

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 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*

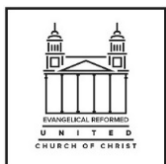
Jenna Duranko ~ *Social Media Assistant* | Ashley Murphy ~ *Nursery Attendant*

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 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:30 AM



How does a
weary world
rejoice? *We sing stories
of hope*

The numbered hymns are from
The New Century Hymnal

*All who are able may stand

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *An English Carol*

– A. Sherman

Cambridge Handbell Choir

The Holly and the Ivy

– Traditional English Carol

– arr. D. Gilliam / M. McCaskill

Mary Huegel, oboe; C. Douglas Remsburg, clarinet

THRESHOLD MOMENT *The Sound of Hope*

– Rev. Sarah Speed

We've been singing a sad song
for quite some time,
the melody syncing with our heartbeats,
the lyrics stamped to the front of our minds.

You say, *sad songs are honest.*

It's hard to disagree,
for sad songs tap us on the shoulder.

Sad songs remind us
of the 100 different corners
heartbreak could be behind.

But I don't have it in me
to sing a sad song forever.

So despite the news,
despite the aches in my body,
despite the phone call last night
that says she's waiting for the test results,
despite yesterday's shooting,
despite the unknown and unchanged,
I am going to sing a song of hope.

Like a canary in a snowstorm,
I don't need another song of what is;
I need a song of what could be.
So sing with me.
Our voices may get drowned out by the wind,
but surely someone will ask:
Was that a flash of yellow in the snow?
Was that the sound of hope?

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF LOVE

How does a weary world practice love?
By sending cards, and picking up the phone.
By practicing empathy, and assuming the best in others.
By learning people's stories and finding common ground.
By advocating for justice, and saving a place at the table.
There are a million ways to practice love.
So today we light the candle of love as a reminder and a charge.
With God's help, may we bring love into a weary world. Amen

– SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS –

***PROCESSIONAL CAROL** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* VENI EMMANUEL
**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and discord cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

FIRST LESSON: PROPHECY
Isaiah 9: 2-7

Jenna Duranko

CAROL *Rejoice, Rejoice Believers*

**Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let our lights appear;
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising, and soon He draweth nigh;
Up, pray, and watch, and wrestle: at midnight comes the cry.**

**Our Hope and Expectation, O Jesus, now appear!
Arise, Thou Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption that brings us unto Thee.**

SECOND LESSON: THE ANNUNCIATION

Alyssa Kline

Luke 1: 26-38

CAROL *O Thou Joyful*

**O thou joyful, O thou wonderful Grace revealing Christmastide!
Jesus came to win us from all sin within us:
Glorify, glorify the Holy Child!**

**O thou joyful, O thou wonderful Love revealing Christmastide!
Loud hosannas singing and all praises bringing,
May Thy love, may Thy love with us abide.**

**O thou joyful, O thou wonderful Peace revealing Christmastide!
Darkness disappeareth, God's own light now neareth,
Peace and joy, peace and joy to all betide.**

THIRD LESSON: THE SONG OF MARY

Erin Gohegan

Luke 1: 46-55

ANTHEM *Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly*

– J. H. Laster
Senior Choir

FOURTH LESSON: THE SONG OF ZECHARIAH

Trevor Weakley

Luke 1: 67-79

REFLECTION

The Rev. David Cooney

FIFTH LESSON: THE BIRTH

Colleen Huetting

Matthew 1: 18-25

ANTHEM *As Joseph Was A-Walking*

– D. Wagner
Senior Choir

SIXTH LESSON: THE SHEPHERDS

Luke 2: 8-18

Alex Cumber

ANTHEM *Tidings of Comfort and Joy*

– D. Wagner
Cambridge Handbell Choir

SEVENTH LESSON: THE WISE MEN

Matthew 2: 1-11

Ben Mercier

CAROL *The First Nowell*

**And by the light of that same star,
Three Wise Men came from a country afar,
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel!**

**This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel!**

**Then entered in those Wise Men three
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in His presence
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel!**

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

OFFERTORY *What Child Is This?*

– Traditional English Carol
– arr. L. Larson

Mary Huegel, oboe; C. Douglas Remsburg, clarinet

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Bless now these gifts, O God. Help them to become instruments of your grace that help us to fill the hungry with good things, to lift up the lowly, and to sing songs of hope. Enable us to remember your promise that this world is about to turn. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN** *Angels, We Have Heard on High*

GLORIA

**Angels we have heard on high,
Singing sweetly through the night,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their brave delight.**

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why these songs of happy cheer?
What great brightness did you see?
What glad tidings did you hear?**

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

**Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.**

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

***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 *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*
(Please be seated.)

