

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
(Congregational)  
13740 Pearl Road  
Strongsville, Ohio 44136



Church Phone: (440) 238-6697  
Email: StrongsvilleUCC@gmail.com  
Website: www.strongsvilleucc.com

Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall  
Pastor

## FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

*There is no greater love than this.  
There is no greater gift that can ever be given:  
To be willing to die that another might live.  
There is no greater love than this.  
--Steven Curtis Chapman*

#### True Love.

Did you notice? This year, Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day. It might seem a bit incongruous at first, to be entering the somber Lenten journey on a day we traditionally shower extra love on one another. I'd like to suggest why this is a perfect connection.

As we begin the journey once more from the cradle to the Cross, we can be tempted to fall back on the language of *sacrifice*, how God sacrificed his son so the rest of us could spend eternity with God. I struggle to imagine, however, a god who would create *any* beings, simply so they could be sacrificed to appease that god's wrath. The Loving God I know through Jesus doesn't work that way. Our Loving God wants *all* God's children to live together in love, in this life *and* the next. As the apostle Paul puts it, ***In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ.*** (Galatians 3:28, *The Message*)

Jesus was sacrificed on the Cross because he called out the Roman authorities for their injustices. He spoke up when the church leaders didn't and for that, he was crucified at the very human hands of the leaders of the day.

Because of Jesus' willingness to do the right thing, we *all* gained the freedom to live better lives. And because we are now the hands and feet of Jesus, we are called to speak loudly against injustice, to love mercy for *all* people, and to walk humbly as Jesus walked: alongside the poor, the unwelcomed, the misfits. While we may certainly be destined for eternity, *in this lifetime* we are called to bring a little more heaven into the life of each person we meet, every day. Ready? Go!

One Peace, One Hope and One Love,  
Pastor Heidi

### WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4 – 10 a.m.**

*Fifth Sunday after Epiphany*

**Sacrament of Holy Communion**

**Greeter: Linda Plain**

**Liturgist: Linda Ponstingle**

**Ushers: Volunteers needed**

**Special Music: Chancel Choir**



**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11 – 10 a.m.**

*Transfiguration Sunday*

**Greeter: Serena Abruzzino**

**Liturgist: Dave Williams**

**Ushers: Volunteers needed**

**Special Music: Chancel Choir**



**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

**Noon – 1 p.m. Imposition of Ashes**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

**7 p.m. Worship Service**



**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18 – 10 a.m.**

*First Sunday in Lent*

**Retreat Sunday**

**Greeter: Barbara Toth**

**Liturgist: Mary Ellen Zimmerman**

**Ushers: Volunteers needed**

**Special Music: Music Team**



**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25 – 10 a.m.**

*Second Sunday in Lent*

**Penny Sunday**

**Greeters: Nicole & Tiffany Ashforth**

**Liturgist: Sharon Maresco**

**Ushers: Volunteers needed**

**Special Music: Bell Choir**



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**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.**



### ALL ARE WELCOME AT GOD'S TABLE!

As we seek to walk ever more closely with Jesus and welcome all without question or singling anyone out, we will now be offering gluten-free bread to ALL who come forward to the Table for Holy Communion. ALL means ALL at The United Church of Christ (Congregational)!

### IN CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY



Our most heartfelt sympathy is extended to **Rachel, Gary, Penny, and Oliver Zielinski**, as well as to the family and friends of **Phyllis Kurz**, who died at the age of 99 on December 30, 2023. Phyllis was a helper and worker throughout her life and was an integral part of the Thrift Shop crew, the perpetual Garage Sale cashier (even when she lived in Florida), and "GiGi to everyone who was lucky enough to know her.

Our condolences to **Sharon and Dave Lempner** and family on the death of Sharon's mother, **Carol Miller**, who died on December 31, 2023 in Virginia. Carol was 96 and died peacefully in her sleep.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to **Sandy O'Shea, Doug Thorn, Schyler, Leo, and Devin Thorn**, on the death of Sandy's dad, **Thomas O'Shea** in Florida on January 4, 2024.



Our love and prayers go out to **Judi Pavisich** and family on the death of **George Pavisich**. George and Judi were married for 33 years. George, a navy veteran, died on January 5, 2024 at the age of 90. Burial with military honors, was at Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman, Ohio.

A celebration of Ken Konicek's life is being planned for February 24<sup>th</sup> at the church, with visitation at 10 a.m. and the service at 11 a.m. A luncheon in Pilgrim Hall will follow.



### THANK YOU NOTES

Thank you to my Strongsville UCC brothers and sisters for the many cards, expressions of sympathy, and prayers I received on the death of my mother. **Sharon Lempner**



Thank you to my Strongsville UCC family. I am so grateful for your prayers, cards, meals from the Care Team, and the visits from Pastor Heidi. **Judy Carte**

### SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS--PENNY SUNDAY.



Thanks to everyone who donated in January. We collected \$402.35 for World Central Kitchen. Please save your coins, dollars, and checks (to UCC) for our next Penny Sunday on **February 25, 2024.**

### BOOK STUDY A YEAR OF BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD



Continuing on **February 19<sup>th</sup>**, Pastor Heidi and Linda Elkins are leading a monthly book study based on Rachel Held Evans's wonderful book, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*. Based on Old Testament rituals and practices, the book chronicles Rachel's attempts to follow these ancient practices in a modern world. 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!



