



Mysterious Encounter

Thank you for worshiping with us this morning. We extend a special welcome to our guests.

If you are a guest, please visit the welcome desk. 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.

For Children: We have trained nursery staff for ages 0-4. A deacon or greeter can guide you to the nursery. 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 and a children's table is available for quiet activities at the front of the sanctuary.

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.

Restrooms (accessible and equipped with changing stations) are located on the second floor, below the sanctuary, and on the first floor, outside the Community Room.

There is more information about the church in this bulletin and our website: www.erucc.org.

Ministers and Staff of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan ~ *Intentional Interim Senior Pastor* ~ mmorgan@erucc.org
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
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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

Ave Barr | Peter Brehm | Robin Cooney | Matt Huetting | Jeanellen Kallevang | Eric Weakly

Deacons of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

Quynn Adkins | Robin A. Brady-Slifer | Robin L. Brady-Slifer | Angela Brittain
Jim Brittain | Matt Davis | Harrison Fisher | Kyle Miller

Transition Team of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

Felecia Bishop | Tommie Bradshaw | Karen Justice | Terry Logee | Allen Maples
Thomasa Pomeroy | Bud Rossig | Eliza Stitely | Lucas Nguyen-Powell | Isaac Pomeroy



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



May 26, 2024

Trinity Sunday

10:30 AM

The numbered hymns are from
The New Century Hymnal

*All who are able may stand

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peter Brehm

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (adapted from the Athanasian Creed)

O Lord, our Sovereign God,
You are neither made nor fashioned by anyone.
Wonderful beyond measure,
You are faithful Father and Mother,
servant Son, and enlivening Spirit.
Holy Lord, beautiful and dynamic,
Intimately united as a society of love,
You are our Creator and cause,
You are our perfect Savior,
You are our Intercessor and giver of spiritual gifts.
The Lord of all has called us forth;
Our Triune God has made us good.
Hallelujah, bless the Lord.
Hallelujah, praise God's holy name!

***OPENING PRAYER**

Holy Spirit of God, invisible like the wind,
we do not see you moving among us, but the effect we see—
Come to our hearts: that we may be renewed and reborn.
Open our minds: that we may perceive your kingdom.
Lift up our eyes to where the cross of Christ stands for our healing:
so may we believe, through him who in your love for us you sent into the
world, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

Holy, Holy, Holy

#277

**Holy, holy, holy, God the Almighty!
Early in the morning we praise your majesty!
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!**

**Holy, holy, holy! Saints adore you truly,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim, bow before you only,
From the beginning, God eternally.**

**Holy, holy, holy! Through we know but dimly,
Though the eyes of humankind your glory may not see,
You alone are holy, you alone are worthy,
Perfect in power, in love and purity.**

**Holy, holy, holy, God the Almighty!
All your works shall praise your name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!**

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

As heirs of God, let us come to lay before God our sin and wrongdoings and lack of faith. Let us come with hearts that seek newness.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Holy One, we acknowledge that too often we try to live
not acknowledging the mystery of your Being.
Even though you have shown us your truth,
we allow ourselves to rest in our own uncertainties.
We find ourselves unable or unwilling to embrace the love
through which you sent Christ to live among us.
We take for granted the grandeur of you as Creator,
of Christ as Redeemer,
and of the Holy Spirit as ever-present sustainer.
We do not live out the beloved community you desire for all.
Forgive us, we pray, and help us give testimony to your love.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

We trust in these promises:

that the Triune God, in each of its persons,
promises us newness of life, a gift of new birth.

The Divine Trinity invites us to testify to its Being
as the foundation for reconciliation all of God's people and for Creation.

In these truths we trust and give thanks. Thanks Be to God!

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 ages 5 through 5th grade may be dismissed for Junior Church,
located in the Thomas Room (2nd floor).*

***HYMN**

Lift High the Cross

#198

Refrain:

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim;

Let all adore that sacred name.

