

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Congregational)
13740 Pearl Road
Strongsville, Ohio 44136

Worship 10 a.m. (+online)



Church Telephone: (440) 238-6697

Email: StrongsvilleUCC@gmail.com

Website: www.strongsvilleucc.com

Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall
Pastor

FEBRUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

This is what God's kingdom is like: a bunch of outcasts and oddballs gathered at a table, not because they are rich or worthy or good, but because they are hungry, because they said yes. And there's always room for more.

—Rachel Held Evans

Extravagant welcome!

A group of us were recently discussing what it means to be *welcoming*. The conversation started after we read an article from the Living Waters Association General Minister, Nayiri Karjian.

As is so often the case, as we talked, it became clear that *words matter*. For instance, when someone joins us for worship for the first time, are they *visitors*—or *guests*?

Visitors are often just checking things out. They may tend to be observers, or window-shoppers. Do we have *visitors*? Sure.

But we also have *guests*. A guest is someone who is invited to visit and participate in an activity, whether they realize it or not. You are *so good* at making a *visitor* feel like a *guest*, that we really don't have very many folks who leave still feeling like "just a visitor."

I am regularly amazed (and delighted) at how easily you make folks feel right at home. It's largely the presence of God's Holy Spirit—but if *you* weren't so willing to allow the Spirit to move in your hearts, there would be a lot fewer folks saying things like, "When I walked in, I just felt like I was *home*." And there's always room for more. (Scoot over.)

This, friends, is how Christ welcomes all of us. Writer Anne Lamott puts it this way: *I do not at all understand the mystery of **grace**—only that it meets us where we are, but does not leave us where it found us.* At Strongsville UCC, we are getting pretty good at offering this same *grace* that we have received, to every *guest* who walks through the door.

For that—and for *you*—I am grateful. Thank you for being the welcoming hands, feet, and *heart* of Jesus.

Peace, Love, Hope and Welcome,
Pastor Heidi

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5 – 10 a.m.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Sacrament of Communion

Installation of Officers

Greeter: Linda Plain

Liturgist: Sandy O'Shea

Ushers: Volunteers needed

Special Music: Chancel Choir



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12 – 10 a.m.

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Greeter: Judi Pavisich

Liturgist: Dave Williams

Ushers: Linda Ponstingle, Judi Pavisich

Special Music: Venner Clarinets, Chancel Choir



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19 – 10 a.m.

Transfiguration Sunday

RETREAT SUNDAY

Greeter: Jean Bittinger

Liturgist: Lynne McCray

Ushers: Roz Fotos

Special Music: Music Team



ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22 –

Noon - 1 p.m. Imposition of Ashes:

(Come and go as you wish)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22 –

7 p.m. Worship Service



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26 – 10 a.m.

First Sunday in Lent

Penny Sunday

Greeter: Elaine Coffey

Liturgist: Sharon Maresco

Ushers: Volunteers needed

Special Music: Bell 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, go to **Worship**, and click on **Service Videos**. **HERE'S THE LINK TO OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCynOZfg4uKoX7HMnKORbXfQ/videos> **Thanks to Doug Thorn for posting these each week!**



In Christian Sympathy

Our sincere sympathy to the family and friends of **Christina Craig**, who passed away on December 31, 2022.

Christina and her late husband, **Rev. Larry Craig** were dear friends to our congregation. Christina was 75 years old.

Our deepest sympathy to the friends and family of longtime church member **Paul Hirt**, who died on January 4, 2023 at the age of 78. Paul was a member of Strongsville UCC for 63 years.



BABY BLESSINGS

Congratulations to **Devan** and **Danielle Maringer** and on the birth of their daughter, **Quinn Juliette**, on December 19, 2022. Proud grandparents are **Dianne** and **John Maringer**.

Congratulations also to **Jeremy** and **Chelsey Cox**, who gave birth to a baby boy, **Theo Christopher**, on December 31, 2022. Proud grandparents are **Gina** and **Chris Cathcart** and proud great-grandparents are **Bill** and **Dorothy Ritchie!**



Thank you Note

Thank you to my Church family who sent cards and had me in their prayers during my recent health challenges. I really appreciate your thoughtfulness.--Sandy Pogozeleski

PANERA PALS

Thank you so much to our faithful bread transporters and sorters: **Linda Kapcar**, **Sharon Lempner**, and **Cherie Teagno**, who continue to make the Panera Bread ministry possible!



