

Trinity Chimes

A Newsletter of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ in Frederick, Maryland

FALL 2024



Global Connections

Read highlights of the transformative experiences and lasting friendships that have enriched our youth and church community through ERUCC's partnership with churches from the Klein Schwechten parish area of Eastern Germany.

READ MORE ON PAGE 14



Loving Out Loud
Is it a radical act for a church to participate in a Pride Festival?



Reflect on God's Gifts
Approach giving from a spiritual perspective can deepen our understanding of God.



Clock Tower Fundraising Well on the Way, More Needed
Broad support for preservation project continues to grow.



Children and Youth Connect with Creation
Overnight camp at Gretna Glen and VBS enrich connection to God's Creation.

A Look Ahead at Worship



Rejoice in Our Welcome Sunday *September 8*

We will rejoice in God's extravagant welcome, celebrate our connection and community, and launch a new year of faith formation activities for children, youth, and adults.



World Communion and Consecration Sunday *October 6*

Celebrate communion with Christians around the world, gathered symbolically at a common table and give God thanks by consecrating our gifts to God's work in the coming year.



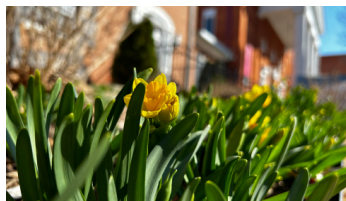
Reformation Sunday *October 27*

We give thanks as we ponder our history, ancient and still developing. We honor the vision to be a part of a new reformation for the Church that will bring ever more joy and justice to the world.



Faith & Democracy Sunday *September 29*

A time of worship and mobilization to urge citizens to vote in the 2024 General Election around faith and democratic principles of valuing and affirming the voice and dignity of all, especially "the least of these" among us.



Creation Care Sunday *October 13*

God delights in creation and declares it good. We celebrate, remember, and advocate for creation as an act of faith.



All Saints Sunday *November 3*

We celebrate, honor, and remember our forebearers of the faith, remembering in prayer those members of the congregation, family members, and friends who have died in the past year.

Don't Miss Out

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events at ERUCC

Women's Retreat
September 28

God's Kids Club
October 3
October 28
November 5

Youth Group – Cyber Safety
October 7

Transition Team Talk – Heritage
October 13

Forest Bathing
October 13

Smoke Free Holy Ground
November 13

Hanging of the Greens
November 23



THE CONFLUENCE OF THE SHENANDOAH AND POTOMAC RIVERS AT HARPERS FERRY

Change in the Community of Faith

Written by:
Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan,
Interim Senior Pastor

We are blessed to have two living pastors emeriti of ERUCC—Fred Wenner and Barbara Kershner Daniel.

In a way, their continued presence is an example of a principle articulated by the ancient philosopher Heraclitus in his Theory of Flux. A word-for-word translation of his actual words reads:

“On those stepping into rivers staying the same other and other waters flow.” In modern English we might modify these words to say: “different waters flow in rivers that stay the same.” Or, perhaps even more clearly: “although the water molecules flowing in a river are always new, not the same ones that flowed by earlier, still the river remains a river.”

Indeed, if the same water stayed in one place, it would be a lake or a pond, not a river. Heraclitus realized a river can stay the same over time even though, or indeed because, the water is flowing/changing. His point: not everything is changing all the time, but the changing of some things makes possible the enduring and unchanging existence of others.

Evangelical Reformed UCC is ERUCC because of all the cultural nuances that make it unique. The Bible says the same thing about Christ in Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

However, don’t be deceived into thinking that an unchanging Christ is stagnant, stale and inflexible. On the contrary, we serve a risen savior who invites and challenges us to live life in all its fullness, as *we warmly embrace the changes that are constant and inevitable.*

You will read more regarding pending changes and will see in-process modifications elsewhere in this issue of the Trinity Chimes. I commend you on the faith and courage you constantly show, as God continues to change and mold this community of faith into God’s own image.

Creating Space for Deeper Relationships in Our Church



SACRED CONVERSATIONS

Written by:
Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

We weren't made, nor were we meant to walk through life alone. This is inherent in the word *community*, which implies coming together to act in unity.

We need each other. That's a simple fact. We weren't made, nor were we meant, to walk through life alone. This is inherent in the word *community*, which implies coming together to act in unity. It's also at the heart of what it means to be a congregation, a church family.

A professor of mine once said, "You can't be a Christian alone because the things that the Bible teaches—the life that God and Jesus invite us to live out—are impossible to do alone."

Recently, we formed a group named *Sacred Conversations*. Our elders and pastors recognized that many in our community struggle with changes in life, especially related to physical limitations and independence. As we age or face life-changing circumstances, we may no longer be able to do what we used to by ourselves.

For the past two months, we've gathered to listen, pray, and connect in a time of holy sharing. This is an open group,

Chimes Refresh

We are excited to share this first edition of a refreshed Trinity Chimes.

Earlier this year, after much reflection and discussion, we decided to embark on a journey to transform our newsletter into something that goes beyond simply sharing information—

it will instead seek to serve as a source of inspiration, connection, and spiritual nourishment for our entire congregation.

Our goal is to create a newsletter that truly reflects who we are as a church family, highlighting the stories, experiences, and faith journeys that make our community so special. We want to use Trinity Chimes to showcase God's work in our lives and to provide encouragement to deepen our discipleship.

