

God
with
Us

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 lobby. We would love to meet and learn more about you, and we are available to answer your questions. 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 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 people 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 aged 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 21, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:30 AM



The numbered hymns are from The New Century Hymnal

**All who are able may stand*

Bold text read in unison

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PRELUDE

The Holly and the Ivy

Mary Huegel, oboe; C. Douglas Remsburg, clarinet

– Traditional English Carol

– arr. D. Gilliam / M. McCaskill

THRESHOLD MOMENT

Tethered

read by Colleen Hueting

– written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

When we were children, we fell asleep
with walkie talkies tucked under our pillows.

All that separated us was a bathroom,
a hallway, a few feet of empty space,
but as children, even small distances can feel like miles.

So after the parents whispered prayers over our skinned knees
and spelling tests, after they kissed our sweaty foreheads
and tucked us into bed,
we'd pull the walkie talkies out from under our pillows.
We'd roll the dial on the top of the transceiver.
We'd sputter that invisible tether to life.

And with a few crackles in the quiet of the night, you'd whisper my name.
I'd press down the button. I'd promise I was close.

As an adult, I don't know what ever happened
to those blue-grey walkie talkies.

But I know, that even today, if the monsters in the closet feel too real,
and you whisper my name, I promise I'll be close.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF LOVE

Tommie & Amanda Bradshaw

Reader 1: O God, we light the fourth candle of Advent: the Candle of Love.

The Candle of Love is lighted.

Reader 2: We hear your angel Gabriel and witness the faith of Mary. Fill us with your grace and light.

Reader 1: Mary was a young, strong, spiritual woman. Even though her life was not easy, she heard God's voice and said yes. Her song was a prayer that would uplift those who were downtrodden. Her lyrics shattered the proud and called the world to change. She would bear within her the promised child, Jesus, the Light of the World. This Advent, we respond to God's beckoning to us as well.

***People:* Revealing God, visit us and fill us with your Spirit. Bring your good news to life within us. Give us courage to carry your light into the injustices and shadows of this world. Amen.**

Choral Response

– tune PICARDY

**Shine on us, O God of justice;
Guide our path through gloom of night;
Bear within us Wisdom's glory;
Come to us, O Christ the Light**

– SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS –

*PROCESSIONAL CAROL

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and discord cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

FIRST LESSON: The prophet Isaiah foresees the coming of the Lord

Isaiah 60:1-3, Isaiah 9:2-7

Trevor Weakly

CAROL

Rejoice, Rejoice Believers

LANCASHIRE

**Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let our lights appear;
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising, and soon He draweth nigh;
Up, pray, and watch, and wrestle: at midnight comes the cry.**

**Our Hope and Expectation, O Jesus, now appear!
Arise, Thou Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption that brings us unto Thee.**

SECOND LESSON: The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown

Jeremiah 23:5-6; Isaiah 11:1-2, 4, 6-9

Luke Chappell

THIRD LESSON: John the Baptist heralds the coming of the Messiah

Matthew 3:1-6, 11-12

Lucy Adkins

ANTHEM

My Lord, He Is a Comin' Soon

Senior Choir
– Winnen/Cothran, arr. P. Drennan

FOURTH LESSON: The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary

Luke 1:26-35, 38

Alex Cumber

FIFTH LESSON: The Birth

Matthew 1:18-25

Alyssa Kline

ANTHEM

Lullaby

Senior Choir
– J. N. Beck

SIXTH LESSON: The shepherds go to the manger

Luke 2:8-18

Kit Tonon

CAROL

Angels from the Realms of Glory

**Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

**Shepherds in the fields abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God on earth is now residing,
Yonder shines the infant Light:
Come and worship, come and worship
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

REFLECTION

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

SEVENTH LESSON: The wise men are led by the star to Jesus

Matthew 2:1-11

Jared Hueting

CAROL *The First Nowell*

**And by the light of that same star,
Three Wise Men came from a country afar,
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel!**

**This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel!**

**Then entered in those Wise Men three
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in His presence
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel!**

EIGHTH LESSON: St. John Unfolds the Great Mystery of the Incarnation

John 1:1-14

Sophia Carliss

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

This is a week when we often feel the disparity between the haves and the have nots. Many will go into debt striving for a perfect holiday, while others cannot even imagine the ability to have such a day. God has told us many times and, in many ways, where love flows from – it comes from the hand we extend when we have enough and even when we do not. Let us bring forth the true joy of this season and give as much as we are able.

