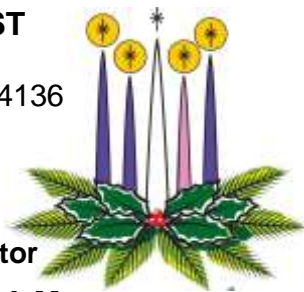




THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(Congregational)
13740 Pearl Road Strongsville, Ohio 44136
(440) 238-6697

StrongsvilleUCC@gmail.com
StrongsvilleUCC.com



Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, December 24, 2023 – 10:00 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.

PRELUDE "The Gift of Love" arr. Raney

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Irene Joyce

INTROIT "Song of Peace" Donnelly/Strid

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: O come, early morning Mist, slowly moving over our lives to swaddle us in your peace, as we seek to walk through these moments.

People: O come, gently falling Grace, calming us in this season that has gotten so out of control we cannot hear the angels sing, or see the shepherds pointing the way.

Leader: O come, Walker with the winds, bring cooling peace to our over-heated fears

of the future; knock us off our feet so we can make angels in the snow, surrounded by children.

People: O come, Flinger of galaxies, so that as we gaze on them in the silence of holiness, our path to Bethlehem, as well as your heart, might be illuminated for us

Leader: O Come, Imagination beyond compare, as you gather us up with all of creation

to dance with joy around the wonder of your love.

People: O come to us, and live with us, this day and forever, Emmanuel. O come!

† HYMN 245 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE (PEACE)

Pam & Doug Hansen

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.

HYMN "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

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 PSALMS

Psalm 89:1-11; 52

(New International Version)

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever.

With my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.

I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,

I have sworn to David my servant,

'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'"

The heavens praise your wonders, Lord, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.

For who in the skies above can compare with the Lord?

Who is like the Lord among the heavenly beings?

In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared, more awesome than all who surround him.

Who is like you, Lord God Almighty? You are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.

You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.

The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth;

You founded the world and all that is in it.

Praise be to the Lord forever!

Amen and Amen.

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.

ANTHEM "We're Bringing You Good News!" Larson

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY "Gesù Bambino" Yon
Craig Hardy, vocalist

† 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: 28-36

(New International Version)

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be with me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

SERMON

"Obedience 101"

† 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.

† RESPONSE/POSTLUDE "What Wondrous Love is This?" arr. Raney

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.

SERVING

TODAY – DECEMBER 24

NEXT SUNDAY – DECEMBER 31

Judy & Roger Davis	Greeters	Susann Lerch
Dave Williams	Liturgist	Tom Gaumer
Elaine Coffey	Ushers	Volunteers needed
Tom Foley	Director of Music	Tom Foley
Mike Elkins	Associate Director of Music	Mike Elkins
Sharon Heinrich	Organist	Sharon Heinrich
Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich	Sound	Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich
Chancel Choir, Carol Foley	Special Music	McKenna Hassel

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**.



A NOTE OF THANKS—

We thank our **Chancel Choir**, along with **Craig Hardy, Carol Foley, Mike Elkins, Sharon Heinrich, and Tom Foley** for their music today.

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A 2024 SIGN-UP SHEET FOR ALTAR FLOWERS IS POSTED IN PILGRIM HALL. (Please note: the cost of flowers will be \$18 for 1 vase and \$36 for 2 vases beginning in January 2024.)



Our steeple will light the sky this week—

Happy Anniversary today to Ryan and Tony Craig!

With love, Grammy

Wishing my church family and friends a very blessed, healthy, happy Christmas and New Year—Lola Millhoane

Wishing a Merry Christmas to all! May 2024 bring you love, joy, hope and peace.--Barb Fraunfelder and Dennis Smith

Happy Birthday today to Audrey Mills!

TONIGHT!

**TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
OF LESSONS AND CAROLS 10 P.M.**



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**NEW YEAR'S EVE HYMN SING—
December 31st at 10 a.m.!**

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FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL:

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL FAMILIES, WHO MADE OUR PAGEANT LAST WEEK SUCH A SUCCESS!

PENNY SUNDAY--The next Penny Sunday will be January 28, 2024.



OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$ 3,617.01
Last Week's Offering Received \$ 3,010.25
Difference (\$ 606.76)



Thank you very much for your support.
PLEDGE CARDS RECEIVED TO DATE: 50



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.

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.



