

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



# **EVANGELICAL REFORMED United Church of Christ**

- An Open and Affirming Congregation -



December 7, 2025

# Second 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**

# \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

# **PRELUDE**

## THRESHOLD MOMENT

God in the Kitchen

read by Dan Smith – written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

I called home my first semester of college. I told my mom I was fine, but I was homesick. She must have heard the truth in my voice. The ache ate at me. It was a long, slow song, a million tiny ants slurping the juice from a peach. I was tender and bruised, in the doldrums of it all. But she could hear all of that. So three states away, she preheated the oven. Three states away, she tossed blueberries in a thin layer of flour. Three states away, she dusted a layer of streusel over the soft peaks of a dozen warm muffins. And three days later, I unboxed a package from home—
a dozen blueberry muffins, a love letter with my name on it, a reminder that I was not alone.
If you're running out of hope, count to three.
God is in the kitchen. She's just waiting for yeast to rise.

# LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF PEACE

Reader 1: O God, we light the second candle of Advent.

The Candle of Hope is lighted.

Reader 2: We seek your comfort. Both mighty and tender, you come. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you.

Reader 1: Isaiah announced God's coming to a people exiled in a broken and parched wilderness. He declared that God's redemption would make a highway in the desert and change the rough places into plain. God would come as a shepherd—feeding, leading, and cradling the weary flock. This Advent, we seek such a God.

People: Saving God, look upon your world and heal your land and your people. Prepare us to be changed. This Advent, teach us to be tender and just, as you are. 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

# \*OPENING HYMN

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

#122

Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set all people free; From our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.

Israel's strength and consolation, hope to all the earth impart; Dear desire of every nation, enter every longing heart.

Born all people to deliver, born a child, you came to reign! Born to rule on earth forever, come, be known to us again.

By your own eternal Spirit, come to claim us as your own; By your all-sufficient merit, let us share your cross and crown.

# \*CALL TO TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

Near the end of his ministry, John the Baptist reached out to Jesus with a heart full of anxiety. John was in jail. He knew he might not get out, so he asked Jesus, "Did I make a mistake? Am I making a difference here? Or did I get it all wrong?"

Like John, let us be fully honest with Jesus about our innermost thoughts. We can pour our heart out to God because God always meets us with grace, tenderness, and mercy. So friends, let us go to God in prayer. Let us be honest, just like John the Baptist. Let us pray.

## \*PRAYER FOR GRACE

On-the-move God, we have every reason to hold onto hope.

We have every reason to believe that spring will come,

that flowers will bloom, that the sun will rise.

And yet, too often hope slips through our fingers.

With anxious hearts we cry out to you,

"Will change ever come? Will things ever get better?

Will I ever make a difference?"

Soothe our wandering hearts and show us where the sun is shining.

Show us the places where you are on the move.

With open hearts, we pray. Amen.

# \*WORDS OF GRACE

Family of faith, in our honesty,

we are heard.

In our worries,

we are held.

In our failings,

we are forgiven.

In our fear,

we are not alone.

Friends, this is the good news of the gospel!

When we're running out of hope,

God is still at work.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

# THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Breath Prayer: *inhale*: Hope that trembles *exhale*: is still hope.

# 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. A special Advent activity is available in the wiggle space. Junior Church for children ages 5 through 5th grade will resume next Sunday.

THE SCRIPTURES Dan Smith

Isaiah 43:19-21 OT page 672 Matthew 11:1-11 NT page 11

Reader: May God bless the reading of this word.

All: Thanks be to God.

CANTATA Senior Choir

Linda Moss, flute; Justin Coen, violin

Light of Peace: Celtic Carols for Christmas – Karen Marrolli

# Noel!

Noel, Noel! The angels tell the story of this night, when Emmanuel came with us to dwell: the Christ, the Child of Light. He was not born in gilded halls befitting of his reign, but rather in a lonely stall to feel our human pain. All glory be to God on high! We heed the angels' call! and joyfully return their cry: Sing peace to one and all!

Noel, Noel! Their praises swell o'er hill and over sea. O hear the bells, o'er hill and dell, that sing of jubilee! The Lord has come to show us how iniquity might cease. O let us be your servants now, and walk the paths of peace. All glory be to God on high! We heed the angels' call! and joyfully return their cry: Sing peace to one and all!

