

The United Church of Christ
(Congregational)
13740 Pearl Road
Strongsville, Ohio 44136
Rev. Rebecca Stephenson, Pastor



Church Telephone: (440) 238-6697
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Worship at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday

FEBRUARY 2013 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

In just a few weeks, the season of Lent begins. All of us have heard about Lent and the many traditions it conjures in our minds. However, most of us do not understand some of the Lenten traditions that we practice. Let's look at some of the Lenten basics:

First, what is Lent? Lent is a season of preparation for the great day of Easter. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 13, and continues until Easter morning. Some of us begin Lent one day earlier on Fat Tuesday or Marti Gras by having a huge celebration or party where we overindulge on things we might not do during Lent. The carnival celebrations in Louisiana are the most well known of these events, and people who attend often do things that they would never do at home. The party is often wild and flamboyant with richly decorated floats and people parading through the French Quarter. Strings of beads are thrown from person to person in recognition of approval for rather risqué acts. The more strands of beads you collect, the better.

Some churches have pancake suppers, often run by youth groups, where people come and eat all the sweet pancakes they want. They do this as a way of overindulging before giving up sweets for the next 40 days. Youth groups sometimes make enough money that they can support the youth program for the entire year. Other churches have fish fries every Friday during Lent—both to make money and to adhere to the custom of not eating meat during Lent. I personally love fish fries and may visit some churches to see who does the best job. Fasnachts are sugary donuts created for Lent. Now we eat donuts on any occasion.

Some of us challenge ourselves by giving up sweets or smoking or some other thing we like to do for Lent. Some have even given up intimacy for the season, something that Jack sternly says NO to doing. In the past I have tried to abstain from all solid food for the season. During this time I survive on liquids only, and then only those liquids with the least food value. I do so not to show how strong I am, but to place myself in a position to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I use as my example those who fasted for 40 days before having a special conversation with the Lord. Fasting is a long tradition in the life of the church. However, I most often fall short of the full fast after 4-5 weeks. I'm not sure what I will do this year.

Some have chosen a different approach and decided to ADD something to their lives during Lent. Some start a new Bible or prayer time. Others step up and take on new challenges at the church, while others reach out to do extra service in the community. Some who fast choose to give the money they save on food or whatever they give up and instead give to funds to the food bank for the poor.

I have even witnessed some who have taken the opportunity to give up things like bigotry and hatred. Some have tried to renew old relationships and seek new understandings about some of the things that vexed them over the years. A friend of mine used this time to study homelessness even to the point of sleeping several nights in a makeshift shelter so she could understand what homelessness was all about. Another chose to study the subject of homosexuality and all the feelings he had around that issue. When he opened his heart, he was changed by what he heard and saw.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts 40 days until Easter. Now if you do the count, that's 46 days. This is true, but Sundays during Lent are free days, where you are not bound by your promise. You can indulge in those things you have given up for Lent if you choose. This was decreed by a Pope long ago to keep those who fast from starving and has become the tradition of today.

One more thing! Before you decide what you will do for Lent, remember that your promise is between you and God. This is a promise that you must do your best to keep. When it becomes difficult to hold to your promise, pray and God will help you. Whatever you do, I pray that it will lead you to a renewed relationship with God the Father, Jesus the Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Becky



WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 3 – 10:00 A.M.

Sermon: "Rejected"
Scriptures: Luke 4:21-30
Liturgist: Lora Rung
Acolyte: Jenna Miller
Greeter: Linda Plain
Nursery: Gina Cathcart
Coffee Hour: Lora Rung

SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 10 – 10:00 A.M.

Sermon: "Transfigured"
Scriptures: Luke 9:28-43
Liturgist: Jim Studer
Acolytes: Lauren Knotts and Aylah Purdum
Greeters: Tom and Judy Gaumer
Nursery: Beth Giuliano
Coffee Hour: Doug Thorn

Retreat Planning Meeting in the Sanctuary,
immediately after worship – Payment is due.

ASH WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 13 – 7:30 P.M.

Liturgist: Jack Stephenson
Acolyte: Aylah Purdum
Greeter: Lora Rung

SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 17 (Retreat Weekend)

10:00 A.M.

Guest Minister: Rev. Pat Jefferis
Liturgist: Bruce Keenen
Acolytes: Gina Gigliotti and Alex Metivier
Greeter: Sharon Heinrich
Nursery: Lora Rung
Coffee Hour: Marty Winch

Evening Lenten Program

6:00 P.M. Potluck Meal in Pilgrim Hall
7:00 P.M. Informal Worship in the Sanctuary

SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 17

10:00 A.M.

