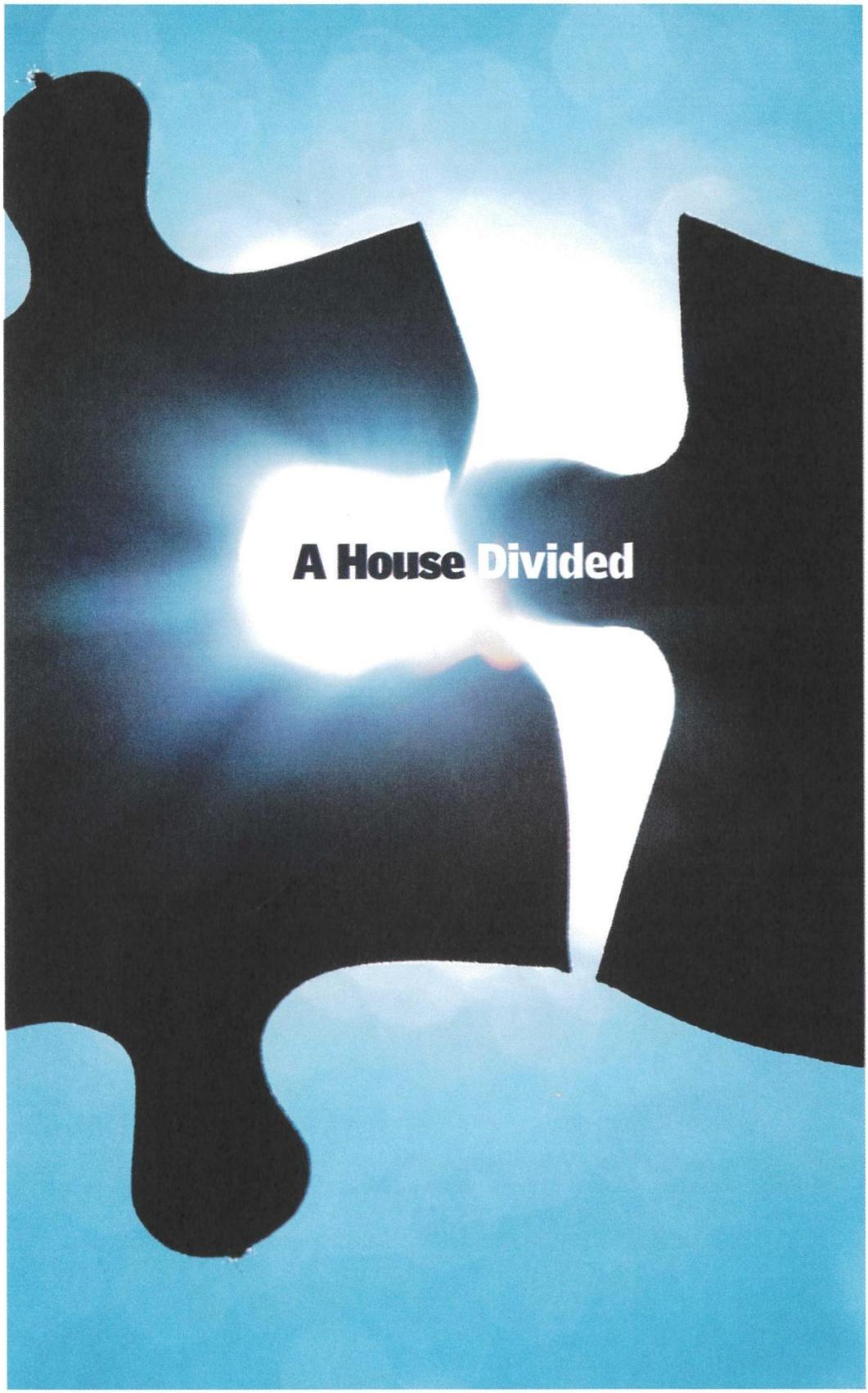

A House Divided

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 –

July 12, 2026 | Seventh Sunday after Pentecost | 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 Jonas Dawson

