



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Congregational)

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Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, December 12, 2021 – 10:00 A.M.

Third Sunday of Advent

WELCOME!

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the best interests of others. – Philippians 2:4

For the safety and comfort of everyone, please continue to wear a mask in the Gathering Area and when entering or leaving the Sanctuary. When you are seated in the pews, you may lower your mask if you wish, while maintaining social distancing. If you are not yet fully vaccinated, we ask that you continue to wear a mask at all times. Thank you.

† Please stand as you are comfortable.

PRELUDE "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" Pritchard, arr. Geschke

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Sally Herzog

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.

BELL INTROIT "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" Lezy, arr. Keller

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Be patient! The time is coming when we will celebrate the birth of Jesus,

People: When we will sing and rejoice, dancing with everlasting joy.

Leader: But for now, be patient, as we wait in this time called Advent,

People: When God speaks through dreams and visions, and we are invited to dance down the holy way into the kingdom.

Leader: For this is Advent, as we prepare to join the world in celebrating the Creator of goodness and hope,

People: When those who limp will teach new dance steps, when together, we stand and sing, "Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming."

† HYMN 255 "Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming"

(If you wish to sing with us, please have your mask in place.)

LIGHTING THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE (JOY)

Barbara White

Leader: Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world; whoever follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Christ's messages of Hope and Love are symbolized in the lighting of the first two Advent Candles; this morning, we light the third candle, the Candle of Joy.

People: In this season of hope, love and joy, we thank God for the freedom to celebrate and worship the One who is worthy of our faith and praise.

Leader: In her innocence, filled with questions and uncertainty, Mary worshipped God, saying, "My soul magnifies the Lord!" This morning, we light the third candle, the rose-colored one, the Candle of Joy.

People: With Mary, we affirm God's presence in every circumstance. We celebrate the Joy of Christ in our lives, even in times filled with uncertainty and anxiety.

Leader: As we light this Candle of Joy, let us sing together, the third verse of...

HYMN 245 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (verse 3)

A READING FROM THE EPISTLES Philippians 4:4-7 (New International Version)

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Leader: The Word of God, for us, the people of God;

People: Thanks be to God.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYER

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.

BELL ANTHEM "Advent Promise" Page

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

OFFERING

Thank you for your continuing commitment to giving freely of your talents and your treasure, as you are able, in service to Christ in the world. Thank you. To give online, please go to:

https://www.myoffering.com/eonline/index.php/dashboard/login/5027

OFFERTORY "I Wonder as I Wander" Appalachian Carol

† 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.

† DEDICATING OUR LIVES AND OUR GIFTS

A READING FROM THE PROPHETS Isaiah 12:2-6 (New international Version)

"Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation."

SERMON "Mysteries and Miracles"

† HYMN 370 "Rejoice, the Lord is King" (If you wish to sing with us, please have your mask in place.)

† BENEDICTION

Be people of joy. Let joy live in your heart, and share the joy of Christ with all you meet. Share joy by noticing someone else's humanity. Share joy by listening to someone's story. Share joy by praying for our world. In this Advent season, together, may we see, feel, and share joy. And as you go out into the wonder of God's creations, share joy with all whom you meet. Amen.

† POSTLUDE "A Child is Born" Jones

SERVING

Table with 3 columns: TODAY-DECEMBER 12, NEXT SUNDAY-DECEMBER 19, and roles like Greeters, Liturgist, Ushers, etc.

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, select Worship, and click on Service Videos.

The altar flowers are given— In loving memory of my Grandpa, Joe Davis, who passed away on this date 25 years ago--Jennifer Sekorky and family

Our steeple will light the sky this week— Happy 50th Birthday to Karen! With Love, Judi & George Pavisich

Happy Birthday to Jonathan on December 18th and Happy Birthday to Rachel on December 30th! Love Mom & Dad (Dianne & John Maringer)

Happy Birthday today to Tom Gaumer!



