

A winter night scene featuring a tree of warm white lights in the center, set against a dark blue sky. A large, glowing starburst light is visible in the upper right. The foreground shows silhouettes of tall grasses, and the background consists of snow-covered mounds and dark evergreen trees.

Sign of Things *to Come*

Welcome to Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

Thank you for worshiping with us at Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ (ERUCC) this morning. We extend a special welcome to our guests.

If you are a guest, please visit us at the Welcome Table in the sanctuary lobby. We would love to meet and learn more about you and are available to answer your questions about ERUCC. Please also feel free to reach out to someone sitting near you and ask them questions about the service or church. We encourage you to join us for in the Community Room for Fellowship after the worship service for casual conversation and connection over light refreshments.

ERUCC is an Open and Affirming Church of the United Church of Christ. We welcome into the full life and ministry persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

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 2nd floor, below the sanctuary, and on the 1st floor, outside the Community Room. Single-occupant, all-gender, accessible restrooms are located outside the North and Flora Rooms on the 2nd floor.

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

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.

15 WEST CHURCH STREET, FREDERICK, MD 21701
(301) 662-2762 • erucc@erucc.org • www.erucc.org



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



December 1, 2024

First Sunday of Advent

10:30 AM

The numbered hymns are from
The New Century Hymnal

*All who are able may stand

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PRELUDE

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Ann Thompson, organ
– setting by Paul Manz

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

God says,

“Do not be afraid.”

God says,

“I have called you by name.”

God says,

“I will be with you.”

God says,

“You are precious and honored in my sight.”

At the beginning of this season,

at the start of this week,

at the top of this hour,

may we wrap ourselves in these words. May we begin again.

Let us worship our Holy God!

***OPENING PRAYER**

Affirming God,

How often do you speak clearly to us, and yet we miss it?

How often do you whisper blessings over us that we refuse to hear?

Open our hearts.

Create space in us to not only hear your inspired words,

but to believe the good news they convey.

**We are hungry for your wisdom, so speak to us now.
With hope and curiosity, we listen.
With hope and curiosity, we dare to begin again. Amen.**

***LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF HOPE**

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again?

Where do we start?

Let us begin with the good news!

**Let us begin by trusting that we are a blessing,
loved by a gracious God.**

Let us begin with music and singing!

Let us begin with warmth and welcome.

Let us begin with hope.

Yes, let us begin with hope.

Today we light the candle of hope to
shine a light in a worn and weary world.

May this be our foundation.

May this be our fresh start.

May this be our new beginning

May hope flow forth from here.

Amen!

***OPENING HYMN**

Come, O Long Expected Jesus

#122

**Come, thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee:
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the saints thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver;
Born a child and yet a king;
Born to reign in us for ever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring:**

**By thine own eternal spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to thy glorious throne.**

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

In the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel tells Mary two things: that she is highly favored and that she will have a child. Mary's response to this news is simple. With awestruck authenticity, she asks, "How can this be?"

Every time we approach the prayer of confession, I ask myself this same awestruck question, "How can this be?" How can God's mercy know no end? How can God be so gracious with someone as fickle as me?

Regardless of the week we've just experienced, this good news never changes. Join me in speaking the truth of our lives. Join me in the prayer of confession and may God's mercy leave you awestruck. Let us pray:

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Affirming God,
Your first words to creation were words of love.
You looked at this earth and said, "It is good."
You spoke affirmations through the prophets.
You spoke blessings over Mary.
You spoke belonging through Christ.
At every turn, you have reiterated that we are a blessing,
made in your image, held in your love.
Forgive us for forgetting this truth.
Forgive us for measuring our worth by society's measuring stick
instead of yours.
We believe.
Help our unbelief.
In Christ's name we pray, amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Family of faith,
I don't know the last time someone told you that you are good, just as you are.
I don't know the last time you heard that you are loved and created in the
image of God. I don't know the last time you trusted those words and truly

believed that you are a blessing. However, in case it has been a while, hear these words from Isaiah: God says,

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name.

You are mine.”

We are forgiven. We are loved. Let this good news leave you awestruck.

Thanks be to God! We believe it. 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 aged 5 through 5th grade who wish to participate in **Junior Church** may meet leaders at the back of the sanctuary and proceed to the Thomas Room.*

*Youth who wish to participate in the **Young Spirit Choir** may be dismissed at this time for rehearsal in the Marj Menchey Berkheimer Music Suite.*

Children and Youth will return to their families in worship by 11:30 AM.

