



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Congregational)

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Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, December 18, 2022 – 10 A.M.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

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 stand as you are comfortable.

As you enter the sanctuary, welcome one another. As you hear the chimes ring, settle your mind in silence. As worship begins, welcome God's Holy Spirit.

- PRELUDE "Sheep May Safely Graze" Bach
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Elaine Coffey
INTROIT "Away in a Manger" Murray

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come, Over-flowing joy: People: Tip-toeing into our lives like the children on the holiest of nights.
Leader: Come, Good News of grace: People: Prepare our hearts to welcome you, and all whose hopes have turned to ashes.
Leader: Come, Dreamer of peace: People: So we may pour our lives and gifts into a world in need of reconciliation.

HYMN 760 "While We Are Waiting, Come"

LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE (PEACE)

Jean Bittinger and Jan Meier
Leader: On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we listen for the word of peace. We listen for stories where people stop hurting each other and start helping.
People: We listen for words of peace from leaders, and we remember that Christ is the Prince of Peace.
Leader: We light this fourth candle for the peace we listen for, that sings in our hearts, reminding us that God's reign is near.
People: Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare, for a gift that compels us with justice to care. Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease. One candle is lit for the reign of God's Peace.
Leader: As we light this Candle of Peace, let us sing together:

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.

A READING FROM THE PSALMS Psalm 80:1-7; 17-19 (New International Version)

Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us. Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. How long, Lord God Almighty, will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful. You have made us an object of derision to our neighbors, and our enemies mock us. Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself. Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. Restore us, Lord God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

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.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT When Christmas Comes written by Elena Joyce

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY "Still, Still, Still" arr. Hayes Carol Konet, keyboard

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 7:10-16 (The Message)

God spoke again to Ahaz. This time he said, "Ask for a sign from your God. Ask anything. Be extravagant. Ask for the moon!" But Ahaz said, "I'd never do that. I'd never make demands like that on God!"

SERMON "Go Ahead, I Dare You!"

HYMN 277 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

BENEDICTION Deep peace of the running wave to you; deep peace of the flowing air to you. Deep peace of the quiet earth to you; deep peace of the shining stars to you. Deep peace of the gentle night to you. Moon and stars pour their healing light on you. Deep peace of Christ, the light of the world to you; deep peace of Christ to you. Amen.

RESPONSE/POSTLUDE "The Sussex Carol/Gesu Bambino" Carol Konet, keyboard arr. MacDonald

Table with 3 columns: TODAY-DECEMBER 18, NEXT SUNDAY-DECEMBER 25, and roles like Greeters, Liturgist, Ushers, etc.

The altar flowers are given— In honor of all the lost souls in the world that cannot be with us this season—The Abruzzino Family

Our steeple will light the sky this week— Happy Anniversary to Ryan & Tony Craig on December 24th With love, Grammy To celebrate Jonathan's Birthday today, my mother's heavenly birthday on December 24th, my great-grandson Cayden's Birthday on December 28th, and Rachel's Birthday on December 30th! Dianne & John Maringer

FRESH FLOWERS ARE BACK! Please sign up for 2023 altar flowers on the bulletin board in Pilgrim Hall. Happy Birthday today to Jonathan Maringer! Happy Anniversary today to Carol & Glen Konet!

When Christmas Comes Directed by Sarah Hayes & Rachel Zielinski Music: Tom Foley Narrator: Irene Joyce GUY 1: Oliver Sekorky MARY: McKenzi Abruzzino GUY 2: Luke Giuliano JOSEPH: Aidan Hurtig LADY 1: Matilda Sekorky ANGEL 1: Autumn Schneider LADY 2: Riley Marshall ANGEL 2: Lacey Marshall KID 1: Oliver Zielinski ANGEL 3: Ella Hayes KID 2 Penny Zielinski SHEPHERD 1: Jack Hayes BELL RINGER: Henry Hayes SHEPHERD 2: Christopher Abruzzino HOPEFUL ANGEL: Ember Schneider JOYFUL ANGEL: Alaya Hitchens PEACEFUL ANGEL: Veronica Kerns FAITHFUL ANGEL: Olivia Kerns WANDERING SHEPHERD: Elliott Joyce Song: "When Christmas Comes" Music: Tom Foley Lyrics: Irene Joyce & Ingrid Dickson

