



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

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

15 West Church Street
Frederick, Maryland

24 December 2025 ~ 7:30 PM

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

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

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

Prelude

Traditional French Carols

Cathy Fronck, trumpet; Connor Frazier, trombone

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

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

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

Words of Welcome

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

Threshold Moment

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

Honeysuckle

There is an abandoned house on my block.

Maybe someone owns it and is just waiting to fix it up,
or maybe it belongs to a family that simply cannot let it go.

Either way, the yard is an overgrown tangle of weeds—
crabgrass and yellow nutsedge, horsetail and clover—
unforgiving and entrenched.

Over the summer, a honeysuckle bush crept
from that forgotten house over the fence and through the yard.

It spilled out in broad patches on the sidewalk. As a result,
you could not pass that mess of a house without the taste of honey in your mouth.

You could not pass that mess of a house without being engulfed in the sweet scent
of something good. It was almost as if the earth was saying, sure, things are chaotic here,
but pause for a moment. Pull a flower bud off in your fingers. Break the stem.

Slurp the tiny bead of honey at the base. Remember that even when bad news is unforgiving
and entrenched, good news grows out of its cage, across the sidewalk, just to get to you.

The Prophet Speaks ~ Isaiah 9:2-7

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

***Processional Carol**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

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

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

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

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

**God of yesterday, today and tomorrow,
we long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit.
We cup our ears to hear the sound of the angel chorus.
We turn our eyes toward the sky to see if we can find your star.
We lean forward in our seat to see if we can feel your presence in our midst.
We long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit, O God.
So on this quiet night,
 on this holy night,
 on this *joyful* night,
 reveal yourself to us once more.
Speak to us through the music and the children.
Speak to us through starlight and candlelight.
Speak to us through these ancient words once again.
We long to catch a glimpse of you.
Amen.**

The Lighting of the Christ Candle (*read responsively*)

The York Family

In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

We see God's fingerprints all around us.

We see God in the beauty of the stars.

We see God in the love of this community.

We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us.

On this holy night, we light the Christ Candle as a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world,

God's love is all around us.

Thanks be to God for a love like that! Amen.

Scripture Reading ~ Luke 2:1-7

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

***Carol**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem,

How still we see thee lie;

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep

the silent stars go by:

Yet in thy dark streets shineth

the Everlasting Light;

The hopes and fears of all the years

are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently

the wondrous gift is given!

So God imparts to human hearts

the blessings of His heaven;

No ear may hear His coming,

but in this world of sin,

Where meek souls will receive Him,

still the dear Christ enters in.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem!

Descend to us, we pray;

Cast out our sin, and enter in,

be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels

the great glad tidings tell;

O come to us, abide with us,

Our Lord Emmanuel!

***Carol**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

**Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn king;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful, all you nations rise;
Join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn king!”**

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

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

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

Holy One, tonight is a night for good news.

Tonight is a night for candles in the window and joyful music in the air.

Tonight is a night for family around the table, and children too excited to sleep.

Tonight is a night for Christmas caroling and storytelling.

Tonight is a night for *good* news.

And we are so grateful for that.

We are so grateful for the good-news moments you sprinkle throughout our days.

However, we also pray for those, both inside and outside this room, who struggle to hear the good news over the sound of their fear.

For despite the joy of this evening, we are well aware that we live in a world with plenty of reasons to be afraid.

We are afraid of the divisions that rack our country.

We are afraid of messing up our relationships, or losing the ones we love.

We are afraid of climate change and of saying the wrong thing.

Everywhere we look, we have reasons to be afraid.

And if we're honest, that fear can cling to us.

So tonight, with-us God, we ask for your presence among us.

So just like the shepherds on that first Christmas, may we hear the voice of angels.

May you fill our hearts with a holy hope.

And may we know, deep in our bones, that your good news is louder than fear.

And until the day when every reason to be afraid has been washed away, we ask that you would continue to inspire courage, conviction, and hope in us.

Point our hearts toward sources of joy.

Remind us of the good news of this night, and may we always hold onto some portion of the wonder, the mystery, and the joy found here.

With hope, we lift our voices together to pray the words your son taught us, saying...

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

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

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

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

Amen.

The Christmas Eve Offering for The Christmas Fund

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

Please give generously using the special envelopes in your pew, scanning the QR code, or by visiting erucc.org/give.

Thank you for making a difference!