Through this refreshed format, we hope to foster greater community and connection, inspire active engagement with our mission, and nourish spiritual growth. We'll be incorporating more photos, short-form pieces, and human-interest stories to bring the life of our congregation into these pages.

Our previous format required a demanding cycle to produce a quality piece each month. Our new approach will be published on a quarterly basis.

We hope this new schedule will alleviate some of the pressures placed on volunteers and staff who serve as contributors, designers, proofreaders, and editors while still delivering a meaningful and impactful newsletter that truly reflects the heart of our church community.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We look forward to seeing how God will use *Trinity Chimes* to bless and inspire us all.

meaning anyone who identifies with this need is welcome. It's a vital group, especially in seasons of loss and change, where leaning on each other and knowing we're not alone is crucial.

During our second conversation, someone expressed how good it felt to get to know one another and share more about themselves with others who listened with compassion. Others voiced a desire to know newer members and sometimes feeling lonely.

We often talk about being part of the Big God Family and the ERUCC family. Both are incredible gifts! Yet, even in this vibrant, welcoming community, it's possible to feel alone or unknown.

We're grateful for events like our church picnic, Everybody's Birthday, movie nights, and the chili cookoff that help us get to know each other. Participating in a small group however, offers other unique gifts—such as a sense of not being alone in our experiences,

receiving immediate encouragement, seeking and giving advice, and feeling more deeply connected to our greater church community.

As I've reflected on what I was hearing in our Sacred Conservation gatherings, I wonder about the possibility of other small groups. I invite you to consider whether this sounds like something that would fulfill a need for you. If you would like to engage in conversations with others in our ERUCC family—whether in a life-sharing format or with

a specific focus, from hobbies like cooking and hiking to life themes like parenting neurodivergent children or supporting non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals—please let us know! We hope to offer more opportunities for us to know and be known by one another more deeply and meaningfully.

What's That Fridge Doing in Our Parking Lot?

Did you know that there's a refrigerator in our back parking lot? What's up with that?

Written by:
Peter Brehm



If you haven't seen it, yes, there is a full-size refrigerator in a blue shed enclosure nestled against the raised planter and the fence surrounding our HVAC units.

It's called the Community Fridge, and it's filled with shelf stable foods that are free for anyone who has a need. It's estimated that 25-50 people are stopping by the fridge each week, coming on foot, bicycle, and car.

A volunteer group, Frederick Community Fridge and Outreach Group, stocks the refrigerator and the pantry shelves beside it 2-3 times each week. They restock with items purchased through monetary donations or with in-kind donations by individuals and groups. (Note: The Frederick Health Department has prohibited the stocking of items such as dairy, meat, and eggs that are not shelf stable for food safety reasons.)

The project was started about three years ago to fill a gap not covered by the existing food banks in the Frederick area. Those food banks accept federal food surpluses, as well as other donations, but those contributions come with regulations

and red tape about who is eligible and how often they can receive food. They're also only open certain times, like two times a month.

The Frederick Community Fridge aims to help people who aren't served by the established food banks with no waiting period, no questions asked, and no paperwork to complete—and it's available 24/7.

Their philosophy is "If you need the food, stop by and take what you need to get you by." Volunteers also go out in teams to take essentials to people without housing, shelter, or transportation.

The Community Fridge was originally hosted at Glory Doughnuts. When they closed, the fridge was housed at the Frederick Center for nearly two years. When the Frederick Center's building was sold, the new owner asked that the Community Fridge be relocated.

The group approached several organizations including ERUCC as potential hosts. Our Mission, Evangelism, and Social Justice Committee considered their request and recommended it to the Consistory, which approved it in June.



Notes of Gratitude

Our mission partners use ERUCC's support to further critical services

City of Frederick's Department of Housing & Human Services

\$824.05 through Souper Bowl of Caring collection

"Your kindness has brightened lives and provided hope to those who need it most, reminding us all of the power of compassion and community."

Frederick Community Action Agency

\$1,291.50 via ERUCC's Community Service Fund at The Community Foundation of Frederick County

"Your support will help us greatly with our Community Table, Food Bank, and other homeless services. We appreciate your continued partnership to help our neighbors create stability to feel empowered."

Heartly House, Inc.

\$1,291.50 via ERUCC's Community Service Fund at The Community Foundation of Frederick County

"Your support enables us to continue providing essential services to survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and human trafficking. Your kindness directly impacts the lives of individuals and families, offering them hope, healing, and a path to safety, and in some instances, saving lives. Your support also sends a powerful message of solidarity and compassion."

Franklinton Center at Bricks, Inc.

\$15,000 via ERUCC's Fisher Fund

"Your gift empowers Franklinton Center at Bricks to continue transformational work addressing social justice issues affecting low-income communities and leadership development."

The church's only contributions are the electricity to power the refrigerator, and the patio space occupied by the fridge and its sheltering shed. Church members are welcome to donate food or money to the group to fill the refrigerator. Simply leave foodstuffs in the refrigerator or on the pantry shelves.

Jesus said, "*Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise.*" (Luke 3:11)

Remembering those words, hosting the Community Fridge is a no-brainer!

The Community Fridge and Outreach Group also partners with the Frederick Health Department to host Opioid Overdose Response Training events, like the one ERUCC hosted on August 16, in our Downtown Community Room.

