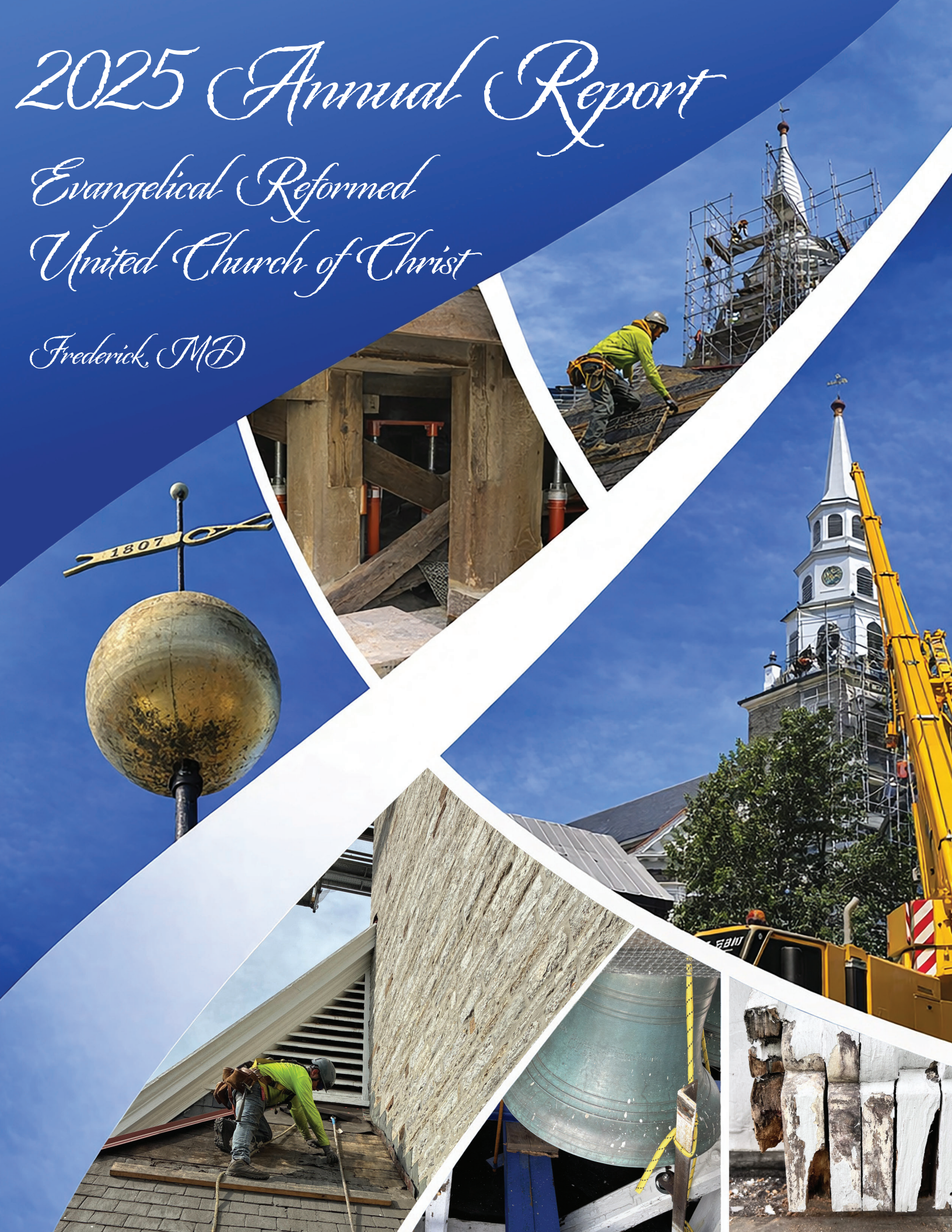
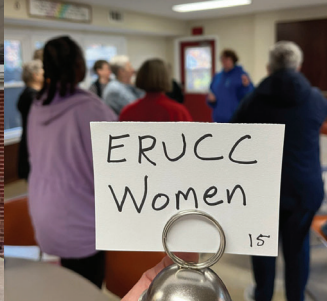


# 2025 Annual Report

Evangelical Reformed  
United Church of Christ

Frederick, MD





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Annual Meeting Agenda ..... 2

Nominating Committee Report ..... 3

Pastoral Record ..... 4

Ministers and Staff of ERUCC ..... 4

Interim Senior Pastor ..... 5

Associate Pastor ..... 6-8

Director of Music ..... 10

Consistory ..... 11-12

Spiritual Council ..... 13

    Faithful Friends ..... 14

    Holy Casserolers (new) ..... 15

Christian Education Committee ..... 16-18

    Scholarships ..... 19

    Green Team ..... 19

Historic Clock Tower Restoration ..... 20

Finance & Budget Committee ..... 21-22

    Personnel & Policy Council ..... 23

    Property Committee ..... 23

Mission, Evangelism, and Social Justice Committee ..... 24

    Stewardship and Generosity Committee ..... 25

Worship Committee ..... 26

    Audio Visual Team ..... 27

    Fellowship ..... 28

    Funeral/Memorial Reception Team (new) ..... 28

    Welcoming Hands Team ..... 29

Deacons ..... 30

# 2026 AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

**Sunday, May 3, 2026**

Welcome and Call to Order	Peter Brehm, President of the Consistory
<i>Brief comments on submitting questions / votes via Zoom chat</i>	
Opening Prayer	Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads
Review of Annual Program Reports	Peter Brehm
Nominating Committee Report and Vote	Peter Brehm
Constitution and Bylaws Report and Vote	Peter Brehm
Review of Financial Reports	Peter Brehm, Finance Committee Chair
	Robert Morris, Treasurer
<b>Old Business</b>	
Historic Clock Tower Preservation	Peter Brehm
Name Study Group Report	Sedonia Martin, Chair
Benediction	Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads
Adjournment	Peter Brehm

## Departing Lay Leaders

Harrison Fisher  
Julie Clark

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

### Nominating Committee Report for 2026

Members: Peter Brehm, Robert Morris, Julie Clark, Sue Pinner, Barb Barry

### *To be voted on by the Congregation*

**Elders** (three-year term) Must be a member. *Can serve two consecutive terms.*

**Two to be elected:**

Robin L. Brady Slifer (first term ending in 2030)  
Matt Hueting (second term ending in 2030)

### Continuing Elders

Eric Weakly (second term ending in 2027)  
Jeanellen Kallevang (first term ending in 2027)  
Susan Kulp (first term ending in 2028)  
Ave Barr (first elected term ending in 2028)



**Deacons** (two-year term) *Can serve two consecutive terms.* Up to four to be elected

**Up to four to be elected:**

Kyle Miller (second term ending in 2028)

Quynn Adkins (second term ending in 2028)

Angela Brittain (second term ending in 2028)

**Continuing Deacons**

Jim Brittain (second term ending in 2027)

Robin A Brady-Slifer (second term ending in 2027)

Robin L Brady-Slifer (second term ending in 2027)

Tommie Bradshaw (first term ending in 2027)

Mark Ulrich (first term ending 2027)

**Standing Committee Chairs** (two-year term but may be re-elected for two additional one-year terms. Co-chairs are allowed.)

**Stewardship Generosity:** Kate Fromknecht (first two-year term ending in 2028)

**Christian Education:** Holly Davis (first two-year term ending in 2027)

**Member At Large:** Larry Martin (second one-year term ending in 2027)

**Property:** Keith Stickley (first two-year term ending in 2028)

**Mission and Social Action:** Shelley Weakly (first one-year term ending in 2027)

**Worship:** Rebecca Shillingburg (second one-year term ending in 2027)

**Finance and Budget:** Peter Brehm (first two-year term ending in 2027)

*To be voted on by the Consistory*

**Consistory Leadership** (voted for one-year term by the Consistory annually)

**President:** Robin L. Brady Slifer (one year term ending in 2027)

**Vice President:** Matt Hueting (one year term ending in 2027)

**Secretary:** David Kehne (one year term ending in 2027)

**Treasurer:** Robert Morris (one year term ending in 2027)

**Team Chairs** (no term set; appointed by the Consistory. No mention of membership requirement. Co-chairs are allowed.)

**AV Tech Team** (reports into Worship): Jeff Baker

**Faithful Friends** (reports into Spiritual Council): Jeanellen Kallevang and Elizabeth Slade

**Green Team** (reports into Christian Education): Linda Coyle

**Holy Casserollers** (reports into Spiritual Council): Kelly Esslinger

**Hospitality/Fellowship:** Joe Adkins

**Hospitality/Funeral Receptions:** Cathie Duncan and Sedonia Martin

**Name Study Group:** Sedonia Martin

**Personnel Council** (reports into Finance and Budget): Darryl Glick

**Safety and Security Task Force** (reports into Finance and Budget): Matt Davis

**Welcoming Hands** (reports into Worship): Barb Barry

**Worship Design Team** (reports into Worship): Ave Barr

# **PASTORAL RECORD**

(January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025)

