

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.



Pastor's Pen

Dear Flock,

I write this as we are on the home stretch toward Christmas. I pray you have maintained sanity (mostly!) and are able to enjoy and process the significance of this season.

Rumor has it that, come January, we will be spending some time together. I am both excited and nervous (however, more excited). We have some work to do.

On our first Sunday together in the new year we will celebrate both Epiphany (which occurs January 6) and the Baptism of Our Lord (celebrated the first Sunday after the Epiphany). I do not want to give away my sermon, but I hope as many of you as possible will attend. Why?

Well, there are many reasons, but the main reason is that I can think of no better way to begin the new year than being together in worship. We will share in the Word, break bread together, and remember our baptisms and be "commissioned" as God's ambassadors to go into this crazy world.

The three seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany each bring a special message for us. Advent is a time of anticipation and preparing ourselves. Christmas is the celebration of God's gift, Jesus. Epiphany is when we celebrate the Light of Christ that hopefully inspires and leads us to new things. The Baptism of Jesus is where we experience Christ as both human and divine. So, what are we to do with all this, because this is a lot to process.

I am a fan of the British Comedy shows from the BBC. My all-time favorite is The Vicar of Dibley. It has a regular set of characters who are led by Geraldine, their first female vicar. The head of the parish council does his best to have her replaced but fails in each attempt. There is a regular core of characters who make up the parish council and, more or less, drive each other crazy. The show may seem far-fetched, maybe even a little irreverent at times. Nevertheless, it perfectly captures the church. Some of my mentors, Revs. Dean and Karen Miller, gave me the nickname "vicar." When Dean preached my ordination service, he spoke of this and spoke of the duties of a vicar, which include "leading a church through prayer, teaching, and worship, enabling God's people to be better disciples of Christ. Vicars are to preside at Holy Communion, baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and walk alongside people in their joy and in their grief."

Just like the people of the parish in Dibley, we come from all times, places, and bring ideas and desires. Sometimes our passions take over and we become a little headstrong. That is okay. It is okay because we are ALL God's children trying to do our level best. The thing that we must always remember is that, primarily, this is God's church. We must also remember that we should do our

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best to function as a unit, to work TOGETHER to process what we need to be as a faith community, to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all we do, and to work toward results as one body. We are ALL ministers of the Gospel. I am merely a facilitator. As some of you know, my current ordination is in the Church of the Brethren. They have a motto or saying that "together we shall seek the mind of Christ." I love that. I think that as a church, this is the very thing that should keep us focused and working together to be all that we can be in a world that is hurting.

All of this has come unexpectedly for me. When I stood in your pulpit in July, I had no clue we would be working together on this level. Throughout my life, I have been nudged (sometimes dragged!) by the Holy Spirit. It has been a ride and a half, but always full of blessings along the way. The key is to fashion stepping-stones and not obstacles. Do you remember the poem I used in the first sermon? Just in case....

Princes & Kings: A poem by R. Lee Sharpe
Isn't it strange how princes and kings,
and clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
and common people, like you and me,
are builders for eternity?

Each is given a list of rules;
a shapeless mass; a bag of tools.
And each must fashion, ere life is flown,
A stumbling block, or a Stepping-Stone."

I promise to do my best and expect you to do the same. Together, let us use the Gospel in new and exciting ways to inspire and provoke each other as well as the community outside the walls of our church.

Are you with me? We are in this together!

Soli Deo Gloria: To God alone be the glory!

Pastor Greg

Notes

Altar Flowers for 2024

The 2024 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 C.M. Bloomers and cost \$62.00. Special requests are available at an additional cost.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather you can get the latest word on our Sunday morning worship plans by checking the church's answering machine or by visiting the church's web page at www.crucc.org.

What is "God on Tap"?

God on Tap provides an opportunity for members and friends of CRUCC to gather to come to know each other and to wrestle with some of life's great (and small) questions. The hope is that we will learn from and with each other while we turn water into a mug or glass of the beverage of your choice. The group meets monthly at the Main Cup. For more information, please contact Christine at 97cfontaine@gmail.com.