Learn more and donate to the Frederick Community Fridge:

<https://linktr.ee/frederickcommunityfridge>



MEMBERS OF THE 2024 CONSECRATION SUNDAY TEAM

Season of Stewardship

Stewardship/Generosity Committee

We're excited to enter a new season of **stewardship** and **generosity** this fall at ERUCC! You might be wondering, what does this mean for us?

In recent years, we've made meaningful changes to our annual stewardship campaign. We're following a model called Consecration Sunday, developed by Herb Miller.

Consecration Sunday encourages us to reflect on what God is calling each of us to do, rather

than focusing on what the church needs to pay its bills. It's an approach designed to nurture our spiritual well-being through giving.

On October 6, we'll invite everyone to fill out an Estimate of Giving Card as an act of worship. Again, this isn't about asking each other for money or pledges; instead, it's about fostering our spiritual growth. That day will culminate with a shared meal celebrating the abundance of our gifts.

So, as we journey through September, we invite you to join us in prayer, listen to the messages you'll hear from us during worship, and engage in conversations about what giving means to you.

We're all in this together, supporting one another's spiritual growth. Let's explore this path of generosity and stewardship as a family of faith!

Pray, Listen

As you reflect on what God is calling you to do through personal and communal prayers, the testimonies and meditations you encounter during worship, and your conversations with family, you are encouraged to also pray for the Consecration Sunday program. Please lift up the leadership team and our guest leader, Rev. Sam Chamelin, in your prayers, asking that all members of the congregation seek God's guidance in making faithful decisions about their stewardship of all God's gifts.

A Gift for Me

Written by:
Robin L. Brady-Slifer

Over the past year, I've found myself waking up in the early morning hours, sometimes as early as 2 o'clock. Initially, I was frustrated by these early awakenings, worrying about how tired I would be throughout the day. I would pace around my house, mulling over family matters and work, trying to resolve issues on my own. I've always been someone who feels responsible for solving problems, believing that if I don't handle them, no one else will.

However, during these early mornings, as I ruminated on my problems and solutions, I began to sense a different kind of interruption. It was as if God was gently guiding me to lean on Him. I realized that I was so burdened by daily challenges and my own attempts at resolution that I was not allowing Him to be my refuge. God seemed to be waiting for me to reach a point of exhaustion, where I would finally let Him lead me. He

reassured me that He had a plan for me, but I needed to slow down, listen, and put Him first.

I had to admit that my own solutions weren't working; I felt like I was just spinning my wheels. In my younger years, I might have resisted more, but as I've grown older, I've learned to listen when God speaks to my heart.

God wasn't just telling me to rely on Him; He was also placing specific tasks on my heart. One morning, I felt compelled to give money to a person I barely knew. I was apprehensive, wondering if my gesture might be taken the wrong way. Despite my nervousness, I put the money in a card and gave it to the person. To my relief, it was received warmly.

A short time later, a similar experience occurred with another individual in the community. Again, I followed the prompting to give money, and the



response was one of genuine gratitude and blessing for both of us. These experiences confirmed to me that God was indeed guiding me and that I mattered to Him.

Now, I still wake up early, but instead of succumbing to anxiety and worry, I use that time for prayer. It has become a sacred moment before everyone else is awake—a time to connect with my Heavenly Father.

I start by sharing my plans with God, only to be reminded that I am not in control. Surrendering my life to God's guidance is an exhilarating journey.

As I grow in my Christian faith, I better understand the joy and significance of giving time and resources to my church and serving others. God is teaching me that loving people and meeting their needs is more of a blessing for me than I ever imagined.

"Through volunteering in the nursery these last couple of years, I have been so blessed. I have been blessed to deepen my relationships in this community. I have found a sense of purpose and belonging, and I have been able to watch my children learn and grow."

Meredith Neely
Sharing Our Stories



Restoring the Clock Tower: How Are We Doing?

The restoration of our historic clock tower and spire is going to happen!

We have signed the contract with Durable Construction, and the permitting process is underway. Durable expects construction to begin in February. All that's left for us to do: finish raising the funds to pay for the project.

We're well on our way, thanks to a strong response from both church members and the community.

By the end of August, we have raised close to \$800,000. So, we have just \$200,000 to go—to reach the campaign goal of one million dollars.

Here's how we will do it!

Frederick Magazine's September issue has a great article telling our story; we expect it will generate additional community response. We expect additional press coverage in the future to update the community on our progress. We have also reached out nationally to individuals and groups interested in historic preservation. We have confidence these efforts will continue to move the needle up.

Here are two ways you can help!

First, make your own gift or pledge to the campaign, if you haven't already done so. It's not too late! Pick up a commitment card, available next to the offering trays in the back of the sanctuary, or simply call the church office. You can even contribute without completing a commitment card; just be sure to designate your donation for the Historic Clock Tower campaign. Every gift moves us closer to our goal.

Second, ask your friends, neighbors, and colleagues to contribute. We have already received many gifts because church members told others about the project, and they wanted to help after hearing about it. Send them a link to the great video on saveourspires.org. Check it out, if you haven't seen it yet. If you're excited about our project, it will translate into contributions from those you know!

