THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(Congregational)
13740 Pearl Road Strongsville, Ohio 44136
(440) 238-6697
StrongsvilleUCC@gmail.com
StrongsvilleUCC.com

Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, March 1, 2026– 10 A.M.
Sacrament of Holy Communion

WELCOME!

We are grateful you chose to worship with us this morning. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

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† *Please stand as you are comfortable.*

PRELUDE "Fairest Lord Jesus" arr. Raney

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Bill Schneider

INTROIT "Sabbath Prayer" adapted from *Fiddler on the Roof* Bock

† CALL TO WORSHIP
Leader: Christ of the comfortable, you would call us from our security and sameness, down that unknown path which leads to God's heart:
People: With trust, we would place our hands in yours, and follow.
Leader: Companion of our sleepless nights, you would beckon us out of the shadows of our fears, calling us to bring our doubts and questioning hearts along:
People: With humility, we would listen to those answers we do not expect, or even understand.
Leader: Word which creates out of nothingness, you would fill us with life where we see only emptiness, you would keep your promises when all ours lie littered on the ground:
People: We would let your grace transform us into faithful disciples.

† HYMN 654 **"Change My Heart, O God"**

A READING FROM THE PSALMS **Psalm 121**
(New King James Version)

I will lift up my eyes to the hills— From whence comes my help?
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to be moved;
the One who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; he shall preserve your soul.
The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore.

Leader: The Word of God, for us, the people of God;
People: Thanks be to God.

PRAYING IN SILENCE
Pastor: Lord, in your mercy, **ALL: Hear our prayers. Amen.**

ANTHEM "Keep Your Lamps" Traditional Spiritual, arr. Johnson

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY "Lenten Offering" Elkins

† DOXOLOGY 815 Tune: *Old Hundredth*
Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, all creatures here below.
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

† DEDICATING OUR LIVES AND OUR GIFTS

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS **John 3:1-17**
(New International Version)

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

REFLECTION "Out of the Darkness"

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

CALL TO RECONCILIATION
Pastor: When we least expect it, even when we are not ready, God comes to us, calling us to trust, calling us to follow, calling us to set aside our foolish lives, for the grace-full ones which are offered to us. Let us confess how often we choose not to follow, as we pray together:

UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS
We are all too human, Faithful God, thinking we have nothing to learn from others, and discounting ancestors in the faith like Nicodemus and Sarah. We look for answers online, convinced that we can trust whatever we find. We close our souls to the whispers of God, reluctant to allow God's Spirit to transform our lives. Yet you continue to keep watch over us, Promise Giver, as we swagger through the sunshine of our lives, or tremble in dark moments of uncertainty in the night. You do not stumble as you continue to come to us, leading us into your kingdom. You will always be our help, remaining faithful even as you remained faithful to Jesus the Christ.
(*silent prayer*)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON
Pastor: Our hope, our help, our peace, our joy? All come from God, the One who loved us, and the world so much, that Jesus came to bring us salvation.

All: Keeper of our souls, be with us; Watcher of our days, lead us; Salvation of our lives, have mercy on us. Amen.

A BRIEF GREAT THANKSGIVING

RECEIVING THE BREAD AND CUP
"The Comforter has Come" Bottome, arr. Lambert
Ralph Heimburger, vocalist

THE LORD'S PRAYER (in unison)
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on 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.

† HYMN 564 **"Just a Closer Walk with Thee"**

† BENEDICTION Thom M. Shuman
Now go with the Spirit, from the comfort of this place, so that we may bring hope to the whole world. Carry the Light of Christ within you, venturing even into the shadows with this gift. Trust in God, whose Spirit is always with you, as we seek to follow a life of deepening discipleship. ***Amen****.*

POSTLUDE "Be Thou My Vision" arr. Raney

SERVING

TODAY – MARCH 1		NEXT SUNDAY – MARCH 8
Linda Plain	**Greeters**	Marsha Hemphill
Elaine Coffey	**Liturgist**	Herb Hampson
Judi Pavisich	**Head Usher**	Bill Robinson
Tom Foley	**Director of Music**	Tom Foley
Mike Elkins	**Associate Director of Music**	Mike Elkins
Sharon Heinrich	**Organist**	Sharon Heinrich
Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich	**Video/Sound**	Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich
Choir, C. Foley, R. Heimburger	**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****, select* **Worship***, and click on* **Service Videos***.*