Stewardship Update

To date, we have received 63 pledges to the 2024 General Fund for a total of \$152,439 and 10 pledges for the 2024 Capital Fund for a total of \$5,556. Feel free to send your Estimate of Giving Card to the church office or drop it in the collection plate on an upcoming Sunday. Thank you for your support of this church and it's many worthy projects.

2024 Envelopes Available

2024 Offering Envelopes are available from Paul or Nancy. If you have not previously requested envelopes and would like to receive a pack, please contact Paul Fink (301-371-4658), Nancy vom Lehn (301-371-7457), or Debbie Bruns in the church office.

Consistory Corner

Dr. Vertie Powers has agreed to serve as consultant to Christ Reformed for a three to six month period beginning in January of 2024. She will be here the weekend of January 13 and 14. She will meet with church leadership (Consistory and Search Committee) on the 13th and will preach on Sunday the 14th. In the meeting on the 13th Dr. Powers will use the meeting with leadership to find out more about the church and what we want to accomplish. We will also decide on a schedule for future meetings with her.

COFFEE HOUR

HOSTS NEEDED!

Please contact the church office
if you would like to host in 2024.



Coffee Hour Hosts Needed

Each week one of the best ways we have to make new and renew old connections with members and friends of the church is at the coffee hour. We have the supplies of coffee, tea and juice. All that's needed is one or two people to set out the items and do a bit of clean up afterward. Many people provide a simple munchie (fruit or veggies or cookies) but that is not a requirement. If you would like to host once or twice during the year, please contact Debbie in the church office.



Children's Center Highlights

CCCC wrapped up the end of 2023 with our beautiful Annual Preschool Christmas Concert! We want to say a special Thank you to Ms. Terry, who worked with the children every Friday to prepare them for the concert. We also had a special visitor from the North Pole, Mr. and Mrs. Claus. Thank you to Mike Locke for coordinating this with us. We want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from CCCC.



HOLIDAY
2023



Ladies Chill Night

January 26th @
5:30pm
Red Lobster

Please add your name to the
sign up sheet by 1/22.

Guys Night Out



1/22 @ 6pm
Brewer's Alley

Join us for fellowship & food.
If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Bob Galey at
robertgaley@hotmail.com or text or call 301 712-8022.

BINGO! Buds

LUNCH, BINGO & FELLOWSHIP

January 11
Noon to 2pm
Coffee Hour Area

No need to sign up—Just show up!

Bingo Buds enjoyed a year of lunch & Bingo on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Our total winnings of \$172.50 were donated to Middletown Valley People Helping People. **BYOL** (Bring your Own Lunch) & join us at noon on the 2nd Thursday of the month in 2024. If U win, U Pay!!

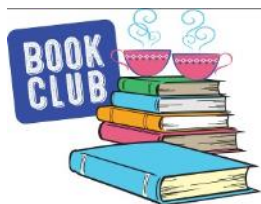
God on Tap

Tuesday
1/16 @6:30pm
Main Cup

God on Tap is an opportunity for members and friends of CRUCC to gather to come to know each other and to wrestle with some of life's great (and small) questions.

.....on Tap!

For more information, please contact
Christine at 97cfontaine@gmail.com.



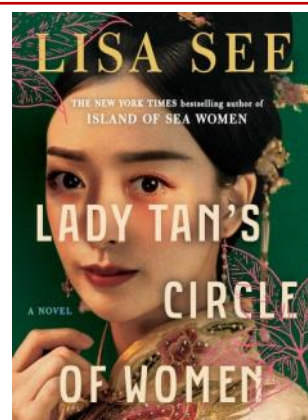
BOOK OF THE MONTH

Jan 24 @ Noon
Fratelli's

"Lady Tan's Circle of Women"

by Lisa See

Our January book is historical fiction inspired by the life of Tan Yunxian, a woman physician practicing during the Ming Dynasty in 15th century China. The journal she wrote detailing her cases remains in existence today.



All are welcome!

Please contact Charlotte Hanson at hansonc3306@gmail.com for more info.

