

Volume XXXIII
Number XII
December 2018



Christ Reformed United Church of Christ

VISIONS

No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. Because Jesus has taught us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves we declare Christ Reformed UCC to be an Open and Affirming church. We invite people of every race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, marital status, economic circumstance, and physical and mental ability into the worship, rites & sacraments, fellowship, and leadership of our church.

Markings

Last Sunday we kept a tradition at CRUCC by remembering loved ones we have lost in the last year. Many, if not most, churches do this around All Saints Day at the beginning of November. It has been our custom to do this on the last Sunday of the church year, the Sunday before Advent begins. Holding the remembrance of those who died on Christ the King Sunday reminds us that God's presence is not just with the living, but with the dead. God is Lord of life and death and those we remember live in God's presence as surely as they did when they took their first breath.

In thinking about our observance of Christ the King Sunday I looked up the origins of the tradition and was surprised to learn how recently it became a part of Christian tradition. It was instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI for the Roman Catholic Church. Originally observed at the end of October Christ the King or Reign of Christ Sunday was moved to the last Sunday before Advent in 1970.

The impetus for the encyclical that established this feast day was the post-WWI rise of non-Christian or nominally Christian dictatorships throughout Europe. Pius XI saw Catholics being persuaded by these earthly leaders. These dictators also often attempted to assert authority over the Church or co-opt the church for their own ends.

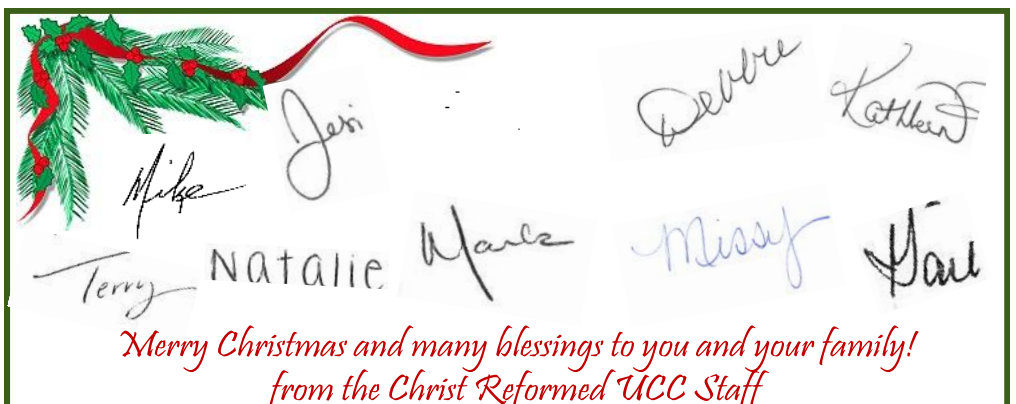
The temptation to give power and authority in our lives to those things, ideas and people who don't deserve it is always with us. Sometimes we give them power because we hope they will protect us and insulate us from the realities of life. And sometimes we give them power because they demand it, because we fear what will happen if we don't.

The answer to that temptation is Christmas. As it did 2000 years ago the world most often respects and deals in force and might. There are "kings" and "queens" aplenty always demanding our intellectual, emotional and financial allegiance. Into that world comes Jesus. The story of his birth may strain credibility, but the transformative truth of his birth and his ministry cannot be

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denied. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment." The power of a manger birth in a minor town clearly transformed the world and is transforming it still.

In the days leading up to Christmas choirs around the world will sing Handel's soaring words "King of King and Lord of Lords! And He shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" Even if we don't know the tune or can't carry a tune in a bucket may the power of those words and the One to whom they refer reign in our hearts and minds.

Marks

Notes

White Gift Service Sunday

This year marks the 30th Christmas that "white gifts" will be collected for Community Living, an organization dedicated to serving persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Gifts will be received during both services on **Sunday, December 16th**. Residents must provide their own personal care items and medications which can use up much of their income. Suggested items include: gift cards to Wal-Mart, fast food restaurants, hair cutters, etc., and basics such as: toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo & conditioner, soap, body lotion, body powder, bubble baths, comb & brush, etc. Gifts should be wrapped in plain white paper.