A NOTE OF THANKS—

We thank **Ralph Heimburger**, **Carol Foley,** the **Chancel Choir, Mike Elkins, Tom Foley,** and **Sharon Heinrich** for today's music. Don't forget, if you'd like to join us to sing for Palm Sunday and Easter, we rehearse on Thursday evenings at 8 p.m.

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL:

PENNY SUNDAY THANK YOU! We collected $288.10 for **World Central Kitchen**, feeding people in crisis all over the world. The next Penny Sunday will be on **March 22, 2026** and we will be collecting for **Providence House**, caring for babies and young children needing assistance in Cuyahoga County and surrounding areas.

The altar flowers are given—
Wishing Elena Joyce a Happy Birthday on March 3rd!
Love, Mom & Dad

Our steeple will light the sky this week—

Happy Birthday to Michael Craig on March 2nd!
With love, Mom

Happy Birthday today to Jo-Ellen Rokicsak!

OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed	$ 5,212.00
Last Week's Offering Received	$ 3,028.00
Difference	-($ 2,184.00)

Thank you very much for your support.
PLEDGES RECEIVED: 62

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

BEREA ANIMAL RESCUE FUND LAST CHANCE!

Women's Fellowship of Strongsville United Church of Christ is collecting donations for Berea Animal Rescue Fund through March 1.

ARF is always in need of basic animal care and cleaning supplies used daily at the shelter. Your donations of these items can make a big difference to the animals.

- Dry Dog Food, Dry Cat Food, Dog and Cat Treats
- Canned Cat Food (any kind), Canned Dog Food (any kind)
- Pill Pockets/Pouches for Dogs and Cats
- Scoopable Litter and Clay Litter
- Nylabones, Benebones, Kongs
- Small Litter Boxes, 3-Tier Cat Cages/Playpens
- Snuggle Safe Pet Heating Pad
- Plastic Swimming Pools
- Paper Towels, Toilet Paper, Nitrile Gloves
- 30 or 13 Gal. Trash Bags, Lawn & Leaf Bags
- Dishwasher Detergent (powder or liquid)
- Laundry Detergent (powder or liquid)
- Liquid Hand Soap, Bleach, First Aid Supplies
- Printer Paper, Wet and Dry Erase Markers
- Postage Stamps
- Computers or Tablets to process adoptions
- Treat Pouches, Leashes
- Gift cards for--
  - Target*, Walmart*, Petco, PetSmart, Pet Supplies Plus, OfficeMax, or Staples

***These gift cards are available from our Gift Card Program.**

Unfortunately, ARF cannot accept donations of comforters, sheets or pillows of any kind.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP—

Women Fellowship will once again celebrate pi Day by providing pies for coffee hour after worship on Sunday, March 15th. All ladies who would like to bring a pie before church or help serve pie after our church service are most welcome!

For our March meetings, we will make "People Chow" for Easter with Sally Herzog in our church kitchen:
Monday, March 16th, at 7pm
Wednesday, March 18th, at 1pm
We will sell the delectable treat, which is also known as "Puppy Chow," after worship on the Sundays of **March 22nd** and **March 29th.** Just in time to fill those Easter baskets!
As always, all ladies are welcome to attend any or all our events.

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BOOK STUDY--SISTERHOOD! On **March 9th,** Pastor Heidi and Linda Elkins will continue our Book Study at **7 p.m**.

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DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS NEXT WEEK
SPRING FORWARD ON MARCH 8th!
Don't forget to set your clocks an hour ahead!

