

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*

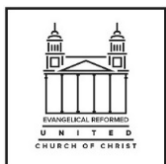
Jenna Duranko ~ *Social Media Assistant* | Ashley Murphy ~ *Nursery Attendant*

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 31, 2023

First Sunday after Christmas

10:30 AM



How does a
weary world
rejoice? *We root ourselves
in ritual*

The numbered hymns are from
The New Century Hymnal

*All who are able may stand

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONGREGATION CENTERING PRAYER

Peter Brehm

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

ORGAN PRELUDE

Ann Thompson

THRESHOLD MOMENT *Lessons in Connection*

– The 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.

***OPENING HYMN** *All Beautiful the March of Days*

#434

All beautiful the march of days, as seasons come and go;
the hand that shaped the rose has formed the crystal of the snow,
Has sent the silver frost of heaven, the flowing waters sealed,
And laid a silent loveliness on hill and wood and field.

O'er brilliant fields of sparkling snow the radiant morns unfold;
The solemn splendors of the night burn brightly through the cold.
Life mounts in every throbbing vein, love deepens 'round the hearth,
And clearer sounds the angel hymn, "Good will and peace on earth."

O you from whose unfathomed law the year in beauty flows,
yourself the splendid vision seen in crystal and in rose,
The passing days with grace declare, and passing nights proclaim,
In ever-changing words of light, the wonder of your name.

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Church family, our faith is decorated with rituals and rhythms that help tie us to God. Confession is one of those rituals. Every week we gather in this space and tell the truth about our lives. And every week, God hears our prayers and offers us grace. This holy dance of confession and mercy is one of the many rituals I could not live without. So let us embrace this holy tradition together. Let us pray:

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God of rhythms, we confess:
our faith would not be what it is without rituals.
Unlike you, we depend on bread and water.
We have to return to this space again and again
to hear old, familiar stories. For if we stopped, we know it would not
take long before we lost our way. Forgive us for our fragility, and
thank you for giving us ordinary rituals and rhythms to hold onto.
With grateful and humble hearts, we pray, amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

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.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Children of all ages are invited to participate in the service today. A book nook with children's programs, books, crayons, and activities is in the rear of the sanctuary near the welcome table and a wiggle space is available in the front of the sanctuary near the baptismal font.

Junior Church for children ages 5 through 5th grade will resume January 14.

***HYMN *On Christmas Night All Christians Sing* #143**

**On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring;
On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring -
News of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful Ruler's birth.**

**Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad;
Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin Christ set us free, all for to gain our liberty.**

**From out of mystery came the Light, which made the angels sing this night;
From our of mystery came the Light, which made the angels sing this night:
"Glory to God and peace to all, forevermore, Alleluia!"**

THE SCRIPTURES

Luke 2:21-51

NT page 59

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

The Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

THE LETTING GO AND LETTING GOD RITUAL

On this final Sunday of 2023, the congregation will observe an ancient European tradition, originally done on Christmas Eve, or, in some churches in America, on New Year's Eve. It is observed by each person present in worship, writing on a piece of paper provided, a trait or behavioral pattern you want to let go of as you enter the New Year. This item, known only to you, will be dropped in the "reflecting bowl" in the front of the church where it will dissolve, thereby symbolically "letting go" so that it will never bother or harm you or someone else again.

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

OFFERTORY *Celtic Christmas Blessing*

– C. Curry
Senior Choir

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Holy One, our faith is a journey marked by the rhythms of life. We come together, and we are reminded: we are not alone. You are near, calling us to join in your work. May this belief shape our lives as we dedicate our time, talents and tithes to you. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

#154

Refrain:

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. [*Refrain*]

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. [*Refrain*]

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. [*Refrain*]

***BENEDICTION**

***SEVENFOLD AMEN**

#814

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

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

Attendance Last Sunday: 18 at 8:30 AM, TBA at 10:30 AM, and 68 online.

