



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Congregational)

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Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, December 22, 2024 – 10:00 A.M.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sacrament of Holy Baptism



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.

BELL PRELUDE "The Bells of Christmas Morning" Ryan

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Joyce Reed

BELL INTROIT "Sing We Now of Christmas" Scholes

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We come to glorify God, to rejoice in the One who saves us.

People: God comes, so we might believe, so we might be blessed.

Leader: Our hearts leap for joy! For God is coming to us in a child.

People: God comes for those who hunger for hope, for those who thirst for grace.

Leader: Holy is the One who comes in God's name, who fulfills every promise of God.

People: God comes to walk with those who follow in faith, to bring peace to a shattered world.

† HYMN 245 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

LIGHTING THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE (PEACE) Carol Foley & Tom Foley

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 of peace on earth, today and every day.

**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.**

PEACE FROM THE PROPHETS

Micah 5:2-5a
(New International Version)

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be our peace."

Leader: The Word of God, for us, the people of God;
People: Thanks be to God.

SHARING 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 "Let There Be Peace on Earth" arr. Sherman

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM



**Austin Tanner Mustee
Son of Gabriella Jasmine Mustee
and Jordan Patrick Mustee
Godparents: Melissa Dawn Mustee
and Ian Taylor Mustee**



WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY WORDS

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FOR THE FAMILY

CONGREGATIONAL PROMISE

Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to the one about to be baptized, as he lives and grows in Christ?

(We promise our love, support and care.)

PRAYER OF BAPTISM

Christ be with you. **(And also with you.)** Let us pray. Gracious God, bless this water by your Holy Spirit. By that same Spirit, save those who confess the name of Jesus Christ, that sin may have no power over them. Create new life in the child baptized this morning, that he may rise in Christ. All glory and honor be to you, Eternal God, who was, who is, and shall always be, world without end. Amen.

BAPTISM OF AUSTIN TANNER MUSTEE

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

Let us pray together:
Gracious God, You have filled the world with joy with the gift of Jesus. Bless this child, Austin Tanner; fill him with your

strength and courage for life's journey; joy for all to see; freedom of love; hope for a new life. May he never be ashamed to confess his personal faith in You. Bless us, O God, that we, too, may be faithful to Your Word, united in the peace of Christ and the company of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HYMN 188 "Praise Him, Praise Him, All Ye Little Children"

OFFERING

OFFERTORY "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella" arr. Beck

† **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

PEACE FROM THE GOSPELS Luke 1:46-55
(New International Version)
"My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."

SERMON "Who am I?"

† **HYMN 277 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!"**

† **BENEDICTION** Celtic Blessing
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.

† **POSTLUDE** "In the Bleak Midwinter" Holst

ATTENDANCE CARDS ARE IN YOUR BULLETIN!
Please take a moment to complete the card that is in your bulletin and place it in the offering plate. You may write prayer requests on the reverse side, if you wish to have us pray for someone and add a name to the prayer chain.



<u>SERVING</u>	
TODAY – DECEMBER 22	NEXT SUNDAY – DECEMBER 29
Teri Barbish	Irene Joyce
Dave Williams	Matilda Sekorky
Jan M., Jean B., Herb H., Bobbie K.	Elaine C. Bill R., Jim & Linda D.
Tom Foley	Tom Foley
Mike Elkins	Mike Elkins
Sharon Heinrich	Sharon Heinrich
Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich	Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich
Bell Choir, Carol Foley	Hymn Sing
Greeters	
Liturgist	
Ushers	
Director of Music	
Associate Director of Music	
Organist	
Video/Sound	
Special Music	

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**, click on **Service Videos**.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Tuesday, December 24, 2024
Family Service of Lessons & Carols—7 p.m.
Traditional Candlelight Service—11 p.m.



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

TODAY at 7 p.m.

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.

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!



A NOTE OF THANKS—We thank our **Bell Choir** and **Carol Foley** along with **Sharon Heinrich** and **Tom Foley** for today's music!

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL:

PENNY SUNDAY: The next Penny Sunday will be on **January 26, 2025** and will go to our Free Lunch for All Program.



The altar flowers are given—
Celebrating the joy of the season!
The Hawk Family



A 2025 SIGN-UP SHEET FOR ALTAR FLOWERS IS POSTED IN PILGRIM HALL. Please note: the cost of flowers is \$18 for 1 vase and \$36 for 2 vases. Reserve your date(s) in memory or in honor of something or someone special.