## **Baptisms**

Camryn Huenger • Hudson Black • Julianne Black

## **Births**

Edith Caughy • Griffin David

## **Deaths of Members and Funerals Officiated by Staff**

Charlene Perry • Mary Ann Simmons  
Delmar Speak • Tamara Tamas

## **Marriages**

Sean Sexton and Emily Atchley

## **New Members**

Karl Cooper • Jennifer Cooper  
Paul McGinley • Frederick Rhines

**Evangelical Reformed UCC Membership 365 starting membership**

**Members Transferred (by request) : 1**

**Deaths of Members: 4**

**Members Removed (by request or inactivity): 26**

**New Members Received: 4**

**Total confirmed Membership as of December 31, 2025: 338**

# **MINISTERS AND STAFF OF ERUCC**

as of March 2026

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



Alison E. Shafer ~ Director of Music

Jaci Clayton ~ Facilities Manager

Ann Watkins ~ Administrative Assistant

Ashley Murphy ~ Nursery Attendant



The Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel ~ Pastor Emerita

The Rev. Fred Wenner ~ Pastor Emeritus

## A SUMMARY MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR

This summary message and the following Group and Organization Annual Reports are designed to provide a broad overview of some, not all, of the services provided within and beyond the ERUCC congregation during the past 12 months. I've been blessed to serve as your Intentional Interim Pastor since January 2, 2024 - a period of approximately two years. Since the advent of the interim relationship, we have, at various times and in various ways, acknowledged that we've been on a "wilderness journey." Not unlike the wilderness journey taken by Moses and the Children of Israel, it is normal for a wilderness journey to include some periods of deep anxiety, some valleys and rivers to cross, and some mountains to be climbed, all leading to future days of uncontrollable celebration and joy for God's blessings along the way and for the assurance of God's presence, as a new chapter is about to begin.

To say that I have experienced extraordinary love and immeasurable personal and spiritual growth since my arrival at ERUCC is an understatement. I have made sincere attempts, with the help of supporting clergy (retired and others), through weekly sermons and other forms of pastoral ministry, to contribute to your personal and spiritual growth. Although I must trust others to evaluate and to discern whether our sojourn together warrants a passing, a failing, or an alternate grade, this much I do know: our God is doing "a new thing" in our midst. There is an increasingly strong sense that you have turned the page and are poised with excitement to begin writing the next chapter in the history of this wonderful congregation, and to do so while embracing new settled pastoral leadership. My fervent hope and prayer is that all of you have sensed, along with me, that we have not been alone on this interim journey. Our Creator, God, has steadfastly journeyed with us through both the pain and the joys of the interim process.

To date, we have been blessed beyond measure by the coordinating work of our faithful and hard-working Transition Team, who introduced us to the Five Focus Points of the interim process: HERITAGE, LEADERSHIP, MISSION, CONNECTIONS, and FUTURE. Now, the Settled Pastor Search Committee is busy reviewing candidate profiles to discern who among interested candidates God

has most ideally prepared to journey into the future with this congregation. Because they are operating under strict confidentiality, the congregation can only wait for them to indicate, through the Consistory, when they are ready to introduce and present a candidate for your prayerful consideration. On behalf of the committee, I request your fervent prayers that God will continue to guide them in their discernment process and that their efforts will prove successful, blessing ERUCC for many years to come.

We've all been blessed to have a Consistory that has been overwhelmingly supportive of the interim process since its inception. They and other church participants whom they enlisted are continuing to review and update ERUCC's Constitution and Bylaws. None of this would have been possible without the constant love, attention, and engagement of you, the ERUCC participants. If we remain faithful and do not lose hope, I am confident, beyond doubt, that God will do what is promised in the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

*"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."*

~ Isaiah 43:18-20 (NIV)

Because I am your Interim Pastor (a Temporary Shepherd), sensing that I have done the work I was called to do.

*Respectfully submitted*

Marvin L. Morgan, Interim Senior Pastor

*See Addendum, Page 6*



**INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR REPORT ADDENDUM:**

Much of Dr. Morgan’s leadership included supporting our Transition Team (Chairperson Bud Rossig, Terry Logee, Tommie Bradshaw, Eliza Stitely, Thomasa Pomeroy, Felecia Bishop, Karen Justice) as they continued to explore and discover in the interim-directed transition process to the completion of Focus Point Five—FUTURE! By the end of December, the team, in connection with the new Settled Pastor Search and Call Committee, completed our new local church profile, and we were pleased to receive conference approval in November 2025. Our Settled Pastor committee includes Bud Rossig, Terry Logee, Tommie Bradshaw, Eliza Stitely, Karl Cooper, Jennifer Powell-Nguyen, Linda Coyle, Rachael Bowman, and Chairperson Matt Huetting. We are thankful for the work they did to finalize and submit our profile, and for the valuable input and partnership with Rev. John Vertigan, Interim CAC Director, and Rev. Freeman Palmer, when Rev. Palmer returned from Sabbatical. We were pleased that, even before the end of 2025, some people had already expressed interest by sharing their profiles.



**ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

We are thankful for the work of the Worship team and Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg, who served as the guiding thread of our worship planning and budgeting this year. For both Lent and Advent, we chose to use Sanctified Arts materials. I, Pastor Kirstin, along with our retired and affiliated pastors, were available to preach when Dr. Morgan needed to be out of town. A big opportunity for me included the invitation to preach for Ash Wednesday. In addition, we affirmed and blessed two of our retired pastors, Rev. Robert Manthey (his spouse, Nancy Manthey) and Rev. Carolyn Roberts, who moved out of the area this year to live closer to family. We will especially miss Bob’s assistance with pastoral care and Carolyn’s assistance in worship, with the Inquirer’s classes, and Christian Education.

In 2025, we said goodbye to three staff members who made significant contributions to our congregation. Each has remained an active part of ERUCC’s church community.

Trish Coffey has been a creative and compassionate leader of our adult and children’s bell choirs and Children’s Music and Movement. In the past year, recognizing the strong interest in music among our Middle and High School youth, Trish also directed a group of five young women who blessed us with special music on multiple Sundays during the 10:30 a.m. service.

Kelly Esslinger, our Assistant Director for Bell Choirs and Children’s Music, brought an eagerness to help our children love and play with music. She helped with words and motions as our children learned new songs. With the absence of Trish and Kelly’s leadership, we have not been able to keep up with our children’s engagement on a regular basis. We miss this as a congregation that values the participation of children in ministry and of music as a gift of praise to God.

A position description was written in the summer, and a search continues for the Musical Directorship of our bells and children’s choirs, which could be one or multiple people. Alison Shafer, Director of Music, will supervise this position moving forward. We will continue to seek ways to involve children in music and worship.

Jenna Duranko, who built our website and social media presence, assisted with worship slides and assisted Pastor Kirstin in creative educational and connectional-themed videos throughout the year, moved on to work at Lancaster Seminary in the admissions office upon her

graduation. The Personnel Committee did not continue this position and, instead merged it into the work of the Executive Church Administrator for the rest of 2025.

We also saw two new hires on our ministry team this year! It was decided that a part-time office assistant would help us to expand our ability to welcome more groups into our downtown community room. This allowed us to staff a Welcome Desk on Sunday mornings for Sunday school check-in, greet visitors, and help establish a presence at the Church Street doors. Additional hours were also approved to assist our associate pastor with administrative tasks, including our Safe Church records. We were thankful to have hired Ann Watkins for this role and to have welcomed her into our staff community, where she brings a love of hospitality and a desire to serve joyfully.

In addition, we welcomed a second rental group host, Jimmy Brittain, to give us more options for hosting groups over evenings and weekends. Jimmy is known to us as the older child of Jim and Angela Brittain. It's been good to have him on staff as well.

The Prayer Tree in the Sanctuary Lobby was a significant part of our congregational life this year. As a creative partnership with vision from Rhea Stein, who is a sculptor, and our Worship Design Team, what began as a prayer tree to highlight Transgender Day of Visibility continued as a tree that blessed us in a variety of congregational prayer opportunities year round including offering prayers for government workers, for refugees, and for the fruits that we pray for in our church's future ministry. I enjoyed partnering with the Worship Design Committee, the Frederick Center, and other area LGBTQ Welcoming Downtown Frederick Churches to complete this project and share it with our trans community, as a form of celebration and advocacy. I was both surprised and encouraged by how engaged our congregation was, as participants of all ages regularly added prayers.

Also in this past year, we more strongly claimed our partnership with the Frederick Community Fridge. Thanks to the coordination and organization of Kim Sexton and the Mission, Evangelism and Social Justice Committee, we have a monthly giving invitation to bring items into "Pack the Pantry." It has been a joy to lift these items up as a part of our congregational offering regularly and to pray as well for those who will receive this food.

This was a year for General Synod, held in Kansas City in July. Rev. Dr. Marvin Morgan, Ben Mercier, Tyler York,

and Rev. Barbara Kershner-Daniel, Pastor Emerita, and I all attended. Rev. Daniel and Ben were voting delegates for our CAC delegation. Rev. Morgan appreciated worship and enjoyed the time to reconnect with colleagues. My own way was paid by the UCC Grant for Love of Children. I participated in the Children's Ministry program and Playground leadership through the National UCC for much of my time there, although I was able to attend one Synod session and the workshops, as well as a luncheon for Lancaster Seminary graduates. This was my first Synod as well as Tyler's. As a first-year seminarian, Tyler, a member and our Executive Church Administrator, wanted to see what Synod was like and enjoyed participating in workshops.

