



Who
is this
Child?

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.

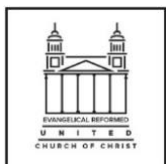
There is more information about our church in this bulletin and on our website: www.erucc.org.

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 29, 2024

First Sunday After Christmas

10:30 AM



DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH

The numbered hymns are from
The New Century Hymnal

*All who are able may stand

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PRELUDE

THRESHOLD MOMENT

The Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

Holy and Unhindered

– Rev. Sarah Speed

I am sure it is important to close your eyes, to pray on your knees, to fling yourself into deep reverence and even deeper humility. I am sure the Spirit is close when we dress up, when we sing the descant line, when we murmur the words with a sincere and hopeful heart.

And I am sure that when you moonwalk through your living room in soft wool socks, when you cackle loudly enough for the whole restaurant to hear, when you squeal into the phone and make pancakes for dinner, when you plunge your hands into the dirt and talk to the sparrows, when you make a mess of Communion breadcrumbs all around the Table, or when you allow yourself an undone, unhindered, unpolished sort of joy—that the Spirit loves that just as well.

The angel said, *Do not be afraid; I am bringing you joy.*
We humans have spent a lot of time focusing on the fear.
Don't forget: God is also in the joy.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

We know that joy has a contagious ripple effect, so today for our call to worship, we are going to share our joy. I invite you to close your eyes now. Picture the things in your life that bring you joy. It could be something as

simple as a warm cup of coffee on a cold morning, or as grand as a person, a place, or an experience.

Friends, tell me: what are some of the things that bring you joy? Shout it out!

Members of the congregation are invited to share aloud.

Having named so many sources of joy in our lives, join me in the call to worship:

We have named our joy out loud, and it is clear—

God is in our joy.

God is in this room.

We have reason to celebrate.

We have a reason to sing.

Thanks be to God for the bright hope of this day.

***OPENING PRAYER**

God of angel choruses and contagious laughter,

we know that you speak to us in the quiet.

However, we also trust that when we throw our heads back in laughter,

when we dance and clap with joy,

when we skip and sing with gratitude,

that even then, you are speaking.

So on this Sunday morning we pray:

open our ears and hearts to hear what you are saying.

Meet us in this joy.

Meet us in this delight.

Meet us in the hope of this Christmas season

and reveal the wisdom we need to hear today.

With hearts full of gratitude we pray.

We laugh. We listen. We pray.

Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

#129

Good Christian friends, rejoice

with heart and soul and voice;

now give heed to what we say:

Jesus Christ was born today;

**Ox and ass before him bow,
asleep within the manger now.
Christ is born today,
Christ is born today!**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now you know of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
God has opened heaven's door,
and you are blessed forevermore.
Christ was born for this,
Christ was born for this!**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save,
Christ was born to save!**

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Friends, when we are honest with God in the prayer of confession, we open ourselves up to receive God's grace and mercy. And that gift—that grace—is full to the brim with good news!

So join me in this prayer of confession, not out of shame or guilt, but because there is a joy on the other side of this prayer that will take your breath away. Let us pray together; let us choose joy.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Joyful God, You told us that in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must be like children. Did you mean that like children, we must practice unhindered joy? Did you mean that like children, we should lean into laughter, release our cynicism, and open ourselves to delight?

In a world as broken and battered as ours, we admit, this often seems easier said than done. Forgive us, patient God, for the moments when we are so focused on the bad that we miss the good.

Forgive us for hearing the nativity story and staying in our seats instead of jumping for joy. We know that even now you are sowing delight in our lives. Open our hearts up to it.

With gratitude we pray, amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**Friends, hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:
We are seen. We are loved. We are forgiven. Amen.**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg

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 participating in the **Young Spirit Choir** are dismissed at this time for an additional rehearsal in the Marj Menchey Berkheimer Music Suite.*

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

***HYMN**

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

#127

**Lo, how a Rose, e'er blooming from tender stem has sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming as saints of old have sung.
It came a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter
when half spent was the night.**

**Isaiah had foretold it, the Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore for us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.**

THE SCRIPTURES

Marc Kline

Psalms 148 OT page 582

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 OT page 616

Reader: May God bless the reading of this word.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

The Rev. John Shillingburg

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

Embracing radical joy transforms our spirits, creating a gentle energy within us. We are renewed, and we sense God's call more clearly. In seeking God's message, we know how to joyfully share our talents, treasures, and time, bringing more peace and comfort into our world.