Special Thanks to Elena Joyce for writing the script, to our Sunday School teachers Linda Elkins, Lora Rung, and Serena Abruzzino, to Sarah Hayes, Amanda Marshall, and Rachel Zielinski for their assistance, our Sunday School families,



Christmas Pageant



TODAY-- After the Pageant worship service, join us in Pilgrim Hall for Jingle & Mingle-- refreshments,

fellowship, and a special visitor from the North Pole!

FAMILY OF FAITH TREE

It's not too late! 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!

PLEASE NOTE: Ornaments will not be returned, but will reappear on our tree year after year.



A NOTE OF THANKS—

Today, we thank the **Children's Choir, Carol Konet, Tom Foley, Sharon Heinrich, and Mike Elkins** for sharing their music with us today.

OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$3,649.37
 Last Week's Offering Received \$4,151.00
 Difference + \$501.63



Thank you very much for your support.

Pledge cards received to date: 60

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 are in the pew racks.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETING

- The Official Board will have an email meeting in December.



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.

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**.

OUR PRAYER LIST

Please provide updates for this list to the church office.

Long-Term Care or Homebound: Ruth Milidonis, Karen Rak, Connie Rebar

Church Family: Serena Abruzzino, Joan Beckwith, Lloyd Bridle, Mary Carey, Gina Cathcart, Kathy Cockrell, Betty Craig, Christina Craig, Sam Cuyler Jr., Sam Cuyler, Sr., Sue Hawk, Paul Hirt, Charles Jannshon, Bruce Keenen, Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Len Lane, Judy Maur, Reggie McCray, Laurie Meister, Roy Merkle, Michele Mhlack, Lola Millhoane, Kenn Oerkfitz, Gary Paul, Sandy Pogozeleski, Joyce Reed, Dorothy & Bill Ritchie, Ginger Rothel, Tracy Seneff, Peter Smith, Maggie Struhar, Sharon Wilson, Dave Williams, Janis Williamson, Claire Wills, Marty Winch, Rachel Zielinski, Mary Ellen Zimmerman



Extended Church Family: Dorene Baldrige, Amy Carroll (Marty Winch's sister), Ron Colosimo (Judi Pavisich's friend), John Dickson (Greg's dad), Kim Filiatraut (Sarah Keenen's friend), Elizabeth Fulford (Lora Rung's friend), Jennifer Gleichauf (Don & Sandy's daughter-in-law), Dana Hardy (Craig's wife), Tiffany Hassel (Judi Pavisich's daughter-in-law), Julie Kowell (Sarah Cathcart Wilhoit's friend), Ed Kuhn (Sandy & Don Gleichauf's friend), Andrew Majoros (Michele Mhlack's cousin), Diane Mason (Lora Rung's friend), Rudy Matjazic (Judi Pavisich's friend), Donna McDonald (the Ritchies' friend), Zachary McKeever (Pastor Heidi and Chuck's great-nephew), Linda McNabb (Ginger Rothel's sister-in-law), Heather Overman (friend of Judi Pavisich), Mae O'Shea (Sandy O'Shea's mom), Thomas O'Shea (Sandy's dad), Jeff Peacock, Terry Robson (Barb & Mark Camp's friend), Mike Rung (Lora's brother), Tina Serrano (Elliott Joyce's grandma), Amanda Shannon (Sarah & Jon Hayes' friend), Vicky Smith (Venner Clarinets), Bruce Unger (Sally Herzog's friend), Chris Vozniak (Lora Rung's friend), Weston (Chelsea Cathcart's friend's baby), Tom (friend of Judi Pavisich), The people of Ukraine, victims of violence, those affected by severe weather

OPT-IN: Please contact Pastor Heidi if you would like to pray for others via the email prayer chain. h.e.denman@gmail.com

PLAN TO ATTEND THESE 2 LIVE MUSIC EVENTS TODAY!