***CONGREGATION CENTERING PRAYER** Mark Ulrich and Darryl Glick

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

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Praise is due to the Holy One, whose ways are the joy of our hearts.
The Faithful One holds our lives and our hands. Happy are we who praise the Holy One!
Worship is due to the Holy One, whose revelation illuminates our path.
The Just God is righteous. Happy are we who follow the Holy One!
Love is due to the Holy One, whose compassion, peace, and strength satisfies the prayers spoken and unspoken.
The Sovereign God answers prayer. Happy are we who love the Holy One!

***OPENING PRAYER**

God who gathers us together, we delight to be in community with you and one another. Let your word be proclaimed in truth. Let us burst into songs that reflect the depths of our spirits. May our prayers be formed in your name and granted by your wisdom. May we know you, Divine Mystery, and ourselves better and deeper because we have entered your presence as a community of faithful, questioning, and hope-seeking participants in your kin-dom. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

We Love Your Realm, O God #312

We love your realm, O God,
All places where you reign.
We recognize, with hope and joy,
The world as your domain.

We love your church, O God,
For Christ has given life
To form communities of love
That seek to heal our strife.

We recognize, with pain,
That we have not achieved
The faithfulness of our resolve
When we at first believed.

Yet Christ, our friend and guide,
Continues to forgive,
Delivering us from our mistakes,
Inviting us to live.

Beyond your brokenness,
We seek to know your way
Of deep communion, solemn vows,
And hymns of love and praise.

We know your truth will last.
We trust your reign is sure.
Equip us for those daily tasks

That help your world endure.

***CALL TO TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE**

Holy One, we incline our hearts toward you, but the concerns of the world and challenges of daily living pull us away. Keep us grounded in your promises, your purposes, your power, and your presence. Reorient us on the road of liberation, belonging, and communal care so that not only do we receive the gift of transformation, we companion with siblings, neighbors, and even enemies in your work of making all things new. Remove the misleading veil that disguises sufficiency with scarcity. Sustain us with being satisfied with enough and abundance materially while continuing to thirst for righteousness so that all may be well. In you, we hope and believe. Amen.

***PRAYER FOR GRACE**

God of Grace and God of Glory, your mercy is so great that you do not deal with us as we deserve, but as love demands. Your justice is tempered with graciousness. Yet, dear God, we so often treat others unjustly or with rigidness rather than grace. We are more interested in what others have earned instead of what others need. We confuse fairness with righteousness. Forgive us. Help us to live as Jesus modeled. Give to us the heart that reflects your own. Fill us with kindness and mercy. May our actions demonstrate the ways of your kin-dom. Hasten that day when your will is done on earth as it is in heaven. In Christ's name. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE**

Beloved, rest in the assurance of Psalm 65:5, "By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas." The Holy One receives and responds to our prayers and offers the promise of renewed life and the power of community in the kin-dom of God. Through Christ, we participate as witnesses, agents, and recipients of transformation for the glory of God and by the grace of God.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Children, youth, and all who wish to join them are invited to come forward for a special message. Children entering Kindergarten through 5th grade are invited to join us for a fun, camp-themed Summer Sunday School during Junior Church time. We will meet in the Thomas Room.

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.

HYMN

Be Not Dismayed (God Will Take Care of You) #460

Be not dismayed whate'er betide;
God will take care of you.
Beneath His wings of love abide;
God will take care of you.

Refrain:

God will take care of you,
through ev'ry day, o'er all the way.
He will take care of you;
God will take care of you.

Through days of toil when heart doth fail,
God will take care of you.
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

All you may need He will provide;
God will take care of you.
All strength you need will be supplied;
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you.
Lean, weary one, upon His breast;
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

THE SCRIPTURES Youth

Hebrews 6: 10-12 NT Page Number 221
Matthew 20: 1-16 NT Page Number 21

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

SERMON The Rev. David Cooney, PhD

"Fairness Debunked"

MORNING PRAYER

GERMAN PARTNERSHIP MOMENT

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

When we share our material resources, we proclaim our trust in God's provision, abundance, and community. Let us give in order to support the ministry of this church in hope and faith.

