

Volume XXXX  
 Number XI  
 November 2024

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*



## Pastor's Pen

Dear Flock,

In Genesis 15:1-6 it says, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

I was talking with a colleague from the seminary a few weeks back, and she reminded me that we have been ordained for over twenty-five years. We both were not sure we would last. However, through God's grace and sense of humor, here we are! Since our conversation, I've been reflecting a bit. Over my twenty-five years in ministry, I have accompanied many individuals and communities sensing God's call in new directions. Sometimes, that call has been self-initiated, and sometimes, it is based on factors beyond our control. I remind you of how Covid reshaped many things for us. Change often brings us fear and anxiety. We can't get a clear picture of the road ahead, and that often washes out the bridge of trust in God's leading, which would carry us to what is next.

Abram understood this dilemma. God had revealed an intention and promise for his life, yet he could not see how it could possibly come to pass. He had no children of his own, yet God promised: "I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth" (13:6a). Fear and doubt created great questioning and a narrowing of vision.

God assuages Abram's fears and invites him to look to the sky and count the stars. Scanning the great expanse of the heavens, Abram received a visual reminder of how God's wisdom and ways are greater than his. He rediscovered a hope greater than his own fears. I feel there were more nights when Abram looked toward the heavens. God's people often need a regular practice of stretching out underneath the night sky, counting the stars, and reconnecting with God's promise.

Fall brings change. Fall brings us the splendor of color as the leaves turn and temperatures drop. It also brings on stewardship drives and reworking of budgets for our churches. We meticulously review figures and numbers, scratch our heads, and have meetings and discussions. CRUCC is doing just that. We are also involved in a pastoral search. There are lots of potential changes. Change can bring on feelings of fear and uncertainty. However, change can be viewed as a time of new beginnings, when we can be creative and dream for our future together. It's a time to look at the heavens and be reminded of the many blessings we have each received.

You probably have already received budget information and a stewardship letter. Our budget meeting is Sunday, November 3 at 9:15. If you feel good about your church, be proactive and supportive as we look toward the future for God's ministry on this spot. As I have said several times, if you feel good about your church, support it and share that news with others. If not, please talk to me.

Thanks be to God for Abram's example, who worked through his fears to see and believe God's new vision for him.

When uncertainty comes (and it will), and you can't see your next step, go sit outside and study the heavens. Hear God speak: "Do not be afraid. Look toward the heavens and count the stars. You have a big family of faith. Trust and believe."

Prayers for all of us to recognize every constellation as our gift for refreshing our faith.

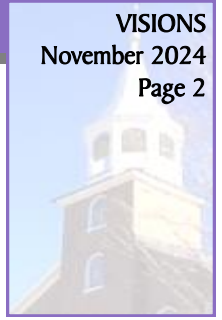
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## Congregational Budget Meeting

Sunday, Nov. 3rd  
 Chapel @ 9:15am



Soli Deo Gloria  
 Pastor Greg



### **Year End Donations**

As your church approaches the end of 2024, the Finance Committee wants to remind members who are already 72 and older and have tax-sheltered investment accounts, they can make **tax-free** contributions to churches and other not-for-profit organizations by having the holder of these funds transfer contributions directly to eligible organization (which, of course, your church is). Please contact one of our Financial Secretaries, Nancy or Paul at [crucffinancialsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:crucffinancialsecretary@gmail.com) to obtain more information.

### **Hurricane Helene Recovery Appeal**

The National Ministries of the United Church of Christ has a long history of supporting communities as they recover from disaster and their plight fades from the headlines. Your support of this appeal will ensure that communities are supported and accompanied for years as they rebuild. If you would like to make a donation, you can do so using Realm (our online giving platform) or simply write a check and note "Hurricane Relief" in the memo line.

### **Christmas Decorating**

If you are interested in helping to decorate the church for Christmas, please contact Gertie Mende at 301-639-2109 or [cgmende@comcast.net](mailto:cgmende@comcast.net) to let her know your availability to help out either **Friday, 11/29 or Saturday, 11/30**. Once she has an idea of availability, she will confirm the date.

### **Search and Call Committee Update**

The Search & Call Committee would like to thank everyone for reviewing the Local Church Profile and providing feedback. The Committee is reviewing the feedback and making the necessary adjustments to our profile prior to posting to the UCC Ministry Opportunities website. We anticipate having the profile posted by early November. Once the Local Church Profile is posted, the Search & Call Committee will be turning their attention to preparing for the candidate review and interview processes.

