

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST (CONGREGATIONAL)

13740 Pearl Road, Strongsville, Ohio 44136

Rev. Rebecca Stephenson, Pastor Church (440) 238-6697

Website strongsvilleucc.com Email strongsvilleucc@gmail.com

January 5, 2014

11:00 A.M.

† *Those who are able may stand.*

PRELUDE

Journey of the Kings

Hopkins

INTROIT

Emmanuel

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant which will never be forgotten.

People: **We come together early in this new year to join in a covenant service. Our purpose is to be reminded of our deep need of God's Grace.**

Leader: All persons must recognize their sinful condition and remember that they cannot experience forgiveness outside the Grace of God.

People: **Then we must acknowledge that our need of His Grace is deeper than forgiveness for wrong acts, but goes to the cleansing work of His Spirit at the very core of our beings.**

All: **So we embrace an opportunity for a fresh experience of His Grace. Let us re-dedicate ourselves to the covenant relationship provided for us through Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

† HYMN 592

Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Pastor: Let us, the members of Strongsville United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

People: **We promise you our continuing friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the**

church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

CHORAL ANTHEM

You Are the New Day

arr. Knight

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

Masters in This Hall

† DOXOLOGY (No. 815)

† PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 John 1:5 to 2:6

N.T., p. 211

A COVENANT SERVICE

HYMN 596

I Surrender All

Verses 1 and 4 only

CONFESSION

Pastor: In surrendering all to Christ, we now renounce our own righteousness. Do you deeply sense your need of God's grace in Christ?

People: **We acknowledge a deep sense of our need. We see ourselves as sinners in need of a savior. The spirit of God has awakened us; for we cry out, "Lord where are you? Is there no hope of escaping out of this wretched state? We are but dead, if we continue as we are. What may we do to be saved?"**

Pastor: Being made aware of our sin and its danger, we look for help and deliverance, but we often look everywhere else before looking to Christ. Nothing will bring us to Christ but absolute necessity. We try to forsake our sins through prayers, and sermons, and sacraments, searching for salvation. But all of these, though they are needed in their places, cannot save us. Our determination cannot help us; in fact, it may reflect the source of our sin. Ritual alone cannot help; these are empty vessels.

They tell us, "You knock at a wrong door; salvation is not in us." We find despair in our own goodness, but we find salvation in Christ.

SUPPLICATION

People: Lord, be merciful to us. What shall we do? We dare not abide as we are, and we are weary of trying to do it alone. Our praying alone will not help us. Our hearing alone will not help us. If we give everything we have to the poor, or give up our bodies to be burned, all this would not save our souls. Woe is us. What shall we do?

Pastor: We must let our sins go. We must let our righteousness go. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came to seek and to save them that are lost. Friends, will you now trust Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and has provided everything needed for our forgiveness?

All: Lord Jesus, here we are, lost creatures, and enemies to God, under his wrath and curse. Lord, undertake for us, reconcile us to God, and save our souls. You have promised not to refuse us, for we have nowhere else to go. If we had come in our own righteousness, you may well have sent us away; but since we come at the command of the Father, and because of your great love, we know you will not reject us. We come, Lord. We believe, Lord. We throw ourselves upon your grace and mercy. We cast ourselves upon your blood. On you we will trust, and rest. On you we lay our hope for pardon, for life, and for salvation.

PRAYER

Pastor: Jesus invites us into a covenant relationship with God. Nowhere is that more evident than when Jesus invites us to pray the prayer we have come to call, "The Lord's Prayer." It is a community prayer. We pray this prayer, recognizing that God has drawn us to himself as a people. It expresses our desire together to see God's kingdom revealed among us - and so let us pray together:

All: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in 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.

COMMITMENT

Pastor: We now yield ourselves to the Lord. As his servants, we must give up the dominion and control of ourselves to Christ. "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law but under Grace."

All: We are yours, Lord. We trust you. We dedicate ourselves to your service.

Pastor: In giving ourselves to the Lord, we affirm that we will heartily embrace what he has appointed us to do, both corporately and personally. Let him appoint you to your work. Christ has many services to be done; some are more easy and honorable, others more difficult and menial. Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests; others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves, as when he requires us to feed and clothe ourselves. Indeed, there are some spiritual duties that are more pleasing than others; as to rejoice in the Lord, to be a blessing and praising God. These are the sweet works of a Christian. But then there are other works, where to please Christ, we must deny ourselves. Find what Christ expects of you and then give yourselves totally to his will, without bargaining and without reservation.

All: Make us what you will, Lord, and send us where we are to go. Let us be vessels of silver or gold, or vessels of wood or stone; as long as we are vessels of honor, we are content. If we are not the head, or the eye, or the ear, one of the nobler

and more honorable instruments, then let us be the hands, or the feet, as one of the lowest and least esteemed of all the servants of our Lord.