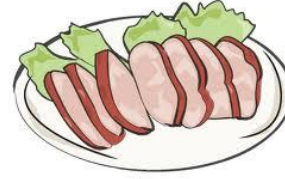
Sermon: "God's Time"
Scriptures: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27
Liturgist: Rich Tressa
Acolytes: Elizabeth Metivier and Lisa Pogozeleski
Greeter: Lola Millhoane
Nursery: Sarah Hawk
Coffee Hour: Gina Cathcart

Evening Lenten Program

6:00 P.M. Potluck Meal in Pilgrim Hall
7:00 P.M. Informal Worship in the Sanctuary

Strongsville UCC

**ROAST PORK, KIELBASA &
SAUERKRAUT DINNER**



Saturday – February 23, 2013

Seatings at
5:00 P.M. and 6:30 P.M.

Reservations Only: **(440) 236-8025**

Adults \$9.00 Ages 6-12 \$5.00 Under 6 Free

The Thrift Shop will be open.

Bakery donations are needed, and help is needed to serve and clean up for the dinner. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board. For safety reasons, no children under age 6 (with or without parent) can be helpers in any capacity during the serving hours of 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Children who are 6 to 10 years old must have a parent helping them.

THE CHURCH VARIETY SHOW IS COMING!

Saturday, March 2, is the third annual Variety Show, and this year, it could be starring YOU! If you have a talent you'd like to share, you are welcome. There is a sign-up sheet in Pilgrim Hall, and you can also talk to Rachel Zielinski to be part of this fun and entertaining evening. If your talent involves music, you can see Susan Tressa for ideas and help with that, too.



**SEMINARY SUNDAY/CHURCH VOCATIONS SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 24, 2013**

Thanks to many of the 2,000 UCC congregations in the Mid-West who receive a special offering for our three CUE seminaries—**Chicago, United** (Twin Cities, MN), and **Eden** (St. Louis, MO)—their students continue to receive first-class theological training, which otherwise would not be financially possible. Tuition and scholarships currently pay about 32% of the total costs of seminary education each year. CUE receipts of \$645,000 (2011) from congregations cover another 7%. The balance comes from personal contributions from graduates, endowments/legacies, and corporate gifts. Last year, Strongsville UCC members contributed \$155. A CUE envelope is included in this newsletter for a special offering to be received on **Sunday, February 24**. Your gift, and prayers for our seminaries are much appreciated.

If you have never considered a "church vocation," why not consider it now? Second-career seminary and church educators/missionaries, etc. are increasingly filling U.S. seminaries of every denomination. Exciting things are happening in religion and in congregations. We are experiencing it right here in Strongsville UCC! Speak with Pastor Becky, and/or retired UCC pastors—Larry Craig, Pat Jefferis, or Erv Koch—for suggestions and literature.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP CANDY SCHEDULE

Make Candy at 9:00 A.M.
Monday – February 25
Wednesday – February 27
Friday – March 1
Monday – March 4

Package Candy at 10:30 A.M.
Friday – March 8

Sell Candy after Church
Sunday – March 10
Sunday – March 17

All ladies are welcome!



OFFICIAL BOARD

The Swiss Steak Dinner on January 19 made a profit of \$1,586.47. Thanks again to everyone for their support!



We extend a warm welcome to the following people, who joined our church family on January 6, 2013:

Frank and Rev. Patricia Jefferis
transferred from
Olmsted Community United Church of Christ

Tina Mausser and Jim Sneed
joined the church by profession of faith

Jack and Rev. Rebecca Stephenson
transferred from
First Congregational Church of Fort Lauderdale
United Church of Christ

Shirley Weinhold
transferred from
Brooklyn Heights United Church of Christ

Denise Woolwine
joined the church by profession of faith

Our congratulations to
parents Diane and Drew Kuzmickas, brother Trevor,
grandparents Bruce and Pam Keenen, and
aunt Sarah Keenen on the birth of
Abigail Riley Kuzmickas
on January 9, 2013!



Roast Pork Dinner – page 2

Variety Show – page 2

Ladies Make Candy – this page



WOMEN'S LUNCHEON



As of this writing, no luncheon is scheduled for February. However, if the weather permits, a luncheon will be decided at the last minute. For more information, please contact Lola Millhoane at (440) 238-3037.

In Sympathy

Our love and prayers are extended in sympathy to Sheri Martin and family on the passing of her father, Ed Sommers, and to Greg Dickson and family on the passing of his brother Michael on January 3. The funeral took place on January 7 in Michigan.



ALTAR FLOWERS

As of this writing, altar flower vases are still available for purchase on the following Sundays:

February 10 – 1 vase
February 24 – 1 vase
March 10 – 2 vases
March 24 – 1 vase
April 28 – 1 vase
May 5 – 1 vase
May 12 – 1 vase
May 19 – 1 vase
June 2 – 1 vase
June 9 – 2 vases
June 30 – 1 vase
July 7 – 2 vases
August 11 – 1 vase
August 25 – 1 vase
September 8 – 1 vase
October 6 – 2 vases
October 20 – 1 vase
October 27 – 2 vases
November 3 – 1 vase
November 10 – 2 vases
November 17 – 2 vases
December 1 – 2 vases
December 15 – 2 vases
December 22 – 1 vase

The signup chart and flower forms are on the bulletin board in Pilgrim Hall. The cost is \$15 for one vase; \$30 for two. For special orders, please contact our supplier, Floral Elegance, early in the week—(440) 638-5179.

