



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Congregational)

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Rev. Heidi Denman McDougall, Pastor

Sunday, November 30, 2025– 10 A.M.

First Sunday of Advent

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 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” Prichard

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Bill Schneider

INTROIT “Emmanuel” McGee

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Now, in this holy season of Advent, we wait.

People: For the faithful God is coming to us.

Leader: Now, in this season of waiting, we listen.

People: For the faithful Word speaks of good news to us.

Leader: Now, in the waiting and listening, we watch.

People: For the faithful Spirit is moving among us.

† HYMN 760 “While We Are Waiting, Come”

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE (HOPE)

The Raymond family—Lauren, Eric, Brecken, Cade, & Lena

Leader: On the first Sunday of Advent, we look for signs of hope in our world. People helping each other. Walls of separation being broken down. Bridges crossing great divides.

People: We see signs of hope in a family, traveling a long way from home, expecting a baby and being surrounded by the compassion of strangers.

Leader: We light this first candle for the hope we find in the world, as we wait for Christ to come into our world and lives in a new way.

People: Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night, our hearts long to greet you, as roses love light. Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage. One candle is lit for the Hope of the age.

HYMN 245 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (verse 1)

HOPE FROM THE PSALMS Psalm 122
(New Revised Standard Version)

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord!”

Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together.

To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,

as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

For there the thrones for judgment were set up, the thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you.

Peace be within your walls and security within your towers.”

For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, “Peace be within you.”

For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

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 for G.R.I.N.—with Radar

OFFERING

OFFERTORY “Offering Hope” 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

HOPE FROM THE PROPHETS Isaiah 2: 1-5
(New International Version)

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob.
God will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.”

REFLECTION “Come. See! Dream. . . .”

† HYMN 244 “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

† BENEDICTION

Be people of hope. Let hope live in your heart and share the hope of Christ with all you meet. Share hope by noticing someone else’s humanity. Share hope by listening to someone’s story. Share hope by praying for our world. In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share hope. As you go out into the wonder of God’s creations, share hope with those you meet. Amen.

† POSTLUDE "And the Glory of the Lord" from Messiah Handel



A NOTE OF THANKS—We thank our Chancel Choir, Mike Elkins, Tom Foley, and Sharon Heinrich for today’s music.

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.

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 30

NEXT SUNDAY—DECEMBER 7

Jim & Linda Dettmer	Greeters	Linda Plain
Riley Marshall	Liturgist	Elaine Coffey
Judi Pavisich	Head Usher	John Toth
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
Chancel Choir	Special Music	Chancel Choir

Today’s altar flowers are given—

In celebration of our wedding anniversary last Sunday
Ingrid & Greg Dickson



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. **SIGN UP EARLY AND GET YOUR FIRST CHOICE OF DATES!**

Our steeple will light the sky this week—

In loving memory of Jane C. Graves

Roberta Carpenter

Happy Birthday tomorrow to Colette Emerson!

From her Panera Pals

Happy Birthday to Sarah Keenen on December 6th

Love, the Alto Section



PENNY SUNDAY TODAY!

Time to donate your coins, dollars, and checks to UCC for G.R.I.N. (Golden Retrievers in Need). Today is the last Penny Sunday of 2025. The next Penny Sunday will be January 25, 2026.

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT IS COMING!

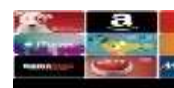
Rehearsals will take place during and after Sunday School classes each week prior to December 14th—OUR PAGEANT DAY, when we will have our pageant during the worship service!



Children's Pageant Sunday will be your opportunity to wear your favorite Christmas/holiday sweater an extra day! Let's fill the church with extra cheer on Sunday, December 14th and wear those special outfits! (And don't forget to stay to greet our special visitor from the North after worship!)



IT’S BACK! Save a stamp or two and use our Church Family Mailbox (located in the Gathering Area) for in-town church friends. Please remember to check the box for any greetings you may receive.



GIFT CARDS

PLEASE DON’T FORGET ABOUT THIS EASY, CONVENIENT PROGRAM THAT BENEFITS THE

CHURCH. **ORDER NOW FOR CHRISTMAS!** You can order gift cards by calling Jim Joyce at 216-346-4161 in advance with your order.

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., Roz Fotos, Sue Hawk, Bruce Keenen, Erv Koch, Bobbie & Wayne Krisak, Karl & Sharon Kuhlenschmidt, Roy Merkle, Amanda Moulton, Ginny & Kenn Oerkfitz, George & Joyce Reed, Dorothy Ritchie, Ron Rothel, Jennifer Sekorky, Tracy Seneff, Peter Smith, Bruce Sperber, Linda Stepan, Sharon Wilson, 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 Ghatti (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), Chris Vozniak (Lora Rung’s friend), 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



Marriage Congratulations

Our best wishes to Darla Wickline and Marjorie Morrison, who were married at our church on November 22, 2025. May their marriage be filled with joy always!

