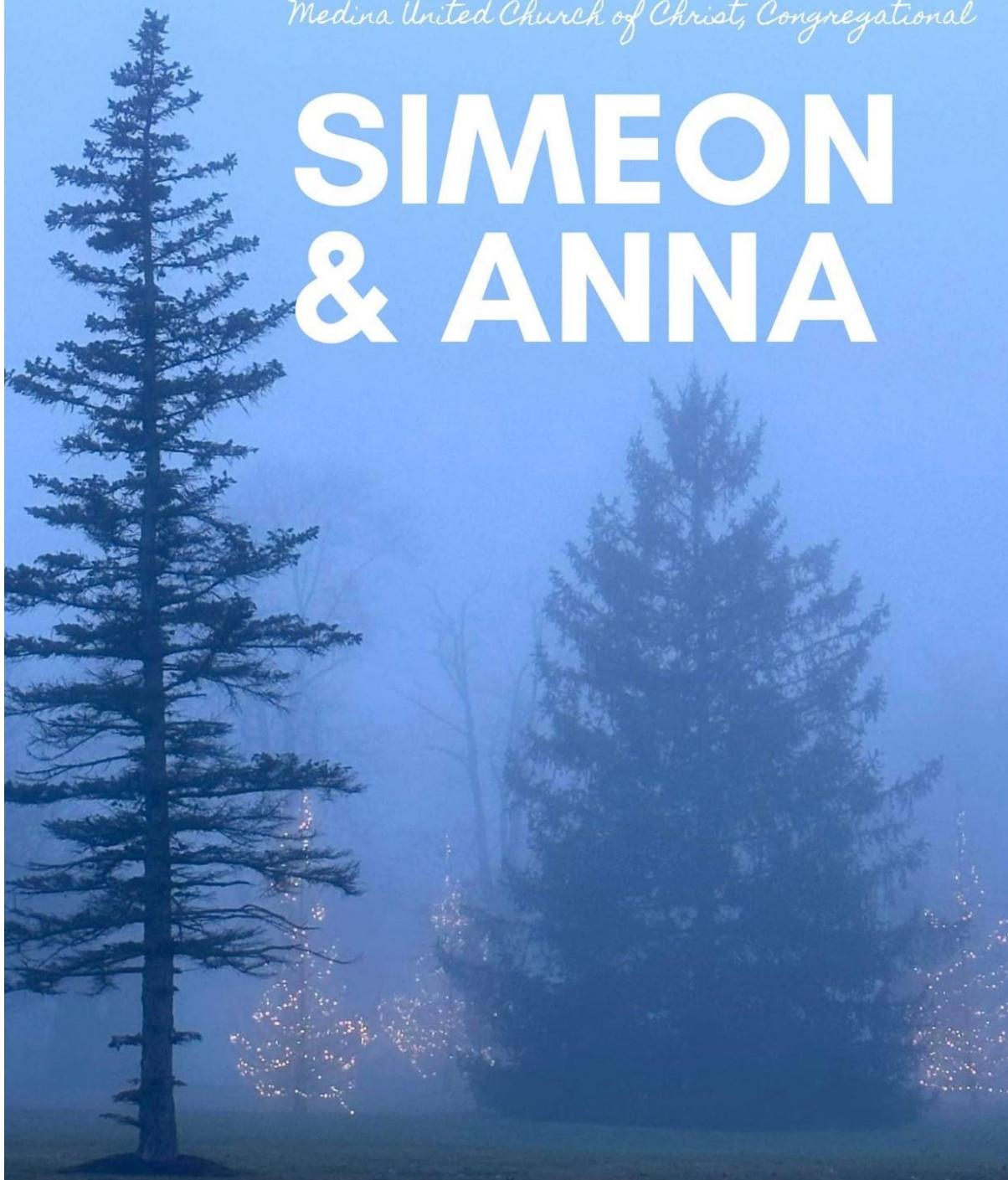


Medina United Church of Christ, Congregational

SIMEON & ANNA





UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL

217 E. Liberty St. Medina, Ohio 44256 330-725-4559 www.uccmedina.org

*****Assisted Listening Devices Available – Please Ask Your Usher*****

LIVE STREAMING OF THE SANCTUARY SERVICE IS AVAILABLE AT UCCMEDINA.ORG

- *During the 10:30 service, Jesus Vibes Sunday School is available for ages 3-8th grade*

“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS”

Please take a moment to sign the attendance pads, (located at the end of each pew) so that you know who is worshipping near you and you may greet them by name.

**Those who are able please stand*

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE "A la ru" -arr. Karl Osterland

Cathy Fafrak, Piano

WELCOME

PASSING OF THE PEACE

OPENING HYMN

“The First Noel”

THE FIRST NOEL Irr.

