



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

**Evangelical Reformed
United Church of Christ**
An Open and Affirming Congregation

**15 West Church Street
Frederick, Maryland**

24 December 2024 ~ 7:30 PM

Christmas Eve

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**All who are able may stand*

We are grateful for your presence this evening as we celebrate the birth of Jesus—God with us, Emmanuel.

As we enter this time of worship, we kindly ask that you silence your cell phones and any other devices that might beep or chirp. We also invite you to refrain from applause following the musical performances. Instead, let the music resonate in the stillness of the sanctuary and within your hearts.

Our musicians offer their gifts of music for the glory of God as an expression of joy at the birth of Jesus. They know you appreciate their efforts and their talents, and we invite you to receive their offerings as part of this sacred celebration.

Prelude

Traditional French Carols

Cathy Fronck, trumpet; Jeffrey Baker, trombone

He Is Born, the Holy Child (Il est Né, le Divin Enfant) ~ arr. D. Gilliam/M. McCaskill

What Is This Lovely Fragrance? (Quelle est Cette Odeur Agéable) ~ arr. L. Smith

Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella (Un Flambeau, Jeanette Isabelle) ~ arr. D. Gilliam/M. McCaskill

Words of Welcome

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

Threshold Moment

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

“Hey Love”

My grandmother was strong. That’s what they tell me. She played piano and clipped coupons. She raised four kids. One was sick. One never would, never *could* grow up. But she loved them all. And when life fell apart in brand new ways, she bought books. She went back to school. She started over again. She was the kind of strong that reminds you of a live oak. The kind of woman, the kind of tree, you’d want to crawl up into and whisper, “Tell me how you did it. Tell me how you survived the storm.”

She was fifty-one when a vessel in her brain burst, blood coloring outside the lines, blood stealing large swathes of her strength with every pulse. After that, she never did play piano, read, or clip coupons. After that, she never could find the words. Nouns became things to point out. Names became numbers. Conversation creaked and slowed, but one word stayed.

The name of my baptism never crossed her lips, but when my grandmother saw me, she’d say—*Heeeey Love*.

My grandmother and God have this in common.

Both know my name. Both call me Love.

The Prophet Speaks ~ Isaiah 9:2–7

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

***Processional Carol**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

**O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

**O sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation!
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above!
Now to our God be Glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

**Amen, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning,
O Jesus, forever be Thy Name adored;
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

***Prayer (*read in unison*)**

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—
We are leaning forward.**

**We are craning our necks, straining to hear a murmur of the angels' song,
or an echo of a gloria.**

**We always long for you, but on this night, on this holy Christmas Eve,
we long for you to feel as close as possible.**

**So as we prepare to hear this ancient story once again,
we ask that you would awaken something new in us.**

Awaken in us a fire for your Word.

Awaken in us proof of your proximity.

**Awaken in us your love, which is bigger than the sky,
and as close as our very breath.**

We are listening. We give thanks. Amen.

The Lighting of the Christ Candle (*read responsively*) Quynn Adkins, Lazslo Caughy

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

Let us begin with hope. Let us begin with peace.

Let us begin with joy. Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us begin with love, for surely love knows your name.

Today, in addition to the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, we light the Christ Candle.

For surely God is in this place. Surely the Spirit is near. Surely love knows our name.

May we rest in that good news. Unto us a child is born.

A light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Glory to God in the highest heaven! Amen.

Scripture Reading ~ Luke 2:1-7

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

***Carol**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie;

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the Everlasting Light;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!

So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven;

No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,

Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;

Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;

O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

Scripture Reading ~ Luke 2:8-20

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

***Carol**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;

Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."

Joyful, all you nations rise; Join the triumph of the skies;

with angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come, Offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

**Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness.
Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise each child of earth, Born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

Christmas Meditation

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

***Christmas Evening Prayer (*read in unison*)**

**God of new beginnings, our hearts are full to the brim.
We need this story of a baby wrapped in swaddling cloth, lying in a manger.
We need this story of the angels and the shepherds.
We need Mary's song and Joseph's faith.
We need this night to remember how to begin again.
Here at the end of the day, at the end of the year,
instill in us the truth that love knows our name.
Remind us that we are not too far, or too lost, or too distracted to lose your love.
Remind us that no matter where we go or what we do,
you took on flesh for each of us.
And if we believe that we have to earn your love, help us write a new narrative.
And if we believe that we have lost your love, help us see the truth.
And if we believe that we are too far from your love,
help us to feel your presence all around.
You love us. You know us. You came to earth for us.
Of course the angels couldn't help but to sing!
With hope, we sing alongside the angels.
With hope, we run toward you like the shepherds.
With hope, we cast our eyes to the sky and look for your star.
With hope, we begin again.
We believe. Help our unbelief.
In Christ's name we pray, saying. . .**

***The Lord's Prayer (*read in unison*)**

**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.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

The Christmas Eve Offering for The Christmas Fund

For over 100 years, The Christmas Fund has supported retired and active United Church of Christ ministers, church workers, and their families in times of need. Your donation provides critical assistance and affirms our shared mission to care for those who serve the church.

