



BOLD

BLESSING

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 –



March 1, 2026

Second Sunday in Lent

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**

PRELUDE

*** CONGREGATION CENTERING PRAYER**

Eliza Stitely

As we walk together through this time of transition, we give thanks for the faith that has shaped us and look with hope toward what lies ahead. We covenant to proclaim and embody God's love and justice for all people, serving our neighbors both near and far. Through faithful living and active participation in our congregation, we commit to following in the way of Jesus to build a community of extravagant welcome and inclusivity for all people. May we continue to reflect God's light through our love and hope in all that we do. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CENTERING CANDLE

***THRESHOLD MOMENT**

Nancy Jones

If God Lived Next Door

– written by The Rev. Sarah A. Speed

If God lived next door,
I'd drop off a loaf of bread.
I'd use my mom's best recipe.
I'd wrap it in parchment and ribbon
and place it on the front stoop.
If God lived next door,
I'd leave a note with my phone number.
Call anytime you need anything!

I'm always happy to help!
If God lived next door,
I'd keep sugar on the shelf,
just in case she needed a cup.
I'd put a picnic table in the front yard
and begin taking my coffee there.
Whenever God passed by with their gaggle of rescue dogs,
I could say, Want to sit for a moment? Want to rest your legs?
I'd keep a jar of dog treats and water by the mailbox
and change my doormat to one that says:
All are welcome here.
I'd invite God over for dinner.
She'd bring bread and juice.
I'd host a block party,
so that everyone could meet her.
I'd start a community garden
so that the kids could run between rows of squash and tomatoes
while we adults put our hands in the dirt.
We'd share stories while we weeded,
and eat harvest meals at the end of the season.
If God lived next door,
I'd want to build something beautiful.
Then again,
who says she doesn't?

OPENING PRAYER

**Good news God,
speak louder than the news updates.
Speak louder than our mental distractions.
Speak louder than our anger and louder than our fear.
God, speak loudly to us today,
because we long to hear your good news once more.
With hope we pray, amen.**

***OPENING HYMN**

Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service

- A. Bayly

**Lord, whose love in humble service bore the weight of human need
Who upon the cross, forsaken, worked your mercy's perfect deed
We, your servants, bring the worship not of voice alone, but heart
Consecrating to your purpose ev'ry gift which you impart**

**Still your children wander homeless; still the hungry cry for bread
Still the captives long for freedom; still in grief we mourn our dead
As you, Lord, in deep compassion healed the sick and freed the soul
By your spirit send your power to our world to make it whole**

**As we worship, grant us vision, till your love's revealing light
In its height and depth and greatness dawns upon our quickened
sight
Making known the needs and burdens your compassion bids us bear
Stirring us to ardent service, your abundant life to share**

***CALL TO TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE**

Family of faith,
we long to love others as God loves us,
but that work is easier said than done.
We lose our way.
We become distracted.
We grow fearful.
We need God's grace.
Fortunately for us, God's grace is freely and abundantly given.
So join me in the Prayer of Confession.
Join me in being transformed.

***PRAYER FOR GRACE**

**Merciful God,
did we see you hungry and give you something to eat?
Did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink?
Did we see you alone and offer you compassion?
Or did we cross the street?
Did we avert our eyes?
Did we come up with every excuse in the book?**

**God, we long to be people who love our neighbors
with the same overwhelming love that you have for them.
But we must admit, we have a long way to go.
Forgive us for the times when we let bias, scarcity, or fear
get in the way of love. Wash us clean and give us the courage to try again.
With hope for a better tomorrow we pray, amen.**

***WORDS OF GRACE**

Faith family,
even when we act with judgment,
even when we are guided by fear,
even when we turn our back on a neighbor in need,
God does not turn God's back on us.
So join me in this good-news declaration:
**We are seen.
We are forgiven.
We are invited to try again.
Thanks be to God for this unending love.**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Children, youth, and all who wish to join them are invited to come forward for a special message.

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

Camryn Huenger

Luke 7:36-50 NT page 66
Matthew 25:31-40 NT page 29

Reader: May God bless the reading of this word.

