



**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
 (Congregational)  
 13740 Pearl Road  
 Strongsville, Ohio 44136

**Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall**  
 Designated Minister

**DECEMBER 24, 2017 – 10:00 A.M.**

**WELCOME!**

We are grateful you chose to worship with us this morning. No matter who you are and where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

For questions about our church and ministries, you may call the church at (440) 238-6697. Please complete your Attendance Card and place it into the offering plate. We hope to see you again soon!

† *Please stand as you are comfortable.*

**BAND PRELUDE** "He Is Born, Il Est Ne" Setting, Mark Albrecht

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS** Rachel Zielinski

**HAND BELL CHOIR INTROIT** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

† **CALL TO WORSHIP** *after Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26*

Leader: We come to witness a miracle.

**People: We sing the miracle of God's steadfast love.**

Leader: New life bursts forth in unexpected ways.

**People: We shout the good news: God's covenant endures forever!**

Leader: The desert blooms; what was barren is fertile!

**People: With our mouths we proclaim God's faithfulness to all generations: God is the Rock of our Salvation! Amen.**

† **HYMN 249** "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

**LIGHTING THE 4<sup>th</sup> ADVENT CANDLE** The Candle of Peace  
The Oerkfitz Family

Leader: Our first three Advent candles symbolize the Hope, the Love, and the Joy that living a life that follows Christ's teaching can bring. Today, we light the fourth Advent Candle, symbolizing Peace.

**People: We remember God's promise that Jesus, Prince of Peace, is coming. We pray for peace in our hearts. We work for peace and justice in our communities.**

Leader: Let us sing together "Let There Be Peace on Earth."

*(Lyrics are on next column.)*

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me;  
 Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.  
 With God our creator, family all are we.  
 Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.  
 With every step I take, may this be my solemn vow:  
 To take each moment, and live each moment in peace eternally.  
 Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

**SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**PASTORAL PRAYER and 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. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READING** Isaiah 9:2, 6

**LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE**

**PRAYER RESPONSE** "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

**CHOIR ANTHEM** "Christ Is Born This Holy Night" Lloyd Larson

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

**THE OFFERINGS**

**BELL OFFERTORY** "We Three Kings" John H. Hopkins, Jr.

† **DOXOLOGY 815** Tune: *Old Hundredth*  
 Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, all creatures here below.  
 Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

† **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**SCRIPTURE READING** Luke 2:1-7

**SOLO** "Mary, Did You Know?" Mark Lowry  
Sharon Metivier, Vocalist

**SERMON** "Eyes Wide Open"

**SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST**

† **HYMN 253** "Silent Night"

Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright.  
 Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant so tender and mild.  
 Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, Shepherds quake at the sight.  
 Glories stream from heaven afar; Heavenly hosts sing alleluia.  
 Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

*(Hymn continues on next column.)*

Silent night, holy night, Wondrous star, lend thy light.  
 With the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King.  
 Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light.  
 Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
 with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
 Jesus, Lord at Thy birth. Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

† **SEEING CHRIST'S LIGHT ALL AROUND**

† **HYMN 270** "Joy to the World"

Joy to the World, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;  
 Let every heart prepare Him room, And Heaven and nature sing,  
 And Heaven and nature sing,  
 And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ;  
 While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
 Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,  
 Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
 And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness,  
 And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love,  
 And wonders, wonders, of His love.

† **BENEDICTION**

† **BAND RESPONSE** "O Lord of Light, Who Made the Stars"  
Setting, Anne Krentz Organ

† **POSTLUDE** "Carol of the Bells"

**Our steeple** will light the sky this week . . .

*In Memory of Baby Clare Molnar  
 In Memory of My Dad, Ray Higham, and Sister, Laura Smith  
 Happy 89<sup>th</sup> Birthday to My Mom on December 24  
 Dianne*

**Happy Birthday today** to Audrey Dragonoy.

**Our love and prayers are extended in sympathy** to Steve Herzog and family on the passing of his sister, Kathy Anderson, on December 15, 2017, in Upstate New York.

**Joining the Church** – If you are interested in becoming a member of Strongsville UCC, please either inform Pastor Heidi or call the church office, (440) 238-6697. Thank you!