PENNY SUNDAY

Thank you to everyone who contributes to our Penny Sunday collection. On January 29th, we collected for World Central Kitchen in Ukraine. Save those pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, and yes,



DOLLARS for our next Penny Sunday collection, **February 26, 2023!**



MUSIC NOTES

Many thanks to the **Bell Choir** and the **Chancel Choir**, **Ken Mehalko**, **Richard Densmore**, and of course, **Tom Foley**, **Sharon Heinrich**, and **Mike Elkins** for their music in January.

BEE A BUSY BEE IN 2023

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.



NEWS FROM THE KITCHEN

Did you know? The "tip jar" you see next to the coffee on Sunday mornings is there for a reason. The "tips" go directly to keeping the coffee, tea, sugar, creamer, etc., supplied. Your generosity is appreciated!



Did you know that **Dale Hawk** and his intrepid crew of hearty souls took down the outdoor Nativity scene—in the rain?

Thank you to everyone who helped!

Did you know that **Doug Thorn** researched and procured a new camcorder to record our worship services? The Memorial Fund will finance the purchase, in memory of **Chuck McDougall**. Thanks, Doug! Did you know that **Jim** and **Ryan Heinrich** installed a bunch of new, brighter bulbs in the sanctuary and around the church? You're sure to notice the light—thanks, gentlemen!

Did you know that **John Toth** put up a new light fixture in the sanctuary vestibule and is repairing a piece of molding in the Gathering Area. We appreciate you, John!

IN OUR COMMUNITY



Girl Scout Troop #71363 has placed, and will be stocking and maintaining a weather-proof box with hygiene items on the church's property for people in need. The "Hygiene Library," is located on the lawn facing Royalton Road.

**GIFT CARDS
PLEASE DON'T
FORGET ABOUT
THIS EASY,
CONVENIENT**



PROGRAM THAT BENEFITS THE CHURCH. You can order gift cards by calling **Jim Joyce** at 216-267-5043 in advance with your order. **Limited stock is available for purchase on Sunday mornings.**



**PROGRAM ENDING
ON FEBRUARY 20th!**



You just have a little time left to go on an Amazon spending spree and feel good about benefitting the

church. Amazon is discontinuing this program. Here's what you do:

1. Instead of typing amazon.com into your search bar, type in **smile.amazon.com**.
2. Select United Church of Christ Congregational Strongsville by clicking this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-1298100>
3. Shop as if the program is ending, which it is!

Your addresses, billing information, and shopping cart are still saved and your Prime membership privileges still apply. A small percentage of your purchase price will go toward supporting the church until February 20th. After that, the packages on your porch can't be excused by saying, "It's for the church!"



**NEWS ABOUT OUR ROYALTON ROAD
PROPERTY:**



On Christmas weekend, a pipe burst at the house next door to the church lot on Royalton Road due to the extreme temperatures. Our tenant was not at home, but he returned to water pouring in and extensive damage. The Trustees were immediately made aware of the situation and they sprang into action. Our insurance company was notified and the Trustees hired Paul Davis Restoration Company to remediate the damage. We are working with our tenant and making things right. Thank you to all the members of the Board of Trustees and to Ed Sobek for taking the lead on this project.