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BABY CONGRATULATIONS

Welcome to the world, **Sunnie Marie Kehaulani Cantu**! Born February 19, 2026 at Fairview General Hospital, Sunnie checked in at 5 lbs., 11 oz., and 17-1/2" long. Her Hawaiian middle name means "heavenly dew." Mom **Olivia Clotworthy** and father **Andrew Cantu** are over the moon-- as are grandparents **Kristen** and **Mike Clotworthy** and aunt and uncle **Emma** and **Ben.**

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, Jen Barry, Mark Camp, Judy Carte, Elaine Cofffey, Betty "Grammy" Craig, Sam Cuyler Jr., Roger Davis, Colette Emerson, Sue Hawk, Frank Jefferis, 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 Gleichauf'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 Gleichauf (Don & Sandy's daughter-in-law), Sarah & David Gleichauf (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 Gleichauf's friend), Jeff Peacock (former member), Amanda Shannon (Sarah & Jon Hayes' friend), Vicki Smith (Venner 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

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

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UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

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

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ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF MARCH

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery. Envelopes are in the pews.

FROM OUR FRIENDS AT STRONGSVILLE COMMUNITY BAND:
"Classical Favorites" concert TODAY at 3 p.m. at Strongsville Middle School
"Melodies for Memories"

Mark your calendar on **Sunday, March 15th**, to attend a benefit jazz band concert for Alzheimer's Research at 3pm. at the Strongsville Middle School at 13200 Pearl Road.

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YOUTH GROUP

SPAGHETTI DINNER—Thank you to everyone who supported our fundraiser!

THREE WITH GLEE!

Capital Campaign: We currently have $60,456.08 in our capital campaign account after paying $2,500 for the painting of PIlgrim Hall. A new roof for Pilgrim Hall and the church building may be on the horizon. 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.

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EASTER FLOWERS ORDER FORM

You may choose lilies, hyacinths, or tulips (no color choice). To order, please email the church or turn in this form prior to the deadline of **Friday, March 20, 2026 at NOON**. The cost is **$8.00**.

Wording for bulletin:

_____

_____

_____

Given by: _____

(# of plants) Lilies _____(x $8)

Tulips _____ (x $8)

Hyacinths _____ (x $8)

Total amount due: $_____

☐ ***I will take my plant(s).*** ☐ ***I will leave my plant(s) for someone who needs some cheer.***

Please make your check payable to ***United Church of Christ,*** *and call or email the church with your order.*

For Church Records **2026 Easter Flowers**

Total number of plants: _____ Amount enclosed: $_____

Offering envelope number: _____ Cash/Check No. _____

Name:_____

THERE'S STILL TIME TO PLEDGE FROM YOUR H.E.A.R.T.!

Hospitality, **E**ngagement, **A**ctivities, **R**esources, **T**ime, **T**alent, & **T**reasure

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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***

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CHURCH OFFICERS 2026

**Elected February 1, 2026*

Moderator: Rachel Zielinski *
Vice-Moderator: Herb Hampson*
Treasurer: Sally Herzog* **Clerk**: Judy Gaumer*

Sunday School Superintendent: Linda Elkins

Board of Trustees
Karen Bates Jen Barry* Greg Dickson*
Bill Giuliano* Chris Goff Les Fox* Cathy Hawk
Sandy Pogozelski* Bill Robinson * Cheryl Sobek
Alex Tomoff Mike Willis

Endowment Fund Subcommittee
Linda Stepan* Dave Williams*

Diaconate
Jean Bittinger Elaine Coffey* Diana Creecy*
Bobbi Cook Wayne Cook Judy Davis
Judy Fox* Pam Heimburger Marsha Hemphill*
Cindy Hurley* Lynne McCray*
Linda Ponstingle Lora Rung

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
Jen Barry * Gina Cathcart Bobbi Cook*
Cathy Hawk Sarah Hayes* Lora Rung
Mary Willis Mary Ellen Zimmerman

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.

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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. **Thank you to all of our faithful volunteers!**

PLEASE NOTE: For Safety Reasons, if the Strongsville City Schools are closed due to inclement weather on a Wednesday, the Free Lunch will not be served.

THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop is OPEN on Thursdays 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.**

IMPORTANT: If the Strongsville City Schools are closed due to inclement weather on a Thursday, the Thrift Shop will not be open.

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