Noel, Noel! O come and quell the fear of earthly care. O teach us well, Emmanuel, to nourish and to share, to grasp each far and distant land and to knock down ev'ry wall, 'till peace and light reign o'er the land, and love embraces all. All glory be to God on high! We heed the angels' call! and joyfully return their cry: Sing peace to one and all!

# **Creation Sings**

O sleep, o sleep, Thou Holy Child, the Son of God, so meek, so mild. The donkey carried your Mother blessed, the cow gives hay to hasten your rest, and all Creation sings the birth of Christ, the Savior of the earth! And all Creation sings the birth of Christ, the Savior of the earth!

O sleep, o sleep, Thou Holy Child, the son of God, so meek, so mild. The stars will hum a slumber tune as oxen bow and sweet birds croon, and all Creation sings the birth of Christ, the Savior of the earth! And all Creation sings the birth of Christ, the Savior of the earth!

Rejoice, rejoice! This Holy Child, the Son of God, so meek, so mild has come that darkness now might cease! Sing welcome to that Light of Peace! Now all Creation sings the birth of Christ, the Savior of the earth!

# **Peace on Earth**

Peace on earth, peace on earth, we shall know peace, when Christ comes to reign within us, when Christ is born in us. Peace on earth, peace on earth, we shall know peace.

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis! (Glory to God in the highest! And peace on earth to all of good will!)

# The Call

We greet the joy of Christmas and the chorus the angels sing! Ring out a song of welcome to Christ, the newborn King! For present in that welcome of the light through blissful birth is a welcome to all people and the promise of peace on earth.

We feel the call of Christmas in the message the shepherds heard. Though they were but common people they were chosen to greet the word. Oh glory be to God in the highest, and peace to all of good will. But will we embody the promise when the ancient song is stilled?

Forgive us, Lord, forgive us when we look to the rich and strong instead of the lowly stable for the pow'r to right Earth's wrongs. O use us, the poor and lowly, inspired by the song from above to seek the lost and broken, to heal the world with love.

# Alleluia

Alleluia! Alleluia! Peace on the earth! Good tidings to all! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The angel song rings from on high! The star is shining in the sky! And all the heavens seem to cry: "Alleluia! Alleluia!

From the darkness shines an endless light, never overcome by ceaseless night, and we greet the dawn with great delight!

The chorus falls like holy rain and rings and echoes o'er the plain, and creation joins the song again: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Now we no more cling to doubt and fear since the Prince of Peace has entered here, and we greet the morning with great cheer!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Peace on the earth! Good tidings to all! Alleluia! Alleluia!

# **HOMILY**

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

#### MORNING PRAYERS

# **INVITATION TO GENEROSITY**

Peace makes us generous. God's abundance pours through us to our neighbors, just as God's love showers us with blessings. As each of us gives what we can, we know that our community is only as resilient as our most vulnerable neighbor. God uses our gifts to spread peace throughout our homes, communities, and world.

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.



# - SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION -

# INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Here at this Table, there is enough room, enough food, enough love for everyone.

Here at this Table, you are wanted and welcomed.

You are safe and loved.

Here at this Table, you belong.

So my friends, there is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast.

And you are invited. Come. All are welcome.

# PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Loving God, pour out your Spirit on this Table.

Pour out your Spirit on this ordinary bread.

Pour out your Spirit on this ordinary juice.

The thing we fear the most is distance from you, so draw near to us here.

Saturate this room with your Spirit and this Table with your love.

In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

On the night he was betrayed, the Light of the World took bread and blessed it. Then he thanked God for it and broke it, saying:

"This is my body which is broken for you. Whenever you eat it, remember me."

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

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

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

## SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

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

After all have received the bread and the cup:

Great is the mystery of faith.

Christ has died;

Christ is risen;

Christ will come again.

# \*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Loving God, in a world racked with fear, you gather us together.

You set the table. You meet us here.

You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits.

You remind us that this is a joyful feast,

and that fear cannot win every time.

So with renewed courage, with renewed hope,

with renewed conviction, send us out into the world.

Help us to feed others as you have fed us.

With gratitude we pray, amen.

# \*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**



Worship Notes: Adapted from liturgy by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. Offertory from *Raised Above*: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday of Advent Year A, written by Maria Mankin.