**Come, Christians, follow where our Savior trod,
the Lamb victorious, Christ, the Son of God. [Refrain]**

**Each newborn servant of the Crucified
bears on the brow the seal of Christ who died. [Refrain]**

**O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
your death has brought us life eternally. [Refrain]**

**Set up your throne, that earth's despair may cease,
beneath the shadow of its healing peace. [Refrain]**

**So shall our song of triumph ever be:
praise to the Crucified for victory. [Refrain]**

THE SCRIPTURES

Jim Weitz

Isaiah 6:1-8 OT page 635

Romans 8:12-17 NT page 158

John 3:1-17 NT page 93

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

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

MORNING PRAYERS

CELEBRATION FOR OUR GRADUATES

God of truth and knowledge,
by your wisdom we are taught the way and the truth.
Bless our graduates as they now finish this place in their study.

**We thank you for those
who taught and worked beside them,
and all who supported them along the way.**

Walk with the graduates
as they move forward in life.
Take away their anxiety and confusion of purpose.
**Strengthen their many talents and skills,
instill in them a confidence in the future you plan,
where energies may be gathered up
and used for the good of all people.**

For the graduates, this truly is a day of new beginnings,
a time to remember and move on,
and a time to believe what love is bringing.

**May they always know that
Christ is alive and goes before us,
to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings,
our God is making all things new.**

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

God is the Giver of life, Christ is the Gift sent to share our life, and the Holy Spirit the power that enables us to continue in generosity, justice and joy.
Let us open our hearts and our lives to God and one another.

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 to our church's ministries and programs. We also use this time to ask God how we might use the gifts of our hands and hearts to share God's love. If you are visiting, there is no obligation to give a financial gift. We are just glad you are worshiping with us.

If you wish to give, you can give online at www.erucc.org, by placing your gift in the offering plates in the rear of the sanctuary before or after the service, or by scanning the QR code to give from your phone.



OFFERTORY

Prayer for Shalom

Senior Choir
– K. Pederson

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Generous God, may we give gifts that are sufficient and abundant, as you have provided creation with all that we need to flourish. May the fear of scarcity give way to the joy of sharing. Magnify the resources we bring and cultivate generosity within us so that all needs are met and all your people may be well and whole in your name. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory

#610

**My eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,
who is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored,
And has loosed the fateful lightning of a terrible swift sword;
God's truth is marching on.**

Refrain:

**Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
God's truth is marching on.**

**God has been there in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps,
where they built a sacred altar in the evening dews and damp;
I can read the righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps;
God's day is marching on. [*Refrain*]**

**God has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
and is sifting out the hearts of all before the judgment seat;
O be swift, my soul, to answer and be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on. [*Refrain*]**

**In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
with a glory in whose bosom that transfigures you and me;
As Christ died to make us holy, let us die to make all free;
While God is marching on. [*Refrain*]**

***BENEDICTION**

***SEVENFOLD AMEN**

#814

POSTLUDE

Please be seated.



Worship Notes: Today's liturgy is from UCC Worship Ways: *Mysterious Encounter: Service Prayers for Trinity Sunday* was written by the Rev. Dr. Bertrice Wood, Sagamore Hills, Ohio. The Call to Worship comes from Faithward.org and the Opening Prayer was written by Michael Perry, The Jubilate Group,



ERUCC CELEBRATES OUR SENIORS AND GRADUATES

Liam Cumber – Governor Thomas Johnson High School
Jared Huetting – Poolesville High School
Ben Mercier – Indiana University Bloomington
Maria Lagrotteria – American University Washington College of Law
Maddie Martin – Penn State College of Medicine

Fellowship: Please join us after worship in our Community Room for a time of fellowship.

The flowers on the altar this morning are in loving memory of Gerri Wilson by Bruce Wilson.

The yellow rose is placed in honor and remembrance of those who have died in service to the United States.

Attendance Last Sunday: 14 at 8:30 AM, 156 at 10:30 AM, and 61 online.



