

POSSibilities
unfolding

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 –



January 11, 2026

Baptism of Christ Sunday

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. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

BLESSING FOR THOSE TRAVELING TO FRANKLINTON CENTER AT BRICKS

***CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP**

Welcome

– L. Zelman / M. A. Miller

**Let's walk together for a while and ask where we begin
To build a world where love can grow and hope can enter in,
To be the hands of healing and to plant the seed of peace,**

**Refrain: Singing welcome, welcome to this place
You're invited to come and know God's grace
All are welcome the love of God to share
'cause all of us are welcome here;
All are welcome in this place.**

**Let's talk together of a time when we will share a feast,
Where pride and power kneel to serve the lonely and the least,
And joy will set the table as we join our hands to pray,**

**Refrain: Singing welcome, welcome to this place
You're invited to come and know God's grace
All are welcome the love of God to share
'cause all of us are welcome here;
All are welcome in this place.**

**Let's dream together of the day when earth and heaven are one,
A city built of love and light, the new Jerusalem,
Where our mourning turns to dancing, every creature lifts its voice**

**Refrain: Crying welcome! Welcome to this place
You're invited to come and know God's grace
All are welcome the love of God to share
'cause all of us are welcome here;
All are welcome in this place.**

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Come, beloved of God, to remember who you are and whose you are.

God in Christ, has named us all “Beloved.”

Yes, here and now, God's heaven of love is being poured out anew.

May this motion of our Holy God, shape our hearts and minds.

May it brighten the Epiphany light in us and the whole creation.

And may it shape our words and work into good news for the world!

***OPENING PRAYER**

Holy God, awaken us again to Your outpouring Spirit of Love.

Through this generous gift, stretch our souls wide and form us into channels of your healing grace. Gift us with an ability to recognize You in each other, all imprinted with Your beloved blessing.

Clarify our intentions, purify our actions, fill our words with grace and our hearts with hope. Yes, soak our thinking, our praying, our hoping, our everything in You. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

Take Me to the Water

#322

**Take me to the water, take me to the water,
take me to the water to be baptized.**

**None but the righteous, none but the righteous,
none but the righteous shall see God.**

**I love Jesus, I love Jesus,
I love Jesus, yes, I do.**

**Jesus is my Savior, Jesus is my Savior,
Jesus is my Savior, forever more.**

***CALL TO TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE**

We have entered the season in which God's Light has been given to the world, God's blessings have been poured out on the world, and yet all we can think about is our own problems, our own needs, our own desires. So today, we

come to the river of God's mercy to offer our confession. We come humbly, asking God to pour baptismal waters over us again, cleansing us from our self-pity and arrogance. May we pray together:

***PRAYER FOR GRACE**

Loving God, let us enter again Your baptismal river of grace. Let it soak every stain attached to the fabric of our lives. Holy One, submerge us in You again and again and again.

Today, help us choose you above every temptation that draws us away from You. Let no urgency be more important than Your forgiving love, always transforming.

Forgive us, renew us, and grant us the grace promised by You in Jesus Christ. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE**

Before we thought to turn to God, God already turned toward us in love. The saturating grace of God is trustworthy and true. Our prayers of transformation have been met with God's outpouring of forgiving love.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

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 aged 5 through 5th grade who wish to participate in **Junior Church** may meet leaders at the back of the sanctuary. Children will return to their families in worship by 11:30 AM.*

THE SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 42:1-9 OT page 670
Matthew 3:13-17 NT page 3

Emmie Rhoads

Reader: May God bless the reading of this word.
All: **Thanks be to God.**

– RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS –**INTRODUCTION**

God created new life forms and brought them up from the waters of chaos, embraced them, and called them good.

Jesus, baptized in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, became living water for us and embraces all of us.

Jesus embraces also you who are the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized and all others who come seeking.

We follow Jesus with our baptism, marking a starting place for new life and new ways of being.

We join Jesus in love and service. Let us prepare our hearts and minds to see, feel, and hear once again the vows of baptism.

VOWS OF RENEWAL

Do you renew and affirm the promises made at your baptism?

I do.

Do you recognize the call of God to be God's people always?

I do.

Do you embrace the way of Jesus in faith and ministry?

I do

Do you accept the nurture of the Holy Spirit who renews your spirit each day?

I do.

Do you accept and embrace others who seek a liberating faith in God?

I do.

In renewing your baptismal vows, remember your baptism as a mark of acceptance and welcome into the care of Christ's church where you may begin again your Christian faith and life.

PRAYER

O God, we rejoice in your grace, given and received.