Christmas Fund Clergy Offering

There are many retired clergy who served congregations at a time when compensation was small and pension provision very limited. Other clergy and lay employees serve at levels that leave them near poverty. Each year UCC churches take up a special offering called The Christmas Fund which provides a lifeline of hope to many lower-income active and retired clergy and lay employees. The money collected is used to supplement pension checks, help pay health insurance premiums, and to provide emergency grants to individuals and families in need. You are invited to make a contribution to the health and well-being of these servants of God. Checks can be made out to the church and noted "Christmas Fund."

The Longest Night Service

December contains the longest night of the year in the northern hemisphere. And for many people Christmas can feel like the longest season of the year. The approaching Christmas holiday does not bring with it the joy and happiness that is advertised on television or in greeting cards, but reminds them what is missing. They may be facing a holiday after the death of a loved one or after a divorce. Perhaps they have been unable to have a child, or have suffered through an emotional trauma. Or perhaps they simply feel pressured and overwhelmed by holiday preparations. On **December 19th**, you are invited to a simple service of remembrance, healing and communion in the sanctuary. The scripture, music and reflections will focus on the comfort God offers during dark times. The service will begin at 7:00 p.m. Childcare will be provided.

Adopt a Family

Through Middletown Valley People Helping People our congregation is being invited to help provide Christmas gifts for families who are facing hard times. The Discipleship Board has placed a small Christmas tree in the back of the Narthex. On the tree are ornaments representing gift cards to Target, Walmart, Kohl's or any grocery store in amounts of \$15, \$20, \$25, \$50 and \$75. You are invited to take an ornament, purchase a gift card through the church's gift card program (see Gail) or through a retail outlet, and place the card in the offering plate or return it to the church office. Gift cards are due by **December 5th**. If you have any questions please call Judy Brandenburg or Mary Lou Dent.

Middletown Lions Memorial Tree

The Middletown Lions Club blue spruce Memory tree at Cone Branch "Pocket Park" (Main St. & Cone Branch) contains white lights--each one honoring the memory of a deceased relative or friend. If you wish to memorialize the names of deceased relatives or friends on the Tree, you may do so by donating \$5 for each name. Deadline is **December 16th**. Forms are available in the Narthex. Please see Ruth Falconer for more details.

Altar Flowers for 2019

The 2019 Altar Flower Chart has been posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex. If you would like to honor, remember, or celebrate a special person or occasion, or simply want to enhance our worship service with flowers on the sanctuary altar, please add your name next to that date. A member of the Altar Guild will contact you near that time with complete details. Our altar arrangements are designed by Mountainside Florist of Boonsboro and cost \$47.00. Special requests are available at an additional cost.

Year End Giving

As we close out the calendar year we also close out our fiscal year. The Consistory is grateful for your generous support of the church's ministries throughout these past 12 months. A reminder that contributions you plan to claim for 2018 tax purposes must be received by December 31. If you have questions you can contact either of our financial secretaries, Paul Fink or Nancy vom Lehn at crucffinancialsecretary@gmail.com.