All: Thanks be to God.

MORNING PRAYER

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

The season of Lent invites us to consider what it means for us to live life sacrificially, to lean into Jesus' call to costly discipleship. How might God be calling you to a new way of sharing your resources to build care and equity in our communities and world? Let us offer whatever gifts we have to love the world like God did in giving God's Son.

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

Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether

Senior Choir
- H. Friedell

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

As you leave this place,
when you meet anger, speak with love.
When you meet fear, speak with hope.
When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.
But no matter what, speak this good news.
For the good news of the gospel is
love and justice for all.
It is joy that surprises,
and nonviolence that transforms.
The good news of the gospel is alive in the world,
so go forth speaking.
For if you won't, then who will?
Thanks be to God
for this good, good news.
Amen.

– SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION –

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

When we share communion, we gather for a meal in which all are invited. We remember that communion takes on the shape of the world as public witness. When we eat together, we are defending all bodies, all flesh around the table and around the world. To ignore this, would be to ignore that in this season Jesus's own body was sacrificed as he was criminalized: hungry and beaten, mocked and broken. This meal holds a justice imperative that professes NO one should go without. All are welcome at this table. Let us take a moment to remember those who may be feeling unwelcome in our world today.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Abba Father, Holy Mother, parent to us all,
When we come to this table, we remember.

We remember the way he witnessed to your justice,
shared your mercy, told the truth, and risked everything for it.
We remember his terrible death, and his indestructible new life.

We remember that he called us to follow him.

We remember all his precious siblings, living and dead, whom he has made
our siblings, too, and all whose lives cry out for justice and hope.
They are present here; we embrace them, never forgetting.

**We remember the glory and the pain,
The harm and the healing,
what we have done and left undone,
in thoughts, words, and deeds,
our costly faithfulness and our timid failings.**

Asking now for your mercy, and confident of your love,
we come now to eat the meal
that strengthens bonds of affection
and our ties of accountability:
the meal of bread and body,
the meal of cup and poured out life;
the meal of persevering presence,
of Love that rejoices in our good and redeems our failings.

When we come to this table, we remember.

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.

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Bread is Heaven’s kindest dream;
Wine, its deep spellbinding kiss.
Filled with so much more than food:
nothing’s better, Lord, than this.

Mabe we can even love,
call off battles and forgive;
peaceful, peaceful to abide,
eat, and drink, and fully live.
Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life

#543

**Where cross the crowded ways of life,
where sound the cries of race and clan,
above the noise of selfish strife,
we hear your voice, O Son of Man.**

**In haunts of wretchedness and need,
on shadowed thresholds fraught with fears,**

**from paths where hide the lures of greed,
we catch the vision of your tears.**

**From tender childhood's helplessness,
from human grief and burdened toil,
from famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
your heart has never known recoil.**

**The cup of water given for you
still holds the freshness of your grace;
yet long these multitudes to view
the sweet compassion of your face.**

**O Master, from the mountainside,
make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
among these restless throngs abide;
O tread the city's streets again;**

**Till all the world shall learn your love,
and follow where your feet have trod;
till glorious from your heaven above
shall come the city of our God.**

***BENEDICTION**

As you go out from this wilderness into another
hold close to your heart this promise:

there will be wellsprings to quench and cleanse
and lead you to new life.

You are already born of water and the Spirit.

Beloved and blessed.

Like the river

that always finds its way to the sea,

there is a way to be made

toward the kingdom

that we can only make

together.

So may God's blessings flow in, among and through us.

Amen.

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

POSTLUDE



Worship Notes: Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. Of Water and Spirit: Service Prayers for the Lent 2A was written by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema who serves as a free-range facilitator, ritualist, activist, teacher, and writer whose work lives at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and embodied spiritual practices. She is a founding member of the Liberating Lineages Collective.

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

The flowers on the altar this morning are placed by Cliff and Ave Barr in memory of their parents Paul and Ival Barr and Bill and Betty Lou Cassell.

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

Attendance Last Sunday: 10 at 8:30 AM, 92 at 10:30 AM, and 98 online.