We thank you that you claim us, that you wash us, strengthen us, and guide us, that you empower us to live a life worthy of our calling.

In the way of Jesus, make us as water in a dry and thirsty world.

**Establish us to be places of refreshment.
Root us and nurture us in love, that with all your people,
that we may rightly and justly serve you.
Fill us with your fullness that our lives may overflow in service and love.
Amen.**

COMING TO THE WATER

As you are called, as you are moved, you are invited to come forward to the bowl of water nearest you, using the center aisles, to renew your baptism. As you return to your seat by the outer aisles, remember that just as God called out to Jesus, God calls out to each of us:
“You are my beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

BAPTISMAL HYMN *Down to the River to Pray* – Southern U.S. folk hymn

**¹As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**²O sisters let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on, sisters let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**³As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe & crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**⁴O brothers let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O brothers, let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**⁵As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**⁶O fathers let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on, fathers let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**⁷As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe and crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**⁸O mothers let's go down
Come on down, don't you wanna go down?
Come on mothers, let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**⁹As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

**¹⁰O sinners, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O sinners, let's go down
Down to the river to pray**

**¹¹As I went down to the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the robe and crown?
Good Lord show me the way**

BLESSING

Remember that your first name is Beloved, given to you by God before any other name. Remember also, it is the name given to every human being. May this blessed gift and claim of God grow in your heart and mind. And may it flow through you as a blessing into the life of the world. Blessings on you, Beloved! Amen.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

The outpouring of God's spirit described in the baptism of Jesus reminds us that God's very nature is generous, self-giving love. It is the source of our deepest joy. When we open our hearts in generous giving, we give space for God's love and joy to grow in us for the good of others. May our hearts be stretched wide as we joyfully bring our gifts back to God.

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

Come, Be Baptized

Spirit

– G.A. Smith

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

O Gracious God, we thank you for the invitation to grow through giving, made possible by your outpouring spirit. May these gifts we bring be used to form ever-new blessings in this congregation and around the world. And may our lives be the instruments of love and joy you desire. Amen.

– LITURGY OF FAREWELL –

GREETING

**The Rev. Freeman Palmer
Conference Minister, Central Atlantic Conference**

Our church family is constantly changing.
People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up.
People commit themselves to one another.
Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives.

Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share the time of farewell with the Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan, who is leaving.

REMEMBRANCE AND RECOGNITION

Mr. Peter Brehm

President of the Consistory, Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ

GIVING AND SHARING SYMBOLS

RECOGNITION OF THE END

Mr. Peter Brehm

On January 1, 2024, Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ called the Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan to serve as Intentional Interim Senior Pastor.

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

I thank Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ, its members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown to me over the last two years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made.

I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted.
As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

People

We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you are now leave to minister elsewhere.

We express our gratitude for your time among us.

We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes.

Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

VOWS OF RELEASE

The Rev. Freeman Palmer

Do you, the members and friends of Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ release Dr. Morgan from the duties of pastor?

People

We do with the help of God.

The Rev. Freeman Palmer

Do you offer your encouragement for Dr. Morgan's ministry, wherever led by God?

People

We do with the help of God.

The Rev. Freeman Palmer

Do you, Dr. Morgan, release this local church from turning to you and depending on you?

The Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan

I do with the help of God.

WITNESS OF THE CONFERENCE

Consistory and Elders of ERUCC, please come forward at this time.

The Rev. Freeman Palmer

On behalf of the Catoctin Association, the Central Atlantic Conference, and the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. The member churches of our Association and Conference hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

Consistory and Elders of ERUCC

Thanks be to God.

***PRAYER**

The Rev. Freeman Palmer

Let us pray.

O God, we give thanks for remembered time when we, together, have shared the life of faith. We thank you for the moments we have shared with Dr. Marvin L. Morgan in worship, in learning, in service. We pray that Dr. Morgan will be aware of your Spirit's guidance in the name of Jesus the Savior.

People

Amen.

All

God, whose everlasting love for all is trustworthy, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. The time we were together in your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments.

Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other, in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

***HYMN OF THANKSGIVING**

We Shall Overcome

#570

**We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
we shall overcome some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
we shall overcome some day.**

**We'll go hand in hand, we'll go hand in hand,
we'll go hand in hand some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
we'll go hand in hand some day.**

**We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
we are not afraid today;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
we are not afraid today.**

**Our God will see us through, our God will see us through,
our God will see us through some day,
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
our God will see us through some day.**

**The truth shall make us free, the truth shall make us free,
the truth shall make us free some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
the truth shall make us free some day.**

**We shall live in peace, we shall live in peace,
we shall live in peace some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
we shall live in peace some day.**

***BENEDICTION**

The Rev. Freeman Palmer

Go now, surrounded by our love and led by the promises of God, the presence of Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***CHORAL BENEDICTION**

God Be with You

#809

During the postlude, please remain seated, letting the music flow over you as a closing blessing.

