



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Congregational)

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Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, December 31, 2023 – 10 A.M.

New Year's Eve



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

"Mary, Did You Know?"

Lowry/Greene

McKenna Hassel, vocalist

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Joyce Reed

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)

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

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS

Luke 2:41-52

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

"A Child is Born"

Jones

† 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

† 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

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children."

† 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

† RESPONSE/POSTLUDE

"Auld Lang Syne"

Scottish Air

SERVING

TODAY – DECEMBER 31

NEXT SUNDAY – JANUARY 7, 2024

Susann Lerch

Greeters

Linda Plain

Aidan Hurtig

Liturgist

Elaine Coffey

Volunteers needed

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

McKenna Hassel

Special Music

Chancel Choir

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 special guest vocalist, **McKenna Hassel** (Judi Pavisich's granddaughter), along with **Ken Mehalko**, **Mike Elkins**, and **Sharon Heinrich** for their music today.

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 Birthday to Kristen Kohler on January 2nd!
Your family

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP



Become
Part of
Our
Church
Family

Are you interested in joining our congregation? Pastor Heidi will be offering a membership class in the near future. Please contact her or the church office if you would like to become a member of the Strongsville UCC.

IN CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

Our love and prayers to the family and friends of **Marie Bury**, who died on December 21, 2023. Marie turned 99 in September. She was 99 years old. Although she was not officially on the membership rolls of our church, she was a blessing to our congregation.



We have received word that **Ken Konicek** died on December 25, 2023. Our deepest sympathy to his family and friends, and especially to his wife, **Kay**. The Koniceks joined the church in 2018 and have been living in South Carolina for a couple of years. A celebration of Ken's life is being planned for February 24, 2024 at the church.



FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL:

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



OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$ 3,617.01
Last Week's Offering Received \$ 5,749.00 (2 services)
Difference +\$2,131.99



Thank you very much for your support.

PLEDGE CARDS RECEIVED TO DATE: 50



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.

CHURCH CHRISTMAS MAIL BOX

Please remember to check the box for greetings you receive. 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, Bobbie & Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Phyllis Kurz, 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, Dave Williams, Claire Wills, Marty Winch

Extended Church Family: Edward and Sharon Acton (Sally Herzog's friends), Dorene Baldrige, 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 Matjajic (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



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP—

All ladies are invited to **Game Day** on **Wednesday, January 3rd at 1 p.m.** and **Monday, January 8th at 7 p.m.**



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 REPORTS DUE!

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 an 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.



P.S. The Strongsville Emergency Food Bank is in need of canned veggies! You may bring them to the church any time.

FREE LUNCH FOR ALL-- Wednesdays

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

Thank you to all our faithful volunteers!
On December 27th, The mayor of Strongsville, Tom Perciak, presented the church with a proclamation lauding our program on its 10 year anniversary!

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



ANNUAL ALL FAMILY WINTER RETREAT
February 16-18, 2024
Templed Hills Camp
in Bellville, Ohio

The Church's Annual All-Family Winter Retreat will take place on President's Day weekend 2024. As you may already know, Templed Hills is being sold and this will be our last Retreat at that location—Let's make it the best ever! 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 14 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, 2024: Reservations close; **MONEY DUE**
FEBRUARY 4, 2024: Retreat planning meeting in the church after the worship service

BOOK STUDY

A YEAR OF BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

Continuing on **January 15th**, Pastor Heidi and Linda Elkins are leading a monthly book study based on Rachel Held Evans's wonderful book, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*. The group will meet on the **third Monday of each month at 7 p.m.**, for one hour. It's not too late to join us! **DECEMBER MAKE-UP DATE IS SUNDAY, JANUARY 7th AFTER WORSHIP!**



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.



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.

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*



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

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.

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 ____/____/____