



FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

*"This is God's Message: Attend to matters of justice. Set things right between people. Rescue victims from their exploiters. Don't take advantage of the homeless, the orphans, the widows. Stop the murdering!"
 (Jeremiah 22:3, The Message)*

Who We Are

(This month, I am ceding my space to Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, United Church of Christ General Minister and President/CEO, regarding recent events):

The peace we long for seems elusive, as we witness the violence in Minneapolis. We are shocked by the murder of Alex Patti by ICE agents in the streets of Minneapolis, a mere 17 days after the murder of Renee Nicole Good. We grieve the loss of these lives and pray for their families and loved ones during this time of grief and sorrow.

We pray for the city of Minneapolis, for its leaders and for clergy and spiritual leaders who are offering care to this city that continues to experience violence, tyranny, and oppression in the presence and actions of ICE agents. We pray for an end to the violence and hatred unleashed on immigrant communities and pray safety for those most vulnerable. . . .

The United Church of Christ joins the broader faith community in strongly condemning the on-going actions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as it continues to bring death and violence to the streets of Minneapolis. The use of lethal force on unarmed and non-threatening individuals continues to result in loss of life and injury. The abduction of people on the streets of major cities, the profiling of individuals, the targeting of immigrants, and the escalation of deportations are violating the human rights of millions. . . . It is time to stop the violence. It is time to return peace to our nation's cities. . . .

Today we mourn, weeping at the injustices meted out upon neighbors. We mourn the loss of freedom, dignity, and respect. We mourn the loss of these lives. Alex Patti. Renee Nicole Good.

God, we long for peace in our communities, peace that is promised, peace that is everlasting. We cry out for the loss of lives to violence in the streets of the United States. Grant us the courage to see and speak the truth. Help us to be witnesses to your presence and to the call to love our neighbors as ourselves. Restore peace to the land and to our communities.

Set things right among us we pray. Amen.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1 – 10 a.m.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Annual Meeting

Greeter: Linda Plain

Liturgist: Judi Pavisich

Special Music: Chancel Choir



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 – 10 a.m.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Installation of Officers

Greeter: Lynne McCray

Liturgist: Mary Ellen Zimmerman

Special Music: Chancel Choir



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15 – 10 a.m.

Transfiguration



Greeter: Volunteer needed

Liturgist: Sharon Maresco

Special Music: Music Team

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 – 7 p.m.

**Imposition of Ashes at Noon
 and at the evening meditative worship**



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22 – 10 a.m.

First Sunday in Lent

Penny Sunday

Greeters: Roger &

Judy Davis

Liturgist: Dave Williams

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](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCynOZfg4uKoX7HMnKORbXfQ/videos), 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.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation has been rescheduled for **February 1, 2026**, due to the winter storm. The meeting will be preceded by the traditional Pancake Brunch. All are encouraged to attend this meeting, where we will review the events and activities of the past year and elect officers for 2026. **Annual Reports are available for pick up or online.**



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 offer gluten-free bread to ALL who come forward to the Table for Holy Communion. ALL means ALL at The United Church of Christ (Congregational)!

BABY CONGRATULATIONS



Welcome to the world, **Beckham Hayes Wade**, son of Nicole and Brett Wade, who was born on January 11, 2026. Congratulations to grandparents **Beth & Bill Giuliano** and uncle **Luke Giuliano**, too!

BAPTISM CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to **Molly Marie Boden**, daughter of **Katelyn and Vince Boden**, and little sister of **Charlotte and Emma Boden**.

Molly, whose sponsor is **Rebecca Deertz**, is the granddaughter of **Lori Deertz** and **Dave Deertz** and the great-granddaughter of **Marty Winch**. Molly was baptized on January 11, 2026.



Congratulations to **Natalie Rose Thomas and Joseph Michael Thomas**, grandchildren of **Deborah A. Thomas**, who were both baptized on January 18, 2026. Their sponsors are **Bobbi and Wayne Cook**.

Installation of Officers

Congratulations to our new (and returning) church officers, who are to be elected at the rescheduled Annual Meeting on February 1, 2026. Installation of Officers will take place during our worship service on February 8, 2026. Our most sincere thanks to everyone who served in 2025.

