



Defining
Moments

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. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan ~ Intentional Interim Senior Pastor ~ mmorgan@erucc.org
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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 –



January 7, 2024 Epiphany Sunday | Baptism of Christ Sunday 10:30 AM



How does a
weary world
rejoice?
*We trust our
belovedness*

The numbered hymns are from
The New Century Hymnal

*All who are able may stand

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING FOR THOSE TRAVELING TO FRANKLINTON CENTER AT BRICKS

PRELUDE

SHARING OF THE STAR GIFTS

This morning you are invited to receive a gift from the offering plates being passed around the congregation. Please help yourself to a star. The wise ones traveled great distance to offer their gifts to the newborn Christ-child were responding to the gift first given to them. They received God's gift, then offered their gifts to God. As we commemorate the arrival of the wise ones and remember their offerings, we take delight in receiving these stars and words that symbolize God's generosity in our lives. You are invited to ponder what significance this word might have in your life, and how God might be speaking to you through that simple message. You are encouraged to take your star home and place it some place where you can see it every day. Allow this "word" to speak to you throughout the year.

THRESHOLD MOMENT *The Bravest Thing We Can Do*

Trust your belovedness.

Let it be a protest,
an act of resistance,
a song of celebration.

Trust your belovedness in a world
that is rarely satisfied.

Wear it like a badge of honor.

Speak it as confidently as your last name.

Tattoo it to your heart.

When outside forces
chip away at your sense of self,
when life asks you

to hand over the keys,
remember the water.
Remember creation.
Remember how it was good,
so very good.
Let that truth hum through your veins.
Sing it so loud
that it drowns out the weariness of the world,
for the bravest thing we can ever do
is trust that we belong here.

***OPENING HYMN** *As with Gladness Those of Old*

#159

**As with gladness those of old did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
So, true Morning Star, may we evermore your splendor see.**

**As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before One whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet ever seek your mercy seat.**

**As they offered gifts most rare at that manger plain and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ to you from whom they spring.**

**Holy Jesus, every day keep us in the narrow way;
And when mortal things are past, bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide, where no clouds your glory hide.**

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Our scripture passage for today tells the story of Jesus being baptized. The Gospel of Luke tells us that the sky opened up and the voice of God was heard saying, "You are my Son, whom I love; with whom I am well-pleased" (Luke 3:22).

Friends, I don't think that's the only time God has said words like that. If I understand the promise of scripture, then I believe God delights in you. God created you. God loves you with the same passion that we hear God express in today's scripture.

So trusting that good news, trusting that we are beloved, let us go to God in prayer. For we know that the one who listens, listens with love. What greater gift exists than that? Let us pray:

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Loving God, from the very beginning, you breathed life into us and called us good. However, somewhere along the way we replaced “good” with “not enough.” Somewhere along the way we turned the volume up on that phrase and began to doubt our own self-worth. Forgive us, for this is not what you have taught us. For when the world tells us we are not enough, you call us beloved. Show us how to return to that truth. Show us how to let go of our weariness and rest in that good news. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Family of faith, God’s grace and understanding is deeper and wider than we could possibly imagine. So say these words of grace with me:

**Our story begins with belovedness.
Even when we lose our way, even if we stumble and fall,
God never stops breaking through the clouds to claim us.
We are known. We are forgiven. We are beloved.
Thanks be 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.
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 next Sunday.

THE SCRIPTURES

Luke 3:21-22

NT page 60

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

– RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS –

INTRODUCTION

God created new life forms and brought them up from the waters of chaos, embraced them, and called them good.

Jesus, baptized in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, became living water for us and embraces all of us.

Jesus embraces also you who are the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized and all others who come seeking.

We follow Jesus with our baptism, marking a starting place for new life and new ways of being.

We join Jesus in love and service.

Let us prepare our hearts and minds to see, feel, and hear once again the vows of baptism.

VOWS OF RENEWAL

Do you renew and affirm the promises made at your baptism?

I do.

Do you recognize the call of God to be God's people always?

I do.

Do you embrace the way of Jesus in faith and ministry?

I do

Do you accept the nurture of the Holy Spirit who renews your spirit each day?

I do.

Do you accept and embrace others who seek a liberating faith in God?

I do.

In renewing your baptismal vows, remember your baptism as a mark of acceptance and welcome into the care of Christ's church where you may begin again your Christian faith and life.

PRAYER

O God, we rejoice in your grace, given and received. We thank you that you claim us, that you wash us, strengthen us, and guide us, that you empower us to live a life worthy of our calling. In the way of Jesus, make us as water in a dry and thirsty world. Establish us to be places of refreshment. Root us and nurture us in love, that with all your people, that we may rightly and justly serve you. Fill us with your fullness that our lives may overflow in service and love. Amen.