Our steeple will light the sky this week—
Happy Anniversary to Ryan & Tony Craig on December 24th
With love, Grammy

Happy Birthday today to Marty Winch!

OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$ 3,617.01
Last Week's Offering Received \$ 3,987.50
Difference +\$ 370.49

Thank you very much for your support.

PLEDGES RECEIVED: 58



IN CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

A celebration for **Tom Gaumer's** life is being planned for Saturday, January 11, 2025. Visitation will be at 10:30 a.m. and the service will be at 11:30 a.m., followed by a luncheon in Pilgrim Hall.



UPCOMING BOARD MEETING

- The Official Board will meet on Tuesday, **January 7th** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.



DON'T FORGET! Save a stamp or two and use our **Church Family Mailbox** (located in the Gathering Area). Please remember to check the box for any greetings you may receive.



OUR PRAYER LIST

Please provide updates for this list to the church office.

Long-Term Care or Homebound: Irene Jannsohn, Karen Rak, Connie Rebar, Maggie Struhar

Church Family: Serena Abruzzino, Judy Carte, Sam Cuyler Jr., Brandi Garsteck, Sue Hawk, Corrine Jackson, Bruce Keenen, Sarah Keenen, Kay Konicek, Bobbie & Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Jim Maresco, Roy Merkle, Lola Millhoane, Ginny & Kenn Oerkfitz, Judi Pavisich, George & Joyce Reed, Dorothy Ritchie, Ron Rothel, Tracy Seneff, Peter Smith, Gayle Sperber, Linda Stepan, Richard Sullen, Sharon Wilson, Claire Wills, Marty Winch

Extended Church Family: Yvonne Adams (Judi Pavisich's friend), Linda Allwood (Dale Hawk's sister) Dorene Baldrige, Amy Carroll (Marty Winch's sister), Barbara Davis (Don & Sandy Gleichauf's friend), John Dickson (Greg's dad), Allison Emerson (Colette's sister), Kim Filiatraut (Sarah Keenen's friend), Elizabeth Fulford (Lora Rung's friend), Joanne Gariepy (Sally Herzog's friend), Kathy Ghatti (friend of Ginger Rothel), Jennifer Gleichauf (Don & Sandy's daughter-in-law), Sarah & David Gleichauf (Don & Sandy's grandson & wife), Dana Hardy (Craig's wife), Barb & Dale Holmberg (Tiffany Hassel's parents), Diane Mason (Lora Rung's friend), Linda McNabb (Ginger Rothel's sister-in-law), Sylvia Pakish (Don & Sandy Gleichauf's friend), Jeff Peacock (former member), Zora Roundtree (FL4A volunteer), Mike Rung (Lora's brother), Amanda Shannon (Sarah & Jon Hayes' friend), Vicki Smith (Venner Clarinets), Chris Vozniak (Lora Rung's friend), The people of Ukraine, Sudan, Gaza, and Israel, victims of violence, those affected by natural disasters

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



THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop is **OPEN every Thursday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.** Come and shop lots of interesting merchandise at amazing prices. Donations are accepted during our Thursday

sale hours, but please try to limit your donations to what you can carry downstairs. **Please do not abandon items outside the church doors. THE THRIFT SHOP WILL BE CLOSED ON DECEMBER 26th and JANUARY 2nd.**

THE CHRISTMAS FUND



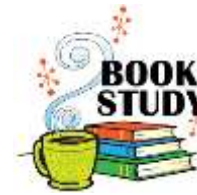
Formerly known as Veterans of the Cross, this special offering of the United Church of Christ provides direct financial assistance to retired and active United Church of Christ authorized ministers and lay employees and their surviving spouses, including pension and health premium supplementation, emergency 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.

FREE LUNCH FOR ALL--Wednesdays

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

A reminder: Donations are welcomed to support the increasing costs of this valuable program. **We received a \$1,000 Make a Difference grant from the Heartland Conference of the UCC.**

THE LUNCH WILL NOT BE SERVED ON CHRISTMAS DAY, DECEMBER 25th or NEW YEAR'S DAY, JANUARY 1st.