English Carol

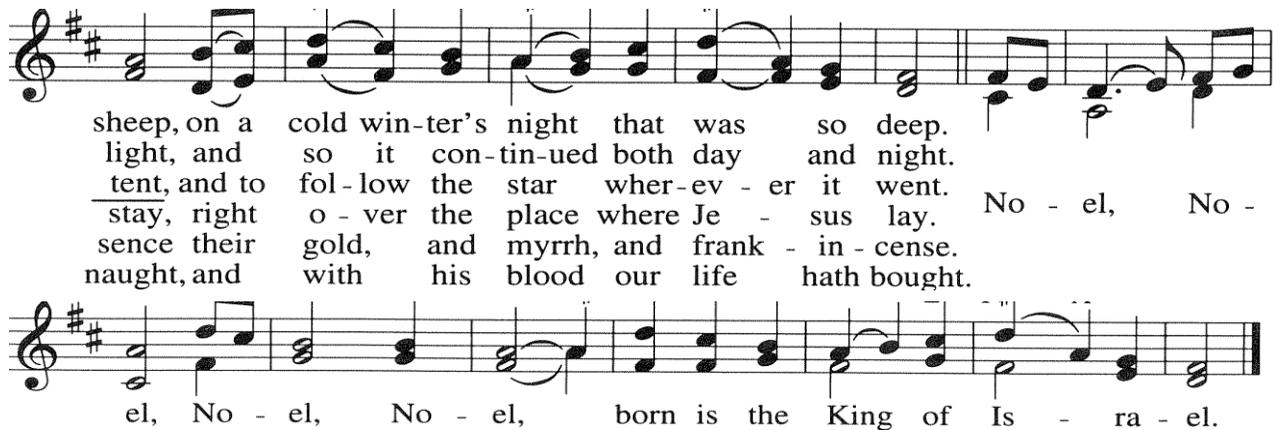
W. Sandy's Christmas Carols, 1833; arr. John Stainer (1840-1901)



1 The first No - el, the an - gel did say, was to cer - tain poor
 2 They look - ed up and saw a star shin - ing in the
 3 And by the light of that same star three wise men
 4 This star drew nigh to the north - west, o'er Beth - le -
 5 Then en - tered in those wise men three, full rev - erent -
 6 Then let us all with one ac - cord sing prais - es



shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keep - ing their
 east, be - yond them far, and to the earth it gave great
came from coun - try far, to seek for a king was their in -
 hem it took its rest, and there it did both stop and
 ly up - on their knee, and of - fered there in his pres -
 to our heav - en - ly Lord, who hath made heaven and earth of



sheep, on a cold win-ter's night that was so deep.
 light, and so it con-tin-ued both day and night.
 tent, and to fol-low the star wher-ev - er it went. No - el, No -
 stay, right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay. No - el, No -
 sence their gold, and myrrh, and frank - in - cense.
 naught, and with his blood our life hath bought.
 el, No - el, No - el, _ born is the King of Is - ra - el.

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (*Cloth for the Cradle, Iona Community 1997, Glasgow G51 3UU Scotland*)

In the face of the Gospel, let us ask God for a good Christmas:

That no powerful nation should tax the poor and uproot them;

that no unmarried mother should be put away in disgrace;

that no door will be shut on those who need to find it open;

that shepherds and sheep and all of nature need not be afraid;

that barbed wire and angry soldiers may not be found in Bethlehem;

that wise folk might appear in Belfast,

in Moscow and Kiev

in Gaza

in Medina.

that children may be preserved from those who would abuse them;

That this Christmas,

worship may become a manger,

and the church building a stable,

and the rumor become a reality,

that Christ has come among us.

And this we pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC "Candlelight Carol" – John Rutter

Pete Metzloff, voice

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:22-40 (N.T. pg. 55)

Ashley Bonsell Liturgist

SCRIPTURE REIMAGINED: Anna & Simeon

(*Cloth for the Cradle, Iona Community 1997, Glasgow G51 3UU Scotland*)

Narrator: It was the custom of Jewish parents to go to the Temple in Jerusalem and there to dedicate their child.

When Mary and Joseph did this, they were greeted by two elderly people, Simeon and Anna. They had been waiting and praying for God to send the Messiah,

and recognized that their prayers had been answered. Not for the first time, God uses older people to be the midwives of a new age.

Simeon: Anna...

Anna: Simeon?

Simeon: I thought I would wait on you.

Anna: Have you been here long?

Simeon: Seventy years.

Anna: So have I.

(pause)

Are you sure?

Anna: Yes... I saw him.

