



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
(Congregational)
13740 Pearl Road Strongsville, Ohio 44136
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StrongsvilleUCC.com

Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, November 26, 2023 – 10:00 A.M.
Reign of Christ
Penny Sunday



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.

† Please stand as you are comfortable.

PRELUDE "Great is Thy Faithfulness" arr. Raney

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Irene Joyce

INTROIT "Come Before His Presence" Whitworth

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, Son of the Most High?

People: With thanksgiving for the words of the prophets, who told long ago of God's victory over darkness.

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the eternal Christ?

People: With evergreen symbols of our faith, with garlands and wreaths of pine and fir.

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, our Savior?

People: With arrangements of holly and ivy, reminders of Jesus' passion, death and victory over death.

Leader: How shall we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus, the King?

People: With thanksgiving and praise, with songs of celebration and remembering. With stories that belong to all God's children across the world.

† HYMN 797 "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come"

READING FROM THE PSALMS Psalm 100
(New International Version)

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Leader: The Word of God, for us, the people of God;

People: Thanks be to God.

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYER

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.

ANTHEM "Prepare the Way of the Lord" Rowan

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Penny Sunday

OFFERING

OFFERTORY "O Worship the King" Haydn, arr. Gardiner

† 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

HANGING OF THE GREENS

HYMN "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" (verse 1)

Hail to the Lord's anointed! Great David's Royal Son!

Hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun!

He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free,

To take away transgression, and rule in equity.

PRESENTATION OF THE HOLLY AND IVY Isaiah 53:3a, 4a, 5-6

HYMN "The Holly and the Ivy" (verse 1)

The holly and the ivy, When they are both full grown,

Of all trees that are in the wood, The holly bears the crown:

O, the rising of the sun, And the running of the deer

The playing of the merry organ, Sweet singing in the choir.

PRESENTATION OF THE WREATH Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

HYMN 256 "Love Has Come!" (verse 1)

PRESENTATION OF THE POINSETTIA Isaiah 11:1-2

HYMN 255 "Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming" (verse 1)

PRESENTATION OF THE PARAMENTS Isaiah 40:3-5

HYMN 279 "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" (verse 1)

PRESENTATION OF THE EVERGREEN TREE Micah 5:2, 4

HYMN 249 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (verse 1)

PRESENTATION OF THE CHRIST CANDLE 1 John 1:1, 5

† HYMN 270 "Joy to the World" (verses 1 & 4)

† BENEDICTION

Go forth from this place an awakened people, aware of the world's darkness, yet reaching for the Light. Go forth from this place an expectant people, eagerly waiting to see what God is doing next in our world, eager to be a part of the Plan. Go forth from this place prepared and desiring to serve, aware of the pain so many people bear, yet confident God will bring healing in this season of life. May the God of peace be with us all, this season and forever. Go in peace. Amen.

† RESPONSE/POSTLUDE "Jesus Shall Reign" Hatton



ATTENDANCE CARDS ARE IN YOUR BULLETIN!

Please take a moment to complete the card that is in your bulletin and place it in the offering plate. You may write prayer requests on the reverse side, if you wish to have us pray for someone and add a name to the prayer chain.

SERVING

TODAY – NOVEMBER 26 NEXT SUNDAY – DECEMBER 3

Serena Abruzzino Greeters Colette Emerson

Pam Keenen Liturgist Linda Ponstingle

Volunteers needed Ushers Volunteers needed

Tom Foley Director of Music Tom Foley

Mike Elkins Associate Director of Music Mike Elkins

Sharon Heinrich Organist Sharon Heinrich

Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich Sound Doug Thorn/Jim Heinrich

Chancel Choir 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 our Chancel Choir, along with Mike Elkins, Tom Foley, and Sharon Heinrich for their music today.

The altar flowers are given—

Celebrating our 23rd wedding anniversary!

Ken Mehalko & Bev Wehr

Always in our hearts, never forgotten, Jay. We miss you.

Serena Abruzzino and the "kidz"



A 2024 SIGN-UP SHEET FOR ALTAR FLOWERS IS POSTED IN PILGRIM HALL.