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

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

Serving Today: May 26

Scripture Reader: Jim Weitz
Deacons: Betsy Selby, Jim Britain
Elder: Peter Brehm
Greeters: Niel and Kathleen Jefferson
Rob Smith
Welcome: Jeanellen Kallevang
Audio/Visual: Jeff Schaeberle, Larry Martin
Jeff Baker
Nursery: Kate Fromknecht
Fellowship: Susan Kulp, David Howard
Carolyn Roberts, Colin Nealy
Robert Morris

Serving Next Week: June 2

Patti Patterson
Eric Weakly
Larry Martin, Jeff Baker
Kelly Esslinger
Robert Kambic
Rena Kline, Cathie Duncan
Jim Weitz, Glenn Wallace Weitz
Kathleen and Niel Jefferson
Emily Button Kambic

Next Sunday: June 2 – Pride Sunday

Isaiah 56:1-8 | 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Pride Sunday is a celebration of the image of God in everyone and the diversity of humanity. In the beginning, when God breathed the breath of life in us, God blessed us and called us very good. There is no better way to celebrate the fact that we were created in the image of the Divine than by being unapologetically ourselves and becoming the people God called us to be: authentic, whole, complex, and made to love.

This Sunday, we will share communion. We will give thanks for all those who supported children, youth, and adult Christian Education classes and activities this year. The Senior Choir will sing, and the Chancel Handbell Choir will offer an anthem.

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.

ERUCC members who are in nursing homes and those who currently reside in their homes but are unable to come to regular Sunday morning services will continue to receive visits (and communion) from Rev. Bob Manthey.

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:

Gerry Hanberry
Sherry Murray
Haley Duff
Bill Gourlie
Pat Hanberry
Charlie Woodward
Sherry Murray
Jack Mens
Charlotte Blue and Family
(friends of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)
Mark Ulrich
Emogene Wyand
Richard Leslie
Bob Pinner
Betsy Fisher
Delmar Speak
Donna Hill (mother of Collen
Baldree)
Philip Hill (father of Colleen
Baldree)

Tanya Pearre (sister of Colleen
Baldree)
Jim Baldree (father of Chuck
Baldree)
Anne Gallagher (friend of Milt
and Bettie Joe Crutchley)
Lee Thomas
Joan Thomas (mother of Dan
Smith's friend)
Autumn Crutchley
Jason Rhoads
Nathan Cable
Greg Rhoads
Marcia Eisenstein
Derek C. Hupp (grandson of
Beanie & Gaylon Cornell)
Wayne Kolb (friend of Stefan
and Judi Mach and Tony and
Linda LaFianza)
Jeannette Johnson

Jackie Keyser (sister-in-law of
Betsy and Phil Selby)
Barbara Lee Crutchley (sister
of Milt Crutchley)
Marcy Channell (daughter of
JoAnn Fritz)
Paige Coffey
Fran Wenner
Bonnie Devilbiss
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)

Please notify the church office when you want your request removed from the prayer list.

Today at ERUCC

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

Sundays

North Room / Zoom

9:00 – 10:15 AM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERsunstudy

Meeting ID: 893 8670 5888

Passcode: 327128

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

We will not meet Sunday, May 26; class will resume June 2.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

9:30 – 10:10 AM

One May 26 and June 2, our Pre-K – 2nd Grade class and 3rd – 5th Grade class will have a combined Children's Sunday School in the Community Room.

Our Youth Sunday School class for 6th – 12th Grade meets in the Clapp Conference Room in the Parish House Church Offices. On May 26, Youth will meet briefly in their classroom before supporting Children's Sunday School in the Community Room. On June 2, Youth should go directly to the Community Room.

June 2 is the final class for the 2023-2024 school year. We will give thanks for those who supported children and youth Christian Education classes and activities this year at a breakfast during Sunday School hour in the Community Room and during the 10:30 AM service.

Ways to Give to Evangelical Reformed UCC

WEBSITE

www.erucc.org/give



one time or recurring gifts

GIVE THE NEW WAY



We're moving to a better way of giving. Scan to try it for yourself!

CASH OR CHECK

*made payable to
Evangelical Reformed UCC
15 W. Church St,
Frederick MD 21701*



*offering plates
are available in the
rear of the sanctuary
before and after worship*

This Week at ERUCC

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY with Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

Tuesdays

North Room / Zoom

11:00 AM

Zoom: bit.ly/3TdUnOy

Meeting ID: 875 1423 3398

Passcode: 973365

Revs. David Felten and Jeff Procter-Murphy, along with an all-star cast of Bible scholars and top church teachers, provide a primer to a church movement that encourages every Christian to "live the questions" instead of "forcing the answers." We will supplement our reading with the DVD course, which includes commentary from such bestselling authors as Diana Butler Bass, John Shelby Spong, Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, Brian McLaren, and others.