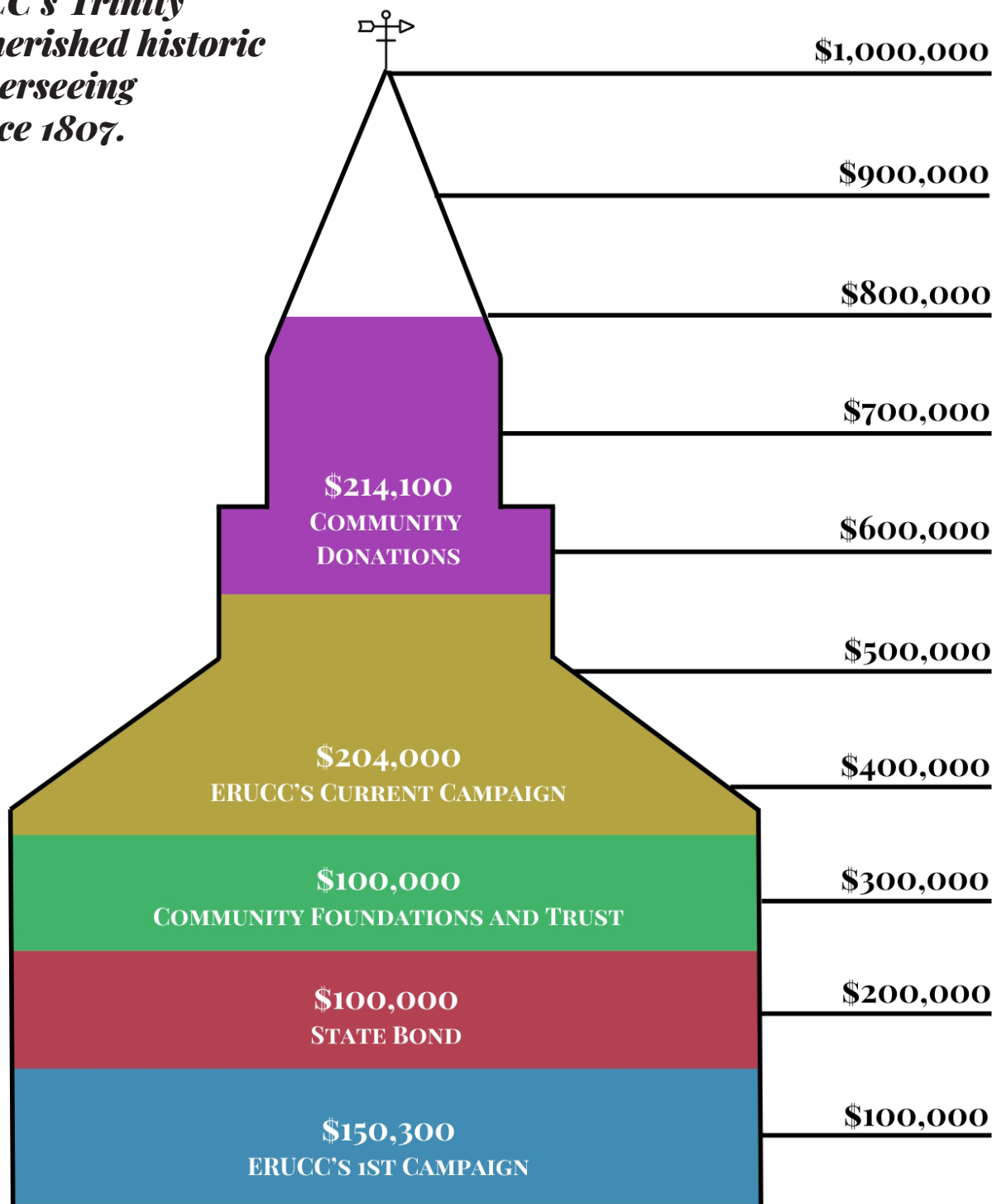
The last dollars of a fund-raising campaign are always the hardest to find, but we can find them!

This summer's Paris Olympics offered a great example for us to follow: in the track and field events, not one Canadian runner medaled individually. But, four of them running together in a relay won the gold. Think about it. Individually, no one won. Together, they won gold. The clock tower restoration will be fully funded when we run together. The finish line is in sight. Let's cross it together.

Written by:
David Cooney,
Historic Clock Tower
Restoration
Committee

Historic Clock Tower Fundraising Campaign

The clock tower and steeple gracing ERUCC's Trinity Chapel is a cherished historic landmark, overseeing Frederick since 1807.



Visibly, Vocally Loving Out Loud

Is it radical for our church to participate in Pride?

Why does ERUCC participate in Frederick Pride?

Each June, Frederick Pride transforms Carroll Creek Linear Park into a vibrant celebration of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer+ community. Organized by The Frederick Center, this event offers a powerful opportunity for ERUCC to connect with our community and affirm that God’s love embraces people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.



At ERUCC, we believe that no one needs to suppress any part of themselves to receive God’s love.

We celebrate Pride as an expression of God’s unconditional love, and recognize each person as God’s beloved.



Tragically, many Christian churches have a history of exclusion and harmful rhetoric toward LGBTQIA+ individuals, often demonizing and casting them out. This religious trauma can severely harm the spiritual and mental health of those affected. In contrast, ERUCC stands as an open and affirming faith community that welcomes everyone.

Kathleen Jefferson, who helped organize ERUCC’s presence at Pride this year, shared, “It’s so important for us to show the community that at ERUCC, everyone is embraced. LGBTQIA+ individuals can find a home here in this community of faith and be their authentic selves.”

Standing on the side of God’s extravagant love, our presence at Frederick Pride is a public proclamation of our belief in the dignity and worth of every

individual’s journey through gender and sexuality. By doing so, we not only honor God’s unique creation within each person but also affirm the value of lives that have too often been marginalized.