COMING TO THE WATER

As you are called, as you are moved, you may approach the bowl of water to renew your baptism. Remember always that, just as God called out to Jesus, God calls out to us, “You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased.”

BAPTISMAL HYMN *Down to the River to Pray* – Southern U.S. folk hymn

¹As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way

⁶O fathers let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on, fathers let's go down
Down to the river to pray

²O sisters let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on, sisters let's go down
Down to the river to pray

⁷As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe and crown?
Good Lord show me the way

³As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe & crown?
Good Lord show me the way

⁸O mothers let's go down
Come on down, don't you wanna go down?
Come on mothers, let's go down
Down to the river to pray

⁴O brothers let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O brothers, let's go down
Down to the river to pray

⁹As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way

⁵As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way

¹⁰O sinners, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O sinners, let's go down
Down to the river to pray

¹¹As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe and crown?
Good Lord show me the way

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

OFFERTORY *Star in the East*

– Southern folk hymn, arr. M. Price
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.

– SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION –

INVITATION

Friends, we know what it feels like to look for God.

We know what it feels like to turn our heads up to the sky, looking for stars or signs.

We know what it feels like to walk day after day, hoping that we grow closer to God.

We know what it feels like to seek.

I think that's part of why we end up here,
because we are hoping that in the midst of this messy world
we might catch a glimpse of God
that will carry us through.

Well, friends, I have good news.

God is already here.

Like a mighty wind, God is moving through this room.

God is at this Table, inviting us forward.

The invitation may not be as clear as a star in the sky,
but from generation to generation, God has always gathered with God's
people.

So come to this Table with your questions and your doubts.

Come with your joys and your gratitude.

Come seeking, come hungry, come curious.

Come open. Come not because you have to, but because you can.

Come with all of you, for there is room for you here.

This is God's Table; this is God's meal.

We are the guests.

So come.

Let us pray...

COMMUNION PRAYER

God of today, tomorrow, and yesterday, like the Magi, we are seeking you. Like the Magi, we are bringing ourselves closer to you, step by step, and word by word. So today we ask that you make yourself known to us. Reach into our spirits and give us a boost of confidence that love is real, and we are not alone.

We know we're asking a lot for a group that brings very little. We don't have gold or frankincense or myrrh. We haven't spent the last several days traveling here by camel. We're no Magi, but we're yours. Instead, we bring ourselves to this Table—to your Table—in hopes of catching a glimpse of you. Speak to us in this bread. Speak to us in the cup. Holy God, you were the God of yesterday, and we know you'll be the God of tomorrow, for you have loved us from generation to generation.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

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

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN *Go, My Children, with My Blessing*

#82

**Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone;
Waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own;
In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever,
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.**

**Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you, here with tender comfort stilled you;
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.**

***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 is accessible by stairs or elevator on the 1st floor. Today, we will have a special cake to celebrate Dr. Morgan's first Sunday!

The flowers on the altar are given by Cindy Smith, Cindy Duranko and Jenna Duranko in memory of Liz Coffey whose sweet spirit will forever dance in our memories.

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

Attendance Last Sunday: 14 at 8:30 AM, 86 at 10:30 AM, and 57 online.



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

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

Serving Today: January 7

Scripture Reader: Bob Manthey
Deacons: Mark Ulrich, Darryl Glick
Elder: Tyler L. York
Greeters: Anne Hoffmann, Ave Barr
Danielle Carbone
Welcome: Marj Berkheimer
Jeanellen Kallevang
Audio/Visual: Jeff Schaeberle, Larry Martin
Jeff Baker
Nursery: Kate Fromknecht
Fellowship: Julie Clark, Joe Adkins
Quynn, Pat Dorsz, Kyle Miller
Bobby Van Dyk, Hollie Mercier

Serving Next Week: January 14

Robin A. Brady-Slifer
Robin L. Brady-Slifer
Eric Weakly
Cathie Duncan, Rob Smith
Cliff Barr
Julie Clark, Sue Pinner
Rodney Martin, Larry Martin
Kelly Esslinger
Emily Spear, Abby, Ben
Karen Justice, Laura Rhoderick
Susan Kulp, Peter Brehm
Marj Berkheimer

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

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 contact the church office at (301) 662-2762 or erucc@erucc.org.

