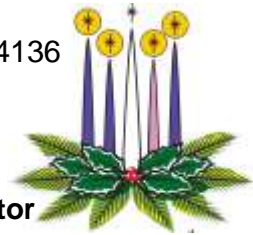




THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(Congregational)
13740 Pearl Road Strongsville, Ohio 44136
(440) 238-6697

StrongsvilleUCC@gmail.com
StrongsvilleUCC.com



Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, December 19, 2021 – 10:00 A.M.
Fourth Sunday of Advent

WELCOME!

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 "Sheep May Safely Graze" Bach

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Irene Joyce
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.

INTROIT "Ding Dong! Merrily on High" Trad. English Carol, arr. Raney

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Wherever we have been, you were with us, Architect of the Universe

People: Wherever we are, you are constantly at our side.

Leader: Shelter of our hearts, wherever we are going, you are there waiting for us.

People: Above the din of violence and war, Prince of Peace, you whisper to us of reconciliation.

Leader: Into lives which are barren and filled with the ashes of disappointment, Hope of Heaven, you come singing of newness.

People: Thanks be to God, Creator of all that is. Amen.

† HYMN 3 "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!"
(If you wish to sing with us, please have your mask in place.)

LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE (PEACE)

Ginny & Kenn Oerkfitz with Rowan Garcia

Leader: Our first three Advent candles symbolize the Hope, Love, and Joy that living in Christ can bring. Today, we light the fourth Advent Candle, the Candle of Peace.

People: We remember the words of the prophets. We await the coming of the One who shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, Prince of Peace. We pray for peace in our hearts, as we work for peace and justice in our communities.

Leader: 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 PROPHETS

Micah 5:2-5a

(New Revised Standard Version)

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. 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.

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

Remembering the Very First Christmas written by Elena Joyce

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 "Greensleeves" with "Coventry Carol" Eng. Melody, arr. Raney

† 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 GOSPELS

Luke 1:46b-55

(New Revised Standard Version)

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

SERMON

"Prequel to the Main Event"

† HYMN 250 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"
(If you wish to sing with us, please have your mask in place.)

† BENEDICTION

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

† POSTLUDE "Good King Wenceslas" *Tempus Adest Floridum*, arr. Raney

SERVING

TODAY – DECEMBER 19

Laura & Dan Winrod
Dale Hawk
Volunteers needed
Tom Foley
Mike Elkins
Sharon Heinrich
Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich
Children/Sharon, Mike, Tom

NEXT SUNDAY – DECEMBER 26

Greeters Irene Joyce
Liturgist Dave Williams
Ushers **Volunteers needed**
Director of Music Tom Foley
Associate Director of Music Mike Elkins
Supplemental Organist Sharon Heinrich
Sound Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich
Special Music Hymn Sing

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**.

Remembering the Very First Christmas

Directed by Sarah Hayes Music: Tom Foley

Narrator: Lora Rung
Grandpa: Mark Camp
Grandchild: Oliver Zielinski
Grandchild: Penny Zielinski
Grandchild: Oliver Sekorky
Grandchild: Summer Zoscak
Grandchild: Alaya Hitchens
Grandchild: Ember Schneider
Grandchild: Elliott Joyce
Joseph: Christopher Abruzzino
Mary: Riley Marshall
Angel: Ella Hayes
Angel: Matilda Sekorky
Angel: McKenzi Abruzzino
Angel: Autumn Schneider
Angel: Lacey Marshall
Angel: Autumn Zoscak
Shepherd: Luke Giuliano
Shepherd: Jack Hayes
Little Lamb: Henry Hayes

Song: "The Very First Christmas"

Music: Tom Foley Lyrics: Irene Joyce & Ingrid Dickson

Song: "Away in a Manger" Music: James Murray

Special Thanks to Elena Joyce for writing the script, to our Sunday School teachers Linda Elkins, Lora Rung, and Serena Abruzzino, to Rachel Zielinski for her assistance, our Sunday School families, and to Herb Hampson for crafting our new manger!

The altar flowers are given—

*For my parent's 70th Anniversary, celebrated in Heaven
Happy Birthday to Michele today!*

Allen Mhlack

*So proud of the children of our church. Great job on the pageant today.
Thanks to the adults who played a part as well. –Serena Abruzzino*

Our steeple will light the sky this week—

*Wishing my church family & friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy,
Healthy 2022! Love you all, Lola Millhoane*

* * * * *

**Happy Birthday today to Michele Mhlack,
and Clay & Jake Williams**

Happy Birthday 57th Anniversary today to Tom & Judy Gaumer!



Christmas Pageant

OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$3,649.37
Last Week's Offering Received \$3,480.00
Difference (-\$ 169.37)

Thank you very much for your support.



PLEDGE CARDS RECEIVED TO DATE: 56

FREE LUNCH FOR ALL DEC. 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.)

OUR PRAYER LIST

Please provide updates for this list to the church office.

Long-Term Care or Homebound: Janet Kato, Marge McKinney, Ruth Milidonis, 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 Mhlack, 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, Mary Ellen & Bob Zimmerman

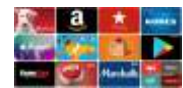
Extended Church Family: Dorene Baldridge, Fred Beba (Theresa's husband), Jackie Berkheimer (Judi Pavisich's friend), Amy Carroll (Marty Winch's sister), Jerry Cergol, (Barb Fraunfelder & Dennis Smith's friend), Hunter Colao (Barb & Mark Camp's grandson), Ron Colosimo (Judi Pavisich's friend), Lou Conte (Judi Pavisich's friend), Mary Ann Csory (Judi Pavisich's friend), John Dickson (Greg's dad), Kim Filiatraut (Sarah Keenen's friend), Elizabeth Fulford (Lora Rung's friend), Dana Hardy (Craig's wife), Marty Hassel (Judi Pavisich's friend), 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



FAMILY OF FAITH TREE (in the Gathering Area)-- 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!

GIFT CARDS—LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS GIFTS!



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!

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.



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE--Tonight 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.



FRIDAY – DECEMBER 24 – 7 p.m.

Family Christmas Eve Service

FRIDAY – DECEMBER 24 – 11 p.m.

Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service



HYMN SING SUNDAY--DECEMBER 26th

First Sunday after Christmas

Celebrate the end of an eventful year with your church family as we worship and sing your hymn requests together during our 10 a.m. worship.

WE NEED YOU IN 2022!

Sign-up sheets are waiting for **your name** to be added as a communion server, greeter, usher, coffee hour helper, or bread/pastry sorter. 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.



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.

Please Note: The Church Office will be closed on Monday, December 27th and Tuesday, December 28th.



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!

ANNUAL REPORTS

Chairs of church organizations: Annual reports are due in the church office the 1st week of January. Please be kind and email your reports on time. Thank you!!!

FINANCIAL OFFICERS OF CHURCH GROUPS:

Please turn in your financial statements to the Auditing Committee through the church office by January 1st. It is extremely important that all books be audited before the Annual Meeting on January 30, 2022. All organizations are required to submit:

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). Thank you for your cooperation.

UCC DISASTER RELIEF--TORNADOES

In response to the recent devastating storms that have decimated parts of the country (especially Kentucky), the United Church of Christ is accepting donations to aid the victims of severe weather. To contribute, please go to <https://www.ucc.org/appeal-severe-storms-2021/> and follow the prompts.