



Cosmic
Praise

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.

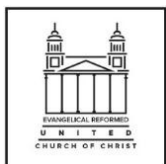
There is more information about our church in this bulletin and on our website: www.erucc.org.

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 28, 2025

First Sunday After Christmas

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

The Rev. John Shillingburg

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

PRELUDE

THRESHOLD MOMENT

Until We Reach the Sun

– Rev. Sarah Speed

Buffaloes are the only animals that run into a storm.
They can smell the snow coming. They can feel the temperature change—
deep in their bones. So they gather together, a pack on the plains.
And with their large lumbering bodies, they run.
They run through snow and ice, wind and rain. They do not stop
until they reach the sun.

When you are afraid, because this world is cruel and harsh,
or because humans are deported and shot without reason,
or because we cannot remember how to talk to each other civilly,
I will be your pack. I will stay by your side. I will run with you
until we reach the sun.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

In worship, we hear God's story and we ask,

“What did God do long ago?”

In worship, we hear God's story, so we ask,

“What is God doing, here and now?”

In worship, we hear God's story, then we ask,

“What can I do to respond to it all?”

Listen, God is speaking.

Listen, it may be time to act.

Let us worship our moving, inspiring, with-us God.

Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

#143

¹ On Christmas night all Christians sing,

to hear the news the angels bring;

On Christmas night all Christians sing,

to hear the news the angels bring -

News of great joy, news of great mirth,

news of our merciful Ruler's birth.

² Then why should we on earth be sad,

since our Redeemer made us glad;

Then why should we on earth be sad,

since our Redeemer made us glad,

When from our sin Christ set us free,

all for to gain our liberty.

³ From out of mystery came the Light,

which made the angels sing this night;

From out of mystery came the Light,

which made the angels sing this night:

“Glory to God and peace to all,

forevermore, Alleluia!”

***CALL TO TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE**

Family of faith, the invitation of our faith is simple.

We are invited to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.

And yet, those acts have always been easier said than done.

That is why we need the Prayer of Confession.

In confession, we speak honestly with God. We tell the truth of our lives, and

in response, God offers us grace. God picks us up, shakes the dust off our

wearily bones, and shows us how to keep walking toward God.

So let us go to God in prayer, not because we have to, but because God will always meet us there. Let us pray.

***PRAYER FOR GRACE**

**Emmanuel, God with us,
scripture tells us that you were a refugee,
but we love to forget that information.
We love to forget every act of gun violence.
We love to forget how many people go hungry,
or how many students do not have access to good education.
We love to forget the injustices in our world that feel too big for us to
face. But you are a God who refuses to forget.
So today we pray: make it impossible for us to overlook the stories of
those in need. Make it impossible for us to sweep injustice under the rug.
Open our eyes along with our hearts, so that the anger we feel around
injustice might fuel a fire for action.
With hope for a better tomorrow we pray. Amen.**

***WORDS OF GRACE**

Church family, even when we fail to do justice,
even when we fail to love kindness, even when we allow fear to override
action, freezing us in place, God still loves us.
So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:
**On our best days and on our worst days, we belong to God.
We are invited into community. We are held in God's grace.
We are forgiven. And we are sent to serve.**
Thanks be to God for a love like that.
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 of all ages are invited to participate in the service today. A book nook with children's programs, books, crayons, and activities is in the rear of the sanctuary and a wiggle space is available in the front of the sanctuary near the baptismal font. Junior Church for children ages 5 through 5th grade will resume Sunday, January 11.

***HYMN**

Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear

#105

**¹ "Gentle Joseph, Joseph dear,
stay with me, for the baby's near;
God will surely your goodness hear,
as you will love this new-born child," says Mary.**

**² "Gladly Mary, Mary mine,
I will cradle the child divine;
Here will heaven and earth combine,
for you will bear God's child, O dearest Mary."**

**³ "Peace to all and God's good-will,"
heaven and earth with this song will fill;
Soon will God, in the evening still,
be born in Bethlehem, the child of Mary.**

THE SCRIPTURES

The Rev. John Shillingburg

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 NT page 2

Reader: May God bless the reading of this word.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

MORNING PRAYERS

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

We hear God's story and ask, "How will we respond?" Today we remember the Holy Family—moved by fear, yet acting with courage to seek safety. Our giving is one way we turn our own fears for the world into compassion and justice. Let us offer our gifts with hearts ready to act.

This is a time during worship 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 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

Christmas Joy!

Senior Choir

– L. Smith

THE LETTING GO AND LETTING GOD RITUAL

On this final Sunday of 2025, 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

God-with-us, bless these gifts and use them to bring safety, hope, and justice to those in need. Turn our fears into fuel for courageous love, and shape our lives to reflect Your grace. 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**

In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit.