THREE WITH GLEE!



Capital Campaign: We currently have \$48,332.08 in our capital campaign account after paying for the electric work and automatic door openers for the kitchen and main doors, which will be installed soon. We also paid for the rest of the tuckpointing on the church building. The Trustees chose a vendor for painting Pilgrim Hall, which needs to happen prior to dealing with the acoustics in that room. 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.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE LIVE NATIVITY AND OPEN HOUSE LAST SUNDAY!



CHRISTMAS TEA Saturday – Dec. 6, 2025 – 1:00 P.M. – Pilgrim Hall



All ladies are welcome. To attend, please sign the pink sheet on Pilgrim Hall’s bulletin board. If you’d like to donate food for the table, please sign the green sheet also. If you’ve never attended the tea, additional information is on the pink half sheet on the cabinet

in the Gathering Area. Thank you!



HELP WANTED! The church will be needing a new treasurer at the beginning of the year, as our treasurer, Sally Herzog, will be completing her 3rd term of service. The treasurer position is an elected office and is responsible for facilitating the payment of the church’s bills and working closely with the Financial Secretary. Sally is willing to thoroughly train her successor. Please see Rachel Zielinski or Cathy Hawk if you can serve.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Are you interested in learning more about the United Church of Christ and becoming a member? Please let Pastor Heidi or the church office know if you would like to join our congregation in membership. We will be welcoming new members soon.



MISSION OUTREACH NEWS:

The Mitten Tree/Family of Faith Tree



the others on our tree!

We are collecting hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and socks for the needy this year through December 7th; bring your items to the church during office hours and they will be placed on the Mitten Tree. After the 7th, 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

SHARING TREE—LAST CHANCE

The Mission Outreach committee is teaming up with the Strongsville Community Food Bank as well as many other churches and local businesses. You will find a tree with "ornaments" in the Gathering Area. Each ornament is paired with a child who could use a little help this holiday season. If you would like to participate, simply take an ornament, purchase one \$30 gift card at any of the stores listed on the ornament. We’ll have \$10 gift cards to Target and Walmart in stock, so if you’d like to support our gift card program, you can get 3 of those—win-win! Then, simply hand the ornament and gift card(s) in to Sarah Hayes or Irene in the church office TODAY.



OFFERINGS RECEIVED

Weekly Offering Needed \$ 4,359.00
Last Week’s Offering Received \$ 1,964.00
Difference -(\$ 2,395.00)
Thank you very much for your support.
PLEDGES RECEIVED for 2026: 55



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY CHORUS:

Please mark your calendar for Sunday, December 7th at 3 p.m. for our Christmas concert, “There is Sweet Music Here,” 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 and Jarred Sorauf. 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! Tickets are \$15.

SWINGIN’ SOUNDS OF THE SEASON CHRISTMAS JAZZ CONCERT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19th at 7 p.m.
LIVE MUSIC featuring Jim’s Little Big Band and vocalist Cindy Smith Tickets are \$15 and are on sale now. Plus, we will have a reception following the concert. Please contact Ingrid Dickson or Sharon Heinrich if you can donate finger foods for the reception.



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT STRONGSVILLE COMMUNITY BAND:

Come to our Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 14th – 3 p.m. at Strongsville Middle School Auditorium!

ALTAR POINSETTIA FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Order deadline is Sunday, December 7, 2025. Please complete this form and give it to the Church office with your cash or check payment. The cost is \$8.00 per plant.

Wording for bulletin: _____

Given by: _____

Number of plants: ____ x \$8.00/plant = \$_____

I WILL: TAKE MY PLANT(S) ☐
LEAVE FOR A SHUT-IN ☐

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 2025 Christmas Poinsettia

Total number of plants: _____

Amount enclosed: \$_____

Envelope number: _____ Cash/Check #_____

Name: _____

Order deadline is next Sunday, December 7, 2025.





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.

CHURCH OFFICERS 2025

**Elected January 26, 2025 ** appointed by Official Board*

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



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. We also have a Life-vac choking device to assist in the event that someone is choking. It is located just beneath the AED.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETING

- The Official Board will meet on **December 2nd** in the Parlor at 7 p.m.



FREE LUNCH FOR ALL--Wednesdays

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

Many thanks to all of our dedicated volunteers and to all who come and enjoy food and fellowship on Wednesdays!

PLEASE NOTE: The Free Lunch for All program will be on hiatus on December 24th and December 31st.



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 yourself. **Please do not abandon items outside the church doors.**

PLEASE NOTE: The Thrift Shop will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

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***