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

**The flowers on the altar** this morning are given by Nan MacNamara in memory of her father, who passed away on December 16, 1984, and in honor of her son Thomas, who was born one month later.

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

Attendance Last Sunday: 11 at 8:30 AM, 107 at 10:30 AM, and 62 online.



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

https://sundaystreams.com/go/ERUCC

Serving Today: December 7 Serving Next Week: December 14

Deacons: Mark Ulrich, Quynn Adkins Robin A. Brady Slifer

Robin L. Brady-Slifer

Elder: Eric Weakly Starr Schaeberle

Scripture Reader: Dan Smith Pam Shepp

Acolyte: Abby Spear Laurel Nguyen-Powell

Greeters: Danielle Carbone, Paul McGinley Cathie Duncan, Robin Cooney

Felecia Bishop Rob Smith, Paul McGinley

Welcome Table: Julie Clark Rissah Watkins

Audio/Visual: Ethan Kline, Jeff Baker Kelly Esslinger, Larry Martin

Jack Day Jack Day

Nursery: Meredith Neely Kate Fromknecht Fellowship: Renae Kline, Jim Weitz Ave Barr, Cliff Barr

> Cathie Duncan Joan Maples, Allen Maples Emily Button Kambic Jen Powell, Pat Condo

Kathleen Jefferson, Niel Jefferson Bud Rossig

Communion Prep: Cathie Duncan, Will Duncan

Communion Clergy: Rev. John Shillingburg

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Shillingburg

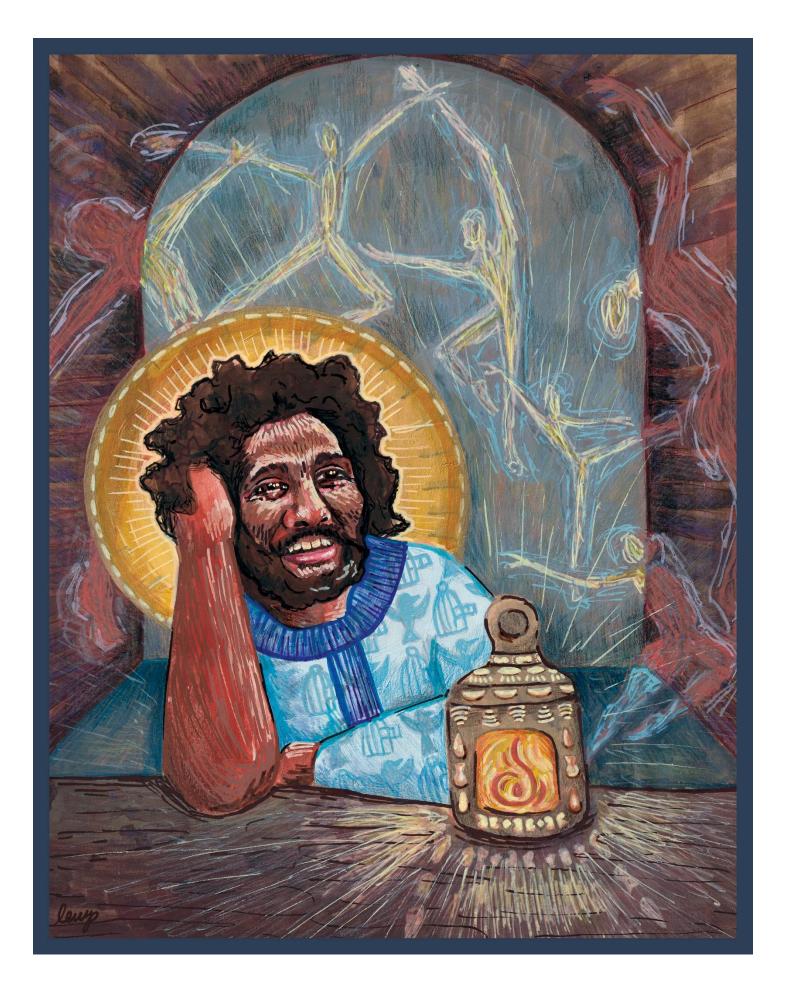
Next Sunday: December 14 – Third Sunday of Advent

Even in Our Fear, We are Called Forward

Jeremiah 1:4-10 | Luke 1:26-39

Sometimes saying "yes" to God's call fills us with fear. Like Mary and Jeremiah, we fear that we aren't enough, we'll be alone, and no one will listen. And yet, God calls us forward, inviting us to live fully into who we are created to be and promising to be with us every step of the way as we move forward through our fear. Too often, we talk about bravery and courage in terms of hero narratives or big actions, but each day presents many moments to practice small, quiet acts of courage. May we say "yes" to God, even when our knees shake and our voices tremble.

