



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(Congregational)
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Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, December 1, 2019 – 10:00 A.M.
First Sunday of Advent
Sacrament of Holy Communion

WELCOME!
We are grateful you chose to worship with us this morning. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.
Please complete your Attendance Card and place it in the offering plate.

† *Please stand as you are comfortable.*

PRELUDE "O, Come Emmanuel" Helmore (adapted)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Irene Joyce

INTROIT "I Was Glad" Whitworth

† **CALL TO WORSHIP**
Leader: We may not know when,
People: But we trust and believe you are coming again, O Lord, healing grace overflowing from your heart.
Leader: We may not know who,
People: But your hope will awaken among the least, the last and the lost.
Leader: We may not know how,
People: But your peace will transform our angry words into warm words of welcome, our bitterness into cups overflowing with Love. Come, Lord Jesus.

† **HYMN 760** "While We Are Waiting, Come"

LIGHTING THE FIRST CANDLE OF ADVENT
Lora Rung, Sam and Braxden Cuyler
Leader: On the first Sunday of Advent, we look for signs of hope in our world. People helping each other. Walls of separation being broken down. Bridges crossing great divides.
People: We see signs of hope in a family, traveling a long way from home, expecting a baby and being surrounded by the compassion of strangers.
Leader: We light this first candle for the hope we find in the world, as we wait for Christ to come into our world and lives in a new way.
People: Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night, our hearts long to greet you, as roses love light. Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage. One candle is lit for the Hope of the age.

HYMN 245 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (verse 1)

A READING FROM THE PSALMS Psalm 122

PRAYING IN SILENCE
Pastor: Lord, in your mercy, **ALL: Hear our prayers. Amen.**

PRAYER RESPONSE "Wind on the Prairie" Mehalko

ANTHEM "Prepare the Way of the Lord" Rowan

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

THE OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" Prichard

† **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**

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS Matthew 24: 36-4

SERMON What's the Hurry?

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

CALL TO RECONCILIATION
Leader: We may not know the time, but our every moment is held in God's hands. We may not do and say what we should or could, but God offers us words of forgiveness.

UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS
People: God who rules our lives, sometimes we struggle to see your hand in our world. When our hopes are turned to ashes, how can we become beacons of light for those in the shadows? Forgive us, God of holy seasons. As the days unfold, may we discover again, the grace which has always been ours. May we taste the sweet goodness of your love, and feed those around us. May we be filled with the peace of your Spirit; may we expect to see you in unexpected places, in everyday moments we often overlook, and may we see the Image of God everywhere we turn. (silent prayer)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON
Leader: Reach out and touch the kingdom, for it is right next to you. Breathe in, and feel the Spirit of peace and hope. Trust and believe this good news: God is nearer than you might ever imagine.

People: Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! We can set aside our differences and embrace everyone, we can seek peace for all in our lives, in our neighborhoods, and in our world. Amen.

A BRIEF GREAT THANKSGIVING

RECEIVING THE BREAD AND CUP
All are welcome to come forward to partake of the Lord's Supper, or the communion servers will come to you if you wish.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION "Give Thanks" Smith

THE LORD'S PRAYER (in unison)
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.

† **HYMN 436** "Freely, Freely"

† **BENEDICTION**

† **RESPONSE** "Two-fold Amen" Whitworth

† **POSTLUDE** "Jesus is Coming" Cothen, setting by Burkhardt

<u>SERVING</u>		
TODAY – DECEMBER 1		NEXT SUNDAY – DECEMBER 8
Linda Ponstingle	Liturgist	Jim Studer
Linda Plain	Greeters	Billie Cantrell
Linda Plain	Ushers	Roy Merkle
Sharon Heinrich	Coffee Hour	Volunteer needed
Tom Foley	Director of Music	Tom Foley
Mike Elkins	Associate Director of Music	Mike Elkins
Sharon Heinrich	Supplemental Organist	Sharon Heinrich

The altar flowers are given—
*In remembrance of our parents and
in remembrance of my twin aunts, Catherine and Frances
Ginger and Ron Rothel*

Our steeple will light the sky this week—
Happy Birthday to Sarah Keenen on December 6th

Happy Birthday today to Lori Kovatich (and her twin sister, Lisa)!