Leader: Lord, place us in your kingdom in the roles you have designed for us.

People: Lord, make all of us your servants.

Leader: In exalted places, or humble places.

People: Let us be full; let us be empty.

Leader: Let us have all things; let us have nothing.

People: We freely and gladly embrace our places in your kingdom.

COVENANT REQUIREMENTS

Pastor: Beloved, the commitment to Christ we have just expressed is the essence of discipleship. Only when we have laid all our hopes on Christ, giving ourselves freely to the merits of his righteousness—only then are we truly Christians. His people are a willing people. He will be our all in all, or he will be nothing.

HYMN 583

You Are My All in All

THE COVENANT

Leader: And now let us confirm our commitment by a solemn covenant to him. What would it take for us to make a covenant with God? What would it mean for us to commit ourselves to His plan for our lives in 2014?

First, it would mean the forgiveness of our sins and the constant realization of our continual need for the Grace of God in our lives.

Second, it would mean for us to resolve in our own lives to live as disciples of our Lord, forgoing our own selfish motives and living in our world as servants to others in the name of God.

Finally, it would mean not trusting in our own strength and abilities, but anchoring in the source of our strength and abilities; God himself. God is here in a very real way. His presence is here to give evidence of his promises to us.

Pastor: Will you trust him? If you are willing to trust Him, then join with your brothers and sisters in this holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

All are welcome to come forward to partake of the Lord's Supper, or Pastor Becky will come to you, if you wish.

† HYMN 441

Rescue the Perishing

BENEDICTION

All: And now may the covenant we have made on earth be sealed in heaven. And may God enable us to live faithfully before him. The Peace of Christ be with us all. Amen.

POSTLUDE

SERVING TODAY

Director of Music
Organist / Pianist
Liturgist
Nursery
Ushers
Coffee Hour

Andrew Purdum
Susan Stevenson Tressa
Rachel Zielinski
Barb Fraunfelder
Tom and Judy Gaumer
Barb Fraunfelder

ANNOUNCEMENTS – JANUARY 5, 2014

Welcome, visitors! We are so glad you have chosen to worship with us this morning. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. **Members, please wear your nametags** to assist visitors, our minister, and other members to get to know you.

Our love and prayers are extended in sympathy to the family of Kerrin Shafer on the occasion of her passing on January 2. Kerrin was the daughter of Peggy Baum and the daughter-in-law of former church organist Donalee Munson—all of whom had been members of our church. A memorial service and luncheon will be held at the church at 12 noon next Saturday, January 11. If you can help with the luncheon and/or provide food, please inform the church office. Help and donations of food are needed. Thank you.

Annual Reports are due in the church office **NOW** please.

The Adult Discussion Group continues to meet on Sunday mornings between the two worship services. All are welcome.

Moms Group is a new support group within the church for mothers with young children. It will meet once a month on Mondays. The first meeting is January 13, from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. If you are interested, please see Beth Giuliano or Kelly Bickley.

Membership Class – Pastor Becky will once again teach a 12-week membership class entitled *Journey in Faith*, beginning **on Thursday, January 16**. Members, as well as potential members, are welcome and encouraged to attend. Topics covered are *Establishing the Group*, *The Bible as Our Authority*, *Discovering Jesus*, *What We Believe and How We Got Here*, *The Nature of the Church*, *From the Early Church to Us*, *We Are ALL Gifted*, *Investigating the Local Church*, *Christian Giving*, *Understanding Different Levels of Living and Giving*, *The Meaning of Christian Covenant*, and *Investigating Worship*. Class dates are Thursday evenings—January 16, 23, 30; February 6, 13, 20, 27; March 6, 13, 20, 27; April 3. The class will be held at the church from **7:00 to 9:00 p.m.** A sign-up sheet is on the Gathering Area bulletin board or call the church office at (440) 238-6697.

Memorial Fund Donations for Music Chairs – The new chairs in the sanctuary were recently purchased after a search by Music Committee members. These 30 chairs are needed for the choir on a routine basis, for special programs, and can be used for extra sanctuary seating. Some key features are the neutral color, stackability (with a book rack in place), and comfort. The chairs are being paid for by the Memorial Fund

and by contributions. \$50 supports the purchase of a chair. If you would like to help, please write a check to the Strongsville UCC Memorial Fund, and forward it to Greg Dickson, along with the information if you're purchasing it in memory of or in honor of someone. The Committee is investigating a way to label the chairs to recognize individual donations.