POSTLUDE



**We thank Laura Walling and Joe Baker for sharing their gifts
with us in worship today!**

Worship Notes: *Heaven Opened: Service Prayers for the Baptism of Christ* was written by the Rev. Dr. David Long-Higgins, Conference Minister of the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ. Liturgy of Farewell adapted from *Book of Worship* ©2002 by permission of the United Church of Christ, Local Church Ministries, Worship and Education Ministry Team.

Please join us for **Fellowship** after worship in our Community Room (1st Floor). Today, we will enjoy a special Soup Luncheon as we say farewell to Rev. Dr. Morgan and receive a presentation of survey data from the Name Study Group.

The flowers on the altar are in memory of the Rev. Henri L. G. Kieffer, Margaret Roulette Kieffer, and Dr. Robert H. Pilgram and Margaret Kieffer Pilgram, by Penny & Bill George.

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

Attendance on Sunday, December 28: 9 at 8:30 AM, 79 at 10:30 AM, and 36 online.

Attendance on Sunday, January 4: 11 at 8:30 AM, 114 at 10:30 AM, and 48 online.



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

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

Serving Today: January 11

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Deacons: | Robin A. Brady-Slifer Robin L. Brady-Slifer |
| Elder: | Eric Weakly |
| Acolyte: | |
| Scripture Reader: | Emmie Rhoads |
| Greeters: | Kathleen Jefferson, Niel Jefferson Feleica Bishop, Rob Smith |
| Welcome Table: | Julie Clark, Elizabeth Slade |
| Audio/Visual: | Kelly Esslinger, Ethan Kline David Howard |
| Nursery: | Maria Lagrotteria, Emily Spear |
| Fellowship: | Emily Spear, Chris Spear Abby Spear, Ben Spear Jocelyn Vara, Chris Vara Rachael Bowman, Josh Bowman |

Serving Next Week: January 18

| | |
|----------------|--|
| | Kyle Miller, Tommie Bradshaw |
| | Jeanellen Kallevang |
| | Jack Day |
| | Sue Pinner, Felecia Bishop |
| Welcome Table: | Betsy Selby, Jeanellen Kallevang |
| Audio/Visual: | Kelly Esslinger, Jeff Baker |
| Nursery: | David Howard |
| Fellowship: | Linda Coyle Starr Schaeberle, Julie Chappell Mark Ulrich, Darryl Glick Betsy Selby, Angela Brittain |

January 18 – Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 49:1–7 | Matthew 5:1–12

In the season after Epiphany, we listen for how God's reign is revealed not through force or certainty, but through lives shaped by mercy, humility, and hope. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus begins his public teaching not with commands, but with blessings. Speaking from a mountainside, he names the poor in spirit, the grieving, the meek, and the peacemakers as those closest to God's heart. Alongside Isaiah's vision of a servant called to be a light to the nations, these words invite us to imagine what it means to live as people shaped by God's blessing, even when the world tells a different story.

The Rev. Dr. Rebecca Shillingburg will preach and lead worship. The Senior Choir will sing.

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.

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

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Ashley Murphy following the death of her father, Gunther Sirtautas, on Monday, January 5. Please keep Ashley and her family in your hearts and prayers.

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

UPDATE! – PICTORIAL CHURCH DIRECTORY

EXCITING NEWS! We are updating our pictorial church directory and invite you to OPT-IN by completing a digital or paper form and submitting a photo.



You can access the digital Opt-in form by scanning the QR code or via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/EROptin26>. Paper forms will be available at Fellowship each Sunday from January 11 to February 1, with volunteers available to answer questions and help navigate the digital form.

You can submit a photo via email OR have a church volunteer take your photo for submission. Please sign up to have your photo taken (near the Welcome Desk) on one of the following Sundays: January 11, 18, 25, and February 1 by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://tinyurl.com/ER26phto>. Walk-ins are also welcome. **On January 18, Elizabeth Slade will be taking photos after the 8:30 AM service. Just stop by the Welcome Desk. No appointment necessary.**



Our new directory will help us get to know one another better by putting names to faces, and will be a gift helping us connect with our ERUCC family.

Questions? Contact Barbara Barry at ebarry1@gmail.com or via text at (240) 422-7888.