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

What Child Is This

Mary Huegel, oboe; C. Douglas Remsburg, clarinet
– Traditional English Carol
– arr. L. Larson

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Love and Light of the world, we give you thanks for these gifts. We give you thanks for the privilege of generosity. We give you thanks for the ability to share your divine love in a tangible form with our siblings around the world. Help us to remember, as we await Christ's birth, to give more generously than we receive, knowing we will always be rich in your abundant love. Amen.

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 are presented in memory of my father, Dale Schaeberle, and my brother, John Schaeberle, from the Schaeberle Family.

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

Attendance Last Sunday: 5 at 8:30 AM, 82 at 10:30 AM, and 56 online.

Watch
Worship
Live



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

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

Serving Today: December 21

Deacons: Tommie Bradshaw, Kyle Miller
Elder: Matt Hueting
Scripture Reader: *Young Adults*
Acolyte: Vivian Bowman
Greeters: Tom Ford, Rachel Ford
Cliff Barr, Felecia Bishop
Welcome Table: Betsy Selby, Elizabeth Slade
Audio/Visual: Ethan Kline, Jeff Baker
Jack Day
Nursery: Emily Spear
Fellowship: Karen Justice, Marj Berkheimer
Peter Brehm, Felecia Bishop
Rob McGuire, Alex Martinez

Serving Next Week: December 28

Jim Brittain, Angela Brittain
Peter Brehm
Rev. John Shillingburg

Niel Jefferson, Kathleen Jefferson
Sue Pinner, Felecia Bishop
Elizabeth Slade
Jeff Schaeberle, Kelly Esslinger
Ethan Kline
Nursery will be open, but not staffed
Linda Coyle, Tommie Bradshaw
Shelley Weakly, Eric Weakly
Colleen Baldree, Chuck Baldree

Next Sunday: December 28 – First Sunday after Christmas

Let Fear Fuel a Fire for Justice | Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

The Holy Family fears for their safety and for their child's life, like so many refugees around the world. Their valid fears motivate them to move—and so they seek refuge in Egypt until it is safe for them to return home. Instead of trying to push fear away, what if we used it as fuel? What if we harnessed that incredible source of energy for good, fighting for a world where no one fears for their safety? Utilizing our fear wisely not only helps others; taking concrete action also interrupts the fear that so easily paralyzes us. The work helps others, but putting our fear to work changes us, too.

The service will include our "Letting Go and Letting God" ritual, when the congregation will be invited to write down on a piece of dissolvable paper those things that each person wants to let go of from the ending year, receive God's grace, and move into the new year with divine blessing and hope. The dissolving pieces of paper will be placed in a water bowl at the front of the chancel. The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads will be preaching. The Senior Choir will sing.

THE POINSETTIAS ADORNING THE CHANCEL ARE ...

IN MEMORY OF

- ✿ Orvis M. Staley and the Staley family by Mary Staley, Janice Staley, and Diane Waggy
- ✿ Charles and Erma Routzahn and the Routzahn family by Mary Staley, Janice Staley, and Diane Waggy
- ✿ Our loved ones by Tom and Rachel Ford
- ✿ Members of the Elseroad and Martin families by Larry and Sedonia Martin
- ✿ Craig Hoffmann by Ken and Anne Hoffmann
- ✿ Blaine Hoffmann by Ken and Anne Hoffmann
- ✿ My husband, Bill Stahler, by Peg Stahler
- ✿ My granddaughter, Liz Coffey, by Peg Stahler
- ✿ John Howard by David Howard and Susan Kulp
- ✿ John and Martha Morris by Robert and Suzanne Morris
- ✿ Herman and Mildred Smith by Robert and Suzanne Morris
- ✿ Betty McShea and Jack McShea by Judy McShea
- ✿ Dale and John Schaeberle by Jeff and Starr Schaeberle
- ✿ Roger and Dawn Williams by Jeff and Starr Schaeberle
- ✿ Loved ones by Audrey Rayfield and John Stush
- ✿ My sister, Linda Skewes, by Audrey Rayfield
- ✿ Todd Stush by John Stush
- ✿ Richard Robinson by Renae Kline
- ✿ Eleanor Briggs by Renae Kline
- ✿ Pat and Bob Armitage by Linda and Kevin Coyle
- ✿ Rita and John Coyle by Linda and Kevin Coyle
- ✿ Our grandfather and great-grandfather, Bobby L. York, by The York Family
- ✿ Family members who are greatly missed and remembered particularly during the Christmas season by Cindy Smith and Cindy Duranko
- ✿ Ed and Melanie Hoffman by Julie, Justin, Luke, Nathan, and Kali Chappell
- ✿ Salvator and Maria Varacali by Jim and Andrea Hyndman