The Worship Team will meet today at 11:15 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE: Our worship services are video recorded each week and posted on our YouTube channel for all to enjoy. Just go to strongsvilleucc.com, go to **Worship**, and click on **Service Videos**.



OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$3,522.02
Last Week's Offering Received \$1,707.07
Difference (-\$1,814.95)

To date for the Stewardship Campaign, we have received 72 pledges totaling \$150,624.00. **If you have not yet returned your Estimate of Giving card, the church will gratefully accept it at any time. Thank you very much for your support.**



CHRISTMAS TEA TODAY

Women's Fellowship is hosting a **Christmas Tea** in Pilgrim Hall today at 1:30pm.

Last Sunday's **Penny Sunday** collected \$177.65 for the **National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP)** which helps foster children in Cuyahoga County with programs, activities, financial support, counseling, placement, and scholarships. Thank you for your generosity! The last Penny Sunday of 2019 will be on Sunday, December 29, and will also be donated to NYAP. Thank you to everyone who saves their spare change—and more—for this important outreach. Our church is truly generous!



DECEMBER'S NEWS LETTER IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK-UP for those who choose to receive a printed version.

OUR PRAYER LIST

Please provide updates for this list to the church office. Thanks!

Long-Term Care or Homebound: Janet Kato at Kemper House, Martha Liebert, Marge McKinney, Karen Rak, Connie Rebar, Trish Shields

Church Family: Dolores Bail, Jen Barry, Joan Beckwith, Elaine Coffey, Rev. Larry and Christina Craig, Sam Cuyler Jr., Sue Hawk, Steve Herzog, Paul Hirt, Carole Kapcar, Debbie Krause, Karl Kuhlenschmidt, Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Millie Lafave, Lacey Marshall, Judy Maur, Laurie Meister, Michele Mhlack, Bill Ritchie, Alysha Rolland, Ginger Rothel, John and Maggie Struhar, Josh Trinckes, Bill Williamson, Sharon Wilson, Sally Vetovitz, Peg Weakley, Claire Wills, Marty Winch

Extended Church Family: Amy Carroll (sister of Marty Winch), Lyla Joy Crowley (great grand-niece of Irene Jannsohn), Joanne Gigliotti (mom of Lou), Rebecca Gordon (niece of Irene Jannsohn), Kim Filiatraut (friend of Sarah Keenen), Elizabeth Fulford (friend of Lora Rung), Jeff and Tiffany Hassel (son and daughter-in-law of Judi Pavisich), Kelly Kling (Strongsville Emergency Food Bank), Rev. Kent Knife (retired pastor from MHUCC), Diane Mason (friend of Lora Rung), Pat Masuga (mother of Dan), Zachary McKeever (great-nephew of Pastor Heidi and Chuck), Mae O'Shea (mom of Sandy O'Shea), Carrol Riley (father of Marjorie Morrison), Terry Robson (friend of the Camps), Mike Rung (brother of Lora), Amanda Shannon (friend of Sarah & Jon Hayes), Brad Williams (friend of Judi Pavisich), Daphne Wilson (niece of Irene Jannsohn)

Our church has an e-mail prayer chain.

Please see Pastor Heidi if you would like to be added.



SUNDAY – DECEMBER 15 – 10:00 A.M.

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Service of Remembrance & Healing

Join us for a time of reflection, remembrance and meditation as together we seek peace during this busy season. All are welcome—especially you.

THANKSGIVING BASKETS

Thank you to everyone who donated food or money, helped sort and pack, or distributed baskets last week. We fed 49 families for Thanksgiving!



HOW CAN YOU HELP OUT?

Sign-up sheets in Pilgrim Hall are waiting for **your name** to be added as a communion server, greeter, usher, coffee hour helper, bread/pastry sorter, or nursery helper! Don't know how to do any of those things? No worries—we will show you everything you need to know! No experience is needed and everyone is welcome to be a part of our church life. **Help will be needed in January/February/March to pick up Panera bakery donations on Monday mornings. Please see Kenn Oerkfitz to volunteer.**



AED IS HERE

The church has purchased an AED with funds from the Memorial Fund. It is located just outside the interior entrance to Pilgrim Hall. Rachel Zielinski and Dale Hawk will soon be instituting a program to teach people how to use it to save someone's life.