THE SCRIPTURES

Dan Smith

Isaiah 43:1-7

OT page 672

Luke 1:26-38

NT page 56

Reader: May God bless the reading of this word.

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

MORNING PRAYERS

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

God continues to increase love in our hearts for our neighbors within our congregation, community, and world. Through our various gifts, we can strengthen our connections and grow with God.

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 worshipping 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

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent

Senior Choir
– arr. E. Campbell

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Joyous God, this day and always, we celebrate the gifts of our hands and hearts. We share our talents and time, knowing our energy builds the world with love. We share our treasures, knowing that all gifts we entrust to your Church will build your Realm. With joy, we devote our first fruits to loving you and what you have created. Amen.

– SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION –

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

God, we gather at this table representing all people in all places in our world. We bless and pass the bread and cup as Christ passed it to his friends. Please allow these elements to remind us of the good that you have done and inspire us to do the good that Christ calls us to do. May we leave this table revived and refreshed, having sipped from the cup of bold courage so that we may challenge all forms of injustice and pain. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

On the night he was betrayed, the Light of the World took bread and blessed it. Then he thanked God for it and broke it, saying:
“This is my body which is broken for you. Whenever you eat it, remember me.”

And likewise at the end of the meal, Jesus took the cup, blessed it and thanked God for it. Pouring out the red wine, he said:

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you. When you drink this cup ever after this night, remember me.”

Now, let us come to receive the bread and the cup.

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

All who desire the Sacrament, including children, are invited to come forward at the direction of the deacons to the chancel rail, where you will be served the bread and the cup. You may kneel or stand to receive the elements. The cup contains grape juice (apple juice is provided in the center of each tray) and all bread is gluten-free. Please partake of the elements as they are given to you, then give the empty cup to the nearby steward before returning to your seat by the side aisle. If you want to receive the elements in the pew for any reason, please notify a deacon.

After all have received the bread and the cup:

Great is the mystery of faith.

Christ has died;

Christ is risen;

Christ will come again.

A BLESSING OF THE PEOPLE

May the presence of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit keep and preserve you to everlasting life. **Amen.**

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**We have been fed, dear God, by your presence and led by your light.
May we bask in this glow now and forevermore. Amen.**

***CLOSING HYMN**

Savior, Again to Your Dear Name

#80

**Savior, again to your dear name we raise
with one accord our parting hymn of praise;
We join to bless you ere our worship cease,
then, in the silence, wait your word of peace.**

**Grant us your peace upon our homeward way;
with you began, with you shall end the day;
Guard all the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,
that in this house have called upon your name.**

**Grant us your peace, as day turns into night;
stay with us till the coming of the light;
Keep safe all those who call upon your name,
for dark and light to you are both the same.**

**Grant us your peace throughout our earthly life,
our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
Then, when your voice shall bid our conflict cease,
call us, O God, to your eternal peace.**

***BENEDICTION**

As you leave this place,
may you have the wisdom to lean on one other.
May you have the courage to hold onto hope,
the compassion to do the good that is yours to do,
and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing.
For in a world full of dead ends,
Advent invites us to begin again.
Start here. Start now.
Start with love and begin again.
In the name of Christ, our new beginning, go in peace. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE *Please remain seated*
Tell Out My Soul

Ann Thompson, organ
– Walter Greatorex



Please join us for **Fellowship** with light refreshments and time for casual conversation after worship in our Community Room (1st Floor).

The flowers on the altar this morning are placed in loving memory of Todd Stush by John Stush.

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

Attendance Last Sunday: 16 at 8:30 AM and 148 at 10:30 AM. Online attendance will be reported next week.