I continued serving through the year as ERUCC's Pastor of Faith Formation and Parish Life for 2025. In this interim, however, additional tasks have been asked of me including participation on multiple ministry committees; partnering with Faithful Friends; additional worship leadership; additional pastoral care; leadership of a church-wide hosting of our West German friends with Pastor Daniel Muller Thor; the primary design and leadership of confirmation; the primary connection to FAMA (Frederick's Area Ministerium), Downtown Pastors, and the UCC conference and association teams; and leadership of our Inquirer's and membership processes. Our congregation has affirmed my work as valuable and assured me that I'm a gift in many ways, while also acknowledging how much has been asked of me in this interim. After a year without someone, it has been amazing to have Holly Davis serving as the Christian Education chair. Her enthusiasm and problem-solving abilities are invaluable to us!

### Children's Ministry Highlights

- New Bible Resources for Christian Education
- Setting aside space for active safe play for children during fellowship, planned with the Consistory
- Ash Wednesday afternoon ashes available for children and families
- Holy Friday God's Kid's Club Holy Week Experience
- Gretna Glen "Night Owls" camp week away
- Vacation Bible School with a service project, creation of a garden
- Tots' activities and more young families
- Singing at Record Street Home
- LOVE for Children 2025 Cohort, UCC Children's

Ministry grant-funded opportunity that I was able to participate in for most of the year.

**Confirmation Highlights**

- Seven Confirmands and mentors entered the confirmation process in August 2025 with a weekend retreat at Camp Manidokan
- One-day retreat at church in October to explore the Sacraments
- Sunday lesson on the reformation shared by Pastor Daniel from Germany
- Participation in Franklinton Center at Bricks work experience and discussion of being an anti-racist church
- Meeting twice per month to explore other topics of the structure of the UCC, Bible history and exploration, history of Christianity, and church history.
- Getting to know mentors
- Beginning to work on Confirmation projects and choosing a Bible focus verse

**Youth Ministry Highlights**

- Movie Night: *Mufasa!*
- Bethany Beach Holy Week Retreat with help from Dawn Lagrotteria and Tommie Bradshaw
- Soup fundraiser
- Germany summer trip with five youths and three adults
- High school fall kayaking trip
- Planning day at Dan Smith’s pool
- Trunk or Treat care project for our younger kids
- Going shopping for SHIP hygiene items
- Providing leadership for God’s Kids’ Club, nursery, and Junior Church
- Goals: to have more community service opportunities in 2026

**Adult and Congregational Ministry Highlights**

- Women’s retreat
- Sacred Conversations (about changes with aging, abilities, and shifts in dependency)
- Little Easter all-church meal
- Postcard campaign to the FCPS School Board supporting transgender students

- Prayer tree creation and usage
- Church picnic in June
- ERUCC weekend campout in June
- Rejoice in the Welcome Sunday with one large table in Fellowship and puzzle pieces to symbolize connections
- Christmas all-church dinner
- Intergenerational Christmas pageant
- Advent: Coordinated “Breath Prayer” reflections shared by the congregation
- Advent: Designed and facilitated midweek labyrinth walks

**Additional Leadership Highlights**

- Workshop leader at UCC’s Spring Annual Meeting
- Active in UCC Conference planning teams for children and youth activities
- Participation with the UCC Washington, DC office with the Germany Partnership
- Participation with the UCC Washington, DC office with Love Without Borders Initiative
- Participation in multiple community gatherings and stands for justice

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads





### DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Major works sung by Senior Choir this year were “Blessed, A Holy Week Journey through the Beatitudes” by Joel Raney and “Light of Peace: Celtic Carols of Christmas” by Karen Marroli. The Celtic cantata was accompanied by Linda Moss on flute and ERUCC member Justin Coen on violin.

Our schedule for Spirit (a contemporary music group) to sing on the second Sunday of each month continued. We have 4-7 singers, and are accompanied by a trio of piano, Laura Walling on bass, and Joseph Baker on drums.

Worship services on Palm Sunday and Reformation Sunday were enhanced by the quintet Market Street Brass. Guest musicians Cathy Fronck, Jeffrey Baker, and Conner Frazier played for Easter and Christmas Eve. ERUCC member Jenna Duranko treats us to beautiful marimba music on occasion. In December, our Service of Lessons and Carols featured Mary Huegel playing the oboe and C. Douglas Remsberg on clarinet.

The Senior Choir began the year with a potluck picnic in September. This year, we had nineteen singers. Rehearsals are held twice a week, on Thursday and Sunday, and the choir sings anthems three Sundays a month. The ERUCC Senior Choir is a dedicated and fun-loving team.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Alison E. Shafer



## CONSISTORY

Because many of us come from different faith traditions, it is useful to understand ERUCC's approach to governance. In summary:

- The entire church membership is responsible for making decisions regarding church operations.
- Those decisions are made at congregational meetings, with one in the fall focused on approving our mission spending plan and one in the spring focused on the election of lay leaders.
- Between congregational meetings, church operations are overseen by the Consistory, which is the governing body that acts on behalf of the congregation.
- A majority of members of the Consistory are elected by the full membership at the spring congregational meeting and include the chairs of all Standing Committees (Mission, Evangelism and Social Justice, Worship, Christian Education, Finance & Budget, Property, and Stewardship/Generosity), and a Member-at-Large. Along with a Youth Representative, the Senior Settled Pastor and Associate for Faith Formation and Parish Life also attend Consistory meetings and have a voice but no vote. The Head Deacon, who is elected by the Deacons, and the Chair of the Spiritual Council, who is elected by the Elders, also serve on the Consistory as voting members. The Consistory's President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer are all elected by Consistory members at its first meeting following the spring congregational meeting.

Highlights from 2025, some of which will be reflected in other committee reports, included:

- We experienced a second year of leadership by the Rev. Dr. Marvin M. Morgan, which saw the conclusion of the Transition Team efforts under the leadership of Bud Rossig and the formation and start of work by the Pastor Search and Call Committee under the leadership of Matt Huetting.
- The Worship Committee continued to engage the congregation with spiritual, visual, and musical offerings that help us connect more deeply with one another and our God.
- Christian Education efforts were organized into teams that focused on specific groups of congregational members. These have included

Adult Faith Formation (including Green Team efforts), Adult Bible Study, Youth Group, Sunday School, Faith Formation for Children (Junior Church, God's Kids Club, etc.), and Young Adult Group. Participation in all aspects of these efforts remains healthy as our church family seeks first to understand and then to live out the Word of God.

- Robust participation at our services, both in-person and online, with in-person attendance at the 10:30 a.m. service averaging 135 people, and online participation averaging 55 log-ons.
- With continued thanks to the ministry of the Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads and a tremendous cohort of Sunday School and Youth Group teachers plus Youth Faith Formation volunteers, many children, youth, and families participated weekly in Sunday School and attended church services, with this year also seeing the start of a Confirmation Class.
- Our congregation experienced its fourth Consecration Sunday, a process that continues to encourage us to reflect on how we steward our time, talent, and treasure and how that stewardship reflects our relationship with God.
- ERUCC remained a supportive Five for Five Church, which provided funds to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and the Special Mission Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need, and The Christmas Fund.
- With thanks to Treasurer Robert Morris and former Finance Committee Chair Will Duncan, ERUCC's Finance Committee began receiving complete and accurate monthly financial reports from our bookkeeping firm Jitasa and, along with the Finance Committee and staff, gained increased comfort with our new Chart of Accounts as well as our new PushPay church management software. To continue improving our financial processes, the ERUCC Finance Committee agreed to migrate accounting support from Jitasa to a local firm, LSWG, beginning in 2026.
- Prompted by the Transition Team, two study groups formed in 2024 continued their efforts:
  - o The Name Study Group collected internal and external data on people's perceptions of the ERUCC congregation and its current name, and shared these results with the congregation.

- o The Constitution and Bylaws Study Group completed the draft and began seeking congregation feedback through small-group gatherings. According to current documents, changes to the constitution will require a congregational vote while changes to the bylaws require a Consistory vote.
- With continuing thanks to David Cooney for leading this effort and to Sedonia Martin for sharing her marketing skills in support of it, the congregation made additional progress in raising funds for the Historic Clock Tower Preservation project, the work on which made substantial progress.

As in past years, I will note that while the Pastoral staff is supportive of and central to the ERUCC congregational family, ERUCC is not the Pastor, not the retired Pastor, not the Intentional Interim Senior Pastor, and not the Settled Senior Pastor we are calling. ERUCC is the congregational family, and this understanding requires all of us to steward our God-given time, talents, and treasure in support of the church — not only for external missions such as visits with and from our German friends and work trips to the Franklinton Center at Bricks, North Carolina, to Kentucky, and to other places needing hands-on help, but also for internal missions such as property upkeep, assisting with Fellowship, helping with counting after Sunday services, welcoming people into our spaces, teaching Sunday School, Youth Group, and Confirmation Class, and serving as a member of one of our committees, councils, and task forces. All of these efforts call for our engagement.