**Ash Wednesday is February 14<sup>th</sup>.** 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 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.



**Become Part of Our Church Family**

### CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

**Are you interested in learning more about the United Church of Christ and becoming a member?** Pastor Heidi will be leading class after worship on **February 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>**, and folks desiring to join this church family will be added during worship on **February 25<sup>th</sup>**. (Not baptized? Come for the classes, and on February 25<sup>th</sup>, you will be baptized and affirmed into Christ's family as well as added to OUR church family!)

### BABY CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Matt & Ginny (McKenzie) Basenback** on the birth of their son, **Axel Matthew** on December 28, 2023. Axel joins big brother **Jimmy** in the family. Grandparents are former church members **Kim & Dave McKenzie.**



**PHOTO DIRECTORY UPDATE**  
Directories have arrived!  
Folks who were photographed receive a free copy. Extra directories may be purchased for \$10 each.

## 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, Judy Carte, Jennifer Cockrell, Sam Cuyler Jr., Sue Hawk, Irene Jannsohn, Kay Konicek, Bobbie & Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Jim Maresco, Reggie McCray, Roy Merkle, Lola Millhoane, Kenn Oerkfitz, Gary Paul, 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), John Dickson (Greg's dad), 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), 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

## ADDRESS CHANGES/ADDITIONS

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



**Nicole & Brett Wade**  
651 Sturbridge Drive #18  
Medina Ohio 44256



Did you know that **Elaine Coffey** spent a couple of hours cleaning and sanitizing the church's coffee pots? Thanks you for taking care of this important task!

Did you know that **Nicki Haire** has been filling in whenever the bell choir needs a substitute? She is willing to play any bells and does so with aplomb.

Did you know that **John Toth** replace the door stop on the interior entrance door and place a safety mat by the walkway to the stairs from the parking lot? Thanks, John!



## MUSIC NOTES

Many thanks to **Carol Foley**, the **Bell Choir**, the **Chancel Choir** and of course, **Tom Foley**, **Sharon Heinrich**, and **Mike Elkins** for their music in January!

## MISSION OUTREACH NEWS:

**MISSION OUTREACH** is collecting cans of soup now through **Super Bowl Sunday (February 11<sup>th</sup>)** 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. **On Sunday February 11<sup>th</sup>, Mission Outreach will host a "Souper Bowl" celebration. After the service, join us in Pilgrim Hall for a light snack of homemade soup. We want to bring people together to celebrate our soup drive!**



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](mailto:strongsvillefoodbank@gmail.com)

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 cereal and mac and cheese.

## GIFT CARDS

**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR PROGRAM** You may place orders by calling **Jim Joyce** at 216-346-4161 in advance. **Limited stock is available for purchase on Sunday mornings.**



## BE 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. Thank you so much to our faithful bread transporters: **Teri Barbish, Carole Kapcar, Roz Fotos, Linda Elkins, Cherie Teagno, Wayne & Bobbi Cook, and Sharon Lempner**, who are enabling the Panera Bread ministry to continue! Special thanks to **Pastor Heidi, Cathy Hawk, and Irene Joyce** who transport the bread and pastries downtown when needed.



### RIVER VALLEY PAPER RECYCLING

KEEP RECYCLING YOUR PAPER, MAGAZINES, AND CARDBOARD (Please break down cardboard.) PRO TIP: The bin

is usually emptied on Mondays.

### PLEASE DON'T FALL

**FOR A SCAM!** Pastor Heidi will never ask you for cash or gift cards via text or email. If there is a need, she will approach you in person.



**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.

### 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!



### IN OUR COMMUNITY



Girl Scout Troop #71363 is stocking and maintaining a "Hygiene Library," which is located on the lawn near the parking lot

facing Royalton Road.

### FREE LUNCH FOR ALL--Wednesdays

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

Thank you to all our faithful volunteers!

**Please note:** If the Strongsville City Schools are closed due to inclement weather on a Wednesday, the Free Lunch will not be served on that day.



### ALTAR FLOWERS FOR LAST MONTH

The altar flowers are given—

**January 7<sup>th</sup>**

*In loving celebration of Linda Kapcar from your "charming child"-- Elaine*

**January 14<sup>th</sup>**

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

**January 21<sup>st</sup>**

*In loving memory of Bob Goff Jr. Miss you little brother. Chris Goff*

**January 28<sup>th</sup>**

*In celebration of our Daughter-in-law Noebeth Reed's Birthday this month. Love George & Joyce Reed With love and gratitude to my church family in the new year--Judy Carte*



**THE FLOWER CHART FOR 2024 IS NOW 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 \$36 for two vases; \$18 for one.