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

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

Serving Today: December 1

Deacons: Matt Davis, Quynn Adkins
Elder: Eric Weakly
Scripture Reader: Dan Smith
Greeters: Felecia Bishop, Anne Hoffmann
Cliff Barr, Ave Barr
Welcome Table: Julie Clark, Holly Davis
Lobby Attendant: Cliff Bar
Audio/Visual: Jeff Baker, Jeff Schaeberle
Kelly Esslinger
Nursery:
Fellowship: Renae Kline, Cathie Duncan
Jim Weitz, Glenn Wallace-Weitz
Kathleen Jefferson, Neil Jefferson
Emily Button Kambic

Serving Next Week: December 8

Robin A. Brady-Slifer
Robin L. Brady-Slifer
Ave Barr
Nancy Jones
Cathie Duncan, Susan Kulp
Robin Cooney, David Cooney
David Howard, Sue Pinner
Rob Smith
Larry Martin, Jeff Baker
Jeff Schaeberle
Ave Barr, Cliff Bar, Jen Powell
Joan Maples, Allen Maples
Pat Condo, Bud Rossig

Next Sunday: Second Sunday of Advent

We Can't Go Alone

Ruth 1 | Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

One of life's most essential lessons is that we are never meant to go alone. And yet, modern culture pushes us more and more into lonely silos. If Ruth had followed her culture's norms, she would have gone home to her family of origin after her husband died, but instead, she commits herself to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Together they form a new family and covenant. Ruth and Naomi travel together to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest, foreshadowing the journey Mary and Joseph will one day take to be counted in the census. Both Ruth and Naomi, as well as Mary and Joseph, are unconventional pairs, but if God can bring unlikely people together, God can form us into a covenant community, too.

We will receive new members and Spirit and Young Spirit will be sharing in music leadership.

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.

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 receive visits (and communion) from Rev. Dr. Morgan. Our Faithful Friends Team also makes visits, calls, and sends care cards.

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 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:

Charlene Perry
Greg Alley
Dave Alley
Sue Stevens (friend of Susan Kulp)
Kitty Bradley
Beanie Cornell
Raymond Slifer (father of Robin A. Brady-Slifer)
The Black Family
Susan Bonhag (friend of the Mercier family)
Milt Crutchley
Father of Sherry Murray
Craig, Carrie, Aaron, Chase and Maddy Percopo (friends of Lois Gaul)
Kat Weedon (friend of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)
Tom Frazier
Kayla Merry (niece of Kim Sexton)
Carol Spera (mother of Mark Ulrich)

Pauline Marendt
Haley Duff
Sherry Murray
Charlotte Blue and Family (friends of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)
Emogene Wyand
Bob Pinner
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 Jo Ann Fritz)
Paige Coffey
Fran Wenner
Bonnie Devilbiss
Tina Prescott (daughter-in-law of Barbara & Bill Prescott)
Heleen (sister of Karin Mens)
Kathy Blue Shores (friend of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)
Gretchen Manuel (niece of Audrey Rayfield)

Cards invited: Kitty Bradley
3990 Farm Lane
Frederick, MD 21770

Adult Christian Education Opportunities

BIBLE STUDIES for ADULTS

SUNDAY MORNING LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE

with Revs. John and Rebecca Shillingburg
North Room / Zoom, 9:00 – 10:15 AM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERSunstudy
Meeting ID: 893 8670 5888
Passcode: 327128

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

with Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg
North Room / Zoom, 11:00 AM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERTuesday
Meeting ID: 875 1423 3398
Passcode: 973365

A new Tuesday Morning Bible Study series begins Tuesday, December 3!

The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon
by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.

World-renowned New Testament scholars Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan use the best of biblical and historical scholarship to show the emerging church hierarchy attempting to make sense of Paul's more radical teachings in ways that make them more acceptable to the Romans. Crossan and Borg take a close look at the way Paul has been perceived and reinvented by the church. They go to great lengths to show Paul as he truly was and how he should be represented in modern Christianity.

Books are available for \$6 through the church office or in class.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE

with Rev. John Shillingburg
North Room / Zoom, 7:00 PM

No class on Nov. 27; Resumes Dec. 4

Zoom: bit.ly/ERWedstudy
Meeting ID: 892 1764 4500
Passcode: 848933



LET'S TALK

Let's Talk is an adult educational opportunity that focuses on how we can live out our faith and share our knowledge and expertise. Contact Linda Coyle, lkcoyle@yahoo.com with questions or ideas for a presentation.

A SPIRITUAL RESET FOR ADVENT

Video and discussion led by Richard Leslie

Sunday, December 1

*Community Room, 9:15 AM – 10:15 AM

From the election outcome to the climate crisis to declining confidence in our institutions, many of us are frightened or overwhelmed. Many of us feel numb. Our old ways of responding have not worked. Where do we go from here? On November 17, Pastor Morgan's sermon reminded us that "The God who brought us this far will not let us down now." Jonathan Rowson explores making a radical shift to more personal and spiritual ways of responding in a video we will watch together on the first Sunday in Advent.