**The Church Office will be closed tomorrow for Christmas Day and January 1, 2018, for New Year's Day.**

**Family of Faith Tree** – If you are new to the church or haven't yet added your special ornament to our tree in the Gathering Area, we invite you to donate an ornament that represents you or your family. Besides new members bringing in ornaments, we also gladly accept any additional ornaments which current members might want to add in recognition of important events in their lives--such as a new baby, marriage, special trips or a new job. Please do not bring an heirloom, since it will not be returned to you, but will be used for years to come. Please place your ornament into the church office. A nametag will be prepared and attached to your ornament. Thank you!

**Stewardship** – 70 Estimate of Giving Cards have been received so far for a total of \$110,408. If you have not yet submitted your Estimate of Giving Card, your card will be gratefully accepted at any time. The cards are used in preparing the church budget. Thank you very much to those who have already submitted their cards.

**Nursery – Helpers are needed** because of the increase in number of children. A signup sheet is in Pilgrim Hall. For questions, please contact Amanda Hawk, Sarah Hayes, or Kelly Bickley.

**Help Needed** – Diaconate is removing Christmas decorations on Saturday, January 6, at 10:00 a.m. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

**Mission Outreach** distributed the hats, scarves and mittens from our Mitten Tree in the gathering area this past week. Thanks to the always amazing generosity of our congregation, there was enough abundance to give to Brookside Center, the Refugee Relocation program of Cleveland, and the Puerto Rican immigration (post Hurricane Maria).

**Photo Directory** – Please contact Sarah Hayes or Cathy Hawk today to get your picture re-taken **if your first picture was taken before September.**

**Church Christmas Mail Box** is for giving Christmas greetings to church friends and is available in Pilgrim Hall. Please check the box for greetings you receive. Please do not put cards into the box for those who are not in town for Christmas, because the church office cannot mail your personal greetings. Cards left after Christmas will be discarded.

**The Wednesday Lunch Program really needs volunteers** especially in January when four regular volunteers will go south for the winter. To help, please contact Kenn Oerkfritz, Betty Craig, or the church, (440) 238-6697. Thank you!

**Fit Club** is on hiatus until Wednesday January 10, at 7:00 p.m. Everyone at any level is welcome to join. It's a perfect opportunity to get your New Year's resolution to be more active started! Fit Club is fun and fellowship while getting your body moving!

**The signup charts for Greeters, Ushers, and Coffee Hour for 2018** are posted on Pilgrim Hall's bulletin board. Please sign up to help in these areas if you are able. Your help is appreciated very much. Thank you!

**Annual Reports** are due in the church office next Sunday, December 31. The Annual Meeting of the congregation is Sunday, January 28, 2018.

**Nominating Committee** – Many offices in the church will be available for the coming year. Please consider saying yes when a member of the *Nominating Committee asks you to serve.*

*I wanted to take a moment to thank everyone who helped contribute to my toy drive. Your generosity is overwhelming. We were able to provide gifts to 95 students at Memorial Elementary School in Cleveland.*

*Peace and blessings to all. Beth Giuliano*

## 2018 ALL-FAMILY WINTER RETREAT AT PILGRIM HILLS

The Church's Annual All-Family Winter Retreat will return to Temples Hills this year and will take place on President's Day weekend 2018: February 16, 17 and 18. The sign-up sheet to attend and the sign-up sheet for things to bring and to volunteer will soon be posted on the bulletin board in Pilgrim Hall. Please reserve your spot and room now, as rooms will be first-come, first-served. The cut-off to sign up—January 14—will be strictly enforced this year. We will not have the same luxury as we've had in the past, in which we were able to take reservations up until the event weekend. Space is limited to 68 attendees. Also, please let us know if you have any special dietary needs. Finally, those that wish to come down on Saturday only—we would be happy to have you there, but we also need your reservation by January 14, and the cost is \$10 per meal. Please contact Irene Joyce or Rachel Zielinski if you have any questions.

