers
c/o Nexus-Woodbourne Family Healing
1301 Woodbourne Ave
Baltimore, MD 21239

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.

Sunday School will not meet December 24 and 31; classes will resume January 7.

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 help us determine which projects can be accomplished, if you are interested in the Franklinton Center Work Trip, attend a 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.

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

Sunday, December 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.

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*.

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.



**LOVE IS
LOUDER**
Love Your Neighbor **OUT LOUD**

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.

MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICES AND SOUP LUNCHEON

Wednesday, December 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

Wednesday, December 20

Community Room/Thomas Room 5:00 – 6:30 PM

We will share a light dinner at 5 PM in the Community Room, before departing for caroling. RSVP to Pastor Kirstin, ksrroads@erucc.org, or sign up at Fellowship. When you RSVP please note if you will be joining for dinner.

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.

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.

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. 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

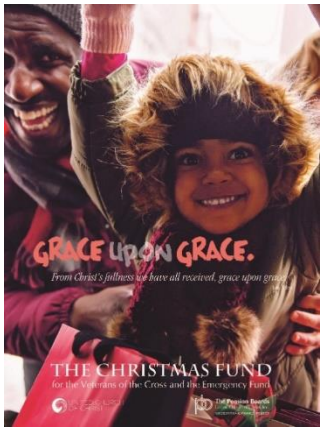
In 2017, Federated Charities launched The Mitten Project by inviting the community to participate in a small action to reach out in kindness during the cold, winter months. Thousands of pairs of mittens (plus scarves, gloves, jackets and socks) have been made available to anyone who needs them in the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

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING: “GRACE UPON GRACE”



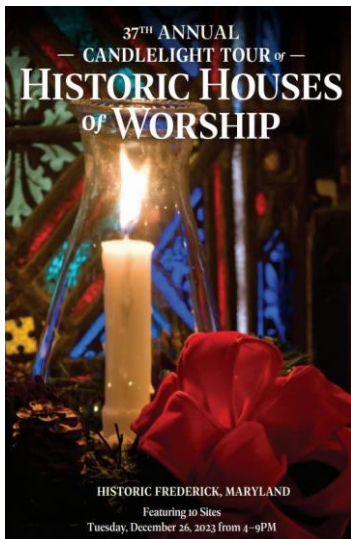
The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide 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>.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

UCC.ORG



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.

Junior Church will not meet December 24 and 31; activities will resume January 14.

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.

MAPPING OUR CONGREGATION

With approval from Dr. Morgan, and with thanks to Susan Kulp and Carolyn Roberts for suggesting this, starting today and extending into 2024, we have posted maps of Frederick City and County in the foyer and are supplying flag pins that ERUCC attendees can use to document where they live. These maps will help us objectively and subjectively as a congregation to see where we live. This can help us to understand not only one aspect of our demographics, but also our connection to people living throughout the county.

When time permits, please place a pin on the map to identify where your household is located. One pin per household, please!! One does NOT need to be a member to place a pin. Just number and sign your name in the notebook on the table provided, write your number on the pin, and place it on the map.

HELP FUNDRAISE FOR ERUCC JUST BY SHOPPING!

With gift-giving holidays just around the corner, now is the perfect time to raise funds for ERUCC simply by shopping for gift cards from 750+ brands. With your gift card purchase through RaiseRight, you will help our church automatically earn. Gift cards can be purchased as eGift cards, delivered electronically to you within minutes or physical gift cards, which will be delivered to the church office for distribution or for direct delivery to your door, look for brands labeled “Ship to home eligible.”



Enroll to earn for ERUCC at <https://bit.ly/3RplpT5> or scan the QR code:

WINTER WEATHER POLICY

You decide whether a drive or walk to the church is safe. We do not encourage you to risk life and limb to get to church at all costs, but we expect to hold services for those who can arrive safely, unless the Frederick roads are closed.

Other in-person activities, including committee meetings and any other regularly scheduled church activities, are generally governed by the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) inclement weather plan. In the event inclement weather requires FCPS to close, delay opening or dismiss early, the church office will similarly delay opening or be closed and ERUCC activities will also be cancelled or may be held virtually when possible and appropriate.

In the event inclement weather causes ERUCC to close or cancel activities, the church website (www.erucc.org) and the church’s Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/eruccfrederick>) will be updated as soon as possible.

A background image showing a close-up of a pine branch with snow-covered needles, creating a winter atmosphere.

OUR CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DECEMBER 25 - JANUARY 1

During this period, as we spend some time with our families and friends we may take longer than usual to reply to your messages.

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

This 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.

ADVENT MUSICAL GIFTS

This Advent season we are sharing the musical talents of our congregation. Each night of Advent a new video will premiere on our YouTube channel featuring one song. You can sing along or just relax and listen and get into the spirit of Advent as we prepare for Christmas!

Watch and sing along: bit.ly/singadventERUCC

CHRISTMAS EVE – MORNING SERVICES

Sunday, December 24

8:30 AM Communion Service – Sanctuary

10:30 AM Lessons and Carols Service – Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org

Today we celebrate our annual Lessons and Carols service with our college students reading the scriptures. The Rev. David Cooney will be leading worship. The Senior Choir will be singing and the Cambridge Bell Choir will offer special music.

CHRISTMAS EVE – EVENING SERVICES

Sunday, December 24



How does a
weary world
rejoice? We make
room

Luke's Gospel tells us that when Mary gives birth to Jesus, she lays him in a manger, for there was no place for them in the guest room. Scholars argue about where, exactly, the birth occurs—and why. Was it in a stable or the living room of a simple peasant home? Was Bethlehem teeming with

visitors who were also there to be counted in the census? Was Joseph's family inhospitable because they disapproved of his marital situation? Regardless of where the birth occurs, we know that Christ is born in a crowded, unlikely place. And yet, God makes a place here anyway. God draws the circle wider as shepherds and unexpected guests arrive. This Christmas, let us also make room—for strangers and neighbors alike. For this is good news of great joy for all people.

5:30 PM Children's Service – Sanctuary

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads will be leading worship.

7:30 PM Family Candlelight & Carol Service – Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org

An elegant telling of the Christmas story in carols and readings with music from the Senior Choir and featured music from brass, culminating in the singing of "Silent Night" in our candle-lit sanctuary. The Rev. David Cooney will provide a Christmas Meditation.

10:30 PM Communion and Candlelight Service – Sanctuary

The Revs. John and Rebecca Shillingburg will be leading worship.

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 |

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.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 17, 2023

Psalm 126

Shouts of Joy

This is the third 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.

¹*When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.*

²*Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
'The LORD has done great things for them.'*

³*The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.*

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.

In the first week of Advent, we searched for a God who seemed to be lost. In the second week, we took comfort in finding our way to God at last. Now, in the third week, we lift up our voices in praise. What is your favorite way to express praise to God? Do you praise in quiet prayer or in direct action? Alone or with a group? Does your praise flow silently or through song and word?

How much time each week does your faith community spend in praising God? Do you express praise in worship? In meetings? In emails or newsletters? Do you believe that your faith community should spend more or less time in praising God?

End your time of meditation with this prayer: *I praise you, Holy One. And as I do, I breathe in your goodness. We praise you, Holy One. And as we do, we rejoice in all the ways you have been gracious to our community. In your amazing name we pray. Amen.*



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