Sustained by retired clergy who worship at ERUCC and by a very proactive, perceptive, and diligent staff, our voyage through 2025 was calm, focused, and steadfast, as a broad range of congregation members offered their stewarded support consistently. Our congregational family should be proud of itself and take heart that we were dutiful in honoring our mission statement, which states that we “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 developing and implementing specific programs to fulfill our mission.” Amen!

Through the strong commitments of our pastors, staff, and members of the congregation, both individually

and through collaboration on committees, teams, task forces, councils, mission trips, and other working groups in the church, the Consistory is optimistic that ERUCC will continue to live out our missions for 2026. On this, and with the guidance of the Pastor Search and Call Committee, we look forward as that team discerns in a deliberate manner who God is calling to be our new Settled Senior Pastor.

In closing, this will be my last Consistory report as I term off as President of the Consistory after six years. I have been honored by the confidence and trust you have accorded me, and am again grateful for the time, talent, and treasure you have shared with the congregation on our journey together. I look forward to our worship, fellowship, and missional work together, and to continuing my service as Chair of the Finance Committee and to assisting the new President of the Consistory when needed.

Members of the Spiritual Council and the Consistory welcome your questions, comments, and concerns at any time.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Peter Brehm, Consistory President



## SPIRITUAL COUNCIL

The Spiritual Council members include the Senior Pastor (currently vacant), the Associate Pastor for Faith Formation and Parish Life, Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads, and the six elders elected from the congregation: Matt Huetting (Chair), Jeanellen Kallevang (Vice Chair), Eric Weakly (Secretary), Peter Brehm, Ave Barr, and Susan Kulp.

The Council is responsible for assisting the Intentional Interim Senior Pastor with the church's spiritual affairs. These roles include exercising discipline, maintaining order, ministering to the members' spiritual growth, reviewing members' attendance and participation, and making appropriate recommendations for action to the Consistory. The council reviews the readiness of confirmands and makes recommendations for their confirmation; advises and assists the pastors in performing their duties and planning for professional and spiritual growth; and reviews the performance and compensation of the pastors, making appropriate recommendations to the Personnel Council.

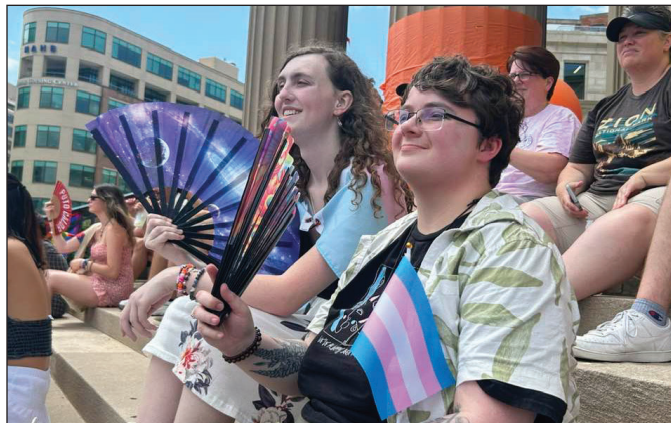
The Spiritual Council organizes itself annually, electing its chair, vice chair, and secretary. The council meets as often as necessary to ensure all these tasks are completed, but at least once a month. Most importantly, the Spiritual Council serves as a bridge between the pastors and the congregation, ensuring that all members have someone with whom to speak concerning spiritual matters and the pastors' leadership and ministry.

In 2025, the Spiritual Council began by reviewing the pastoral staff of ERUCC and incorporating input from the congregation through a survey. The remainder of the year, the Council continued to meet with and support our hard-working pastors. In April, the council joyously recommended to the Consistory that ERUCC member Tommie Bradshaw be accepted as a Member in Discernment. Robin Cooney completed her term as elder in May, and we are blessed to have received her contributions over the years. The council supports both the Faithful Friends ministry and the Holy Casserlers, and details of their activities follow in their own sections. The council supported the activities of the Transition Team, wrapping up their work in the first half of the year, and then assisted in the selection and formation of the Pastor Search Committee. Finally, in November, our Intentional Interim Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Marvin L. Morgan, announced his intention to depart. The council

began planning for his departure in January 2026. We would like to thank in advance the many retired clergy and volunteers who will help continue to bridge the gap until a new senior pastor is selected. The council also received many congregational prayer requests throughout the year. These 2025 highlights represent just some of the duties and responsibilities completed by the Spiritual Council.

I would like to thank the members of the Spiritual Council for their time and talents over the past year, as well as all the prayers said for members of the congregation. They are a group dedicated to ERUCC's well-being.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Matt Huetting, Chair



## FAITHFUL FRIENDS

Faithful Friends is ERUCC’s ministry for ERUCC members who are unable to attend regular Sunday morning services for various reasons, generally related to their health. Faithful Friends is under the purview of the Spiritual Council.

The ERUCC members on the Faithful Friends list have been integral parts of ERUCC and need to continue to be included in our faith community. The average number of individuals on the list to be cared for in 2025 varied slightly over time, generally approaching 20. Those on the Faithful Friends list reside in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other homes (e.g., their own homes and those of family members). Several individuals spent time in hospitals and rehabilitation centers during 2025. Most of those on the Faithful Friends list can watch ERUCC’s services online, but that is no substitute for having someone from ERUCC reach out to them.

The Faithful Friends Team is responsible for maintaining connections. The primary way the Team communicated with individuals on the Faithful Friends list was by mail. Cards were sent regularly to keep in touch, as well as to commemorate birthdays. The Faithful Friends Team also called and emailed those on the Faithful Friends list. Visits, which had been a mainstay of the ministry prior to COVID, slowly started to increase again in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Elizabeth Slade, a member of the Faithful Friends Team, became a team co-coordinator in 2025. Members of the Faithful Friends Team during all or part of 2025 were Katharine Alley, Mary Boswell, JD Bowman (youth - 10), Rachael Bowman, Vivian Bowman (youth - 13), Kelly Esslinger, Anne Hoffman, Jeanellen Kallevang (team co-coordinator), Sue Kreh, Nan MacNamara, Heather McCarty, Sue Pinner, and Elizabeth Slade (team co-coordinator). Team members participate on their own time and in the ways and to the extent that they choose (e.g., send cards to everyone on the list twice a year, visit one person on the list per month, visit a specific individual once every two weeks, call certain individuals routinely, send cards every two months to everyone on the list, send birthday cards only). Several members send cards monthly to everyone on the list, and two team members, Katharine Alley and Heather McCarty, make them.

In 2025, Starr Schaeberle continued to lead the tradition of providing Christmas cookies from the ERUCC cookie swap to those on the Faithful Friends list. In addition, at

the encouragement of Pastor Kirsten Shrom-Rhoads, the Faithful Friends Team’s efforts were augmented by a few ERUCC youth who visited some on the list.

The Faithful Friends Team initiated a new form of recognition in 2025, this time for the caregivers in our congregation. Various “significant others” (e.g., parents, spouses, partners, daughters, sons) provide ongoing care for people on the Faithful Friends list and others. Similar to what ERUCC does for college students and those in the military, ERUCC collected items for the caregivers. The Youth Group put them into gift bags, and the Faithful Friends team delivered them to the caregivers.

Those who are connected to ERUCC through Faithful Friends and their families are very appreciative of this ministry. Sometimes correspondence gets started between an individual on the list and a team member. When ERUCC members who are limited in how often they can get out receive calls and visits from other members of our church, the connection among ERUCC members becomes personal, and friendships develop.

Participating in the Faithful Friends Team is very rewarding. Please contact Jeanellen at [geeeggirl@hotmail.com](mailto:geeeggirl@hotmail.com) or Elizabeth at [elizaslade@gmail.com](mailto:elizaslade@gmail.com) if you are interested.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
 Jeanellen Kallevang and Elizabeth Slade,  
 Faithful Friends Team Co-Coordinators



## HOLY CASSEROLLERS

One discreet but important mission of the ERUCC congregational family is to provide meals for people and families experiencing a medical or other event. When ERUCC pastoral or lay staff connect with a family in need, they relay contact information to the Meal Train Conductor, who then coordinates with the person or family on how many meals are needed, the number of people in the family, dietary guidance, drop-off times, and other important details. We compile this information into a “Meal Train” and share it via email with the Holy Casseroler contact list, who then sign up to provide one or more meals over the days or weeks for which they are requested.

All are welcome and appreciated aboard the Meal Train, as participation is optional and a shared extension of our love and radical hospitality. If you feel inclined but are not sure how to participate, you can peruse options listed at [tinyurl.com/holycasserollers](https://tinyurl.com/holycasserollers).

In 2025, the Holy Casserollers coordinated four trains: June, August, September, and December.

If you or your family are ever in need of temporary meal support because of an illness or another life event for which supplied meals would be helpful, please let ERUCC pastoral or lay staff know so that your congregational family can help out.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
Kelly Esslinger, Holy Casseroler Meal Train Conductor



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian Education at ERUCC continues to flourish through the dedication of our teachers, volunteers, clergy, and participants of all ages. From our youngest children to our adult learners, our congregation remains committed to growing in faith, services and understanding.