GENTLE YOGA

Tuesdays

Trinity Chapel

7:00 PM

Experience tranquility and wellness in this Gentle Yoga Class. Led by experienced Yogamour instructors, this nurturing practice focuses on gentle postures, mindful breathing, and deep relaxation techniques. Join us in this spiritual journey to strengthen the body, soothe the mind, and connect with your inner self. Participants of all levels are welcome.

Each class is \$10. Questions? Contact Renae, rdkline15@gmail.com.

To access the yoga classroom in Trinity Chapel, walk through the gate to the left of the building, down the walkway to the side door, and into the hallway leading to the classroom.

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

Wednesdays

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.

ERUCC BOOK GROUP

Tuesday, May 28

North Room / Zoom

7:00 PM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERUCCbooks

Meeting ID: 848 7056 7574

Passcode: 226669

The Secret Chord by Geraldine Brooks provides new context for some of the best-known episodes of David's life while also focusing on others, even more remarkable and emotionally intense, that have been neglected. We see David through the eyes of those who love him or fear him—from the prophet Nathan, voice of his conscience, to his wives Mikhal, Avigail, and Batsheva, and finally to Solomon, the late-born son who redeems his Lear-like old age.

Upcoming at ERUCC

"THE STORY OF PLASTIC" FILMMAKER DISCUSSION

Thursday, June 6

Virtual Webinar

7:00 – 8:00 PM



Join Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake for an exclusive screening of "The Story of Plastic"! Experience the film before engaging in an in-depth and thought-provoking talkback session with the filmmaker. Registrants will receive exclusive access to a

link for viewing the 95-minute film one week before the discussion. To watch the film, please register and join IPC for the live webinar discussion. ERUCC's Green Team Leader Linda Coyle will also share about our congregation's efforts to make a difference!

Register: bit.ly/3y1OCIK

FAMILY CAMPING

Gifford Pinchot State Park, PA

June 7 - 9

We're camping June 7-9 in Gifford Pinchot State Park in Pennsylvania, about an hour's drive from ERUCC. The park includes multiple small sites next to one another for pitching a tent or bringing an RV, a central area with gravel ground that includes multiple picnic tables, and several fire circles. Our site is within walking distance of a shower house and a small sandy beachfront with a small playground area. We can also drive to other waterfront locations to visit the nature center, rent boats, or fish and to other green spaces to play other sports.

We plan to have cold breakfast items and supplies to pack or make sandwiches at lunchtime. We'd like to invite a couple of families to pair up to cook dinners on Friday and Saturday.

Sign up to camp in the Sanctuary Lobby. Cost per family is estimated to be \$30-40. Connect with Pastor Kirstin to help with programming and Owen York to help with meals.

WEAR ORANGE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION – WE CAN END GUN VIOLENCE

Saturday, June 8

Community Room

10:00 – 11:30 AM



Frederick's Mom's Demand chapter will host a Round Table Discussion focusing on the impact of gun violence on survivors and how we, as a community, can meet the needs.

You are encouraged to wear orange to worship on June 9 as a public witness in support of gun violence prevention.

Ending gun violence is going to take all of us. Learn more about Wear Orange at <https://wearorange.org/>.

ERUCC AT FREDERICK PRIDE 2024

Experience the Joy and Unity of the LGBTQ+ Community in Frederick. Join ERUCC at our outreach table to share our message of community!!

Sign up now to volunteer with ERUCC's outreach during Pride: <https://bit.ly/ERatPride24>



A JUST WORLD FOR ALL

GERMAN FRIENDS - SAVE THE DATES

Our German friends will be here before we know it! Our friends will arrive June 23 and depart July 6. We have several activities planned with our youth and there will be activities for the whole church to be involved in as well.

We can still have people join us for the trip to Bethany Beach from Tuesday, June 25 through Saturday, June 29. Email Pastor Kirstin ASAP to be a part of this trip. This activity is for youth completing 6th grade, adults who have gotten a background check and reviewed and agreed to our safe church policies since December 2022, and children of chaperones.