OUR PRAYER LIST

Please provide updates for this list to the church office. Thank you.
Long-Term Care or Homebound: Ruth Milidonis, Karen Rak, Connie Rebar

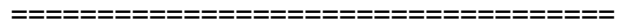


Church Family: Serena Abruzzino, Joan Beckwith, Lloyd Bridle, Mary Carey, Gina Cathcart, Betty Craig, Sam Cuyler Jr., Sam Cuyler, Sr., Sue Hawk, Irene Jannsohn, Bruce Keenen, Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Len Lane, Judy Maur, Reggie McCray, Laurie Meister, Roy Merkle, Michele Mhlack, Lola Millhoane, Kenn Oerkfitz, Gary Paul, Sandy Pogozelski, Joyce Reed, Dorothy & Bill Ritchie, Ginger Rothel, Tracy Seneff, Peter Smith, Maggie Struhar, Sharon Wilson, Dave Williams, Janis Williamson, Claire Wills, Marty Winch, Mary Ellen Zimmerman

Extended Church Family: Dorene Baldrige, Amy Carroll (Marty Winch's sister), Ron Colosimo (Judi Pavisich's friend), John Dickson (Greg's dad), Kim Filiatraut (Sarah Keenen's friend), Elizabeth Fulford (Lora Rung's friend), Jennifer Gleichauf (Don & Sandy's daughter-in-law), Dana Hardy (Craig's wife), Julie Kowell (Sarah Cathcart Wilhoit's friend), Ed Kuhn (Sandy & Don Gleichauf's friend), Andrew Majoros (Michele Mhlack's cousin), Diane Mason (Lora Rung's friend), Rudy Matjazic (Judi Pavisich's friend), Donna McDonald (the Ritchies' friend), Zachary McKeever (Pastor Heidi's great-nephew), Linda McNabb (Ginger Rothel's sister-in-law), Mae O'Shea (Sandy O'Shea's mom), Thomas O'Shea (Sandy's dad), Jeff Peacock, Terry Robson (Barb & Mark Camp's friend), Mike Rung (Lora's brother), Tina Serrano (Elliott Joyce's grandma), Amanda Shannon (Sarah & Jon Hayes' friend), Vicky Smith (Venner Clarinets), Bruce Unger (Sally Herzog's friend), Chris Vozniak (Lora Rung's friend), Weston (Chelsey Cathcart Cox's friend's baby), Tom (friend of Judi Pavisich), The people of Ukraine, victims of violence, those affected by severe weather

EMAIL PRAYER CHAIN—OPT IN

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

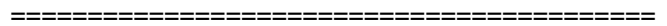


ADDRESS CHANGES/ADDITIONS

If you move or change your phone number, please be so kind as to let the church office know—thanks!

Allen & Michele Mhlack
23 Station Court #004
Greenville, SC 29601
Allen 440-488-0067
Michele 440-488-0460

Roy Merkle
5806 Luelda Avenue
Parma, OH 44129
216-401-6768



RIVER VALLEY PAPER
KEEP RECYCLING YOUR PAPER, MAGAZINES, AND CARDBOARD (Please break down cardboard.) PRO TIP: The bin is usually emptied on Mondays.



MISSION OUTREACH is collecting cans of soup now through **Super Bowl Sunday (February 12th)** for the **Strongsville Emergency Food Bank**. Please bring your cans of any kind of soup and place them in the receptacle in Pilgrim Hall near the bulletin board.



MORE MISSION OUTREACH NEWS:



Our church is working in partnership with St. Joseph Strongsville Welcome Circle for Ukraine We are excited to announce

that a group of us (St Joseph church and Strongsville UCC) are coming together to help a Ukrainian family escape danger and uncertainty due to the ongoing war. We are committed to providing support and guidance during the 2-year Uniting for Ukraine program by helping this young family assimilate to life in Northeast Ohio and guiding them towards self-sufficiency. The Ukrainian family arrived Monday, January 16th and was welcomed at the airport by a group of volunteers, including Father Joe of St. Joseph Catholic Church, along with **Sarah and Jack Hayes** from our church. They were excited and relieved to finally be in the U.S. Currently, the family is staying in a basement apartment of one of the volunteers. As we become more aware of their needs, Sarah will reach out to the congregation with opportunities to give. Thank you very much for the continued support, love, prayers, and time that everyone puts in to make this a wonderful community of giving! We truly make a difference!



The Strongsville Emergency Food Bank has always been supported by our congregation.

Please remember, we do not accept expired goods. The needs for the food bank in February would be large sized peanut butter and jelly and soup.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS



- The Board of Trustees will meet on the second Tuesday of the month, **February 14th** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.
- The Diaconate will meet on the third Tuesday of the month, **February 21st** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.
- The Official Board will meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month, **February 28th** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.