### **Fall Bible Study**

Join our discussion of the Parables at our weekly bible study hosted by Pastor Greg. The group meets on Wednesday's at 11:30am in the Parish House. Feel free to bring your lunch. Hope to see you there!

### **Congregational Budget Meeting**

Our constitution calls for a meeting of the congregation on the first Sunday of November to adopt a budget for the next year. Copies of the proposed budget, along with voting options, have been mailed out. Copies are also available in the Narthex. You are encouraged to attend this meeting on November 3rd at 9:15am in the Chapel.

### **Would you be a Candle Lighter?**

During the four Sundays of Advent that precede Christmas you will see a wreath with five candles displayed on a stand in the chancel. There will be one pink and three purple candles around a larger, central, white candle that represents the birth and arrival of Jesus. Our tradition is that the four colored candles are lit at the opening of worship by one of our church families. As they light that week's candle, a short dedication is shared on the theme of

HOPE (12/1), PEACE (12/8), JOY (12/15) and LOVE (12/22). If you would like to celebrate Advent in this way please contact Debbie in the church office and advise her whether you will write your own dedication or have one provided.

### **Gift Cards Church Fundraiser**

By purchasing gift cards through *RaiseRight*, one of our church fundraisers, the church receives a percentage of every gift card purchased. Use the enclosed Order form to purchase a wide selection of cards for your shopping convenience. Return the completed form to Gail Johnson or the church office with payment. Your cards will be delivered to the church the following week for you to pick up either on Sunday morning from Gail or during the week from the church office. Cash or check payments will need to be submitted to the church before the order can be finalized.

### **Small Nativity Sets Wanted On-Loan for Advent**

This Advent and Christmas we are once again looking for small nativity sets/scenes to feature in our sanctuary. If you have such a set or one-piece scene that you are willing to loan to the church between now and Christmas, we would be grateful! You can bring it with you to worship on Sunday or drop off to the church office during the week. Be sure to mark it with a tag or tape with your name. And, if there's a neat history or family story to the nativity, we'd love to know it so we can post that along with your name when it's on display in the sanctuary.

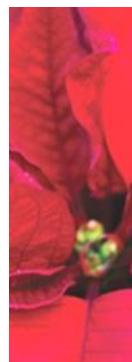
### **Wreath-Making Workshop**

The Parish Life Board is hosting a wreath-making workshop on December 8 from 1 to 3 pm. The cost is \$5 and snacks and drinks will be served. Renee Brandenburg-Huffer will be the instructor. Bring gloves, pruning shears, and wire cutters if you have them. Bring a friend. Please add your name to the sign up sheet so we can be sure we have enough supplies.

### **Nominating Committee Needs Your Help!**

Nominating Committee has begun recruiting individuals to staff our church boards and committees (see page 6 for more details). If you are interested in any position or if you would like more information, we would love to talk with you!

Nominating Committee representatives:  
 Laura Fontaine [laura.s.fontaine@gmail.com](mailto:laura.s.fontaine@gmail.com)  
 Laura Verdi [lverdi@comcast.net](mailto:lverdi@comcast.net)  
 Judy Zeck [jaczeck@gmail.com](mailto:jaczeck@gmail.com)



## **Christmas Flowers**

Use the enclosed order form to honor or remember special family members, friends or an event with potted plants which will decorate our sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

**Deadline to order is  
December 4th**



Nov. 14th  
12pm-2pm  
Coffee Hour Space

No Need to Sign Up  
Just Show Up!

**B I N G O**

**BUDS**

Ladies Chill Night

Resumes in  
January

Book of the Month:  
"The Demon of Unrest: A Saga of Hubris, Heartbreak,  
and Heroism at the Dawn of the Civil War  
by Erik Larson

11/19 Noon @ Fratelli's

**BOOK CLUB**

All are Welcome!

Contact Charlotte Hanson at  
hansonc3306@gmail.com for more info.

**GUYS NIGHT OUT**

11/25 @ 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.