Anthem

Senior Choir

*Noel (from **Light of Peace**) ~ Karen Marroli*

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!

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*read in unison*)

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

Holy God,

We have been waiting a long time for this night—

for the joy and the quiet of Christmas Eve,

for the sound of the angel chorus,

for the old familiar songs.

We have carried weary hearts through the last four weeks of Advent,

longing for the peace and hope of this night,

and now we're finally here.

So as we bow our heads, we offer you our most earnest and honest prayers,

trusting that once again, you meet us where we are.

Anthem

Senior Choir

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

The Gift of the Light

Scripture Readings on Light

Genesis 1:1-4

Isaiah 9:2

John 1:1-5

Matthew 5:14-16

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

The ministers will bring the light of Christ to the congregation.

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

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

Parents or other adults, please assist young children.

***Carol**

Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent night! Holy night!

All is calm, all is bright;

'Round yon virgin mother and Child,

Holy Infant so tender and mild;

Sleep in heavenly peace,

Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night!

Darkness flies, all is light;

Shepherds hear the angels sing:

Alleluia! Hail the King!

Christ the Saviour is born,

Christ the Saviour is born.

Silent night! Holy night!

Guiding Star, lend thy light!

**See the eastern wise men bring
gifts and homage to our King!**

Christ the Saviour is born,

Christ the Saviour is born.

Silent night! Holy night!

Wondrous Star, lend thy light!

**With the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King!**

Christ the Saviour is born,

Christ the Saviour is born.

*Benediction

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.

*Recessional Carol

Joy to the World

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

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

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

Postlude

Provençal Carol

Cathy Fronck, trumpet; Connor Frazier, trombone

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

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

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

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

We are grateful to all who have given of themselves to inspire our devotion on this beautiful evening. We are especially grateful to the members of our choirs, our deacons and greeters, and our audio-visual team. We also offer our heartfelt thanks to our music director and organist Alison E. Shafer; our trombonist Connor Frazier, and trumpeter Cathy Fronck.

We thank them all for their devotion and generosity!

About Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

Founded 280 years ago by Frederick County's first settlers, this church is firmly rooted in the life of our community and is regarded as a landmark church of the City of Frederick.

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

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

Trinity Chapel's colonial steeple, recognized for miles around as the oldest of the "clustered spires of Frederick," rests atop the original stone tower built in 1763, which also hosts the City of Frederick's Town Clock. Restorations on the Historic Clock Tower will conclude in 2026. The chapel hosts our Confirmation and Youth Christian Education classes, yoga, and other activities.

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



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



Christmas Eve | What do you fear?
GOOD NEWS IS LOUDER THAN FEAR



Good, New

by Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell

Inspired by Luke 2:1-20

16"x20" Acrylic on canvas

We often link fear and anxiety to bad news. But what about the moments when the news is good—almost too good to believe? The dream job offer arrives. The long-hoped-for pregnancy test is finally positive. The illness goes into sudden remission.

Euphoria, the fear of good news, often stems from past losses, fear of change, or the pressure of new expectations. Joy and relief may come first, but they're often followed by a quiet dread. *What now? What could this mean?*

In Luke's Nativity story, even angelic news stirs overwhelm. The shepherds tremble. Mary ponders. As she wraps her newborn in cloth, what thoughts rise in her heart?

The word "new" is nestled in "good news"—a reminder that even the best gifts lie beyond our control. In the birth of Jesus, we witness the mystery of it all: the terrifying, the unexpected, the good, and the new that hope often brings. —CARMELLE BEAUGELIN CALDWELL

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.

Ministers and Staff of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan ~ *Intentional Interim Senior Pastor*

The Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads ~ *Associate Pastor for Faith Formation & Parish Life*

—

Alison E. Shafer ~ *Director of Music*

Tyler L. York ~ *Executive Church Administrator*

Jaci Clayton ~ *Facilities Manager*

Ann Watkins ~ *Administrative Assistant/Receptionist*

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

Sunday Schedule

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

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

9:15 AM-12:00 PM ~ Nursery Care for children up to age 4

10:30-11:30 AM ~ Worship Service

11:30 AM ~ Fellowship

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
- ❀ Frank and Jean Keyser, Howard and Pacia Selby by Betsy and Phil Selby

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





Contact Us

Phone: (301) 662-2762 • Web: www.erucc.org • E-mail: erucc@erucc.org