



Hanging
of the
Greens

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Congregational)
13740 Pearl Road
Strongsville, Ohio 44136

Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall
Designated Minister

NOVEMBER 26, 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.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Irene Joyce

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus,
Son of the Most High?

**People: By hearing again the words of the prophets,
who told long ago of God's victory over darkness.**

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus,
the eternal Christ?

**People: With garlands and wreaths of pine and fir,
whose branches are ever living, ever green.**

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus,
our Savior?

**People: With arrangements of holly and ivy, reminders of
Jesus' passion, death and victory over death.**

Leader: How shall we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus,
the King?

**People: With the Light of God's promise and songs of
celebration and remembering. With stories that belong
to all God's children across the world.**

† HYMN 244 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

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.**

PRAYER RESPONSE

BELL ANTHEM "Shout to the Lord" Darlene Zschech, arr. Peggy Bettcher

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HYMN 262 "Away in a Manger" Verse 1

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay;
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

THE OFFERING "Awesome God" Rich Mullins, arr. Peggy Bettcher

† 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

Pastor: On the Christian Calendar, today is officially Christ the King
Sunday, the very last Sunday before we start over again. In this
church, today is a bit like a preparation for the preparation, a time to
get ready for Advent, the season of waiting. And just as we decorate
our homes in anticipation of the arrival of Christmas, so, too, do we
decorate God's house with special decorations that remind us of
God's faithful presence in our lives and God's never-ending grace.

HYMN 406 "Wonderful Words of Life" Verse 1

Sing them over again to me, Wonderful words of Life;
Let me more of their beauty see, Wonderful words of Life.
Words of life and beauty, Teach me faith and duty.
Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life.
Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life.

HOLLY AND IVY Reading from Isaiah 53:3a, 4a, 5-6

Reader: He was despised and rejected by others; a man of
suffering and acquainted with infirmity; Surely He has borne our
infirmities and carried our diseases. But He was wounded for our
transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; Upon Him was the
punishment that made us whole. And by His bruises we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own
way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Pastor: For Christians, this passage from Isaiah reflects the
sufferings of Jesus, who redeemed us eternally in victory over death,
even death on the cross. In ancient times, holly and ivy were
considered signs of Christ's passion. Their prickly leaves suggest
the crown of thorns, the red berries the blood of the Savior, and the
bitter bark the drink offered to Jesus on the cross. As we place the
holly and ivy, let us rejoice in the coming of Jesus our Savior.

HYMN "The Holly and the Ivy" Verse 1

The holly and the ivy, When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood, The holly bears the crown:
The rising of the sun And the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ, Sweet singing in the choir.

WREATH

Reading from Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Reader: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, among them a
light has shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.
And the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall
be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

Pastor: From ancient times, evergreens have been considered a
symbol of eternity, a sign of God's everlasting nature. Isaiah tells us
that there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah. Therefore, we
hang wreaths shaped in never-ending circles with no beginning and
no end, and place garlands of green as signs of everlasting life.
These are symbols of Christ's gift of eternal life and of the
celebration of Christmas itself.

HYMN 256 "Love Has Come!" Verse 1

Love has come- a light in the darkness!
Love explodes in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

POINSETTIA

Reading from Isaiah 11:1-2

Reader: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a
branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest
on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel
and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Pastor: There is a beautiful legend told in Mexico that goes
something like this: *A young girl was sad on Christmas Eve because
she had no gift for the Christ Child when she went to chapel. She
didn't want to arrive empty-handed, so as she walked, she picked a
small bouquet of flowering weeds, hoping the babe would accept her
offering. The other children teased her unmercifully, and as she
walked, tears began to well up in her eyes. Then-- a miracle
happened! As the tears fell from her eyes and landed on the
flowers, the weed bouquet she carried turned a glorious red, more
beautiful than any flowers ever seen! These fiery flowers today
remind us of the Bethlehem star that showed the way to the manger.*

HYMN 255 "Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming" Verse 1

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming As men of old have sung.
It came, a Flow'ret bright, Amid the cold of winter
When half-spent was the night.

PARAMENTS

Reading from Isaiah 40:3-5

Reader: In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make
straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be
lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low. Then the glory of
the Lord shall be revealed.

Pastor: For many weeks now, we have been in what's called "ordinary time" on the church calendar. The green of the paraments, or altar cloths, symbolizes a time of growth. Truly, there has been nothing ordinary about these days! Now, as we approach Advent, the colors on the altar will change. In celebration of Jesus' royal lineage, both human and divine, we offer these purple paraments now, place them as a gift before the Lord and ask God's blessing upon them and us in the weeks ahead.

HYMN 279 "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" Verse 1
Infant holy, Infant lowly, For His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing Christ, the Babe, is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing, Noels ringing, tidings bringing,
Christ, the Babe, is Lord of All! Christ, the Babe, is Lord of all!

EVERGREEN TREE Reading from Micah 5:2, 4

Reader: But you, O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from ancient days. And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they shall live secure, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and He shall be the one of peace.

Pastor: In ancient times the cedar was revered as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality and the eternal nature of God. Today, we prefer other varieties of evergreen, but the meaning remains unchanged. We place this tree in our sanctuary as a symbol of Christ, who reigns as King forever, and whose coming will purify our hearts.

