

# THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Congregational)

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Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, December 28, 2025 – 10 A.M.

Sacrament of Holy Baptism  
Hymn sing!

## 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** "One Small Child" arr. Larson

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS** Irene Joyce

**CONGREGATIONAL INTROIT 275** "Sing We Now of Christmas" (v. 1, 2)

**† CALL TO WORSHIP from Psalm 150**

Leader: Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.

**People: Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.**

Leader: Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre.

**People: Praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe;**

Leader: Praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.

**People: Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.**

**ALL: Praise the Lord!**

**† CHRISTMAS MEDLEY I**

265 "The First Noel" (v. 1, 6)

277 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (v. 1, 3)

258 "Go Tell it on the Mountain" (v. 1)

**A READING FROM THE PROPHETS**

**Isaiah 52:7-10**

(New International Version)

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings,

who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy.

When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes.

Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

**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.

## CHRISTMAS MEDLEY II

225 "Come Christians, Join to Sing" (v. 1)

249 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (v. 1, 3)

256 "Love Has Come!" (vv. 1, 2, 3)

## A READING FROM THE GOSPELS Luke 2:41-52 (The Message)

Every year Jesus' parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up as they always did for the Feast.

When it was over and they left for home, the child Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents didn't know it. Thinking he was somewhere in the company of pilgrims, they journeyed for a whole day and then began looking for him among relatives and neighbors. When they didn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem looking for him.

The next day they found him in the Temple seated among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. The teachers were all quite taken with him, impressed with the sharpness of his answers.

But his parents were not impressed; they were upset and hurt. His mother said, "Young man, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been half out of our minds looking for you."

He said, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I had to be here, dealing with the things of my Father?"

But they had no idea what he was talking about. So he went back to Nazareth with them, and lived obediently with them. His mother held these things dearly, deep within herself. And Jesus matured, growing up in both body and spirit, blessed by both God and people.

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE



### THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

**Madison Paige Mustee**

Daughter of Melissa Dawn Mustee  
and Ian Taylor Mustee

Godparents: Michael Sobotka and Janine Sobotka



## 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 Madison and her family, as she is baptized and learns to live and grow in the way of the 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 she 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 MADISON PAIGE MUSTEE

## † CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

Let us pray together:

Gracious God, you have filled the world with joy with the gift of Jesus. Bless this child, Madison Paige; fill her with your strength and courage for life's journey; joy for all to see; freedom of love; hope for a new life. May she never be ashamed to confess her 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, All Ye Little Children"

## OFFERING

## OFFERTORY

"A Merry Medley"

arr. Elkins

## † DOXOLOGY 815

Tune: *Old Hundredth*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, all creatures here below. Praise Him above, ye heav'ly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

## † DEDICATING OUR LIVES AND OUR GIFTS

## † CHRISTMAS MEDLEY III

250 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (v. 1, 4)

251 "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" (v. 1, 4)

259 "Angels from the Realms of Glory" (v. 1, 5)

## PROMISES FROM REVELATION *Revelation 21:1-7* (The Message)

I saw Heaven and earth new-created. Gone the first Heaven, gone the first earth, gone the sea. I saw Holy Jerusalem, new-created, descending resplendent out of Heaven, as ready for God as a bride for her husband. I heard a voice thunder from the Throne: "Look! Look! God has moved into the neighborhood, making his home with men and women! They're his people, he's their God. He'll wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good—tears gone, crying gone, pain gone—all the first order of things gone."

The Enthroned continued, "Look! I'm making everything new."

Write it all down—each word dependable and accurate."

Then he said, "It's happened. I am A to Z. I am the Beginning, and I am the Conclusion. From the Water-of-Life I give freely to the thirsty. Victors in Christ inherit all this. I will be God to them, they'll be sons and daughters to me."

## † HYMN 589

"Here I am, Lord" (All verses)

## † BENEDICTION

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. Amen.