Fall ...into the Parables

**BIBLE STUDY**

WEDS @ 11:30AM  
PARISH HOUSE

We gather  
together

**God on Tap**

Tuesday 11/12 @ 6:30pm  
Showroom

882 N East St, Frederick, MD  
Please RSVP by 11/10 to  
Christine at 97cfontaine@gmail.com.





**783 million people go to bed hungry every night.  
Let's change that!!**

**Heifer International is working to end world hunger in 19 countries across four continents, including the USA. How can you help? You can sponsor an animal or give a donation (one time or monthly). See information on the table in the back of the Chapel.**



*The Heifer project is sponsored by the Discipleship Board in memory of Cynthia and Carrollee Zecher.*

## HOLIDAY ASSISTANCE

Through Middletown Valley People Helping People our congregation is invited to help provide Holiday Assistance for local families who are facing hard times. Ways to help:

- ◆ The Discipleship Board has placed a small Christmas tree in the back of the Narthex. On the tree are ornaments representing gift cards in amounts of \$20, \$25, and \$50. You are invited to take an ornament, purchase a gift card through the church's gift card program (see Gail Johnson) or through a retail outlet, and place the card in the offering plate or return it to the church office.
- ◆ Donate Toiletry Items for teens
- ◆ Donate toys for children under age 12

All donations can be dropped off to the church office.  
**DEADLINE: DECEMBER 6TH**



## MIDDLETOWN FOOD BANK

### FOOD ITEMS

- Beans (dry/canned)
- Canned Meat
- Instant Potatoes
- Pasta
- Pasta Sauce
- Ketchup
- Mayonnaise
- Sugar



### PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

- Toilet Paper
- Toothbrushes
- Liquid Hand Soap
- Bars of Soap

Collection boxes are found in the hallway between the sanctuary and the chapel.

## WEEKEND FOOD PROGRAM

Many children in the Middletown valley area are provided a free or reduced priced lunch on school days, but they face the prospect of hunger on the weekend. In partnership with area churches, the weekend food program helps to fill this gap by providing weekend bags full of food for children in these area schools: *Middletown Elementary, Primary, Middle and High School, Myersville, Valley and Wolfsville Elementary.*

### How Can YOU Help These Children?

- ◆ SPONSOR a child for a year at a cost of \$300.00, in whole or in part – simply make out your check to CRUCC and indicate on the memo line that it is for the Weekend Food Program.
- ◆ PURCHASE the specific foods needed and put the items in the designated box located in the Narthex
- ◆ VOLUNTEER your time to pack the food.
- ◆ DELIVER the food to a school.

## Fall Clothing Drive

Debbie Bruns is collecting gently used clothing for an upcoming fall clothing event at Ballenger Creek Middle School. Please label your bag/boxes with sizes and indicate for male/female and drop them off to the church office by November 6th.

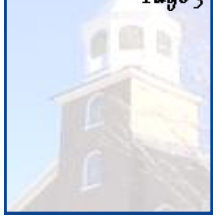


## Toys for Tots Drive

The Golden Gears Car Club in conjunction with the CCCC center are conducting a Toys for Tots drive through Sunday December 1st. The toy collection boxes are located outside the coffee hour space. Please consider donating a new unwrapped toy or two to this very worthy charity. This is the Golden Gears Car Club's 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary for raising funds and donations for Frederick area organizations.



CRUCC friends:  
John and I want to thank you all for your many prayers, cards, and calls during my recent hospitalization and recuperation from a blood clot. We both felt the love and concern. I especially appreciated the wonderful visit by Rev. Greg at the hospital. Hope to see you soon.  
*Sherry Hildebrand*



Thank you so much for your donation to my Walk to End Alzheimer's® fundraising efforts! Your generosity will help the Alzheimer's Association® provide care and support to all those facing Alzheimer's and all other dementia, and advance critical research. To learn more about Alzheimer's disease or the Alzheimer's Association, please visit [alz.org](http://alz.org) or call the 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900. Thank you for making a difference in the fight against Alzheimer's!

My page: <http://act.alz.org/goto/BethScott>

*Beth Scott*

Around the Congregation

Monthly Info Meeting  
hosted by Consistory  
Join us in the Chapel  
11/17 @ 9:15AM

Mon-Fri  
10am-2pm  
Office Hours

Nov. 3  
FALL BACKWARD  
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS!  
[-1 HOUR]

ALTAR FLOWERS

November 3	TBD
November 10	TBD
November 17	TBD
November 24	TBD

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

November 3	Consistory
November 10	Connie & Gary Bell
November 17	Stewardship Committee
November 24	Christian Ed Board

SOUND TECHS

November 3	Nick Fink
November 10	Pat Joy
November 17	Tony Verdi
November 24	Pat Joy

LAYREADERS

November 3	Sue Wickless
November 10	Andrew Corl
November 17	Emily Mathis
November 24	Gail Johnson

USHERS

November 3	Pat Joy, Nancy vom Lehn
November 10	Linda DeLauder, Bill Falconer
November 17	Be' Hill, Karen Koogle
November 24	Linda Nichols, Judy Zeck