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:

Elsa	Shannon Baxter (daughter of Kathy Gelles-Baxter)	Jeannette Johnson
Richard Leslie	Milt Crutchley	Jackie Keyser (sister-in-law of Betsy and Phil Selby)
Susan Whiting (sister of Nan MacNamara)	Sandra Trout	Tamara Tamas
Marie Wallace (mother of Glenn Wallace-Weitz)	Autumn Crutchley	Barbara Lee Crutchley (sister of Milt Crutchley)
Bob Pinner	Christiane Armitage (sister- in-law of Linda Coyle)	Marcy Channell (daughter of JoAnn Fritz)
Betsy Fisher	Jason Rhoads	Paige Coffey
Caughy Family	Nathan Cable	Jane Doll
Donna Hill (mother of Collen Baldree)	Hillal Eastburn	Fran Wenner
Philip Hill (father of Colleen Baldree)	Barbara Rhoads	Bonnie Devilbiss
Tanya Pearre (sister of Colleen Baldree)	Pat Condo	The McCarty family
Jim Baldree (father of Chuck Baldree)	Cathy Crome (sister of Nancy Jones)	Tina Prescott (daughter-in-law of Barbara & Bill Prescott)
Katharine Alley	Greg Rhoads	Mary Remsberg
Anne Gallagher (friend of Milt and Bettie Joe Crutchley)	Holly Davis	Heleen (sister of Karin Mens)
Lee Thomas	Marcia Eisenstein	Kathy Blue Shores (friend of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)
Joan Thomas (mother of Dan Smith's friend)	Derek C. Hupp (grandson of Beanie & Gaylon Cornell)	Gretchen Manuel (niece of Audrey Rayfield)
Lucy Patterson Cox (friend of Kathleen Jefferson)	Wayne Kolb (friend of Stefan and Judi Mach and Tony and Linda LaFianza)	
	Conway Barnes (brother-in- law of George & Linda Kline)	
	Pat Hevner	

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.

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?

LET'S TALK with Rev. Esther Ziegler

Sundays, January 7, 21, and 28

Community Room

9:30 – 10:15 AM



Over these three Sundays we will discuss three women who lived during very different times in the course of Israel's history as it moved from a confederation of tribes descended from Jacob to a monarchy under Saul's rule, to the brink of defeat because its rulers and aristocracy had strayed from their covenant with God.

January 7 - **Rahab** lived between the walls of Jericho before they “came tumblin’ down” and hundreds of years later she was listed in Jesus’ genealogy as recorded in Matthew. She assisted the Hebrew spies that Joshua had sent to Jericho when the tribes of Israel were preparing to enter the Promised Land. Her story is found in the book of Joshua, but she is also mentioned in Matthew and Hebrews in the “Newer” Testament. For this session we will be using material from *Eavesdropping on the Echoes* by Ted Loder.

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.

Youth Sunday School will not meet January 14 while many participate in the Franklinton Center at Bricks work trip.

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, 2024

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.

This Week at ERUCC

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 (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.

Food Donations Needed for Meals

We will be preparing our own meals while we work to restore and improve the facilities at Franklinton Center at Bricks. We could use your help in providing donations for these meals. Please review the items list available through the website/QR code below and sign up as you are able. All donations must be in the church kitchen and labeled as "Franklinton Trip" no later than Thursday, January 11. Monetary donations are also welcome. Thank you, as always, for your generosity and support!



Donation List: <https://bit.ly/3RJQmla>

Upcoming at ERUCC

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.

FRIDAY NIGHT “OUT” TO THE MOVIES

Friday, January 19

Community Room

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Join us on Friday, January 19 for a night in, while “out” at the movies! We’re hosting a church-wide movie celebration with a pasta buffet and viewing of *Ratatouille*, chosen by our Youth Group for us all! Please come for dinner at 6:00 PM and movie viewing from 6:30 – 8:00 PM.

ERUCC BOOK GROUP

Tuesday, January 23

North Room / Zoom

7:00 PM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERUCCbooks

Meeting ID: 848 7056 7574

Passcode: 226669

Poverty, By America by Matthew Desmond. The United States, the richest country on earth, has more poverty than any other advanced democracy. Why? Why does this land of plenty allow one in every eight of its children to go without basic necessities, permit scores of its citizens to live and die on the streets, and authorize its corporations to pay poverty wages?



In this landmark book, acclaimed sociologist Matthew Desmond draws on history, research, and original reporting to show how affluent Americans knowingly and unknowingly keep poor people poor. Elegantly written and fiercely argued, this compassionate book gives us new ways of thinking about a morally urgent problem. It also helps us imagine solutions. Desmond builds a startlingly original and ambitious case for ending poverty. He calls on us all to become poverty abolitionists, engaged in a politics of collective belonging to usher in a new age of shared prosperity and, at last, true freedom.

SERVICE OF WELCOME FOR DR. MORGAN

Sunday, January 28

Sanctuary

3:00 PM

A Service of Welcome for Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan as Intentional Interim Senior Pastor will take place Sunday, January 28 at 3:00 PM in our Sanctuary. A reception will immediately follow in the Community Room. Please join us in giving Dr. Morgan an extravagant welcome!

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



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 resumes next Sunday, January 14.