TODAY at 3 p.m.: The Strongsville Community Band will have their Christmas concert at Strongsville Middle School Auditorium. The concert will include traditional songs of the season including the Ukrainian Bell Carol as a tribute to

Ukraine and Christmas "pop" classics sung by Strongsville's own Cindy Smith. Admission and parking are free.

TONIGHT at 7 p.m.: Christmas Cantata "Peace" in our Sanctuary--Our Chancel Choir, in cooperation with the Columbia United Methodist Church choir, under the direction of **Tom Foley** and accompanied by **Mike Elkins** and **Sharon Heinrich** with special guest musicians (including **Robert Foley, Brian King, and Bob Faulkner**) will present this beautiful cantata. There is no admission charge for this program. Cake and coffee will be served following the performance.

**FREE LUNCH FOR ALL
 Wednesdays 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**



We have room for YOU! Please join us for a nutritious meal and warm fellowship.

Reminder: For the safety of our volunteers and friends, when the Strongsville City Schools are closed on a Wednesday for the weather, the Free Lunch for All will not be serving lunch.

THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop is **OPEN** on Thursdays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. but we will have special bonus hours in December. Come and shop lots of interesting merchandise. Donations are being accepted during those hours, but please try to limit your donations to what you can carry downstairs.



SPECIAL DAYS & TIMES:

Thursday, December 22 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
 Wednesday, December 28 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
CLOSED THURSDAY DECEMBER 29
 Friday, December 30 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

GIFT CARDS

GET YOUR LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING DONE AND BENEFIT THE CHURCH! Limited stock is available for purchase today.



MEMORIAL SERVICE TO HONOR THE LIFE OF CHARLES (CHUCK) McDOUGALL



Thursday, December 29, 2022 at 11 a.m., followed by a luncheon and fellowship in Pilgrim Hall. If you are able to provide a side dish for the luncheon, please see the sign-up sheet in Pilgrim Hall.





Thank you to everyone who supported the Women's Fellowship Candy Sale! We made a profit of \$425 for Laura's Home!

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place Sunday, **January 29, 2023**, and will be preceded by the traditional Pancake Brunch. All are encouraged to attend this meeting.



ALL ORGANIZATIONS: Annual Reports are due via email January 8, 2023.

FINANCIAL OFFICERS OF CHURCH GROUPS:

Please turn in your financial statements to the Auditing Committee through the church office by January 8, 2023.

It is extremely important that all books be audited before the Annual Meeting on January 29, 2023. All organizations are required to submit:

THANKS!

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).



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:

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, Ushers, and Church Family Care Team.

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.



You shop. Amazon gives.

DON'T FORGET!

If you're doing your Christmas shopping online, why not benefit the church while you make your purchases from Amazon? It's incredibly easy!

Here's what you do:

1. Instead of typing amazon.com into your search bar, type in **smile.amazon.com**.
2. Select United Church of Christ Congregational Strongsville by clicking this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-1298100>
3. Shop as you would normally—that's it!

Your addresses, billing information, and shopping cart are still saved and your Prime membership privileges still apply. A small percentage of your purchase price will go toward supporting the church.

NEWS FROM THE KITCHEN

Did you know? The "tip jar" you see next to the coffee on Sunday mornings is there for a reason. The "tips" go directly to keeping the coffee, tea, sugar, creamer, etc., supplied. Your generosity is appreciated!



ANNUAL ALL FAMILY WINTER RETREAT

February 17-19, 2023

Templed Hills Camp in Bellville, Ohio



The Church's Annual All-Family

Winter Retreat will take place on President's Day weekend

2023: 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 8th—will be strictly enforced. Space is limited to 14 families. 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 8th, and the cost is \$10 per meal. Please contact Irene Joyce or Rachel Zielinski if you have any questions.

Here is the cost:

- ADULTS (12 and up): \$75
- CHILDREN (6-11): \$20
- CHILDREN (5 and under): FREE

Important dates to remember:

- JANUARY 8, 2023: Reservations close; **MONEY DUE**
- JANUARY 8, 2023: Special dietary needs reported
- FEBRUARY 12, 2022: Retreat planning meeting in the church after the worship service