The Christian Education Committee would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all our volunteers. This includes our teachers, family and parent helpers, and members of the congregation who generously support our programs. Your time, care, and commitment make ERUCC Christian education ministry possible.

In 2025, we brought in new leadership and support:

- May 4: Holly Davis volunteered to serve as head of the Christian Education Team for a two-year term
- Chris Vara stepped into the role of the Youth Parent Representative. Many thanks to Julie Clark, who held this position for the past year and a half!

It truly takes a village to organize and sustain so many meaningful education groups, and we are deeply grateful for the many hands and hearts that contribute to this ministry.

### YOUTH

Our congregation continued to faithfully support our youth throughout 2025 as they grew in faith, service, and community.

#### Franklinton Center Service Trip (January):

Over the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, our youth once again traveled to Franklinton Center at Bricks. This long-standing trip is both a meaningful tradition and an important learning experience: exploring the history of the UCC, African-American slavery, and the Civil Rights Movement while encouraging reflection on Christian Justice.

#### Winter and Spring Activities:

The youth calendar was full of fun, fellowship, and service opportunities

- Snow tubing adventure at Snow Riders in Harper's Ferry.
- Super Bowl sub fundraiser, complete with a coin bet predicting the winning team (the Philadelphia Eagles!)

- A successful Soup Fundraiser, organized with the help of Julie Clark and crew, featuring a variety of homemade soups.

#### Serving the Church Community

- Youth decorated glasses filled with candy and chocolate for Valentine's Day. They handmade Valentine's Day cards for Faithful Friends.
- Together, our church and community packed college care packages and caregiver packages in December.
- Spring Retreat and Summer Fellowship
- A meaningful spring retreat to Bethany Beach, where youth explored the theme of peace alongside the story of Holy Week.
- Many youth participated in the church camping trip event at Gifford Pinchot State Park.

#### Celebrating Inclusion

- Participation in World Pride in Washington, D.C. and joining the Frederick Pride March and Frederick Pride at Carroll Creek.

#### Germany Partnership

Youth and adult volunteers continued ERUCC's partnership with Germany with a summer trip to Klein Schwechten. Participants included Quynn Adkins, Eli Baker, Camryn Huenger, Isaac Pomeroy, and Katie Zander. Thanks to Hollie Mercier, Matt Pomeroy, and Pastor Kirstin for chaperoning.

This year's theme, *Nachstenliebe* (loving one's neighbor), encouraged youth to reflect on how acts of kindness become habits of the heart. Activities included environmental and team-building workshops, a geo-cache adventure, visits to Seehausen and Berlin, and volunteering with a hospice in Stendal. Our youth also gifted the German youth with a rainbow yard-sized Jenga game. Our youth and previous members who had participated in the Germany partnership had written words about what it means to Love Your Neighbor. Everyone shared meaningful experiences with their host families.

#### Fall and Advent Traditions

- The return of the beloved All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast fundraiser.
- Using collection change to purchase needed items for SHIP.

- A fun evening of dinner, discussion, and fellowship around a campfire.

### Confirmation Classes

- Reached out to parents and prospective confirmands in April. This special group of seven youth with their mentors meet regularly to learn about their Christian faith, faith communities, service to others, and the UCC.

### CHILDREN

Children’s ministry at ERUCC begins with our youngest members in the Nursery (ages 0-4). Ashley Murphy continues to serve as our weekly nursery staff member, ensuring a safe and welcoming space for our infants and toddlers.

Sunday school began in the fall using the Growing in Grace and Gratitude curriculum for Pre-K, Kindergarten-2nd Grade, and 3rd-5th grade

- Both the nursery and Sunday school classrooms use a computer check-in/check-out system to enhance safety for children and families. Classes meet at 9:15 a.m. in the main building, alongside adult education. We are thankful for our dedicated teachers, the guidance of Dawn Lagrotteria, and Thomasa Pomeroy for leading Junior Church, and a creative space for spiritual formation during worship service.

God’s Kids Club continues to offer fun, faith-filled gatherings throughout the year. Below are just some of the activities the group did in 2025:

- A theater-themed kickoff with youth leading warm-ups, games, and set design while exploring God as a Creator.
- Weather Fun! Connecting weather and faith.
- An Eggstravaganza with egg painting, crosses as reminders of God’s love, and baskets for homebound members

### Additional Special Children’s Events

- Palm Sunday participation with the children marching in the sanctuary, waving palms.
- Easter morning egg hunt with tiny Jesus figurines hidden in the sanctuary.
- Summer “I Am” Sunday series exploring identity, faith, and authenticity.
- A joyful Trunk or Treat celebration in early November.
- K-5 classes supported the Frederick Community

Fridge and Pantry, personally delivering food and hygiene items.

- Gretna Glen Camp in July with seven ERUCC youth and children.

Vacation Bible School in early August featured Camp Firelight, where children explored ways to trust God through stories, music, crafts, and activities, including a fun outing to the Baker Park swimming pool.

### ADULT

#### Weekly Bible Study Opportunities

- **Let’s Study the Bible**, led by Rev. John Shillingburg, was offered both in-person and via Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Sunday lessons focused on the New Testament with particular attention to the gospels. Wednesday sessions have explored Israel’s transition from a tribal confederacy to a nation. Both classes study scripture verse by verse and encourage thoughtful discussion on interpretation and history.
- **Theology Among the People** (Tuesday Morning Study) led by Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg and offered in person and via zoom. Readings and discussions this year included:
  - *How the Bible Actually Works* by Peter Enns
  - *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor
  - *UnClobber: Rethinking Our Misuse of the Bible on Homosexuality* by Colby Matin
  - *The Bible According to Christian Nationalists* by Brian Kaylor

#### Special Adult Education Opportunities

- Christian Nationalism: What’s That? A special class led by Dr. Matthew Davis and Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg examining the meaning, history, and theological implications of Christian nationalism through scripture and historical context using the book by Brian Kaylor.
- Frederick School of Religion while not an ERUCC-sponsored program, many members participated in its offerings this year, including courses such as Jesus’ Secret Teachings, Native American Ideology, and How the Hebrew Bible Was Formed.
- Young Adult Gathering: Young adults met for fellowship and conversation at Brewer’s Alley in March, an opportunity for connection and community. Much of the conversation related to finding peace in the stresses of our nation’s politics and the world around us.

The **Let's Talk** series continued throughout the year, offering conversations on living out our faith in daily life. Topics included:

- The Frederick Community Fridge and local community support
- A Q&A with the Transition Team
- *Widows Among Us: Stories and Insights* with author Karen Justice
- Deepening welcome for those with mental health challenges, disabilities, substance use concerns, and dietary needs
- Living the Questions: The Wisdom of Progressive Christianity led by Rev. Rebecca Shillingburg
- Parenting young children
- Lenten reflection on the Good Samaritan through contemplative practices with Rev. Sandra Dorsainvil
- Foster parenting with Frederick County recruiter Kaitlin Morris, LCSW-C
- Advent reflections with Sanctified Art's "What Do you Fear?" and conversations on practicing peace in times of war

**Retreats and Spiritual Gatherings**

- Women's Retreat at Camp Manidokan was a weekend of fellowship, reflection, and celebration of diverse expressions of the feminine spirit and our spiritual gifts as well as social change themes named by author Deepa Iyer.
- Wednesday Prayer Gathering is a weekly quiet prayer time in the sanctuary led by Rev. Richard Leslie, offering space for silence, meditation, and listening for God's spirit within.

**Fall Germany Partnership Visit**

In October, ERUCC welcomed youth partners from West Germany. Special thanks go to Suzanne Morris, Julie Clark, and Renae Kline for their coordination, and to the many members who hosted, provided meals, and offered transportation. Together, youth and hosts:

- Learned about the history of ERUCC
- Participated in mission work at the Franklinton Center
- Joined the AARCH walking tour in Frederick
- Carved pumpkins, shared fellowship and meals, and went to Tree Trekkers

- Met with the UCC Office of Public Policy and Advocacy in Washington, D.C. to discuss living out faith in the public square

**Safe Church Policy**

ERUCC continues to uphold its Safe Church Policy, ensuring that all ministries remain welcoming, supportive, and safe environments for children, youth, and our volunteers.

- Sunday school emergency procedures now include an emergency location at All Saints Episcopal Church. Teachers had time to walk through to the location with Pastor Kirstin.
- The Risk Management committee updated the policy in 2025.
- We continued to offer new training and two cohorts of "Recertifications."
- Thanks to Jenna Duranko for editing and producing a video with Pastor Kirstin to offer a virtual option for recertifying, paired with Presidium courses through our insurance company.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Holly Davis



## SCHOLARSHIPS

Evangelical Reformed UCC is fortunate to offer scholarship programs to our post-secondary students as they pursue educational opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills needed to realize their full potential.

Robert McCardell established the McCardell Scholarship Fund in honor and memory of his family. The Kieffer Scholarship Fund was established in honor of Dr. Henri L. Kieffer, pastor of this church from 1910 to 1946. The Liz Coffey Scholarship Fund was established in memory and in honor of our beloved youth member, Liz Coffey. Contributions to these scholarship funds by members and friends of the church are always welcome.