Watch
Worship
Live



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

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

Serving Today: December 31

Scripture Reader: Tyler L. York
Deacons: Matt Davis, Harrison Fisher
Elder: Peter Brehm
Greeters: Susan Kulp, David Howard
Mary Lou Blessing
Welcome: Thi Nguyen
Audio/Visual: Rodney Martin, Jeff Schaeberle
Kelly Esslinger
Nursery: Meredith Neely
Fellowship: Julie Clark

Serving Next Week: January 7

Bob Manthey
Mark Ulrich, Darryl Glick
Tyler L. York
Anne Hoffmann, Danielle Carbone
Ave Barr
Marj Berkheimer, Jeanellen Kallevang
Jeff Schaeberle, Larry Martin
Jeff Baker
Kate Fromknecht

Worship Next Week: Epiphany Sunday | Baptism of Christ Sunday

We trust our belovedness

Luke 3:21-22

We began our series by acknowledging our weariness and we conclude with trusting our belovedness; ultimately, our joy is rooted in the fact that we belong to God. In the story of Jesus' baptism, the heavens part open and the voice of God wraps Jesus in joy and loving care. Some translations of Luke 3:22 read, "in you, I find happiness and delight." Therefore, we can conclude that we are also the source of God's joy. When we trust our belovedness, we live and give fully—we are compelled to treat all of creation with tenderness and care. When we trust our belovedness, we have endless reasons to rejoice.

We will be sharing communion at the chancel rail this morning as well as receiving our star words for the coming year. This day, we celebrate Jesus' baptism and remember the role our baptism has played in our lives. It is a day we also remember that along with Jesus we are beloved by God and empowered to participate in God's healing work in the world. The Senior Choir will be singing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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:

Barba Speak
Richard Leslie
Rob Peters
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
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)

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of Donald Kline who passed away December 23.



**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 31; classes will resume January 7.

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.

This Week at ERUCC

ERUCC OFFICES CLOSED NEW YEAR'S DAY – MONDAY, JANUARY 1

Happy New Year!

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>.

LET'S TALK

Eavesdropping on the Echoes: Voices from the Old Testament

Sundays, January 7, 21, and 28

Community Room

9:30 – 10:15 AM



Rev. Esther Ziegler will be leading discussions on selected passages from the “Older” Testament using the resource *Eavesdropping on the Echoes: Voices from the Old Testament* written by Ted Loder. The chapters in the book are based on monologue sermons Rev. Loder preached in the voice of the Biblical character and then turned into a book portraying 12 well known and not-so-well-known biblical characters. Unlike the Wednesday Evening class Rev. Ziegler led for many years, she will not be giving homework for this class so whether you recognize the name of the biblical character on whom the class focuses each week, or never even heard of that character before, won't matter. Just come prepared to meet some of God's children through the eyes and imagination of Ted Yoder, a gifted Bible scholar and preacher, and then talk about how their lives may still be relevant to our faith development.

SUNDAY MORNING LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE with Revs. Shillingburg
Sundays, resuming January 7 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.

In January we will be skipping lightly through 1 & 2 Kings, focusing on Solomon, the prophets Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah, as well as the stories of the destruction of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. What happened to the 10 Lost Tribes of Israel?

HELP PUT CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS AWAY
Sunday, January 7 following 10:30 AM service

We will be taking down our Christmas decorations and appreciate all the help we can get! Help after the 10:30 am worship service on January 7.

FRANKLINTON CENTER WORK TRIP MEETING
January 7 Community Room after helping put away decorations

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

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY with Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg
Tuesdays, resuming January 9 North Room / Zoom 11:00 AM
Zoom: bit.ly/3TdUnOy Meeting ID: 875 1423 3398 Passcode: 973365

During the first half of January, we discuss the New Testament chapters in *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* by Marcus Borg. Then we will begin a study of labyrinths using a yet to be determined resource.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE with Rev. John Shillingburg
Wednesdays, resuming January 10 North Room / Zoom 7:00 PM
Zoom: bit.ly/ERwedstudy Meeting ID: 892 1764 4500 Passcode: 848933

Like the Sunday morning class, this 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.

In January we begin the stories of the matriarchs and patriarchs in Genesis: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel, and Joseph. Just how exemplary were these heroes and heroines of the Hebrew Scriptures? Do they provide good models for us today?

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.

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.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ANNUAL BELOVED COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Monday, January 15

Trinity UMC, 705 W. Patrick St 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Theme: "The World House." Muslim, Jewish and Christian Leaders will explore local and global paths to promote peace. Please bring a modest amount of food to share.