**We will meet in the Community Room at 9:15 AM (instead of the usual 9:30 AM) to allow time to watch the video and have a follow-up discussion.*

Other Announcements

CALL FOR CONGREGATIONAL NAME SUGGESTIONS

On Sunday, October 13, the congregation voted in favor of a motion *"to consider changing its name from 'Evangelical Reformed' to another name, to be voted on at a later date. The new name will retain 'United Church of Christ,' with the understanding that the congregation may also choose to retain 'Evangelical Reformed' as the name."*

Submit names you wish to be considered for the congregation in a digital suggestion box at bit.ly/3Y7nPcd or the designated suggestion box in the Sanctuary Lobby.



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*

Activities and Events at ERUCC

EVENING ADVENT DEVOTIONS

This Advent season, join Pastor Kirstin and Jenna Duranko in contributing to our pre-recorded evening devotions, inspired by Sanctified Art's series *Words for the Beginning: Advent Reminders for New Seasons*. The theme invites us to reflect on words Mary might have whispered to her newborn, shared with the hope that God is making all things new.

To participate:

1. Choose a word from the Sign-Up Genius list (bit.ly/ERadventwords).
2. Select a recording time with Jenna or indicate if you'd like instructions to record yourself.



Prepare a 3–5 minute reflection inspired by your word, using music, poetry, art, or personal testimony. Ensure all materials are properly attributed.

Beginning Sunday, December 1, these reflections will be shared nightly on ERUCC's YouTube channel.

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. Participants of all levels are welcome.

Each drop-in 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.

4th ANNUAL COOKIE SWAP

Sunday, December 1

Flora Room, 12:00 PM

Celebrate the sweet treats of the season at ERUCC's 4th Annual Cookie Swap! Bring five dozen cookies and an extra container to take your cookies home. Children and their cookie creations are welcome. We will also be taking cookies to our members who are homebound. You may bring your cookies to the Flora Room before attending worship or a Christian Education opportunity.

If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Starr Schaeberle at starr.schaeberle@comcast.net or (301) 662-6902.

ADVENT CANDLE REFILLS

Running low on Advent candles? Stop at the back of the sanctuary and stock up to keep your wreath glowing bright all season long.

MID-WEEK ADVENT SERIES: *EMBODIED LIGHT*

Wednesdays, December 4, 11, 18

Sanctuary/Community Room, 12:00 PM

This Advent season, we invite you to a journey of reflection, worship, and connection inspired by *Embodied Light* by Melissa Tidwell. *Embodied Light* is a thoughtful exploration of the Christian concept of incarnation—God taking on human form in the person of Jesus. The book focuses on how our bodies, as well as the material world, are sacred and central to our faith journeys. Tidwell invites us to ponder what it means to live fully embodied lives, drawing connections between spirituality and the physical experience of being human.

Weekly Gatherings:

- **Worship:** Brief, meaningful 20-minute services in the Sanctuary led by Pastor Kirstin.
- **Fellowship:** Services will be followed by a cozy soup lunch in the Community Room.
- **Themes:**
 - Week 1: *We Are Spirits in the Flesh*
 - Week 2: *Activities that Relate to the Incarnate Body*
 - Week 3: *Song and Breath*

Get the Book:

While the book is not necessary to participate, it's a wonderful companion to deepen your Advent reflections. Reserve your copy for **just \$10** online: bit.ly/3UYbJBG.



Come, let us embrace the beauty of our incarnate lives and prepare our hearts together for the mystery of Christmas.

BUDGET REVIEW OPPORTUNITY: JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

Wednesday, December 4

Zoom, 6:00 PM

Zoom: bit.ly/3AVKNeR

Meeting ID: 840 0588 2215

Passcode: 213191

Interested in learning more about ERUCC's proposed 2025 budget before the Congregational Meeting? Join our Finance Chair and Consistory President for a Zoom session on Wednesday, December 4, at 6 PM.

This is your chance to ask questions, share input, and get a closer look at the financial planning that supports our mission and ministry.

We hope to see you on Zoom as we prepare for the Congregational Meeting on December 8!

