

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
 (Congregational)  
 13740 Pearl Road  
 Strongsville, Ohio 44136  
 Rev. Rebecca Stephenson, Pastor



Church Telephone: (440) 238-6697  
 Email: StrongsvilleUCC@gmail.com  
 Website: www.strongsvilleucc.com  
 Traditional Worship 9:45 a.m. Sunday  
 Contemporary Worship 11:15 a.m. Sunday

## DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

### WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

<p><b>SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6</b></p> <p><i>Sacrament of Communion          Reception of New Members</i></p> <p><b>Scripture:</b> Luke 3:1-6  <b>Sermon:</b> <i>Then Along Came John!</i></p> <p><b>Deadline for Ordering Poinsettias</b>  <i>(Order Form on page 9)</i></p> <p><b>Women's Fellowship Candy Sale</b>  <i>during Coffee Hour between the two services</i></p> <p><b>Advent Study at 5:30 p.m.</b>  <i>in Pilgrim Hall – See page 2.</i></p>	<p><b>TRADITIONAL 9:45 a.m.</b></p> <p><b>Liturgist:</b> Kelly Bickley  <b>Greeter:</b> Linda Plain  <b>Ushers:</b> Linda Plain  <b>Coffee Hour:</b> Cheryl Sobek</p>	<p><b>CONTEMPORARY 11:15 a.m.</b></p> <p><b>Liturgist:</b> Jack Stephenson  <b>Coffee Hour:</b> Cheryl Sobek</p>
<p><b>FRIDAY          DECEMBER 11          7:30 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>BLUE CHRISTMAS          WORSHIP SERVICE          7:30 p.m.</b></p> <p><i>followed by a reception          in Pilgrim Hall</i></p>	<p><i>In this special service we will          remember our loved ones who have          passed away, while we seek hope          during the Christmas Season.          All are welcome.</i></p>
<p><b>SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13</b></p> <p><b>Scripture:</b> Luke 1:26-38  <b>Sermon:</b> <i>Gabriel</i></p> <p><b>Diaconate Cookie Sale</b></p> <p><b>Women's Fellowship Candy Sale</b>  <i>during Coffee Hour between the two services</i></p> <p><b>Advent Study at 5:30 p.m.</b>  <i>in Pilgrim Hall – See page 2.</i></p>	<p><b>TRADITIONAL 9:45 a.m.</b></p> <p><b>Liturgist:</b> Bill Schneider  <b>Greeters:</b> The Bickley Family  <b>Ushers:</b> Needed  <b>Coffee Hour:</b> Rosemary Bechtel</p>	<p><b>CONTEMPORARY 11:15 a.m.</b></p> <p><b>Liturgist:</b> Kenn Oerkfitz  <b>Coffee Hour:</b> Rosemary Bechtel</p>
<p><b>SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20</b></p> <p><b>1 Morning Service ONLY          at 9:45 a.m.</b></p> <p><b>9:45 a.m. – Chancel Choir Cantata</b></p> <p><b>5:00 p.m. – Children's          Christmas Presentation</b>  <i>See page 9.</i></p>	<p><b>TRADITIONAL 9:45 a.m.</b></p> <p><i>Chancel Choir will present          a cantata.</i></p> <p><b>Greeter:</b> Needed  <b>Ushers:</b> Needed  <b>Coffee Hour:</b> Ginny Oerkfitz</p>	<p><b>SUNDAY SCHOOL          CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION          5:00 p.m. in Pilgrim Hall</b></p> <p><i>"Supper at the Inn"</i></p> <p><i>A free, simple meal will be served.  <b>Reservations are required.</b>          Please either submit form on page 9          or call the church, 440-238-6697.</i></p>