- ✿ My husband, Donald E. Kline, by Martha Jane Crum Kline
- ✿ My mother, Evelyn V. Crum, by Martha Jane Crum Kline
- ✿ Our beautiful mom and mother-in-law by Sharon and Dave Reith
- ✿ Robert C. McCardell by John McCardell
- ✿ My late wife, Missy, by Norm Ross
- ✿ Delmar and Barba Speak, placed by your grandchildren Donnie, Amber, and Carmen
- ✿ Delmar and Barba Speak, with love from your daughters Karen and Colleen

IN HONOR OF

- ✿ Ida and Bernie Desrosiers by Larry and Sedonia Martin
- ✿ Michael Wells by Nan MacNamara
- ✿ Thomas Wells by Nan MacNamara
- ✿ My children, grandchildren, and great-grandson by Patti Patterson
- ✿ Julianne and Hudson Black by Rob and Molly Black

PLACED BY

- ✿ Bob Funk and Dave Kehne



PRAYER LIST

We invite you to hold the following people in your prayers this week. Though we may not know the specifics of their needs, God does, and our prayers are a meaningful way to surround them with love and support.

ERUCC seeks permission before adding a name to this list or in worship announcements. There are many for whom we pray and visit whose names are not listed in the bulletin by their request.

Izzie Sims (friend of Molly Black)	Ginny Peters	Carol Spera (mother of Mark Ulrich)
Holly Davis	Tom Ford	Emogene Wyand
Debbie Jennings (<i>friend of Kathleen Jefferson</i>)	Karen Stitely	Bob Pinner
Mateo Fisher	Donna Baumgardner Smith (friend of Sandra Trout)	Jim Baldree (father of Chuck Baldree)
Donna Logee	Bill Cassell (brother of Ave Barr)	Lee Thomas
Jason Rhoads	The Murray/Lennox/Cable Family	Marcia Eisenstein
Charlie and his mother, Amanda Brown (friend of Rachael Bowman)	Rhea Stein	Derek C. Hupp (grandson of Beanie & Gaylon Cornell)
Robert Debonis (uncle of Sophia Carliss)	Doris Esslinger	Wayne Kolb (friend of Stefan and Judi Mach and Tony and Linda LaFianza)
Sandy Maples (sister-in-law of Allen and Joan Maples)	Sandra Trout	Jeannette Johnson
Confirmands and Mentors	Charlie Van Eman (son of friends of Kathleen and Niel Jefferson)	Jackie Keyser (sister-in-law of Betsy and Phil Selby)
Betsy Fisher	Mary Staley	Marcy Channell (daughter of Jo Ann Fritz)
Laura Duncan Broderick (Cathie and Will's daughter)	Pat Condo	Paige Coffey
Barbara Heverley	Wells Condo	Fran Wenner
Todd Starr (nephew of Mary Staley)	Kitty Bradley	Bonnie Devilbiss
Sharon DiDonato (aunt of Darryl Glick, friend of Mark Ulrich)	Beanie Cornell	Tina Prescott (daughter-in-law of Barbara & Bill Prescott)
Isa Baxter (granddaughter of Kathy Gelles-baxter)	Raymond Slifer (father of Robin A. Brady-Slifer)	Heleen (sister of Karin Mens)
	Tom Frazier	Kathy Blue Shores (friend of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)
	Pauline Marendt	
	Kayla Merry (niece of Kim Sexton)	

PASTORAL CARE

ERUCC 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 the 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.

Activities, Events, and Announcements

ALL-CHURCH, INTERGENERATIONAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Sunday, December 21

Sanctuary, 9:30 AM

Join our Intergenerational Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 21!