Church Attendance

September 2024

	8:15 am	10:30 am
September 1	21	48
September 8	31	50
September 15	22	51
September 22	22	57
September 29	13	42

# Consistory, Boards & Committees Descriptions

*Below is a summary of the objectives and duties of our Consistory, Boards and Committee to help you decide where to share your talents and help our church grow!*

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## CONSISTORY

*Objective: Function as an executive council, providing leadership for the Church around significant spiritual and financial matters. Work in harmony with the pastor to develop and implement the vision for the congregation.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Meet monthly on the second Monday evening of the month. Serve as liaison to a board or committee. Receive input/feedback from the congregation. Draft operating budget. Oversee constitution and by-laws. Serve communion. Host Coffee Hour on the first Sunday of November.

## CEMETERY BOARD

*Objective: Ensures perpetual care for past, present and future generations.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Provide care and maintenance for the cemetery. Meet every quarter. Adhere to the bylaws of the cemetery and the state of Maryland. Host Coffee Hour when scheduled.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BOARD

*Objective: Oversees the Christian learning ministries and opportunities for all ages within the church.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Meet monthly (except July) on the third Sunday of the month at 9:15. Provide curriculum for each faith building program. Plan and execute children's activities at the annual picnic. Host Coffee Hour when scheduled.

## CHRIST CHURCH CHILDREN'S CENTER BOARD

*Objective: Provide guidance and input about the Center's operation to the Center's director, and act as a conduit for information between the church and the Center.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Quarterly meetings the 2nd Monday of each month at 6pm. Attend center events as able. Host Coffee Hour when scheduled.

## CHURCH PROPERTY BOARD

*Objective: Maintain all of the Church properties, grounds, and equipment with the exception of the cemetery. Determine future needs and/or improvements and make recommendations to the Consistory, as appropriate.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Manage building repairs and maintenance, landscaping, lawn care, snow removal, etc. Maintain an annual record of all maintenance and repair projects and costs. Communicate with pastor, Consistory, office personnel and CCCC about current projects. Host Coffee Hour when scheduled.

## DISCIPLESHIP BOARD

*Objective: Support congregational activities that build cohesion and Christian spirit within the church. Support local, national and international activities that reflect Christian principles and meet social needs.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Meet the second Sunday of the month at 9:15. Organize Sunday of Service, Soup Kitchen, the Backpack program, Christmas gifts for families in need, Food Bank and Heartly House. Coordinate with Advocates for Homeless for the Weagly House. Maintain a connection with congregational members in need of care. Host Coffee Hour when scheduled.

## PARISH LIFE BOARD

*Objective: Develop and coordinate programs in the Church that promote fellowship, encourage emotional support, and deepen the spiritual life of the congregation.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Attend monthly meetings. Assist with board sponsored events and activities. Host Ice Cream Sundays (June, July, August).

## CHURCH AND MINISTRY COMMITTEE

*Objective: Support and maintain an open relationship and communication between the ordained minister and the congregation.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Support the pastor by providing a forum for the pastor to express concerns and reactions regarding their work. Listen to church members, openly and honestly communicate feelings and reactions to the pastor. Demonstrate concern and understanding for the pastor's contract.

## FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE

*Objective: Act as the fiduciary responsible for managing CRUCC's Restricted (Endowed) Funds. Serve to support the monthly financial reporting and accounting processes. Prepare a recommended draft annual budget each fall for the Consistory to deliberate and finalize.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Attend and participate in monthly meetings, except during the summer. Review monthly financial reports for accuracy. Observe and analyze trends in giving and spending.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*Objective: Staff committees and boards*

Duties and Responsibilities: Review board and committee descriptions in order to accurately staff each board and committee. Gather input from boards and committees about possible new members. Recruit individuals to serve on boards and committees.

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

*Objective: Responsible for matters concerning paid non-clergy staff and volunteer staff*

Duties and Responsibilities: Assign liaison to non-clergy staff. Meet with personnel to go over expectations, needs and evaluations completed by the pastor. Prepare/update position descriptions. Form search committees to fill vacant positions.

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

*Objective: Develop methods and means to call people into personal growth as people with capacity to give, serve, and care generously. Stewardship is about more than giving money.*

Duties and Responsibilities: Help church members understand how the church budget is the "mission statement" of the church. Plan a Stewardship program. Help personalize giving so church members can see and pray for what their gifts are doing. Analyze present and past trends in giving. Host Coffee Hour on Stewardship Sunday in November.