Ash Wednesday is February 18th. At 7 p.m., we



will have a meditative service, with music and readings and the imposition of ashes. All are welcome to join us for this quiet time of reflection as we begin our Lenten journey together. Pastor Heidi will also offer the imposition of ashes at noon in the sanctuary.

IN CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY



Our deepest sympathy goes out to the family and friends of **Steve J. Gall**, who completed his earthly journey on January 2, 2026 at the age of 88. Please keep his daughter **Sue Ludwig** Sue's friend **Bob**; Sue's brother and sister-in-law **Steven & Debbie Gall** and their sister **Sharon** and their families in your prayers. Steve also had numerous grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. The funeral was January 4, 2026 at Jardine Funeral Home.

We were saddened by the loss of long-time member **Barbara Bridle** in California on January 9, 2026 at the age of 91. She and her late husband, Lloyd, were integral members of our church for many years. Our heartfelt condolences to Barbara and Lloyd's friend and family: Ken (Luann Bridle), her daughter Susan (Kevin Verner) and their daughters Mallory (Brian Haliema) and Stacy (Britt Willingham) and her daughter Laura (Marty Swartz) and their son Drew Swartz (Cassie Clemens) and daughter Jamie (James Cooper). Barbara was also very proud to be a great grandmother of 5: Gavin Swartz, Reese and Stella Haliema, Avery Willingham and Cameron Cooper. She will be buried next to Lloyd at Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery in Seville..



BOOK STUDY--SISTERHOOD!

On **February 9th**, Pastor Heidi and Linda will resume our Book Study. Our group will usually meet on the **third Monday of each month at 7 p.m.**





FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL: PENNY SUNDAY

Since January's Penny

Sunday was cancelled due to the snow storm, save those coins, dollars, and checks (to UCC) for our kids, who are collecting for World Central Kitchen on **February 22, 2026**. The next Penny Sunday will be **March 22, 2026**.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS SPAGHETTI DINNER



SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 28th
2 seatings:
5 p.m. or 6:30 p.m.

(Carry out available)

Adults: \$12,

Kids 6-12: \$8, 5 & under = FREE

Includes your choice of Spaghetti & meatballs or Vegetarian marinara, salad, bread, dessert, and coffee/tea/soft drink.

Contact Cathy Hawk for reservations 440-781-7812 or purchase your tickets on Sunday mornings.

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.



**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 a class after worship on **February 8th**, (with plenty of time to enjoy the Souper Bowl) and folks desiring to join this church family will be added during worship on **February 22nd**.

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, Mark Camp, Judy Carte, Elaine Coffey, Betty "Grammy" Craig, Sam Cuyler Jr., Roger Davis, Sue Hawk, Pam & Bruce Keenen, Erv Koch, Jan Meier, Carol Konet, Bobbie & Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon

Kuhlenschmidt, Jim Maresco, Jan Meier, Roy Merkle, Amanda Moulton, Ginny & Kenn Oerkfitz, George & Joyce Reed, Dorothy Ritchie, Ron Rothel, Jennifer Sekorky, Tracy Seneff, Peter Smith, Bruce Sperber, Linda Stepan, JoAnn Thomas, Debbie Wentz, Heather Williams, Claire Wills, Marty Winch

Extended Church Family: Amy Carroll (Marty Winch's sister), Barbara Davis (Don & Sandy Glechauf'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 Rothel), Jennifer Glechauf (Don & Sandy's daughter-in-law), Sarah & David Glechauf (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 Rothel's sister-in-law), Sylvia Pakish (Don & Sandy Glechauf's friend), Jeff Peacock (former member), Amanda Shannon (Sarah & Jon Hayes' friend), Vicki Smith (Vanner Clarinets), Jeaneane Steinmeyer (Greg Dickson's aunt), 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, people of Minnesota

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



MUSIC NOTES

Many thanks to our **Chancel Choir**, **Ken Mehalko**, and of course, **Tom Foley**, **Mike Elkins**, and **Sharon Heinrich**, for their music in January!