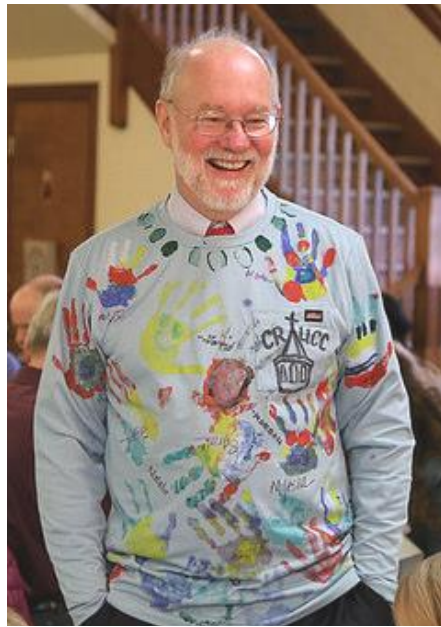
Mark's 30th Anniversary Celebration

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On November 11, 2018, the congregation of CRUCC celebrated Pastor Mark's 30 years as our Senior Pastor during a special worship service. Rev. Suzanne Morris reminded us of the "Mark's" he has made on the ministry of this congregation. From the uncanny ability to recognize a person's talents and put them to good use, to the most important gift you can give yourself, that of self-care. Many joys were verbally expressed from the congregation, such as mentor, friend, inspiration, and we can't forget, stubborn. Kathleen Rogers reminded us through the children's story that:

*"I am a Pastor
Because
I love people so much
That I will speak
The truth of God
Whether anyone
Likes it or not"*

The music, food, memories, and surprise family members made for a special celebration. We thank Pastor Mark for 30 cherished years of service!



Thank You Notes

Words cannot do justice in expressing my gratitude to you for the wonderful celebration of my 30 years as pastor of CRUCC. Suzanne's sermon, the choir's songs, the Praise Team and Edward rocking "Do Something," Kathleen and the kids' cards and shirt, Gregg's reading of the poem, the meal and the kind words- all of it has taken up permanent residence in my heart and mind. I look forward to looking back in the days ahead! And for the beyond-generous financial gift I can only say thank you. I'm grateful for your affirmation and support through these many years. I'm blessed to be doing work I love with people I love.

~Mark

A sincere and heart felt thank you to all my friends and church family for all the cards, hugs, well wishes and support through Lee's illness. Thanks for the continued food and visits from many of you. It was all of this that brought a smile to his face and heart while he was still here and comfort to me with his loss. It was an overwhelming response and I thank God for you all and am glad to be part of such a loving and supportive congregation. Thanks again.

~All my love, Deanie and Family

Handbell Fundraiser Update

\$5,200

\$1650

Handbell Fundraiser

To date, we have raised \$1650 towards our goal of \$5200. Thank you to everyone that has supported our Fundraiser so far.

As of Sunday evening, November 18, here are the initial reports from our Financial Secretaries, Paul Fink and Nancy vom Lehn.

74	Total Pledges
38	Pledges increased
20	Pledges remained the same
2	Pledges decreased
7	Pledges stated they would give as able
7	Pledges for the first time
26	Pledges increased 1% - 10%
11	Pledges increased 11%-50%
1	Pledge increased more than 50%

\$195,494 Total Pledge Amount \$2,642 Average Pledge

Further updates will be announced in December Early Worship and in the bulletins for second service. Thanks to all for Taking a Step Up!

Journey to Generosity

Plan Your Calendar



Christmas Eve Worship Service

5:00pm
7:00pm
7:30pm

Family Service
Concert
Candlelight Service

An Overnight Adventure for K-5th Graders (Sleep Over or Stay Late) Friday, December 14th @ 7pm

Children 5 and under will need to have a parent present for the night. Breakfast at 8am on Saturday in Parish House. Pickup no later than 9:30am.



Please sign-up in the Narthex or by contacting the office at 301-371-6610 or debbielbruns@comcast.net. Don't forget to let us know whether you will be spending the night or just staying until lights out.

Questions? See Ms. Kathleen.



American
Red Cross

Blood Drive

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

8:00 a.m.—1:30 p.m.

Chapel

Please give the Gift of Life!

Add your name to the sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the Narthex or contact the church office.

Friday, December 21

Caroling at Buckingham's Choice

Leave church at 4:30pm.



Lyrics will be printed for you, so please join us and spread some Christmas Joy to the residents

Christmas "Cookie Crunch"



Our annual Christmas "Cookie Crunch" will be observed during Coffee Hour after the 10:30 service on **Sunday, December 16th**. You are invited to bring one of your favorite Christmas treats (i.e. cookies, candy, cake, cheese spreads and crackers, etc.) to share. The Chapel Class will be hosting and will provide coffee and drinks.