- **Children, please arrive at 9:15 AM**, in the children's Sunday School area, where you will choose a costume.
- Some **youth** will be invited in advance to take a reading part. Other youth will assist the younger children in moving from the Sunday School area to the sanctuary and with their exits and entrances "on stage" at the appropriate times.
- **Anyone of any age** can be a sheep, an angel, or a wise person following a star from the East. Costumes for these roles will be at the back of the sanctuary.

You won't want to miss this fun opportunity to "play" together as we remember and reenact the story of that first Christmas. Please join us!

HELP PACK THE PANTRY

Sunday, December 21, during both worship services

Due to last Sunday's harsh winter weather, we extended our Pack the Pantry collection to this week! So, let's continue to BE the Church by supporting our neighbors in need. Once a month, we work together to fill the Frederick Community Fridge pantry in our parking lot.



"Do you have a favorite family food you always have around the holidays? Are the ingredients shelf-stable? In my family, appetizers are the thing at any family gathering, especially canned clams, oysters, and sardines all on a cracker. I prefer crackers, cheese, and meat. I'll be bringing those. Use your imagination."

You are invited to bring any shelf-stable, unopened, and unexpired items to worship. You can place them on the table at the back of the sanctuary as you arrive. If you're unable to bring donations on Sunday, you can place them in the pantry at any time.

Contact: Kim Sexton, mkessexton@comcast.net.

ADVENT MIDWEEK: WALKING & PRAYING THE LABYRINTH

December 24, Labyrinth in the Community Room, 12:00 – 1:00 PM

December 31, Trinity Chapel Labyrinth, 12:00 – 1:00 PM

Walking a labyrinth is an ancient spiritual discipline. This year, during Advent, we invite you to gather midweek at various locations in our area to walk a labyrinth. Look for more details in the Advent edition of *Trinity Chimes*.

ALL-CHURCH CHRISTMAS HAM DINNER

Sunday, December 21

Community Room, 5:00 – 7:00 PM

Come share a joyful all-church ham dinner as we gather to celebrate connection and community. We'll have children's activities set up at the side of the room, along with a simple art project for adults—and together we'll brighten the space with paper Advent lanterns!

Please sign up to bring a side dish, and consider bringing 1–2 canned goods, shelf-stable items, or toiletries to help stock the Frederick Community Fridge.

As one big and generous family of God, let's make this a table of welcome. Think about inviting a friend or neighbor, or reaching out to someone from church you haven't seen in a while—let them know you'll be there, or offer them a ride so they can join us too.

Side up to attend and/or contribute food: <https://tinyurl.com/hamER1221>



ALL ARE INVITED

Christmas Ham Dinner

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21
5:00 - 7:00 PM | Community Room

The theme for Sunday, December 21 worship invites us to be together in connection rather than live in isolation. It is certainly easy to feel isolated at the holidays and especially at a time when it is important to continue to share:

**"Fear not!
We don't go through this alone!"**

Sign up to Attend and Contribute Food



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Wednesday, December 24



The Christmas season can be filled with saccharine images of Mary, meek and mild, with a quiet, sleepy Jesus in her arms, but the host of angels shouts to the skies, “Glory to God in the highest!” What would it look like for us to proclaim the good news loudly, with overflowing joy? In a world that weaponizes fear, where algorithms decide what gets weight, what gets circulated, and what takes up space, let us be disruptive with our joy. Let us be loud and unruly, amplifying the good news like the shepherds running into the streets of Bethlehem. In a world where good news never feels loud enough to drown out fear, let us shout with the angels, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace!”

4:30 PM Children’s Service – Sanctuary

7:30 PM Family Candlelight & Carol Service – Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org

An elegant telling of the Christmas story in carols and readings with music from the Senior Choir and featured music from brass, culminating in the singing of “Silent Night” in our candle-lit sanctuary.

CANDLELIGHT TOUR OF HISTORIC HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Friday, December 26

The beloved Candlelight Historic Houses of Worship Tour 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 Friday, December 26, 2025, from 3 - 8 PM.

ERUCC will open its main building, located at 15 West Church Street, to the public for this tour. We will be offering refreshments and our wonderful hospitality.



Interested in volunteering at this event?

Scan the QR Code or go to <https://tinyurl.com/ERcnd125>.