MITTEN TREE ~ FAMILY OF FAITH TREE

The **Mitten Tree** will be in the Gathering Area through December 8th for collecting hats, gloves, mittens and scarves for the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless. On December 9th, the hats, gloves, mittens and scarves



will be removed, and 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 become part of the Christmas decorations each year. **Please do not bring expensive heirloom ornaments.**

Thank you for celebrating with your church family in the Mitten Tree, as well as the Family of Faith Tree!

CHRISTMAS JAZZ CONCERT Friday, December 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Join the Strongsville City Jazz Swing Band for an evening of your favorite Christmas tunes with a little toe-tapping swing! Tickets are only \$10, \$5 for kids 6-12 and Free for kids under age 6

Followed by a wine & cheese reception!

(Donations of finger foods will be needed for the reception. Please see **Ingrid Dickson** or **Pam Keenen** if you can help.)



CHURCH CHRISTMAS MAIL BOX



To send Christmas greetings to fellow members and friends, the church "mail box" will again be available in Pilgrim Hall, starting next week. Please remember to check the box for greetings you receive.

Also, please do not put cards in the box for friends who are not in town for Christmas. The church office cannot mail your personal Christmas cards. Cards left after Christmas will be discarded. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT IS DECEMBER 15, followed by a reception and a visit from a friend from the North Pole. Please wear your best (or worst) Christmas sweater, dress, tie, or outfit.

ATTENTION FAMILIES: We will run through our scripts after worship today. Parents, please allow time after church next week, **December 8**, for our children to rehearse the Christmas pageant. If your child can not be a part please let Serena Abruzzino know ASAP so she can reassign parts. Thank you!



FROM THE KITCHEN:

We are in need of gallon pails with lids! If you have any of these buckets, most commonly containing ice cream or sherbet, please consume all the contents (in one sitting, if necessary), and bring the empty container and lid to us!

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED IN ANY WAY AT THE OPEN HOUSE AND LIVE NATIVITY LAST SUNDAY.
We had over 900 people pass through our doors!

WEST PARK KIWANIS CHILDREN'S READING CENTERS IN NEED OF BOOK DONATIONS:



The West Park Kiwanis set up a few children's reading centers in our area and it's been going really well. It's encouraging children to read and they are allowed to take a book with them. The Kiwanis are getting low on books and are looking for anyone who has children's books that would be willing to donate to their reading centers. If you have any to donate, please contact **Herb**

Hampson at **216-287-3871** to arrange pick up or delivery! Thank you from our West Park Kiwanis and the kids in our area!

SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY CHORUS CHRISTMAS CONCERT 2019



The **Southwest Community Chorus** and Chamber Singers will present their 2019 Christmas concert, "Heart of Winter," on **Sunday, December 8, at 3:00 p.m.** in the United Methodist Church at 170 Seminary Street in Berea. This year's performance features our Music Director, **Tom Foley** as director, accompanist **Carol Konet**, and church singers: **Ingrid Dickson, Gary Hackett, Irene Joyce, Bruce Keenen, Pam Keenen, Sarah Keenen, Sharon Maresco, Dave Williams**, and UCC guest singer, **Craig**

Hardy. Tickets are available in advance at a cost of \$12.50 for adults, \$15 at the door and free for children 12 and under. Save a few bucks by purchasing your tickets from any of the above choir members! You'll enjoy the music, and we'll get you in the Christmas mood. We like looking into the audience and seeing our fellow church members. Thank you!

ADVENT EVENTS

Mark your calendars for a busy and blessed Christmas season:

December 1: 1st Sunday of Advent—10 a.m.
WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP CHRISTMAS TEA

December 8: 2nd Sunday of Advent—10 a.m.
PAGEANT DRESS REHEARSAL
December 13: Christmas Jazz Concert
Friday evening at 7:30 p.m.

December 15: 3rd Sunday of Advent—10 a.m.
Christmas Pageant followed by reception and visitor from the North
Blue Christmas Service
Sunday evening at 7 p.m.

December 22: 4th Sunday of Advent—10 a.m.

December 24: Christmas Eve Worship
Tuesday at 7 p.m. & 11 p.m.

December 29: Last Sunday worship of 2019