Spirit will be sharing in music leadership.



# Hope Like a Dancer

by Lauren Wright Pittman Inspired by Matthew 11:1-11

11"x14" Gouache, paint pens, colored pencils, and ink on paper

John the Baptist was thrown in prison after publicly questioning the legality of Herod's marriage (Matthew 14:3-5). He was not afraid to go toe-to-toe with the powerful, and perhaps he expected Jesus' ministry to look more confrontational and politically strategic. In questioning Jesus, I wonder if John sought a particular answer to hang his hope on, that maybe the Messiah would be how he'd imagined him. Maybe Jesus would bust him out of jail and take things straight to Herod, but Jesus offers something else.

In this image, John sits in prison, letting the disciples' testimony settle in. People with hearing, visual, and physical impairments experience new senses and mobility. Those with skin diseases are cleansed. Those with little material comfort are offered irrepressible hope, and the lungs of the dead are filled with the breath of life. I decided to image this good news through the dancing light of a lantern in John's prison cell. I chose dancing figures because dancing feels like a primal response to the radical healing taking place outside the prison walls. As these six dancers illuminate the cell, I imagine John, even if for a moment, breaking into a bit of laughter at the magnitude of Jesus' ministry. Jesus was quite literally doing the unimaginable. He was removing barriers so that the marginalized were no longer reduced to begging and sitting on mats, shoved to the edges of society. He was not only healing physical ailments; perhaps more importantly, he was restoring people to community.

Out of all the miraculous actions mentioned, the news did not include "release of the captives" (Luke 4:18-19). With this message, John would know that he was not going to be freed, and so, the number of dancers would remain one short of seven. As we know all too well, God's work isn't completed in Jesus' time. We are still woefully short of realizing the fullness of God's desire for all of creation, and the work is ours to see through. Until then, let us keep our eyes peeled for the glimmers of hope dancing all around us and work toward a day when all can join in that dance of wholeness.

# **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.

Debbie Jennings (friend of Kathleen Jefferson) Matteo Fisher Mother of Sharon Reith Christopher Dove Donna Logee Jason Rhoads Charlie and his mother, Amanda Brown (friend of Rachael Bowman) Robert Debonis (uncle of Sophia Carliss) Sandy Maples (sister-in-law of Allen and Joan Maples) Confirmands and Mentors Betsy Fisher Laura Duncan Broderick (Cathie and Will's daughter) Barbara Heverley Todd Starr (nephew of Mary Staley) Sharon DiDonato (aunt of Darryl Glick, friend of Mark Ulrich) Isa Baxter (granddaughter of Kathy Gelles-baxter) **Ginny Peters** 

Tom Ford Karen Stitely Donna Baumgardner Smith (friend of Sandra Trout) Bill Cassell (brother of Ave Barr) The Murray/Lennox/Cable Family Rhea Stein Doris Esslinger Sandra Trout Charlie Van Eman (son of friends of Kathleen and Niel Jefferson) Mary Staley Pat Condo Wells Condo Kitty Bradley Beanie Cornell Raymond Slifer (father of Robin A. Brady-Slifer) Tom Frazier Pauline Marendt Kayla Merry (niece of Kim Sexton) Carol Spera (mother of Mark Ulrich)

Emogene Wyand **Bob Pinner** Jim Baldree (father of Chuck Baldree) Lee Thomas Marcia Eisenstein Derek C. Hupp (grandson of Beanie & Gaylon Cornell) Wayne Kolb (friend of Stefan and Judi Mach and Tony and Linda LaFianza) Jeannette Johnson Jackie Keyser (sister-in-law of Betsy and Phil Selby) Marcy Channell (daughter of Jo Ann Fritz) Paige Coffey Fran Wenner Bonnie Devilbiss Tina Prescott (daughter-in-law of Barbara & Bill Prescott) Heleen (sister of Karin Mens) Kathy Blue Shores (friend of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)

Thank you all so much for all the thoughtful words and amazing messages on my birthday cards. All the cards made my day extra special. I'm so blessed to have such a wonderful group of friends.