So, is it radical to participate in Pride? Absolutely. And that’s why we do it.



Strong Bonds Go Beyond Borders

This summer marked our eleventh year of partnership with friends from churches in the Klein Schwechten area of Eastern Germany.

During their visit this summer, we explored various levels of politics and policy, including youth issues in the United States and environmental concerns related to beaches and woodlands.

We've continued to foster this intercultural connection because of the value it brings to broadening the minds and understandings of our youth from both countries, helping them to appreciate different people and cultures.

Some of the highlights of our time together include visiting the U.S.

Capital, the German Embassy, and other sites in Washington, D.C., spending several days at Bethany Beach, attending a Frederick Keys baseball game, touring the Gettysburg Battlefield and Gettysburg College, and sharing in worship and a church picnic together. Our activities also included an invasive species removal project in the Frederick Watershed.



ECO KAYAK TOUR



PASTOR KIRSTIN & RENÉ SCHERNIKAU



LEARNING ABOUT HORSESHOE CRABS



ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE

Quynn, 9th grade youth:

“I have been a part of the German partnership for five years now. When I first met the Germans, I was 8 and my family was a host family, I remember showing our Germans around downtown Frederick and Maryland and how excited I was to have them experience what life in the U.S. is like. Every year that the Germans have come we have been able to host; it has been a fulfilling experience because it allows new friendships to grow and old friendships to flourish. Although I have only been to Germany once, that one time was a great experience because I got to meet new people and learn about the different cultures in Germany. Also, when you are there, you stay at someone’s house while you are in Germany. Living with a host family is so cool because you get to experience what a normal day at a host family house is like and what they eat every day. Also, when you stay at someone’s house you get to experience all the stuff that happens in the place where they live.”



ALL CHURCH PICNIC WITH OUR GERMAN PARTNERS



Owen York, adult host family and program team volunteer:

“One of the primary drivers of our decision to come to ERUCC and to ultimately become members, and raise our children here, is the connection the congregation has with congregations in Germany. We have been honored to host members from our German “sister churches” a few times now. Each time has been a great experience for our family, meeting new people, and getting to know them more closely as we’re sharing our home and multiple meals together. Each time, our children have been surprised and in awe of these people from another country, watching and listening to them speak another language, how they use their utensils and asking questions about what they do in Germany. Hosting guests in your home does add extra work, cooking/planning larger meals, laundry, general housekeeping, helping with their transportation, but all of this is but a small price to pay to build new relationships, and give ourselves and our children the opportunities to experience new people and cultures. We’ve kept in touch with each group we’ve hosted and send greetings, mostly via email, a couple times a year. This past group, one of our guests, video called on our oldest child’s birthday to wish him a happy birthday, check in on all the things he got and ask what he was going to do now that he’s 10!”



REMOVING INVASIVE PLANTS FROM THE FREDERICK WATERSHED

Cam, 7th grade youth:

“Until this point, I have never had an experience as fun and educational as the ERUCC German partnership. It brought us many things to learn. Our German partners taught us the differences and similarities between our community and theirs. They taught us many different German customs. They helped us get better at embracing the differences and similarities between our communities. They taught me that there was a word in German for getting a song stuck in your head! (Ohrwurm). There are many more things I’m grateful for learning. It was amazing how well the American people and the German people blended on the Bethany beach trip, the day trip, and the other events when we were together. I remember the concert we went to on the Bethany Beach trip. I remember helping the German youth learn the song, “Sweet Caroline.” For all the people who made those events happen, I thank you for the experience.”



WORSHIP TOGETHER

Katie, 9th grade youth:

“The German exchange partnership is important to me because I love learning about other cultures and their similarities and differences. I think it’s super cool because we are connecting based on one similarity (church), but once we come together we find more and have fun and learn and grow. This is also important because of the new experiences we get to have and the points of views we are exposed to, which expands the way we see the world.”



TOURING THE GETTYSBURG BATTLEFIELD



“CHRISTMAS IN JULY” FAREWELL LUNCH



Celebrating Grads, Scholarship Awards

Evangelical Reformed UCC is fortunate to have scholarship programs available to our post-secondary students as they seek educational opportunities to develop knowledge and skills.

The Scholarship Committee awarded the following members scholarships for the 2024-2025 academic year:

Lucy Adkins

St. Mary's College of Maryland

Aiden Baldree

Millersville University of Pennsylvania

Luke Chappell

University of Maryland, Baltimore

Paige Coffey

Millersville University of Pennsylvania

Alex Cumber

St. Mary's College of Maryland

Liam Cumber

Salisbury State University

Erin Gohegan

Wilson College

Colleen Hueting

Susquehanna University

Jared Hueting

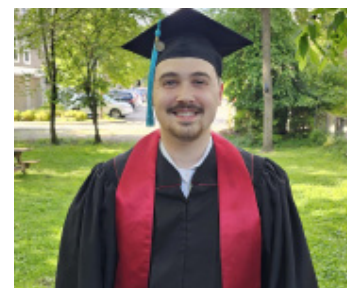
West Virginia University

Matthew Mercier

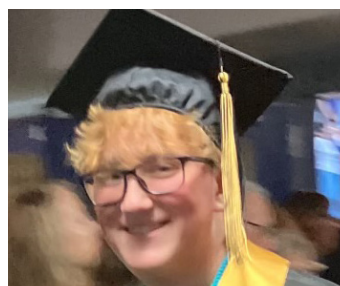
University of Maryland, College Park

Trevor Weakly

Gettysburg College



BEN MERCIER
GRADUATED FROM
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
BLOOMINGTON AND
IS NOW PURSUING A
MASTER OF PUBLIC
AFFAIRS AT IU'S
O'NEILL SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
AFFAIRS.