Simeon: Anna, I held him. I held him in the crook of my arm and let this wrinkled hand touch his brow and I felt young again. I'm sure.

Anna: You spoke to them?

Simeon: Yes, to her more than him. I told her what I was told to tell her.

Anna: How did she take it?

Simeon: With tears in her eyes. How else?

Who wants to hear about death so close to birth?

She took it like one who knew that through her child,
the best and worst will change place
all the time.

Anna: What now?

Simeon: A bottle of wine and a loaf from the baker's!

Anna: Can I join you?

Simeon: I was just going to ask you.

MESSAGE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY OF GOD

Stacie Yates

The Lord's Prayer

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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

SERMON "Simeon and Anna"

Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon

HYMN "Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace"



1 Lord, bid your ser - vant go in peace; your
2 This is the Sav - ior of the world, the
word is now ful - filled. These eyes have seen sal -
Gen - tiles' prom - ised light, God's glo - ry dwell - ing
va - tion's dawn, this child so long fore - told.
in our midst, the joy of Is - ra - el.

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

There is an offering plate if you feel led to deposit your envelope or an offering there. You can also give through our Realm app or get the link to give by texting UCCMEDINA to 73256. Thank you for your prayerful consideration!

Offering Invitation

May what we offer be cloth for the cradle. Let us rise in body or spirit and sing out our praise!

***Doxology** (words, Christina G. Rossetti, 1872; music, Gustav Holst, 1906)

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

***Prayer of Dedication**

God With Us! You have come into our world as that we might be transformed. May we stick close to your side. May we consider your parables. May we tell our life story in and through you. May we follow your Spirit wherever it may lead. Thanks be to you, our God, our Christ, our Spirit, One God forevermore. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"

Charles Wesley, 1739; alt. George Whitfield & others

MENDELSSOHN 7.7.7.7.D with refrain
Felix Mendelssohn, 1840; arr William H. Cummings, 1856



1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King;
2. Christ, by high - est heaven a-dored; Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord;
3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righ-teous-ness!



peace on earth, and mer-cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on-ciled!"
late in time be - hold him come, off-spring of a vir-gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, risen with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na-tions rise, join the tri-umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail th'in-car-nate De - i - ty,
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with th'an-gel - ic host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth-le-hem!"
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Refrain



Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King!"

***ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***BENEDICTION** (*Cloth for the Cradle*, Iona Community 1997, Glasgow G51 3UU Scotland)

God of God,
Light of Light,
True God of True God,
We Bless You!

Object of the Magi's search,
subject of an old man's song and an old woman's rejoicing,
fulfilment of the Baptist's preaching,
We bless you!

Mary's son,
Joseph's son,
God's only son,
You have blessed us to be a blessing to your world you died to save.
Go as Christ to the world and into your new year!
Amen!

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "God Be with You"**
God be with you 'til we meet again; By His counsels guide uphold you;
With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you 'til we meet again.

***POSTLUDE "Cold December Flies Away" -setting, Lynn Arthur Koch Cathy Fafrak, organ**

"MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY"

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Jack Sharpe, Maintenance
Nick Brlan, Custodian

THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

DECEMBER 31, 2023

**“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS.
MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY!”**

Live streaming of the Sanctuary service is available at www.uccmedina.org/live

December 31, 2023 thru January 7, 2024

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun	NEW YEAR'S EVE
	10:30 am One service of worship
	10:30 am Teen Church
Mon	NEW YEAR'S DAY - OFFICE CLOSED
Tues	8:00 am Men's Breakfast
	7:00 pm Bible Study
Wed	10:30 am Quilters
	5:30 pm Hobby Horse Open House
	6:00 pm Gathering Band Rehearsal
	6:15 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal
	7:00 pm Evangelism Team Meeting
	7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal
Thurs	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	8:15 am Chapel Worship
	9:00 am Gathering Worship
	9:45 am Children's Choir Rehearsal
	10:30 am Sanctuary Worship
	4:30 pm Youth Group

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! ONE SERVICE ONLY 10:30 A.M. & ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Report time is near! As we are working on our 2023 budget, we will also need a few other reports to put this together. **We will need an annual report from our Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, the Finance/Stewardship Team, and the Endowment Team.** Please have your report to the office no later than Wednesday, December 29th. Thank you.

Worship Highlights: ONE SERVICE OF WORSHIP AT 10:30 am

Scripture: Luke 2:22-40

Sermon: "Simeon and Anna"
Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon

Communion Table: The communion table flowers are given by Alan Parkhurst in honor of his beloved church.

SAVE THE DATE

Chili Cook Off - Sunday, January 28, 2024

Brrr, it's getting *chili!* Mark your calendars for the Medina UCC Chili Cook Off following one service of worship at 10:30 and the Annual Meeting. Signups will begin the second week of January. Stay tuned for more details!