OUR PRAYER LIST

Please provide updates for this list to the church office.

Long-Term Care or Homebound: Joan Beckwith, Laurie Meister, Ruth Milidonis, Karen Rak, Connie Rebar, Maggie Struhar

Church Family: Serena Abruzzino, Jennifer Cockrell, Sam Cuyler Jr., Sue Hawk, Irene Jannsohn, Carole Kapcar, Bobbie & Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Jim Maresco, Reggie

McCray, Roy Merkle, Lola Millhoane, Kenn Oerkfitz, Gary Paul, George Pavisich, Dan Ponstingle, Joyce Reed, Dorothy & Bill Ritchie, Peter Smith, Sharon Wilson, Claire Wills, Marty Winch

Extended Church Family: Edward and Sharon Acton (Sally Herzog's friends), Dorene Baldridge, Ron & Yvonne Adams (Judi Pavisich's friends), Chris Anderson (Linda & Mike Elkins' son-in-law), Amy Carroll (Marty Winch's sister), Angie Colosimo (Judi Pavisich's friend), Barbara Davis (Don & Sandy Gleichauf's friend), Kim Filiatraut (Sarah Keenen's friend), Elizabeth Fulford (Lora Rung's friend), Joanne Gariepy (Sally Herzog's friend), Kathy Ghetti (friend of Ginger Rothel), Dana Hardy (Craig's wife), Diane Mason (Lora Rung's friend), Rudy Matjazic (Judi Pavisich's friend), Donna McDonald (the Ritchies' friend), Linda McNabb (Ginger Rothel's sister-in-law), Thomas O'Shea (Sandy's dad), 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), Tom (friend of Judi Pavisich), Don Wills (friend of Judi Pavisich), The people of Ukraine, 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

To the Glory of God,
the poinsettias are given...



In honor of our loved ones in heaven and the lost souls with no one for the holidays. Most importantly, Happy Birthday, Jesus!

Abruzzino-Krisak Familia

In honor of all my grandchildren with joy!
Teri Barbish

With love to my parents, Bill and Dorothy Ritchie
In memory of my grandparents, Pete & Edna Lansell
and Leroy & Rusha Ritchie
Gina Cathcart

In loving memory of Debbie Churnega Krause-miss you!
With Love, Mom & Kenn

In loving memory of the Davis-Heglund family
In loving memory of the Penasa-Demichei family
Roger and Judy Davis

In memory of family and friends
Jim and Linda Dettmer

In loving memory of Aimee J. Jannsohn, Eric R. Jannsohn,
Michael E. & Deborah Dickson, and Brooke M. Akins
The Dickson-Joyce-Jannsohn Family

In loving memory of Bill Fraunfelder
Barb Fraunfelder

In memory of my beloved husbands John Kompa and Don Garber
and Mom & Dad, Mary & John Sainsbury
Nancy Garber

In memory of our parents and grandparents, Donald & Betty Babics
The Gigliotti and Kubancik Families

In memory of our parents and grandparents, Joanne & Louis Gigliotti, Sr.
The Gigliotti Family

In memory of our parents and grandparents Don & Lois Winch
and William & Ruth Giuliano-always in our hearts
Bill, Beth, and Luke Giuliano
Nicole and Brett Wade

In loving memory of Charles & Thelma Hawk
In loving memory of Richard & Sally Mack
Dale and Cathy Hawk

In loving memory of Erik O. Jannsohn
and Mary Joyce-Smith & James J. Joyce, Sr.
The Joyce-Jannsohn-Dickson Family

In loving memory of June & Joseph Harshey, Frank & Rose Kapcar
and Linda Kapcar
Frank and Carole Kapcar

Merry Christmas, Trevor and Abby!
Love, Aunt Sarah Keenen

In memory of Uncle Jimmy and mom, Caroline Davis
Kristen and Brian Kohler

In loving memory of Charles Angus McDougall, aka the Pastor's Wife.
Pastor Heidi

With love and blessings to all of our family and friends
Judi and George Pavisich

In memory of Gregory Perciak, Sarah Perciak, Max & Elsie DeWitt,
Elton & Virginia Bedford,
Tom and Debbie Perciak

In loving memory of our grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Clements
In loving memory of our parents, Roger and Lorna Robinson
In loving memory of our aunt, Rhea Clements
Becky and Bill Robinson