Boots Mixup – Two pairs of size 9 black boots that zip in the front were inadvertently swapped at Pastor Becky's party last Sunday. Please check that you have your own boots. If not, please bring the wrong boots to the church; the other pair is already at the church, waiting for its owner!

Paper Recycling – The paper bin from River Valley Paper Company is in our church parking lot. **Acceptable:** Brown Paper Bags, Cardboard, Catalogs, Hard and Soft Bound Books, Magazines, Mail, Newspapers, Office and School Paper, Phone Books. **Not Acceptable:** Aluminum, Glass, Metal, Plastic of any type, Styrofoam, Trash.

Altar Flower Chart for 2014 is posted in Pilgrim Hall. Please indicate whether you want one or two vases on the date(s) you select. Thanks!

The 2014 Greeters Chart for the 11:00 a.m. service and other special services is also posted in Pilgrim Hall. Please help if you are available. (The 9:00 A.M. service is casual worship and has no signup.)

Financial Officers of Church Groups: Please turn in your financial statements to the Auditing Committee through the Church office now. It is extremely important that all books be audited before the Annual Meeting on January 26, 2014. 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! For questions or concerns, please call the church office, (440) 238-6697.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place on Sunday, January 26, at about 12:45 p.m. in Pilgrim Hall. The meeting will be preceded by the Traditional Pancake Breakfast. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Ushers are really needed and appreciated. Please sign up on the board in the Gathering Area for the 11:00 a.m. service. Thank you! (The 9:00 A.M. service is casual worship and has no signup.)

Strongsville UCC **SWISS STEAK DINNER**

Saturday – February 1, 2014

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

Reservations Only: **(440) 238-8192 – Notice New Number !**

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

Help is needed. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in Pilgrim Hall. 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 Thrift Shop will be open during the dinner.

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. Please inform the church of updates to this list.

Long-Term Care or Homebound Members: Bill Betz at Chapel Hill Community in Canal Fulton, Edith Graves at Century Oak Care Center, Debbie Krause, Connie Rebar, Erla Mae Schultz at Medina Village

Church Family: Dan Davis, Holly Elkins, Janet Kato at The Altenheim, Betty Kovach, Dolores Matchett, Barbara Morgan, Rich Tressa

Extended Church Family: June Brewer (niece of Ed Powers), Logan Churnega (grandson of Ginny Churnega), Audrey and Gene Curry (parents of Pam Keenen), Zachary Crouse (grandson of Barbara Morgan), Tom Davern (relative of the Woodward), Rebecca Deeb (Godddaughter of Lora Rung), Victor DiChiro (father-in-law of Rob Wentz), Donna Fargo (mother of Sally Herzog), Ruth Fraley (relative of the Jannsohn family), Elizabeth Fulford (friend of Lora Rung), Irene Hagemeyer (niece of Betty Craig), Kate Heisler (friend of Lora Rung), Janine Kaltenstein (cousin of Vicky Masuga), Phyllis Keenen (mother of Bruce), Erik Kratky (friend of Sarah Hawk), Rick Mahon (friend of the Woodward), Pat Masuga (mother of Dan), James Smith (brother of Katie Renfro), Barbara Sommers (mother of Sheri Martin), Trudie Taylor (sister of Karen Morgan), Bob Tomko (cousin of Ed Sobek), Marge Tressa (mother of Rich)

Our Proposed Vision . . .

A world filled with God's love, where all are welcome at God's table.

Our Proposed Mission Statement . . .

Wherever you are on life's journey, the Strongsville United Church of Christ (Congregational) welcomes all to become passionate followers of Christ through Unconditional Love with Justice and Peace † Meaningful Prayer † The Celebration of Worship † Uplifting Music † Mutual Support † Joy of Service † Honoring Creation † the Giving Spirit, where all are welcome at God's table.

January 2014

- 12 Sun Collate Annual Reports
- 13 Mom Mom's Group Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 14 Tue Diaconate Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 15 Wed Mission and Outreach Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 16 Thu Journey in Faith Class, 7:00 p.m.
- 22 Wed Worship Team Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 23 Thu Journey in Faith Class, 7:00 p.m.
- 26 Sun Following 11:00 a.m. Worship – Pancake Breakfast and Annual Meeting of the Congregation
- 28 Tue Official Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- 30 Thu Men's Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. at European's Best Restaurant
Journey in Faith Class, 7:00 p.m.
- 31 Fri Prepare for Swiss Steak Dinner
Memorial Service in Sanctuary, 11:30 a.m.

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred,
let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt,
faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.*

Serving Next Sunday – January 12, 2014

Liturgist	Pam Keenen
Greeters	Volunteers Needed
Nursery	Lora Rung
Ushers	Volunteers Needed
Coffee Hour	Dianne Maringer