— Mary Staley

#### 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 <a href="mailto:erucc@erucc.org">erucc@erucc.org</a>.

# **Activities, Events, and Announcements**

# ITEMS NEEDED FOR CARE PACKAGES TO THOSE IN COLLEGE & MILITARY

Collection: November 2 - December 7

We're sending care packages to our young adults in college, job training, or military service—just a little reminder that ERUCC's care extends to them no matter where they are on life's journey! We are collecting individual snacks and small office/household items to include in these packages. Donations could include hot chocolate packets, chips/crackers, fruit pouches, popcorn, granola bars, cookies, soup packs, candy, sticky notes, pens, reusable straws, decks of cards, word search or game books, stress balls, and lip balm. Think: what can be useful and fun?!

Bring donations to the Sanctuary Lobby and place them in the designated donation box. Thanks!

#### CARE PACKAGES FOR CAREGIVERS

Collection: November 2 – December 7

Our Faithful Friends volunteer team is collecting small items to put together "Care packages for Caregivers" of our Faithful Friends and others. Donations will be collected on November 2, both on Sunday morning and during Trunk-or-Treat. We will continue to collect them through December 7. Our youth will pack them up along with other packages on December 7.

- Prayer cards
- Playing cards
- Cards to send to other people with stamps
- Shelf-stable food (protein bars, nuts)
- Lip balm
- Socks
- Gloves
- Lotion
- Question books/cards
- Pet treats/toys

- Tea bags
- Small stuffed animals
- Low-maintenance plant with a small pot for the youth to decorate

Bring donations to the Sanctuary Lobby and place them in the designated donation box. Thanks!

## ADVENT MIDWEEK: WALKING & PRAYING THE LABYRINTH

Wednesdays, December 10, 17, 24, and 31

Various locations, 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*.

- **December 10**, Chartres Essence Labyrinth at Frederick Community College, meet there or contact Pastor Kirstin to coordinate a ride
- **December 17**, All Saints Episcopal Church Labyrinth, meet at the garden entrance, turning left just past the church
- December 24, Canvas Labyrinth borrowed from Trinity UMC, in the Community Room
- **December 31**, Trinity Chapel Labyrinth

# 5th ANNUAL COOKIE SWAP

Sunday, December 7 North Room, 12:00 PM

Celebrate the sweet treats of the season at ERUCC's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Cookie Swap! Bring five dozen cookies and an extra container to take your cookies home. Children and their cookie creations are welcome. We will also be taking cookies to our members who are homebound. There will be a designated place to bring your cookies before attending worship or a Christian Education class.

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

#### MISSION SPENDING PLAN REVIEW OPPORTUNITY

Sunday, December 7

Community Room, during Fellowship

Interested in learning more about ERUCC's proposed 2026 budget before the Congregational Meeting? Join our Finance Chair and Treasurer during Fellowship on Sunday, December 7.

This is a great opportunity to ask questions, share your input, and gain a deeper understanding of the financial planning that supports our mission and ministry.

#### **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

Sunday, December 14

Community Room / Zoom, ~ 12:00 PM

Register to attend via Zoom: tinyurl.com/reg1214er

Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 14, immediately following the 10:30 AM service. This is a vital opportunity for us to gather as a community, share updates, and make important decisions for our church's future.

# **Agenda Highlights:**

- Review and approval of the proposed 2026 Mission Spending Plan
- Progress on the Historic Clock Tower project
- Response to Consecration Sunday
- Study Group plans for our Congregation Name
- Settled Senior Pastor Search and Call Committee

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

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

## ORDER POINSETTIAS FOR OUR ALTAR THIS CHRISTMAS

Order deadline: Sunday, December 14

Please find details and an order form on the inside back cover of this bulletin, on printed forms at the back of the sanctuary, or order online at tinyurl.com/ERpnt25.