PARENT NIGHT OUT

Let Us Watch the Kids While You Enjoy the Evening!

Saturday, December 7

Community Room, 5:00 – 8:00 PM

Looking for a break during the busy holiday season? Let ERUCC's Youth Group help!

Drop off your preschool through elementary-aged kids for an evening of holiday fun and dinner led by our amazing high school and middle school youth. This is a perfect opportunity for you to enjoy some time to yourself while your kids have a blast!

Why Participate?

This event is a fundraiser for our Youth Group to support their trips and activities. Your donations (suggested to be about the cost of a babysitter) will help us create more opportunities for our youth to grow and serve together.



Register your child(ren): bit.ly/ER24pno

Thank you for supporting our youth and helping them make a difference!

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, December 8

Community Room / Zoom, ~ 12:00 PM

Zoom: bit.ly/24congmtg

Meeting ID: 894 8029 1148

Passcode: 908195

Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 8, immediately following the 10:30 AM service. This is a vital opportunity for us to gather as a community, share updates, and make important decisions for our church's future.

Agenda Highlights:

- Progress on the Historic Clock Tower project
- Response to Consecration Sunday
- Study Group plans for our Congregation Name
- Transition Team updates
- Review and approval of the proposed 2025 Mission Spending Plan

We Are the Church! Your voice matters, and your participation is essential.

A light lunch will be provided, and we invite you to bring a dessert to share. Let's come together to celebrate, plan, and grow as a church family!

KRIS KRINGLE PARADE – HOT COCOA OUTREACH

Friday, December 13

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Youth and young adults (of all ages) are invited to come together to spread some holiday cheer at the Kris Kringle Parade on Friday, December 13, by helping us serve hot cocoa and candy canes to our neighbors in downtown Frederick! This is a fun and festive way to engage with the community and bring warmth to the holiday season.

We'll first prepare cups, then serve cocoa and treats to parade-goers during the 30 minutes before the parade and after the parade ends.

Let us know if you can come! (RSVP encouraged but not required): bit.ly/40Vdrr1



Contact: Pastor Kirstin, ksrhoads@erucc.org.

INTERGENERATIONAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Sunday, December 15

Sanctuary, 6:30 PM

Join us for a joyful and heartwarming Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 15 at 6:30 PM! This year, we're bringing the story of Jesus' birth to life with a rehearsal-free, interactive, and family-friendly program that includes humor, music, and plenty of opportunities for everyone to participate. As you arrive, you'll be invited to select costumes—whether as an angel, shepherd, or even a barn animal—and help bring the Christmas story to life. Together, we will sing carols, create a live nativity, and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. Whether you enjoy singing, acting out the nativity scenes, or simply watching the Christmas story unfold, this pageant is sure to fill your heart with the spirit of the season. It's a perfect way to gather as a church family and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas together!

Following the pageant, we invite everyone to stay for a brief time of fellowship, where we'll share cookies, enjoy each other's company, and reflect on the joy this season brings. The Pageant is open to all ages, so bring along your friends, family, and neighbors for a festive evening full of laughter, love, and the warmth of our church community. We can't wait to see you there as we enter the Christmas season with joy and celebration!

Contact: Trish Coffey, trishcoffey1195@gmail.com or (240) 815-9118.



CAROLING NIGHT: A FESTIVE EVENING FOR ADULTS

Wednesday, December 18

Community Room, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Get ready for a memorable night of caroling, food, and fun—just for ERUCC adults! Join us for a special evening filled with holiday cheer, music, and community. It's the perfect way to celebrate the season with your church family!

What's Happening:

- **Caroling:** Raise your voice and spread the holiday spirit with our church community.
- **Food & Drinks:** Enjoy delicious food and a festive drink selection, including beer and non-alcoholic options.
- **Suggested Donation:** \$10 at the door gets you food and one drink. Additional drinks are available to purchase by donation.

This event is for ERUCC adults (ages 21 and older)—so bring your holiday spirit, your best caroling voice, and your friends! We can't wait to sing, feast, and celebrate the season with you.

CANDLELIGHT TOUR OF HISTORIC HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Thursday, December 26

3:00 – 8:00 PM

The beloved Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship returns this holiday season in Downtown Frederick. This special open house celebrates Frederick's tradition of religious diversity, local history, and the holiday season on Thursday, December 26, from 3:00 – 8:00 PM. This is Frederick's most popular church tour and is a great opportunity to step inside some of its most beautiful buildings.