On December 17th, our Annual Christmas Cantata offered an evening that filled the Sanctuary with beautiful songs of praise and worship. Our ecumenical community of performers made hearts and spirits soar in preparation for the arrival of the Christ child.



New Members Welcome



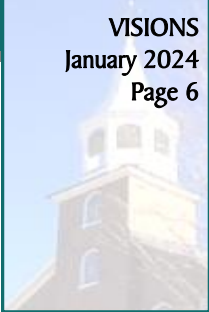
Kendra Perry was born not too far away in Pennsylvania, but most of her childhood was spent in Southwest Michigan. Kendra and her husband, Jay, have been married for 26 years and lived in Michigan, Kansas, Minnesota and Central California before relocating to Maryland in 2018. They have an 18-year old son, Nathaniel, who graduated from high school this past spring. Kendra enjoys reading, creative writing, beading, coloring, and she is currently learning more about watercolor painting. She is the Coordinator of Library & Learning Support Services at Hagerstown Community College, where she oversees library services as well as peer tutoring. Kendra joins us by affirmation of faith.

Welcome Kendra!

Emma Thornton was born on the Eastern Shore of MD and moved to Frederick County to the Thornton farm that had been in her family for generations in 1963. She loves gardening and animals. . At age 95, Emma is retired and loving being with her family. Emma is renewing her membership. *Welcome Emma!*

Susan Thornton was born in Baltimore MD and built a house on the Thornton farm in 1994. Susan loves animals and theatre. She is semi-retired from teaching acting classes and managing a theater company. She currently directs the productions at Middletown High School and occasionally directs at the Old Opera House in Charles Town, West Virginia and occasionally performs at Toby's Dinner Theater. Susan is transferring her membership from the Lutheran Church. *Welcome Susan!*





MIDDLETOWN FOOD

FOOD ITEMS

- Fresh Produce
- Canned Tuna
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Tomato Products
- Soup
- Cereal
- Canned Veggies
- Condiments
- Pasta
- Oatmeal



PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

- Toilet Paper
- Liquid Hand Soap
- Bars of Soap
- Hand Lotion
- Facial Tissue
- Paper Towels



The mission of Heartly House is to end domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and child abuse, and to provide victims with safety, shelter, and supportive services.

- ♦ Gift cards Only: Walmart, Giant, Weis, Safeway, Food Lion, Target, Sheetz, Shell, Giant Eagle, CVS, Walgreens, TJ Maxx, Marshalls, Wawa, Exxon, etc

Collection boxes are found in the hallway between the sanctuary and the chapel.
Gift cards for Heartly House can be dropped off to the church office.

Around the Congregation

ALTAR FLOWERS

January 7	TBD
January 14	TBD
January 21	TBD
January 28	TBD

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

January 7	Jesi & JJ Bell-Godfrey
January 14	Linda DeLauder, Bill Steigelmenn
January 21	Consistory
January 28	Laura & Tony Verdi

SOUND TECHS

January 7	Nick Fink
January 14	Pat Joy
January 21	Tony Verdi
January 28	Tony Verdi

LAYREADERS

January 7	Wendy Campbell
January 14	Susan Thornton
January 21	Paul Fink
January 28	Emily Mathis

USHERS

January 7	Pat Joy, Nancy vom Lehn
January 14	Debbie Locke, Mike Locke
January 21	Laura Verdi, Nancy vom Lehn
January 28	Wendy Campbell, Isaac Cummings

Church Attendance

NOVEMBER 2023

	8:15 am	10:30 am
November 5	28	69
November 12	29	57
November 19	22	64
November 26	47	53

New Members

Emma Thornton joined on November 19.
Susan Thornton joined on November 19.
Kendra Perry joined on December 10.

Baptism

Jolene Brandenburg, daughter of Jake & Caitlin,
and granddaughter of Jill & Perry,
was baptized on November 26th.