Questions? Contact Julie Clark, Jclarkad@yahoo.com.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING: “BE THE LIGHT”

“When they saw the star, they were filled with joy.” —Matthew 2:10

For over one hundred years, **The Christmas Fund** has provided direct financial assistance to the healers in our lives: retired and active UCC ministers, church workers, and their families. Thanks to your generosity, last year The Christmas Fund provided over \$1.7 million in pension and health benefits, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired clergy

Please consider donating to this Special Mission Offering to ensure more healers receive the loving support of the Church in their moment of deepest need. ERUCC will receive The Christmas Fund offering on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 21, on Christmas Eve, and anytime online by scanning the QR code or going to <https://tinyurl.com/CF25give>.



NEW YEAR'S DAY HIKE

January 1, 10:00 AM

Families are invited to take a New Year's Day walk, meeting Pastor Kirstin and her family for a 1–2 hour hike. The timing and location will be determined closer to the date, when we can better predict the weather. Bring clothes to layer for the weather, a water bottle, and a snack if desired. Let's welcome the new year with movement and community connections!

Let us know if you are interested so we can keep you updated: <https://tinyurl.com/4up9hmfa>

LET'S TALK: PRACTICING PEACE IN TIMES OF WAR

Sundays, January 4, 11, 18

Flora Room, 9:15 – 10:15 AM

Many of us are struggling to find our way in the face of previously unimaginable, radical changes occurring daily in our world. Join us as we explore together effective ways to respond to these assaults. The class is based on the short book, *Practicing Peace in Times of War*, by Pema Chödrön, an American Buddhist nun in the Tibetan tradition who draws on Buddhist teachings to explore the origins of aggression, hatred, and war.

The way we respond to challenges in our everyday lives can either perpetuate a culture of violence or create a new culture of compassion. She offers practical ways to break the cycles of violence and aggression. We will also explore the parallels between these teachings and those of Jesus and the Bible as a whole.

It is not necessary to read the book to participate. New members are welcome at any session.

THEOLOGY AMONG THE PEOPLE WITH REV. DR. REBECCA SHILLINGBURG

Tuesdays

North Room / Zoom, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Zoom: tinyurl.com/tuetap

We are reading Brian Kaylor's book *The Bible According to Christian Nationalists: Exploiting Scripture for Political Power*. Have you heard the term Christian Nationalism and wondered exactly what was meant by that and how we as Christians should approach it and Christians in other traditions who adhere to aspects of it?

This class is slightly different than the Sunday class offered earlier, but will cover similar topics.

**This class resumes January 6, 2026.*



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

LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE WITH REV. JOHN SHILLINGBURG

Sunday morning, 9:15 – 10:15 AM, Zoom: bit.ly/ERSunstudy

Wednesday evening, 7:00 – 8:15 PM, Zoom: bit.ly/ERWedstudy

North Room / Zoom

Led by Rev. John Shillingburg, this is an ongoing class, with new members welcome at any time. No prior Bible knowledge is required. The class explores scripture in its original context, considering who wrote it and how it has been interpreted over time. This multi-faceted approach leads to deep learning and engaging conversations.

**The Sunday class resumes January 4, 2026. The Wednesday class meets for a final session on December 17, 2025, resuming on January 7, 2026.*

GENTLE YOGA

Tuesdays (Final class in 2025 on December 16, classes resume January 6)

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.

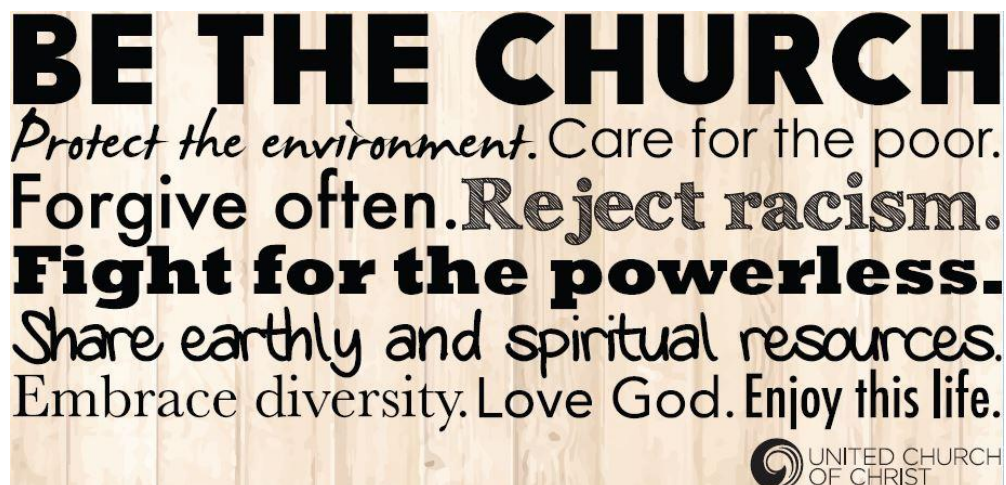
To access the yoga classroom in Trinity Chapel, walk through the gate to the left of the building, down the walkway to the side door, and into the hallway leading to the classroom.