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

A Star Rising in the East

Senior Choir
– P. Choplin

THE LETTING GO AND LETTING GOD RITUAL

On this final Sunday of 2024, the congregation will observe an ancient European tradition, originally done on Christmas Eve, or, in some churches in America, on New Year's Eve. It is observed by each person present in worship, writing on a piece of paper provided, a trait or behavioral pattern you want to let go of as you enter the new year. This item, known only to you, will be dropped in the "reflecting bowl" in the front of the church where it will dissolve, thereby symbolically "letting go" so that it will never bother or harm you or someone else again.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Holy One, we bring to you our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Bless them to your use and the building on your kin-dom here on earth. We have brought forth also that which we wish to "let go," freeing us from burdens we need not carry and making us lighter, better able to serve you. Receive these as our "acceptable sacrifice" to you. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

Go Tell It on the Mountain

#154

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

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

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

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

***BENEDICTION**

Family of faith, in a hurting and lonely world,
in a battered and bruised society, there is good news:
Jesus Christ is born!
So as you leave this place, may you be quick to laugh and quick to hope.
May you look for reasons to be grateful.
May you not hesitate to join in the dance, or join in the song.
May you extend a hand to your neighbor,
and find God in every moment of joy.
For unto you a child is born.
That is good news!
So go in peace trusting in that promise.
Go in peace, and go with joy. **Amen.**

During the postlude, please remain seated, letting the music flow over you as a closing blessing.

POSTLUDE

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 today are in loving memory of Robert C. McCardell given by his family.

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

Attendance Last Sunday: 13 at 8:30 AM, 176 at 10:30 AM, and 58 online.



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

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

Serving Today: December 29

Deacons: Harrison Fisher, Kyle Miller
Elder: Matt Hueting
Scripture Reader: Marc Kline
Greeters: Susan Kulp, David Howard
Felecia Bishop, Barb Barry
Welcome Table: Sue Pinner
Lobby Attendant: Eric Weakly
Audio/Visual: Jeff Schaeberle, Larry Martin
Kelly Esslinger
Nursery: Meredith Neely
Fellowship:

Serving Next Week: January 5

Matt Davis, Quynn Adkins
Robin Cooney
Jack Day
Cliff Barr, Ave Barr
Rob Smith
Julie Clark, Holly Davis
Cliff Barr
Rodney Martin, Larry Martin
Jeff Baker

Julie Clark, Joe Adkins
Quynn Adkins, Hollie Mercier
Kyle Miller, Pat Dorsz
Bobby Van Dyk

Next Sunday: January 5 – Epiphany

The Road Isn't Straight

Matthew 2:1-12 | Isaiah 43:16-21

Too often, we've been told that a successful life is a linear one. But in reality, our lives unfold with many unexpected twists and turns. The Magi follow a star, embarking on a long journey in a foreign land to honor the newborn Christ. Instead of returning to Herod as commanded, they trust their dreams and go home by another way. Their road isn't straight, but God "makes a way in the wilderness" (Isaiah 43:19) as they follow their intuition and diverge from the expected path.

We will share communion at the chancel rail this morning and receive our star words for the year. The Senior Choir will be singing.

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:

The Murray/Lennox/Cable
Family

Gail Ellam

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

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

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)

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

Next class: January 5, 2025

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon
with Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg
North Room / Zoom, 11:00 AM

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

Next class: January 7, 2025

WEDNESDAY EVENING LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE

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

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

Next class: January 8, 2025

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.

Let's Talk will take a break on December 22 and 29.

The Story Behind the Frederick Community Fridge

Sunday, January 5
Flora Room, 9:30 AM – 10:15 AM



Have you noticed that ERUCC has a refrigerator and pantry shelves in our parking lot? Are you wondering what's up with that? Come find out more and get your questions answered on January 5.

The Frederick Community Fridge & Outreach invites community members to participate in a presentation and open discussion about the services offered. You can find out more about the project at <https://linktr.ee/frederickcommunityfridge>.

Children, Youth, & Families

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School for Children and Youth will not meet on Sunday, December 29. Classes will resume on January 5, 2025.

JUNIOR CHURCH

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

dismisses from 10:30 AM worship service

Junior Church will resume on Sunday, January 12. Children are invited to participate in worship with their families.