### STEEPLE LIGHTING

**Week of January 7<sup>th</sup>**

*Celebrating my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday today! Ginger Rothel*

**Week of January 14<sup>th</sup>**

*Happy Birthday to Tony Craig on January 20<sup>th</sup>! With love, Grammy*

*Happy Birthday to Tracy Seneff on January 19<sup>th</sup>!*

**Week of January 21<sup>st</sup>**

*Happy Birthday to Jack Hayes on January 23<sup>rd</sup>! Happy Birthday to Linda Stepan on January 24<sup>th</sup>!*

*With love from your church family*

**Week of January 28<sup>th</sup>**

*In loving memory of our Dad, Erik O. Jannsohn With love from the Dicksons & Joyces*



To light the steeple, the minimum donation is \$5.00. Multiple dedications are welcomed for each week. Please email [strongsvilleuuc@gmail.com](mailto:strongsvilleuuc@gmail.com). Thank you to everyone who lights our steeple!

### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP—



Daytime will play a Chocolate Trivia Game with Cherie Teagno on **Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>**, at 1:00 p.m. in Pilgrim Hall. Evening will celebrate chocolate on **Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup>**, at 7:00 p.m. in Pilgrim Hall. All ladies are welcome to attend either of both meetings.



**THRIFT SHOP**  
 The Thrift Shop is **OPEN**  
 every **Thursday** 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.

*As always, special thanks to our dedicated volunteers and to everyone who supports the Thrift Shop with donations or by shopping!*

**If the Strongsville City Schools are closed due to inclement weather on a Thursday, the Thrift Shop will be closed on that day.**

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**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.)



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**UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS**



- The Board of Trustees will meet on the second Tuesday of the month, **February 13<sup>th</sup>** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.
- The Diaconate will meet on the third Tuesday of the month, **February 20<sup>th</sup>** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor
- The Official Board will meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month, **February 27<sup>th</sup>** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.

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**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](http://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.

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**FROM OUR FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

**Gary Zielinski**

Below is a monthly report listing the budget income we need to receive from Pledges and Offerings and the amount received from **January 7 through January 28, 2024**. *Thank you to everyone who supports our church and its ministries.*



Offering Needed \$14,468.04 for 4 Sundays  
 Offering Received \$15,922.90  
 +\$ 1,454.86

**PLEDGE CARDS RECEIVED TO DATE: 50**



**ANNUAL ALL FAMILY WINTER RETREAT**  
**IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR SATURDAY RETREATERS!**  
**February 17, 2024**

Templed Hills Camp in Bellville, Ohio  
**Attention: those who wish to come down on Saturday only—we would be happy to have you there, but we also need your reservation and payment right away-- the cost is \$20.** Please contact Irene Joyce or Rachel Zielinski if you have any questions.

**Important date to remember:**  
**FEBRUARY 4, 2024:** Retreat planning meeting in the church after the worship service

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**CHURCH OFFICERS 2024**

*\*Elected January 28, 2024*

**Moderator:** Greg Dickson\* **Vice-Moderator:** Jen Barry\*  
**Treasurer:** Sally Herzog\* **Clerk:** Judy Gaumer\*

**Sunday School Co-Superintendents**

Linda Elkins Mary Densmore

**Board of Trustees**

Bill Giuliano\* Chris Goff Mike Elkins\*  
 Les Fox\* Herb Hampson\* Cathy Hawk  
 Sarah Hayes\* Sandy Pogozelski\* Cheryl Sobek  
 Dan Winrod Laura Winrod Rachel Zielinski\*

**Endowment Fund Subcommittee**

Greg Dickson\* Dave Williams\*

**Diaconate**

Teri Barbish\* Jean Bittinger Elaine Coffey\*  
 Bobbi Cook Wayne Cook Judy Davis Judy Fox\*  
 Carole Kapcar Susann Lerch\* Cherie Teagno\*  
 Barbara White Mary Ellen Zimmerman

**Christian Education Committee**

Serena Abruzzino Mary Densmore Linda Elkins\*  
 Colette Emerson\* 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**

Sue Gigliotti\* Judi Pavisich Bill Schneider  
 Rob Toth\* Mary Willis

**Mission and Outreach Committee**

Judy Carte Diana Creecy\* Sarah Hayes\* Lora Rung  
 Jennifer Sekorky\* Peter Smith Bev Wehr\*  
 Mary Ellen Zimmerman



**Due to a bank change, all checks to the church should be made out to **United Church of Christ or UCC or United Church of Christ (Congregational)**. Please do not use "Strongsville" or "SUCC" in the "Pay to the Order of" line. Thanks!**

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO PLEDGE!**

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

**M- Making and moving**

**A- Accepting and Acknowledging**

**P- People**

**L- Learning and Loving**

**E- Encompassing**



**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 \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**EASTER FLOWERS—EASTER IS MARCH 31<sup>st</sup>**



Easter flowers (Lilies, Tulips, and Hyacinths) will be available for order. Please watch your bulletin for ordering information and pricing.  
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**NEED TO CHAT WITH THE PASTOR?**

Pastor Heidi is always available by appointment or by phone, but you can stop by the church on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday mornings, or Thursday afternoons during her office hours.



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