NAME CHANGE SURVEY RESULTS PRESENTATION

Sunday, January 11

Community Room/Zoom, during Fellowship

Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/ERjan11>

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.

2026 GIVING ENVELOPES

For those who currently use giving envelopes, your 2026 envelope boxes are available at the back of the sanctuary, labeled by household name. Please note that envelopes are unnumbered this year, as numbering is no longer needed for our finance processes.

Giving envelopes are always optional. If you do not currently use envelopes but would like to begin, you may request either a full set (weekly plus special giving opportunities) or a packet of special giving opportunity envelopes only. Please see Ann at the reception desk in the Kieffer Lobby, or contact the church office at erucc@erucc.org or (301) 662-2762.

Thank you for your faithful support of ERUCC's ministry and mission.

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 remaining following sessions:

- **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!

ERUCC BOOK GROUP

Tuesday, January 27

North Room / Zoom, 7:00 PM

Zoom: bit.ly/ERUCCbooks

***The Lilac People* by Milo Todd.** Based on the true experiences of the LGBTQ+ population of Berlin/Germany before Hitler, during the war, and after liberation.

In 1932 Berlin, a trans man named Bertie and his friends spend carefree nights at the Eldorado Club, the epicenter of Berlin's thriving queer community. An employee of the renowned Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld at the Institute of Sexual Science, Bertie works to improve queer rights in Germany and beyond. But everything changes when Hitler rises to power. The Institute is raided, the Eldorado is shuttered, and queer people are rounded up. Bertie barely escapes with his girlfriend, Sofie, to a nearby farm. There they take on the identities of an elderly couple and live for more than a decade in isolation.

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

FRANKLINTON CENTER AT BRICKS WORK TRIP

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

January 17–19

Please Pray for ERUCC's annual work trip to the Franklinton Center at Bricks (FCAB). We depart on Saturday, January 17, at 6:00 AM and will return home on Monday, January 19, in the afternoon. This historic conference, retreat, and educational center in eastern North Carolina is dedicated to justice advocacy, leadership development, and community empowerment.



ERUCC has the longest continuous volunteer partnership with Franklinton Center at Bricks. Each year, our group helps upgrade and maintain facilities so FCAB can better serve its community through education, justice programming, and essential services.

Special thanks to Keith Stickley, Marc Kline, and Sandy Gray for setting up our projects in advance. Thanks as well to Starr Schaeberle and Barb Barry for organizing our kitchen and meals.



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

Prep Meeting for Participants and Parents of Participating Youth: Participants should attend our prep meeting on Sunday, January 11, at 9:15 AM in the Community Room. Please bring all completed forms (including the health form if you did not bring it in by January 4. At this meeting, we will discuss and sign our covenant agreement and review the four work projects. **ALL CONFIRMANDS SHOULD ATTEND!**

Budgeted mission funds and additional donations from the congregation help subsidize the trip. Please consider supporting the FCAB work trip:



Sign-up to purchase food items for meals:

<https://tinyurl.com/ERfcab26>



Questions? Contact Starr Schaeberle, (301) 639-1309, or Barb B, (240) 422-7888.



Make a financial gift in support:

<https://ppay.co/Dz9IAJljsS4>



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

LET'S TALK: PRACTICING PEACE IN TIMES OF WAR

Sundays, January 11, 18

NEW LOCATION: Clapp Conference Room (church offices), 9:15 – 10:15 AM

Led by Susan Kulp. 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

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

North Room / Zoom

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

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?

GENTLE YOGA

Tuesdays

NEW LOCATION: Community Room, 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.

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 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 starting 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, scan QR code at left, or use a paper order form 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 (they/he), chris.marie.vara@gmail.com, or Pastor Kirstin, ksrhoads@erucc.org.



MLK JR. COMMUNITY CONVERSATION & POTLUCK

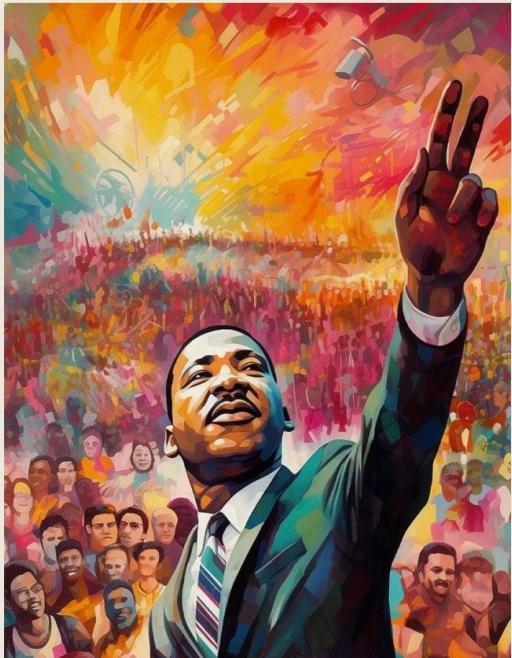
Monday, January 19

Trinity United Methodist Church, 703 West Patrick Street, Frederick, 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Questions? Contact Shelley Weakly, shelley.w.weakly@gmail.com, or Kathleen Jefferson kathleen.jefferson@gmail.com.