Thank you for providing altar flowers.



ANNUAL CHURCH RETREAT

Friday, February 15 – Sunday, February 17, 2013
Templed Hills



It's almost time for the retreat!

If you're attending, don't forget we have a brief planning meeting on Sunday, February 10, in the sanctuary immediately following the worship service. Payment is due at that time—cash or checks payable to *Strongsville UCC*. We'll also go over the basics, distribute maps and checklists, and figure out who is bringing which snacks and essentials. We are really looking forward to that weekend—even Pastor Becky and Jack will be joining us!

In the meantime, feel free to contact Charles or Aimée Jannsohn at (440) 895-1858 or jannsohn@cox.net with any questions.

If you're not coming this year, please do consider it for next year. It's a wonderful, fulfilling, relaxing time with great company—your church family!

STEEPLE LIGHTING

Week of January 13, 2013

In Celebration of
Our Granddaughter Morgan's Birthday on January 17
and
Our Daughter Sharon's Birthday on January 18
Bill and Dorothy Ritchie

Week of January 20, 2013

In Celebration of My Grandson
Chase J. Masuga's 30th Birthday on January 20!
Happy Birthday, Chase! Love ya!
Love, Banny
Happy 2nd Birthday to My Great-Grandson,
Zander John Nobel, on January 25, 2013
Love ya, G.G.B.

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. Thank you to all who light our steeple!



MISSION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

We thank the many people of our church who remembered their annual gifts to the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund. A total of \$670.00 was contributed. Our 2011 total was \$620.00. Your generosity is much appreciated.

KITCHEN NOTES



Thanks to all who contribute to the Coffee Hour Fund. With the continual increase in the cost of paper products, etc., your donation is greatly appreciated. All products are available to all church groups. However, if you use the last of any of these items—paper towels, napkins, cups, coffee, tea, sugar, or drinks for the children—please use the sheet on the refrigerator to write down what is needed, or inform the church office or Betty Craig, (440) 238-5389, so that replacements can be purchased. Thank you!

Please remember to name and date your food in the church refrigerator. Thank you!

Donations of bakery are needed for the first Sunday of each month. Please put your bakery in the kitchen before the worship service. Thank you!

THANK YOU

We wish to extend our deepest and sincere thanks for all the warm condolences, cards, messages, prayers and hugs from our dear church family, with the sudden death of Greg's brother, Michael Dickson. The support which we have experienced has truly helped us carry our heavy hearts at this difficult time. We are really comforted by the outpouring of love. Special thanks and appreciation to Pastor Becky and Jack for making the drive up to Michigan to console us; it meant so very much to us, more than words can express. How extremely blessed we feel to belong to such a wonderful, loving church.
Greg and Ingrid Dickson

Thank you to all who collated the 150 annual report booklets on January 13, 2013, after worship. With everyone's help, the task was completed very quickly. Again, thank you very much.
Sharon Heinrich

SERVING MEALS AT ZION UCC

Our congregation continues to serve meals for the poor at Zion UCC on Cleveland's West Side. The date this month is Saturday, **February 23**.



To participate, please sign up on the bulletin board in the Gathering Area and coordinate carpooling with others who are serving on that day. Thank you!

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.

Long-Term Care or Homebound Members:

Bill Betz at Chapel Hill Community in Canal Fulton, Nadine Burnand, Edith Graves at Century Oak Care Center, Victor Rak at Falling Water, Louetha Rieth at Sunrise Assisted Living of Dresher in PA, Erla Mae Schultz

Church Family:

Gary Fischer at Cleveland Clinic, Michael Fischer, Irene Jannsohn, Janet Kato, Betty Kovach at Parkside Villa, Elizabeth Snook

Extended Church Family:

Betty Berk (mother of Mary Mortus), Zachary Crouse (grandson of Barbara Morgan), Audrey and Gene Curry (parents of Pam Keenen), Victor DiChiro (father-in-law of Rob Wentz), Donna Fargo (mother of Sally Herzog), Ruth Fraley (relative of the Jannsohn family), Shirley Gerecke (friend of Frank and Pat Jefferis), Janine Kaltenstein (cousin and best friend of Vicky Masuga), Phyllis Keenen (mother of Bruce), Erik Kratky (friend of Sarah Hawk), Cyrila Kribel (friend of Betty Craig), Rick Pfuhl (former custodian of Strongsville UCC), James Smith (brother of Katie Renfro), Barbara Sommers (mother of Sheri Martin), Sarah Spiegler (niece of Betty Craig), Trudie Taylor (sister of Karen Morgan), Mike Thutt (friend of Louie Gigliotti), Bob Tomko (cousin of Ed Sobek), Bob Wentz (father of Larry)

Please inform the church of updates, (440) 238-6697.

ANNUAL REPORTS 2012

Annual Report booklets are available in the Gathering Area at the church. If you want a copy mailed to you, please call the church office, (440) 238-6697.