Watch worship live every Sunday at 10:30 AM or on-demand:
<https://erucc.org/visit/sunday-live-stream>

Serving Today: March 1

Deacons: Mark Ulrich, Quynn Adkins
Elder: Eric Weakly
Scripture Reader: Camryn Huenger
Acolyte: Wyatt Pomeroy
Greeters: Felicia Bishop
Rob Smith
Welcome Table: Julie Clark
Audio/Visual: Ethan Kline, Jeff Baker
Kelly Esslinger
Nursery: Emily Spear
Fellowship: Julie Clark, Joe Adkins
Quynn Adkins, Hollie Mercier
Kyle Miller, Pat Dorsz,
Zaydan York
Communion Prep: Ave Barr
Communion Clergy: Revs. Michelle Beadle & Dr. Rob Peters

Serving Next Week: March 8

Robin A. and Robin L. Brady-Slifer
Susan Kulp
Pam Shepp
JD Bowman
Cathie Duncan, Sue Pinner
Rob Smith
Rissah Watkins
Kelly Esslinger, Ethan Kline
David Howard

Emily Spear, Chris Spear, Ben Spear
Jocelyn Vara, Chris Vara
Michelle Kerill, Brendon Page
Rachael Bowman, Josh Bowman

Next Sunday: March 8 – Third Sunday in Lent

Mark 6:32-44 | Ephesians 3:20-21

As Jesus and his disciples head to a deserted place, perhaps seeking peace and quiet, many from the surrounding towns follow them. Instead of turning them away, Jesus expresses compassion and begins an impromptu teaching session. As the day goes on, the disciples have logistics in mind and urge Jesus to send the people back into the villages so they can feed themselves. Instead, Jesus presents them with an impossible task: “You give them something to eat.” Dumbfounded, the disciples can only fathom the limitations and financial constraints of Jesus’ suggestion. Yet when they “go and see,” their meager provisions multiply so that thousands are fed. This week we focus on building networks of collective care in order to meet people’s needs. Jesus models a way to be in community by coming together and sharing what we have, dispelling perceived impossibilities. The good news empowers us to believe in the miracles that can become possible through the power of community.

Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads will be preaching and leading worship. Spirit 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.

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

~ Many thanks from Alison Shafer for all the prayers, cards, and thoughts during her surgery recovery time. ~

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Ingrid Jacobsen on the passing of Kitty Bradley on Wednesday, February 24. Please keep Ingrid and Kitty's 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 communion from our pastoral team. Our Faithful Friends Team also makes visits, calls, and sends care cards.

If emergency pastoral care is needed in the case of crisis, death, or severe illness, please contact the church office at (301) 662-2762 or erucc@erucc.org.

Activities, Events, and Announcements

CHURCH DIRECTORY - DEADLINE EXTENDED (March 2)

We are off to a great start with the Church Directory Update. The snow and cold snap threw a wrench in our timeline! **The submission deadline is extended to Monday, March 2.** Please OPT-IN by completing a digital or paper form.

You can access the digital Opt-in form via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/EROptin26>. Paper forms will be available at Fellowship and the office through March 2. Submit a personal photo via email OR a church volunteer is available through March 1 to take photos before and after the 10:30 Service. Tom Dorsz is taking photos 2/22. Come to the Welcome Desk or Reception Desk in Keiffer Lobby.

Thanks for participating in this opportunity to build connection and community with our ERUCC family and new settled Pastor. **Questions?** Contact Barbara Barry at ebbarry1@gmail.com or via text at (240) 422-7888.

HELP PACK THE PANTRY

Sunday, **March 8**, during both worship services

Let's continue to BE the Church by supporting our neighbors in need. Once a month, we work together to fill the Frederick Community Fridge pantry in our parking lot.

***Easter Dinner in-a-bag* – Bring canned ham, instant mashed potatoes, canned pineapple, canned green beans, boxed mac-n-cheese and a prepackaged dessert**

You are invited to bring any shelf-stable, unopened, and unexpired items to worship. You can place them on the table at the chancel as you arrive. We will offer a prayer of dedication over the items before sending them out to bless our neighbors. If you're unable to bring donations on Sunday, you can place them in the pantry at any time.