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

Grace Upon Grace - M. McDonald

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Generous God, receive these gifts and magnify them to bless our community and world. May these offerings reflect our gratitude for your beloved community and trust in your kin-dom. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending #565

God, whose giving knows no ending,
From Your rich and endless store:
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom,
Costly cross, grave's shattered door,
Gifted by You, we turn to You,
Off'ring up ourselves in praise;
Thankful song shall rise forever,
Gracious donor of our days.

Skills and time are ours for pressing
Toward the goals of Christ, Your Son:
All at peace in health and freedom,
Races joined, the Church made one.
Now direct our daily labor,
Lest we strive for self alone;
Born with talents, make us servants
Fit to answer at Your throne.

Treasure, too, You have entrusted,
Gain through pow'rs Your grace conferred;
Ours to use for home and kindred,
And to spread the gospel word.
Open wide our hands in sharing,
As we heed Christ's ageless call,
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming,
Serving You by loving all.

***BENEDICTION**

May you drink from the wells of God's abundance
Nourished by the grace of God
Sustained by the truth of God
Hydrated by the promise of God
As you go, spread the good news and good gifts the Holy One bestows upon all.

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

POSTLUDE

Worship Notes: Drink: Service Prayers for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost Year A was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.

We thank Jonas Dawson, our guest organist today!

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 in honor of Joseph and Elaine Bishop by Felecia Bishop.

The yellow rose is presented by Felecia Bishop in thanks of the Ray, Bishop, Nicholoson, Cuffee, and Jones families for their continued military service since the Civil War to the present time.

Attendance Last Sunday: 14 at 8:30 AM, 94 at 10:30 AM, and 101 online.

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

	Serving Today: July 12	**Serving Next Week: July 19**
Deacons:	Robin A. & Robin L. Brady-Slifer	Kyle Miller, Tommie Bradshaw
Elder:	Robin L. Brady-Slifer	Eric Weakly
Scripture Reader:	Youth	
Acolyte:	Wyatt Pomeroy	Emmie Rhoads
Greeters:	Kathleen Clancy Jefferson	Felecia Bishop, Sue Pinner
	Niel Jefferson, Robin Cooney	
Welcome Table:	Rissah Watkins	Betsy Selby, Elizabeth Slade
Audio/Visual:	Ethan Cline, Jeff Schaerberle	Kelly Esslinger, David Howard
Nursery:	Molly Black	Emily Spear
Fellowship:	Emily, Chris, Abby and Ben Spear	Starr Schaeberle, Mark Ulrich
	Jocelyn, Chris and ElaRose Vara	Darryl Glick, Julie Chappell
	Rachael and Josh Bowman	Betsy Selby, Angela Brittain

Next Sunday: July 19 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
Luke 10:25-37, Psalm 86:11-17

The Rev. Esther Ziegler will be preaching and leading worship. The Senior Choir will sing.

PRAYER LIST

We invite you to hold the following people in your prayers this week. Though we may not know the specifics of their needs, God does, and our prayers are a meaningful way to surround them with love and support.

ERUCC seeks permission before adding a name to this list or in worship announcements. There are many for whom we pray and visit whose names are not listed in the bulletin by their request.