A NOTE OF THANKS

We thank our Bell Choir, Richard Densmore, Mike Elkins, Tom Foley, and Sharon Heinrich for providing our musical worship today.

OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$3,649.37 Last Week's Offering Received \$2,230.50 Difference (-\$1,418.87)

Thank you very much for your support.



PLEDGE CARDS RECEIVED TO DATE: 56

FREE LUNCH FOR ALL DECEMBER 22nd

Gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches!

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

LIMITED RESERVATIONS--Call

(440) 238-5389

To-go meals will be available.



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT DRESS REHEARSAL TODAY

The Sunday School Christmas Pageant will be next Sunday, December 19th, during our 10 a.m. worship service.

Families, please plan to stay after church for the dress rehearsal today.





## OUR PRAYER LIST

Please provide updates for this list to the church office.

**Long-Term Care or Homebound:** Janet Kato, Marge McKinney, Ruth Milldonis, Karen Rak, Connie Rebar, Trish Shields

**Church Family:** Serena Abruzzino, Joan Beckwith, Eddy Bond, Mary Carey, Elaine Coffey, Kathy Cockrell, Betty Craig, Christina Craig, Sam Cuyler Jr., Sam Cuyler, Sr., Linda Elliott, Tom Foley, Ramona Glaze, Sue Hawk, Bob Heddleson, Steve Herzog, Paul Hirt, George Kapcar, Tony Koussa, Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Millie Lafave, Vicky Masuga, Judy Maur, Reggie McCray, Heidi & Chuck McDougall, Laurie Meister, Roy Merkle, Michele Mihalack, Lola Millhoane, Gary Paul, Judi Pavisich, Joyce Reed, Dorothy & Bill Ritchie, Ginger Rothel, Peter Smith, John & Maggie Struhar, Keith Sullen, Sharon Wilson, Sally Vetovitz, Peg Weakley, Claire Wills, Marty Winch, Gary Zielinski, Mary Ellen & Bob Zimmerman



**Extended Church Family:** Dorene Baldrige, Fred Beba (Theresa's husband), Jackie Berkheimer (Judi Pavisich's friend), Amy Carroll (Marty Winch's sister), Judy Carte's son-in-law, Ryan, Hunter Colao (Barb & Mark Camp's grandson), Ron Colosimo (Judi Pavisich's friend), Mary Ann Csory (Judi Pavisich's friend), John Dickson (Greg's dad), Kim Filatraut (Sarah Keenen's friend), Elizabeth Fulford (Lora Rung's friend), Dana Hardy (Craig's wife), Kelly Kling (Strongsville Emergency Food Bank), Julie Kowell (Sarah Cathcart Wilhoit's friend), Diane Mason (Lora Rung's friend), Donna McDonald (the Ritchies' friend), Zachary McKeever (Pastor Heidi and Chuck's great-nephew), Linda McNabb (Ginger Rothel's sister-in-law), Mae O'Shea (Sandy O'Shea's mom), Thomas O'Shea (Sandy's dad), Carrol Riley (Marjorie Morrison's dad), Terry Robson (Barb & Mark Camp's friend), Mike Rung (Lora's brother), Amanda Shannon (Sarah & Jon Hayes' friend), Chris Vozniak (Lora Rung's friend), Jimmy Walken (Kristen Burgess's uncle), Sandra Wentz (Debbie's daughter-in-law)

Please contact Pastor Heidi if you would like to pray for others via the email prayer chain. [h.e.denman@gmail.com](mailto:h.e.denman@gmail.com)



**FAMILY OF FAITH TREE (in the Gathering Area)** If you have not donated an ornament for yourself/your family, you may bring it to the church office and your ornament will join the others on our tree!

## THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop is OPEN on Thursdays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. with lots of fall merchandise on display. Donations are being accepted, but you must call the church first to arrange a time for drop-off.