The Scholarship Committee awarded gifts to church members for post-secondary undergraduate

education based on the quality of the candidate's plan for the use of the funds, the ability and promise of the applicant, the need for financial assistance, and for active participation in the life of the church. The aid may continue for subsequent years after in the interview with the committee, submission of intent to reapply, and submission of their transcript of grades from the current year.

Our committee was very impressed with the academic accomplishments of all of this year's recipients. They shared their involvement in many worthwhile extracurricular programs during annual phone interviews with committee members.

For the 2025 academic year, the following members were recipients of scholarships:

For the 2025 academic year, the following members were recipients of scholarships:

Lucy Adkins	Senior	St. Mary's College of Maryland
Alex Cumber	Senior	St. Mary's College of Maryland
Erin Gohegan	Senior	Wilson College
Trevor Weakly	Senior	Gettysburg College
Luke Chappell	Junior	University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Paige Coffey	Junior	Purdue University Global
Liam Cumber	Sophomore	Salisbury University
Jared Hueting	Sophomore	University of West Virginia
Sophia Carliss	Freshman	Connecticut College

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Scholarship Committee:* Sandra Trout, Chair, Tricia Coffey, Cathie Duncan, and Dan Smith

## GREEN TEAM

In 2025, the Green Team held two educational forums for our church and the Frederick community on sustainable practices. We heard from Michael Judd of Morris Orchard Natural Burial about sustainable end-of-life practices. Then, Paul Varga from the Frederick County Solid Waste and Recycling Division shared information on best practices for blue bin recycling. Later in the spring, we hosted representatives from Frederick City and Frederick County Sustainability Divisions for a listening session to ascertain the sustainability priorities of Frederick residents.

During the summer, the blessing of water was explored with the children and youth. At Vacation Bible School, the children constructed a raised bed and planted seeds while learning about the needs of all living things.

(Inadvertently, they found out what happens when seeds do not get enough water!) The confirmation youth participated in a discussion about the need for clean water and our moral responsibility to advocate for clean water practices, then participated in an informal stream survey.

Throughout the year, the Green Team mulched, planted, and weeded our native plant garden located behind the church next to the parking lot. We aspire to have a garden that fulfills the needs of pollinating insects, provides habitat for wildlife, and is a place of calm, respite, and beauty for us humans. It is a work in progress, and we welcome anyone who would like to support this work!

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Linda Coyle, Team Lead

### HISTORIC CLOCK TOWER RESTORATION

The clock tower restoration project was proceeding smoothly with an anticipated completion date sometime before Christmas 2025. The work began from the top, and it is possible to see how nice it looks as you focus on the spire.

Unfortunately, a major problem was discovered upon reaching the lantern level. Wooden support beams proved to be more deteriorated and rotted than expected, and bracing them adequately would be extremely challenging. McMullen Consulting Engineers was hired to provide a solution. Work needed to be paused while this study was done.

The conclusion was that a steel support structure would need to be manufactured and installed. That work has been underway for the last few months, and the installation is imminent. Once this level has been properly stabilized, the rest of the project can be completed.

As you might imagine, this has increased the cost considerably. It has added close to \$250,000 to the project.

While new or additional contributions from the congregation are needed and welcome, we are not planning another campaign. We have had two and are not eager for a third. In the same vein, we are not planning an extensive community campaign. We ran a significant campaign last spring and believe those outside of the church wanting to contribute have done so already. We will continue to publicize the project and need as best we can, and we are keeping our Community Foundation account open so we are able to receive additional contributions. We are also

circling back to Foundations seeking more support. We anticipate some relief.

Before the project began, we established a line of credit just for this contingency. We did not want to get deep into the work and discover we were unable to finish it. We fervently hoped we would not have to borrow anything to refurbish the tower, but we are grateful we have that option. It means that the project will be completed and the clock tower will be stable and in good condition for the next several decades.

Thank you for your support and pray for no more change orders.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
David Cooney



## FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE

In conjunction with the Treasurer, church staff, and our accounting firm, the Finance & Budget Committee prepares and reviews monthly financial reports and is responsible for keeping the Consistory and congregation apprised of ERUCC's financial state.

With a couple of exceptions, committee members met monthly via Zoom.

### HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2025:

#### Bookkeeper/Accounting

ERUCC continued its relationship with Jitasa Bookkeeping and Accounting Services. They manage our financial books and assist with paying our bills. The finance team provides the proper categories for our income (offering, investments, facility use, etc.), and Jitasa ensures they are recorded properly on our books. It is the same on the expense side; staff and the Treasurer submit invoices for payment and specify the expense category (supplies, utilities, benevolence, etc.), and Jitasa issues the payments and records the entries on our books.

Jitasa is an international organization, and Jitasa representatives to ERUCC were inconsistent and did not exhibit the same level of client service. Because the Finance Committee wanted stability in terms of ERUCC's accounting vendor contact, and because we wanted to have the accounting vendor come on-site and join Finance Committee meetings, the Finance Committee voted to change ERUCC's accounting vendor to local firm LSWG. The Consistory approved this, with the change occurring in January 2026. There was no material change in the cost of the two vendors.

#### Member Donation Software (Pushpay)

ERUCC continued using the Pushpay church management software in 2025. It has two major components: Giving and Church Member Management. As one would expect, the Finance team uses the Giving component.

As reported last year, in addition to tracking donations, Pushpay provides online giving services to allow members and others to make donations easily online, via a personal credit card or directly from the member's bank. These donations can be one-time gifts or recurring contributions. Contact the church office, the Treasurer treasurer@erucc.org, or the Finance Committee Chair financechair@erucc.org for more information.

## Loans

ERUCC continued to pay down our two loans related to the building project:

- ACNB Bank's loan balance at the end of 2025 was \$2,006,808.00. The ACNB loan is due December 15, 2026. Prior to that time, we will have to negotiate a new loan and interest rate, with the current interest rate being 4%.
- Fisher Fund's loan balance at the end of 2025 was \$98,069.00; per Consistory guidance, at the end of the year, we applied \$18,250 in unspent Fisher Fund distributions to this loan balance, making it closer to \$80,000 at this time.

## Clock Tower

As of the end of 2025, the total funds raised from internal and external sources, excluding the Brouillet bequest, was \$914,199. As of December 2025, the total amount spent was \$797,865, meaning we have \$116,334 in our Clock Tower campaign fund.

The **Save the Historic Clock Tower** campaign was launched in June 2024, and by the end of 2024, \$208,938.00 had been donated directly to the church, mostly from members. In 2025 ERUCC received additional donations of \$105,995, again, mostly from members, plus a \$50,000 grant from the Ausherman Foundation and a \$100,000 Bond Bill reimbursement from the State of Maryland.

As reported previously, and to make sure the congregation has access to this information as the project proceeds:

- ERUCC received the final installment of \$99,089.00 (out of \$298,000.00) from the estate of Alice Brouillet in 2023. A total of 10% (\$29,818.00) was allocated for Mission, Evangelism and Social Justice, and \$9,760.00 was spent on Pastor Daniel's celebration in 2023, and so \$258,600.00 remained. The finance team decided to earmark that amount to cover the costs of the Clock Tower repairs that exceed the funds raised directly for that project. The campaign and finance team's philosophy is that the more that is covered by the campaign, the more Brouillet funds the church can use for other purposes.
- The Finance Committee initiated the establishment of a line of credit with the Adams County National Bank (ACNB), the bank that holds the mortgage for the Downtown Community Room and Foyer

addition, to pay for repairs to the Historic Clock Tower. The Finance Committee undertook this effort in case donations to preserve the historic clock tower did not match the costs for undertaking this effort, recognizing that the time to secure a line of credit should precede the actual need for such credit. ACNB has agreed to offer ERUCC a line of credit of \$600,000 at 6.75%. This gives ERUCC a backstop if our current fundraising efforts cannot cover the costs of preserving the city of Frederick's first spire and town clock tower.

**Fisher Funds Policy**

In 2025, ERUCC's Fisher Fund policy was modified to clarify that only the Senior Settled Pastor would receive a pay supplement and have the responsibility for directing how remaining funds should be spent.

**2024 Mission Spending Plan Surplus**

In May, 2025, the Finance Committee discussed how to spend the Fiscal Year 2024 surplus for recommendation to the Consistory. The Finance Committee recommended that the 2024 surplus of \$40,720.00 be disbursed as follows:

- A 10% tithe of \$4,072.00 be added to the 2025 OCWM budgeted amount
- The remaining \$36,161.00 be used to pay down the Fisher Fund Building Loan balance/principal.