#### LET'S TALK: ADVENT

Sundays, December 7 & 14 North Room, 9:15 – 10:15 AM

Led by Kim Sexton. As we delve deeper into the theme from Sanctified Arts, *What Do You Fear? Insisting on Hope this Advent, we* will use the daily devotional that comes with the program as our book and supplement with other resources. There will also be an art project as part of our lesson and we will find ways to share our light in the world.

Questions? Contact Kim Sexton, mkcssexton@comcast.net.

# HOT COCOA OUTREACH AT KRIS KRINGLE PROCESSION

Friday, December 12 ERUCC, 6:00 – 8:30 PM

We are excited to prepare for our fourth annual Hot Cocoa Hospitality and Outreach before and after the Kris Kringle Procession. Everyone in the congregation is invited to join in this warm act of welcome and service. Our children and youth will offer neighbors a cup of hot chocolate and share invites to our Christmas Eve services and the Historic Houses of Worship Candlelight Tour.

This year we will also have a donation box to collect socks, shoes, and deodorants for SHIP students (Frederick's Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership).

We can use your help to prepare! Donations of large containers of hot chocolate mix, candy canes, and mini marshmallows are needed for this fun evening.

Sign up to donate: tinyurl.com/ER25kkp

# 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!

#### 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 dish sign up: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/hamER1221">https://tinyurl.com/hamER1221</a>



# 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 <a href="mailto:erucc@erucc.org">erucc@erucc.org</a> to request an invitation.

## ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET

Beginning with the first week of Advent, this devotional takes seriously the angels' message in Luke's Gospel and trusts that Christ's birth truly is good news of great joy for all people. Each week offers art, reflections, poetry, and hymns to give you hope in a fearful world. The devotional is available in the rear of the Sanctuary. You can also request a copy through the church office at <a href="mailto:erucc@erucc.org">erucc@erucc.org</a>.

# LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

No matter their mental health challenge.
No matter their immigration status.
No matter their sexual orientation.
No matter their economic status.
No matter their gender identity.
No matter their disability.
No matter their religion.
No matter their race.

Love your neighbor. No exceptions.



## **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 <a href="https://www.erucc.org">www.erucc.org</a>

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 <a href="https://tinyurl.com/ERcndl25">https://tinyurl.com/ERcndl25</a>.

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



# 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.

#### LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE WITH REV. JOHN SHILLINGBURG

Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings (Note: class will not meet on November 30)
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 course is offered twice each week:

- Sunday morning, 9:15 10:15 AM, Zoom: <u>bit.ly/ERsunstudy</u>
- Wednesday evening, 7:00 8:15 PM, Zoom: bit.ly/ERwedstudy

#### **GENTLE YOGA**

Tuesdays Trinity Chapel, 7:00 PM

Experience tranquility and wellness in this Gentle Yoga Class. Led by experienced Yogamour instructors, this nurturing practice focuses on gentle postures, mindful breathing, and deep relaxation techniques. Participants of all levels are welcome. Each drop-in class is \$10. Questions? Contact Renae, <a href="mailto:rdkline15@gmail.com">rdkline15@gmail.com</a>.

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.

#### 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. (Confirmands 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: <a href="https://ppay.co/kkaBnvIos-A">https://ppay.co/kkaBnvIos-A</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:** <a href="https://tinyurl.com/ER26fcab">https://tinyurl.com/ER26fcab</a>

Questions? Contact Pastor Kirstin, ksrhoads@erucc.org



# **Children & Youth Activities, Events, and Announcements**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Sundays, 9:15 – 10:15 AM

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

2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays

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 – December 14

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. Beginning November 30, children are invited to bring non-perishable food items or hygiene products to their classrooms. We'll be collecting donations through December 14.

Weather permitting, 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.

# YOUTH GROUP - WRAPPING, PACKING, & GIVING NIGHT

Sunday, December 7 Community Room, 5:00 – 7:00 PM

We'll pack up the donated stuffies, assemble Care Packages for Caregivers, and decorate mini plant pots as a bright reminder of appreciation for those caregivers. We'll also put together care packages for our college students, complete with plenty of food to help them power through finals. And yes—there will be food for our youth to enjoy that night, too!

It's a night of giving, creating, and spreading love. Come be part of it!

# CHILDREN & YOUTH CAROLING AT RECORD STREET HOME

Wednesday, December 10 Community Room, 5:15 PM

Join our children and youth to raise our voices to sing for the residents at the Record Street Home! Meet at ERUCC's Community Room at 5:15 PM for a quick bite to eat and to set up a song list.