<p align="center"><b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> <b>THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>FAMILY SERVICE</b> <b>7:30 p.m.</b> <b>Liturgist:</b> Rachel Kovatich <b>Greeter:</b> Needed <b>Ushers:</b> Needed</p>	<p align="center"><b>CANDLELIGHT SERVICE</b> <b>11:00 p.m.</b> <b>Liturgist:</b> Bruce Keenen <b>Greeter:</b> Needed <b>Ushers:</b> Needed</p>
<p align="center"><b>SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27</b>  <i>Rev. Mendel Adams is our guest minister.</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>TRADITIONAL 9:45 a.m.</b> <b>Liturgist:</b> Lynne McCray <b>Greeter:</b> Ginny Dangelo <b>Ushers:</b> Needed <b>Coffee Hour:</b> Tom Gaumer</p>	<p align="center"><b>CONTEMPORARY 11:15 a.m.</b> <b>Liturgist:</b> Betty Craig <b>Coffee Hour:</b> Tom Gaumer</p>

**ADVENT STUDY**

Pastor Becky will lead a study on “**Christianity’s Impact in Christmas Movies.**” The study began on the first Sunday in Advent, November 29, and will continue on the Sundays of December 6 and December 13 at 5:30 p.m. in Pilgrim Hall. A light meal of soup will be served. Child care will be available, and children will view special movies as well. All are welcome!

**IN SYMPATHY**

Our love and prayers are extended in sympathy to Bob, Lori and Rachel Kovatich on the passing of Bob’s mother Dorothy in Pennsylvania on November 2, 2015. A funeral mass was held November 6 at the Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church in Pennsylvania.

**HOLIDAY COOKIE SALE**



Too busy to bake for the holiday season? The Diaconate will hold its ninth annual Holiday Cookie Sale on Sunday, December 13, in Pilgrim Hall. Come prepared to buy all your favorite cookies. To provide bakery, please sign up on the sheet posted in Pilgrim Hall and bring your treats in half-dozen

or dozen packages. All are welcome to participate!! For questions, please contact Dianne Maringer, 440-476-0925.



**THE THRIFT SHOP**

The Thrift Shop is overstocked right now! If possible, please hold your donations until further notice. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

December is a very busy and colorful time in the shop. We have saved all the Christmas items that have been donated and are now selling them in the shop. We have a variety of indoor and outdoor décor, cards, tree decorations, stands, lights, craft items...we are filled with colorful holiday items. We also have a nice selection of Christmas clothing for the entire family along with coats and jackets to keep everyone warm this winter.

We will only be open the first three Thursdays in December: December 3, 10 and 17; and we hope to see you to shop or visit. We will reopen after the holidays on January 7. Shop the Thrift Shop first for Christmas items!

Just a reminder: If you receive a Christmas gift that you can't use, the Shop will be happy to sell it. New items do not last long on our sale's floor.

**200<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK**

As part of our church’s 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017, we will be printing a new, one-of-a-kind . . . cookbook! We would like to include old recipes passed down through generations from your families and friends. Also we want any new recipes you currently love! Please submit all recipes in an envelope with your name and phone number to Marty Winch, Dianne Maringer, or place under the church office door. Thank you.



## BLUE CHRISTMAS

Friday, December 11, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
in our Sanctuary

A worship service remembering those who have passed away, while seeking hope for all of us during the Christmas season.



After the service, a reception will be held in Pilgrim Hall.

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## SWINGIN' CAROLS OF CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISER CONCERT

for Strongsville UCC's Music Ministry  
featuring the

### Strongsville City Jazz Swing Band

under the direction of Ken Mehalko and Jim Wonnacott  
with vocals by Kim Wasielewski

Friday – December 18, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.

in our Sanctuary, with a reception following the concert

\$10 – 13 years and older      \$4 – 6 to 12 years  
Free – 5 years and under



Tickets are available at the church,  
or please call the church at 440-238-6697.

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## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship will sell candy on the Sundays of December 6 and 13 during coffee hour between the two worship services.