WEDNESDAY PRAYERS

Wednesdays

Sanctuary, 4:00 – 4:30 PM

On Wednesday afternoons, you are invited to enter the church (doors open at 3:45 PM) and proceed to the front of the sanctuary in silence. We will each pray silently in our own personal traditions. We begin promptly at 4:00 PM and end at 4:30 PM. What you can expect: substance for your everyday journey. Led by Rev. Richard Leslie.



CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS REVIEW SESSIONS

A Constitution and Bylaws Study Group has completed a draft of a revised document, and we invite the entire congregation to be part of the next step. Three upcoming sessions will offer an opportunity to hear more about the recommended revisions, ask questions, and share your feedback as we discern together the best path forward for ERUCC's governance and ministry.

Review the current draft: <https://tinyurl.com/ymaaemst>

Please join us at one of the following sessions in 2026:

- **Tuesday, January 6 at 6:30 PM on Zoom**
 - Pre-registration required: <https://tinyurl.com/ERcb0106>
- **Sunday, January 25 in the North Room at approximately 12:00 PM**
- **Sunday, February 8 in the North Room at approximately 12:00 PM**

Your participation is essential as we shape structures that support our mission, our values, and our shared future. We hope to see you there!

SOUPER SEND-OFF

Sunday, January 11

On Dr. Morgan's last Sunday at ERUCC, we would like to acknowledge his time with us with a soup lunch during Fellowship. We are expecting a crowd in his honor and for the Name Study Group presentation that is also scheduled during Fellowship. Please contact Ave Barr (avebarr9200@gmail.com) or Susan Kulp (smkulp@earthlink.net) if you would be willing to make a crockpot of soup or bring bread/crackers for the event.

NAME CHANGE SURVEY RESULTS PRESENTATION

Sunday, January 11

Community Room/Zoom, during Fellowship

At the Congregational Meeting on December 14, the Name Study Team shared an overview of results from the name survey conducted in the fall. To explore the full findings from Church Leadership, the Congregation, and our External Partners & Community, please join us for a presentation during Fellowship on Sunday, January 11. We'll take a deeper look at what the data—including your voices—are telling us and outline the next steps as we continue to discern whether a name change is right for ERUCC.



ADVENT 2025: SHARE A DAILY BREATH PRAYER ON FACEBOOK

This year, we have a prayer focus word for each day of Advent. Here's how you can use the focus word and demonstrate breath prayers to our members:

- Pick up a list of words with corresponding breath prayers for each day of Advent from the back of the sanctuary.
- Sign up for a day. <https://bit.ly/43GuXQE>.
- Make a video for your day that is approximately one minute long that shares the word, shares your connection to the word for Advent, and demonstrates the breath prayer.
- Upload your video to our ERUCC Facebook group on your scheduled day, or send it to Pastor Kirstin in a text, and she will upload it for you.

If you are not already a member of our internal church Facebook group, email erucc@erucc.org to request an invitation.

FRANKLINTON CENTER WORK TRIP

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

January 17–19

Join us for ERUCC's annual work trip to the Franklinton Center at Bricks (FCAB), a historic conference, retreat, and educational center in eastern North Carolina dedicated to justice advocacy, leadership development, and community empowerment. Over MLK Jr. weekend (2026), we'll partner with this remarkable UCC-related ministry whose roots include the Franklinton Christian College (1871) and the Congregationalist Bricks School (1895), both founded to expand education and opportunity for formerly enslaved and marginalized communities. Today, FCAB continues that legacy as a hub for transformation and justice work.