*These actions were taken.*

The 2026 ERUCC Mission Spending Plan (budget) was developed and approved by a congregational vote. Many thanks to the staff and committees for their work. Here is a quick summary:

Projected Income: \$978,345.47

Projected Expenses: \$1,077,377.99

Projected Net Income/(Loss): \$(99,032.52)

Like all churches, we face challenges meeting the financial requirements for the programs and ministry of our active congregation, along with the ever-present needs of our facilities, old and new. On this, ERUCC's year-end for 2025 ended differently than what we budgeted because of lower-than-budgeted income and higher-than-budgeted expenses:

	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2025 Difference
Total Income	\$995,519	\$980,260	\$(15,259)
Total Expense	\$986,869	\$1,030,383	\$43,514
Expense from 1/27/2026 Jitasa reports	\$986,869	\$1,029,583	\$42,714
Income / (Loss)	\$8,650	\$(50,123)	\$(58,773)
Income/(Loss) from 1/27/2026 Jitasa reports	\$8,650	\$(49,323)	\$(57,973)

The Finance Committee has agreed that in 2026, it will take a more aggressive role in communicating budget versus actual information to the congregation and staff.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Peter Brehm



## PERSONNEL AND POLICY COUNCIL

This past year has been one of the busiest and most transformative seasons that the Personnel Council has experienced in recent memory. Our work began with the search for a Handbell and Youth Choir Director, a position we continue to actively seek to fill.

As the year progressed, it became clear that additional administrative staff support was needed in the church office. In response, we created a part-time Administrative Assistant position. We are blessed to welcome Ann Watkins into this role. Among her many duties, Ann serves on Sunday morning at the Keiffer Foyer Front desk, where she greets guests and assists with the nursery and children check-in. Her warm smile has already become a cherished part of our church's welcome.

In addition, the Personnel Council is being considered for redesignation as the Personnel Committee pending approval by the congregation. This change would grant the Personnel Council chair Consistory voting privileges on matters affecting the church and formal representation at those meetings.

The Council remains committed to overseeing all matters related to our paid church staff. We continue to play a vital role in supporting church leadership through conducting assessments, anticipating current and future needs, and identifying opportunities for growth for both our staff and the church as a whole.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
Darryl Glick, Chair



## PROPERTY COMMITTEE

During 2025, the Property Committee supported ERUCC Facilities Manager Jaci Clayton in maintaining our grounds and facilities, especially since Trinity Chapel has been largely closed due to preservation efforts for the Historic Clock Tower. In addition to handling routine repairs and inspections as needed, Jaci spent considerable time diagnosing troublesome boiler leaks, especially in the Thomas Room, and working with vendors to resolve them.

The committee plans on organizing one or two Church Maintenance Mission Mornings in 2026.

In October 2025, The Durable Construction Company, which is the contractor for the Historic Clock Tower project, identified substantial and unanticipated wood deterioration at the top of the Clock Room/base of the Lantern. They suggested ERUCC retain a new engineer to evaluate options about how to address this, one option being to replace the mortise and tenon wooden timbers, and the other to install a steel superstructure around and between the wooden timbers, in both cases to provide a robust structure to hold up the spire that sits on top of the lantern. The engineer's report, delivered in 2026, indicated that the steel solution was the better, less expensive path forward. Durable subsequently supplied ERUCC with a change order that added \$235,000 to the project cost. We signed the change order, and work resumed in March 2026.

Thanks go to Keith Stickley, Rob Smith, Bud Rossig, Robin A Brady Slifer, Owen York, and Jaci Clayton for their participation in and support of this committee. We are always on the prowl for congregation attendees who can support this effort. Please contact Keith Stickley at [keith.stickley@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:keith.stickley@montgomerycountymd.gov).

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Peter Brehm, Acting Property Committee Manager



**MISSION, EVANGELISM, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The Mission, Evangelism, and Social Justice Committee is grateful for ERUCC’s support of and involvement in its work to carry Jesus’ message of peace and justice to the greater Frederick community and beyond. Here are some of the ways in which our church community pursued that gospel call:

- **Elevate Human Thriving/Building and Strengthening Congregational Capacity**
  - Holding monthly themed Pack the Pantry events for the Community Fridge. Each month, congregational members are invited to bring items related to the theme to the communion table and then take them to the fridge and pantry.
  - Participating in the Asbury United Methodist Church Coat Drive from October through November.
  - Collecting items for SHIP following the Kris Kringle parade on December 12.
  - Providing lunch for Mission of Mercy medical volunteers every other month.
  - Filling three large bins for FCPS’s 2025 Stuff the Bus campaign for Frederick County schoolchildren.
- **Engage in Advocacy and Community Healing**
  - Advocating for LGBTQ+ students in Frederick County schools by supporting FCPS Policy #443 and attending counter-demonstrations outside FCPS during school board meetings.
  - Attending training on support for immigrant and refugee schoolchildren.
  - Moving ahead with plans to work with the Central Atlantic Conference in setting up a Racial Justice Journey at ERUCC.
  - Attending the April “Hands Off” protests: 21 church members participated in Washington, D.C., and four attended the Frederick protest.
  - Attending the “No Kings” protest in Baker Park on October 18. Ten church members participated.
- **Share the Gospel**
  - Participating in the first annual Pride parade and hosting a table at the Pride Festival.
  - Hosting a table at Asbury United Methodist Church’s Community Block Party in July.

- **Exercise Best Practices in Financial and Prophetic Stewardship**
  - Participating in a one-day boycott of big-box stores, gas stations, fast-food restaurants, and other companies that rolled back their DEI programs.
  - Supporting the United Church of Christ through setting aside funds for Our Church’s Wider Mission and the Catoctin Association.
  - Promoting and collecting donations for the four annual UCC offerings (One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and The Christmas Fund).
  - Supporting Beyond Shelter (formerly the Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Needs).
  - Distributing our funds from the Frederick Community Foundation to the Frederick Community Action Agency, Heartly House, the AARCH Society, the Humane Society of Frederick (to support senior citizens who forego food and medication in order to provide for their pets), the Frederick Center, and the Community Fridge.

Our committee is so thankful for these opportunities to share in equipping ERUCC to serve as Christ’s hands and feet in the world.

*Gratefully and respectfully submitted,*  
Shelley Weakly, Chair



## STEWARDSHIP AND GENEROSITY

The Stewardship and Generosity Committee educates our members on the importance of giving and encourages them to commit to supporting the work of the church. Specifically, the team is responsible for the organization and implementation of a stewardship program each year and to “help members discern their vocation, their spiritual gifts, and passions, and find ways within the Church to help them use those gifts.”

For the fourth year, our committee used an approach to our annual stewardship campaign called Consecration Sunday by Herb Miller with Eugene Grimm. The program guides us in a spiritual growth-oriented process designed to enrich our biblical understanding of Christian stewardship. Rather than focusing on the church’s need to receive, the experience concentrates on the giver’s need to give for his or her own spiritual development.

During the four weeks of our fall Consecration Sunday program, Julie Chappell, Eliza Stitely and Karen Justice generously shared personal testimonies and invited us to prayerfully consider questions such as “What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?” and to examine our relationship with money. Our guest leader, Rev. Sheresa Simpson-Rice, led our Consecration Sunday team behind the scenes and provided the program’s closing meditation on October 5th, Consecration Sunday. After the services, we joined together for a Celebration Breakfast in the lobby and the Community Room for a joyful Celebration Luncheon, culminating our month of exploring together how financial stewardship is a part of our relationship with God. Throughout the weeks of the program, a faithful group prayed daily with the Consecration Sunday team, the congregation, and the program led by Tommie Bradshaw in person after the “Let’s Talk” series. Will Duncan, Robert Morris and Peter



Brehm also provided a great deal of support from our Finance Committee.

As shared at the Congregational Meeting in December 2025, 79 families or single persons completed the Estimate of Giving Cards this year. Of these, 52 increased their 2026 financial commitment above their 2025 pledge. Per the Estimate of Giving Cards, \$374,610. was committed. Combined with income expected from loose offerings, expected giving from people who have consistent giving patterns during the past 12 months but have not yet completed Estimate of Giving Cards, and income from non-donor sources such as interest, rentals, and fees, this yields a total of \$462,364.84 in anticipated income for 2026.

During the 10:30 a.m. worship service, we continued to share stories from members of the congregation about how their relationship with God is strengthened or changed through their generosity. We heard from Bud Rossig and Trish Coffey. We thank you for your generous and faithful giving.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Tyler L. York, Julie Clark, Peter Brehm, Rachael Bowman, Jen Cooper, Stephanie Fisher, Kate Fromknecht, Jenni Caughy, Trish Coffey



**WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

Worship is a multifaceted experience that relies on the input of many members. The contributions of the organist, musicians, choir, deacons, acolytes, liturgists, and clergy are visible. We appreciate all that they do! We are also grateful for the contributions of many members who work behind the scenes to help our worship service flow smoothly. These include our Communion Preparation Team, Barbara Rhoads, who changes our paraments based on the church calendar, the Maples, who supply juice for communion, and individuals who hang our greens and set up and take down the putz (Holly and Matt Davis, Laura, Eli and Jeff Baker).

The Central Atlantic Conference LOVE 2025 Cohort gave us \$200 to expand our Children’s Worship Space in the sanctuary. We bought a low half-circle table that allows an adult to help children on Communion Sundays, a second rug, and art caddies. These help focus our children’s attention during worship, enabling them to listen to the service while meeting their need to be active. Take a look during Thought for the Day to see how this area invites our children into the worship space.

Our children and youth bless us with their participation in worship services. Along with readers of all ages, we have youth who read scripture. Lucas Nguyen-Powell trains and organizes our Acolytes, who light our candles each Sunday. Juliane Black helps greet people when they arrive at church. During Advent, our young adults led us in our lessons and carols service. Quynn Adkins is a deacon who helps members during worship.