Activities and Events at ERUCC

CALL FOR CONGREGATIONAL NAME SUGGESTIONS

On Sunday, October 13, 2024 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.



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.

**Next Class: January 7, 2025*

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.

FRANKLINTON CENTER TRIP PREP MEETING

Sunday, January 5

Community Room, 11:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Adults, youth and their parents who will be attending the work trip to Franklinton Center at Bricks should attend. We will discuss expectations, work assignments, travel, packing, and food menu.

FRANKLINTON CENTER WORK TRIP

Open to adults and youth (6th – 12th grade)

January 18 – 20

Please let Pastor Kirstin know if you are interested in going on the work trip to The Franklinton Center at Bricks, a conference, retreat, and educational facility in eastern North Carolina with a focus on justice advocacy and leadership development. Franklinton Center is an historic center of transformation where issues affecting the marginalized, the oppressed, and the poor are addressed. A former plantation, FCAB traces its beginnings to the founding of Franklinton Christian College in 1871 and the Congregationalist Bricks School in 1895. A merger of those two schools in the 1950s formed Franklinton Center at Bricks.

Our group has the longest partnership as volunteers who upgrade and maintain facilities to help Franklinton Center at Bricks better lead education and programs and meet their community's basic needs.

The work trip costs \$80 per person (includes housing and meals). The trip is subsidized by budgeted funds for mission trips.

YOUR YEAR-END GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

This holiday season, we invite you to reflect on the impact of your generosity. At Evangelical Reformed UCC, your contributions sustain essential ministries, support special programs, and keep our vibrant community thriving. Whether it's nurturing the next generation, providing care to those in need, or creating spaces of hope and inclusion, your gift matters.

Give in a way that's easy and convenient—visit www.erucc.org/give to donate online. Prefer to give by check? Simply make it payable to *Evangelical Reformed UCC* and drop it in the offering plate or mail.

Every gift, no matter the size, is a blessing to our church and the work we do together. Let's make this season one of love, hope, and generosity!



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.

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
9:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Nursery Care
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Worship , Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org
11:30 AM	Fellowship , Community Room

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.



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*

Worship services and events at Evangelical Reformed UCC are sometimes photographed and videotaped to document the vibrant life of our church. If you do not wish to be included in these recordings, please notify a deacon or the church office. Always obtain permission prior to sharing images and videos that include minors on your personal social media.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 29, 2024

Luke 2:45-52

Who is This Child?

Jesus was missing. Mary and Joseph were present. So were the shepherds and their sheep. Even the angel took its place in the nativity scene. But no Jesus figurine. The young mother searched the house many times, but to no avail. Was the new puppy to blame? Or did the figurine get placed in the box marked “ornaments” rather than the one that read “nativity”?

The mother eventually gave up looking.

Then, while taking down the Christmas decorations, the box marked “nativity” fell over. There on the floor was the Jesus figurine, tangled in a clump of straw used to adorn the nativity scene. He was exactly where he was supposed to be all along.

While technically Christmastide doesn't end till Jan. 6 with the celebration of Epiphany, many of the festive trimmings are being packed away and, with them, many a baby Jesus figurine.

But how do we keep Christmas in our hearts long after the decorations are gone? Will we remember who this child is for us come spring or summer?

It might feel jarring to go from infant Jesus to 12-year-old Jesus in a week, but today's reading from Luke does just that, bringing us to the temple where a precocious pre-teen is discussing matters of faith with religious leaders.

Jesus' parents find him there after a three-day search upon discovering their son was not in the group that they were travelling with from Jerusalem back to their home in Nazareth.

Mary's agitation is not helped when Jesus says to her, “Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I would be in my Father's house?”

Good question, Jesus.

Didn't Mary remember that holy night of your birth 12 years ago? It was a night the angels sang, and shepherds left their flocks to adore you. Did the challenges and stresses of parenting make her forget?

Will being back to the challenges and stresses of life after the holidays are packed away deaden our senses to the Holy One?

As Christmas becomes a distant memory will we have a Mary moment — or two — forgetting who this child is? And if we find ourselves searching for Jesus, will we know to look in our hearts first. For he is always there, waiting for us to find him.

God of Christmas promises, we praise You for the greatest gift we could ever receive, Your Son, Jesus. As we make our way into a new year, help us to keep the words of the old hymn in our hearts, the words that remind us that “this, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.” In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



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

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