**Here is the cost breakdown (no change from last year):**

**Adults** (12 and up): \$70

**Children** (6-11): \$15

**Children** (5 and under): FREE

**Special dates for the retreat are:**

**January 14, 2018:** Reservations close AND MONEY IS DUE.

**January 28, 2018:** All special dietary needs must be reported.

**February 11, 2018:** Retreat planning meeting in the church after worship

## OUR PRAYER LIST

*If you or a family member would like a visit, please call the church at (440) 238-6697. Please provide updates for this list. Thank you.*

**Long-Term Care or Homebound:** Betty Bushea, Janet Kato at Kemper House, Connie Rebar, Trish Shields

**Church Family:** Betty Babics, Lacey (daughter of Amanda Hawk), Steve Herzog, Paul Hirt at Northwestern Health Care Center in Berea, Martha Liebert, Bill Ritchie, Betsey Santomen (wife of Rev. Joe Santomen), Rev. Oommen Thomas, Leah Tressa Forget, Kyle Woodward

**Extended Church Family:** Luke Bazan (friend of Judi Pavisich's grand-daughter), Donna Briggs (mother-in-law of Judi Pavisich's daughter), Audrey Curry (mother of Pam Keenen), Kim Filiatraut (friend of Sarah Keenen), Joyce Freeman (sister of Carol Woodward), Elizabeth Fulford (friend of Lora Rung), Sue Grunenwald (friend of the Heinrichs), Diane Mason (friend of Lora Rung), Pat Masuga (mother of Dan), Carrol Riley (father of Marjorie Morrison), the Sink family (friends of Judy Pavisich's granddaughter), Keith Stewart (cousin of Carol Woodward), Frank Toth (father of Rob), Sheena Toth (mother of Dale), Joe Valli (brother-in-law of Vicky and Dan Masuga)

## OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$3,865  
Weekly Offering Received 12/17/2017 \$2,634  
Difference -\$1,231



SERVING	12/24 – 10AM	12/31 – 10AM
Advent Wreath	The Oerkfritz Family	-----
Liturgist	Jim Studer	Ted Bickley
Greeters	Dawn and Alysha Rolland	Sharon Heinrich
Ushers	Volunteers Needed	Volunteers Needed
Coffee Hour	Ed and Cheryl Sobek	Cathy Hawk

**Financial Officers of Church Groups:** Please turn in your financial statements to the Auditing Committee through the church office by December 31. It is extremely important that all books be audited before the Annual Meeting on January 28, 2017. All organizations are required to submit:

1. ALL bank books (savings and/or checking).
2. ALL bank statements for each month for each account. Checking accounts statements should show completed reconciliation on the back.
3. ALL monthly recap forms.
4. ALL bank deposit slips, withdrawal slips and bank check receipts (if received), attached to monthly recap forms.
5. ALL receipts and bills paid.
6. Copy of Annual Financial Report (original provided to church office for Annual Report).

Thank you for your cooperation.

## DECEMBER 2017

24 Sun Christmas Eve Worship at 10am and 11pm (**No** 7:30 service)  
25 Mon Christmas Day – Church office is closed.  
27 Wed Free Lunch Program, 11:30am-12:30pm  
28 Thu Deadline to report special dietary needs for Winter Retreat  
31 Sun Penny Sunday  
Annual Reports are due in the church office.

## JANUARY 2018

1 Mon New Year's Day – Church office is closed.  
2 Tue Worship Committee Meeting, 7pm  
3 Wed Free Lunch Program, 11:30am-12:30pm  
4 Thu Rehearsals for Bell Choir and Chancel Choir resume.  
7 Sun Worship with Communion, 10am  
9 Tue Trustees Meeting, 7pm  
10 Wed Free Lunch Program, 11:30am-1pm  
Fit Club, 7pm  
14 Sun Retreat Reservations close and payment is due.  
Annual Reports are collated in Pilgrim hall, after church  
16 Tue Diaconate Meeting, 7pm  
17 Wed Free Lunch Program, 11:30am-1pm  
Fit Club, 7pm  
Adult Social Club Meeting, 7pm  
23 Tue Official Board Meeting, 7pm  
24 Wed Free Lunch Program, 11:30am-1pm,  
Men's Luncheon, 11:30am  
Fit Club, 7pm  
28 Sun Annual Meeting of the Congregation, after worship  
Special Dietary Needs for the Retreat must be reported.  
31 Wed Free Lunch Program, 11:30am-1pm,  
Fit Club, 7pm

## MUSIC REHEARSALS DURING THE WEEK 🎵 🎶 🎷

**Band** (Adults and Students in Grades 6-12) – 8pm on Wednesdays

**Bell Choir** – 7pm on Thursdays

**Chancel Choir** – 8pm on Thursdays

*For information about our music program, please see*

**Elena Taylor, Director of Music**