We will open our main building at 15 West Church Street to thousands of visitors! We will be offering refreshments and our wonderful hospitality.

We need your help to share our radical hospitality!

Interested in volunteering? Sign up: bit.ly/cndltour24



Contact: Julie Clark, Jclarkad@yahoo.com.



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

WINTER GIVING OPPORTUNITIES AT ERUCC!

Giving Tree in Sanctuary Lobby

Looking for ways you or your family can give to those in our community this winter? The ERUCC Giving Tree is a great place to start! The Giving Tree in the Sanctuary Lobby is decorated with ornaments listing needed items for various organizations sponsored by ERUCC's Mission, Evangelism, & Social Justice Committee (MESJ) and Youth Group.

You are invited to take one or more ornaments from the Giving Tree and then bring the donation items to the designated collection box. Read below about the amazing community organizations we are supporting this season and the items that can make a big difference!

SHIP (STUDENT HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVE PARTNERSHIP)

Donate November 24 – January 5

Contact: Shelley Weakly, MESJ Chair

SHIP provides critical resources and urgent services to the hundreds of Frederick County youth experiencing homelessness each year. Lend SHIP a helping hand by donating critically needed, NEW, FULL-SIZED hygiene supplies.

BEYOND SHELTER FREDERICK

Donate November 24 – January 5

Contact: Shelley Weakly, MESJ Chair

The mission of Beyond Shelter Frederick (formerly the Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Needs) is to prevent and alleviate the effects of poverty on the residents of Frederick County. They operate the Alan P. Linton, Jr. Emergency Shelter for adults and an Emergency Family Shelter. Help Beyond Shelter Frederick stock the shelters this winter with donations of items for clients and use in the shelters.

FOSTER FAMILIES – ENTERTAINMENT GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Donate November 24 – December 22

Contact: Pastor Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads or Youth Group members

ERUCC's **Youth Group** has set a goal to collect 32 gift cards for the Frederick County Department of Social Services' Foster Families Program. This program asks for gift cards for locations like MeLand, Warehouse Cinemas, AdventureLand USA, Fourth Dimension Fun Center, Chuck E Cheese, Hot Fired Arts and other similar places. Gift cards are used by families for family visits with birthparents and recreation time as foster families.

Our **Children's Sunday School** classes will also learn about and participate in giving! Look for more details soon from our Pre-K – 2nd grade class, who will be collecting juice boxes for the Frederick Community Fridge and Tide pods for Frederick County Department of Social Services, and our 3rd – 5th grade class, who will collect items to support the Animal Welfare League of Frederick County. These classes will be collecting those donations from December 1 – 22.

Children, Youth, & Families

ADVENT “MAKE IT, TAKE IT” KITS FOR FAMILIES

Sunday, December 1

Community Room, during Fellowship

Join us during Fellowship to gather supplies for your family Advent kit! Each kit includes a fun, meaningful weekly activity for your family to enjoy at home whenever it suits you best.

Bonus! Pastor Kirstin will share weekly inspiration and encouragement on Facebook—don't forget to check it out and share your own family's Advent moments!

HELP NEEDED IN THE NURSERY

We're looking for a regular volunteer to assist our Nursery Assistant, Ashley Murphy, on Sunday mornings from 9:00 – 10:00 AM. Many of our usual helpers are busy with Sunday School during this time, so we need someone who can step in and lend a hand with our youngest members.

If you're interested in helping and sharing your care, please let Pastor Kirstin know!

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children should be checked in by one of their grown-ups at the Check-In Station in the Kieffer Lobby before class.

Pre-K – 2nd Grade

Liz Coffey Room, 9:15 – 10:00 AM

3rd – 5th Grade

Thomas Room, 9:15 – 10:00 AM

Immediately following Sunday School, teachers will transition children to Children's Music and Movement. Participating children should be checked out by their grown-ups from the Liz Coffey Room at 10:20 AM. If not participating in Children's Music and Movement, children should be checked out from their Sunday School classroom at 10:00 AM.

CHILDREN'S MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Liz Coffey Room, 10:00 – 10:20 AM

This music group for children in Pre-K through 5th Grade are invited to participate in rehearsals each Sunday morning following Sunday School from 10:00–10:20 AM in the Liz Coffey Room.