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.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

- The Board of Trustees will meet on the second Tuesday of the month, **February 10th** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.
- The Diaconate will meet on the third Tuesday of the month, **February 17th** at 10:30 a.m. in the Parlor.
- The Official Board will meet on **February 24th** at 7 p.m. in the Parlor.



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.

MISSION OUTREACH NEWS:



MISSION OUTREACH is collecting cans of soup now through Super Bowl Sunday (February 8th) 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 8th, 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!

Plus, we will have 24 oz. containers of soup to purchase for \$10.

Three soups will be available:

Broccoli Cheddar***Chicken

Paprikash***Unstuffed Cabbage

FROM OUR FRIENDS AT THE FOOD BANK:



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 canned soup, pasta, and Dinty Moore beef stew.

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 & sorters: **Teri Barbish, Colette Emerson, Carole Kapcar, Roz Fotos, Linda Elkins, Cherie Teagno, Wayne & Bobbi Cook, Jane Kossin & Ed Geyer, Irene Joyce, and Sharon Lempner**, who are enabling the Panera Bread ministry to continue!

NEWS FROM THE KITCHEN

DISHES, and BOWLS, and PLATES--Oh My!

They're starting to accumulate again.



Many folks have been kind enough to bring dishes to the church for funeral luncheons or other events. After the delicious food is eaten, the dishes are sometimes forgotten. If you are missing one of your bowls or containers, please pick it up from the kitchen right away. Abandoned dishware will be sold at the Thrift Shop.



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 **Jim Heinrich** repaired the broken door latch on the door from the Gathering Area to Pilgrim Hall? Your good work is appreciated, Jim!

Did you know that **Sarah Hayes** facilitated the donation of the Pilgrim Hall piano to a family in need? Sarah made sure the instrument was given to a good home. Thanks, Sarah!

Did you know that **Dale & Cathy Hawk, Luke Giuliano, Dave & Oliver Sekorky, Penny & Oliver Zielinski, John, Amanda & Riley Marshall, and Jon, Sarah, & Jack Hayes** braved frigid temperatures and no small amount of accumulated snow to dismantle our crèche after Christmas? Thanks so much, friends!

THANK YOU NOTES:

Thank you to everyone who worked so diligently to turn in their Annual Reports for 2025. It's gratifying to see all the activities and accomplishments that our congregation has achieved together!



ADDRESS CHANGES/ADDITIONS

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



THE HEARTLAND CONFERENCE'S PORTAL TO MINISTRY RESOURCES!



SCAN ME

YOU CAN ACCESS RESOURCES FROM AND INFORMATION ABOUT OUR HEARTLAND CONFERENCE OF THE UCC! Looking for a way to get connected for ministry resources in the wider church? Just scan the QR code.



ROYAL OAK PAPER RECYCLING
Please do not place papers/cardboard outside the bin if it's full. Thanks!

FREE LUNCH FOR ALL--Wednesdays

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

A reminder: Donations are welcomed to support the increasing costs of this valuable program.



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.



IN OUR COMMUNITY--Girl Scout Troop #71363 is stocking and maintaining a "Hygiene Library," located on the lawn near the parking lot facing Royalton Road.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP—



Monday, February 2 2025 at 7 p.m. and/or Wednesday, February 4 at 1 p.m. We will cut out fleece circles for

"Snuffleballs" for dogs and cats, as well as collect needed items for Animal Rescue Fund.



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.

ALTAR FLOWERS FOR LAST MONTH

The altar flowers are given—

January 4th

Happy Heavenly Birthday, Mom!

You were the best mom a child could ever hope for!

Elaine Coffey

January 11th

In Loving Memory of Carol L. Studer.

Jim, Kathy, and Jeff

January 18th

In loving memory of our beautiful mother Barbara Bridle, who embraced life with joy and nurtured deep connections within her family, her circle of friends, and her beloved church community. She remains forever in our hearts.

— Her children: Ken, Sue, and Laura and their families

January 25th

In celebration of our Daughter-in-Law Noebeth

Reed's Birthday this month.

Love, George & Joyce Reed



THE FLOWER CHART FOR 2026 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 \$36 for two vases; \$18 for one.



