

**Impossible Possibilities: Imagine
First Mennonite Church
December 16, 2018**

Bells call us to worship Ray Raeburn
Welcome and announcements Rhonda Winstead
Call to worship
*Hymn “O come, O come, Immanuel” (*vv 1, 2, 3 and 6*) HWB 172
Jackie Wyse Rhodes
*Responsive Reading Micah 5:2-5a (NRSV)
L: But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah,
C: from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel.
L: Therefore, he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has
brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.
**C: And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the
majesty of the name of his God.**
L: And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth;
ALL: and he shall be the one of peace.
Special music “Before the Marvel of This Night” Carl Schalk
Chancel Choir and Youth Choir
Conversation with friends Judy Steiner
“Come, light of the world,” sing twice, coming forward STS 3
“Come, Prince of Peace,” sing twice, returning

Community prayer Theda Good
Scripture Matthew 1:18-2:15 Gary Wetherill
Justin and Paul Neufeld Weaver
Sermon “A child and a king” Wanda Stopher
*Hymn “Jesus Entered Egypt” *See insert*
Presenting our tithes and offerings
Offertory “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” arr. Melody Bober
Ana Neufeld Weaver
*Hymn of dedication “Gloria” HWB 204
(Sing once in unison and then 2 times in a round: choir, organ side, piano side, balcony)
*Offering words (*read responsively*)
L: We give these gifts, O God, believing the impossible is possible.
C: May our gifts empower others near and far to imagine.
*Hymn “O little town of Bethlehem” HWB 191
*Benediction
Postlude

**Please rise in body or in spirit.
HWB – Hymnal: A Worship Book; STJ – Sing the Journey; STS – Sing the Story
Please ask an usher for assistance in locating large print hymnals.*
**Please note that today’s worship coordinates with We Make the Road by Walking,
Chapter 16.**

First Mennonite Church, 101 S. Jackson Street, Bluffton, Ohio 45817
419-358-5766 | fmcbluffton.org | Office open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

Church Staff

- Pastor Wanda Stopher -- Monday-Thursday, 9-4, off Friday; 419-551-1079 (cell); fmc.wanda@bluffton.edu
- Pastor Theda Good -- Tuesday-Friday, 9-4, off Monday; 419-549-2417 (cell); fmc.theda@bluffton.edu
- Interim Children and Youth Ministry Director – Carrie Mast, M-F, 8-10 a.m., mastc@bluffton.edu
- Director of Music – Mark Suderman, 419-230-5368 (cell); sudermanme@bluffton.edu
- Administrative Assistant – Mary Pannabecker Steiner, M-F, 9-4, fmc@bluffton.edu
- Custodian – Mick Hardy, 7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., weekends as needed

Host: Cheryl Slotter | **Greeter:** Judy Diller

Sound: Melissa Friesen | **Chancel:** Anita Lehman

Nursery today: SS – Shelby Cluts, Mary Ina Hooley

Worship – Andrea Goings and Kathy Dickson

Nursery next week: SS – Julie Mackey

Worship – John & Julie Mackey, Ben Hartzler, Theo Andreas

OUR STEWARDSHIP

Worship attendance last Sunday	FMC-204, MC-6
Volunteer hours Dec. 2-8	213
Spending plan giving Dec. 9, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$15,804.00
Special fund giving Dec. 9, 2018 (includes e-giving): Freudige-\$20; Faith/Life-\$10 Community-\$10; Connections-\$50; JHYF-\$10; Kitchen service-\$12.10; MCC-\$50	
Coll scholar-\$50; Mennonite subs-\$148; flooring-\$685	\$1,036.10
Total giving Dec. 9, 2018 (includes e-giving)	\$16,840.10
Total spending plan receipts as of October 31, 2018	\$295,445.65
Spending plan expenses as of October 31, 2018	\$326,562.24
2018 spending plan	\$427,441.00

First Mennonite Church is affiliated with the Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA. The Mennonites are named after Menno Simons, one of our early church leaders, and are rooted historically in the "Anabaptist" movement, which began in 1525, with origins in Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands now reaching around the world. Some primary Anabaptist convictions then and now are following Jesus Christ in service to others, rejection of violence and war, and joyful community life.

*Impossible
Possibilities:*

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In response to God's unconditional love for all people, we joyfully and unconditionally welcome you to join us on our journey of faith in Jesus Christ. We are committed to breaking down dividing walls and building community where all are loved and accepted. We believe in active inclusion and invite each one to participate in the life and ministry of our congregation.