ALTAR FLOWERS FOR LAST MONTH

The altar flowers are given—

January 8th

To my church family in gratitude for the laughter, love, and prayers we share—Judy Carte



January 15th

Happy Birthday to mom Rachel tomorrow! In loving memory of Papa on his birthday, January 19th.

Penny & Oliver Zielinski

January 22nd

In loving memory of Carol L. Studer—Jim, Kathy, & Jeff

Happy 75th Birthday today to John Toth—Love Barbara

January 29th

In loving memory of Erik O. Jannsohn on his Groundhog's Day Birthday—The Dicksons & Joyces

THE FLOWER CHART FOR 2023 IS POSTED IN PILGRIM HALL. Please sign up for fresh flowers in honor or in memory of a loved one or just for yourself. Cost is \$30 for two vases; \$15 for one vase.

STEEPLE LIGHTING

Week of January 1st

In loving memory of Mike & Deb Dickson With love, Greg & Ingrid Dickson

Week of January 8th

In Memory of Christina Craig In Memory of Paul Hirt

Week of January 15th

Congratulations to new parents Chelsey and Jeremy Cox on the birth of my grandson, Theo

With love, Gina Cathcart

Happy Birthday to Tony Craig on January 20th

With love, Grammy

January 22nd

Prayers for Linda & Mike Elkins while they are in Mexico

January 29th

Thank you to everyone who has served as an officer this past year and to those who extended their terms.

Happy Anniversary to Sharon & Karl Kuhlenschmidt on February 1st!



To light the steeple, the minimum donation is \$5.00.

Multiple dedications are welcomed for each week.

Please email strongsvilleuuc@gmail.com. Thank you to everyone who lights our steeple!

FREE LUNCH FOR ALL

Wednesdays

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

New partnership: We were able to share some of the Chik-Fil-A chicken we receive from the Strongsville Emergency Food Bank with Lakewood United Methodist Church for their monthly meal!

Reminder: For the safety of our volunteers and friends, when the Strongsville City Schools are closed on a Wednesday for the weather, the Free Lunch for All will not be serving lunch.





WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP—

**Upcoming Events
Monday, February 6th
at 7 p.m.**

“Repurposing & Recycling” with Sharon Heinrich

Tuesday, February 7th at 1 p.m.

“Mind, Body, & Spirit” with Bev Wehr

Wednesday, March 1st at 1 p.m.

“Guess Who” Bring and old photo of yourself

Monday, March 6th at 7 p.m.

“Guess Who” Bring and old photo of yourself

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO SERVED AS CHURCH OFFICERS IN 2022

*Elected January 30, 2022 * = 1 year term
**appointed by the Official Board*

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

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

Sunday School Co-Superintendents

Linda Elkins Serena Abruzzino

Board of Trustees

Myron Costin Diana Creecy Bill Giuliano*
Herb Hampson Dale Hawk Sarah Hayes
Sandy Pogozelski* Dave Sekorky Ed Sobek*
Rachel Zielinski

Endowment Fund Subcommittee

Greg Dickson Linda Stepan Joyce Reed*

Diaconate

Teri Barbish Barbara Camp* Elaine Coffey
Cathy Hawk* Linda Kapcar Bobbie Krisak
Sharon Maresco Linda Ponstingle Cheryl Sobek*
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* Rob Stepan
ex officio: Sharon Heinrich Tom Foley Mike Elkins

Stewardship Committee

Sue Gigliotti* Beth Giuliano* Judi Pavisich
Bill Schneider** Richard Taylor Rob Toth

Mission and Outreach Committee

Judy Carte* Sarah Hayes Bobbie Krisak Lora Rung*
Jennifer Sekorky Peter Smith** Bev Wehr*