On Pentecost Sunday, we heard the Pentecost story in six languages: English, Greek, French, Spanish, Old English, and Latin. We handed out flames to encourage members to reflect where they were on fire to live the Gospel in their lives.

The Worship Design Team began the year with a COVID memorial art piece and asked us to add our prayers along the edges. Guided by Rhea Stein’s idea for a tree sculpture, members of the team constructed the tree. On the Transgender Day of Visibility, we placed our prayers for our transgender siblings and later for immigrants. The team had leaves, flowers, and butterflies to help us pray.

*Grace and Peace,*

2025 Worship Committee: Rebecca Shillingburg (Chair), Rev. Dr. Marvin Morgan, Rev. Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads, Alison Shafer, Ave Barr, Jeff Baker, Peter Brehm, and partial year members Trish Coffey, Matt Davis, and Kelly Esslinger.



## AUDIO VISUAL TEAM

The AV Team is responsible for supporting ERUCC's audio-visual needs. This includes providing live sound reinforcement in the sanctuary during the weekly service so that:

1. Everyone in the congregation can hear the service
2. Worship leaders can hear each other (monitoring)

We also provide a live video stream internet broadcast for those who cannot attend in person (as well as for archival purposes). In addition to Sunday morning responsibilities, we also support audio and video needs for events in the Community Room.

The AV team live-streamed 58 services over the past year, averaging 72 viewers per service. People attended services from 35 states and 16 countries.

The map below shows locations where people have watched the service.

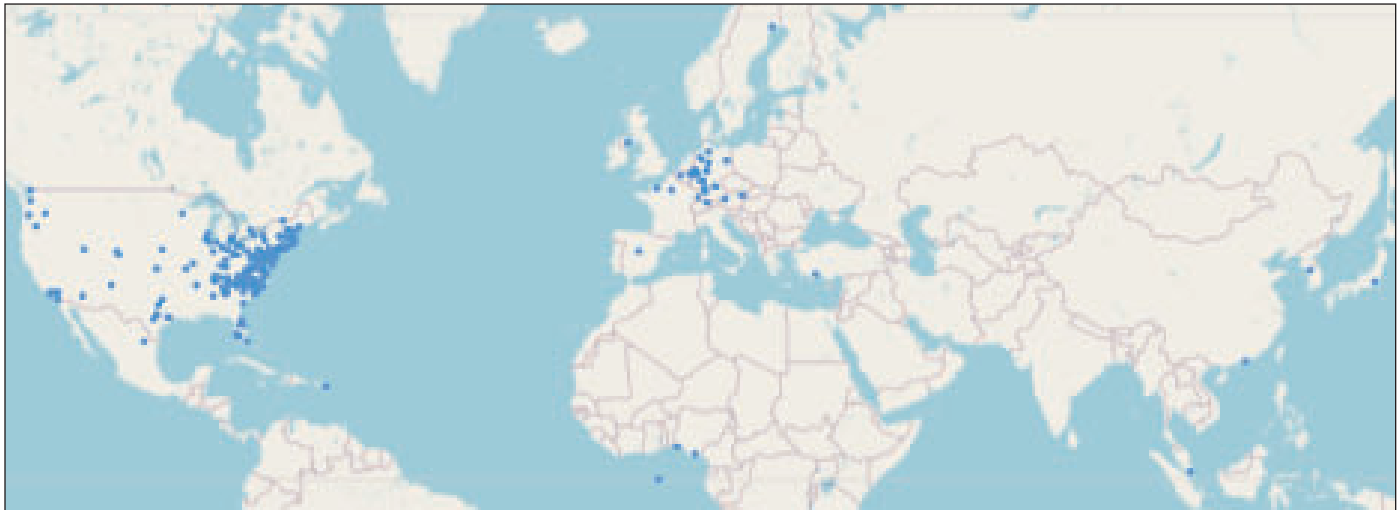
In addition to church service support, we also made congregational meetings available via Zoom.

The current members of the AV team are:

- Jeffrey Baker (lead)
- Jeff Schaeberle
- Kelly Esslinger
- David Howard
- Ethan Kline
- Larry Martin

We really need more volunteers. It takes three people to work the sound and video systems each Sunday (four people is more ideal, but not currently possible). Without additional volunteers, we may need to consider cutting back on live streaming and/or support on Sundays when Spirit performs. If you can help, even a little, please don't hesitate. We can train you in the various roles and systems (not everything is overly technical). If you are interested in learning more, feel free to stop by the balcony before or after any service or contact Jeffrey Baker at 240.405.4479 or [bastrombonejeff@gmail.com](mailto:bastrombonejeff@gmail.com).

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Jeffrey Baker, AV Team Lead



**FELLOWSHIP**

As with any family get-together, everything good happens in the kitchen. People gather and share stories as food is being prepared. It is a perfect place to serve the church while making new friends. The fellowship teams allow members to serve on fellowship 6 times a year which is an easy way of getting involved with the church. While the menu is typically simple finger foods, fellowship teams can get creative. The Sweet Justice team typically brings in cakes and desserts living up to their name.

Once again, we passed the Health Department inspection with no major issues. The kitchen is still looking for a cart to allow dishes to air dry.

Cathie Duncan and Marj Berkheimer coordinated funeral receptions which was appreciated. This service provided to the church is so important in helping grieving families.

Fellowship is always looking for new members. It is only six Sundays a year and young and young at heart are always welcome. Just contact one of the team leaders or Joe Adkins and we will get you involved.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Joe Adkins



**FUNERAL/MEMORIAL RECEPTION TEAM**

The team consists of approximately 15 people. We set up receptions in the social room, provide beverages and desserts, and also clean up afterward. In 2025, we had two services.

We would like to thank the following people who have helped out at services in 2025. Ave Barr, Will Duncan, Marj Berkheimer, Betsy Selby, Betsy Fisher, Susan Kulp, Peter Brehm, Joan Maples, Karen Justice, Gail Ellam, Kim Sexton, David Howard, Kathleen Jefferson, Larry Martin, Starr Schaeberle. Marj Berkheimer has stepped down as a Reception Co-Coordinator. Sedonia Martin has agreed to take on this role.

Please let us know if you are interested in joining our team.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Cathie Duncan, Sedonia Martin



## WELCOMING HANDS TEAM

Every Sunday, the Welcoming Hands Team (WHT) seeks to transform our public welcome statement—“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!”—into action by centering this value in our formal work as a team and also in the way we care for all who cross our threshold, whether it’s the sidewalk, parking lot, or building. We strive to cast our net wider than a Sunday Welcome, to include special events and our observance of Holy Days. We are listeners, observers, introverts and extroverts, door openers, problem solvers, and above all, a team that understands that people navigate the world in different ways and have a wide variety of approaches to joining in community. We endeavor to create layers of hospitality so that people have a clear path to understanding who we are as a faith community, learn about entry points for involvement, and have space to navigate this process at a pace that is comfortable for them.

In 2025, we continued the tried-and-true welcome from Greeters at the Keiffer Lobby and Narthex, as well as from the Welcome Desk. Our Welcome Desk volunteers welcome first-time (and returning) visitors and introduce them to all aspects of the congregation’s life and ministry. They provide temporary and permanent nametags, as well as literature about ERUCC programs, and offer visitors the opportunity to share their information with us so we can follow up with them on a one-on-one



basis. This is a multi-step process for deepening our connection with our visitors, which we continue to refine regularly. This year, we updated the ERUCC literature and developed two rack cards: one highlighting Children and Youth Ministry, and the other focusing on Spiritual Life, Learning & Practices (for adults). In terms of special events, the WHT hosted two New Friends Gatherings, where those new to us are invited to mingle with ERUCC members and Elders to get to know both the Church and members of the congregation, facilitated the Inquirers’ Class for people who want to learn about membership, and also welcomed The Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship under our umbrella with the commitment to provide support as needed for this event. Finally, our largest single project was developing a proposal for creating an updated ERUCC Photo Directory. This proposal was approved and is continuing in projection in 2026.

Our aim is always to welcome and encourage new people as they progress from first-time visitor to regular attendee to full members, but we do not emphasize full membership as the only way to participate in the life of the church. The team, which reports to the Worship Committee, meets every other month. Our members include Cliff Barr, Barbara Barry, Julie Clark, Susan Kulp, Paul McGinley, Sue Pinner, and Pastor Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads.

## DEACONS

Your wonderful team of deacons serves ERUCC in various ways. Most importantly, they take care of our 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship services. We also serve at special services throughout the year, including but not limited to Holy Week services, Christmas Eve, and memorials/celebrations of life. With guidance from our safety and security commission, we’ve increased our efforts to keep our congregation secure and to be even more ready in case of emergencies. In 2025, your deacons were Harrison Fisher, Quynn Adkins, Kyle Miller, Tommie Bradshaw, Robin A. Brady-Slifer, Robin L. Brady-Slifer, Angela Brittain, Jim Brittain, and Mark Ulrich. I am grateful to them all for their hard work and dedication!

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Ulrich, Head Deacon



*Many thanks to everyone for their input on this report.  
Angela Brittain for design and production,  
and Scott Harris for proofing.*



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for all  
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