CALENDAR

Today, December 16, 2018

8:30-9:30	SHYF pancake breakfast fundraiser, FH
9:45 a.m.	Children tell nativity story in sanctuary, all invited
10:30 a.m.	Worship, Wanda Stopher preaching
5:30 p.m.	Learning circle, supper provided, FH
6 p.m.	Intergenerational caroling, MMH and MC; snacks at FMC after

December 17-25, 2018

Tuesday (12-18)	Morning prayers, 7 a.m. Staff meeting, 9 a.m., parlor
Wednesday (12-19)	Adult bells and cherubs, 6 p.m. Jubilate, 6:30 p.m. Chancel choir and youth bells, 7 p.m.
Thursday (12-20)	Community meal, senior center, 6 p.m.
Friday (12-21)	Menno-Life deadline
Sunday (12-23)	SS, coffee time, 9:15 a.m. Worship, Theda Good preaching, 10:30 a.m.
Monday (12-24)	Our Daily Bread, volunteers leave at 9:45 a.m. Church office closing at 1 p.m.
Tuesday (12-25)	Candlelight Christmas Eve service, sanctuary, 6:30 p.m. Christmas Day, church office closed

Welcome to our worship service today. If you are a visitor, please sign one of our guest books located at the entrances to the sanctuary. Wireless hearing aids are available. If you would like your children cared for while you worship, our nursery is downstairs in the church. Worship activity bags for children are available.

New announcements

Menno-Life deadline: Items for the January Menno-Life must be submitted to fmc@bluffton.edu by Friday, Dec. 21.

Friends and family are invited to attend our Christmas Eve service, Monday, Dec. 24, at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The service will include a dramatization of the nativity story, carol singing and candle lighting. The offering that evening will benefit the Deacons Benevolent fund.

A card shower is planned for Keith Brauen, who will celebrate his 90th birthday on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 2018. Please send cards to Keith at 5900 Pevee Road, Bluffton, OH 45817.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped with the December 13 American Red Cross blood drive at FMC. Our next blood drive will be Thursday, Feb. 7, 2019.

Reminders

Today at FMC:

- ***8:30-9:30 a.m.** -- SHYF pancake breakfast fundraiser in the fellowship hall
- ***9:45 a.m.** -- Children in preschool through fifth grade will retell the nativity story in the sanctuary. *(This event replaces the children's program previously held in the afternoon or evening.)*
- ***6 p.m.** -- Intergenerational caroling at Mennonite Memorial Home and Maple Crest, returning to the church for snacks and hot beverages

All are invited to attend the annual holiday brunch at 9:15 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 30, in the fellowship hall. Please bring food to share: breakfast casseroles, fruit, breads, coffee cakes, muffins, cookies, etc. Coffee, tea, and juice will be provided. **Please**

bring your own table service. There will be no Sunday school that morning.

-- *Nurture Commission*

Advent is traditionally a time of waiting for the birth of Jesus, the coming of "God with us." By definition, it is a time to anticipate this world-altering change that is just around the corner. It is therefore, a time of hope, a time to dare, to imagine, to be surprised, to see in a new light, and to welcome this new day. Our Advent theme, *Impossible Possibilities*, captures that moment of waiting when what could be is still only a glimmer, but when it is also just inspiring enough that we want to risk giving ourselves to it. As we explore these *Impossible Possibilities*, we will continue to coordinate our worship each week with the walking book, *We Make the Road by Walking*.

~ 2018 Advent Planning Team:

*Theda Good, Carrie Mast, Mark Suderman, Judy Steiner,
Lois Wetherill, Rhonda Winstead, and Wanda Stopher*

For those interested in the workshop series, "Meaningful Presence: Support for Late Life Reorientation," a sign-up sheet is available on a table in the fellowship hall. The dates are January 11, 15 and 22. Brochures are available in the office. For more information call Jeff Boehr at 419.236.9150.

Mennonite Disaster Service is recruiting weekly and long-term volunteers for the new MDS unit in Marianna, FL, where Hurricane Michael devastated the landscape in October. Lynn and Linda Miller will be the project directors in January. While the greatest need is for volunteers from Jan. 6-11, Elizabeth Kelly has registered for the week of Jan. 13-18, and is able to take one or two persons with her for that week. For more details, talk to Lynn or Linda. To see videos of MDS' work there, see www.youtube.com/user/MDSMennonite/search?query=marianna. To register, call Deanna Frey at MDS (1.800.735.3536.)

~ *Lawrence Matthews*