Contact: Kim Sexton, mkcssexton@comcast.net.

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

Join us as we read and discuss *How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith* by Mariann Edgar Budde beginning February 8.

Bishop Mariann Budde of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C., guides readers in how to find courage in pivotal life moments, using personal stories, scripture, and pop culture to explore themes like deciding to go, stay, or start. The book argues that bravery isn't a single act but a journey built from small, conscious choices, offering hope and practical wisdom for navigating uncertain times.

GENTLE YOGA

Tuesdays

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.

NEW! Pay what you can or drop-in for free. The donations will be used to purchase food for the Frederick Community Fridge & Pantry, located in the church parking lot.

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.

FREDERICK SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The 42nd Frederick School of Religion will be offering 7 classes covering a broad range of topics.

WHEN: Monday and Tuesday afternoons and Monday and Tuesday evenings, for six weeks starting March 16, 2026.

WHERE: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick (UUCF) 4880 Elmer Derr Road Frederick, Md.

All 6-week long courses are eligible for up to 1.2 Continuing Education Units. For more information and registration forms, you may call 240-651-1865 or 240-490-5657 or visit our website at www.frederickschoolofreligion.org.

INQUIRERS' CLASSES

Two options to choose from:

Sunday, March 8 – Flora Room, 3:00 – 5:00 PM, *or*

Thursday, March 12 – Zoom, 5:00 – 7:00 PM

Interested in learning more about ERUCC and what it means to be part of our community of faith? We warmly invite you to join us for **Inquirers' Class** — a time to connect, ask questions, and explore what membership at ERUCC looks like.

At our Inquirer's Class, you'll meet our pastors and church members, hear more about our values, beliefs, and history, and learn about the United Church of Christ — our wider church family.

Who should come? Anyone curious about ERUCC, whether you're brand new or have been worshipping with us for a while, but haven't taken the step of membership. ERUCC members looking for a refresher or who simply want to be part of meeting and welcoming others into our church community are also welcome.

To register, please email Ann Watkins at erucc@erucc.org, or stop by the reception desk in Kieffer Lobby after worship. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. **Questions?** Contact the church office at erucc@erucc.org or (301) 662-2762.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING (OGHS)

Sunday, March 22



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.

Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment. By partnering with Global Ministries and international response networks, OGHS maximizes its impact. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities.

ERUCC will collect the One Great Hour of Sharing offering on **March 22, 2026**. Please prayerfully consider your contribution.

NO KINGS RALLY

Saturday, March 28

Baker Park, 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Join us for the next **No Kings Rally** on March 28, 2:00 – 4:00 PM at the Baker Park bandshell! Watch for further details.

WORK CAMP OPPORTUNITIES

There are two opportunities in 2026 for members of the Central Atlantic Conference to help our neighbors in North Carolina – April 12-18 and June 21-27.

Register for the April trip: <https://tinyurl.com/mb2925rx>

Please contact Rev. Chance Martinez-Colon, for more information or to register for either trip: pastorchance.graceucc@gmail.com.

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).

Pickup: All families must check out children with leaders in their classrooms at 10:15 AM.

JUNIOR CHURCH

2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th 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. (Special activities are provided in the children's worship space on these Sundays).

YOUTH GROUP: BOARD GAME NIGHT

Sunday, March 1, Youth Group 5-7pm

We may also walk for a downtown treat, so wear clothes that keep you warm enough for a stroll!

CLIMATE HOPE ART CONTEST

We celebrate the opening of the 2026 Climate Hope Art Contest sponsored by the UCC Climate Justice Organizers. UCC children and youth are welcome to participate by drawing, painting, or coloring their own work of art to bring this theme to life. We will pass out templates during Sunday School and have additional flyers available at the reception desk in the Keiffer Lobby.

We will accept submissions until **March 18**. Please submit artwork to Pastor Kirstin, to Ann at the reception desk, or share by email to awatkins@erucc.org. Contact Pastor Kirstin, ksrhoads@erucc.org, with questions.