Breakfast Bible Study

**Wednesday Mornings @
7:00AM
Mountain View Diner
with Pastor Mark**



Craft Night

Our next craft night will be on **Friday, December 14th at 6:00pm** in the Social Room. Any and all crafters are welcome: scrapbookers, card makers, needlecrafts, etc. Please RSVP to Beth Scott at 301.788.3524 or BethOScott@aol.com.



Advent Bible Study

The Growing in Faith Class invites you to join them for a Journey to Bethlehem, which begins December 2nd and continues through Advent. This is a DVD series filmed in the Holy Land. Each Sunday features a different aspect of what we think of as the "familiar" Christmas story, providing new insights into the stories from Matthew and Luke. The class meets in the Social Hall, beginning at 9:15 a.m. Please join us for the entire month.

Community Outreach

**6th Annual Soup with Santa
to Benefit Emily Line & Family and the purchase of a
handicap accessible Van**

Saturday 12/15 from 10am-3pm

**Maugansville Ruritan Club 18007 Maugans Avenue,
Maugansville, MD**

*\$7 per person includes soup,
sandwich, chips, dessert,
drink and visit with Santa*



All net proceeds raised from this event will be matched up to \$2000. If unable to attend, please consider a financial donation. Details can be found at:
www.woodsetter.com/soup-with-santa.html

WEEKEND FOOD PROGRAM

DECEMBER FOODS OF THE MONTH

**5 OZ TUNA FISH
15 OZ PASTA W/O MEATBALLS**

Gift Cards Church Fundraiser

Christ Reformed earns 2-16% rebate on gift cards purchased through the Scrip program. Please use the enclosed form to order all your holiday gift cards. You can easily set up an account online (www.shopwithscrip.com). You can order cards from home or office, reload cards, or purchase on Sundays following worship. Please see Gail to purchase.

JAMES GANG FUNDRAISER THIRD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH

(This Month's Date: December 16th)



Enjoy lunch or dinner (or both!) at James Gang and 15% of all sales will be donated to the church's General Fund.

SERRV Sale: Sunday, December 2nd, 9th & 16th





Unfortunately our Annual Thanksgiving Potluck was cancelled due to the unexpected snowstorm. But we were not going to let 147.13 pounds of turkey go to waste! So Friday afternoon we hosted a luncheon for the children and then we donated the leftovers to the Church Cantata group that came to practice on Saturday for a luncheon!



DECEMBER 18TH
6:30PM
SANCTUARY

under the Direction of Ms. Terry Sparks

Notes from Kathleen

Laughter is the BEST medicine/Kids say the darnedest things
Sign Outside a Secondhand Shop—We exchange anything —bicycles, washing machines, etc. Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?

Unity Prevents Problems... "Our church was without a building, as was another church nearby. They both ended up worshipping in a town building. One congregation met on the 3rd floor and the other church met on the 2nd floor. The arrangement worked fine until one Sunday, when one congregation broke into song, "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?" Just as the church finished singing that line the second-floor congregation was singing out the line "No Not One"

"How lovely you look, my dear! Gushed a wedding guest to the bride. And then she whispered, "Whatever happened to that dizzy blonde your groom used to date?" "I dyed my hair." replied the bride.

Three high school youth played hooky from their morning classes. They told their teacher they were late getting to school because the car broke down due to a flat tire. She said they would have to take a make-up test on the quiz that they had missed that morning. After seating them apart from each other, she gave them just one question: "Which tire was flat?"



"FROSTY THE SNOWMAN"

Other Voices Theater in Frederick
Sunday, December 16th at 2pm
Cost is \$12 per person

Upcoming Winter Events:

Saturday, January 26th

Paint Night

More details to come



Sunday, February 10th

ARE YOU READY!!!!!!

C.R.U.C.C. Got Talent is back!!!

Sign up soon. Pot luck & entertainment begin at 4pm



12/23
ELF Wear day
let's see who has the best
Elf imitation

Thank you to all who helped us to send off 83lbs of Halloween candy to Operation Gratitude. The candy will be included in care packages sent to military personnel stationed overseas.