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Trinity Chapel, 9:15 – 10:15 AM

Youth Sunday School, with Middle and High School classes, meets in Trinity Chapel, 10 West Church Street. Enter through the side door behind the iron gate on the left side of the building. Always use the crosswalk. Youth will return as a group to the Kieffer Lobby at 10:15 AM.

JUNIOR CHURCH

2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays

dismisses from 10:30 AM worship service

Junior Church, a space to join in creative spiritual formation activities, meets most Sundays during the school year. Children ages five through 5th grade begin 10:30 AM worship in the sanctuary with their families, then dismiss after the Thought for the Day for well-supervised instruction and activities held in the Thomas Room, one floor below the sanctuary. On the first Sunday of each month, children participate in worship and communion with their families.

YOUTH GROUP MOVIE NIGHT WITH DINNER

Sunday, December 1

High School Youth Room, Trinity Chapel 5:00 – 7:00 PM

Youth Group will enjoy a meal, receive their annual ornament, and watch the movie, *Nightmare Before Christmas!*

YOUTH GROUP BABYSITTING FUNDRAISER

Saturday, December 8

Community Room, 5:00 – 8:00 PM

Calling all ERUCC Youth: we need your help for Parent Night Out! Here's your chance to make a difference and have some fun while supporting your Youth Group!

We're hosting a Parent Night Out to give parents a break and raise funds for our Youth Group trips and activities. Kids from preschool through elementary will join us for dinner and holiday fun—and we need YOU to help make it amazing!

Why Volunteer?

- Support your Youth Group! Funds raised will go toward trips and activities we all enjoy.
- Get service hours and make a positive impact on our church community.
- Have fun leading games, crafts, and activities for younger kids.

What You'll Do:

- Help set up and clean up the event.
- Lead holiday-themed games, crafts, or activities.
- Serve dinner and show our church's youngest members a great time!

Confirm you can help with Pastor Kirstin! Together, we can make this event a huge success while helping our group grow.

Ministers, Staff, & Lay Leaders of Evangelical Reformed UCC

MINISTERS AND STAFF

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

Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads ~ *Associate Pastor for Faith Formation & Parish Life* ~ ksrhoads@erucc.org

Alison E. Shafer ~ *Director of Music*

Tyler L. York ~ *Office Administrator* ~ tyork@erucc.org

Jaci Clayton ~ *Facilities Manager* ~ jclayton@erucc.org

Tricia Coffey ~ *Head Chimer & Children & Youth Choir Director*

Kelly Esslinger ~ *Assistant Director for Bell Choirs & Children's Music*

Jenna Duranko ~ *Social Media Assistant*

Ashley Murphy ~ *Nursery Attendant*

The Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel ~ *Pastor Emerita*

The Rev. Fred Wenner ~ *Pastor Emeritus*

CONSISTORY

Peter Brehm ~ *President* | Matt Hueting ~ *Vice President*

David Kehne ~ *Secretary* | Robert Morris ~ *Treasurer*

Rebecca Shillingburg ~ *Worship Chair* | Will Duncan ~ *Finance Chair*

Shelley Weakly ~ *Mission, Evangelism, and Social Justice Chair*

Julie Clark ~ *Stewardship/Generosity Chair* | Dan Ebersole ~ *Property Chair*

Vacant ~ *Christian Education Chair* | Matt Davis ~ *Head Deacon* | Larry Martin ~ *Member-at-Large*