(Please note: the cost of flowers will be \$18 for 1 vase and \$36 for 2 vases beginning in January 2024.)



Our steeple will light the sky this week—

Happy Birthday to Stephen Popovich on November 28th!

With love, Grammy

Happy Birthday today to Mary Ellen Zimmerman and Gary Barbish!

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL: SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT IS COMING!

Rehearsals will take place during and after Sunday School classes each week prior to December 17th—OUR

PAGEANT DAY, when we will have our pageant during the worship service!



TODAY IS PENNY SUNDAY (Last of 2023)

Time to contribute your coins, dollars, or checks to UCC! Today's Penny Sunday money will go to help victims of the Tusky Valley band bus accident. The next Penny Sunday will be January 28, 2024.





IN CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

Our sympathy goes out to the family and friends of **Robert Sperber**, who died on November 16, 2023 at the age of 81. Robert joined our congregation in 1954.



Our heartfelt condolences to **Susann Lerch** and family on the death of **Bruce A. Lerch**. Bruce died on November 19, 2023 after a fall. He had joined the church earlier this year.

Marriage Congratulations



Our best wishes to **Dallas and Jenny (Wahl) Brammer**, who were married in Key West, Florida on November 18, 2023. Dallas & Jenny are the parents of **Carson Brammer**. Dallas is the son of **Cheryl & Ed Sobek** and the grandson of **Ginny & Kenn Oerkfitz**.

MISSION OUTREACH NEWS:

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Sharing Tree project! If you have not yet returned your ornament and gift card, please do so **TODAY**. We will be delivering the cards to the Strongsville Emergency Food Bank in time for Christmas.



GIFT CARDS

IT'S TIME TO ORDER CARDS FOR CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING! You can order gift cards by calling **Jim Joyce** at 216-346-4161 in advance with your order. **We will be placing a Christmas order the first week of December.**



OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$ 3,617.01
Last Week's Offering Received \$ 2,508.00
Difference -(1,109.01)

Thank you very much for your support.
PLEDGE CARDS RECEIVED TO DATE: 50



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP—

Everyone is welcome at all our events!

ALL LADIES ARE INVITED TO OUR CHRISTMAS TEA

Saturday, December 2nd at 1 p.m.



The Mitten Tree...

We will collect hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and socks for the needy this year until **December 3rd**; bring your items to the church during office hours and they will be placed on the Mitten Tree. After the 3rd, the items will be given to the homeless shelter and the tree will become the **Family of Faith tree**.

If you have not donated an ornament for yourself/your family, you may bring it to the church office and your ornament will join the others on our tree!



LIVE NATIVITY AND OPEN HOUSE--THANK YOU!

A great big **THANK YOU** to everyone who participated in the Live Nativity event! Charlie the Camel, Pete the Donkey, Anna the Sheep, and Rusty the cow were a big hit! Thanks to the set-up/clean-up crew, the kitchen crew, the Live Nativity participants, our musicians, and especially, Dale & Cathy Hawk, Doug Thorn, Jim Heinrich, and Rachel Zielinski and crew for organizing a very special evening!

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, Jennifer Cockrell, Sam Cuyler Jr., Sue Hawk, Irene Jannsohn, Carole Kapcar, Bobbie & Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Jim Maresco, Reggie McCray, Roy Merkle, Lola Millhoane, Kenn Oerkfitz, Gary Paul, George Pavisich, Dan Ponstingle, Joyce Reed, Dorothy & Bill Ritchie, Peter Smith, Sharon Wilson, Claire Wills, Marty Winch

Extended Church Family: Edward and Sharon Acton (Sally Herzog's friends), Dorene Baldrige, Ron & Yvonne Adams (Judi Pavisich's friends), Amy Carroll (Marty Winch's sister), Angie Colosimo (Judi Pavisich's friend), Barbara Davis (Don & Sandy Gleichauf's friend), 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), Thomas O'Shea (Sandy's dad), 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, 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



PLEASE BE AWARE: 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!