ERUCC has the longest continuous volunteer partnership with Franklinton Center at Bricks. Each year, our group helps upgrade and maintain facilities so FCAB can more effectively serve its community with education, justice programming, and essential services. To continue our partnership, we especially need the commitment of adults with a variety of skills. Please pray about participating with us.

The cost is **\$90 per person**, which includes housing and meals. (Confirmants participate at no cost—it's part of the Confirmation program.)

Budgeted mission funds and additional donations from the congregation help subsidize the trip. **Make a gift in support of this work trip today:** <https://ppay.co/kkaBnvIos-A>

Participants should attend our prep meeting on Sunday, January 11, at 9:15 AM in the Community Room.



If you're ready for meaningful service, deep learning, and great community, we'd love for you to join us. **Register and pay here:** <https://tinyurl.com/ER26fcab>

Questions? Contact Pastor Kirstin, ksrhoads@erucc.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSURE

Wednesday, December 24 – January 2

The church office will be closed Wednesday, December 24 through Friday, January 2 to allow our staff time to rest and celebrate with their families. The erucc@erucc.org inbox and the main voicemail will be monitored once each day for urgent needs. Thank you for your understanding, and we wish you a peaceful Christmas season!

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

SUNDAY MORNING

Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ prefers not to cancel worship services because of the weather. We advise you to use your own good judgment about whether conditions where you live are too treacherous for you to make it to services safely.

If conditions are such that the ERUCC needs to cancel services, we will make that decision no less than one and a half hours ahead of the time each worship service begins. Activities such as Christian Education classes for children, youth, and adults and Nursery Care may be cancelled even if worship services continue as scheduled.

Notification: If services are cancelled, we notify people via email, our Facebook page(s) and the website at www.erucc.org.

WEEKDAYS AND SATURDAYS

Church classes, groups, meetings, and other activities may be canceled or held virtually when possible and appropriate if weather conditions are hazardous or are predicted to become hazardous. If you have a question about whether or not your specific event is cancelled, please contact the coordinator/leader of the event.

The church office is generally governed by the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) inclement weather plan. In the event inclement weather requires FCPS to close, delay opening, or dismiss early, the church office will similarly delay opening or be closed and ERUCC activities will also be cancelled or may be held virtually when possible and appropriate.

Notification: If the church office is closed or will delay opening, we will post a notification on our Facebook page(s) and the website at www.erucc.org.

YEAR-END GIVING

As you contemplate donations this holiday season, please keep Evangelical Reformed UCC in mind. Your contributions are needed for everything from special programs to basic operating expenses—both deserve your support. Please be as generous as you can this holiday season and in the year ahead. For the convenience of church members, we offer electronic giving at www.erucc.org/give.

Children & Youth Activities, Events, and Announcements

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Sundays, 9:15 – 10:15 AM*

**December 14 is the last day of Sunday School in 2025. We hope you participate in the Intergenerational Christmas Pageant on December 21 during the Sunday School hour. Classes will resume in January 2026.*

Join us for a joyful hour of learning, connection, and faith formation with classes for all ages.

Children in Pre-K; K – Grade 2; and Grades 3 – 5: please check-in at the reception desk in the Kieffer Lobby (main building).

Music & Movement takes place from 10:00 – 10:15 AM. Students who wish to participate in Music & Movement will transition under the direction of their teachers to the Liz Coffey Room at 10:00 AM.

Pickup: All families must check out children with leaders in their classrooms at 10:00 AM OR in the Liz Coffey Room at 10:20 AM if staying for Music & Movement.

Youth in Middle School/Confirmation or High School should enter Trinity Chapel through the side door, located behind the iron gate on the left side of the building. Please check in at the self-service kiosk before proceeding to your classroom. Always cross the street at the crosswalk.

Dismissal: Youth, escorted by a teacher, will return as a group to the main building at 10:15 AM.

JUNIOR CHURCH

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

**December 14 is the last day of Junior Church in 2025. We hope you enjoy the Service of Lessons and Carols during worship at 10:30 AM on Sunday, December 21. Junior Church resumes on Sunday, January 11, 2026.*

Children in K – Grade 5 are invited to Junior Church most Sundays during the school year. Children begin worship at 10:30 AM in the sanctuary with their families and, after the Thought for the Day, are dismissed for creative, well-supervised spiritual formation activities. On the first Sunday of each month, children remain in worship to participate in worship and receive communion with their families.