YOUTH AND CONFIRMATION INTERFAITH RETREAT

Confirmands: Thursday, March 19, 6-8pm, Flora Room. Ways we Pray, Dinner Included

Youth and confirmands: Friday, March 20 at 9am with an overnight in the sanctuary until

Saturday, March 21 at 11am. Interfaith visits to the Islamic Center and Beth Shalom included as well as Planning for Good Friday leadership project.

RSVP for the overnight: <https://tinyurl.com/YthOvrnte320>

GOD'S KIDS' CLUB

Friday, March 20

Community Room, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Pack a lunch, bring a water bottle, and clothes to play outside.

God's Kids' Club offers fun, faith-based programming for children on many scheduled school-closure days, providing both a safe place to be and meaningful opportunities for youth to serve as helpers. Activities can include Bible stories, crafts, games, and service projects, all of which focus on exploring faith and building community.

Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/ERUCCGKC320>

BETHANY BEACH YOUTH RETREAT

April 10-12, Cost \$50

We will leave early Friday and return Sunday afternoon. We will play on the beach, take photos on the boardwalk, enjoy many group games, and plan for YOUTH Sunday. We will carry our theme of STORY into hearing about the 6 uniting themes of the UCC church. 2 Adults volunteers needed. Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/BBYRAPR10>

EAST GERMANY GROUP IS COMING THIS SUMMER

July 5-16, Approximate Dates

We will need help with host families and other hospitality for 10-12 people. Feel free to ask our planning team: Matt Pomeroy, Owen York, Barb Barry, Jeff Baker, or Pastor Kirstin, if you have any questions!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SUNDAY SCHOOLS

From now through Palm Sunday, our Christian Education Sunday Schools invite the church to give donations for our first responders. We will collect individual, store-bought snacks like crackers, pretzels, chips, brownies, and non-refrigerated individual drinks. These can be brought to the Lobby outside of the Liz Coffey and Thomas Rooms. Our God's Kids Club in February followed the theme of Heroes, and we were blessed with sharing from Sean Sexton, who is Firefighter Paramedic. We will collect items to distribute as a gift during Holy Week to Stations #3, #4, and #5. Two of these are located closest to our church, and one is a location that Sean serves from.

IMPORTANT "SAVE THE DATES" FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

April 3	God's Kids' Club, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
May 2	Tots Family Flower Photos
June 22-26	Full Day VBS in partnership with All Saints Episcopal
July 16	East Germany Group is Coming!
July 26-31	Gretna Glen Camp for Children, Lebanon PA

Lent 2026 at ERUCC



This Lent, we are grounding ourselves in the good news of Jesus’ teachings. Over the next 7 weeks, our objective is not to simply examine some of the core tenets of Jesus’ ministry, but to truly embody them in our daily lives.

Jesus’ words are easily distorted and sanitized in our modern world. Following Jesus leads to a richer, more expansive life, but it’s not necessarily comfortable. Jesus’ ministry can be described as “radical,” which comes from the Latin word “radicalis,” meaning “root” or “ground.” Therefore, the good news should bring us back to our roots. Emulating Jesus and embodying his teachings should ground us in who God created us to be. Can we be “good news”

people in a world too often burdened by bad news?

This Lent, let us remember that the good news really is good news. It is joyful—like fine wine saved for celebration. It grows like a mustard seed and smells like perfume poured from an alabaster jar. It tastes like bread passed endlessly through a hungry crowd. It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy. The good news is alive in the world.

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Each week offers commentary, poetry, visual art, written reflections, hymns, and reflection prompts. Devotionals will be available starting Sunday, February 15, in the back of the Sanctuary or by request through the church office. We encourage you to engage in the weekly art and reflections at your own pace, imagining where God might be meeting you in between the dichotomies and supposed binaries.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL CARDS

A collection of 52 daily devotional cards – each with a question for reflection and a short prayer, spanning from Ash Wednesday through the first few days of Easter will be available starting Sunday, February 15, in the back of the Sanctuary or by request through the church office.