May you reach for each other's hands.

May you choose courage whenever you can.

And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear.

In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends,

and the one who journeys with— go in peace and *be not afraid*.

Amen.

***SEVENFOLD AMEN**

#814

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 are placed in loving memory of my parents, Barbara D. Kreh and William B. Kreh, by Susan Kreh.

The yellow rose is presented by John Stush in memory of his father, John Stush, US Navy.

Attendance Last Sunday: attendance for December 21 and 24 will be reported on January 11

Watch
Worship
Live



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

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

Serving Today: December 28

Deacons: Jim Brittain, Angela Brittain
Elder: Peter Brehm
Scripture Reader: Rev. John Shillingburg
Acolyte:
Greeters: Niel Jefferson, Kathleen Jefferson
Sue Pinner, Felecia Bishop
Welcome Table: Elizabeth Slade
Audio/Visual: Jeff Schaeberle, Kelly Esslinger
Ethan Kline
Nursery: *Nursery is open, but not staffed*
Fellowship: Linda Coyle, Tommie Bradshaw
Shelley Weakly, Eric Weakly
Colleen Baldree, Chuck Baldree

Serving Next Week: January 4

Mark Ulrich, Quynn Adkins
Ave Barr
Rev. Dr. Rebecca Shillingburg
Danielle Carbone, Cliff Barr
Rissah Watkins
Jeff Schaeberle, Ethan Kline
David Howard
Julie Clark, Joe Adkins
Quynn Adkins, Hollie Mercier
Kyle Miller, Pat Dorsz

Next Sunday: January 4 – Epiphany

Fear Doesn't Stop Us

Matthew 2:1-12, 16-18

Christ is born, yet it feels as if the world has not changed. The temptation to give up is strong, especially in the face of violence. But the magi don't let Herod's fear-driven demands stop them from honoring the newborn Christ or returning home by a different way. They model for us what it looks like to be led by hope, moving through fear without letting it paralyze us. As the new year begins, we proclaim: our journey continues, and fear won't have the last word.

We will share communion at stations this morning and receive our star words for the year. The Senior Choir will sing.



Stay With Me

by T. Denise Anderson

Inspired by Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 | 18"x24" Acrylic on canvas board

ARTIST STATEMENT

I used to think my mother was cheap. When we'd go on road trips, she'd spend the night before preparing food for the trip. I thought it was because she didn't want to spend money on fast food. She didn't. But her reasons had nothing to do with a drive-thru.

My mother was a Black child in the U.S. in the 1950s and 60s. When they went on road trips, they had to leave in the dead of night with everything they'd need for the trip. For Black folks, there was no casual stopping along the way. If you stopped at the "wrong" place, you might not make it home. Her elders taught her what they had to learn themselves, often the hard way. My mom grew up in the Steel Belt, but the family had moved there after leaving the Jim Crow South during the Great Migration for greener (and ostensibly safer) pastures. Her preparations were vestiges of a circumspect upbringing designed to keep her safe.

I was well into adulthood when I realized my family had been refugees in their own country.

The story of the Holy Family's flight to Egypt takes new significance as I consider not only the experiences of dear ones around the world, but also my own ancestors. My piece focuses on a parent's desperate grip of their child's hand as they escape a despot's fiery wrath, possibly in the dead of night. The colors subtly recall the Pan-African, Palestinian, and Sudanese flags. I remember those left behind, and the lower part of the composition depicts the anguish of mothers whose children were not spared. Rachel still weeps (Matthew 2:18).

Our fears aren't unfounded. Salvation may have arrived, but the world still isn't safe. How will we remember Rachel's children as we resist and rebuild?

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)	Karen Stitely	Bob Pinner
Debbie Jennings (<i>friend of Kathleen Jefferson</i>)	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)
Ginny Peters	Tom Frazier	Kathy Blue Shores (friend of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)
Tom Ford	Pauline Marendt	
	Kayla Merry (niece of Kim Sexton)	
	Carol Spera (mother of Mark Ulrich)	
	Emogene Wyand	

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

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!

ADVENT MIDWEEK: WALKING & PRAYING THE LABYRINTH

Wednesday, December 31

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

Walking a labyrinth is an ancient spiritual discipline. We invite you to gather one final time to walk a labyrinth.

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>

SPECIAL GIVING OPPORTUNITY NEXT WEEK

Sunday, January 4

Mortgage Assistance: On the first Sunday of each month, we have a special opportunity for giving towards Mortgage Assistance. Donations fund ERUCC's mortgages with the Fisher Fund and FCB Bank, a division of ACNB Bank, payments on which are about \$153,000/year.