ADVENT MISSION PROJECT FOR K–5 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

Collection: November 30 – January 4

This Advent season, our K–5th grade Sunday School classes are putting compassion into action with a special mission project! We're teaming up to stock the Frederick Community Fridge and Pantry, a simple but powerful way our children can help care for our neighbors. Children are invited to bring non-perishable food items or hygiene products to their classrooms. We'll be collecting donations through January 4, when our classes will make a special trip out to our parking lot to place their gifts directly into the Community Fridge. It's a hands-on moment of generosity and learning that embodies the heart of Advent.

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 ~ *Executive Church Administrator* ~ tyork@erucc.org

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

Ann Watkins ~ *Administrative Assistant/Receptionist* ~ awatkins@erucc.org

Ashley Murphy ~ *Nursery Attendant*

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

The Rev. Fred Wenner ~ *Pastor Emeritus*

CONSISTORY

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

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

Rebecca Shillingburg ~ *Worship Chair* | Peter Brehm ~ *Finance Chair*

Shelley Weakly ~ *Mission, Evangelism, and Social Justice Chair* | Vacant ~ *Property Chair*

Julie Clark ~ *Stewardship/Generosity Chair* | Holly Davis ~ *Christian Education Chair*

Mark Ulrich ~ *Head Deacon* | Larry Martin ~ *Member-at-Large*

ELDERS

Ave Barr | Peter Brehm | Matt Hueting | Jeanellen Kallevang | Susan Kulp | Eric Weakly

DEACONS

Quynn Adkins | Tommie Bradshaw | Robin A. Brady-Slifer | Robin L. Brady-Slifer

Angela Brittain | Jim Brittain | Kyle Miller | Mark Ulrich

SETTLED PASTOR SEARCH AND CALL COMMITTEE

Rachael Bowman | Tommie Bradshaw | Karl Cooper | Linda Coyle | Matt Hueting

Terry Logee | Jen Powell | Bud Rossig | Eliza Stitely

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 <i>Next Sunday, December 28, the nursery is available for family use but will not be staffed.</i>
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Worship , Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org
11:30 AM	Fellowship , Downtown Community Room

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

MOBILE



Scan to give from your mobile device

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.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 21, 2025

Matthew 1:18-25

God with Us

It was Christmas Eve, and I was joining my father at a church he had been attending. I settled into the pew, letting the medley of hymns soothe my still frazzled soul from the push to meet holiday deadlines at my Manhattan magazine job. Soon, though, I heard more than the music. I heard a silent prayer fill my heart.

God, thank You for being in my life. May I never forget to thank You even when dark times come. May I always know You are with me.

Why was I thinking about dark times descending upon my seemingly perfect life? I was young. My career was taking off. I had a wonderful apartment. I even had a special someone in my life.

Thankfully, the church school procession of angels with lopsided cardboard wings had begun, giving me something else to focus on. But throughout the service, every now and then, I kept thinking about, “May I never forget to thank You even when dark times come.”

Two months later, “the one” I envisioned building a future with was killed in a jeep accident while traveling in Africa. The proverbial rug was ripped out from underneath me. Yet through my tears, I remembered my Christmas prayer. And so, I prayed in my sorrow a prayer of thanks for God being with me here in my dark time.

The year of unwanted change flew by and once again it was Christmas Eve. This time, though, I wasn’t sitting in the pew of the church my father was attending. I was standing with a heavenly host of angels with lopsided cardboard wings. I had left my magazine job and was now serving the church as Christian ed director as I prepared to enter seminary. Little did I know then that down this unexpected path was a rural congregation waiting for me where I would find not only my call, but someone to share my life with.

As I waited with the overly excited angels, I thought about how drastically my life had changed. It was then the realization of where God had led me fully hit. I was standing in church named “Emmanuel,” which was located on a street named “Hope.”

The angels began fluttering as the organ bellowed with the first notes of the processional hymn. But I didn’t hear any of it. All I could hear was a familiar prayer, in which I invite you to say along with me:

God, thank You for being in my life. May I never forget to thank You even when dark times come. May I always know You are with me. In the name of Emmanuel, God with us always, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today’s Sunday Bulletin.)



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

BUL0203

Bulletin artwork and backpage stories copyright © 2025 United Church of Christ