Phil Berkheimer
Dan Rice (Alison Shafer's partner)
Friends & family of Catherine Crome
Rodney Martin
Donna Logee
Daniel Schaffer (neighbor of Kathleen & Niel Jefferson)
Paul McGinley
Sue Whiting (sister of Nan McNamara)
Mike Simms
Adam Huegel
Carroll Smith (friend of Sandra Trout)
Tom Ford
Ingrid Jacobsen
Della Willmann (Shelley Weakly's mother)
Charlie Woodward
John Stush
Izzie Sims (friend of Molly Black)
Debbie Jennings *(friend of Kathleen Jefferson)*
Robert Debonis (uncle of Sophia Carliss)
Sandy Maples (sister-in-law of Allen and Joan Maples)
Betsy Fisher
Barbara Heverley
Todd Starr (nephew of Mary Staley)
Sharon DiDonato (aunt of Darryl Glick, friend of Mark Ulrich)
Ginny Peters
Karen Stitely
Donna Baumgardner Smith (friend of Sandra Trout)
Bill Cassell (brother of Ave Barr)
The Murray/Lennox/Cable Family
Sandra Trout
Family of Charlie Van Eman (son of friends of Kathleen and Niel Jefferson)
Mary Staley
Pat Condo
Wells Condo
Tom Frazier
Pauline Marendt
Colton Pudvah (great nephew of Kim Sexton)
Carol Spera (mother of Mark Ulrich)
Emogene and Don Wyand
Bob Pinner
Jim Baldree (father of Chuck Baldree)
Lee Thomas
Marcia Eisenstein
Derek C. Hupp (grandson of Beanie & Gaylon Cornell)
Wayne Kolb (friend of Stefan and Judi Mach and Tony and Linda LaFianza)
Jeannette Johnson
Jackie Keyser (sister-in-law of Betsy and Phil Selby)
Marcy Channell (daughter of Jo Ann Fritz)
Paige Coffey
Fran Wenner
Bonnie Devilbiss
Tina Prescott (daughter-in-law of Barbara & Bill Prescott)
Heleen (sister of Karin Mens)
Kathy Blue Shores (friend of Jean Fish & Barb Biser)

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

LET'S STUDY THE BIBLE WITH REV. JOHN SHILLINGBURG

Let's Study the Bible is taking a break for the summer.

THEOLOGY AMONG THE PEOPLE WITH REV. DR. REBECCA SHILLINGBURG

Theology Among the People is taking a break. In September, we will begin with a review of the early chapters of *Genesis for Normal People* by Peter Enns and Jared Byas, making it easy for anyone to join us. If you are not a Bible scholar but want to be able to read Genesis and understand its big picture, this brief, witty book is the guide you've been waiting for. Clear summaries and thought-provoking questions provide direction for personal reflection and group discussion. Peter Enns, a Biblical Studies professor, and Jared Byas, an Old Testament professor, summarize the book's key themes and help us see Genesis as an ancient story, one with continued relevance for human experience today.

WEDNESDAY PRAYERS

Wednesdays
Sanctuary, **4:30 PM**

On Wednesday afternoons, you are invited to enter the church (doors open at 4:15 PM) and proceed to the front of the sanctuary in silence. We will pray silently in our own personal traditions. We begin promptly at 4:30 PM and end at 5:00 PM. What you can expect: substance for your everyday journey. Led by Rev. Richard Leslie.

ERUCC SUPPORTS THE UNITED WAY STUFF THE BUS CAMPAIGN

Collection Period: June 14 – August 3

ERUCC is collecting NEW school supplies for The United Way's Stuff the Bus campaign, which supports Frederick County Public Schools students in ALICE families.

Drop off school supplies in the big yellow bins in the Sanctuary and Kieffer Lobbies. The supplies most needed include markers, two-pocket folders (plastic preferred), earbuds with microphones, composition notebooks, spiral notebooks, three-ring binders, crayons, and backpacks. Complete lists of supplies are available above the yellow bins.

WEARING NAMETAGS

Please be sure to wear your nametags so that we have that gracious reminder as we get to know people who are new to us. If you do not have a nametag and want one, please request it at either the Welcome desk or Welcome table.

GRETNA GLEN CAMPER MAIL

This month, six ERUCC children and youth will be campers at Gretna Glen, where they will have the opportunity to share in a camp experience filled with singing, Bible Discovery, worship, crafts, nature, swimming, boating, fishing, campfires, hiking, archery, sports, games, and much more. We have campers over two weeks this year.