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY CHORUS:

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, **December 3rd** at 3 p.m. for our Christmas concert, "Amid the Winter Snow," at the Berea

United Methodist Church (170 Seminary Street in Berea). Come and hear this community choir, which is under the direction of Tom Foley, accompanied by Carol Konet. Many of our own SUCC Chancel Choir members also sing in the Southwest Community Chorus. We hope you will support our singers and celebrate the Christmas season with music!



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT STRONGSVILLE COMMUNITY BAND:

On **Sunday, December 10th** at 3 p.m., the Band will present their Christmas concert at the Ehrnfeldt Center. More music to enjoy and celebrate the most wonderful time of the year!

SWINGIN' SOUNDS OF THE SEASON CHRISTMAS JAZZ CONCERT



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17th at 7 p.m. featuring **Strongsville's Jazz Band and vocalist Cindy Smith** Tickets will be \$10 (\$5 for kids under 10) and we will have a reception following the concert. *Please contact Ingrid Dickson or Pam Keenen if you can donate finger foods for the reception.*



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Sunday, December 10th at 7 p.m. **Service of Remembrance & Healing**--Join us for a time of reflection, remembrance, and meditation as together we seek peace during this busy season. All are welcome—especially you.

BE A BUSY BEE IN 2023 & DO 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.



ALTAR POINSETTIA FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Order deadline is **Sunday, December 3, 2023**. Please complete this form and give it to the Church office with your cash or check payment. The cost is \$7.00.

Wording for bulletin: _____

Given by: _____

Number of plants: ____ x \$7.00/plant = \$_____

Please make your check payable to **United Church of Christ**, and place it with your order in the offering plate, under the office door, or mail it to:

Strongsville United Church of Christ
13740 Pearl Road
Strongsville, OH 44136

Thank you for placing a poinsettia plant on the altar!

For Treasurer's Records 2023 Christmas Poinsettia

Total number of plants: _____

Amount enclosed: \$_____

Envelope number: _____ Cash/Check #_____

Name: _____

Order deadline is Sunday, December 3, 2023.





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.

CHURCH OFFICERS FOR 2023 *Elected January 29, 2023

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

Sunday School Co-Superintendents

Linda Elkins Mary Densmore*

Board of Trustees

Diana Creecy Chris Goff* Herb Hampson Cathy Hawk
Sarah Hayes Cheryl Sobek* Dan Winrod*
Laura Winrod* Rachel Zielinski

Endowment Fund Subcommittee

Greg Dickson Linda Stepan Dave Williams*

Diaconate

Teri Barbish Jean Bittinger* Elaine Coffey
Bobbi Cook* Wayne Cook* Judy Davis*
Carole Kapcar* Sharon Maresco Linda Ponstingle 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* Mike Willis*
ex officio: Sharon Heinrich Tom Foley Mike Elkins

Stewardship Committee

Judi Pavisich Bill Schneider* Richard Taylor
Rob Toth Mary Willis*

Mission and Outreach Committee

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



The Strongsville Food Bank is searching for a coordinator for the Food Bank. It is a compensated volunteer position. The coordinator is paid for 20 hours per week, however it may entail 30+ hours to fulfill the duties of the position, therefore the volunteer designation.

Qualifications for this job include organizational skills, effective communication 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 at strongsvillefoodbank@gmail.com.



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.

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 being accepted during those hours, but

please try to limit your donations to what you can carry

downstairs. **Thanks, as always, to our dedicated**

volunteers!



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Everyone is welcome to be a part of our church life.



FREE LUNCH FOR ALL— Wednesdays 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.



Our Free Lunch for All Program welcomes everyone to enjoy a nutritious meal and warm fellowship.

GOOD NEWS! Our Free Lunch for All program received a \$1,000 Making a Difference Grant from the Heartland Conference of the UCC!

CHURCH CHRISTMAS MAIL BOX



To send Christmas greetings to fellow members and friends, the church “mail box” will again be available in the Gathering Area. Please remember to check the box for greetings you receive.

Also, please do not put cards in the box for friends who are not in town for Christmas. The church office cannot mail your personal Christmas cards. Cards left after Christmas will be discarded. Thank you.

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

M- Making and moving

A- Accepting and Acknowledging

P- People

L- Learning and Loving

E- Encompassing

Strongsville 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 ____/____/____