JARED HUETING
GRADUATED FROM
POOLESVILLE HIGH
SCHOOL AND WILL
ATTEND WEST
VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY.



MADDIE MARTIN
GRADUATED WITH A
PH.D. IN BIOMEDICAL
SCIENCES FROM PENN
STATE COLLEGE OF
MEDICINE.



LIAM CUMBER
GRADUATED FROM
GOV. THOMAS
JOHNSON HIGH
SCHOOL AND WILL
ATTEND SALISBURY
UNIVERSITY.



MARIA LAGROTTERIA
EARNED A JURIS
DOCTOR (JD) DEGREE
FROM AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON
COLLEGE OF LAW.

Night Owls

This past July, we had the joy of taking eight campers and two volunteers to Gretna Glen for a Night Owls Camp! Pastor Kirstin served as the pastor and director for a group of 47 campers, creating a safe and fun environment where our kids could build community, experience God's creation both in the light and the dark, and learn about the Fruit of the Spirit through Bible stories and creative activities.

Because this was the first time in a number of years that we planned to send kids to camp, we only budgeted for a small number of "camperships" for this summer. Imagine our surprise when we had more kids sign up for camp than we had budgeted for! So, we asked the congregation to help out, and you rose to the challenge, giving over \$1500 for additional camperships!

Here are some of the wonderful experiences that resulted from your generosity:

Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads, Volunteer Pastor

"I believe that camping ministry is one of the most creative and holistic forms of ministry. Like mission trips and retreats, it focuses on Christian community building while identifying and encouraging God's gifts in individuals. When a young person discovers new talents and learns leadership or relationship-building skills—often through adventure experiences—our church community can continue nurturing those gifts.

This summer, it was a blessing to help campers discover the beauty of God's nighttime creation, to experience calm and comfort in the stillness of night, and to reflect on the messages God has for them in the darkness when distractions are dimmed. We also considered what God might be saying to them in their own 'times of darkness,' when it can be hard to see God's light."



Emy, 6th Grade Camper

"Gretna Glen was an amazing experience! I highly recommend going next year. The people there are so nice and caring, and you'll have a great time, especially if you go with friends from church. Plus, you'll make new friends along the way. They taught us about the Fruit of the Spirit in such a fun way.

Thank you to ERUCC for helping cover the cost of camp. The counselors were so kind; when I got upset, they did everything they could to make me feel better. Even if you're not usually a 'camp person,' I think you should still try it because you might find something you love. Again, a big thank you to ERUCC for making this possible, and to Gretna Glen for being such an awesome camp!"

Isaac, 7th Grade Camper

"There are so many reasons why I loved Gretna Glen. First, I made new friends and got to hang out with people I already knew, which was awesome. Second, the pool party was AMAZING! I hope I can go back and do it again. And finally, I just had a really fun time overall. I wish we could go back right now! I had fun the whole week, made new friends, and had tons of FUN!!!"



Abby, 7th Grade Camper

“I learned about God and Jesus at camp and had a blast with the late-night activities. I would love to go again!”

Marley, 6th Grade Camper

“Camp is a different way to learn about God because we’re not just sitting and listening—we’re moving around and interacting. I learned that God created darkness as a time that can be relaxing, and that nocturnal animals are out and enjoying life too. During Bible Discovery, we even made bread like the widow made for Elijah, cooked it over the fire, and shared it with a friend.

I loved choice time because I could hang out with my friends. The pool, the craft cave, and the Snackery were all awesome!”



Thomasa, Adult Volunteer Counselor

“Gretna Glen is a wonderful place. I felt included and welcomed, and it was clear that the counselors and leaders love what they do. Every camper’s voice was heard and valued. I enjoyed watching the campers learn about God and His love, all while being outdoors. The experiences of hiking, boating, archery, and crafts were all activities that showcased God’s love. As both a volunteer and a parent, it was amazing to witness my children grow in their faith at camp.”

This summer’s Night Owls Camp at Gretna Glen was a truly transformative experience for all involved, from the campers who discovered new aspects of their faith, to the volunteers who witnessed their growth. We’re grateful to everyone who supported this journey and made it possible for our youth to have such an enriching experience.



BETSY SELBY DROPPING OFF SHOES FOR SOLES OF LOVE. 154 PAIRS WERE COLLECTED WITH SUPPORT FROM ERUCC MEMBERS. IN TOTAL, 5,359 PAIRS WERE DONATED THIS YEAR TO PROVIDE NEW SHOES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED LIVING IN FREDERICK AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES

Compassion Camp: What Every Living Thing Needs

Written by:
Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

This year's Vacation Bible School was an absolute blast! We were thrilled to have sixteen children, ten youth helpers, and eleven adults come together for a week filled with learning, laughter, and growth.

Our theme focused on compassion and understanding what every living thing needs.

As is tradition, we explored these lessons through a variety of creative stations, each offering a unique way to engage with the daily themes.



Two stations were unique to this year's program:

The *Compassion in Action* station blended science and community outreach, providing our campers with hands-on experiences that connected them with their surroundings. We ventured out to visit key parts of our community, including the 2nd Street Park, City Hall, our church's Front Steps, and the beautiful lilies at Carroll Creek.