Campers love to get mail while at camp! You're invited to send a positive note or letter (see below for dates), encouraging campers to have fun during their camp experience. Please address as follows:

Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center
c/o ***Camper's Name***
87 Old Mine Road
Lebanon, PA 17042

Pre-printed mailing labels are also available at the reception desk in the Kieffer Lobby. Please remember that it may take a few days for letters to arrive at camp. Gretna Glen will hold mail until the campers are there, so you can begin sending mail right away. Please do not send any kind of food, snacks, candy, or gum.

Abby Spear (After Hours): send by July 14
Ben Spear (After Hours): send by July 14

Julianne Black (Music and Drama): send by July 21
Emmie Rhoads (Music and Drama): send by July 21

Emma Baker (Gaga and Gimp Galore): send by July 21
Marley Rhoads (Gaga and Gimp Galore): send by July 21
Kirstin Shrom-Rhoads (Gaga and Gimp Galore): send by July 21

AWESOME CLOTHESLINE SHARING

Our Eastertide theme has been "Pursuing Awe". Tom Dorsz has wowed us with his photographs, still on display in the music suite hallway. We have explored the deeps of the ocean and the shells on the beach with an awesome sealife display in the lobby outside the Community Room.

Now, it is your turn to share what inspires awe (or awww) for you by posting photos, drawings, or easily hung 2D pieces on a lighted clothesline on the blue wall at the head of the stairs from the Kieffer Lobby. Starting this week, please show us the things that move you, amaze you, inspire you, or bring you overwhelming joy and gratitude. No explanation is needed other than the image itself, but please put enough information on the back of the piece that we can return it to you when the display is taken down. This will be an ongoing installation project of the Worship Design Team.

GOODBYE DINNER FOR GERMAN GUESTS
Tuesday, July 14
Downtown Community Room, 6:30 PM

Please gather as a church family with our guests as we participate in hospitality together and say goodbye.

Monetary donations can be made to support this ministry by giving to YOUTH ACTIVITIES and indicating GERMANY. Pastor Kirstin will then sort any food purchases accordingly. Questions? Contact Shelley Weakly.

LUCAS NGUYEN-POWELL'S EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT (BSA TROOP 1023)

I am happy to announce that I am doing my Eagle Scout Project this summer. I will be building a total of five benches, two for the front portico and three for the garden space behind the church. This will help manifest the welcoming spirit of our congregation by giving people a comfortable place to sit while they are in the church's outdoor space. If you would like to learn more and support my project, I will have an information table during fellowship on 7/12, 7/19, and 7/26.

THE COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY
Saturday, July 18
West All Saints & Mullinix Park

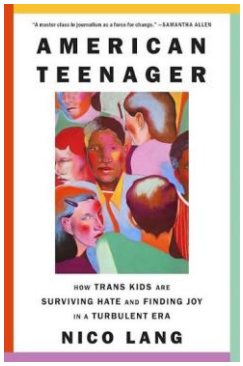
On Saturday, July 18, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, the 100 Block of West All Saints Street and Mullinix Park will come alive as our community gathers for one of Frederick's most anticipated days of connection, compassion, and celebration – the Asbury UMC Community Block Party. What makes this event so special is the heart behind it. More than a festival, the Community Block Party is a tangible reminder that God is in the Neighborhood.
Every organization, church, business, volunteer, and sponsor is helping ensure that families have access to resources, support, encouragement, and hope.

Join the MESJ Committee for this amazing event! Click here https://tinyurl.com/AUMCBlockParty2026 or scan this QR code to volunteer:

CALLING ALL CRAFTERS!
Saturday, July 18
North Room, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

There is a wonderful crafters' gathering in the North Room once a month, which happens to be meeting this month on Saturday, July 18. We'll be there from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Join us for 10 minutes, two hours, or all day. Any craft is welcome, but please, no glitter, (hahahaha!!!) Contact Nancy Jones with any questions.