HYMN 249 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" Verse 1
O Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him—born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him! O come, let us adore Him!
O come, let us adore Him—Christ, the Lord!

CHRIST CANDLE Reading from 1 John 1:1, 5

Reader: We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.

Pastor: From the time we are little children, we have been taught that Jesus is the Light of the World. Even in the most dismal of days, the Light of Life cannot be extinguished. As we draw nearer to Advent, waiting in hope, let the candles and lights on our trees remind us of the One who brings light into our darkness, healing to our broken places, and peace to all who receive Him. May this tree, arrayed in beauty and splendor, remind us, as well, of the life-giving cross of Christ, and may we always rejoice in the Light of Christ that shines in hearts.

† HYMN 270 "Joy to the World" Verses 1 and 4

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

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 and wonders of His love.

† BENEDICTION

Go forth from this place an awakened people, aware of the world's darkness, yet reaching for the Light. Go forth from this place an expectant people, eagerly waiting to see what God is doing next in our world, eager to be a part of the Plan. Go forth from this place prepared and desiring to serve, aware of the pain so many bear, yet confident God will bring healing in this season of life. May the God of peace be with us all, this season and forever. Go in peace.

† BELL RESPONSE "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High" Founds, arr. Bettcher

† POSTLUDE

This morning's altar flowers are given . . .
In Memory of Dr. Frank. L. Weakley
From his wife, Peg

Our steeple will light the sky this week . . .
Happy Birthday to Stephen Popovich on November 28
With love, Grammy

Official Board meets this Tuesday, November 28, at 7:00 p.m.

Women's Fellowship Cheeseball Fundraiser – Tasting and ordering are today after church. Delivery is Sunday, December 10.

Poinsettia order deadline is next Sunday, December 3. An order form is on this morning's bulletin insert.

Attention Fellow Church Members and Attendees: I am collecting Christmas gift (or money) donations for an inner-city Cleveland school. 90% of the students are below poverty level. The grades are Pre K through 3rd. If you would like to donate or would like more information, please see me after church or feel free to call me at (216) 598-6198. Deadline for gifts is Sunday, December 3. Thank you for your support. Beth Giuliano

The Mitten Tree will be in the Gathering Area from now until December 3 for collecting donations of hats, gloves, mittens and scarves for Brookside Center. Brookside is an ecumenical center that provides clothing and necessities to the poor and needy and is located on Pearl Road in Cleveland. After worship on December 3, the Mitten Tree items will be removed. The tree will become the **Family of Faith Tree**, which we will decorate with Christmas ornaments donated by members and friends. **If you have not yet donated an ornament – or – if you'd like to donate an additional ornament, please bring it to the church office and include your name.** Official Board will prepare a tag with your name, attach the tag to your ornament, and hang the ornament on the Family of Faith Tree. Please know that **your ornament will NOT be returned to you**, but it will be part of the Christmas decorations each year. **Please do not bring expensive heirloom ornaments.** Thank you for celebrating with your church family in both the Mitten Tree and the Family of Faith Tree!

UPDATE FROM YOUR PULPIT SEARCH COMMITTEE

To date, we have received 21 ministerial profiles. The Committee has been carefully and prayerfully evaluating the ones we have so far, and are in the process of discerning which of these would be a good fit and a possibility to become our settled pastor. Each profile is between 20 and 30 pages long, and we each read and all discussed the merits of every one. After that, we narrowed the list down to 10, which we are ranking and deciding which of these to further explore. The process continues! Your ongoing support and prayers for us are gratefully felt. Please feel free to bring any questions or concerns to any one of us. Thank you.

Your Pulpit Search Committee

Ted Bickley, Judy Carte, Kristen Clotworthy,
Jim Dettmer, Ingrid Dickson, Sally Herzog, Bill Schneider

Hurricane and Earthquake Relief – The UCC denomination has this link for helping with the relief programs:

http://www.ucc.org/disaster_hurricane_2017_relief

Giving Statements – For a year-to-date statement on the status of your pledge, please call Financial Secretary, Adria Bond, at (440) 227-8410 or email her at succfinancialsecretary@gmail.com. Year-end statement will be mailed in January.

Mission and Outreach appreciates the wonderful support from our congregation in our fundraiser in honor of Veterans Day. A total of \$640.00 was raised. Once the committee agrees on distribution, we will have the news in the Sunday bulletin. Many thanks to all!

Stewardship Update – 63 Estimate of Giving Cards have been received so far for a total of \$106,730. Estimate of Giving Cards will be gratefully accepted at any time. The cards are used to plan the church budget. Thank you very much for your support.

Wednesday Lunch Program really needs volunteers—especially in January when four regular volunteers will go south for the winter. If you can help, please see Kenn Oerkfitz or Betty Craig, or call the church at (440) 238-6697. Thank you!

I want to thank you all for your prayers, phone calls, cards and visits during my operation and long rehab. My surgeon told me it will take 3-6 months for recovery. It has been only little over 2 months. I miss church. Have a blessed thanksgiving. "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." --Philippians 1: 3-6.
In Christ's service, Oommen

OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$3,865
Weekly Offering Received 11/19/2016 \$2,542
Difference (\$1,323)



SERVING TODAY

Director of Music: Elena Taylor **Liturgist:** Bill Schneider
Greeter: Marty Winch **Coffee Hour:** Myron Costin