STEEPLE LIGHTING

Week of January 4th

Happy Birthday to our "Little K" on January 2nd!

Week of January 11th

Happy Birthday to Rachel Zielinski on January 16th!

Love, your 2nd favorite set of twins

Week of January 18th

Happy Birthday to Tony Craig on January 20th!—With love, Grammy

Week of January 25th

Honoring our church officers who have served this past year.

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!

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 would LOVE to have you be a part of our team! (You don't need to be a member of the Diaconate to participate, and you may come and go as you are led.)



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 accepted during our Thursday sale hours, but please try to limit your donations to what you can carry downstairs.

Please do not abandon items outside the church doors.

THANK YOU TO OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS, THE CHURCH, AND THE COMMUNITY FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

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

CHURCH OFFICERS 2025

**Elected January 26, 2025*

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* Myron Costin* Diana Creecy
Cathy Hawk* Sarah Hayes Lora Rung*
Peter Smith Mary Willis* Mary Ellen Zimmerman

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 The United Church of Christ (Congregational) 13740 Pearl Road Strongsville, OH 44136 or drop it off in the church's mailbox.

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 4 through January 18, 2026.**



Thank you to everyone who supports our church and its ministries.

Offering Needed \$20,848.00 for 4 Sundays

Offering Received \$14,821.00 (only 3 Sundays)

-(\$ 6,027.00)

PLEDGE CARDS RECEIVED : 62

Giving statements for 2025 are available in the Church Family Mailboxes in the Gathering Area.



PLEASE REMEMBER THE CHURCH IN YOUR WILL.

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 **All checks to the church and its organizations should be made out to United Church of Christ or UCC or United Church of Christ (Congregational).**

ANNUAL ALL FAMILY WINTER RETREAT IT'S NOT TO LATE TO JOIN IN THE FUN!

February 13-15, 2026

Inspiration Hills Camp in Burbank, Ohio



Please call the church office if you would like to come down on Saturday. 440-238-6697

Important date to remember:

FEBRUARY 8, 2026: Retreat planning meeting in the church after the worship service during the "Souper Bowl" luncheon in Pilgrim Hall



**IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO PLEDGE FROM
YOUR H.E.A.R.T.!**

**Hospitality
Engagement
Activities
Resources
Time, Talent, & Treasure**



United Church of Christ 2026 Estimate of Giving

In recognition of God's many blessings to me, I am happy to join with others in the following commitment for 2026:

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 ____ / ____ / ____

**For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
Matthew 6:21**

THREE WITH GLEE!

Capital Campaign: We currently have \$63,403.08 in our capital campaign account. Pilgrim Hall is painted and the supplier and installer of acoustic tiles in Pilgrim Hall is being scheduled. 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.



POLE BARN UPDATE:

The siding is on the structure and the garage door has been installed. In the spring, the concrete can be poured.



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT THE STRONGSVILLE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:

(13500 Royalton Road)

FOLLOWING FREEDOM

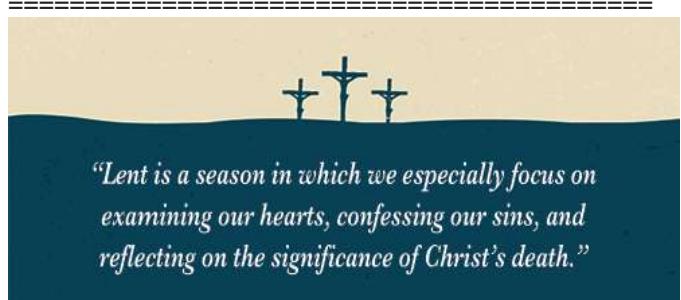
An Afternoon with Harriet Tubman

**Saturday, February 21st
at 2 p.m.**



Learn about the fascinating life of abolitionist Harriet Tubman in a reenactment by professional reenactor Allison Smith. This event is free and open to the public and refreshments will be served following the 1 hour program.

For more information, please call Strongsville United Methodist Church at 440-238-6145.





The United Church of Christ
(Congregational)
13740 Pearl Road
Strongsville, OH 44136
www.strongsvilleucc.com