HELP PUT CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS AWAY

Sunday, January 4

following 10:30 AM service

We will be taking down our Christmas decorations and appreciate all the help we can get! Help after the 10:30 AM worship service on Sunday, January 4.

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 a brief overview of the survey results. 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.



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

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

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.

LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE WITH REV. JOHN SHILLINGBURG

Sunday morning, 9:15 – 10:15 AM, Zoom: bit.ly/ERSunstudy (class resumes January 4)
Wednesday evening, 7:00 – 8:15 PM, Zoom: bit.ly/ERWedstudy (class resumes January 7)
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.

THEOLOGY AMONG THE PEOPLE WITH REV. DR. REBECCA SHILLINGBURG

Tuesdays (class resumes January 6)
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?

GENTLE YOGA

Tuesdays (class 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.

YOUTH FUNDRAISER: “OPERATION NACHOS!”

We’ve subbed SUBS with NACHOS! This year, our Youth Group is trying something new and selling nachos to pick up on Super Bowl Sunday.

Youth will begin taking orders for “Operation Nachos!” either on paper or online on Sunday, January 4. **Orders must be completed by Sunday, February 1.**

Each order will be served in an 8-inch square container of nachos and your choice of three 3-oz. sides for \$12. You can then add additional sides, including ground beef, guacamole, salsa, and more for an extra cost. Ground beef will be pre-cooked and refrigerated. We hope to make it easy



for you to pick up your nachos on Sunday, February 8, go home, and put your chips on a plate with other ingredients that you want to heat up while your cold sides are all ready for gametime! Portions will serve 1-2 people.

1) **Order online:** tinyurl.com/ERncho26 or scan QR code at left by Sunday, February 1

2) **Pay** for your order anytime or on day-of pickup by cash/check or online by scanning the QR code at right, or go to ppay.co/y5HdY9oKBQY (note: Youth Nachos in the memo field).



3) **Pick up** your order on Sunday, February 8, in the Community Room

Questions?

Contact Chris Vara, chris.marie.vara@gmail.com, or Pastor Kirstin, ksrhoads@erucc.org.

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

Children & Youth Activities, Events, and Announcements

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Sundays, 9:15 – 10:15 AM

(resumes on Sunday, January 4)

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

(resumes on Sunday, January 11)

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*

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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>The nursery is available for family use but is not staffed today.</i>
10:30 – 11:30 AM	Worship , Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org
11:30 AM	Fellowship , Downtown Community Room

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FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY

December 28, 2025

Psalm 148

Cosmic Praise

How many forlorn Christmas trees, kicked to the curb and stripped of all their tinsel glory, did you see on your way to church today? One? Two? Perhaps even three?

Once again, the world has rushed the seasons, ushering in the bleak midwinter before its time. I have always wondered why we are quick to start our holiday celebrations earlier each year, and then seem to be in a rush to pack it all away? We are still in Christmastide until Epiphany, Jan. 6 which, before St. Nick came with a sack full of toys, was traditionally the time to exchange gifts, recalling the gold, frankincense and myrrh that the Magi presented to the Christ Child.

But rather than lingering to listen to the angels sing, we stop too soon, leaving many to come down with a severe case of post-holiday letdown. You might recognize the symptoms: sadness, lethargy, and trouble getting back into the swing of mundane routines.

While my Christmas tree stays lit until Jan. 6, I am still susceptible to post-holiday letdown. But when I find myself struggling to get out of bed and stare with dread at the computer, not wanting to check work emails, I reach for the best cure I know of. I reach for God's enduring Word.

It is in the Good Book that we find the psalmist's prescription for let downs and blues of all kinds (not just holiday!): A huge dose of praise, administered every hour on the hour.

*Praise him, all his angels! Praise him, all his host! Praise him you highest heavens!
Praise him!*

When we turn our attention to lifting our praises rather than cursing the darkness, our hearts start soaring with an indestructible hope. We begin believing that with God all things are possible. Frowns become smiles. Mountains become molehills. Strength, courage and energy return.

Praise is a transformative spiritual discipline that I urge us to add to our New Year's resolutions, that is, if you make resolutions. I remember reading years ago that Satan is more afraid of praise coming from our lips than praise. Yes, praise is that powerful. So my friends, practice praise — this day and always.

God of light and love, the Christmas decorations that filled our hearts with joy are being taken down. The corners of our lives that were illuminated with the glow of warm hope are now bleak and cold. Yet still we are being reminded to praise You — now and always. And so, hear our praises this day. And may our praise to You be the very thing that chases away the gloomy shadows all around. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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



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