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## MITTEN TREE / FAMILY OF FAITH TREE

The Mitten Tree will be in the Gathering Area from November 29 until December 6 for collecting hats, gloves, mittens and scarves for Brookside Center. Brookside is an ecumenical center that provides clothing and necessities to the poor and needy and is located on Pearl Road in Cleveland.

After church services on December 6 the Mitten Tree items will be removed. The tree will become the Family of Faith Tree, which we will decorate with Christmas ornaments donated by us in previous years. If you have not yet donated an ornament – or – if you'd like to donate an additional ornament this year, please bring your ornament to the church office in early December and include your name. Official Board will prepare a tag with your name, attach the tag to your household ornament, and then hang the ornament on the Family of Faith Tree. Please know that your Christmas ornament will NOT be returned to you, but will become part of the Christmas decorations each year. It is recommended that you do not bring expensive heirloom ornaments. Thank you for celebrating with your church family in both the Mitten Tree and the Family of Faith Tree!

## OUR PRAYER LIST

Hospitals no longer provide names of members who are patients. If you or a family member would like a visit, please call the church at 440-238-6697. Please inform the church of updates to this list.

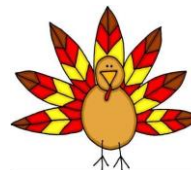
**Long-Term Care or Homebound Members:** Ethyl Jeglie at Elmcroft of Sagamore Hills, Janet Kato at Western Reserve Masonic Community in Medina, Betty Kovach at Parkside Villa, Connie Rebar, Erla Mae Schultz at Medina Village

**Church Family:** Linda Elliott, Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Laurie Meister, Michele Mhlack at Cleveland Clinic, Eileen Pincombe, Denzil Richards, Sharon Ritchie, Barb Stayrook, Keith Sullen, Judy Thurn, Leah Tressa Forget, John Wood

**Extended Church Family:** Ryan Brubeck, Emelyn Carels (sister of Irene Jannsohn), Dylan Churnega (grandson of Ginny Churnega Oerkfitz), Zachary Crouse (grandson of Barbara Morgan), Audrey Curry (mother of Pam Keenen), Rebecca Deeb (Godaughter of Lora Rung), Angie Dickinson (friend of Lola Millhoane), Donna Fargo (mother of Sally Herzog), Kim Filiatraut (friend of Sarah Keenen), Elizabeth Fulford (friend of Lora Rung), Kay Gritti (friend of Lola Millhoane), Irene Hagemeier (niece of Betty Craig), Amanda Hover (granddaughter of Betty Kircher), Phyllis Keenen (mother of Bruce), Pat Kolba (mother of Kelly Bickley), Lily (student of Lora Rung), Maggie (friend of the Bickleys), Pat Masuga (mother of Dan), Dolores Mhlack (mother of Allen), Debbie Morey (sister of Steve Herzog), Carrol Riley (father of Marjorie Morrison), Keith Stewart (cousin of Carol Woodward), Trudie Taylor (sister of Karen Morgan), Bob Tomko (cousin of Ed Sobek), Kathleen Wickline (mother of Darla)

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## OFFICIAL BOARD



The profit from the Turkey Dinner on November 7, 2015, was \$2,667.48. Thank you to all who participated.

Betty Craig

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## SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY CHORUS

The chorus will present its 2015 Christmas concert, "In the Holiday Mood," on Sunday, December 6, beginning at 3:00 p.m. in the Berea Methodist Church, 170 Seminary Street, Berea. The chorus is directed by Tom Foley and accompanied by Carol Konet. UCC singers include Pam Keenen, Bruce Keenen, Jack Stephenson, Gary Hackett and UCC guest singer, Craig Hardy. Children 12 and under are free, and adult tickets are \$10. Tickets are available from chorus members or at the door the day of the concert. Please plan to attend. We love seeing church members in the audience. 🎵

## STEEPLE LIGHTING

To light the steeple for a week, the minimum donation is \$5.00. Information and donation forms are on the bulletin board in Pilgrim Hall. Multiple donations for the same week will be accepted.