CHILDREN & YOUTH RAISING FUNDS FOR HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Our Sunday school classes are collecting cash and change to make donations to Heifer International. Since 1944, Heifer International has been working to end hunger and poverty in partnership with the communities by supporting entrepreneurs around the world, creating lasting change from the ground up. Seed investment of livestock or agriculture, partnered with business mentorships and access to supply chains and markets allow the world's farmers, ranchers, and female business owners to both provide for their own families and lift up the next generation of leaders in their communities. Our donations will help to “build inclusive, resilient economies, so communities can develop effective ways to end global hunger and poverty in a sustainable way.”

You can help each of our classrooms to meet their goals by donating! Each classroom has a goal to meet by Sunday, January 28. Our Younger Elementary class (Pre-K through 2nd grade) has decided to raise money to purchase sheep; The Older Elementary class, (grades 3-5) are raising money to purchase and gift families ducks; and our Youth are raising money to purchase the Dream Basket, which includes sheep, heifer, goats, ducks, and chicks. All are on their way to their goals but would appreciate your help too! You can give by bringing cash or change to the church office with a designation or by depositing it in a jar at the back of the sanctuary during January only.

TINY TOTS – SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, January 20

Save the date for a Tiny Tots gathering! Look for more information from Pastor Kirstin.



Other Announcements and Reminders

2023 YEAR END GIVING STATEMENTS

As we begin 2024, 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 in 2023. The final 2023 year-end giving statements will be distributed before the end of January 2024, either via e-mail or printed and mailed.

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:



GERMANY FAMILY HOSTING “SAVE THE DATES” FOR HOSTING

Please save the dates from June 22 - July 8 as the arrival and departure dates for our group visiting from Germany. We expect to host about 15 people which means that we need 10-15 families depending on how many people a family can host. We ALSO have a plan to go to Bethany Beach and stay at the Discipleship Center from June 24 - 29. During this time, you would not be hosting in your home. All ERUCC youth are invited to come to the Bethany Beach retreat. Other group plans include to be at Baker Park for the 4th of July and to see the sites in DC again, including hopefully the White House and the German Embassy.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

SUNDAY MORNING

Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ prefers not to cancel worship services because of the weather. We advise you to use your own good judgment about whether conditions where you live are too treacherous for you to make it to services safely.

If conditions are such that the ERUCC needs to cancel services, we will make that decision no less than one and a half hours ahead of the time each worship service begins. Activities such as Christian Education classes for children, youth, and adults and Nursery Care may be cancelled even if worship services continue as scheduled.

Notification: If services are cancelled, we notify people via email, our Facebook page(s) and the website at www.erucc.org.

WEEKDAYS AND SATURDAYS

Church classes, groups, meetings, and other activities may be canceled or held virtually when possible and appropriate if weather conditions are hazardous or are predicted to become hazardous. If you have a question about whether or not your specific event is cancelled, please contact the coordinator/leader of the event.

The church office is 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.

Notification: If the church office is closed or will delay opening, we will post a notification on our Facebook page(s) and the website at www.erucc.org.



**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

JANUARY 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/jan24chimes.



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.

**THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
(FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY)**

January 7, 2024

Mark 1:4-11

Defining Moments

“Every time you listen with great attentiveness to the voice that calls you the Beloved, you will discover within yourself a desire to hear that voice longer and more deeply. It is like discovering a well in the desert. Once you have touched wet ground, you want to dig deeper.” -Henri Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*.

A Dutch priest interested in the intersection of theology and psychology, Henri Nouwen was born in January 1932 and moved to the United States in the early 1960s. In the 1970s and into the 1980s, he taught at Yale and Harvard where many progressive seminary students received their education in those years. Nouwen’s teaching about the human need for connection with God and one another, and the necessity for creating peace in individuals as well as in communities and the world, was influential to a generation of pastors, many of whom went on to serve at United Church of Christ churches.

Nouwen was deeply moved by the work of L’Arch communities, which are Christian communities formed of people both with and without developmental disabilities, and at the end of his life he left his relatively prestigious and well-paying career to live in a L’Arch community himself.

Nouwen wrote widely about this life and experience. But although he never spoke publicly about this, Nouwen revealed in his letters and in conversations with friends that he knew he was gay. Because of his generation and circumstances, the reality of Nouwen being closeted caused him pain and loneliness. And yet, his writings about the importance of creating beloved community taught countless student pastors who went on to lead movements to create Open and Affirming United Church of Christ congregations, which welcome all.

It is likely that the church where you are worshiping today was at one time led by a pastor who was taught by Henri Nouwen, who passed away in 1996. He was never able to live openly as full self, and for that this generation may grieve. Yet, his life opened doors for countless others and the impact of his teaching is still being felt today and for that, all who were touched by his life can rejoice.



8.5" x 14" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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