GIVING OPTIONS



If you are interested in giving electronically,
you can set up your giving through Bill Pay
on your bank's website or on our church's

website: www.strongsvilleucc.com. You may also mail a

**check to Strongsville UCC 13740 Pearl Road
Strongsville, OH 44136 or drop it off in the church's
mailbox.**

FROM OUR FINANCIAL SECRETARY—Mike Elkins



Below is a monthly report listing the budget
income we need to receive from Pledges
and Offerings and the amount received from **December 25,
2022 through January 15, 2023. Thank you to everyone
who supports our church and its ministries.**

Offering Needed \$14,597.48 for 4 Sundays

Offering Received 14,832.00

+ \$ 234.52

Pledge cards received so far for 2023: 62



For those of you who
have been asking about
offering envelopes, our
Financial Secretary, Mike
Elkins has received a
communication from
Church Budget, the

company that sends out our envelopes:
*"Greetings from The Church-Budget Envelope and
Mailing Company, Some of you may be aware of
delays in the offering envelope mailings over the
past couple months. Due to supply chain and the
inability to add employees at the rate necessary
has created a slow draw on production and
shipping. Recently, both of those issues have been
resolved. However the "catch-up" would jeopardize
long term delivery. In order to get back to expected
levels of timely deliveries, we are forced to
suspend the production of the remaining supply of
your January envelopes. The offering envelopes
will resume and be delivered by the first Sunday in
March. Quarterly supply will restart in April. Never
in our company's history have we had to skip
scheduled mailings and we are doing all we can to
make sure this never happens again. We deeply
apologize for this necessary course of action and
the inconveniences this has caused you and your
church family.*

Please know that you may use any envelope to
give your offering--we still need your donations to
maintain our ministries! Mike is looking into
obtaining loose envelopes to tide us over until
March. Please check with him for updates.

ANNUAL GIVING STATEMENTS



Statements of Giving for
2022 are available in the
Church Family Mailbox that
is located in the Gathering
Area. Please be so kind as
to pick up your statement as
soon as you are able. (Statements will be mailed to
our homebound givers.)

CHURCH FAMILY CARE TEAM

If you like to cook . . . or bake . . . or reach out to others in love . . . as winter and circumstances continue to make it hard to stay connected, your Diaconate is organizing a Pastoral Care Ministry Team and would LOVE to have you take part! (You do not need to be a member of the Diaconate to participate, and you may come and go as you are led.)



PHONE A FRIEND!

Are you interested in praying for others, but don't use email? Your Church Family Care Team has a number of folks who are willing to call you, typically once a week, to share with you the prayer requests Pastor Heidi shares via email. Please let **Linda Ponstingle** know.



THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop is OPEN on Thursdays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Be on the lookout for extended

hours on some Thursdays!

Come and see lots of interesting merchandise. Donations are being accepted during those hours, but please try to limit your donations to what you can carry downstairs.

Special thanks to all our dedicated volunteers!

IT'S NOT TOO LATE! You may pledge anytime. 2023 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN S.O.C.K.S.

Service Offering Community Kindness Sanctuary Strongsville United Church of Christ 2023 Estimate of Giving

In recognition of God's many blessings to me, I am happy to join with others in the following commitment for 2023:

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 account.

Signed _____

Date ____/____/____

YOUR PRAYERS AT WORK

Thank you to everyone who prayed for the health of **Jennifer Cockrell**. She is well at back at her job!--**Kathy Cockrell**

ANNUAL ALL FAMILY WINTER RETREAT

February 17-19, 2023

Templed Hills Camp in Bellville, Ohio

The Church's Annual All-Family Winter Retreat will take place on President's Day weekend 2023. Please contact Irene Joyce or Rachel Zielinski if you have any questions.



Important date to remember:

FEBRUARY 12, 2022: Retreat planning meeting in the church after the worship service



Ash Wednesday is February 22nd. Pastor Heidi will offer two opportunities for those who wish to receive ashes. Beginning at **Noon** through **1 p.m.**,

come and go as you wish to receive ashes and a blessing. At **7:00 p.m.**, Pastor Heidi will lead a meditative service, culminating with the imposition of ashes. All are welcome to join us for either or both times.

LENT

Please include attendance at Strongsville UCC in your Lenten observances. Stay tuned for information about a Lenten Bible Study.





The United Church of Christ
(Congregational)
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