Operating Finances Year to Date (Ending November 30, 2023)



	Actual Nov 01, 2023 - Nov 30, 2023	Actual This Year to Date	Budget Remaining Year to Date
CRUCC			
REVENUE			
Operating Income	\$ 15,419.21	\$ 238,873.27	\$ 157,471.30
Unrestricted Investment Income	\$ 5.46	\$ 19,094.64	\$ (19,094.64)
Other Income	\$ 1,193.67	\$ 41,535.40	\$ 19,459.60
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 16,618.34	\$ 299,503.31	\$ 157,836.26
EXPENSES			
Compensation Expenses	\$ 15,881.92	\$ 202,985.89	\$ 66,452.68
Operating Expenses			
Program Expenses	\$ -	\$ 107.20	\$ (107.20)
Worship-Related Expenses	\$ 696.47	\$ 5,987.68	\$ 3,512.32
Education-SS/CCCC	\$ -	\$ 523.91	\$ 3,976.09
Office & Supplies	\$ 1,413.50	\$ 18,371.69	\$ 6,579.31
Utilities	\$ 1,284.06	\$ 29,139.65	\$ 4,060.35
Building & Property	\$ 865.68	\$ 72,311.06	\$ 5,688.94
Equipment Maintenance	\$ -	\$ 957.00	\$ 1,543.00
<i>Total Operating Expenses</i>	<i>\$ 4,259.71</i>	<i>\$ 127,398.19</i>	<i>\$ 25,252.81</i>
Ministry Expenses			
Ministry - Outreach	\$ -	\$ 18,796.00	\$ 6,304.00
Ministry - Boards & Committees	\$ 171.07	\$ 1,828.20	\$ 4,921.80
<i>Total Ministry Expenses</i>	<i>\$ 171.07</i>	<i>\$ 20,624.20</i>	<i>\$ 11,225.80</i>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 20,312.70	\$ 351,008.28	\$ 102,931.29
Net Total	\$ (3,694.36)	\$ (51,504.97)	\$ 54,904.97
CCCC			
REVENUE			
Operating Income	\$ 71,873.00	\$ 835,882.50	\$ 127,072.26
Unrestricted Investment Income	\$ 4.30	\$ 1,019.03	\$ (1,019.03)
Other Income	\$ -	\$ 6,231.56	\$ 2,968.44
Designated Income	\$ 899.00	\$ 4,061.48	\$ (4,061.48)
Total Designated Income	\$ 899.00	\$ 4,061.48	\$ (4,061.48)
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 72,776.30	\$ 847,194.57	\$ 124,960.19
EXPENSES			
Compensation Expenses	\$ 59,195.75	\$ 668,748.46	\$ 116,006.30
Operating Expenses			
Program Expenses	\$ 6,495.55	\$ 60,367.98	\$ 11,632.02
Education-SS/CCCC	\$ -	\$ 1,795.59	\$ 1,204.41
Office & Supplies	\$ 3,037.17	\$ 25,295.70	\$ 7,904.30
Utilities	\$ -	\$ 3,332.56	\$ (332.56)
Building & Property	\$ 3,615.00	\$ 50,207.81	\$ 22,492.19
Equipment Maintenance	\$ 82.51	\$ 1,821.96	\$ 1,678.04
<i>Total Operating Expenses</i>	<i>\$ 13,230.23</i>	<i>\$ 142,821.60</i>	<i>\$ 44,578.40</i>
Designated Expenses	\$ -	\$ 2,316.50	\$ (2,316.50)
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 72,425.98	\$ 813,886.56	\$ 158,268.20
Net Total	\$ 350.32	\$ 33,308.01	\$ (33,308.01)

*Christ Reformed
United Church of Christ*

In-Person Worship
8:15am Contemporary Worship

In Person & On-Line Worship
Traditional Worship 10:30am
Coffee Hour 11:30am

Church Office Hours
Mon-Fri 10am-3pm
301-371-6610
Fax: 301-371-6912

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

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Frederick, Maryland 21701

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Christ Church Children's Center

Mrs. Missy Payne, Director
6 Weeks—5th Grade
Mon-Fri 6:30am – 6:00pm
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.*

ANNUAL MEETING



SUNDAY, JANUARY 21
9:15am in the Chapel
Join us in person or via Zoom

***Join us as we look back over the past year, elect officers, and
consider any other business brought forth by members.***