**THRIFT SHOP BONUS HOURS: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, December 16, 2021 — 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.**

## CHURCH CHRISTMAS MAIL BOX

To send Christmas greetings to fellow members and friends, the church "mail box" will again be available in the Gathering Area. 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.



## SWINGIN' SOUNDS OF THE SEASON CHRISTMAS JAZZ CONCERT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

LIVE MUSIC featuring Strongsville's Jazz Swing Band and vocalist Cindy Smith! (Masks required) Tickets will be \$10 (\$5 for kids under 10) and we will

have a reception following the concert. **TICKETS ON SALE NOW!**

## BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

This season of pandemic has been tough on all of us. So much loss: of family, of friends-- of freedom to gather and enjoy life. Have you been able to slow down long enough to actually listen to your spirit- and grieve? Join Pastor Heidi for a **Service of Healing & Reflection**. We will take a pause to pray, meditate and grieve as we feel led-- *together*. Invite a friend. Your heart will thank you.



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT THE STRONGSVILLE COMMUNITY BAND: Christmas Concert—Today, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m.

At the Strongsville Middle School Auditorium Come and hear the Band, under the direction of our own Ken Mehalko, with special guest vocalist Brittany Fernandez!



## THE CHRISTMAS FUND



Formerly known as Veterans of the Cross, this special offering of the United Church of Christ provides direct financial assistance to retired and active United Church of Christ authorized ministers and lay employees and their surviving spouses, including pension and health premium supplementation, emergency assistance, and Christmas thank-you checks. A ministry of the Pension Boards, the offering is received throughout December. Offering envelopes will be in the pew racks.

## UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

- The Board of Trustees will meet on the second Tuesday of the month, **December 14<sup>th</sup>** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.
- The Diaconate will meet on **Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.
- The Official Board will not have their regular meeting in December.



## WOULD YOU LIKE A WAY TO SERVE GOD AND SERVE YOUR CHURCH AT THE SAME TIME? How about volunteering to serve on a church board or committee?

The Nominating Committee, through the Official Board, will be looking for church members to fill the many open positions on our boards. 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. Some of the positions that are available include:

**Moderator**, who presides over the Official Board and represents the church in the community  
**Vice-Moderator**, who works in tandem with the Moderator, serves on the Nominating Committee, and enlists volunteers for dinners and other Official Board events.

**Treasurer:** Manages the outgoing finances of the

church in conjunction with the Financial Secretary

**Diaconate**, which oversees the worship operations and church services. The committees of the Diaconate are Acolytes, Altar, Coffee Hour, Funeral, Greeters, Membership, Nursery, Pastoral Relations, Special Events and Ushers.

**Board of Trustees**, which oversees the finances and physical plant of the church. The committees of the Trustees are Building and Grounds, Finance, and Long-Range Planning and Memorial/Endowment.

**Mission & Outreach**, which sponsors projects and our church's benevolence in the local, national, and international communities, including the 5 for 5 offerings through the United Church of Christ

**Stewardship**, which administers a yearly campaign to assess and inspire giving of time, talent, and treasure

**Christian Education**, which oversees the Sunday School and Adult Education programs

**Music Committee**, which supervises all aspects of the Music Ministry

Remember the old but true saying, *Many hands make light work*. Plan to be a part of one of these boards or committees. Thank you for your consideration!

## GIFT CARDS--THINK AHEAD FOR CHRISTMAS!

Please order your Christmas gift cards early!



**AN EASY WAY TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING NEEDS!**

You can order gift cards with **Jim Joyce** or by calling him at 216-267-5043 ahead with your list. **Limited stock is available.** Thank you to those who continue to support this project by purchasing gift cards!

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**FRIDAY – DECEMBER 24 – 7 p.m.**

**Family Christmas Eve Service**

**SUNDAY – DECEMBER 24 – 11 p.m.**

**Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service**

**THE UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONAL  
GUIDE FOR JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022 IS  
AVAILABLE IN THE GATHERING AREA.**

(Pocket-sized or large print)  
Pick up your free copy today!



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