Please give generously using the special envelopes in your pew, scanning the QR code, or by visiting erucc.org/give. Thank you for making a difference!



Anthem

Senior Choir

The Work of Christmas ~ Thuman/Forrest

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*read in unison*)

Holy God,

**We have been waiting a long time for this night—
for the joy and the quiet of Christmas Eve,
for the sound of the angel chorus,
for the old familiar songs.**

**We have carried weary hearts through the last four weeks of Advent,
longing for the peace and hope of this night,
and now we're finally here.**

**So as we bow our heads, we offer you our most earnest and honest prayers,
trusting that once again, you meet us where we are.**

Anthem

Senior Choir

O Holy Night ~ A. Adam, arr. C. Courtney

The Gift of the Light

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

Scripture Readings on Light

Genesis 1:1-4

Isaiah 9:2

John 1:1-5

Matthew 5:14-16

***A Celebration of the Light ~ Candle Lighting**

The ministers will bring the light of Christ to the congregation. To symbolically receive the light, tilt your unlit candle toward the flame of a lit candle that is held upright. Once your candle is lit, keep it upright at all times. Avoid tilting your candle to light another; instead, allow the next person to tilt their unlit candle toward yours.

Use caution around hair, clothing, flammable items, and hot wax.

Parents or other adults, please assist young children.

***Carol**

Silent Night, Holy Night

**Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright;
'Round yon virgin mother and Child,
Holy Infant so tender and mild;
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Darkness flies, all is light;
Shepherds hear the angels sing:
Alleluia! Hail the King!
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Guiding Star, lend thy light!
See the eastern wise men bring
gifts and homage to our King!
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Wondrous Star, lend thy light!
With the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King!
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.**

***Benediction**

As you leave this place,
may you have the wisdom to lean on one another.
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.

***Recessional Carol**

Joy to the World

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns;
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of His righteousness,
and wonders of His love,
and wonders of His love,
and wonders, wonders of His love.**

Postlude

Provençal Carol

Cathy Fronck, trumpet; Jeffrey Baker, trombone

March of the Three Kings ~ G. Bizet, arr. S. Mitchell-Wallace / J. H. Head

You may take our lighted candles out into the night's darkness so that the light of Christ will shine in your homes and communities.

Ministers and Staff of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan ~ *Interim Senior Pastor*
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Tricia Coffey ~ *Head Chimer & Children & Youth Choir Director*

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

Jenna Duranko ~ *Social Media Assistant*

Ashley Murphy ~ *Nursery Attendant*

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

The Rev. Fred Wenner ~ *Pastor Emeritus*

Sunday Schedule

8:30-9:15 AM ~ Worship with Communion & Healing Prayer

9:15-10:15 AM ~ Sunday School classes for all ages

10:30-11:30 AM ~ Worship Service

11:30 AM ~ Fellowship

Trained paid nursery attendant for children up to age 4.

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.

Welcome to all who seek the love of God on this sacred night.

May the peace of Christ be with us all this blessed Christmas Eve!

We are grateful to all who have given of themselves to inspire our devotion on this beautiful evening. We are especially grateful to the members and directors of our choirs, our deacons and greeters, and our audio-visual team. We also offer our heartfelt thanks to our organist Alison E. Shafer; our trombonist Jeffrey Baker and trumpeter Cathy Fronck. We thank them all for their devotion and generosity!

About Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

Founded 279 years ago by Frederick County's first settlers, this church is firmly rooted in the life of our community and is regarded as a landmark church of the City of Frederick.

We are an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, dedicated to serving God and our neighbors near and far. We are a dynamic and diverse congregation in every way. Sunday is just one of days in the week when our church is active. Our sanctuary, Downtown Community Room, and other welcoming spaces host educational, spiritual and recreational programming. Children's voices fill the air, adults gather for Bible study, and we work tirelessly for social justice.

Our 8:30 AM Sunday morning communion service, our 10:30 AM traditional worship service, and our Christian Education classes for children, youth, and adults take place in the large Greek Revival church built in 1848. We also share space in our hearts and buildings with the community. Each week, hundreds of community members come through our doors. Our church hosts dozens of nonprofit organizations that use our space for little to no cost. We do so because we know the profoundly positive impact this has on Frederick County and the quality of life we want everyone to have.

Trinity Chapel's colonial steeple, recognized for miles around as the oldest of the "clustered spires of Frederick," rests atop the original stone tower built in 1763, which also hosts the City of Frederick's Town Clock. Restorations on the Historic Clock Tower will begin in 2025..

You can support the work of ERUCC in our community by sharing a donation in the plates at the rear of the sanctuary or via our online giving option at www.erucc.org.



Information about ERUCC is available in the literature racks by the church doors. We ask our visitors to sign the blue welcome cards in the pews and return it to a greeter so we will know of your visit with us, and we invite you to take any pamphlet that may be of interest to you. We invite you to return for the Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship on Thursday, December 26 from 3:00-8:00 PM and to visit at www.erucc.org where you will find more information about the church and current ministries and programs.



Contact Us

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