BOOK STUDY—TURNING THE PAGE

On **Monday, January 20th**, Pastor Heidi and Linda Elkins will begin a study of a book called *Sisterhood*. The Book Study group will continue to meet on the **third Monday of each month at 7 p.m.**

BE A GREETER! A new sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area is waiting for your name to be added as a greeter. No experience is necessary—we will show you everything you need to know. Being a greeter is a wonderful way to get to know people and welcome them to worship!



IMPORTANT INFO—Do you know where the AED and First Aid Kit are located in the church? They are adjacent to the doorway in Pilgrim Hall, just to the right of the confirmation classroom.

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. 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 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

Chairmen of church organizations: Annual reports are to be submitted electronically and are due in the church office on **January 5, 2025**. Please be kind and email your reports in on time. Thank you!!! Once completed, Annual Reports will be available for pickup prior to the Annual Meeting.



FINANCIAL OFFICERS OF CHURCH GROUPS:

Please turn in your financial statements to the Auditing Committee through the church office by **January 5, 2025**.

It is extremely important that all books be audited before the Annual Meeting on January 28, 2024. 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.

CHURCH OFFICERS IN 2024

**Elected January 28, 2024 **Appointed by the Official Board*

Moderator: Greg Dickson* **Vice-Moderator:** Jen Barry*

Treasurer: Sally Herzog* **Clerk:** Judy Gaumer*

Sunday School Co-Superintendents

Linda Elkins Mary Densmore

Board of Trustees

Bill Giuliano* Chris Goff Mike Elkins* Les Fox*
Herb Hampson* Cathy Hawk Sarah Hayes* Sandy Pogozelski*
Cheryl Sobek Dan Winrod Laura Winrod Rachel Zielinski*

Endowment Fund Subcommittee

Greg Dickson* Dave Williams*

Diaconate

Teri Barbish* Jean Bittinger Elaine Coffey* Bobbi Cook Wayne Cook
Judy Davis Judy Fox* Carole Kapcar Cherie Teagno*
Barbara White Mary Ellen Zimmerman

Christian Education Committee

Serena Abruzzino Mary Densmore Linda Elkins*
Colette Emerson* Sarah Hayes** Amanda Marshall* Lora Rung

Music Committee

Karen Bates* Ingrid Dickson*
Pam Keenen Ken Mehalko Mike Willis
ex officio: Sharon Heinrich Tom Foley Mike Elkins

Stewardship Committee

Sue Gigliotti* Judi Pavisich Bill Schneider Rob Toth* Mary Willis

Mission and Outreach Committee

Diana Creecy* Sarah Hayes* Lora Rung
Jennifer Sekorky* Peter Smith Bev Wehr* Mary Ellen Zimmerman

ANNUAL MEETING



The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place Sunday, **January 26, 2025**, and will be preceded by the traditional Pancake Brunch. All are encouraged to attend this meeting.

PAPER RECYCLING!

Our paper recycling bin is serviced by Royal Oak Recycling. Please continue to deposit your **FLATTENED** cardboard and your papers in the bin. However, **please do no place papers/cardboard outside the bin if it's full.** Thanks!



ANNUAL ALL FAMILY WINTER RETREAT
February 14-16, 2024 Inspiration Hills Camp in Burbank, Ohio



MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW!
MARK YOUR FEBRUARY

CALENDAR FOR THE RETREAT!

The Church's Annual All-Family Winter Retreat will take place on President's Day weekend 2025. This year, we are at a new location and things will be a little different. 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 7th—will be strictly enforced. Space is limited to 12 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 7th, 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 7, 2025: Reservations close; **MONEY DUE**
FEBRUARY 4, 2025: Retreat planning meeting in the church after the worship service

GIFT CARDS

PLEASE DON'T FORGET ABOUT THIS EASY, CONVENIENT PROGRAM THAT BENEFITS THE CHURCH. ORDER NOW FOR CHRISTMAS! You can order gift cards by calling **Jim Joyce** at 216-346-4161 in advance with your order. **Limited stock is available for purchase on Sunday mornings.**



2025 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN—it's not too late!

What do you bring to the campfire?

United Church of Christ 2025 Estimate of Giving

In recognition of God's many blessings to me, I am happy to join with others in the following commitment for 2025:

Name _____

Address _____

I plan to give \$_____ each

week month other _____ to be used for

Our Congregation's Ministries and Operations \$_____

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) \$_____

I would like to talk with someone from the Endowment Committee about including the church or church-related institution in my Will.

I would like to talk with someone about using the automatic deduction plan from my checking/savings account.

Signed _____