We will bring copies of our Advent calendar lanterns and glow sticks to share our Advent theme as we sing common Christmas carols. In past years, children and youth have also volunteered to sing solos or duets; these are always welcome. We have some small hand instruments to share, but feel free to bring your own. A guitar, a flute, a saxophone ... all are welcome.

After a participatory rendition of the *Twelve Days of Christmas*, we'll say goodnight to the residents and walk back to ERUCC around 6:45 PM.



# 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 Let's Study the Bible, North Room

9:15 AM Let's Talk, Flora Room

9:15 AM – 12:00 PM **Nursery Care** 

9:15 – 10:00 AM Children's Sunday School

*Pre-K*, Nursery

 $K - 2^{nd}$  *Grade*, Liz Coffey Room  $3^{rd} - 5^{th}$  *Grade*, Thomas Room

9:15 – 10:15 AM **Youth Sunday School** 

Middle School Youth/Confirmation, Trinity Chapel

High School Youth, Trinity Chapel

10:00 – 10:20 AM Children's Music and Movement, Liz Coffey Room

10:30 – 11:30 AM Worship, Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org

Junior Church, Thomas Room

Participating children are dismissed from Worship (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays)

11:30 AM Fellowship, Downtown Community Room

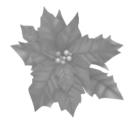
# **Stay Informed**



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

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

# **Poinsettias**



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

Order by December 14! Complete the form and return it with payment to the church office, offering plate, or pay online at <u>bit.ly/eruccflowers</u> by December 14.

Scan to Pay Online

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

Donor Name(s):
I would like to place poinsettias in the church for Christmas.
☐ I/we have <b>enclosed</b> a payment of \$ (\$10 per plant).
☐ I/we made an <b>online</b> payment of \$ (\$10 per plant).
If you wish for your poinsettias to be listed in memory of, in honor of, or placed by the donor please indicate which and PRINT the names below.
In memory of:
In honor of:
Placed by:

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 7, 2025

Isaiah 11:1-10

# Vision of Peace

The year was 1481. Switzerland was on the verge of a civil war — again. Forty years earlier, the Old Zürich War raged over succession issues. For a country whose name is synonymous with "neutrality," such factions seem unfathomable. Human nature, though, is predictable and conflicts are inevitable. This time, though, there would be no bloodstained alpine meadows. Instead, a child of God would emerge to broker peace among the divided villages.

Nicholas of Flüe was his name. He was a man of the mountains who bid farewell to his wife and 10 children two decades earlier to devote his life to God. He left with just a cloak on his back and no shoes. Legend has it that Nicholas, who would later be called "Brother Klaus," sustained himself with the elements of the Eucharist, eating bread and wine for the remainder of his life.

When unrest came to the country, Nicholas, a former soldier who had seen his share of carnage, knew he had to speak for peace. History does not record what he said, but opposing parties miraculously came together. What was documented was how church bells pealed triumphantly that Christmas of 1481, ringing continuously for four days.

It's a beautiful story to have on this second Sunday of Advent — one that echoes the vision of peace Isaiah brings to us, where all get along and no one is harmed. There are cows feeding with bears, an infant plays near a cobra's den, and a child puts its hand in the viper's nest. The message is clear: On God's holy mountain there will be no destruction to anyone or anything.

That holy mountain is still, though, a vision. Just ask Switzerland about its warring history. Yet that doesn't mean we let go of hope. Rather, as God sent the prophets to speak of peace, we are being called to speak to our communities of a better way to live together. We are to be the brokers of peace who, like Nicholas, hold steadfast to the belief that "peace cannot be destroyed, but discord can" and that true peace is "always in God, for God is peace." It was this thinking that led to Nicholas' canonization by Pope Pius XXII in 1947, making him Switzerland's only saint.

The Christmas bells rang with the good news of peace on Earth in Switzerland in 1481 thanks to a soldier-turned-hermit-turned-saint who believed Isaiah's vision was possible. Imagine the peace we could bring into the world today if we too believed.

God of Advent waiting, help us become brokers of peace. Soften our hearts and make tender our words so that love is heard rather than hate and discourse. 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.)