Nominating Committee representatives:  
Laura Fontaine [laura.s.fontaine@gmail.com](mailto:laura.s.fontaine@gmail.com)  
Laura Verdi [lverdi@comcast.net](mailto:lverdi@comcast.net)  
Judy Zeck [jaczeck@gmail.com](mailto:jaczeck@gmail.com)





# Operating Finances Year to Date Ending September 30, 2024



<b>CRUCC</b>	<b>Actual Sep 01, 2024 - Sep 30, 2024</b>	<b>Actual Year to Date</b>	<b>Annual Budget Remaining This Year</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Operating Income	\$ 19,283.00	\$ 188,800.39	\$ 87,931.61
Investment Income	\$ 1,751.78	\$ 16,078.32	\$ 10,415.68
Other Income	\$ 4,002.19	\$ 35,886.89	\$ 23,753.11
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 25,036.97</b>	<b>\$ 240,765.60</b>	<b>\$ 122,100.40</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Compensation Expenses	\$ 13,734.49	\$ 120,248.18	\$ 158,493.82
Operating Expenses			
Program Expenses	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ (200.00)
Worship-Related Expenses	\$ 288.48	\$ 3,450.19	\$ 6,849.81
Education-SS/CCCC	\$ -	\$ 684.82	\$ 2,315.18
Office & Supplies	\$ 1,300.68	\$ 17,089.97	\$ 8,932.03
Utilities	\$ 1,550.53	\$ 22,134.71	\$ 12,465.29
Building & Property	\$ 2,390.29	\$ 19,912.94	\$ 9,887.06
Equipment Maintenance	\$ -	\$ 581.00	\$ 1,419.00
Insurance Expenses	\$ -	\$ 37,811.25	\$ (33,227.25)
<i>Total Operating Expenses</i>	<i>\$ 5,529.98</i>	<i>\$ 101,864.88</i>	<i>\$ 8,441.12</i>
Ministry Expenses			
Ministry - Outreach	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 14,044.00	\$ 4,756.00
Ministry - Boards & Committees	\$ 366.21	\$ 2,071.88	\$ 4,628.12
<i>Total Ministry Expenses</i>	<i>\$ 4,366.21</i>	<i>\$ 16,115.88</i>	<i>\$ 9,384.12</i>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 23,630.68</b>	<b>\$ 238,228.94</b>	<b>\$ 176,319.06</b>
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,406.29</b>	<b>\$ 2,536.66</b>	<b>\$ (54,218.66)</b>

<b>CCCC</b>	<b>Actual Sep 01, 2024 - Sep 30, 2024</b>	<b>Actual Year to Date</b>	<b>Annual Budget Remaining This Year</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Operating Income	\$ 101,077.50	\$ 734,475.00	\$ 267,314.00
Investment Income	\$ 3.12	\$ 2,763.20	\$ 152.80
Other Income	\$ -	\$ 5,083.27	\$ 1,843.73
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 101,080.62</b>	<b>\$ 742,381.88</b>	<b>\$ 269,250.12</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Compensation Expenses	\$ 58,487.10	\$ 588,151.37	\$ 227,821.63
Operating Expenses			
Program Expenses	\$ 4,711.87	\$ 50,822.98	\$ 27,177.02
Education-SS/CCCC	\$ 1,383.72	\$ 2,309.54	\$ 1,190.46
Office & Supplies	\$ 1,948.34	\$ 24,024.44	\$ 21,175.56
Utilities	\$ 222.94	\$ 2,258.72	\$ 1,406.28
Building & Property	\$ 4,056.19	\$ 42,869.06	\$ 19,630.94
Equipment Maintenance	\$ 92.50	\$ 1,687.82	\$ 2,312.18
<i>Total Operating Expenses</i>	<i>\$ 12,415.56</i>	<i>\$ 123,972.56</i>	<i>\$ 72,892.44</i>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 70,902.66</b>	<b>\$ 712,123.93</b>	<b>\$ 300,714.07</b>
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$ 30,177.96</b>	<b>\$ 30,257.95</b>	<b>\$ (31,463.95)</b>

*Christ Reformed  
United Church of Christ*  
Rev. Greg Shook

In-Person Worship  
8:15am Contemporary Worship

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

Office Hours  
Mon-Fri 10am-2pm  
301-371-6610  
Fax: 301-371-6912

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

Non Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
PERMIT 2202  
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](http://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.*

# NOVEMBER 17 8:15AM & 10:30AM

To help celebrate our church and dedicate the financial commitments of our members and friends to the church's work, we invite you to join us on Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. Following the 10:30am service the Stewardship Committee will host Coffee Hour.



## STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