A fun fact about chili: ICS is the International Chili Society. Since 1967, ICS has been bringing people together over America's greatest culinary creation – CHILI! Traditional Red Chili is defined by the International Chili Society as any kind of meat or combination of meats, cooked with red chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients, with the exception of beans and pasta which are strictly forbidden. No garnish is allowed.

GIVING ENVELOPES

2024 Giving Envelopes for those who requested them are now available for pick-up in the East Room.

COMMUNION TABLE FLOWERS

The 2024 Flower Chart is now hanging in the East Room hallway. This is a wonderful way to honor or remember someone, or to celebrate a special occasion. Please fill in your name and **write “Church” or “Self”** to let us know if you would like the church to order the flowers for you or if you will be ordering them yourself. The cost of the flowers ordered through the church office is \$22.50.

Also, please write what you would like printed in the Messenger and if you want to claim your flowers after the 10:30 service.

MEN’S BREAKFAST

Mark your calendars for the next Men’s Breakfast on Tuesday, November 7th at Buehler’s River Styx at 8:00 am. All men of the church are invited. No reservations required. We hope to see you there!

PLEDGE UPDATE

Thank you for submitting your 2024 Pledge cards, to all those who have done so. Several members had elected to have their gifts set up on autopay, but unfortunately there is no banking/credit card information setup in your Realm profile. If you would like setup on auto pay you can log into your Realm account and enter your desired bank/credit card details, or you can give me a call in the office, and I can enter on your behalf, whichever you feel most comfortable with. Please send me an email (jeff@uccmedina.org) or give me a call if you have any questions.

Also, just a reminder, **all 2023 contributions must be postmarked by December 31st, 2023, to be eligible for tax deductions.** In order to best forecast 2024 budgets, the church is still in need of your 2024 Faith Offering Card. Blank cards are available in the pew racks or online.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ONA TASK FORCE

ONA notes

The Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ has been advocating for LGBTQ+ individuals and their families since 1972 and has been encouraging UCC Congregations to become Open and Affirming. What do the letters LGBTQ+ stand for? Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and Questioning. The + is added to include those who may not fit into any neat category.

Aren’t all congregations in the UCC Open and Affirming? Each congregation decides for itself whether to engage in an Open and Affirming process. (We are Congregationalists, after all!) There are currently more than 1800 UCC congregations that have gone through the process and become ONA. More information can be found at UCCCoalition.org.

Michael Sferro, a member of our congregation, will speak in worship on January 28th about his own journey to find our congregation.

Questions/comments? Email ONA@UCCMedina.org

Faithfully, Pam, Dan, Vicki, Brad, Mike, Alan, and Lilly.

Luke 2:22-40

Long-Awaited Gift

In today's scripture, the elder (Simeon) meets the infant (Christ Jesus). The image of the old person - wrinkled with the passing of their days and sporting a long, white beard - meeting the new baby - smooth and innocent - has been adapted in the secular world as a fitting image for the passing of the year. As we say goodbye to the old and usher in the new, what rituals do you practice to deepen and enrich your experience of the passing of time? Here are a few ideas. Maybe you have others.

Star Words

It is not known where the tradition of Star Words began, but this tradition is growing year by year among many congregations. In this tradition, words of intention, challenges to grow or spiritual gifts are written on paper stars. Then, each member of the group draws one star to guide them into the new year. Like the Wise Magi who followed the star in the sky to the Christ Child, pray that your word will lead you through the year until you more fully discover Christ's purpose for you.

Watchwords

A watchword is like a star word, except instead of a single word, a passage of scripture is written on each paper. If you choose this one, get curious about the scripture you are given. What words or phrases stick with you? Read it over several times. You may want to find it in the Bible and read it in context. Make this scripture part of your prayer life by praying it every day for a whole year. How does the watchword change as you live with it? How does it change you?

Letting Go of the Past

The new year is a good time to release what is no longer serving you from the past. Set aside some time to take stock of the past year. What were you doing when you felt God's presence and blessings most strongly? After you have written these thoughts down, ask God to bless what has happened in the past and to bless you in helping to release it. You may want to burn or bury the paper as a symbol of cleansing.

Set an Intention of Gratitude

As you step into the New Year, set an intention to express gratitude more often. Maybe you want to list three things you are grateful for before you go to sleep at night. Maybe you would like to wake up with the intention to express gratitude throughout the day. Maybe you want to be more aware of moments through the day when you feel grateful and express those in the moment.

However you prepare for the New Year, be gentle with yourself and choose one you will enjoy. You will be more likely to keep it up, and the practice will be more impactful that way.