More info? Contact french.james84@icloud.com

TUESDAY EVENING YOGA

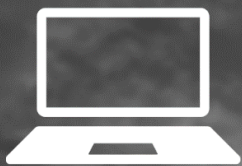
resumes January 16

Community Room

7:00 PM

Join our drop-in Tuesday night yoga class! The first class of 2024 is January 16. You will need to bring yoga mat, blocks if used, and a water bottle. Each class is \$10. Questions? Contact Renae, rdkline15@gmail.com.

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

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

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL - *CEASEFIRE FOR THE NEW YEAR*

An Invitation to All Who Desire a Stop to Hostilities in Gaza

Sunday, December 31

Memorial Park, 201 N. Bentz St

6:00 – 6:45 PM

Our friends in faith with the Frederick Quaker Meeting are organizing a peaceful candlelight vigil on New Year's Eve, casting a vision for a permanent ceasefire in Israel-Palestine in the New Year. Those who gather will be called to embrace the humanity of all people in the region, including equally our Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Palestinian, Israeli, and Arab siblings, and to mourn all those who have died in this terrible conflict. There will be a call for those in power to commit to upholding international law universally and to rejecting all attacks on civilians, and for all humanity to join in a shared condemnation of all war crimes whether by Hamas, Israel's government, or any other party. They will also be calling for the ending of the occupation and the securing of a just peace.

All are invited. Candles will be provided. Please do not bring amplification.

MAPPING OUR CONGREGATION

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! You do 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.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

We value being together to worship, for learning and discipleship, and to be in fellowship. Protect the safety and health of our community by considering these ways to love thy neighbor and test for COVID when needed:



stay home if sick

if you experience symptoms like cough or fever, we ask that you join us online



masking

all may choose to mask at anytime



wash and sanitize

wash hands for at least 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer often

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.

As 2023 comes to a close, the Finance Committee would like to thank you all for your continued extravagant generosity to the financial well-being of ERUCC in support of its programs and mission. The final 2023 year-end giving statements will be distributed before the end of January 2024, either via e-mail or printed and mailed.

All checks postmarked or delivered to the church by December 31 will be considered a 2023 tax year donation.

PASTORAL CARE

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

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



Sunday 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.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 31, 2023

Luke 2:22-40

Long-Awaited Gift

In today's scripture, the elder (Simeon) meets the infant (Christ Jesus). The image of the old person - wrinkled with the passing of their days and sporting a long, white beard - meeting the new baby - smooth and innocent - has been adapted in the secular world as a fitting image for the passing of the year. As we say goodbye to the old and usher in the new, what rituals do you practice to deepen and enrich your experience of the passing of time? Here are a few ideas. Maybe you have others.

Star Words

It is not known where the tradition of Star Words began, but this tradition is growing year by year among many congregations. In this tradition, words of intention, challenges to grow or spiritual gifts are written on paper stars. Then, each member of the group draws one star to guide them into the new year. Like the Wise Magi who followed the star in the sky to the Christ Child, pray that your word will lead you through the year until you more fully discover Christ's purpose for you.

Watchwords

A watchword is like to a star word, except instead of a single word, a passage of scripture is written on each paper. If you choose this one, get curious about the scripture you are given. What words or phrases stick with you? Read it over several times. You may want to find it in the Bible and read it in context. Make this scripture part of your prayer life by praying it every day for a whole year. How does the watchword change as you live with it? How does it change you?

Letting Go of the Past

The new year is a good time to release what is no longer serving you from the past. Set aside some time to take stock of the past year. What were you doing when you felt God's presence and blessings most strongly? After you have written these thoughts down, ask God to bless what has happened in the past and to bless you in helping to release it. You may want to burn or bury the paper as a symbol of cleansing.

Set an Intention of Gratitude

As you step into the New Year, set an intention to express gratitude more often. Maybe you want to list three things you are grateful for before you go to sleep at night. Maybe you would like to wake up with the intention to express gratitude throughout the day. Maybe you want to be more aware of moments through the day when you feel grateful and express those in the moment.

However you prepare for the New Year, be gentle with yourself and choose one you will enjoy. You will be more likely to keep it up, and the practice will be more impactful that way.



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

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