– Traditional English Carol
– arr. L. Larson

Mary Huegel, oboe; C. Douglas Remsburg, clarinet

FELLOWSHIP

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

The flowers on the altar are presented in memory of my father, Dale Schaeberle, and my brother, John Schaeberle, from the Schaeberle Family.

The yellow rose bud is presented in honor of Specialist Tyler Schaeberle and Corporal Alex Schaeberle.

Attendance Last Sunday, December 10: 18 at 8:30 AM, 163 at 10:30 AM, and 54 online.

Watch
Worship
Live



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

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

Serving Today: December 24

Scripture Reader: Young Adults
Deacons: Betsy Selby, Jim Brittain
Elder: Laura Rhoderick
Greeters: Robin Cooney, Felecia Bishop

Welcome: Sue Pinner
Audio/Visual: Larry Martin, Jeff Schaeberle
Kelly Esslinger
Nursery: Dawn Lagrotteria
Fellowship: Julie Clark

Serving Next Week: December 31

Matt Davis, Harrison Fisher
Peter Brehm
Susan Kulp, David Howard
Mary Lou Blessing
Thi Nguyen
Rodney Martin, Jeff Schaeberle
Kelly Esslinger

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

The Poinsettias Adorning the Chancel are ...

IN MEMORY OF

- ✳ Frank and Jean Keyser by Phil and Betsy Selby
- ✳ Hypatia Selby by Phil and Betsy Selby
- ✳ My son, Todd by John Stush
- ✳ Loved ones by Audrey Rayfield
- ✳ Deceased loved ones by Don and Emogene Wyand
- ✳ Robert Armitage by Linda Coyle
- ✳ Rita and John Coyle by Linda Coyle
- ✳ Howard and Mabel Ellam by Gail Ellam
- ✳ Our parents by David Howard and Susan Kulp
- ✳ Papa and Grammie Hoffman by Justin, Luke, Nathan, and Kali Chappell (grandchildren)
- ✳ Ed and Melanie Hoffman (4) by Edwin W. Hoffman (son), Julie Chappell (daughter), Sherri Calhoun (daughter), and Kari Lussier (daughter)
- ✳ Loved ones by Patti Patterson
- ✳ My granddaughter, Liz Coffey by Peg Stahler
- ✳ My husband, Bill Stahler by Peg Stahler
- ✳ Betty Glick by Darryl Glick and Mark Ulrich
- ✳ George Wolf (christened 17 October 1762) by the Kenner Family Association
- ✳ Our parents, Kathleen and Joe Clancy, and Margret and Bruce Jefferson by Kathleen and Niel Jefferson
- ✳ Joan's parents, Lois and Lawrence Schwin, Sr. by the Maples and Gauls
- ✳ Allen's parents, Sam Wynn and Margaret Quynn Maples by the Maples and Gauls
- ✳ Bob Wittington by Marj Berkheimer
- ✳ Blaine Hoffmann by Ken and Anne Hoffmann
- ✳ Kevin Hoffmann by Ken and Anne Hoffmann
- ✳ Members of the Elseroad and Martin families by Larry and Sedonia Martin
- ✳ Kevin Raab by Nan MacNamara
- ✳ Our siblings by Jean Fish and Barbara Biser
- ✳ John and Martha Morris by Robert and Suzanne Morris
- ✳ Herman and Mildred Smith by Robert and Suzanne Morris
- ✳ Orvis M. Staley by Mary and Janice Staley and Diane Waggy
- ✳ Mr. and Mrs. Charles O. Routzahn by Mary and Janice Staley and Diane Waggy
- ✳ Dawn and Roger Williams, family of Starr and Jeff Schaeberle
- ✳ Dale and John Schaeberle, family of Jeff and Starr Schaeberle

IN HONOR OF

- ✳ Chris, Emily, Abby, Ben Spear by Bob and Sue Pinner
- ✳ Howard Selby by Phil and Betsy Selby
- ✳ Our grandson, Duncan Broderick by Cathie and Will Duncan
- ✳ Ida Martin Desrosiers and Bernie M. Desrosiers by Larry and Sedonia Martin
- ✳ Carol Spera by Darryl Glick and Mark Ulrich
- ✳ Our granddaughter, Virginia Quynn Gaul by Allen and Joan Maples
- ✳ Michael Wells by Nan MacNamara
- ✳ Thomas Wells by Nan MacNamara



