**WELCOME!**

We are grateful you chose to worship with us this evening.

No matter who you are and where you are on life’s journey,

you are welcome here.

**CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**

**11:00 P.M.**

**CHRISTMAS EVE 2017**

**Rev. Heidi E. Denman McDougall**

Designated Minister

**Strongsville United Church of Christ**

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**†** Please stand as you are able.

**Hand Bell Choir Prelude** “Good King Wenceslas”,

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”, “We Three Kings”,

“Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming”, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**Welcome**

**†** **Responsive Call to Worship** Kenn Oerkfitz

Leader: We gather here to recall the mystery of our redemption.
**People: Though sin drew us away from God,**

 **God never stopped loving us.**
Leader: The prophets told of the coming of a Messiah
 who would initiate a reign of justice and peace.
**People: This promise was fulfilled**

 **in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
ALL: Let us now reflect with joy on this wondrous mystery.**

**†** **Opening Hymn 286** *Once in Royal David's City*Verses 1 , 2

**First Lesson** **Genesis 3:1-13**

**Unison Prayer:**  Lord of mercy, despite our sinfulness, you never stopped loving us. Fill our hearts with your mercy, that we may forgive others. Amen.

**Choir Anthem** “Celtic Christmas Blessing” Craig Curry

**Second Lesson** [**Jeremiah 23:5-8**](http://www.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/23%3A5)Pastor Heidi

**Unison Prayer:**  Lord, you promised that your reign would bring the justice that would never end. May we help to bring this justice in our time. Amen.

**Choir Anthem** “Bethlehem” Lloyd Larson

**Third Lesson**     **Isaiah 11:1-9** Kenn Oerkfitz

**Unison Prayer:** Lord, we wait for the day of your peace. May we help to bring this peace in our families, our communities, and our world. Amen.

**Choir Anthem** “Who Would Send a Baby?” Mary Kay Beall

**Fourth Lesson Isaiah 9:2-6** Pastor Heidi

**Unison Prayer:**  God, you are always with us. May we always trust in your presence and share it with those around us. Amen

**†** **Hymn 245**    *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

**Meditation**

**Fifth Lesson Luke 1:26-38** Pastor Heidi

**Unison Prayer:** Lord, you asked Joseph and Mary to trust in you.
May we come to share in their trust and always rely on you. Amen.

**Choir Anthem** “Christ Is Born This Holy Night” Lloyd Larson

**Sixth Lesson Luke 2:1-7** Kenn Oerkfitz

**Unison Prayer:** Lord, you came to us in humility and vulnerability. May we always show loving care to those around us, especially those in most need. Amen.

**†** **Hymn 256**     *Love Has Come*

**Seventh Lesson Luke 2:8-20** Kenn Oerkfitz

**Unison Prayer:** Lord, you are the giver of all good gifts. May we always remember to share our gifts with others for the glory of your name. Amen.

**Offertory** “Mary, Did You Know?” Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene

 Sharon Metivier, Vocalist

**Eighth Lesson Matthew 2:1-12** Pastor Heidi

**Unison Prayer:** God of power and might, you are beyond all time and space. May we never fail to recognize your majesty and give praise to you in all we do. Amen.

**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.

*Continued on next page . . .*

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!

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.

**Ninth Lesson John 1:1-4; 14** Pastor Heidi

**†** **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.

**†** **Passing the Peace**

**†** **Benediction**

**†** **Postlude**

**SERVING THIS EVENING**

Director of Music – Elena Taylor

Greeters – Kenn and Ginny Oerkfitz

Liturgist – Kenn Oerkfitz