PFLAG WELCOMES AUTHOR NICO LANG
Tuesday, July 21
Downtown Community Room, 6:00 – 8:00 PM



PFLAG is hosting a free author talk and Q&A with award-winning journalist and author Nico Lang. They will discuss their acclaimed book, *American Teenager: How Trans Kids Are Surviving Hate and Finding Joy in a Turbulent Era.* The book will be available for purchase and signing by the author. Email pflagfrederick@gmail for more information.

THE KOKOPELLI WINDS CONCERT - POSTPONED – NEW DATE TBD

Mark your calendar for Sunday, July 26th, 4:00pm for a concert of American music to Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of our country. The concert will be held in the Sanctuary, and will be performed by The Kokopelli Winds and Alison E. Shafer, organist. The concert is free, and a freewill offering will support The Community Fridge.

GET OUT THE VOTE POSTCARDING
Tuesday, July 28
Downtown Community Room, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

The Mission, Evangelization, and Social Justice committee will once again be writing postcards encouraging voters to check their registrations so they are ready to have their votes counted this fall. We are working with the Center for Common Ground on this effort. Volunteers are needed to hand-write messages to voters in North Carolina, Georgia and Virginia.

Join us for an evening of community and postcard writing on **Tuesday, July 28** from 5:30-7:30 PM. Everyone is welcome! There will be a brief introduction for new postcard writers, followed by a joint effort to write. Colorful pens and light refreshments will be provided. Please contact Kate katemmcdermott@msn.com and Sophia scarliss07@gmail.com with any questions (subject line POSTCARDS). We hope to see you there!

CAC WORK CAMP OPPORTUNITY
October 18-24, 2026
Western North Carolina

High Country UCC in Western North Carolina is accepting groups of up to 20 people with the church coordinating work in the area with a variety of different community organizations to do rebuilding and recovery work based on the skills and interests of the volunteers.

Cost is $100 and includes housing at the church ($60 per person), meals, gas, and some funds for materials. Trip leaders are Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel, CAC Disaster Response Coordinator (bkdaniel@cacucc.org) and Rev. Chance Martinez-Colon, Grace UCC (pastorchance.graceucc@gmail.com). Please contact Barbara or Chance for more information and to register for this trip.

ATTENTION CHURCH KEY HOLDERS

In the event that we would need to re-key any doors to our buildings, we are compiling a comprehensive list of anyone who has keys, electronic or metal, to any doors at ERUCC. If you have keys, please stop by the Kieffer Lobby desk on Sunday mornings, contact Ann at erucc@erucc.org, or call the office. We will need your name and the numbers on the key(s). Please reach out with any questions.

MEDITATIONS ON CONNECTION

Be sure to visit the Music suite hallway in the next four weeks to view artwork by **Sophia Carliss**, local artist and member of our congregation. The paintings were all done to highlight something Sophia cares deeply about. "These pieces focus on the necessity of connection: spiritually, interpersonally, and environmentally."

Children & Youth Activities, Events, and Announcements

SUMMER CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

Children entering Kindergarten through 5th grade are invited to join us for a fun, camp-themed Summer Sunday School! Offered during Junior Church time at the 10:30 AM worship service, we will meet in the Thomas Room on the following four Sundays: **June 28, July 12, July 26, and August 9**. We will have a fun-filled end of summer camping themed event on August 16th in the evening. We will share more details on this event as the date approaches.
Each week stands alone with a unique outdoor-themed Bible lesson paired with an exciting campfire-style game or creative craft. Because every session is a brand-new adventure, children can attend as many or as few as your summer schedule allows. Come unplug, get active, and explore how outdoor adventures bring us closer to God!