CAMPERS PREPARE FOR COMPASSION IN ACTION

Our *Yoga* station introduced movement and breathing exercises that complemented our lessons on compassion and mindfulness. Ms. Betsy's warm greeting of "Namaste" became a favorite among the campers, adding a special touch to the experience.



YOGA

**Highlights from
Adult VBS Leaders:**

“It was such a joy working with the children and youth. I especially love watching their personalities grow and their friendships strengthen.”

– **Audrey Rayfield**,
Adult Volunteer, Arts
and Crafts

“VBS gives me the opportunity to get to know the children and youth better. It’s also fun to have time to talk and bond with the other adult leaders. As an older adult, I love watching our young people as they grow in faith, develop leadership skills, and become strong advocates for justice.”

– **Linda Coyle**, Adult
Volunteer, Compassion
in Action

“The joy of ‘working’ at VBS is unbelievable! Watching the young helpers—who we knew as babies and toddlers—becoming young adults and taking on leadership responsibility is so encouraging for the future of our beautiful country. They are amazing! Sharing the joy of being with young children with other loving, caring adults and sharing stories about our experiences with these children is so educational and rewarding. The whole building just reverberates with love, and hope beams. The children are our future.”

– **Jean Fish and
Barb Biser**, Adult
Volunteers, Snacks



Highlights from Campers:

“I loved the way we learned about filtering water, and I really care about baby sea turtles. I liked that I could talk about that this week.”

– **Jonah**, 4th Grade participant

“I learned a lot more about God in Bible class through the Psalm.”

– **Cam**, 7th Grade youth helper

“I learned about having compassion, and I liked Tilly the Turkey!”

– **Laszlo**, 1st Grade participant



Building Community:

On our final day together, we focused on the theme “Community Produces Life.”

Each of our younger participants brought an item or story to share during Show and Tell, giving us a glimpse into their interests, passions, and the communities they are part of—whether it be sports teams, scouting, band, theatre, or our church community at ERUCC.

Our youth were also asked to share about a community they belong to and what makes it healthy. Peyton, one of our 9th grade youth, shared about her leadership experience in the 4-H community. She offered some thoughtful insights on what we can learn from alpacas about being in a community:

“Alpacas love their friends. Sometimes, when we are working with alpacas outside the barn, the others hear them and they all run over to the barn. If an alpaca gets loose, they also stay nearby because they want to stay right next to their friends, even if they just wanted to eat the grass outside the pen. Alpacas have herds, and they need that community.”

“The sad thing is that when you have an alpaca by itself, it is more likely going to have more problems than one in a community.”

“In a community, we often have people that we don’t know or people different from us, and we need to accept them. Alpacas can do this too. They can be in a pen with goats and sheep, and they will be fine, as long as they have that community. When we are part of a community, we can express ourselves socially, and positively influence and help others. Just like alpacas, it is good to have family and friends who support you.”

Vacation Bible School 2024 was a tremendous success, filled with learning, compassion, and community.

We are incredibly thankful for everyone who contributed to making this experience so meaningful, from our dedicated volunteers to the enthusiastic campers. Here’s to continuing to build a strong, compassionate community together!

ERUCC Youth & Students with SHIP

Cook Up Success

In the fall of 2023, during a youth planning meeting, Ben Spear, then a 6th-grade student, proposed an idea that would bring students together for a meaningful cause. Ben suggested that the youth group collaborate with students from SHIP (Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership), a nonprofit group that provides services to homeless students in Frederick County, to prepare meals, not just as a fun activity but as a way to empower SHIP students with skills and tools to last a lifetime.

This vision came to life when Ben's idea was awarded a \$1,000 Youth Grant from the Catoctin Association, the association in which we belong in the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Ben, now a 7th grader, reflected on the what he learned in this experience: "One of the first fundraisers I remember when we started coming to church was for people without food. I wanted to recreate that for SHIP



students, to give others less fortunate this same opportunity. And it's fun to cook! Through this experience, I learned that you really need cooking skills to live and eat healthy—instead of just eating fast food. Eating healthy is lower cost and higher quality if you can do it yourself. But I learned it's really hard to do if you have very little stuff (bowls, knives, stoves, etc.), so I wanted to help provide tools and food plus teaching cooking skills and giving the SHIP students recipes they *can* cook. Healthy food should be accessible to everyone."

Ben's idea turned into a family project. Ben's parents, Chris and Emily Spear, shared "We were thrilled when Ben's idea to combine cooking with helping less fortunate people in our community was selected for the grant," Ben's parents, Chris and Emily said. "With Chris' background in cooking and our family's love of creating recipes, we felt this was a perfect project to work on."

After surveying the SHIP students on what they wanted to make, and their barriers to cooking, we came up with a handful of

recipes. We made one with the SHIP students, and filmed 3 additional recipes, which were shared to YouTube.

We really enjoyed collaborating with the youth group, going shopping, making cooking videos and putting together cooking supply kits for the students in the SHIP program.

It was especially great to work with the SHIP students hands-on, and see how interested they were in learning to cook. By the end of the class, they seemed more confident in their

cooking abilities, and we felt that they would be comfortable making many of these recipes at home. When we presented them with their cooking tool kits, they were so excited. This whole experience was as rewarding for us as it was for them.”
—Chris & Emily Spear, Adult Volunteers

ERUCC youth were involved in the planning and preparation stages, but for privacy reasons, they were not in the classroom teaching or learning alongside the SHIP students. Our youth met by Zoom to create a survey and met in person to make cooking videos and then later to shop for food and practice cooking.