Please Join Us January 19, 2026

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ANNUAL BELOVED COMMUNITY CONVERSATION & POT LUCK



**THEME: DR. KING'S
NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
ACCEPTANCE SPEECH!**

**“I believe that
unarmed truth and
unconditional love
will have the final
word in reality.”**

January 19, 2026 — 6:00 to 8:30pm

**Please bring a dish to share with your fellow
neighbors.**

**Trinity United Methodist Church
703 West Patrick Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701**

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 classes will resume on February 1, following Franklinton Center at Bricks work trip activities.

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.

KIDVENTURES: SNOW TUBING

Liberty Mountain Resort, 78 Country Club Trail, Carroll Valley, PA 17320

Sunday, January 25, 4:00 – 6:00 PM

KidVentures this month includes snow tubing at Liberty Mountain on Sunday, January 25. Cost per rider is \$35 (ERUCC will cover additional costs). This is NOT a drop-off event. Parents who are attending but not tubing can attend at no cost. Riders must be 42 inches tall. There is a concession stand with indoor/outdoor seating that is great for parental viewing. Bring money for hot chocolate!



Please sign up as soon as you are able, since spots may be limited!

Register and pay here: <https://tinyurl.com/kvER0125>

LOVE KNOWS NO BORDERS



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

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 Huetting ~ *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 Huetting | 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 Huetting

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 Talk , Flora Room |
| 9:15 AM – 12:00 PM | Nursery Care |
| 9:15 – 10:00 AM | Children's Sunday School <i>Pre-K, Nursery</i> <i>K – 2nd Grade, Liz Coffey Room</i> <i>3rd – 5th Grade, Thomas Room</i> |
| 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 <i>Participating children are dismissed from Worship (2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays)</i> |
| 11:30 AM | Fellowship , Downtown Community Room |

Stay Informed



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

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.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

January 11, 2026

Mathew 3: 13-17

Possibilities Unfolding The Baptism of Christ

The sacrament of baptism is still so shrouded in mystery and misunderstanding. In conversations with families, I often discover the desire to have their child baptized is rooted in an expectation to carry on a tradition.

Baptism, though, is a rite not a tradition. It's a moment where a child is claimed as Christ's own. It's a moment where family — both blood and spiritual — make a commitment, promising to raise the child in the faith. And in that moment that I hold the child in my arms, there is a holy, fleeting second where I realize only God knows the future. It is only God that holds the possibilities born at the font that will keep unfolding for the child till the day their last breath is taken.

Yet after the water is sprinkled on a child's forehead, the excitement of these God possibilities is pushed aside for a slice of the celebratory cake and photo ops with the newly baptized.

What does it take for us to remember our baptismal identities as Christ's own? How would that identify then shape our lives?

Thomas Merton, a 20th-century Catholic monk, addressed unfolding possibilities in a letter he wrote to a young mission worker who had become cynical and jaded. First, Merton urged the mission worker to stop relying on a job for fulfillment and to shape one's identity. This is only the world's way of trying to fend off a despairing sense of "nothingness."

Rather Merton advised that, "All the good that you will do will come not from you but the fact that you have allowed yourself, in obedience to faith, to be used by God's love."

Once we truly allow God to use our lives, the need to prove our worth disappears. We are set free to be our authentic selves, allowing God's power to work through us.

"The big results are not in your hands, but they suddenly happen. There is no point in building our lives on personal satisfaction," said Merton.

Through the waters of baptism, we are claimed as Christ's own. But the question remains to be answered: Do our lives reflect who we belong to? Are the possibilities unfolding before us truly God possibilities?

God, we know Your plans for us are higher and better than we could ever imagine. We want to die to self and live for You. We want to claim our identities as Christ's own. Give us the strength to do so. Help us to let go of our tight group on who we think we are or who we wish to be. May we surrender completely to Your will, so that all Your beautiful possibilities might be revealed. 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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