## † POSTLUDE

"Ding Dong! Merrily on High"

arr. Raney

## SERVING TODAY – DECEMBER 28

## SERVING

## NEXT SUNDAY – JANUARY 4, 2026

Judi Pavisich

Greeters

Linda Plain

Ingrid Dickson

Liturgist

Elaine Coffey

Carole Kapcar

Head Usher

Sharon Heinrich

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

Hymn Sing!

Special Music

Ken Mehalko, Music Team

**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](http://strongsvilleucc.com), select **Worship**, and click on **Service Videos**.

**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.



**A NOTE OF THANKS**—We thank **Mike Elkins** and **Sharon Heinrich** for today's music!

**CHURCH CHRISTMAS MAIL BOX**  
Although it's after Christmas, please remember to check the box for greetings you have received. The church office cannot mail your personal Christmas cards. Cards left after January 11<sup>th</sup> will be discarded. Thank you.



**FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL:**

**PENNY SUNDAY:** The next Penny Sunday will be on **January 25, 2026**.



**THE CHRISTMAS FUND—LAST CHANCE**

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.

**A 2026 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—

Wishing our members and friends a healthy, prosperous 2026!



**OFFERINGS RECEIVED**

Weekly Offering Needed \$ 4,359.00  
Last Week's Offering Received \$ 2,567.24  
Difference -\$1,791.76

**Thank you very much for your support.**  
**PLEDGES RECEIVED:** 58



**THREE WITH GLEE!**

**Capital Campaign:** We currently have \$48,100.08 in our capital campaign account. The automatic door openers have been installed! The Trustees are scheduling the painting of Pilgrim Hall, which needs to happen prior to dealing with the acoustics in that room. Things are happening, but we still have more projects on the list. Please make sure you designate your donation for "Capital Campaign." Thanks for your continuing support.



**OUR PRAYER LIST**

Please provide updates for this list to the church office.

**Long-Term Care or Homebound:** Irene Jannsohn, Connie Rebar  
**Church Family:** Serena Abruzzino, Barb Bridle, Mark Camp, Judy Carte, Elaine Coffey, Betty "Grammy" Craig, Sam Cuyler Jr., Roz Fotos, Sue Hawk, Bruce Keenen, Erv Koch, Carol Konet, Bobbie & Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Roy Merkle, Amanda Moulton, Ginny & Kenn Oerkfitz, George & Joyce Reed, Dorothy Ritchie, Ron Rotherl, Jennifer Sekorky, Tracy Seneff, Peter Smith, Bruce Sperber, Linda Stepan, Debbie Wentz, Claire Wills, Marty Winch



**Extended Church Family:** Amy Carroll (Marty Winch's sister), Barbara Davis (Don & Sandy Gleichauf's friend), Allison Emerson (Colette's sister), Kim Filiatraut (Sarah Keenen's friend), Elizabeth Fulford (Lora Rung's friend), Joanne Gariepy (Sally Herzog's friend), Kathy Ghetti (friend of Ginger Rotherl), Jennifer Gleichauf (Don & Sandy's daughter-in-law), Sarah & David Gleichauf (Don & Sandy's grandson & wife), Michaelene Hanrahan (Jim Joyce's sister), Dana Hardy (Craig's wife), Tiffany Hassel (Judi Pavisich's daughter-in-law), Barb & Dale Holmberg (Tiffany Hassel's parents), George Love (friend of the church), Diane Mason (Lora Rung's friend), Linda McNabb (Ginger Rotherl's sister-in-law), Sylvia Pakish (Don & Sandy Gleichauf's friend), Jeff Peacock (former member), Amanda Shannon (Sarah & Jon Hayes' friend), Vicki Smith (Venner Clarinets), Chris Vozniak (Lora Rung's friend), Don & Pauline Wills (Judi Pavisich's friends), the people of Ukraine, Sudan, Gaza, and Israel, victims of violence, those affected by natural disasters, First Responders

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

**CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

Are you interested in learning more about the **United Church of Christ and becoming a member?**



Please let Pastor Heidi or the church office know if you would like to join our congregation in membership. We will be welcoming new members soon.