During our German partners’ visit, both our youth and our German friends heard first-hand stories of SHIP students’ experience of homelessness, including the events that thrust them into homelessness and their feelings while homeless. They also learned about the great gift that the SHIP experience was for the affected students.

Katie, a 9th grader, also shared about the lessons learned in this process: “The SHIP experience was important to me, because it was helping people in our community and learning about all walks of life. It was very interesting to learn how other people live

and see the world, and to realize that not all life journeys are the same for everyone. It was also enlightening to hear how the SHIP program works and to hear stories from the participants themselves. I thought it was really cool that some of the people we talked to were no longer in need of the program but decided to continue being a part of it, because of its impact on their lives—and the impact it could make on other people’s lives.”



PASTOR KIRSTIN AND CHRIS SPEAR WITH SHIP STAFF

Helping Kids Shine

An Interview with:
Tricia Coffey

Q. What inspired you to bring the GLOW! program to ERUCC's children this summer?

A. We wanted to offer the GLOW! program to keep children and youth engaged during the summer break from Sunday school. It was a way to blend fun and learning, helping children understand that they can shine brightly for Jesus, just as a light brightens a dark room. The program also provided a chance for older youth to mentor the younger children, building a strong sense of community and connection.

Q. Did anything surprise you during the GLOW program?

A. What surprised me most was how deeply the children connected with the idea of being a light in the world. Their creativity during our craft activities and their thoughtful participation in discussions showed that even the youngest among us can grasp and reflect profound truths about faith.

Q. Can you recall any specific instances where the kids had an 'aha!' moment or gained a deep insight during GLOW?"

A. One moment that stands out was when a child, during a craft session, said, "Just like this glow stick needs to be cracked to shine, sometimes we go through hard things so we can show others how Jesus helps us." It was a powerful reminder that these simple activities can lead to deep insights.

Q. What inspires your deep commitment to the children and youth at ERUCC?

A. My commitment to the children and youth at ERUCC is fueled by the belief that they are not just the future of the church, but its present. Seeing their enthusiasm, curiosity, and genuine faith inspires me to invest in their spiritual growth. It's a joy to watch them discover their own ability to shine and working with them is always a highlight for me each week.



The Stuff We're Made of

**Written by:
Terry Logee
Transition Team**

As I delved into the rich history of ERUCC, I was surprised to discover that General 'Stonewall' Jackson once rested here—well, napped here, to be precise. During the Confederate Army's occupation of Frederick on September 7, 1862, General Jackson attended an evening service led by Rev. Dr. Daniel Zacharias, who served ERUCC faithfully for 38 years. True to his habit, General Jackson promptly fell asleep during the sermon and prayers, only to awaken



REV. DR. ZACHARIAS
(C. 1860)

when the choir sang and the organ played. Ironically, he missed Rev. Zacharias' fervent prayers for the success of the Union Army and for President Lincoln, as the Reverend was a staunch Unionist.

I also felt a deep sense of pride learning about the women of ERUCC, particularly those in the Ladies Relief Organization. During the months after the battle of Antietam, the churches of Frederick, including ERUCC, were converted to hospitals for the wounded. The Ladies Relief Organization organized a group of fifty women who provided nursing care and comfort to wounded soldiers every day of the week during this period.

These women were among the unsung heroes working behind the lines, embodying the spirit of community service that seems to be woven into the very DNA of ERUCC.

Another fascinating aspect of our church's history is the congregation's long-standing tradition of generosity toward church and community projects.

As far back as 1837, the German Reformed Church, which later became ERUCC, contributed significantly to the founding of a theological seminary in Mercersburg, PA. Members of the congregation raised five gifts of \$500 each to support this endeavor. Dr. Bernard Wolff, one of the seminary's founders, remarked that this generosity "reflects the enlightened liberality of that people and is what we had reason to expect from a generous community attached to Literary and Religious institutions."

Generosity and a commitment to education are indeed foundational elements of ERUCC!

Meet Our Members

Earlier this year, 11 new members joined ERUCC, committing to participate in this faith community as we work together to serve others, worship, and grow in the love of God.



RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS – MARCH 3, 2024



CLAY, CHRISTY, GRACE, & PAUL YINGLING



REGHAN JAMES-HUBBARD & TRAVIS HUBBARD



MOLLY & ROBERT BLACK, JULIANNE



JO HINDRIKS-STOLKER



WAYNE BAIN



EJ KELLY



Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

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Ministers & Staff of ERUCC

- Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan** – Intentional Interim Senior Pastor
- Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads** – Associate Pastor for Faith Formation & Parish Life
- Alison E. Shafer** – Director of Music
- Tyler L. York** – Office Administrator
- Jaci Clayton** – Facilities Manager
- Tricia Coffey** – Head Chimer & Director of Children & Youth Choirs
- Kelly Esslinger** – Assistant Director for Bell Choirs & Children's Music
- Jenna Duranko** – Social Media Assistant
- Ashley Murphy** – Nursery Attendant
- John Shillingburg** – Proofreader, *Trinity Chimes*
- Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel** – Pastor Emerita
- Rev. Fred Wenner** – Pastor Emeritus