We also need help preparing some of our meals at church while they are here. Some of these days include the first day they arrive (June 23), the 4th of July cookout with ice cream, and a goodbye meal the day they leave for the airport (July 6). Please reach out to Starr Schaeberle, who has agreed to coordinate!

And mark your calendars now for an **ALL-CHURCH PICNIC** at Catoctin Creek Park after church on Sunday, June 30! **Sign up to contribute to our picnic meal:** bit.ly/ERpicnic24.

BE A BLESSING PRACTICE PEACE.
LEAD WITH LOVE.
BE JOYFUL. PRAY OFTEN. BE KIND. GIVE THANKS.
DO GOOD. HAVE COURAGE. WORK FOR JUSTICE.
BE THE LIGHT. ENCOURAGE OTHERS.



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.

This is the final Sunday for Junior Church until the fall. We will share more soon about plans for the summer!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL – SAVE THE DATE

August 5 - 9

ERUCC's Vacation Bible School will be August 5-9! Details and registration information will be shared in early summer. Questions? Contact Pastor Kirstin, ksrhoads@erucc.org.

A brief **Vacation Bible School Meeting** will be held on Sunday, June 2, during Fellowship after the 10:30 AM service for anyone interested in helping this year.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

No matter their mental health challenge.

No matter their immigration status.

No matter their sexual orientation.

No matter their economic status.

No matter their gender identity.

No matter their disability.

No matter their religion.

No matter their race.

Love your neighbor. No exceptions.



Other Announcements

SANKOFA DIALOGUES

Two Sankofa Dialogue sessions have occurred thus far and at least two additional sessions will be scheduled soon. Previously shared Sankofa Survey responses included some truncated comments; a corrected version of the responses can be read/downloaded: bit.ly/3UNlzEi.



CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF MEMORIAL DAY

The ERUCC pastoral and church offices will be closed Monday, May 27, in observance of Memorial Day. We give thanks as we remember and honor those who have lost their lives in military service.



Sunday Morning Schedule

subject to change

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 AM – 12:00 PM	Nursery Care , 1 st Floor
9:30 – 10:10 AM	Sunday School <i>Pre-K – 5th Grade</i> , Community Room <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

TRINITY CHIMES

Read the ERUCC monthly newsletter, *Trinity Chimes*! Find printed copies in the back of the sanctuary or read online at <https://erucc.org/category/news/monthly-newsletter/>.

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.

TRINITY SUNDAY
(1ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST)

May 26, 2024

John 3:1-17

"Mysterious Encounter"

Maybe you don't think of friendship all that often, but friendship is a truly radical act. Friendship has no real purpose. Friends choose each other, without blood ties, without, as the scientists say, "the imperative of procreation," often outside the bounds of geography. And yet even though friendship has a sort of ambiguous status in our culture (we both diminish the relationship of friendship "it's nothing serious: they're just friends" and uphold it, as in "he has many acquaintances, but few friends"), most of us seem to yearn for it.

Theologian Sallie McFague says of the relationships in our lives: "one does not choose one's parents, and even falling in love seems to have a kind of destiny about it, but friends choose to be together...your mother desires your existence, and your lover finds you valuable, but your friend **LIKES** you!"

But don't confuse **LIKE** with **ALIKE**. Because the alchemy that brews the mysterious metal of individuals into the pure gold of real friendship is not necessarily commonality. It's not necessarily about looking at each other, so much as it's about looking ahead in the same direction. A lot of times, it's having a task or goal that you can work on together that helps cement a friendship bond – the mission project, the facilities work day, the book club.

Trinity Sunday is today. It is one day when we pause to marvel that our God is both One and Three. It is one day to remind ourselves that our God is a God of relationship, of friendship that creates and flourishes in a dance of delight and Divine love.

What if it's on purpose that everything was created out of this Holy Love Dance? What if how God is created – three, one, whirling, creating, loving - is part of the plan of things? What if friendship is how it all started, how it all is sustained? What if friendship (that ambiguous but somehow important word) is what God wants of us, what God has called us here for now? What if God has that radical friendship love for us, has had it since the beginning?

Look around you. Perhaps you are sitting with friends right now. How do these friends show you more about God's work in the world?



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

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