MIDWEEK LENTEN WALKS

Wednesdays

12:00 PM in front of Kieffer Lobby

Each Wednesday of Lent, beginning February 25, any who want to can join in a 20-30 minute prayer walk around our Lenten theme for the week. Meet at noon with comfortable walking shoes and a water bottle or snack if you wish. We will wander, not speedwalk. Our intention for Week 1 will be looking for something that surprises us!



The poster features a light green background with stylized trees and a central illustration of a group of people walking. The text is arranged in a list format, with dates and themes. At the bottom, there are two columns of text providing details about the walks and a contact number.

Lenten Prayer Walks

February 25 Looking for things that surprise us!
March 4 Looking for things that show love!
March 11 Looking for ways that nature or community work together!
March 18 Looking for people caring for each other
March 25 Looking for justice, mercy & faithfulness
April 1 Looking for *signs of celebration!*

Questions? Call 301-662-2762

Wednesdays
Start at ERUCC
Keiffer Lobby
12:00 noon

**Walk with wonder:
Looking for GOOD NEWS
through observing our
community each week!**

Everyone welcome - bring a friend!

LET'S TALK – LENTEN STUDY

“Mary Magdalene – A Woman for Our Time” with Rev. Richard Leslie

Sundays, February 22 – March 29

Downtown Community Room / Zoom 9:15 AM

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

“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice.” (Psalm 130)

We will gather to study Cynthia Bourgeault’s book, *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene:*

Discovering the Woman at the Heart of Christianity, beginning on Sunday, February 22. It is not necessary to buy the book, but it is available new and used online. We will begin promptly at 9:15 AM.

Ministers, Staff, & Lay Leaders of Evangelical Reformed UCC

MINISTERS AND STAFF

Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads ~ *Associate Pastor for Faith Formation & Parish Life* ~ ksrhoads@erucc.org

Alison E. Shafer ~ *Director of Music*

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 , Downtown Community 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>
9:15 – 10:15 AM	Youth Sunday School <i>Middle School Youth/Confirmation, Flora Room</i> <i>High School Youth, Alcove</i>
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

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offering plates
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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.



See You
by T. Denise Anderson
Inspired by Matthew 25:35-40
14"x18" Acrylic on canvas

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

March 1, 2026

John 3:1-17

Bold Blessing

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. — John 3:16

Twenty-seven words. That's all John uses to tell us about this life of faith. It's short, sweet and powerful. So much so that German Reformer Martin Luther labeled the 27 words "the heart of the Bible, the Gospel in miniature."

But could it really be that simple?

I asked that question once when I found myself singing a Vacation Bible School song about John 3:16 in front of 20 sugared-up children. As I belted out the biblical truth about God loving the world — complete with the choral refrain "he is the truth, the way, the life" — I wondered what those words would mean someday to the little voices that joined me off key.

Would remembering God's limitless love for them be the very thing that would save them? And how many would go beyond the way-too commercialized Gospel soundbite of John 3:16 to grapple alongside Nicodemus, the educated Pharisee who was told by Jesus that "no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above?"

While it would be wonderful for 27 words to be the Gospel in miniature, we know there's more to this life of faith. There are dark nights of the soul as well as glorious epiphanies.

Through it all, we question God's love more often than we like to admit, and we find it down right frightening to surrender to the Spirit. As Jesus explained to Nicodemus it is the second birth of the Spirit, not flesh, that will help us see a bit better the reign of God. But the Spirit, Jesus says, will blow where it chooses.

And that is okay. Really. Read my words again. It is okay to allow the Spirit to blow you in the God direction. Go to the unknown and unwelcomed places knowing that as you are guided by the Spirit. God's bold blessing is forever with you. That is the blessing of a love so strong and steadfast that no harm will ever come to you.

Now that's the song I wish I belted out for those children at Vacation Bible School — a song of being born in the Spirit and of living unafraid of life's twisting and changing paths, for there's always an abundance of God's redemptive love for them — and for you.

Loving and merciful God, on this second Sunday in Lent may we feel the Spirit winds whipping in our lives, leading us to be born again into new creations that are awakened to the never-ending God opportunities. 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.)