ELDERS

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

DEACONS

Quynn Adkins | Robin A. Brady-Slifer | Robin L. Brady-Slifer | Angela Brittain

Jim Brittain | Matt Davis | Harrison Fisher | Kyle Miller

TRANSITION TEAM

Felecia Bishop | Tommie Bradshaw | Karen Justice | Terry Logee | Allen Maples

Thomasa Pomeroy | Bud Rossig | Eliza Stitely | Katie Zander

Sunday Morning Schedule

subject to change

8:30 – 9:15 AM	Early Worship , Sanctuary
9:00 AM	Coffee and Conversation , Kieffer Lobby
9:00 AM	Let's Study the Bible , North Room
9:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Nursery Care
9:15 – 10:00 AM	Children's Sunday School <i>Pre-K – 2nd Grade</i> , Liz Coffey Room <i>3rd – 5th Grade</i> , Thomas Room
9:15 – 10:15 AM	Youth Sunday School <i>Middle School Youth</i> , Trinity Chapel <i>High School Youth</i> , Trinity Chapel
9:30 AM	Let's Talk , Flora Room
10:00 – 10:20 AM	Children's Music and Movement , Liz Coffey Room
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Worship , Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org Junior Church , Thomas Room <i>Participating children are dismissed from Worship (2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays)</i> Young Spirit Rehearsal , Marj Menchey Berkheimer Music Suite <i>Participating Youth are dismissed from Worship (1st and 3rd Sundays)</i>
11:30 AM	Chancel Handbell Choir Rehearsal , Sanctuary <i>Children and Youth</i>

Thursday Rehearsal Schedule

subject to change

6:15 PM	Cambridge Handbell Choir Rehearsal , Sanctuary <i>Contact: Trish Coffey and Kelly Esslinger</i>
7:00 PM	Senior Choir Rehearsal , Marj Menchey Berkheimer Music Suite <i>Contact: Alison E. Shafer</i>

Stay Informed

Subscribe to receive e-news from ERUCC at <http://eepurl.com/gDNCu5> or by scanning the QR code.



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.

Poinsettias



We will be ordering poinsettias from Frederick High School this year. All funds will benefit the horticultural program and Frederick High FFA Chapter. Each plant will have 4-6 blooms and will cost \$10. Plants will be placed on the chancel in the Sanctuary.

Order by December 15!

Complete the form and return it with payment to the church office or offering plate or pay online at bit.ly/eruccflowers by December 15.



Scan to
Pay Online

Plants may be picked up after the Christmas Eve Services; however, we would appreciate having some left for the Candlelight Historic Houses of Worship Tour on December 26.

Donor Name(s): _____

I would like to place _____ poinsettias in the church for Christmas.

I/we have **enclosed** a payment of \$_____ (\$10 per plant).

I/we made an **online** payment of \$_____ (\$10 per plant).

If you wish for your poinsettias to be listed in memory of, in honor of, or placed by the donor, please indicate which and PRINT the names below.

In memory of:

In honor of:

Placed by:

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 1, 2024

Luke 21:25-36

Sign of Things to Come

The stone cathedral was dim and dank, with only a few souls scattered among the pews softly singing the hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.”

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

With the last note wafting in the air, a candle was lit in a circle of evergreen — the Advent wreath. It was the only sign of the season in the sanctuary. There were no pine boughs strewn from the balcony nor poinsettias gracing the windowsills. They would come later.

For now, it was just the flickering flame of a lone candle urging on a weary world to rejoice.

It was the beginning of Advent, the four-weeks leading to Christmastide. A time for quiet reflection, patient waiting and expectant watching.

But beyond the cathedral’s doors, Christmas joy was in full swing with crowds swarming an open-air market — lights twinkling and speakers blaring songs about chestnuts roasting over open fires.

Yes, tis the season — of missing Advent’s message that before celebrating what God has done for us through Jesus, we must first be still. We must watch for the signs of God’s realm drawing near, signs that can be easily missed amid the traditional trappings of Christmas, which appear earlier each year.

Now it’s understandable why Advent quickly morphs into Christmas. We are a people who find it hard to wait, and we certainly don’t want to be walking in darkness. We want immediate gratification and light — lots of it.

Another reason Advent doesn’t get the attention it deserves is that it clashes with our cultural expectations of the holidays with scripture readings that are more apocalyptic than jolly. Luke’s Gospel is the perfect example of this, as we hear about the signs that will appear in the sun, moon and stars when the Son of Man returns.

Advent, which comes from the Latin word *adventus* means “coming.” And so, we are not just celebrating Jesus’ first coming as the Babe of Bethlehem, but we are anticipating his return as well.

What are the signs to look for today?

Perhaps beyond the artificial holiday lights we might see a sign of God’s true light shining in our communities. Perhaps, if we looked into the eyes of the homeless, the disabled, and the stranger, we would see the sign that God is right in front of us.

Perhaps, if we entered a quiet sacred space this Advent, where the only light burning is that of the first candle around the Advent wreath, we would see the sign that there really is a light in which no darkness can overcome.

God of Advent waiting and hoping, we pray that You open our eyes to the many signs of a weary world being redeemed. May we remain alert to the very things that matter the most to You. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.



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

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