In loving memory of Joe & Marian Davis, Rudy & Mary Penasa
Dolores & Orrville Marshall, and Betty Sekorky
The Sekorky Family

In memory of Rev. & Mrs. George A. Smith
In honor of all Special Olympians
Peter Smith

The Blessings of Christmas on all our church family and friends, and in loving memory of Bernice Cooper, Tad and Gen Thorn, Suzanne Tressa, Charles Garner, Mike, Lucan, Jan Stough, and in honor of Alan Van Kramer
Sandy O'Shea, Doug, Schyler, Devin, and Leo Thorn

With loving thoughts and prayers for our grandchildren (all 10 of them)
Barbara and John Toth

In loving memory of Steve Herzog
Bill & Jane Herzog and Tom & Donna Fargo
Sarah Toth

In loving memory of those who have passed before us
Carol Woodward

In loving memory of Bob Zimmerman
Mary Ellen Zimmerman



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:

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 REPORT

Chairs of church organizations: Annual reports are to be submitted electronically and are due in the church office on **January 7, 2024**. 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.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place Sunday, **January 28, 2024**, 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 **January 7, 2024**.

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.



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

Our Free Lunch for All Program welcomes everyone to enjoy a nutritious meal and warm fellowship.

THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop is **OPEN** on Thursdays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Come and shop lots of interesting merchandise at amazing prices. Donations are being accepted during those hours, but please try to limit your donations to what you can carry downstairs. **Thanks, as always, to our dedicated volunteers!**

PLEASE NOTE: THE THRIFT SHOP WILL BE CLOSED ON JANUARY 4th & 11th, 2024

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The Strongsville Food Bank is searching for a coordinator for the Food Bank. They are looking for a community-focused, compassionate, and detail-oriented individual who will oversee all aspects of the Strongsville Food Bank, guaranteeing smooth operations.

- Average weekly work hours: 30 hours, some weekends and evenings;

Compensation: \$30-\$35k

Qualifications for this job include: a strong desire to help others, ability to effectively communicate with community members as well as volunteers, organizational skills and Word/Excel knowledge for record keeping. If you are interested or want more information about this position, please ask for a complete job description or send a resume and cover letter to strongsvillefoodbank@gmail.com

DO MORE IN 2024! New sign-up sheets in the Gathering Area are waiting for your name to be added as a greeter or usher. No experience is necessary—we will show you everything you need to know! Everyone is welcome to be a part of our church life.



PANERA PALS

Are you able to give less than an hour of your time on a Monday or Friday morning to pick up and/or sort Panera bread, bagels, and pastries? Please contact the church office if you can help with this worthwhile ministry.

CHURCH OFFICERS FOR 2023 **Elected January 29, 2023*

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

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

Sunday School Co-Superintendents

Linda Elkins Mary Densmore*

Board of Trustees

Diana Creecy Chris Goff* Herb Hampson Cathy Hawk

Sarah Hayes Cheryl Sobek* Dan Winrod*

Laura Winrod* Rachel Zielinski

Endowment Fund Subcommittee

Greg Dickson Linda Stepan Dave Williams*

Diaconate

Teri Barbish Jean Bittinger* Elaine Coffey

Bobbi Cook* Wayne Cook* Judy Davis*

Carole Kapcar* Sharon Maresco Linda Ponstingle Cherie Teagno

Barbara White* Mary Ellen Zimmerman*

Christian Education Committee

Serena Abruzzino* Mary Densmore*

Linda Elkins Amanda Marshall Lora Rung

Music Committee

Richard Densmore Ingrid Dickson

Pam Keenen Ken Mehalko* Mike Willis*

ex officio: Sharon Heinrich Tom Foley Mike Elkins

Stewardship Committee

Judi Pavisich Bill Schneider* Richard Taylor

Rob Toth Mary Willis*

Mission and Outreach Committee

Judy Carte* Sarah Hayes Bobbie Krisak Lora Rung*

Jennifer Sekorky Peter Smith* Bev Wehr

Mary Ellen Zimmerman*



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.

2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN --M.A.P.L.E.

M- Making and moving
A- Accepting and Acknowledging
P- People
L- Learning and Loving
E- Encompassing



Strongsville United Church of Christ
2024 Estimate of Giving

In recognition of God's many blessings to me, I am happy to join with others in the following commitment for 2024:

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 _____ Date ____/____/____