CATOCTIN ASSOCIATION OVERNIGHT LOCK-IN

Friday, July 24, 6:00 PM – Saturday, July 25, Noon
Grace United Church of Christ
25 E 2nd St, Frederick

All youth going into 7-12th grades are invited! There is zero cost, and registration includes food and activities all night long, as well as a 2-hour service project on Saturday. There will be time to rest for those who don't wish to go all night. Planning and Leadership by Pastor Kirstin, Pastor Chance Martinez and Pastor Katie Pennick.
Register at https://tinyurl.com/CACJulyLockIn or scan this QR code:

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

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Alison E. Shafer ~ *Director of Music*

Jaci Clayton ~ *Facilities Manager* ~ jclayton@erucc.org

Ann Watkins ~ *Office Administrator* ~ awatkins@erucc.org

Ashley Murphy ~ *Nursery Attendant*

The Rev. Dr. Barbara Kershner Daniel ~ *Pastor Emerita*

The Rev. Fred Wenner ~ *Pastor Emeritus*

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Robin L. Brady-Slifer ~ *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* | Keith Stickley ~ *Property Chair*

Kate Fromknecht ~ *Stewardship/Generosity Chair* | Holly Davis ~ *Christian Education Chair*

Mark Ulrich ~ *Head Deacon* | Larry Martin ~ *Member-at-Large*

Darryl Glick ~ *Personnel Chair*

ELDERS

Ave Barr | Robin L. Brady-Slifer | 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 – 12:00 PM	**Nursery Care**
10:30 – 11:30 AM	**Worship**, Sanctuary and Online at www.erucc.org
	Junior Church (Summer Sunday School), Thomas Room *Participating children are dismissed from Worship after Thought for the Day*
11:30 AM	**Fellowship,** Downtown Community Room

Stay Informed

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

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

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 12, 2026 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

A House Divided

I can't seem to master the art of growing bountiful rows of vegetables and meadows of bee-friendly wildflowers.

My farmer neighbors tell me that my problem is I can't throw seeds down and expect success. Growing something beautiful takes some elbow grease — and education. Starting with understanding what type of soil I have. Is it clay, sand, silt or peat?

Truthfully, I have no idea what language they are speaking. I've tried studying up on soil. I even purchased testers to see what I need to amend my soil with. Still, I can't seem to understand the science of the nutrients needed to help various plants grow.

This I do know: My soil is extremely rocky, so any hopes of growing blue-ribbon winning straight carrots are dashed. Rather than deal with the soil I have, I opted for raised beds. But they aren't the carefree option I thought them to be. Even the "good" soil I put into the beds needs care.

My challenges with soil have made me better understand Jesus' Parable of the Sower.

When Jesus wanted to make his point about what it meant to grow in God's Word and till the Kingdom here on Earth, he used soil as a metaphor for the conditions of our heart — where the seeds of justice and love grow.

First, there was soil on a path that the Sower threw the seeds on. Being it was a path; the birds easily saw the seeds, swooped in and gobbled them up. The seeds had no chance of taking root.

Next, there was the rocky soil. The seeds did begin to grow, but the roots could only go so deep, making the plants easily uprooted. And may I add, making carrots wonky.

Then the Sower threw seeds amid the thorns, where they were soon choked by the overgrowth. Finally, the Sower's seeds fell upon good soil where they produced a bountiful yield.

We are all being asked today by Jesus to assess the soil of our hearts. Where are the seeds of faithfulness falling? Are they scattering on safe, well-worn paths that will not lead to deep growth? Are they falling in rocky ground where the roots will not reach deep enough to withstand droughts or even deluges? What about those thorns of distractions and busyness in our overgrown gardens of life? Are they choking our commitment to following in the ways of Christ?

Be honest with your assessment because, as I have learned the hard way, ignoring what needs to be amended doesn't get you the beautiful abundant life God wants for you.

God of green pastures, rich soil and abundant crops, help us to be honest with You about the condition of our heart soil. May we admit where we are failing in the growth of Your Word here in our own lives and communities. And then, may we be willing to amend our ways so that truly a garden of hope and peace will flourish. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)

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