**THRIFT SHOP**  
Please do not abandon items outside the church doors. **THE THRIFT SHOP WILL BE CLOSED ON JANUARY 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**FREE LUNCH FOR ALL**

**THE LUNCH WILL NOT BE SERVED ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, DECEMBER 31<sup>st</sup>.**



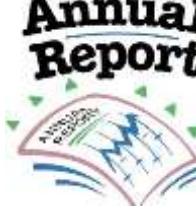
**SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER—January 11<sup>th</sup>**

Please plan to join us in worship on Sunday, **January 11, 2026**, when we will have a special guest speaker, Rev. David Long-Higgins, the conference minister for the Heartland Conference of the UCC. Dave has served in a wide variety of capacities throughout the United Church of Christ. He is a graduate of Heidelberg University with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and music (violin performance). His Master of Divinity was earned at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in New Brighton, Minnesota. He is also a graduate of the Wellstreams Spiritual Direction Program of the Spirituality Network of Columbus (Ohio). Prior to beginning his role with the Conference, Dave was a parish pastor for over 30 years. Dave and his wife Beth, who is also an ordained UCC clergyperson have two adult children, Andrew and Hannah. When not on the ministry trail Dave enjoys movies, playing violin and guitar, bicycling, travel, writing poetry/prayers, and photography.

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**IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR. . . . ANNUAL REPORTS**

**Chairmen of church organizations:** Annual reports are to be submitted electronically and are due in the church office on **January 7, 2026**. 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 25, 2026**, and will be preceded by the traditional Pancake Brunch. All are encouraged to attend this meeting, but only registered members are entitled to vote.

**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 ALL FAMILY WINTER RETREAT**

**February 13-15, 2026**

Inspiration Hills Camp in Burbank, Ohio



**Inspiration Hills**  
CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER

**SIGN-UPS WILL BE POSTED SOON— PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US!**

## FINANCIAL OFFICERS OF CHURCH GROUPS:

Please turn in your financial statements to the Auditing Committee through the church office by **January 7, 2026**.

It is extremely important that all books be audited before the Annual Meeting on January 25, 2026. 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.

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## THANK YOU TO OUR CHURCH OFFICERS 2025

\*Elected January 26, 2025    \*\* appointed by Official Board

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

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

**Sunday School Superintendent:** Linda Elkins

### Board of Trustees

Karen Bates\*\* Bill Giuliano Chris Goff\*  
Mike Elkins Les Fox Herb Hampson Cathy Hawk\*  
Sandy Pogozelski Cheryl Sobek\*  
Alex Tomoff\* Mike Willis\* Rachel Zielinski

### Endowment Fund Subcommittee

Greg Dickson\* Dave Williams\*

### Diaconate

Teri Barbish Jean Bittinger\* Elaine Coffey\*  
Bobbi Cook\* Wayne Cook\* Judy Davis\*  
Judy Fox Pam Heimburger\* Lynne McCray\*  
Linda Ponstingle\* Lora Rung\* Cherie Teagno

### Christian Education Committee

Linda Elkins Colette Emerson Dale Hawk\*  
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

Ingrid Dickson\* Sue Gigliotti Linda Stepan\*  
Rob Toth Sarah Toth\* Dave Williams\*

### Mission and Outreach Committee

Gina Cathcart\* Bobbi Cook\*\* Myron Costin\*  
Diana Creecy Cathy Hawk\* Sarah Hayes  
Lora Rung\* Peter Smith Mary Willis\*  
Mary Ellen Zimmerman



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## UPCOMING BOARD MEETING

- The Official Board will meet on **January 6<sup>th</sup>** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.

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**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.

## ANNUAL ALL FAMILY WINTER RETREAT

February 13-15, 2026

Inspiration Hills Camp in Burbank, Ohio



The Church's Annual All-Family Winter Retreat will take place on President's Day weekend 2026. 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 18<sup>th</sup>**—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 11<sup>th</sup>, 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): \$80

CHILDREN (6-11): \$20

CHILDREN (5 and under): FREE

### Important dates to remember:

JANUARY 18, 2026: Reservations close; **MONEY DUE**

FEBRUARY 1, 2026: Retreat planning meeting in the church after the worship service



**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!