LAYREADERS

December 2 Andrew Corl
December 9 Gary vom Lehn
December 16 Keith Zecher
December 23 Gregg Petermann
December 30 Beth Mummert

USHERS

December 2 Team 4
December 9 Team 5
December 16 Team 6
December 23 Team 1
December 24 5PM Team 2
December 24 7PM Team 3
December 30 Team 4

SOUND TECHNICIANS

December 2 Nick Fink
December 9 Chris Johnson
December 16 Tony Verdi
December 23 Nicole Fontaine
December 24 5PM Nick Fink
December 24 7PM Chris Johnson
December 30 Tony Verdi

ALTAR FLOWERS

December 2 Margaret Brandenburg
December 9 Mike Locke
December 16 Joe Kroener
December 23 Kristi Lare
December 24 TBD
December 30 Tracy Brown

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

December 2 Lorena & Keith Zecher
December 9 Cynthia & Carrollee Zecher
December 16 Annual Cookie Crunch
December 23 Laura & Tony Verdi
December 30 Cemetery Board

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS

December 2 Nancy vom Lehn
December 9 Tracy Brown
December 16 Robyn Bramhall
December 23 Jessica Mekkelson
December 30 Wendy Campbell

ACOLYTES

December 2 Kai Austin
December 9 Sydney Ohler
December 16 Clark Zecher
December 23 Isabella Robey
December 30 Morgan Bruns

CHILDREN'S STORY

December 2 Lorena & Keith Zecher
December 9 Bill Steigelmann
December 16 N/A
December 23 Edward Fontaine
December 30 Gregg & Sarah Petermann

Psalmist

December 2 N/A
December 9 N/A
December 16 N/A
December 23 N/A
December 30 N/A

Church Attendance

NOVEMBER 2018

	8:15 am	10:30 am
November 4	72	109
November 11	0	205
November 18	96	102
November 25	89	104

November Average— 194 2018 Average— 160

Baptisms

Leonie Grace Brandenburg, daughter of Will & Rebecca, was baptized on November 18, 2018.

Maximo Gregory Chemotti, son of Kim & Dan, was baptized on November 25, 2018.

2018 Operating Finances Year-to-Date – OCTOBER 31, 2018

	Budgeted Income	Actual Income	Budgeted Expenses	Actual Expenses	Variant
Operating	\$246,481.70	\$326,807.63	\$321,506.85	\$324,496.11	\$2,311.52
Children's Center	\$568,791.70	\$624,131.07	\$528,748.50	\$534,756.66	\$89,374.41
Global	\$815,273.40	\$950,938.70	\$850,255.35	\$859,252.77	\$91,685.93

Christ Reformed
United Church of Christ

Rev. Mark Wakefield, Pastor

Contemporary Worship 8:15 a.m.
Sunday School for All Ages 9:15 a.m.
Traditional Worship 10:30 a.m.
Coffee Hour following 10:30 Worship

Church Office Hours
Monday-Friday: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
301-371-6610
Fax: 301-371-6912

12 South Church Street
P.O. Box 333
Middletown, Maryland 21769
christreformeducc@comcast.net
www.christreformeducc.org

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
PERMIT 2202
Frederick, Maryland 21701

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Christ Church Children's Center
Childcare

Mrs. Missy Payne, Director
Mrs. Jesi Bell-Godfrey, Asst. Director
6 Weeks—12 Years
Mon-Fri 6:30 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.
301-371-0360
www.christchurchchildrenscenter.net

*Reaching out to help people to know
God through Jesus Christ.
Equipping people to love God through
the community of faith.
Sending people to serve God
throughout the world.*

Upcoming Holiday Events

Sunday, 12/16 @ 10:30am

A Christmas
to Believe In

featuring our Children & Youth



Sunday, 12/16 @ 7:00pm

How Should A
**KING
COME**

A Musical Concert & Reception
featuring our Choir & Friends in the Community