### Week of November 1, 2015

*In Remembrance of the Passing of  
My Father Nicholas on November 5, 1994, and  
My Mother Peggy on November 5, 2002  
Gary Paul*

*In Honor of Karen Morgan  
Ingrid Dickson*

### Week of November 8, 2015

*Happy Birthday to Zach Craig on November 13  
With love, Grammy*

### Week of November 15, 2015

*Happy Birthday on November 18 to Katie Rower and  
Happy Birthday on November 20 to Adam Craig  
With love, Grammy*

### Week of November 22, 2015

*Happy Anniversary to Debbie and Larry Wentz  
on November 24, and  
Happy 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Stephen Popovich  
on November 28  
With love, Mom and Grammy*

### Week of November 30, 2014

*In Honor of My Friends, Edie and Richard Budd  
Pastor Becky  
In Memory of Jane C. Graves on Her Birthday,  
December 4  
Dan and Roberta Carpenter*

**Thank you to all who light our steeple!**



## NEWS FROM OUR FINANCIAL SECRETARY

**Barb Fraunfelder**

The following monthly report lists the budget income we need to receive from Pledges and Offerings and the actual amount we received from October 18 through November 15, 2015. This information also appears weekly in our Sunday worship bulletin.

Offering Needed: \$15,950  
Offering Received: (Oct. 18 through Nov. 15) 11,593  
Traditional: \$10,835 Contemporary: \$758  
Difference (\$4,357)

## GIVING STATEMENTS

The giving statements for January 1, 2015, through November 8, 2015, are now being distributed at church. If you don't receive it at church, it will be mailed to you. The purpose of providing these to you now is so that you can see what you have donated this year, see if it meets your goal and determine if there is further giving you may wish to provide yet this year. As always, give from the heart!

## BUDGETS

Attention: Board/Committee Treasurers and Chairpersons

Reminder: We're approaching the end of the year and it's time to take a look at your Board/Committee's budget for 2015 to see where you stand now and create your 2016 budget. Please refer to emails sent on October 15 and November 10 for details. If you did not receive these emails, please contact me. I may not have correct contact information for your organization.

I will again compile all the budgets for each board/committee and set them up in a uniform format.

Here are the Boards/Committees involved:

Advertising  
Christian Education/Sunday School  
Diaconate  
Endowment Fund and Memorial Fund  
Mission and Outreach  
Music Committee  
Official Board  
Organ Restoration  
Stewardship  
Technology  
Thrift Shop  
Women's Fellowship  
Trustees  
Youth Group

Thank you and please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Barb Fraunfelder  
bfraunfelder@ameritech.net or 440-331-3673

## FROM YOUR STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Dear Church Family,

By now, this year's stewardship campaign, *'Tis the Season*, is in full swing! As you continue to prepare for the Christmas season, the committee asks that you remember the reason for the holiday, and the role stewardship plays in it. As you plan, bake, shop, etc., please keep in mind your commitment to the church and what that means for you in 2016. The committee will be on hand between services to answer any questions you may have about stewardship and ways in which you can continue to grow yours.

Please stop by, ask questions, pledge, and receive a token of thanksgiving for growing your stewardship!

Merry Christmas!

The Stewardship Committee

P.S. The Stewardship Committee is still in the process of implementing the online giving option for the church. Although we had hoped for a November launch date, there were a few other areas we wanted to test, first. When it is officially up and running, we will be sure to make an announcement at church! If you have questions or would like a demonstration, feel free to contact Natalie Daniels: [danielsnatalie1@gmail.com](mailto:danielsnatalie1@gmail.com) -or- 216-470-8646.

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## YOUTH RETREAT

A Youth Retreat will take place at Pilgrim Hills from January 22 through 24, 2016. The cost per youth and per adult is \$25.00 per person. Additional information will be forthcoming.