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worship Next Week: First Sunday after Christmas – *We root ourselves in ritual*
Luke 2:21-38

After eight days have passed, Mary and Joseph circumcise their child and give him the name Jesus. They return to the temple in Jerusalem to enact the sacred birth rituals of their culture and tradition. While they are doing what is customary, the unexpected occurs. A man named Simeon is led by the Spirit into the temple to proclaim Jesus as the “light of revelation.” Then, a prophet named Anna suddenly approaches them; she praises God and speaks about Jesus to everyone longing for redemption. Rituals mark sacred turning points in our lives. They can help us make meaning of celebrations, losses, and transitions. As new parents to Jesus, Mary and Joseph could feel weary for what lies ahead, but perhaps these sacred rituals—and those who bear witness to them—bolster them and give them courage for the journey. How do our sacred rituals root us and help us live into new chapters with courage?

The service will conclude with the “Letting Go and Letting God” ritual. This is a time when the congregation will be invited to write down on a piece of paper those things which each person wants to let go of from the old year of 2023, receive God’s grace and move into the new year with divine blessing and hope. The dissolving pieces of paper will be placed in a bowl of water at the front of the chancel. The Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg will be preaching. The Senior Choir will be singing.

BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

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:

Susan Whiting (sister of Nan MacNamara)
Marie Wallace (mother of Glenn Wallace-Weitz)
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)
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



**LORD, LISTEN TO YOUR
CHILDREN PRAYING**

Today at ERUCC

LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE and SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Sunday morning Adult Bible Study and Sunday School for Children and Youth will not meet December 24 and 31; classes will resume January 7.

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.

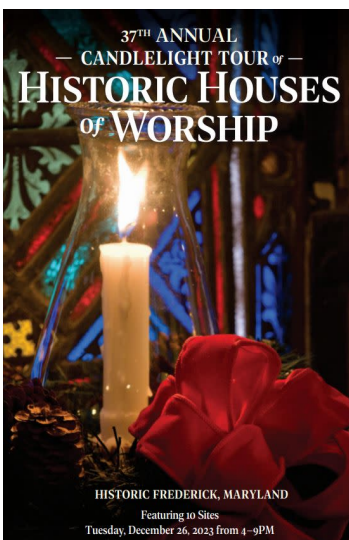
ERUCC will receive The Christmas Fund offering on Christmas Eve!

This Week at ERUCC

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.

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY with Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

Will resume Tuesday, January 9.

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

Will resume Wednesday, January 10.

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 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



JUSTICE
+ WITNESS
ACTION NETWORK

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)

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

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).

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.

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 for a church office closure notice, featuring a close-up of a pine branch with snow-covered needles and small white snowflakes falling or melting.

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.



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 Reflection.

10:30 PM Communion and Candlelight Service – Sanctuary

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



LOVE IS
LOUDER
Love Your Neighbor OUT LOUD

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.

CHRISTMAS EVE (FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT)

December 24, 2023

Luke 1:26-38

Birth of a Promise Christmas Fund Offering

This is the fourth 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.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Luke 1:30-33

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.

-During the Advent season, we have expressed longing for God, found comfort in God's presence and praised God for all the good we have received. Now we open our arms to embrace the Christ Child. Which of these moods of Advent are you feeling now? Or are you experiencing another mood altogether?

-What are some of your Christmas Eve traditions of the past? How are those traditions like or unlike how you will spend this Christmas Eve? How do those traditions help you draw close to the Child? Are there some traditions which need to shift or change?

-A big word for the coming of the Christ Child is *incarnation*. Spend some time with this word and this idea. How is incarnation confusing or uncertain for you? How is incarnation real or profound for you?

-If you are intentional about it, the season of Advent can help you get closer to God and deepen your spiritual life. Do you have ideas about how you might continue this intention beyond Christmas Day? What will help you live into that intention?

End your time of meditation with this prayer: *Incarnate One, We long to be with you because you long to be with us. Your longing brings us the gift of the Christ Child. Help us to respond with a gift worthy of that gift, today and all days. Amen.*



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