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## THE CHRISTMAS FUND



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 annually on the Sunday before Christmas, which is December 20 this year. Offering envelopes will be available in the pew racks.

## MISSION AND OUTREACH

Sponsors are still needed for the months of November and December 2015 for our child Caroline in India. The cost is \$30 per month. Please see the bulletin board in Pilgrim Hall to sign up. Thank you to all sponsors for their support in 2015.

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## WOMEN'S LUNCHEON

Women's Luncheon will be held Tuesday, December 8, at 11:30 a.m. at Pomeroy's. We will meet at the restaurant. Please contact Betty Bushea to make your reservation, 440-238-6749 or call the church at 440-238-6697.

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## ORC GIFT CARD PROGRAM



All those who enjoy the music of the pipe organ are especially looking forward to the beautiful strains of the Advent and

Christmas seasons. It is with sincere gratitude that we thank those many supporters who regularly purchase the gift cards, which raise funds for the continuing restoration of the pipe organ. In addition, a special Thank You goes to Jim Joyce, for his faithful efforts all year long managing and selling the cards.

If you don't purchase gift cards often, this is the perfect time of year to consider doing so. There is no additional cost to the purchaser of a gift card, the cards are purchased at face value and they are worth face value when used! The percentage the church receives from the program comes from the retailer. Think of the convenience of doing some of your Christmas shopping in just a few minutes during your time of fellowship at church. There is rarely a line and if there is, you can spend the wait chatting with friends! Gift cards make for both fun and practical gifts. Remember, too, that at this time of year, in addition to gift giving, there are often extras for entertaining, food and travel; and we have cards for restaurants, groceries and gas stations, in addition to stores.

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## CHURCH CHRISTMAS MAIL BOX

For those who wish to send Christmas greetings to fellow members, the annual "mail box" will again be available in Pilgrim Hall. Please remember to check the box for greetings you have received.





## ANNUAL REPORTS

Chairmen of church organizations:  
Annual reports are due in the church  
office on December 31. Thank you!!!



## ANNUAL REPORT BOOKLETS

After they are printed and assembled, the booklets will be available for pickup at the church. **If you want a copy mailed to you, please call the church office at (440) 238-6697.**

## ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place Sunday, January 31, 2016, and will be preceded by the traditional Pancake Brunch. All are encouraged to attend this meeting.

## FINANCIAL OFFICERS OF CHURCH GROUPS:

Please turn in your financial statements to the Auditing Committee through the church office by December 31. It is extremely important that all books be audited before the Annual Meeting on January 31, 2016. 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.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

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 serving on the:

**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.

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 in advance for your consideration.

## 2016 ANNUAL ALL-FAMILY CHURCH WINTER RETREAT AT PILGRIM HILLS

Mark your calendars now (less than 3 months away!) for the 2016 Winter Retreat at Pilgrim Hills on President's Day weekend: **February 12, 13 and 14**. The sign-up sheet will be hung on the Pilgrim Hall bulletin board around Christmas. Please contact Charles or Aimée Jannsohn if you have any questions, concerns, suggestions or ideas.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Your help would be appreciated with the following:

### **Blue Christmas Worship Service on December 11**

Bakers, Kitchen Helpers, and Ushers are needed.

Please see the signup sheet in Pilgrim Hall.

### **Jazz Concert on December 18**

Bakers, Kitchen Helpers, and Ushers are needed.

Please see the signup sheet in Pilgrim Hall.

### **Greeters on Sunday Mornings**

Please see the signup sheet in Pilgrim Hall.

### **Ushers on Sunday Mornings**

Please see the signup sheet in Pilgrim Hall.

*Pastor Becky and Jack Stephenson  
cordially invite you to a*

## CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

*at their home – 2214 Substation Road in Medina*

**Saturday – December 12, 2015 – 5:00 p.m.**

*All are welcome!*

